

**SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE**



Mangrove swamp

PRESS CLIPPINGS

Enclosed are clippings of local and international press on the Special Court and related issues obtained by the Press and Public Affairs Office

as at:

Thursday, 17 January 2008

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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The News
Thursday, 17 January 2008

“Special Court cannot heal our wounds”

Amputees and War Wounded in post conflict Sierra Leone have remarked that the setting up of Special Court for Sierra Leone to try those that bear the greatest responsibilities during the conflict cannot in any way help them earn decent living standards.

- Victims

According to them, the scars of the conflict are still visible on them and punishing perpetrators is

not enough. Speaking to this press recently in Kenema, Lamin B. *Cont. page 2*

“Special Court cannot heal our wounds”

From front page

Gaima whose foot was amputated during the conflict said if those that wrecked havoc on them were adequately trained and provided with a lot of support they too should be compensated. He went on to state that millions of dollars was spent on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Special Court for Sierra Leone adding that the Special Court is needless.

Another amputee said if the millions of dollars put together to build the court and other facilities for indictees were used to develop Sierra Leone then it would have been much better. He said the Western tradition of crime and punishment does not hold in Africa as most of those the law attempts to hold responsible are held in high esteem, than those afflicted.

It could be recalled that the first amputated soldier, Lance Corporal (Rtd) Ngaojia condemned the Special Court for the fact that millions of dollars are spent on it while they continue to suffer. Meanwhile amputees and war wounded have called on government to take into consideration recommendations especially those touching on reparation on war victims.

BBC World Service Trust

Wednesday, 16 January 2008

Abdul Rashid at The Hague

Former Military Officer Testifies Against Charles Taylor

The Sierra Leone former military officer testifying before the Special Court of (sic.) Sierra Leone, Dennis Koker, has denied receiving treatment for mental illness at the military hospital in Freetown.

Taylor's Defence team cross-examining Mr. Koker said the witness received treatment for mental illness at Block 34 of the military hospital in Freetown. The Defence team also said Koker received more than two million leones from the Witness and Victims Section of the Special Court to testify against Taylor.

Koker, on direct examination, told the Prosecution he saw transportation of arms and ammunition between Liberia and Sierra Leone. When the Defence asked him about evidence of arms from Liberia and Sierra Leone, Koker said that those who brought the truck of arms spoke Liberian English.

Before he left his seat, the Prosecution fourth witness, Dennis Koker, thanked the Court for trying to stop terrorism in Africa.

The Prosecution fifth witness, Dr. Stephen Ellis, then took oath to speak the truth and nothing but the truth. He is an expert witness who wrote a book entitled "The Mask of Anarchy," discussing the conflict in the Mano River Basin.

Dr. Ellis then went into the findings of the violation of the arms embargo on Liberia. The Defence quickly objected to Dr. Ellis's evidence, and said the expert witness was behaving like a witness of fact, going into the merits of the case against the accused. The Court sustained the Defence's objection and warned the Prosecution.

The International Criminal Court, which houses the Special Court of (sic.) Sierra Leone is inducting its new judges on Thursday in the chamber of the Special Court, so Charles Taylor's trial will start at 2:30 in the afternoon instead of 9:30 in the morning.

Abdul Rashid for BBC Common Ground and BBC World Service Trust at The Hague.

[Transcribed by the Office of Press and Public Affairs]

New Democrat (Liberia)
 Wednesday, 16 January 2008

I Saw NPFL Men

Another Witness Recounts Weapons Shipment

The third witness in the trial of former President Charles Taylor has detailed weapons transactions between the RUF and Liberia, saying he saw National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) rebels, along with Lebanese, in the town Sierra Leone town of Beudu, then headquarters of the rebels.

Dennis Koker, a former soldier in the Sierra Leone Army, recounted his experiences with the RUF, where he said he saw slavery in practice. He described the indiscriminate execution of civilians and the burning of their homes:

Mosquito (Sam Bockarie) let us know they had come to see him. These people were speaking the Liberian dialect and wearing camouflage and black caps. Some had polo T-shirts that said NPFL Navy Rangers. I saw it myself.



I Saw NPFL Men

It was sky blue, navy blue and black mixed unflagged. "Material" was a code name for ammunition. I was sent to the ammunition dump where the Material was brought...As military man, I was sent to list the material as it was unloaded. I was standing at the side when they opened the truck and took out the ammunition. I listed everything before it

off-load. Mosquito sent me twice, but not on the other times. The second time he sent me, Mosquito himself came with a lot of Liberians in vehicles and trucks. There were a lot of people. My mother came from Kailahun. My grandmother is connected to the Ghanide people. Liberians are related to Sierra Leoneans. When Liberians talk, we know they are

There was also rice on top of the guns in one of the trucks. In one truck there was no rice, just materials. One Land-Cruiser had rice and people. Two trucks had materials - one was full and other wasn't full - they'd put rice on top of it. This second time I personally saw materials arrive. I saw: AK ammunition, G-3 guns (German model three), much G-3 ammunition, many RPG tubes and bombs, many mortar bombs, heavy machine guns (HMGs) and ammunition for them, many mines. (G-3 is old type of weapon made by the Germans during the Second World War. It's not a heavy weapon. The magazine holds 20 rounds. It uses Uzi rounds. It's an automatic weapon.) There were more Liberians this time. General Fayah brought his bodyguards and they lodged near our house. They brought Oma Lizza, Poday Sankoh's wife. Some of the Liberians were in military uniforms, some were in civilian dress. They wore boots and had guns. The uniforms were sky blue mixed with black, navy blue and green. They had black berets and boots.

Two other times Liberians came. Documents came for Tom Sandie and I saw them. At that time the Nigerian prisoners of war, ECONC soldiers, were in my custody and I had to lock them up at night. Whenever anyone arrived in Beudu, they would go to the MPs for clearance. I saw the documents there that said "Scorpion Regiment, Second Battalion, Lc County". I saw it with my own eyes.

I left Beudu on December 16, 1999. I went central Kailahun and stayed there in 2000. It was there when 200 Indians came. I left the RUF when they said there was a cease-fire started work with the United Nations in February 2000. The Indians stayed in Kailahun and brought peace. On July 7, 1999, when there were peace talks, Sankoh sent a message that there should be peace. We were happy.

Court is now adjourning for the lunch break. Proceedings will resume at 2:30. Our coverage will continue at 3:00 (2:00 in Liberia and Sierra Leone).



was stored. The truck had six wheels in the back. We called it a six-wheel daf (ph). The container of the truck was about 20 feet long and the width was about 7 feet. This delivery of material in July 1998 included: rocket-propelled grenade tubes and bombs, a jet-tracer gun that is put on your shoulder and can shoot down an Alpha jet by following the jet's exhaust. (An Alpha jet is a fighter jet. We called them Alpha jets, and at this time ECOMOG was using Alpha jets.) They had anti-tank mines with a plane, and anti-personnel mines, 50 caliber AA ammunition to shoot at jets, 60mm and 82mm mortars, TNT that could be fixed on an AK to shoot down jets. Some of these materials were in boxes, others in cans, others in plastic containers, or in sealed wooden boxes.

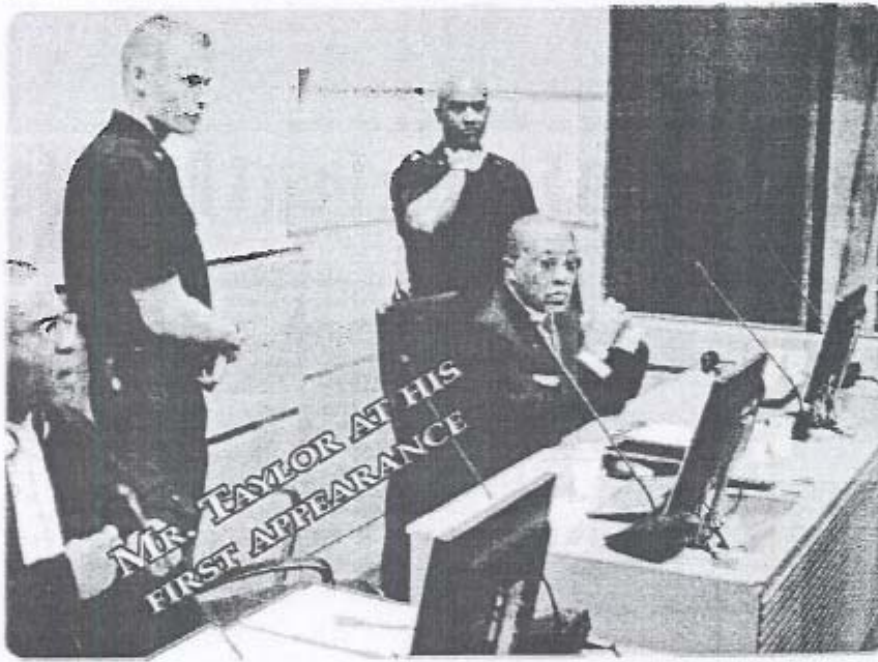
I saw two deliveries. I only heard about two others. Mosquito would send one MP to help

Liberians. It was in the same month that Mosquito went and came back with the Liberians, including General Fayah. They said he was a commander at Foya Kama in Lofa County. I spoke with him. There were many more vehicles this time: Land-Cruisers, cars, trucks, some were Lebanese too. I was at Mosquito's house when the trucks came. I had come from patrol to make sure the MPs there weren't sleeping. The vehicles parked at Mosquito's house. They asked me to call Tom Sandie. I did. Sandie sent me to go help off-load the things and list them. That night we spent about four hours off-loading things. I was listing them. I gave the list to Tom Sandie and he took it to Mosquito. That time Mosquito did not only bring guns, but also rice. There were two big trucks, two mini-vans, a Range Rover and another jeep with Lebanese in it. The rice was in the mini-vans - Action Faim vehicles.



New Democrat (Liberia)
Wednesday, 16 January 2008

Lawyer Tells Witness "You Hate Taylor... I Pretended Stupid -Not To Fight In Guinea-



Following defense lawyers insistence that former Taylor SSS Assistant Director and former ULIMO General Varmunyan Sheriff was mentally deranged, the witness revealed that he pretended to be "stupid" so as not to obey Charles Taylor's order to attack Guinea. Lead counsel Courtenay Griffiths told Sheriff that the motive of his testimony was hatred for Taylor because the NPFL killed his (Sheriff's) family, a charge the witness denied, saying, "I helped him in Lofa."

Def: He invited you to work for the government?

Wit: Yes.

Def: Given your admission this morning that you hated him and that you fought him, did this appointment surprise you?

Wit: No. I was one of the strongest commanders in 1996-1997. I had influence over remote territories. I thought he could use me.

Def: So he was seeking to reconcile differences in Liberia by recruiting people like you?

Wit: Yes, he started that.

Def: Given the experience had gone through fleeing what was going through you working for this man you hate?

Wit: I felt bad, but that didn't hate Mr. Taylor at that time.

Def: So you were able to put that behind you?

Wit: Yes.

Def: In this period following your appointment as Assistant Director of Operations...

Defense asks witness to look at document, interview notes, prosecution from November 2006.

Def: You said within one month of Taylor's election, Taylor sent you to meet with...

Montgomery to invite witness to meet near the Nigerian border. Passage states that Taylor was a important commander. States witness in his government formation and because he was a important commander. States Taylor consulted with witness to gain trust of former MO-K commanders in Lofa.

Def: So he was seeking to reconcile differences in Liberia by recruiting people like you?

SEE PAGE 10

I Pretended Stupid

who were still control there. True?

Wit: Yes.

Pros: You were asked about mental illness. At one point you said that to you, mental illness is telling the individual that they are crazy. Please tell the court what you mean by the word crazy.

Wit: When Taylor was preparing the mission to attack Guinea, I did not want to be part of the attack on Guinea. I would be fighting my own family. I made myself stupid so they could forget about me. Later I could defend attacks from Guinea. I had my senses and knew what I was doing. I was not crazy.

Pros: So a person is crazy when you are not yourself?

Wit: It means you do not have your senses. At the time, if I did not look like someone who did not have his senses, he would send me to participate in the attack on Guinea. I said I was not feeling well. Every time he sent someone to ask at my house, my mother said I

was not feeling well.

Pros: Today you said that in April 2007 cause of threats you and your family were located out of Liberia.

Wit: Yes.

Pros: And you received a temporary job from your job at the SSS.

Wit: Yes. I asked the Special Court to with Madame Sirleaf to allow me to testify at the Special Court.

Defense lawyers ended their cross examination of Mr Sheriff on Wednesday, which lasted three days. Throughout the questioning Taylor's lawyers sought to discredit Sheriff an insider, suggesting that although he went to Sierra Leone in 1998, the trip was a private one and not one which Taylor authorized to bring Sam Bockarie, the RUF commander later killed here, to Monrovia.

We reproduce the final portion of Sheriff's cross examination, courtesy website "The Trials of Charles Taylor":

National Chronicle (Liberia)
Wednesday, 16 January 2008

From S/Leone:

“CHARLES TAYLOR RECEIVED LOOTED MONIES, VALUABLES”

-5th Witness Tells Court



Former President Charles Ghankay Taylor

The trial of former President Charles Ghankay Taylor continues at The Hague with the fifth witness, Dennis Caulker, a Sierra Leone, taking the stand.

In his testimony, Caulker told the court that monies and other valuables that were looted from Sierra Leone were taken to Taylor in Liberia.

According to BBC's "Trust and Search for Common Ground" monitored

by this paper, witness Caulker saw the transportation of looted goods to Liberia.

Caulker said these items and monies were transported from Kailahun to Koinduin in Sierra Leone and later to Liberia.

He also said that a Liberian was the operational commander in Koindu when the RUF and the AFRC Junta Forces drove the Karmojor militias and captured the area.

Testifying before the UN-backed special court in The Hague, Caulker said he heard

Sam Boakarie on a satellite radio ordering Essah Sesay to launch an operation code name, "No Living Thing", in Koindu.

The former Sierra Leonean army commander told the court that the operation led to the burning of every house in Koindu. He said the reason for the destruction was to prevent ECOMOG and the Sierra Leonean Army (SLA) from occupying Koindu.

Cont'd on Page 6

In 13-Year-Old Girl's Death: 2 INVESTIGATORS, PATHOLOGIST EXPECTED

As controversies over the death of 13-year-old little Meiden Angel Tokpa still linger, two Ghanaian investigators and a pathologist are expected soon in the country to

ensure the facts surrounding the death of Angel; Henry K. Bestman reports.

According to a statement from the executive mansion, besides the

two Ghanaian investigators a senior pathologist is also to come to perform a new autopsy on the body of the late little Angel, whom her guardians

Cont'd on Page 6

CHARLES TAYLOR

Caulker said that the former AFRC leader, Johnny Paul Koroma, and Sesay, were in Koindu when the operation took place.

He recalled that the RUF and the AFRC forces broke into a bank in Sierra Leone and took a huge sum of money.

During the cross-examination of the fourth witness on Tuesday, he said that civilians, mostly women and children, were used to carry looted goods and munitions for the RUF and Junta Forces.

National Chronicle (Liberia) Wednesday, 16 January 2008

TOM KAMARA: TAYLOR'S FRIEND YESTERDAY AND FOE TODAY

Tom Kamara has resurged to milk the Taylor trial, which is virtually relegated to backwaters by the government that turned him over to the U.N.-backed Sierra Leone Court for onward transmission to The Hague for prosecution. The only story that Kamara religiously has denied the Liberian reading public is the genesis of Taylor's quest to violently overthrow the elected government of the late President Samuel Kanyon Doe. Any story that is told from the middle will not be fully understood.

As the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has begun its hearings, it is now prudent that the alleged major actors who began the so-called revolution long before Adolphus Dolo, Paul Mulbah and Momo Gebah joined the bandwagon. It is necessary before the TRC begin invoking its subpoenaed powers to ascertain pertinent information on the genesis of Taylor's portion in the fratricidal revolution which plunged this once glorious and peaceful nation into bloodshed.

While Mr. Kamara continues to muck in on the parts played by other major actors, it is gallant and fair that he does not continue to cowardly hide the truth of his participation from the long-suffering people of Liberia, the part that he Kamara played from the day Taylor walked out of the high security penitentiary of Boston, Massachusetts, on that fateful day in the yellow Volkswagen Beetle.

That story is known by a few persons, whom are still alive today and are willing to tell the TRC.

If he is so hell-bent on sending his former friend and colleague to the gallows, it is only manly that he simply tell the TRC the part he orchestrated in the 20-year so-called revolution, before being subpoenaed by the TRC. Do not chicken out now, Mr. Revolutionary and Progressive. The die is cast.

allAfrica.com

Wednesday, 16 January 2008

Koker Testifies About 'Operation No Living Thing'

The Hague

The monitors of former President Charles Taylor's trial report for www.charlestaylortrial.org.

Koker Testifies about "Operation No Living Thing" and Arms Deliveries from Liberia to Sierra Leone; Defense Counsel Begins Koker Cross-Examination

Prosecution team member Christopher Santora resumed his direct examination of Dennis Koker today. Charles Taylor, wearing his gold-trimmed glasses and dressed in a gray pinstriped suit, sat quietly throughout the proceedings. Santora's examination of Koker focused on the movement of RUF and Junta forces throughout Sierra Leone; the capture, enslavement and treatment of civilians; and the delivery of arms from Liberia into Sierra Leone. The defense team started its cross-examination of Koker immediately after his direct examination was completed at 2:30 p.m., at the start of the afternoon session.

Koker Described the RUF Forces' Movement Through Sierra Leone

Koker testified that he was born in the Bo District of Sierra Leone and subsequently moved to the Kailahun District in January 1991. Before joining the army, Koker worked as an artist and he used those skills at the Juba Barracks where he served a sign writer, responsible for logos and decorations on army vehicles. Koker joined the army in 1991 and his first assignment was VIP protection for Army Colonel S. B. Jumo. He held this position until the NPRC Government was overthrown in January 1996 when he was relocated to the Juba Barracks in Freetown to work for the Electrical and Mechanical Engineering Unit.

In February 1998, the AFRC was driven from Freetown by ECOMOG. Koker testified that a large group of 5,000 people, consisting of men, women and children, left the city traveling together on foot — many carrying their property — and in vehicles. He detailed their arrival in Tombo, where they boarded boats to cross the river to Fogbo. When they arrived in Masiaka, there were more people than the town could contain. Koker testified that all of the soldiers from Freetown were present, as well as rebels. Koker identified the rebel commanders that were present in Masiaka, including Eldred Collins, Gummo Jalloh, and Pa Kosiah. He stated that, at the time, Issa Sesay was second in command in the RUF. He also described the treatment of civilians in Masiaka and surrounding villages, reporting that the RUF and Juntas were capturing civilians and forcing them to carry looted property for them.

Koker stated that the group left Masiaka and walked through the night to Makeni. In Makeni, he saw houses being looted and burned. Issa Sesay issued an order to stop the burning, but these orders were only followed when the RUF and Juntas starting shooting the arsonists. Koker also stated that civilians were being captured and women were being forced to become their captor's wives.

Koker testified that it took his group a week to get to Koidu from Freetown. He identified the commanders who were present in Koidu, including Issa Sesay and Superman — Dennis Mingo, a Liberian operations commander who led the attack on Koidu. He also identified AFRC commanders who were in Koidu, including Alex Tamba Brima, Honorable Sammi, Johnny Paul Koroma and Pa Morlai. While in Koidu, Koker testified that he saw Issa Sesay speaking on a satellite phone with Sam Bockarie. He could tell Issa Sesay was speaking with Sam Bockarie because he referred to him as "Master."

Koker also provided a detailed description of "Operation No Living Thing" that took place while he was in Koidu. Forces were burning all of the houses in the town and surrounding areas at the order of the commanders. This order, carried out by RUF and the Juntas, was designed to scorch the earth and make it impossible for ECOMOG or government troops to stay in Koidu.

Koker also testified regarding an incident where the RUF and AFRC forces broke into a bank in Koidu and took diamonds and money. He described the large bags of money and testified that he did not want to be responsible for transporting this money. Eldred Collins assigned Koker and Staff Sergeant Saliu Kanneh to deliver the money. Koker believed that following this order would be a disgrace to his family. When he arrived in Baoma, he saw Kanneh who had accompanied the money. He was naked and told Koker that he had been accused of stealing part of the money. Koker testified that the money and diamonds were being taken to Liberia. His colleagues informed him that the money would be taken to Charles Taylor. The witness stated that he did not see the money being handed to Charles Taylor, but he was informed that the money was going to Liberia.

Brutal Treatment of Women and Children

Throughout his direct examination, Koker described the brutal treatment inflicted on civilians. His account was not limited to women and children, as he also described the recruitment of "manpower" for the forces. Koker recalled one instance where he was punished and sent on a mission where he was forced to recruit additional manpower. Major Tom Sandie sent seven military police ("MPs") to Dodo and Galema. In Galema, the MPs saw two civilians who were fleeing and captured them. The civilians were stripped naked and tied up to keep them from escaping. All of their civilian property was taken and given to one MP. The MPs captured 50 civilians on this mission and brought them back to Beudu where they were forced to clear fields for an airstrip that was being constructed on Gokodu Road.

Koker also testified about his responsibilities as a military police officer, which included watching over prisoners of war. This assignment came directly from Mosquito, Sam Bockarie. When commanders captured civilians, they sent them to Beudu where the conditions for civilians were not good. Koker explained that the civilians were forced to work without pay on the farms of commanders or were forced to carry heavy loads from one town to another for the commanders.

Koker testified about the capturing of women who were turned into the "wives" of the commanders. He likened this occurrence to "having tea to drink" because it was such a common practice. He also testified about the consequences for women who "overlooked" their commander husband. While stationed as a military police officer in Beudu, commanders would bring captured women into the station and state that they had disrespected them. The crying women would explain that they had been captured on the frontline. The commanders would order Koker to detain the women for being disrespectful. Koker described one specific instance where Victor Kallon, a Major in the RUF, brought in a captured woman to the station, stripped her down to her underwear and gave her 50 lashings. The woman explained that Victor Kallon had captured her and turned her into his wife. Koker said he was required to detain these women per the commanding officers' orders.

Koker also testified about the treatment of children who were separated from their families and forced to fight with guns for the RUF. These children were 12 and 14 years old and Koker would inquire about their age in secret because they were too young to participate. These children were part of the SBU — Small Boys Unit. Koker stated that they were taken from their families and given guns, despite the fact that they were not fit for military work.

The Delivery of Arms from Liberia into Sierra Leone

Koker testified about the delivery of arms and ammunition from Liberia into Sierra Leone as well as his participation in the off-loading of arms delivered from Liberia to Sam Bockarie's home on Dawa Road in Beudu. From Beudu, Dawa Road leads to Foya Tinkia, right across the border in Liberia. Koker testified about four separate occasions where convoys from Liberia brought arms into Sierra Leone via Sam Bockarie's house. He was personally present for two of these shipments.

In July 1998, Koker was sent to help off-load a delivery. Koker stated that seven or more people from Liberia arrived in an NGO Land-Cruiser and a red jeep. The individuals in the convoy spoke with a Liberian dialect and wore camouflage and black caps. Some had polo T-shirts that said NPFL Navy Rangers. The shirts, Koker said, were sky blue, navy blue and black mixed camouflaged. They had brought "material", which was a code name for ammunition, and included: rocket-propelled grenade tubes and bombs, a jet-tracer gun designed to shoot down Alpha jets used by ECOMOG, anti-tank mines, and anti-personnel mines, .50 caliber ammunition, mortars, and TNT. Koker was sent to the ammunition dump where the material was unloaded, listed, and stored.

The second shipment Koker observed involved more vehicles and happened within a month of the previous incident. Koker testified that he was present at Sam Bockarie's house when the vehicles arrived. Koker stated that he was able to identify the group as Liberians based on the way they talked. Mosquito arrived with the Liberians, including General Fayah. The vehicles in the convoy included land-cruisers, cars, and trucks. Koker stated that he was charged with listing out the materials that arrived and then presenting the list to Tom Sandie, who delivered it to Mosquito. Koker testified that he saw the materials, which included: AK ammunition, G-3 guns, G-3 ammunition, many RPG tubes and bombs, mines, mortar bombs, heavy machine guns (HMGs) and ammunition. There was also rice on top of the guns in one of the trucks. Koker further stated that some of the Liberians were dressed in military uniforms and carried guns.

Defense Counsel Commences Cross-examination of Koker

In the afternoon session, Defense Counsel Morris Anyah began his cross-examination of Koker. Anyah questioned Koker regarding his participation in two other proceedings in Freeport involving Issa Sesay and Alex Tamba Brima. Koker confirmed that he had testified in both proceedings. Anyah also directed Koker through a series of questions highlighting the route Koker took to reach Freeport. Anyah spent much of the cross-examination this afternoon confronting Koker with statements made in the earlier AFRC proceedings and contrasting them to statements made in open court today. Anyah will continue his cross-examination of Koker tomorrow.

The trial will resume tomorrow morning at 9:30 a.m.

The Analyst (Monrovia)

Wednesday, 16 January 2008

Kromah - 'I'm Preparing for the TRC'

Alhaji G.V. Kromah, former leader of the United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO), one of the several warring factions in the Liberian conflict has commented on the ongoing TRC public hearings, saying it should create an opportunity for national healing and not serve as a forum for promoting political, religious or ethnic interest.

In a release issued late last evening, the former leader of the erstwhile fighting group said accusations made by individuals appearing before the TRC are allegations and should be treated as such by the commission and the media until these claims are investigated and proven to be true.

The former ULIMO leader called on members of the disbanded organization to voluntarily appear before the TRC and respond or comment on accusations. Where wrongdoing is established, it should be accepted with sincere apologies.

He said ULIMO did not have any policy of targeting civilians, and anyone involved in such activities in the organization should be courageous enough to apologize to the victim, provided the truth is clearly established.

Kromah, who is a Professor at the University of Liberia, in a statement said as one of those who proposed the establishment of the TRC at the Accra Peace Conference in 2003, he believes the TRC can reunite the nation.

He cautioned however that all measures should be taken to ensure that the exercise does not undermine the concrete gains already made in reconciliation and peace in the past ten years.

He said he has already hosted two groups from the TRC Inquiry Unit last year, each lasting for more than three hours. He said he is preparing to appear at the TRC public hearings whether he is invited or not.

His statement comes in the wake of accusation made by a witness against his former warring faction, ULIMO. Appearing before the TRC Monday, former Town Chief of Mondo Town in Grand Cape, Momo B. Gray, claimed Kromah's fighters of ULIMO-K carried out massacre in their town.

He said the people of the town will only be happy when Kromah appears before the TRC to apologize. In the absence of that, he said, they will not forgive him or forget about all that they have experienced in the hands of ULIMO-K.

Charlestaylortrial.org
Wednesday, 16 January 2008

Cross-Examination of Koker Completed; Prosecution Examination of Expert Witness Stephen Ellis Commenced

Court resumed this morning at 9:30 a.m. Defense counsel, Morris Anyah continued his cross-examination of Dennis Koker from the previous day. At the close of this cross-examination, Christopher Santora for the Prosecution completed a brief redirect of Koker. The next prosecution witness, Stephen Ellis was introduced and the direct examination of Dr. Ellis by prosecutor Mohamed Bangura commenced.

Anyah Continued Cross-Examination of Koker

During Anyah's cross-examination of Koker, he questioned the witness with regards to several areas. Central themes in this questioning including Anyah's questions to establish that Koker was responsible for some of the brutality in Sierra Leone, the delivery of arms to Sierra Leone from Liberia, inconsistencies in his testimony as compared to previous proceedings, Koker's possible involvement in LURD, and payments Koker has received as a result of his participation in these proceedings. There appeared to be interpretation problems during this portion of the cross-examination. Koker appeared frustrated at times with the questioning and repeatedly told the Court that he was not lying in regards to his testimony.

Anyah sought to establish that Koker was responsible for killing a Nigerian soldier who suffered from tuberculosis while under the control of the military police. Koker explained that the soldier had been taken to Sam Bockarie's home and that he did not die in prison.

Anyah challenged Koker in regards to the uniforms and materials worn by the Liberian men who were present when arms were delivered to Sam Bockarie's house in Beudu. Koker testified that the men wore uniforms consisting of jackets and polo shirts with the NPFL logo on them under the jackets. Anyah challenged Koker's testimony and referred Koker to inconsistent statements in his past testimony regarding the appearance of the Liberian men at Sam Bockarie's home during the delivery of arms. Anyah questioned Koker regarding where the weapons that were delivered to Sam Bockarie's home had originated. Koker informed the Court that he could identify where a weapon was manufactured. For example, he recalled his testimony from the previous day where he identified a G-3 gun as being manufactured in Germany. Koker testified that he knew the weapons arriving at Sam Bockarie's home were from Liberia because his superior, Tom Sandie, had told him so, they arrived in the convoy that came from the direction of Liberia and had Liberians in the vehicles and he could tell by looking at the guns.

Anyah questioned Koker with regard to inconsistencies in his testimony about the treatment of civilians in Sierra Leone by the RUF. Anyah asked Koker if civilians in the commanders' farms received medical treatment and food. Koker answered that they did not receive medical treatment, and was then shown his previous testimony which stated that civilians received first aid in the hospitals, which was not enough treatment. Koker stated that this first aid was only there to "encourage them". Anyah questioned whether currency was available for citizens or whether bartering was the only form of exchange. Koker clarified that currency was available near the markets, but that barter was oftentimes used near the warfront.

Anyah questioned Koker about his involvement with LURD and a nickname of "green snake." Koker stated that he did not have a nickname of "green snake" and further clarified that there is a difference between a nickname and a war name. He identified his war name as "Kugbe." During this part of the

questioning, Charles Taylor passed a post-it note to Anyah. Anyah then questioned whether Koker had heard of LURD and Koker confirmed that he heard of LURD while he was in Beudu. While Anyah questioned Koker with regard to whether he was a member of LURD, Charles Taylor looked up from his notes and computer with interest. Koker answer that he was not a member of LURD and Charles Taylor reacted by raising his eyebrows and shaking his head. Koker stated that witnesses would be lying if they said that he was a member or a mercenary within LURD.

Anyah questioned Koker about payments he had received as a result of his participation in with this matter. Anyah questioned Koker regarding the payments that the witness received from the Special Court in the period from 2004 to 2007. These payments included reimbursement of transportation costs and other expenses paid by the Witness and Victims Section of the Special Court. Anyah stated that most of the payments were received by the witness in 2007, while he never even testified in 2007. Koker agreed that he received all of the smaller payments, however he disagreed with the totals that were presented, stating that he never received a payment equal to those stated as “total amounts”. He repeated that he never received a payment of that size. Koker informed Anyah that he was confused and would not confirm the correctness of the amount. The President of the Court pointed out to the defense that, without pen and a calculator it may be difficult for the witness to add up so many amounts.

Anyah questioned whether Koker ever received psychiatric treatment, which Koker denied. Koker stated that he received treatment for a swollen throat and further stated that he received an injection when he had been bitten by a dog. Koker also denied that he stayed in Block 34 at the Military Hospital in Freetown. He further denied knowing a doctor by the name of Nahim.

Anyah sought to establish that Koker had been court marshaled before. Koker responded that he had never been court marshaled. Anyah continued and asked specifically if Koker had been court marshaled for raping a woman. Koker denied ever raping a woman or having involvement with a woman during the war. Anyah pressed Koker and asked if he had received 150 lashes for this, to which Koker denied receiving the lashing. Charles Taylor and Anyah conferred. Anyah then asked if Koker had received lashing at the order of any other commander. Koker said that he did receive a lashing at the order of Tom Sandie and Edward Collins. Koker detailed three lashings and said that there were no more.

Prosecution Completed a Re-Examination of Koker

Prosecution counsel, Christopher Santora, continued with a brief redirect. Koker clarified that he was aware of the arms being delivered from Liberia because (1) those in the convoy spoke Liberian English, (2) they were wearing Liberian uniforms, (3) the vehicles came from the direction of Liberia, (4) Tom Sandie had informed him of this fact, and (5) he learned that this information was true after the war ended.

Koker also confirmed that responsibilities including the issuance of passes to civilians and warring soldiers, minding the prisoners of war, and counting the civilians brought to the station for “manpower” were all the responsibilities of the entire MP office, and not his alone. In regards to the towns of Tombu and Fogbu, Koker confirmed that Tombu is between Freetown and Masiaka and that Fogbu between Freetown and Masiaka.

Santora also examined Koker in regards to the payments he received from the OTP in 2007. Koker confirmed that he did not testify in 2007 but did meet with the OTP on three occasions.

Examination of Expert Witness Stephen Ellis Commenced

Prosecution attorney Mohamed Bangura introduced the next witness, Dr. Stephen Ellis, an expert witness on African Studies and Affairs. Dr. Ellis was sworn in wearing a blue and brown tie and a teal jacket. Dr.

Ellis received his doctorate from Oxford University. Dr. Ellis currently serves as a senior researcher at the Africa Studies Center, University of Leiden in The Netherlands.

Dr. Ellis described the positions he has held that involve researching African history and current affairs, including his current position. He had also been asked to do consultancies within the field of current affairs in Africa and has lectured for the Dutch foreign ministry on general problems of failed states. He has also worked for the British Ministry of Agriculture, lectured at the University of Madagascar, worked in the International Secretariat of Amnesty International (with a focus on West Africa), and served as Editor for Africa Confidential prior to joining the African Studies Center at the University of Leiden. In 2003-2004, he took leave to work for the International Crisis Group as Director of the Africa Program.

Dr. Ellis explained that the report he has prepared for the Special Court concentrated on the period 1997-2000, but also included information into the year 2003. He was asked to include information about events that occurred during this period in Liberia and how they affected Sierra Leone. Dr. Ellis' testimony included historical accounts of the conflict in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The following are some of the highlights from his testimony:

Dr. Ellis testified that between 1987-1989, Charles Taylor became acquainted with Foday Sankoh at a Libyan military camp. Taylor organized the NPFL, including not only Liberians, but also Gambians and Ghanaians who saw themselves as pan-Africans. Taylor's association with the conflict in Sierra Leone can be traced to his acquaintance with the Sierra Leone revolutionaries in Libya. The witness testified that he believes these revolutionaries saw themselves as Pan-African revolutionaries; an idea held by Africans who believed that a Pan-African armed movement could free the continent from colonialism and neo-colonialism. This idea was prevalent in the Libyan camps.

Dr. Ellis reported that when the war started in Liberia in Dec 1989, some countries had a sympathetic view that it would spark a revolution. Over time, many changed their views as information about RUF atrocities became widely known.

The NPFL was organized outside Liberia and attacked at Christmastime, 1989. Within a few days, it became known that a war had begun. People in West Africa were aware that the group had support from Libya, Burkina Faso, and certain circles in Ivory Coast. Some governments in the region became nervous and believed that this might be an attempt at a pan-African militancy. They feared if a revolutionary government took hold in Liberia, conflict would spread.

Dr. Ellis was asked whether he agreed with the findings of Sierra Leone's Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report (TRC), to which he responded that the TRC did not clearly state from where the tactic of amputations came. Additionally, the wide extent of Liberian involvement in the first phase of the war that was reported was a surprise to him.

Dr. Ellis also discussed abductions and hostage practices that the NPFL and RUF engaged in. He explained that when a group came to attack an area, people would join out of sympathy, to protect the area, or because they were forced. In Liberia, when it became clear that Nigeria was siding with Doe, the NPFL took hostages to pressure the government. Many hostages were mistreated or killed. In 2000 the RUF took UN peacekeepers hostage.

Diamonds played a role in the conflict and the marketing of diamonds was an important factor in the Sierra Leone war, although Dr. Ellis did not believe this was the determinant focus of the entire war. At the beginning of the war, the conflict was not primarily about diamonds. By the end of the 1990s, the control of diamonds was a key factor as combatants were able to sell diamonds to finance the continuation of the war. In Sierra Leone, diamonds became an important means of financing the RUF. Dr. Ellis stated

that the UN Panel of Experts report on Liberia supported findings that Charles Taylor funneled weapons to the RUF in exchange for diamonds.

Charles Taylor had a close personal interest in the RUF and he supervised the diamond trade with them. A source for Dr. Ellis' research was a book by Lester S. Hyman, who is a lawyer and an influential member of the Democratic Party in the United States. Mr. Hyman had written that despite Charles Taylor's suggestions to the contrary, Charles Taylor traded diamonds for weapons sent to the RUF. Mr. Hyman was an employee of the Liberian government at the time.

Dr. Ellis also referred to an interview that he used in the preparation of his report that involved Charles Taylor. When asked about the peace process, Charles Taylor had answered: "Only belligerents can make peace. The RUF committed terrible atrocities. People will have to answer for that. The same people who caused that will have to be part of the solution."

Based on information in UN reports, media reports, and interviews with Liberians close to the government, Dr. Ellis learned that Sam Bockarie was the most important RUF commander and that he had a direct relationship with Charles Taylor. Dr. Ellis testified that the presence of Sam Bockarie in Liberia benefited Charles Taylor, as Sam Bockarie was more closely integrated into the command structure under Charles Taylor.

Dr. Ellis explained that the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) organized the ECOWAS Military Observer Group (ECOMOG). The procedure for establishing ECOMOG was abusive and Nigeria was the main force in its creation. ECOMOG was established in August 1990, after the war in Liberia started. It was divisive in West Africa because governments were aware that the NPFL contained members of different nationalities. Nigerian President, Babangida was close with Liberian President Samuel Doe and Nigeria wanted to intervene and felt it best to do so through a multilateral force, ECOMOG. The ECOMOG mandate was to enforce a cease-fire in Liberia, but there was no cease-fire. ECOMOG was overwhelmingly Nigerian. Charles Taylor made clear he was hostile to ECOMOG and Nigeria, which was close to his enemy, Samuel Doe. There were reports that the Nigerian government supplied Samuel Doe with weapons. Charles Taylor had good grounds to feel the Nigerian government opposed him.

Charles Taylor made it clear that he opposed ECOMOG, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. For example, Charles Taylor made such statements in a BBC radio broadcast on November 4, 1990, where he told Sierra Leoneans they would "taste the bitterness of war".

Dr. Ellis testified that the relationship between Charles Taylor and ECOMOG changed over time. At the beginning, there was extreme hostility and heavy fighting in 1990. The countries that composed ECOMOG were often supporting the armed militias in Liberia and Sierra Leone. In 1998 ECOMOG forces, overwhelmingly Nigerian, forcibly removed the junta from power in February 1998. The ECOMOG troops took control in Freetown and the main centers of Sierra Leone. RUF and AFRC were in fairly remote areas, including the border to Liberia. At this stage, Taylor controlled all of Liberia. As there is no morning session tomorrow, Court will resume at 2:30 p.m.

Posted in Daily analysis, Uncategorized | Tagged: ECOMOG, ECOWAS, Koker, LURD, RUF, Stephen Ellis | No Comments »

5:00

Posted by Webmaster on January 16, 2008

Court is back in session following the lunch break.

Prosecutor Mohamed Bangura continues to question expert witness for the prosecution, Stephen Ellis:

Pros: You were giving the court an idea of your experience during one of your visits to Sierra Leone.

Wit: This was May-June 1998. I met the ECOMOG commander, government ministers, Hinga Norman - head of the Civil Defense Force, some former RUF fighters - two or three young boys and girls, and some victims of amputations.

Pros: How widely have you traveled in SL?

Wit: I've traveled widely and to most of the main towns. I don't have much experience in the rural areas.

Pros: You mentioned that from 1986-1991, you were editor of Africa Confidential. What were your responsibilities?

Wit: I commissioned, and sometimes myself investigated and wrote, articles for this bi-weekly publication. It's a specialized newsletter widely read by diplomats and businessmen concerned with Africa. My job was also to make sure that we maintained the interest of our readers and made a profit. We only had three staff.

Pros: You mentioned earlier that you testified in the Gus Kouwenhoven case. What sort of expert evidence did you give?

Wit: It was fairly minor. I was asked what I knew about Mr. Kouwenhoven's activities in Libeira during the 1990s, the basis for which I knew that, had I ever visited his facilities in Liberia.

Pros: This report for the Special Court covers 1997-2000 and how Liberia affected Sierra Leone?

Wit: Yes, this covers events after those covered in the book that I wrote.

Pros: What is the scope of your research for the report?

Wit: I was asked to concentrate on the period 1997-2000, but the report also has information into 2003. I was asked about events in Liberia and how they affected Sierra Leone.

Pros: Turning to the contents of the report (references a particular page): You have made a finding here that between 1987-1989, Taylor became acquainted with Sankoh at a Libyan military camp. Taylor organized the NPFL, including not only Liberians, but also Gambians and Ghanaians who saw themselves as pan-Africans. Taylor's association with the conflict in Sierra Leone can be traced to his acquaintance with SL revolutionaries in Libya. Did these revolutionaries continue to see themselves as Pan-African revolutionaries?

Wit: I think so, yes.

Pros: Was there a transition over time? Was it just that bond that tied them?

Wit: Some Africans have held the idea since the 1940s or 1950s that a Pan-Africanist armed movement could free the continent from colonialism and neo-colonialism. That idea is still held today. That was very much the idea in these Libyan camps. Various African countries would be liberated from colonial or neo-colonial governments. War started in Liberia in Dec 1989. Some had a sympathetic view at the time

as this being the start of a revolution. Over time, many who held that sympathy changed their views as information became known about RUF atrocities. Those inclined to sympathize with the movements in Liberia and Sierra Leone became disenchanted.

Pros: (Referring to another page) You say Taylor's influence grew across W. Africa throughout the 1990s. How much influence did he have through armed forces outside Liberia?

Wit: The NPFL was organized outside Liberia and attacked Liberia at Christmastime, 1989. Within a few days, it became known that a war had begun. It was known to various people in W. Africa that the group had support from Libya, Burkina Faso, certain circles in Ivory Coast. This caused some governments in the region to become nervous. They thought this might be some sort of attempt at pan-Africanist militancy. The fact of external support became apparent.

Pros: You mention that Foday Sankoh was a popular person in an NPFL camp in Liberia?

Wit: No. He wasn't popular there. Sankoh was spending a lot of time in Liberia. That's the background to the start of the war in Sierra Leone in 1991.

Pros: That's the stage from which Sankoh launched his war into Sierra Leone?

Wit: A number of W. African governments were aware that the invading party included people of various nationality - some had been trained in Libya or Burkina Faso. Gambians who had been involved in a coup attempt were involved. They feared if a revolutionary government took hold in Liberia, conflict would spread. In a way, that's what happened.

Pros: Sankoh and the RUF were noted for their atrocities, correct?

Wit: Yes, but let's add nuance. I've tried to find out when the amputations began. There are accounts from as early as 1991-1992. The tactic wasn't widespread until later. It wasn't altogether whether amputations were mostly the work of the RUF or the AFRC. There's no doubt the RUF did amputations. Others did this also, especially the AFRC. Other groups also committed atrocities. It's not clear to me who precisely encouraged or organized this tactic.

Pros: You said earlier you used the TRC report as a source but that you don't agree with all of the findings.

Wit: I wouldn't say I disagree with the TRC findings. At certain points they might disagree with other analyses.

Pros: (Referencing witness's report) You wrote: the TRC suggests the NPFL had a foundational effect for atrocities by the RUF in Sierra Leone (lists some types of atrocities). You indicated some difference with the TRC in the case of amputations. What about child soldiers?

Wit: I don't disagree with the TRC. The TRC doesn't say clearly where the tactic of amputations came. It's true that the RUF gained a reputation for amputations. I think the AFRC committed many of them. The aspect of the TRC report revealed the extent of Liberian involvement in the first phase of the war, from 1991-1994. I had been aware the war was launched from Liberia and that NPFL fighters had taken part. The extent was a considerable surprise to me. I think the TRC said 3,000 NPFL fighters were involved.

Pros: The practice of recruiting child soldiers was very common in the NPFL and RUF. What link did you find between the two?

Wit: The extent of recruitment is difficult to determine accurately. People, including children, became associated with the combatant groups in various capacities. In Nimba County at the beginning of the war in Liberia, there were a lot of orphans who to some extent attached themselves to the NPFL. Things developed from there. The number of children armed and on the front lines was probably lower in Liberia than Sierra Leone. Many were cooks, scouts, or had other jobs. In the RUF, there was a very high proportion of children fighting.

Pros: What were your findings about rape regarding the NPFL and RUF?

Wit: It's hard to get good information on this. There were a lot of rapes in both places. I'm not able to say much about the comparative extent of rape in the two cases, or say that the RUF learned from other conflicts.

Pros: You discuss abductions with the NPFL and later with the RUF.

Wit: In both wars it became clear that people might join an armed faction not exactly out of free will. If a group came to attack an area, some might join out of sympathy, others to protect the area, or others because they were forced. Many were asked to serve as porters for these movements. It was difficult work with large, heavy loads. Some preferred to fight. Abduction is this kind of coercion. Hostage-taking is different. In Liberia, when it became clear that Nigeria was siding with Doe, the NPFL took hostages in order to pressure governments. In many cases the hostages were maltreated or killed.

Pros: In 2000 there was an abduction of UNAMSIL peacekeepers by the RUF?

Wit: Yes. Throughout the RUF's existence had abducted young people throughout the conflict. In 2000 it took UN peacekeepers hostage.

Pros: You stated in your report that diamonds played a role in fuelling the conflict. To what extent?

Wit: Control and marketing of diamonds came to be a very important factor in the SL war. I disagree with an analysis that the SL war was about diamonds from beginning to end. It's clear that at the beginning of the war it was not primarily about diamonds. The nature of the war changed. By the end of the 1990s, the control of diamonds was a key factor, because some of the combatants were able to sell diamonds to finance the continuation of the war.

Pros: You mean arms were purchased with diamond proceeds?

Wit: Yes.

Pros: How would you characterize this phenomenon?

Wit: All wars have to be financed. In the case of SL, at a certain point diamonds became the main means of financing the RUF. Some groups, including ECOMOG, would try to control the flow of diamonds in order to profit themselves. There was a risk that the war might continue indefinitely. It wasn't always that way.

Pros: By what means were the SL diamonds traded?

Wit: There's a long history of diamonds being smuggled out of SL, at least back to the 1950s. This went on during the 1990s, into the 2000s. The UN Panel of Experts provided very interesting information on this. In 1997 there was a military coup that led to installation of a military junta. Therefore the UN imposed sanctions on that government. There were so many reports that the sanctions were being broken through the border with Liberia. That's when the panel was established.

Pros: You rely on that report for some of your findings?

Wit: That report is very authoritative because of the exceptional degree of access the researchers had, and the authority of the UN. Some of its findings were confirmed by other sources, which I've cited in my report.

Prosecution provides a copy of the Panel of Experts report to the witness.

Pros: Is this the document you're referring to?

Wit: Yes.

Pros: You discuss in your report the involvement of foreign persons involved with the accused. I want to ask about some of them. Col Fred Rindel, Leonid Minin, Colonel Blau, Carl Albert? What role did Fred Rindel play?

Wit: Rindel is a former colonel in the South African defense force under the apartheid government. He had extensive experience with guerilla warfare. According to a UN report, he received a contract to fight in Liberia. Rindel gave one of the UN panels a full account of his contract, which dated from late 1998. There were also some press reports of this. I saw some correspondence in the archives of the Executive Mansion in Liberia, and I received confirmation from a South African general.

Pros: What was his association with the accused?

Wit: Rindel acknowledges signed a contract with Taylor's government.

Pros; What role did Leonid Minin play?

Wit: Leonid Minin is a Ukrainian businessman. He has a number of passports of different nationalities. He's an arms trafficker with an interest in diamonds. He's also involved in narcotics. He was arrested in Italy but the trial was never completed, but there was a lot of information about him in the media. The UN panel documented that he transported weapons to Taylor's government.

Pros: Colonel ___ Blau (ph)? [First name unclear]

Wit: Another South African mercenary. He had a contract to work in Liberia with Rindel. Carl Alberts, the same.

Pros: You make reference to another UN Panel of Experts report, this one on Liberia.

Wit: Yes.

Pros: You cite this report in support of your finding that Taylor funneled weapons to the RUF in exchange for diamonds.

Wit: Yes.

Pros: In your report, you find that Taylor had a close personal interest in the RUF and that he supervised the diamond trade with them; that he had military relationships and imported weapons for the RUF. You've cited numerous sources. How authoritative is this conclusion.

Wit: It's an overwhelming conclusion. One source is book by Lester S. Hyman, a lawyer and an influential member of the Democratic Party in the United States. He was engaged by the Liberian government. Hyman writes that despite Taylor's suggestions to the contrary, Taylor traded diamonds from the RUF for weapons sent to the RUF. He was an employee of the Liberian government at the time.

Pros: In your report you discuss the Freetown invasion in January 1999 and knowledge of the accused about the scale of the atrocities at the time.

Defense objects: this paragraph addresses an issue to be resolved by the court, not the expert. Prosecution: witness is presenting material based on his research. At the end of the day, the bench will have to determine the weight of this evidence. He is not a witness of fact, but an expert witness who has provided a well-sourced report for the court to consider.

Judges Sebutinde, Doherty and Lussick are conferring.

Judge Sebutinde: It is our unanimous view that your witness is presented as an expert witness. His testimony should not go to the guilt or innocence of the accused. If this report is admitted into evidence, we will be looking for opinions in it that do not go to the ultimate issue. The objection is sustained.

Pros: Regarding the January 1999 events in Freetown, there is material you have sourced in your report that suggests knowledge by the accused?

Wit: Yes. The main reason I've referred to the events of Jan 1999 is because this was an attack by RUF and AFRC. It resulted in a great number of deaths and atrocities. It had attention throughout the world. Those who have investigated the organization of that attack come to some differing conclusions. The SL TRC report suggested the attack might not be that organized. That surprised me in light of other evidence.

Pros: In addition to the TRC report, you've referred to press interviews with the accused. (Refers the court and the witness to two documents.) Those documents are news articles from the newspaper LeMonde.

Wit: One is an interview with the accused. The other is more of an analysis by two journalists.

Pros: Referring to the interview, the accused responded to a journalist's question: Taylor was asked: Should the RUF be part of the peace process. Charles Taylor answered: "Only belligerents can make peace. The RUF committed terrible atrocities. People will have to answer for that. The same people who caused that will have to be part of the solution." Was this a source you cited in coming to the view that he had knowledge about what happened in Freetown in January 1999?

Wit: Taylor was acknowledging the terrible atrocities taking place in Sierra Leone.

Pros: In your report, you mention that the RUF became split into two rival factions. When this happened, Taylor's most important ally was increasingly Sam Bockarie who relocated to Liberia in 1999. Are there any indications of the level of trust between the accused and Sam Bockarie.

Wit: It became clear from UN reports, media reports, some interviews with Liberians close to the government at the time, that Bockarie was the most important RUF commander and had a direct relationship with Taylor. It's plain from many sources, including the TRC, that the war in SL changed in nature over time. The RUF changed over time, too. After Foday Sankoh's arrest in Nigeria in 1997 and later transferred to Sierra Leone - he was not released until 1999- during his absence, there were factions and rivalries in the RUF. It was in this time that Bockarie's faction became close to the government in Liberia.

Pros: The accused benefitted from the presence of Bockarie in Liberia?

Wit: Yes. Bockarie was more closely integrated into the command structures under the direct control of Taylor. That was facilitated with the marketing of diamonds.

Pros: What is ECOMOG?

Wit: The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) organized the ECOWAS Military Observer Group (ECOMOG). Many senior ECOWAS officials say the procedure for establishing ECOMOG was abusive. Nigeria was the main force in its creation.

Pros: When was ECOMOG established?

Wit: In August 1990. The war in Liberia started in December 1989. It was proving divisive in West Africa as a whole because governments were aware that the NPFL contained members of different nationalities, and because Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire were backing it. Nigerian President Babangida was very close with Liberian President Doe. Nigeria wanted to intervene directly and felt it best to do so through a multilateral force, ECOMOG. A senior American official told me that expectation had been that the US would intervene to end the Liberian war. When the US government did not intervene, Nigeria took the initiative.

Pros: What was the ECOMOG mandate?

Wit: To enforce a cease-fire in Liberia, but there was no cease-fire. ECOMOG was overwhelmingly Nigerian. There were also Ghanaians, Sierra Leoneans, and others. It assembled in Freetown and went to Monrovia by sea.

Pros: What kind of reception did it have from the NPFL?

Wit: Taylor made clear he was hostile to ECOMOG and Nigeria, which was close to Doe. There were reports that the Nigerian government had been supplying Doe with weapons. Taylor had good grounds to feel the Nigerian government opposed him.

Pros; The accused felt hostile to Sierra Leone at the time?

Wit: Yes. Before the war, Taylor went to Sierra Leone in order to launch the war in Liberia from Sierra Leonean territory. That was refused. Some have suggested Taylor may have borne a personal grudge against Sierra Leone because of this. The ECOMOG force he opposed was based initially in Freetown, and the Nigerian air force used airfields in Sierra Leone.

Pros: Did that spark a reaction from the accused?

Wit: Yes. He made clear, including in radion broadcasts he was very opposed to ECOMOG, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. He expressed this vociferously. When ECOMOG landed in Liberia it was opposed militarily by the NPFL.

Pros: Your report cites comments Taylor made to the BBC.

Wit: Correct. On November 4, 1990, Taylor told Sierra Leoneans they would “taste the bitterness of war”. Sierra Leoneans recall that to this date. It’s in the TRC report too. Nigerians were also being abused by the NPFL. Large numbers of hostages were taken, some of whom have written memoirs. Quite a few were killed.

Pros: How would you characterize the relationship between the accused and ECOMOG?

Wit: The relationship changed over time. That was partly a reflection of the military and political situation, the ECOMOG commanders, and who was in power in Nigeria. At the beginning, there was extreme hostility and heavy fighting in 1990. Relations became much better during a period of cease-fire. There was a flare up during the NPFL “Operation Octopus” to conquer Monrovia militarily. ECOMOG from an early stage was in fact sponsoring various militias in Liberia and in Sierra Leone. The situation became extremely complex. It meant the countries that composed ECOMOG were often supporting various of the armed militias in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Pros: How long was ECOMOG in Liberia?

Wit: Until 1998.

Pros: There was a coup in Sierra Leone in May 1997?

Wit: Yes.

Pros: ECOMOG intervened?

Wit: Yes. There was confusion between ECOMOG and the Nigerian government. ECOWAS never officially decided to deploy its troops in Sierra Leone for internal purposes. They were deployed there to support their campaign in Liberia. Nigerian troops were in SL in a bilateral capacity. When the coup happened, the ECOWAS opposed the coup and didn’t recognize it. A previous executive secretary of ECOWAS told me that really this was an ECOMOG deployment in Sierra Leone, and not really an action by ECOWAS.

Pros: In 1998 the junta was removed from power?

Wit: ECOMOG forces, overwhelmingly Nigerian, forcibly removed the junta from power in February 1998.

Pros: Many junta officials fled Freetown?

Wit: Yes. Some fled inland. Some tried to escape by air to abroad.

Pros: Did some try to land in Liberia?

Wit: Yes. Some AFRC officials tried to land at an airport in Monrovia. They were detained by ECOMOG.

Pros: Did that spark a reaction from the accused?

Wit: Yes. By Feb 1998 Taylor was already president of Liberia. He claimed sovereignty over the country. It's not clear what the rights and obligations of ECOMOG in Liberia were. AFRC officials escaped Nigerian forces in Sierra Leone and were detained by Nigerians in Liberia.

Pros: After removal of the SL junta, there was further fighting?

Wit: Yes. The junta was removed in Feb 1998. I visited SL in May-June 1998. The main towns were under the control of ECOMOG or the restored democratically elected government of SL. There was still violence in the north. The ECOMOG commander dismissed this violence as minor. I was meeting people coming into Freetown every day whose hands had been amputated. It was clear that the RUF and AFRC were still able to perpetrate this kind of violence. I heard they were conducting Operation No Living Thing. To me, this looked like an effort to show that they were still in existence and still had the capacity to inflict damage. I still think that's why the amputations accelerated greatly. Gen Kolbe and the SL government were telling me the problem had been solved. Clearly it hadn't been solved.

Pros: Earlier we discussed diamonds sold for weapons to fuel the war.

Wit: Yes.

Pros: At about what time was the peak period for this?

Wit: There was a diamond trade of sorts in existence from the beginning of the war. I've seen reports of RUF smuggling diamonds from as early as 1991. The TRC identifies 3 key phases: 1991-1994, 1994-1997, and the period after 1997. It's clear that the diamond trade between SL and Liberia was really able to expand in the period after 1997.

Pros: At this time the RUF had increased capacity to attack ECOMOG and government forces?

Wit: In 1998 ECOMOG troops took control in Freetown and the main centers of Sierra Leone. RUF and AFRC were in fairly remote areas, including the border to Liberia. At this stage, Taylor had control of all of the territory of Liberia, of which he was now president.

Pros: You refer to an accusation made by an ECOMOG commander in Sierra Leone, who accused Taylor supplying arms to the RUF in Sierra Leone using Ukrainian aircraft and crews?

Wit: Yes.

Pros: And the RUF and AFRC had increased capacity to attack?

Wit: Yes. The SL Army had effectively ceased to exist. ECOMOG and the Civil Defense Force...

Presiding Judge Julia Sebutinde interrupts to say that the two-hour tapes used by the court to record the proceedings is running out. Court will adjourn until tomorrow. There is no morning session tomorrow, as the International Criminal Court will be using the courtroom for an unrelated event. To compensate for the lost time, the Special Court will sit in the afternoons this Friday and next - time that is usually reserved for dealing with administrative matters. Tomorrow, the trial resumes at 2:30. With the half-hour delay to the media center here in The Hague, our coverage will continue at 3:00 (2:00 in Sierra Leone and Liberia).

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2:00 Cross-examination of Dennis Koker concludes; Stephen Ellis, an expert witness for the prosecution, takes the stand

Posted by Webmaster on January 16, 2008

The court session has resumed.

Defense counsel Morris Anyah continues his cross-examination of prosecution witness Dennis Koker.

[Note: technical problems led to a loss of detail in the summary of the first part of this session.]

Through a series of questions, the witness has agreed that weapons came to Sierra Leone from Ukraine (during the AFRC government), and that there were also weapons made in China and Russia.

Defense asked about the witness's testimony yesterday that the men who brought weapons were wearing yellow polo t-shirts with "NPFL Navy Ranger" written on them, when in previous statements and testimony the witness said the men wore uniforms. The witness says some of the men wore the t-shirts under their military jackets, and that the t-shirt was a kind of uniform.

Defense asks a number of questions about how the witness knew these guns and ammunition were Liberian. Defense points to previous statements and testimony that offered various reasons given by the witness. The witness agrees with all of those previous accounts. Defense puts it to the witness that he is lying when he said Taylor sent the guns. The witness denies it, and says he saw the guns.

Defense asks the witness about currency used in the border region, and the witness says that civilians and soldiers used Liberian currency. Defense asks whether people used barter. The witness says there was barter and use of the Liberian dollar. Defense asks whether civilians who worked on the farms of RUF commanders were fed and received medical treatment. The witness says they were fed, but not enough, and agrees when asked about one of his previous statements that they received first-aid treatment (after first saying they received no treatment).

Def: Is it true that sometimes you are called "Green Snake"?

Wit: No.

Def: Do you deny being known by that name.

Wit: That is not my nickname.

Def: If I told you that witnesses could be brought who would confirm that your nickname is "Green Snake", would I be mistaken.

Wit: If you can bring them, then I am not telling the truth.

Def: Is there a difference between a nickname and a fighting name?

Wit: My warrior name is "Warrior". My traditional name is Kugbe. There is a difference between a nickname and a war name.

Def: Have you ever heard the name LURD?

Wit: I used to hear that name.

Def: In what context did you hear it?

Wit: I used to hear it when I was in Beudu.

Def: In what context. Did you understand it to be a military group?

Wit: I did not have an idea.

Def: What did you understand LURD to mean when you heard others refer to it?

Wit: When we were there, I did not care about Liberia. I did not investigate. I only wanted to know what was happening in Sierra Leone. I cared about Freetown.

Def: What did you understand LURD to mean?

Wit: I cannot tell you what I don't understand. If somebody says LURD in English, it sounds like Lord in the Bible. It was not my concern.

Def: You've told us you were in Beudu and that you're a military man. If I told you that from 1999-2000 there was a military organization called LURD, would I be mistaken?

Wit: I don't know about that.

Def: Do you know Sekou Detame Conneh?

Wit: I've never heard the name until you said it.

Def: Do you know Mohammed Jumandy?

Wit: No.

Def: I say that you, Dennis Koker, were a member of LURD, true or false?

Wit: That is not correct.

Def: I put it to you that your nickname in LURD was Green Snake, true or false?

Wit: That is not correct.

Def: You were a mercenary for LURD, true or false.

Wit: That is not true.

Def: If any witnesses come before this court in the future and testify that you were in LURD, they would be lying?

Wit: It would be a made up story. They would be lying.

Def: I want to go back to when you first had interactions with the Special Court beginning in 2004 and payments you received. I will be referring to disbursement records from the Office of the Prosecutor (OTP) to this witness. (References document). You were paid 10,000 Leones in 2004.

Wit: Yes, at the end of the interview. They gave me a receipt to sign.

Def: And on July 1, 2005, you were paid the amount 10,000 Leones.

Wit: Yes.

Def: And here it indicates that you also received 35,000 Leones. True?

Wit: Yes.

Def: And here it shows on March 2, 2007 you received 15,000 Leones?

Wit: Yes.

Def: On April 26, 2007 you received 55,000 Leones, correct?

Wit: Yes.

Def: On June 13, 2007, you received 25,000 Leones.

Wit: Yes, in Freetown.

Def: And on July 17, 2007 you received 5,000 Leones.

Wit: Yes, at Wilberforce Barracks.

Def: And lastly, in July 2007 you also received 20,000 Leones.

Wit: Yes.

Def: Six of these eight entries date from Feb-July 2007?

Wit: All the amounts I see here are correct.

Def: In all of 2007 you never testified in proceedings before the Special Court?

Wit: I did not testify in 2007.

Def: And in 2006 you did not testify before the Special Court?

Wit: Correct.

Def: (References another document) These are records from the Witness and Victims unit of the court showing payments in addition to those from the prosecution. They gave you money for medical issues?

Wit: Yes.

Def: It was 91,000 Leones?

Wit: Yes, that's right.

Def: You were given money for transportation?

Wit: Yes.

Def: It was 435,000 Leones?

Wit: Yes, this is correct.

Def: Other expenses of 877,000 Leones. Is that also correct?

Wit: I don't know what other expenses are. I don't understand when I was given that.

Def: These are the total amounts you've been paid by the Witnesses and Victims section since April 1, 2005. Did you receive that total sum?

Wit: I did not receive this sort of amount in 2005. In bulk, no.

Def: If you add the amounts you received in 2005, 2006 and 2007, would it add up to 877,000 Leones?

Wit: I want to know if you're asking me for all the money I received. I did not receive it on one occasion. Are you asking me for the grand total.

Judge Sebutinde: To be fair to the witness, he has already explained he does not know what you mean my other expenses. And it's not fair to ask him to add unless you're willing to let him calculate it.

Def: If I told you you had received a total of over 2 million Leones from the Special Court, would that be correct?

Wit: I don't believe it would be correct. I'm confused about this document. If you can check my receipts and give me the total, maybe I'd know. I don't know the occasion where I received this 800,000.

Def: Have you received any kind of psychiatric treatment in the last ten years?

Wit: They did not treat me for that. They gave me treatment in 2007 because my throat was swollen. Otherwise I have never been sick. I had a boil on my throat and the Special Court treated me. Once I was bitten by a dog and they gave me an injection.

Def: From the time you left military training in Kailahun District until today, have you ever received medical treatment for mental health issues?

Wit: No, I have never been treated for a psychiatric treatment.

Def: Have you ever been treated in Block 34 of the military hospital in Freetown.

Wit: I've never been admitted there. I went there for treatment because my ears were aching.

Def: Do you know what I mean by psychiatric conditions?

Wit: Yes. As if I don't have my senses with me.

Def: Do you know a Dr. Nahim?

Wit: I don't know him.

Def: You deny knowing Dr. Nahim, a psychiatrist?

Wit: I only know a Nahim at the Special Court. I don't know any other Nahim.

Def: Have you ever been court-marshalled?

Wit: No.

Def: Was there a time in Beudu when you were court-martialled at the orders of P.M. Kaisamba.

Wit: No.

Def: I put to you that while you were in Beudu you were court-marshalled for raping a woman prisoner. Do you deny it.

Wit: I deny it. I had nothing to do with women during the war.

Def: Because you were found guilty of that offence, you received 150 lashes. Do you deny that?

Wit: Yes.

Defense counsel is now conferring with Charles Taylor.

Def: At any time during your service in Beudu, were you ever administered lashes at the order of any commander?

Wit: Yes.

Def: Tell us.

Wit: Tom Sandie spoke, and I spoke too. They beat me and sent me to an ambush at the Guinea border. I even cried. Later they recalled me to write on the MP vehicle. They brought me back and apologized. Another time, Eldred Collins had me lashed.

Def: So if someone came to this court and said there was a third time, they'd be lying?

Wit: There was a third time in Kailahun. Eldred Collins lashed me. There were only three times. I had a wife, but she was given to me by the UN.

Def: The UN gave you a wife?

Wit: Yes, they asked me to marry.

Defense has no further questions.

Prosecutor Christopher Santora will now have an opportunity to re-examine the witness.

Pros: Yesterday when defense counsel asked about why you did not mention the towns of Tombu and Fogbu in the first statement. Is Tombu between Freetown and Masiaka?

Wit: Yes.

Pros: Is Fogbu between Freetown and Masiaka?

Wit: Yes.

Pros: You were asked about payments from the OTP that you received in 2007. He asked if you testified in 2007. Did you ever give statements to the OTP in 2007?

Wit: I did not give a statement. They just read my statement back to me. I did prepping.

Pros: You met with someone from the OTP in 2007?

Wit: Yes.

Pros: Do you remember how many times?

Wit: Three days I came there, on two occasions.

Pros: Yesterday defense counsel asked about your responsibilities in the MP office in Beudu. You agreed you had significant responsibilities; that you issued passes to civilians and to the warring soldiers; that you were responsible for prisoners of war; that you had to count people brought for "manpower". When you described these responsibilities, were you referring to yourself or to the MP office?

Wit: To the MP office.

Pros: Defense counsel asked about Martin George. Do you know who he is?

Wit: Yes. He was a Colonel, then an RUF commander for the entire Kailahun.

Pros: Yesterday during cross-examination you said Liberian English was used frequently at the border. Who spoke Liberian English?

Wit: The Liberians and even some of our brothers. They had been changed. Even Martin George spoke Liberian.

Pros: You were asked about how you knew arms came from Liberia. You said it was based on language, because of the dress on some of the men, the writing NPFL on yellow shirts, from talking to Liberians who came, because you saw the direction the vehicles came, from a conversation with Tom Sandie, and from your intelligence. Are these all the reasons you know that these arms came from Liberia?

Wit: Yes.

Prosecution has no further questions for the witness.

Judge Sebutinde thanks and excuses the witness.

Wit: I also want to thank you, for you to help us in West Africa to end terrorism. I will pray for you.

Prosecutor Mohamed Bangura calls the next witness, Stephen Ellis, who will be an expert witness.

Stephen Ellis has taken the witness stand and been sworn in on the Bible. He will testify in English.

Through a series of questions from Prosecutor Bangura, the witness states the following:

My name is Stephen Ellis. I have a doctorate of philosophy (history) from St. Antony's College, Oxford University. I'm 54 years old. I'm a senior researcher at the Africa Studies Center, University of Leiden. I have an undergraduate degree in modern history from Oxford. I wanted to do a PhD in African history, because I'd lived in Cameroon. I studied the history of Madagascar. My dissertation was accepted in 1981. Since then I've had a number of jobs researching African history and current affairs. I've acquired skills from those jobs. As a senior researcher at Leiden University, on my own or with others, I develop and implement research projects. I teach an MA course and give general, occasional lectures. I'm often asked to do consultancies within the field of current affairs in Africa. Africa is my primary research interest. Beyond Africa, I've given lectures for the Dutch foreign ministry on general problems of failed states, I've done work on religious history, including European history. After I got my undergraduate degree in 1975, I worked for the British Ministry of Agriculture for a year. I went back to do my doctorate in African history. While doing that, I lectured for a year at the U. of Madagascar. In 1982 I worked in the International Secretariate of Amnesty International, on West Africa - mostly the francophone countries. From 1986-1991 I was an editor for Africa Confidential. From 1991 I've been at the U. of Leiden. In 2003-2004 I took a leave of absence and worked for the International Crisis Group as Director of the Africa Program. At U. Leiden I was initially director of the Africa Studies Center. But it was too administrative, so I became senior researcher.

At Amnesty International from 1982-1986, I was formally responsible for working on 10 or 11 countries. The ones I worked on intensively included Ghana, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Madagascar, Nigeria. I didn't work on Liberia or The Gambia.

For some years I was a member of the Africa Studies Association of the United States, and I've been a member of that association in The Netherlands and UK. I've given testimony before in a case in The Netherlands last year, as an expert witness. It was the case of Mr. Gus Kouwenhoven.

English is my mother tongue. I speak and write fluently in French. I speak fluent Dutch. I can read but not speak the Malagasy language. I speak a little Italian.

My publications on Africa include: my PhD thesis on Madagascar was published by Oxford University Press. Since then I've written, co-written, edited or co-edited 8 books on Africa. I'm author of numerous other articles on Africa. They're written in English, French and Dutch.

I attend many conferences and seminars, most on African affairs. In 1997-1998 I worked for a while as a researcher for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa.

Since 1994 I've had a particular interest in Liberia, and to some extent, Sierra Leone. Since I first became interested in Liberia, I've visited Sierra Leone a number of times. I became interested in Liberia because the Secretary General of Amnesty International asked me to be part of a delegation to go to Liberia, where I'd never visited before. I went with one other person to Liberia, which of course was at war. I received very interesting information, which I thought allowed me to understand the situation there better. When I

went back to Leiden, I resolved to do further research on Liberia. I have since gone back to Liberia on a number of occasions, and also later when I was working for the International Crisis Group. In 1999, I published a book called “The Mask of Anarchy” about the Liberian civil war of the 1990s. A second edition of the book came out in 2006. I’ve also written a number of academic articles on Liberia. The Mask of Anarchy aimed to investigate the historical background to phenomena that became observable during the war of the 1990s: particularly the atrocities that many foreign journalists misunderstood. In order to do that, I also had to establish some of the key events. The first part of the book is a straightforward account of the war. The real purpose was the second part, which investigated the historical antecedents of the war. The book has been widely discussed. In 2000 the Africa Studies Association of the U.S. short-listed it for a prize.

I’ve done some original research on Sierra Leone and published a number of academic articles beginning in 1998. I observe events in Sierra Leone. I first visited in 1984, again in 1998, and a number of times since then. I’ve written on Sierra Leone and the topic of Sierra Leone together with Liberia.

I’ve written a report for the Special Court: “Charles Taylor and the War in Sierra Leone”. I wrote it in 2006.

(Copies of the report and being distributed in court. Prosecutor Bangura notes that a corrigendum was filed with the report.)

Pros: What was the mandate for this report?

Wit: Special Court officers contacted me and made a broad request to outline the political career of Charles Taylor and examine his relationship to events in Sierra Leone from 1997 to 2000. It was a broad brief.

Pros: Under what terms did you write this?

Wit: I was prepared to do this without payment because I’m employed by an institution funded by the Dutch government. It’s part of that institution’s mandate that we’re required to perform services in the public interest. I felt this shouldn’t be paid employment.

Pros: What were your sources for this report?

Wit: I approached it as a historian. All sources could be relevant, but I had to distinguish between primary and secondary sources. Primary documents are those created by a person or institution in the course of their normal work or existence and have a bearing on the matter in question. An archive of documents is a good source of primary documents. Secondary documents are compiled by people with a distance from events, and are more of a commentary on events. I have worked in the Liberian national archives on several occasions before being asked to compile this report. I used some of that. The Liberian archives are in a poor state. I couldn’t necessarily find exactly what I wanted. Interviews that participants gave with newspapers, UN documents, and memoirs are primary documents. A number of Liberians and non-Liberians involved in these events have written memoirs. Secondary sources include the great body of commentary and writing by people considering these events from afar.

Pros: How did you select material?

Wit: The report covers aspects of Liberia and Sierra Leone, so there is a lot of literature, with which I’m quite conversant. I tried to use original sources whenever possible.

Pros: How would you assess the weight these various sources?

Wit: I attach a lot of importance to UN reports, particularly to those of a Panel of Experts created by the Security Council to investigate violations of sanctions. The researchers had exceptional access and the authority of the UN. Press interviews with Charles Taylor and various other first-hand accounts are particularly authoritative.

Pros: Did you ever meet with Charles Taylor?

Wit: I've never met the accused. I tried to meet him in 1994 but it was difficult because I was in Monrovia and Buchanan, which were controlled by ECOMOG. I tried to get permission from Taylor's associates - notably John T. Richardson - to visit Taylor in Gbarnga. Taylor was president of a quasi-government called Greater Liberia.

Pros: Talk about your sources on Sierra Leone.

Wit: I've read many books, news articles and reports. I gave a lot of weight to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report. The TRC had access to document and was able to interview numerous people. It attempted to be an objective source. I used documents and memoirs of a former cabinet minister.

Pros: When you visited Sierra Leone, did you have meetings about the situation there?

Wit: Yes. I went to Sierra Leone for Amnesty International in May-June 1998. It was when the AFRC Junta had been displaced by ECOMOG. I met a number of military and political participants. I met Gen Maxwell Kolbe, the ECOMOG commander at the time. He was also Chief of Staff of the Sierra Leonean armed forces at the time.

Court has adjourned for the lunch break until 2:30. With the half-hour delay, our coverage will resume at 3:00 (2:00 in Sierra Leone and Liberia).

Posted in Uncategorized | No Comments »

National Chronicle
Wednesday, 16 January 2008

“BUTT NAKED” ADMITS KILLING NEARLY 20,000 PEOPLE

Former ULIMO-J fighter, who was at the top of his exploits in the April 6, 1996 fracas, ex-General “Butt naked”, who appeared before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission public hearing on Tuesday, admitted that he killed nearly 20,000 Liberians— young, middle-age and the old— in a period of 14 years; James

Holding Gishyue reports.

Joshua Milton Blayee (now converted Christian and a devoted evangelist of Jesus Christ), whom appeared in a white suit, said that majority of his killings were done for ritualistic purposes to support his priesthood of a

southeastern cult called, Yakpeweh, which means “bring us more power”, and is dominated by people of the Krahn ethnic group. Its shrine is in the Putu Mountain, and is aimed at controlling Liberia.

The 37-year-old ex-war perpetrator told the commission

he was not involved or interested in the political or revolutionary cause of the war; rather, the spiritual perspective that had to do with appeasing their idol, to which the late President Samuel Kanyon Doe paid a lot of unlimited devotion.

According to the war perpe-

trator-turned-prelate, as a little boy of 11, in 1982, he took over as chief priest of the secret cult, the youngest in its history, with a 57-year-old man the second youngest.

He flashbacked that he was born through compulsory adultery from both fa-

ther and mother, who were separately married, to give him that singular birth, so relevant for the post of chief priest.

He explained further that during the regime of the late President Doe, he visited the mansion at will because

Cont'd on Page 6

“BUTT NAKED”

the President understood his role—holding his fate in his hand, mediating between the late Doe and the idol.

He revealed that in 1982 and 1983 all ministers in the PRC administration were either directly or indirectly initiated into the secret cult.

He continued that there is a secret pot in the executive mansion that could only be removed by supernatural means, adding he and the TRC could remove it if they believe in Jesus Christ.

He confirmed that some of those whom the late President Doe killed on charges of coup plot were actually killed out of political motivation, and his captured and subsequent death in 1990 is owed to the fact that he was unpopular in the spiritual circle.

Like many Christians who got converted, Blayee said he met the Lord during the April 6 fracas when a person in white appeared to him after he had killed a child brought him by a woman.

According to him, he did not take the mystery serious until he was shot by, as he called it, “the flexible hands”

of Martina Johnson, which he had never experienced. He was later born again by the soul-winning evangelism group.

He told the hearing that he was later encouraged by Soko Sackor, now deputy minister for operations at the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications, to join the Liberia United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) in 2002, which he refused.

He then asked Liberians for forgiveness and praised the TRC for their move, which he said is beneficial to the perpetrators of war, like him.

Blayee told the commission that he succeeded in changing some of his close friends, who were recently involved in robbing people in the streets of Monrovia and other parts of the country.

He promised to use the proceeds of his book, “Trading Priesthood For Royal Priesthood” to help some of those he hurt during the war.

Xinhua

Thursday, 17 January 2008

Mongolia to send more peacekeepers to Sierra Leone

ULAN BATOR, Jan. 17 (Xinhua) -- Mongolia decided Wednesday to send its fifth batch of peacekeepers to Sierra Leone, the government's press office said Thursday.

The fifth batch of over 200 peacekeepers will be responsible for patrol missions to protect the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone and its personnel.

Mongolia had obtained 5.9 million U.S. dollars from the United Nations for the peacekeeping mission, said the press office.

Mongolia sent its first batch of more than 200 peacekeepers to Sierra Leone in January 2006.

In recent years, Mongolia has been actively involved in international peacekeeping missions in Iraq, Afghanistan and Sierra Leone.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

**UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries
16 January 2008**

[The media summaries and press clips do not necessarily represent the views of UNMIL.]

Newspaper Summary

Repentant Liberian Warlord Admits Killing Nearly 20,000 Persons

(The Inquirer, Daily Observer, New Democrat, The News, National Chronicle, Heritage, Public Agenda, The Informer and The Analyst)

- The media reports that the former ULIMO "J" battlefront commander Milton Blayee, alias 'Butt Naked' has told the ongoing Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings that he killed about 20,000 people in defense of his Krahn tribe.
- Giving his testimony before the commission on Tuesday, the former rebel General turned Evangelist reported a total of three massacres committed in Bomi and Grand Cape Mount Counties during the factional fighting. According to him enemy forces allegedly carried out one of the massacres in a place called Maher Camp. He also revealed that in 1982 the flag and seal of Liberia were planted in the Putu Mountains in the spiritual realm and said the ceremony was intended to ensure that no one ascends to state power peacefully without the approval of that mountainous oracle.

Plan Liberia Supports Child Media Activities in Lofa County

(The News, Heritage, The Informer and The Analyst)

- An international NGO, Plan International has provided capacity building support to community radio stations in four districts in Lofa County including Vahun, Kolahun, Voinjama and Foya. Plan assistance to the community radio stations is aimed at increasing the access of children and young people to the media by facilitating their participation.
- A Plan International release issued in Monrovia said the support to the radio stations will also create an opportunity for children to express their opinions on issues affecting them and to use the media as a way of promoting democracy and human rights.

Pathologist arrive to determine cause of teenager's death

(National Chronicle)

- As the controversies over the death of 13-year old Meideh Angel Tokpa still linger, the Ministry of Justice says three detectives flown in from Ghana along with the Pathologist from Cuba have started work. Justice Minister Philip Banks said the pathologist from Cuba has begun the process of re-performing an autopsy on the body Angel Tokpa.

Radio Summary

Minister Says Local and Foreign Security Begin Probe into Girl's Death

(Also reported on Star Radio, Truth FM, SKY FM and ELBS)

Sirleaf Marks Second Anniversary in Office as President

- Sources said that today, January 16 marks the second anniversary of Liberia and Africa's first elected female President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf who came to power on the platform of zero tolerance for corruption; establishing good governance and the rule of law as well as bringing economic and infrastructure development to Liberia.

- In two years, the Government is credited for reforming the economy; debt waivers and restoring Liberia's image on the international scene. But domestically, many Liberians complain that they are yet to see the trickle-down effect of the Government's economic reform programme.

(Also reported on Star Radio, Truth FM, SKY FM and ELBS)

Speaker Tyler Lines Up Issues to Discuss During House Sessions

- In an interview yesterday, the Speaker of the House of Representatives Alexander Tyler said that there are many issues on the House's agenda among which are the Anti-Corruption Bill, Budget Transfer Bill and the Bill seeking to place the Bureau of the Budget under the Ministry of Finance, but omitted the issue of bribery where former House Speaker Edwin Snowe accused some of his colleagues of receiving US\$5,000 each to remove him from office.

(Also reported on Star Radio, Truth FM, SKY FM and ELBS)

Government draws up new Nation-wide Transport Fares

- The Director of Press and Public Relations of the Ministry of Transport, Mr. Timothy Lagbolum disclosed that the Ministry was in the process of drawing up a new transport fares for commuters in the Country and would be made public soon.
- In an interview with Radio Veritas yesterday, Mr. Lagbolum said that the Ministry has observed with dissatisfaction the hike in transport fares on the part of commercial drivers in the Country, adding that the new fare was being put together considering the price of petroleum products and would involve the Liberia National Police to enforce the new structure.

(Also reported on Star Radio, Truth FM, SKY FM and ELBS)

Police Kill Suspected Armed Robber in Monrovia Suburb

- Eyewitnesses told correspondents that the Liberia National Police in Monrovia killed a suspected armed robber in the Barnesville area this morning after the deceased and 8 other suspected armed robbers attacked two homes in the community. One of the armed robbery victims, an elderly woman, said that the deceased was identified as "Derrick" by his friends.

(Also reported on Star Radio, Truth FM, SKY FM and ELBS)

BBC Online

Thursday, 17 January 2008

France stops genocide transfer

France's Supreme Court has overruled a decision to hand over a Rwandan genocide suspect to an international tribunal in Tanzania, his lawyers say.

Dominique Ntawukuriryayo is accused by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda of co-ordinating the killing of up to 25,000 Tutsis in April 1994.

His lawyer, Thierry Mauseis, told the BBC an earlier ruling was overturned because of procedural violations.



Mr Ntawukuriryayo was in hiding in France for years

Two other Rwandan suspects held last year in France were subsequently freed.

'Invalid' warrants

Mr Ntawukuriryayo, born in 1942, was a sub-prefect in the area of Gisagara at the time of the five-day killings at Kabuye Hill.

Thousands of Tutsis had gathered there and were told they would be safe.

He was arrested in the southern French town of Carcassonne last October.

One of his lawyers, Philippe Greciano, told French media that the lower court had failed to examine a "report outlining the various procedural steps allowing the indicted to defend himself".

The case will now return to a lower court, which will be asked to review it.

In September, a Paris appeals court ordered the release of Wenceslas Munyeshyaka, a Catholic priest, and Laurent Bucyibaruta, a former government official.

The court said the warrants issued by the ICTR, based in Tanzania, were "invalid".

The ICTR later withdrew the warrants and asked the French authorities to prosecute them - to the anger of the Rwandan government.

Some 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed during the 100-day massacre in 1994.

Since 1997, the ICTR has convicted 29 ringleaders of the genocide and acquitted five people.

It is due to finish its work by the end of the year.

Sierra Leone Court Monitoring Program

Tuesday, 15 January 2008

Implications of the Enactment of the Gender Acts in Sierra Leone

By Millicent Mannah

The year 2007 will go down as one of the most significant in Sierra Leone's legal history, with the enactment of what are collectively referred to as the "Gender Acts". After intense lobbying, campaigning and demonstrations the Domestic Violence Act 2007, the Devolution of Estate Act 2007, and the Registration of Customary Marriages and Divorce Act 2007 were passed into law. The outlines of the provisions of these three Acts have been dealt with exhaustively in previous articles. However a brief recap is provided in this article for those who have not been privileged to read it. Previously, customary laws were largely unwritten.

With the enactment of the Registration of Customary Marriage and Divorce Act, all customary laws have been harmonized. This Act also introduces the age of consent and also that both spouses should consent to marriage. Another important thing is that all customary marriages and divorces are registered in order to prove the validity of marriages and divorce. In essence any one who has contracted customary marriage cannot afterwards contract another type of marriage with another person, until both of them are divorced. A woman now has the right to obtain and dispose of her property as and when she likes. In addition, a woman will not be required to return her dowry at the end of a marriage, or any gifts made to her during the course of the marriage, and will as such not be forced to stay in a marriage merely because her family cannot repay.

The law on succession of property at death where there is no will, which previously varied considerably according to the different type of marriages one contracted, is now harmonized, in the Devolution of Estate Act. The new law makes provision for inheritance by spouses which includes people who have cohabited for more than 5 years and children which includes those born with people other than legal spouse during the marriage but is accepted and recognized by the spouse.

The Domestic Violence Act, outlaws sexual violence, physical, emotional, economical and verbal violence, and makes provision also for mediation or prosecution. It also provides for protection orders as a preventative rather than just punitive measure, to regulate the parties' behaviour.

That said, I will now focus on examining the implications of the Acts on Sierra Leone's legal framework in particular and the national society in general.

Enhancement of women's rights

One of the most obvious implications of these Acts is the enhancement and/or improvement of women's right in Sierra Leone. The previous state of the national law was open to scathing criticism in that it left a lot to be desired in relation to women's enjoyment of certain basic rights on an equal footing with men. For example laws on inheritance, contained in Cap 45 of the Laws of Sierra Leone 1960, was glaringly lopsided when addressing the right of a woman to her deceased husbands estate, when compared to the right of the husband in a similar situation.

The new Acts aim to establish equality for men and women in the enjoyment of certain rights. They also work towards fulfilling the obligation by the State to protect all within its borders from violence. The Domestic Violence Act comes as great relief to women who are attacked and persecuted within the home,

and previously had little or no protection from the law. The Registration of Customary Marriage and Divorce Act comes in aid of women who are married under customary law and previously had no concrete evidence to prove it, leaving them at the mercy of unscrupulous husbands who may seek to ditch them on the basis that their marriage is not documented.

Domestication of International Obligations

Sierra Leone is a signatory to a number of international and regional human rights instruments. Most particularly for the purposes of this article is the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Of significance is article 3 of the Convention, which obliges State Parties, among other things, to undertake appropriate measures in all fields, including introducing some legislation, to ensure the equal rights of women. The previous state of the law exposed Sierra Leone to a lot of criticism in international circles. The provisions contained in the Gender Acts are indicative of Sierra Leone's leap towards bringing its legislations in line with its international obligations. Despite this development, it is important to note that there are few more laws the government needs to enact. Examples of these laws include the Sexual Offences Act and a Matrimonial Causes Act, both of which have already been drafted by the Law Reform Commission and await enactment. Having said that, it is important to note at this junction that, sections 27 (4)(d) and (e) of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone which gave deference to laws and customs that discriminate against women has been recommended for repeal by the Constitutional Review Commission in the report presented to the president.

Education Drive on the Gender Acts

Now that the Gender Acts are part of Sierra Leone's legislation, it is essential that concerted efforts be geared towards educating the populace on the provisions of this Act and the rights they confer on the previously under-privileged. Civil society and women's groups should not relent in their drive, which they have already started to sensitize and train communities. This need is particularly pressing in light of the low level of literacy in Sierra Leone, coupled with the social and cultural attitudes towards the role and rights of women in society. Furthermore, administrators of justice such as lawyers, judges, magistrates and even customary court chairmen need to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the laws.

Implementation Mechanisms

Throughout the Gender Acts references are made to entities and/or individuals whose roles are central to their implementation. For example under the Domestic Violence Act the police are empowered to receive complaints relating to Domestic Violence and are required to assist the victim to obtain medical treatment and report where necessary and assist the victim to a place of safety in circumstances where the victim's life is under threat. Further, the Magistrate Courts are empowered to grant protection orders to the victim of domestic violence and or related persons. The Minister for Social Welfare is empowered to make regulations to give further efficacy to the Act. Under the Registration of Customary Marriage and Divorce Act the Local Councils have responsibility for registration of customary marriages and divorces. Under the Devolution of Estate Act the High Court is granted powers to adjudicate disputes under the Act order the sale of proceeds of an estate and appoint receivers. In all of the above cases, the bodies/institutions mentioned are given powers, which must be exercised carefully, efficiently and consistently in order to protect the rights of those whom the Acts seek to protect.

In this vein it is necessary that personnel in these institutions be properly and adequately trained on the provisions of the Act, the scope and ambit of their powers and the need for effective implementation, if the Acts in question are to carry any meaningful value in practice.

Conclusions

In conclusion it is one thing to have these laws enacted into the Sierra Leone statute books, but it is quite another to ensure that the provisions are strictly implemented. It is with this in mind that the relevant authorities must consider how the Gender Acts are to make a serious impact upon the rights of those whom it seeks to guard and protect.

I will endeavour to in the next article to suggest some of the steps that need to be taken to ensure full implementation.