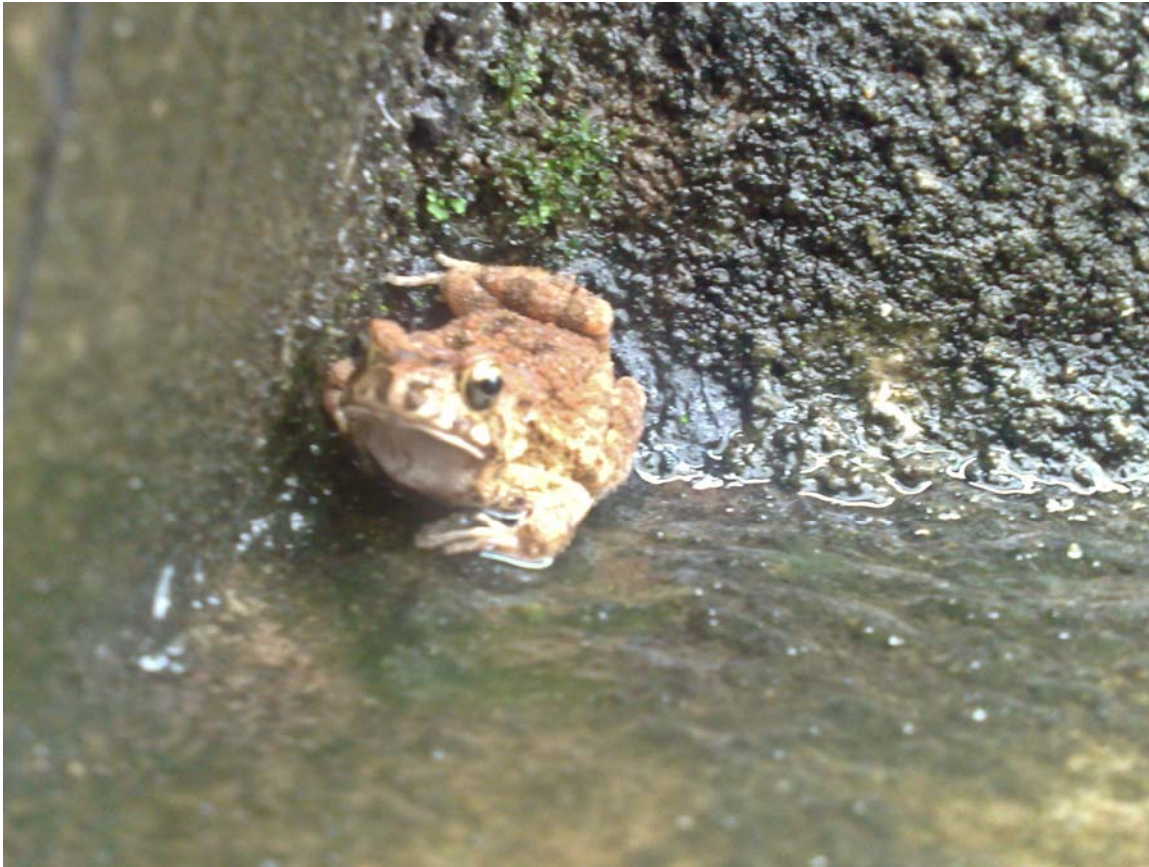


**SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
OUTREACH AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE**



“SCSL Frog”. Photo by Dereque Davies

PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

as at:

Tuesday, 18 August 2009

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Ext 7217

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Office of The Prosecutor

Tuesday, 18 August 2009

**Statement by Stephen Rapp, Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone
Press Briefing, Monrovia, Liberia
18 August 2009**

I am very pleased to be with you today. As you know, the Defense phase in the case against Charles Taylor began last month on 13 July. The following day the Accused took the stand in his own defense and has now been testifying for five weeks.

At this very important stage in the trial it is essential that Liberians and Sierra Leoneans continue to be fully informed of the proceedings in court. People must know that the trial continues in a fair, transparent and efficient manner. For this reason, I am very happy to be in Monrovia to take your questions about the trial.

The Prosecution is pleased that the trial process is going well. Charles Taylor is entitled to present his own account and respond to the charges against him. I must note that I am not able to comment on the specifics of his testimony, as the evaluation of his testimony is a matter for the judges.

Of course, the Accused is presenting a story that is very different from the evidence offered by the Prosecution. We called over 90 witnesses to appear in person before the Court. More than fifty of these witnesses told the judges, and the world, about the grave crimes committed against tens of thousands of innocent victims in Sierra Leone. More than thirty witnesses provided the linkage evidence showing Taylor's responsibility for the commission of these atrocities.

We have been waiting patiently while the Accused gives his own contrary version of events, and denies all the charges against him. We are looking forward to questioning him on cross-examination in the coming weeks. When our turn comes to ask the questions, we will confront Charles Taylor with the full weight of our case.

Let me talk for a moment about my own participation in this process. It has been my greatest honor to serve as the Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone for nearly three years.

During my tenure I have overseen the other trials before the Special Court where we secured convictions of the leaders of the rebel groups and the civil defense forces for atrocities committed during the Sierra Leone civil war. I am particularly proud to have been part of judicial proceedings that resulted in the first convictions in history for the recruitment and use of child soldiers as a war crime, the first convictions for attacks on peace-keepers as a violation of international humanitarian law, and the first convictions for sexual slavery and forced marriage as crimes against humanity. I am also pleased to have seen through the presentation of the Prosecution's case against Charles Taylor, the start of defense evidence, and our preparations to meet the defense case.

In July, I was nominated by President Barack Obama to be United States Ambassador at Large for War Crimes Issues. The nomination has now been confirmed by the US Senate, and I have given notice to the UN Secretary General that I will resign as Special Court Prosecutor on September 7. I will then immediately take up the new post, which is based in the US State Department in Washington in the office of Secretary Hillary Clinton.

For almost a decade, I have been working to bring justice to the victims of the most serious crimes committed by humankind, first at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and then at the Special Court for Sierra Leone. In this new position, I will continue that work on behalf of the US Government to assist countries in achieving accountability after the widespread commission of violations of international humanitarian law, and by doing so help prevent the recurrence of these atrocities.

As I leave the representation of the prosecution in the Charles Taylor trial in the capable hands of my colleagues, I would like to express my gratitude to the people of the region. In my many visits to Liberia, I have always found people of great caring and compassion, who were deeply interested in work of the Special Court in finding the truth and achieving justice.

The Special Court's jurisdiction is limited to Sierra Leone, to the period from November 1996 to January 2002, and to persons bearing the greatest responsibility for serious violations of humanitarian law. Despite these limitations, it is my parting wish as its Prosecutor that it has increased the respect for the rule of law by all individuals, no matter how powerful, and thus contributed to lasting peace and security.

Thank you.

More information on the trial of Charles Taylor can be found on the website of the Special Court for Sierra Leone at www.sc-sl.org, or the website of independent trial monitor www.charlestaylortrial.org.

Awoko

Tuesday, 18 August 2009

Taylor says he expelled RUF collaborators from Liberia

Charles Taylor has testified in his defence at the Special Court in The Hague, The Netherlands that he did not have any control over Liberian fighters who traveled to Sierra Leone to join rebel forces there. He also stated that he expelled a British National and a Sierra Leonean diplomat from Liberia when he suspected them of collaborating with rebel forces in Sierra Leone.

In an effort to distance himself from allegations that he supported and controlled rebel forces in Sierra Leone during its conflict, Mr. Taylor explained that many former combatants from Liberia's own conflict migrated to Sierra Leone after he came to power in Liberia in 1997. He also stated that they joined either the group of Liberians known as the Special Task Force or became prey for mercenaries due to their lack of food or jobs.

"How do you punish someone when he is not under your

control?" Mr. Taylor asked the court. "You can only be responsible for people under your direct command."

"Nobody can say that Taylor ordered me to do X, Y or Z. I did not have contact with them and there was no control over them. I did not help them in anyway," Mr. Taylor told the judges.

Asked by his defense counsel Courtenay Griffiths what he did as newly elected President of Liberia to control such a situation, he said "the only thing I could have done was to get International support to build schools and train people or engage them in projects to become productive citizens." He said this was not possible because he did not have any International support.

Mr. Taylor further told the court how he expelled 70 individuals from Liberia, one from Britain and the other from

Continued on Page 7

Taylor says he expelled RUF collaborators from Liberia

From Page 6

Sierra Leone on suspicion that they were collaborating with RUF rebels in Sierra Leone through a company operating in Monrovia called Red Deer International.

According to Mr. Taylor, when security forces raided the premises of the Red Deer International company, they discovered several items which, intelligence sources suggested were for use by RUF rebels. "We saw some suits of uniform, military uniform, the police seized hand-held walkie talkies, the Government of Sierra Leone was fully briefed about what was going on," Mr. Taylor said. He said the arrested persons were in touch with certain individuals who were connected to the RUF and gave a chronology of steps he took to assure Sierra Leone and the international community that he was not supporting RUF rebels and that he wanted a peaceful end to the conflict in Sierra Leone. On May 5 1998, Mr. Taylor went on, he wrote a letter to the United Nations Secretary General denying allegations by the Nigerian Ministry of Defense that he was involved in the conflict in Sierra Leone.

Adding that on June 24 1998, he sent a delegation to meet with former Sierra Leonean President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, a step Mr. Taylor called a "diplomatic move to assure your neighbor that these are just false allegations and there is no need to worry." President Tejan Kabbah also attended Liberia's independence celebrations in Monrovia on July 26, 1998. Mr. Taylor said this move by President Kabbah proved that there was no animosity between the two leaders. "If this conflict was so serious, Kabbah would not have visited me. Presidents at war with each other will not pay visits," Mr. Taylor said.

Premier News
 Tuesday, 18 August 2009

Charles Taylor's Trial

Former Liberian President Charles Taylor is on trial for atrocities committed in Sierra Leone during one of Africa's most horrific civil wars.

Survivors of the 1991-2002 conflict hope the U.N.-backed Special Court will be able to deliver some long-awaited justice.

More than 250,000 million people died in intertwined wars in Liberia and neighbouring Sierra Leone which shocked the world with their brutality and images of drugged-up child soldiers killing and looting.

Prosecutors say Taylor wanted to plunder Sierra Leone's diamonds and destabilise its government. He is accused of controlling and arming rebels from the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) during a campaign of terror against civilians.

Taylor, once one of Africa's most feared warlords, faces 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity. They include acts of terrorism, murder, rape, enslavement, conscripting child soldiers, sexual slavery, pillage and outrages upon personal dignity. He has denied all the charges.

Ten other people are indicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone which was set up in 2002 to try those most responsible for the conflict. Three key defendants have died, including notorious RUF leader Foday Sankoh.

Taylor's violent career dates back to 1989, when he launched a rebellion against then Liberian President Samuel Doe. Liberia's civil war lasted until 1996, leaving some 200,000 dead. A year later, Taylor became president after winning a landslide election victory.

By the early 1990s, civil war had also broken out in Sierra Leone, where Sankoh's RUF had launched a campaign against President Joseph Momoh, who was eventually ousted in 1992, plunging the country into chaos.

Taylor sought to take advantage of the mayhem by backing the RUF, which had seized towns in Sierra Leone near the Liberian border. According to the indictment, he sought to boost his own influence in West Africa by attempting to gain control of Sierra Leone's vast mineral wealth, particularly its diamond mines. The war was partly funded by what came to be known as "blood diamonds".

A peace deal in 1996 rapidly fell apart and the country returned to war - a conflict characterised by the mutilation of thousands of civilians by rebel forces. A Nigerian-led West African intervention force drove the RUF out of the capital Freetown in 1998, but they returned a year later, devastating the city and killing 5,000 people.

A peace agreement in 1999 policed by U.N. troops backed by the British army finally led to a formal end to the conflict in 2002 and the U.N. agreement to set up a war crimes court. Taylor, who had fled into exile in Nigeria in 2003, was eventually caught in 2006.

Taylor is the first former African head of state to stand trial in front of any court. The case is being held in The Hague for fear that proceedings in



Freetown could ignite unrest in Sierra Leone or Liberia.

The trial, which began in mid-2007, got off to a shaky start when Taylor failed to show up and demanded more money for his defence. The hearing resumed in 2008 and is expected to last until mid-2009. If convicted, Taylor faces a hefty sentence that he would serve in Britain.

NaCSA BURIES THE PAST IN KAMBIA

By Abu Kalokoh

National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA) Commissioner, Saidu Conton Sesay, on Saturday 15th August 2009 enlightened the people of Kambia District that the reparation programme is being done to harmonize with the people that suffered either physically or psychologically as a result of the war underlining that even though no amount of money can bring back the

lost limbs, legs and lives of victims but the Commission would do all it can to compensate them.

The Commissioner, who was addressing traditional leaders, NaCSA staff, war victims, religious leaders and other stakeholders further stated that government is obliged to assist those who suffered immensely as a result of the war and assured that government would implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation

Commission Report in addition to executing the reparation programme in full compliance with government policy.

Amadu Bangura, Programme Manager, Reparation, stated that government places premium on the issue to silence critics who hold the view that government is talking about the dead rather than the living.

According to Amadu Bangura, the programme is being implemented to heal the wounds, bury the

robbers who have been charged to court.

past and harmonize society recalling that during the war years everything went berserk, the reason why government contacted NaCSA to implement the programme with other stakeholders targeting five sets of victims, amputees, war wounded, rape victims, widows and children orphaned as a result of the war.

The Programme Manager went on to disclose that there would

be both material and non-material benefits in the form of grants, skills training and payment of pension to victims to alleviate their sufferings and urged those who failed to register to come forward as the exercise would make them overcome stigma.

Amputee President, Alhaji Lamin Jusu Jaka recounted his ordeal with rebels during the January 6th 1999 invasion of Freetown revealing, "I was in my house at Thompson

Contd on page 8

BBC World Service Trust
Monday, 17 August 2009

NEWS ITEM

17/8/09

INTRO:

Accused Former Liberian President, Charles Taylor says the re-location of Former RUF Leader, Sam Bockarie to Liberia was not his personal decision. After his arrival in Liberia, did the United States promise Sam Bockarie a military scholarship? And why was Sam Bockarie and his forces granted full Liberian Citizenship? Adolphus Williams report from The Hague.

STORY:

Mr. Taylor told the Special Court Monday about the re-location of Former RUF Leader, Sam Bockarie and his 400 fighters to Liberia was a decision of ECOWAS.

He said with the consent of other ECOWAS Leaders, he and the Former Nigerian President, Olusegun Obasanjo, met at the Roberts International Airport in Liberia and concluded Bockarie's transfer.

He said this transfer was part of ECOWAS' effort to restore peace to Sierra Leone.

Mr. Taylor emphasized that the United Nations, the United States and the ECOWAS Committee of Five were informed.

TAYLOR: Bockarie did not voluntarily leave Sierra... We, I will call it, extracted – ECOWAS extracted Bockarie from Sierra Leone. That's how he left. People did not know the inside story of it, but this is what happened. We took him out. He had no choice.

WILLIAMS Mr. Taylor continued, Mr. Obasanjo provided a support of 50-thousand United States Dollars for the relocation of Sam Bockarie and his men in Liberia.

He said the United States, through its Embassy in Monrovia, was informed about ECOWAS' decision about Sam Bockarie's ultimate transfer.

Mr. Taylor said, after the arrival of Sam Bockarie in Liberia, the U.S pledged to assist Bockarie with some training.

TAYLOR: They promised that they would assist, not the upkeep of the people, but and they had said they would probably help him, and gave him a scholarship to do extended military training in one of their military bases in the United States, but that did not come to pass.

WILLIAMS: Mr. Taylor's testimony was that Bockarie's transfer from Sierra Leone was ECOWAS' attempt to stop Sam Bockarie from interfering in the disarmament process at the time.

Mr. Taylor boldly told the court Sam Bockarie and his men were enlisted into the Anti-Terrorist Unit ATU in Liberia.

The ATU was an elite security force that was protecting Mr. Taylor during his presidency. He said Bockarie and his fighters became citizen of Liberia.

TAYLOR: We granted them citizenship. As for him, we excluded him – not from citizenship, from certain training programs – but all of the physical and able-bodied combatants that he brought with that citizenship, we inducted them into a training programme of the ATU. They were given real training. Under that we had control, because income was not forthcoming. Most of the West African countries I guess were too busy. You know, we were sweating under the weight, but we were prepared to do it for peace. AW, BBCWST, The Hague.

The Final Call

Friday, 14 August 2009

Former Liberian president: CIA freed me from jail

BY SAEED SHABAZZ -STAFF WRITER-

UNITED NATIONS (FinalCall.com) - Charles Taylor, the former president of Liberia and the first African head of state to be put on trial for war crimes and crimes against humanity, continues to proclaim his innocence at his trial in The Hague.

Mr. Taylor was well into his third week of testimony at *Final Call* press time and faces up to 11 counts of crimes, including mass killings, mutilations, and sex crimes, in neighboring Sierra Leone. He is also accused of human rights violations—such as enslavement, looting, terrorizing and imposing collective punishments on civilians during the 11-year conflict in Sierra Leone from 1991 to 2002. The war claimed 75,000 lives, according to the United Nations.

Mr. Taylor served as president of Liberia from 1997 to 2003.

Mr. Taylor's trial is being held in the Netherlands at the International Criminal Court (ICC) compound in The Hague because of security concerns. He is not being tried by the ICC, but by a Special Court for Sierra Leone established by UN Security Council Resolution 1688 in 2006. The trial began in earnest on January 7, 2008 after Mr. Taylor ended his boycott of the proceedings.



Graphic: MGN Online

The prosecution rested its case in February after calling 91 witnesses.

Mr. Taylor began his testimony on July 15, saying the CIA freed him from an American jail in 1985 where he was held after accusations of embezzlement were lodged by Samuel Doe, a onetime U.S. ally and brutal Liberian dictator. Mr. Taylor, who had been a high official in the Doe regime, became one of several rebel leaders who opposed Mr. Doe. He entered Liberia to fight a guerilla war in 1989.

Mr. Taylor has dismissed the case against him as “lies” and “misinformation.”

Observers have said there was always a question about how Mr. Taylor got out of jail and out of the United States. Ramsey Clark, a former U.S. attorney general and founder of the International Action Center, a human rights advocacy organization, represented Mr. Taylor during the early stages of his extradition hearing in the U.S. District Court of Massachusetts.

“When Taylor escaped I heard about it right away,” Mr. Clark told *The Final Call* during an interview on Aug. 5. “I don’t see how he could have gotten out of that prison at Plymouth, Mass., and out of the country by himself,” Mr. Clark said. However, he refused to speculate on who was responsible, saying he has never known who helped Mr. Taylor escape.

Mr. Clark did take a swing at the legitimacy of the court trying Mr. Taylor. “The court is a real problem, not a legal court, a creation of the UN Security Council. I have been very concerned by all of these courts, which seem to merely be the UN pursuing people who are the enemies of the powerful nations,” Mr. Clark said.

On July 21, Mr. Taylor testified about the 1991 outbreak of civil war in Sierra Leone and the participation of the rebel Revolutionary United Front and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, a second rebel group. Mr. Taylor said he did not help plan the groups' attacks—nor did he know of the existence of these groups before the conflict

began. Prosecutors say Mr. Taylor aided the rebels with weapons and ammo in exchange for diamonds. He denies the charge.

Mr. Taylor asserted “certain super powers,” including America, provided him with \$10 million—including \$5 million to buy arms at the start of Liberia's civil war in the 1990s.

Mr. Taylor told the judges in late July that the international community knew of and approved of his contacts with the forces fighting in Sierra Leone. He insisted he acted as a representative of the Economic Community of West African States.

According to Mr. Taylor, the United Nations and ECOWAS were kept in the loop and he reported to then-UN Secretary General Kofi Annan or his special envoy to Liberia.

“Liberians are paying close attention to the Taylor trial,” said Emira Woods, co-director of Foreign Policy In Focus at the Washington-based Institute for Policy Studies. There had been speculation for quite some time in Liberia that “the U.S. played both sides during the conflict,” Ms. Woods said.

Ms. Woods, a Liberian national, admitted many are waiting to see who else Mr. Taylor names as participants in the horrors that gripped her country during the conflict. Many feel the Taylor trial should focus on war crimes in Liberia, Ms. Woods added.

Human Rights Watch said the charges against the former president are related to his alleged role as a major backer of the Sierra Leone rebel forces.

On Aug. 4, Mr. Taylor dismissed allegations he has stashed huge amounts of money earned through illicit diamond trading and has secret bank accounts scattered around the world. “What bank accounts has the UN found that are for me?” Mr. Taylor asked. He said no one has produced evidence of their existence, “but it is repeated, repeated, repeated.”

He dismissed as folly any suggestion that while Liberian security forces were without arms, he was supplying forces in another nation; and that while Liberians were suffering he was wasting time planning attacks in Sierra Leone.

A report of Mr. Taylor's testimony is available daily on the internet at www.CharlesTaylorTrial.org, a project of the Open Society Justice Initiative; and can be viewed at <http://www.sc-sl.org>.

Elise Keppler, of the Human Rights Watch International Justice Program in New York, said, “This is an incredibly important trial, especially important to West Africa, where there has been so much civil strife; it shows people there that the rule of law works for all.”

“Charles Taylor is accused of some horrific crimes; and we are not suggesting that he is guilty and must be convicted; but, that it is the process of hearing the evidence in open court that is important,” Ms. Keppler said.

She also responded to the charge that the courts of international justice are only going after Africans. A lot of horrific crimes have been committed in Africa and three out of four of the present cases, such as Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, were referred by those nations, said Ms. Keppler.

“I don't want to suggest that the international justice system has been perfect. Human Rights Watch is working to level the playing field,” she said.

Associated Press

Tuesday, 18 August 2009

Sierra Leone war crimes tribunal appeals for funds

By CLARENCE ROY-MACAULAY

The United Nations-backed Sierra Leone war crimes tribunal is appealing for funds to continue work through 2009. The move comes after earlier appeals failed.

Special Court spokesman Peter Andersen says the court has run out of money and the United States and British governments are looking into how they can contribute money earlier than anticipated.

Andersen says the funds are required to support the appeals and hearings of rebels in Sierra Leone, and for the conclusion of the Charles Taylor trial at The Hague.

Former Liberian President Taylor is charged by the Special Court with 11 counts of murder, rape, sexual enslavement, torture and recruiting child soldiers while supporting rebels in Sierra Leone during the 1991-2002 civil war.

CharlesTaylorTrial.org (The Hague)

Monday, 17 August 2009

Sierra Leone: RUF Commander Sam Bockarie's Relocation to Liberia Was Sanctioned By the International Community

Alpha Sesay

Charles Taylor had the international community's approval to grant political asylum to Sam Bockarie after the rebel commander left Sierra Leone in December 1999, Mr. Taylor told judges today at his trial in The Hague.

Mr. Taylor told the judges that Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) leaders realized that Sam Bockarie's continued presence in Sierra Leone was a hindrance to the peace process in the country and a unanimous decision was taken that he should leave the country and obtain political asylum in Liberia.

"Bockarie did not voluntarily leave Sierra Leone. ECOWAS extracted Bockarie from Sierra Leone. That's how he left. He did not leave Sierra Leone voluntarily. He came to Liberia in December of 1999. People did not know the inside story. But this is what happened. It was an ECOWAS extraction, they took him out of Sierra Leone, he had no choice," Mr. Taylor said.

When the government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels signed a peace agreement in June 1999, the disarmament of combatants started in the country. Reports indicate that while RUF leader, Foday Sankoh, wanted all his forces to be disarmed, his deputy Sam Bockarie was opposed to such a move. This led to a conflict between Foday Sankoh and Sam Bockarie, and at the time, according to Mr. Taylor, "it appears Bockarie wants to challenge Sankoh."

Mr. Taylor said he got involved to settle the conflict between the two rebel leaders by inviting them to a meeting in Liberia. This, Mr. Taylor said, happened with the consent of the United Nations, ECOWAS leaders and the government of Sierra Leone. "Everyone knew about it.

The Committee of Six [originally Committee of 5, this body was set up by West African leaders to facilitate a peaceful end to the conflict in Sierra Leone], the United Nations Secretary General, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in Liberia (SRSG) and [Sierra Leonean] president Kabbah knew about it. In fact, Sankoh was taken to Liberia on board a UN air craft," he explained.

Mr. Taylor said after meeting with the two Sierra Leonean rebel leaders, he informed the United Nations and ECOWAS leaders of what he had said to the rebel leaders and his assessment of the situation.

Mr. Taylor said that when the clashes continued in the RUF, ECOWAS had no option but to get Sam Bockarie out of Sierra Leone. The decision to take Sam Bockarie out of Sierra Leone, Mr. Taylor said, was taken at a meeting with former Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo at the Roberts International Airport in Liberia. In December 1999, Sam Bockarie eventually left Sierra Leone for Liberia with about 300-400 RUF fighters who were loyal to him (Bockarie). Mr. Taylor said that Sam Bockarie and all his fighters were granted Liberian citizenship in order to integrate them into the Liberian society. Members of the international community, he said, were fully informed of everything he did.

As part of the arrangement to get Sam Bockarie out of Sierra Leone and relocate him to Liberia, Mr. Taylor said that the United States government agreed to provide scholarship for Sam Bockarie to undergo military training in the United States.

"The United States promised that they would assist, not the upkeep of the people but the discussion was held as to what to do for Bockarie and they had said that they would probably help to give him a scholarship to do extended military training at one of their military bases in the United States but that did not come to pass," he said.

Mr. Taylor also said that Nigerian president Obasanjo gave a sum of 50,000 United States dollars to sustain Sam Bockarie and his men in Liberia.

Mr. Taylor said he later on found it strange when the United Nations and the United States opposed Sam Bockarie's presence in Liberia. "This is strange. The man has just come in after agreeing with me and now you want me to throw him out? The same US had said they would give Bockarie training so he will cease to be a rebel."

Mr. Taylor said that once Sam Bockarie and his men were in Liberia and had obtained Liberian citizenship, his government decided to recruit them into the security sector. They were all trained and became part of Mr. Taylor's Anti Terrorist Unit (ATU)—an elite force that provided security for Mr. Taylor. The ATU was headed by Mr. Taylor's son Chuckie Taylor, who himself has been convicted in the United States for crimes of torture committed in Liberia.

The prosecution has alleged that Mr. Taylor provided support to the RUF rebels in Sierra Leone through the supply of arms and ammunition. The prosecution has further alleged that RUF commanders were answerable to Mr. Taylor. Several prosecution witnesses testified that in 1999, when Sam Bockarie fell out with RUF leader Foday Sankoh, Mr. Taylor willingly offered to host Sam Bockarie in Liberia, providing houses for him and his family and sending him and his fighters to launch attacks in Ivory Coast. Mr. Taylor has denied these allegations, saying that his involvement in Sierra Leone's conflict was for peaceful purposes only.

Mr. Taylor's testimony continues tomorrow.

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 17 August 2009

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

International Clips on Liberia

FG Replaces Troops in Liberia

Abuja, Aug 17, 2009 (This Day/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- Nigerian Army will today, from the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja, commence airlifting of troops of 231 Tank Battalion, Biu, to Liberia, to replace Nigerian 11 Field Engineer Regiment (11FER). In a statement signed by Directorate of Army Public Relations, the 11 FER is returning to Nigeria after six months of a UN Peacekeeping mission in Liberia.

The rotation exercise will last till August 26. Army headquarters has advised the public not to panic at the sight of the troops in Abuja, as the event will occasion movement of troops and equipment in and outside Abuja. Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lt. General Abdulrahman Dambazau, and senior military officers will be at the airport to welcome the returning battalion and also bid the departing Nigerian troops farewell.

Chinese soldiers leave for UN peace mission in Liberia

BEIJING, Aug. 17 (Xinhua) -- A 275-member team of Chinese soldiers left Beijing for Liberia Monday for an eight-month UN peacekeeping operation in the African country. They formed the first batch of the ninth peacekeeping team that China sent to Liberia. The second batch of 283 soldiers is scheduled to depart on Aug. 29. The ninth team is comprised of transportation troops, engineers and medical staff. China joined the peacekeeping mission in Liberia in December 2003 under a resolution of the UN Security Council. A total of 4,464 Chinese peacekeepers have so far been sent to Liberia in rotation, with each mission lasting eight months. The eighth peacekeeping team also had 558 soldiers, each of whom were awarded the UN international peace medal for their outstanding performance.

George Weah Criticizes President Sirleaf on Corruption

Voice of America - Africa 08:20--Liberian opposition leader George Manneh Opong Weah said the government of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is not committed enough to fighting corruption. Weah, who is chairman of the Congress for Democratic Change (CDC), said if the president were dedicated enough to fighting corruption, she would stop recycling those officials found to be corrupt. He was in Washington over the weekend to attend a meeting of the U.S. chapter of the CDC which was held on the campus of the University of Maryland. "The president wants to deal with corruption but she is not accepting to deal with those people that are corrupt. So where somebody is corrupt and the president takes the person from one position to another, the problem is going to exist," Weah said. Acting Information Minister Cletus Sieh described Weah's criticism as unfortunate. He said while corruption is endemic in the Liberian society, President Sirleaf has committed her government to minimizing if not eradicating corruption.

Liberians and Americans form supportive community for refugees

Aug. 16--GREENSBORO -- There they stood. About 30 people, their expectant, hopeful faces scanning the monitors overhead, waited for the arrival of US Airways flight 3579 at Piedmont Triad International Airport. They were African. American. And African American. Some of them held handmade signs that said, "Welcome Zulu children." And when the plane landed, they began to sing

-- in English -- a Liberian praise song. "God, you are wonderful." "My God, you are excellent!" As the first passengers started to emerge, one woman stepped away from the group, moving closer to the arrival area. Esther Zulu wore traditional Liberian attire: a long, ivory dress with gold and silver sequins and embroidery, with a matching scarf covering her hair. She stood alone, waiting to embrace the sons she hadn't held in 15 years. Then there they were. Kelvin, 19, and Dixon, 18, walked toward her with solemn faces, not as the little boys she remembered, but young men. They began to cry silently, the tears tracing bright, wet streaks down their thin cheeks. Esther Zulu, no longer able to contain the emotions within her, started to wail as she embraced them. Her deep sobs could be heard throughout the airport terminal.

International Clips on West Africa

The Western Mail: Film-maker's tale of misery and hope from Sierra Leone

Source: Western Mail Date: August 17, 2009--A DOCUMENTARY chronicling the poignant story of war-torn Sierra Leone will be premiered in Wales next month. Freetown - Hope Restored is the inaugural documentary of Welsh film-maker James Chapman. It highlights the tale of a country devastated by years of civil war, which resulted in massive poverty, unemployment and suffering. Chapman spent weeks in Sierra Leone and the US. He was in Freetown last March to film a crusade of Ben Cerullo Ministries. Named as one of the "30 emerging voices" that will lead the church in the next decade, Cerullo launched Ben Cerullo Ministries two years ago. Its aim is to take the Gospel to people of all ages and backgrounds throughout the world. "We saw conditions that were almost beyond belief," says Chapman of his time in the war-torn country. "I witnessed first hand the plight of this city and its people. My burden and vision for this project grew as Ben and the others on our team interacted with local residents. "We heard testimonies and talked to people from all walks of life. We were compelled to tell the world about **Sierra Leone** and the human tragedy perpetrated upon this nation.

Govt Carries Out Nationwide Polio Campaign with Help of UN Mission

Aug 17, 2009 (UN News Service/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- The Government of Cote d'Ivoire is wrapping up a nationwide campaign to immunize children against polio today, carried out with the help of the United Nations mission which provided logistical support to the effort to stamp out the highly infectious and incurable viral disease. Some 6 million children were targeted in the four-day campaign, which began on 14 August and is part of the National Immunization Days. The UN Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI) transported medical teams and equipment in 41 localities in the departments of Odienne and Daloa. UN Police were also mobilized to assist throughout the campaign. The mission will continue to assist authorities over the next few days as they evaluate the immunization efforts, which were also supported by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF). Polio - contracted through contaminated food, water and faeces - was almost eradicated in Cote d'Ivoire until a case was confirmed in December 2008 in Adiake in the country's east.

Local Media – Newspaper

President Pro-Tempore Speaks on TRC Report

(Liberian Express, The News, Public Agenda, New Vision, Liberia Journal, The Monitor, New Republic)

- Senate President Pro-Tempore Cletus Wotorson has opposed the prosecution of warlords, former fighters and financiers of the Liberian civil war.
- Pro-Temp Wotorson said prosecuting key players of the war would not be good for the peace and stability of Liberia.
- In his "official" comment on the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia (TRC), Senator Wotorson said he supports what he called restorative justice than retributive justice and recommended that it be pursued through a national dialogue to heal the wounds of the civil conflict.

- He said national leaders and the International Contact Group on Liberia must initiate the dialogue with the people of Liberia.
- Senator Wotorson said his proposal was in response to the speech by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton challenging Liberians to love their Country.

UN Envoy Worries over Support to Liberia, Says International Attention Shifting

(The Informer, Heritage, Public Agenda, New Republic)

- The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General to Liberia, Ellen Margrethe Løj said she is worried that the attention of the international community was gradually shifting away from Liberia when there was still more to be accomplished in the country.
- SRSG Løj said the training of police officers was not sufficient to maintain security in the country but that logistical support should also be provided in order to maintain security in Liberia.
- She reiterated the UN commitment to supporting the government's efforts to recruit more police officers and called on the international community to buttress the efforts of the mission and Government in restoring security in Liberia.
- She spoke during the U.S. Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton's visit to the National Police Academy last week.

US Congressional Delegation Tours NPA...BMA Boss Describes Tour as 'Strategic'

(Daily Observer)

- A United States Congressional delegation over the weekend toured the damaged facilities at the National Port Authority (NPA) inside the Free Port of Monrovia.
- The team is expected to leave Liberia today after meeting with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf at Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- The Congressional team is in the country to acquaint themselves with challenges facing the Freeport and to see how best they can win over support to get it up and running at full capacity.
- Briefing the team, the Managing Director of the National Port Authority, Matilda Parker said lack of basic infrastructure was the key problem facing the port.
- Meanwhile, the Bureau of Maritime Affairs (BMA) Commissioner and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the NPA, Binyah C. Kesselly, described the tour as 'strategic.'

Faith Based Media Group Takes US Secretary of State to Task over Comments on TRC Report

(Heritage, Public Agenda, The Inquirer)

- The Liberian Media Centre (CMC), a faith-based media group, has accused the US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton of creating more problems in the Liberian reconciliation process.
- The Centre's statement is in reaction to the US Secretary of State comment that her Government will support any decision taken by the Liberian administration on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia (TRC) final report.
- The group said Mrs. Clinton failed to address the issue of justice, a key component of the country's reconciliation process.
- At the same time, the Executive Director of the Foundation for Human Rights and Democracy (FORHD), Aloysius Toe has described the United States Government's position on the TRC report "bad face" but did not elaborate.

Law Students Protest Colleague's Murder

(Daily Observer, The Inquirer, Public Agenda, The Monitor)

- Concerned students of the Louis Arthur Grimes School of Law at the University of Liberia (UL) have expressed regret and disappointment over what they called the 'lackadaisical posture' the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) has taken regarding the gruesome murder of their colleague, Stafford Tamba a year ago.

- In a statement issued over the weekend, the students said it was unbelievable and unacceptable that the perpetrators are yet to be apprehended.
- The Concerned Students said the inability of the security forces to arrest a suspect signifies the weakness in the security network to fully manage the growing wave of lawlessness that has engulfed Monrovia and its environs.

Former LURD Rebels Leader Released from Guinean Prison

(The Inquirer, National Chronicle)

- Reports say the former leader of the defunct Liberia United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) has been released by the Guinean military authority.
- According to Mr. Conneh's Chief Public Relation Officer, Mr. Mark Jabateh, his boss was released last Friday by the Guinean Military junta but was asked to leave the country within 72 hours.
- He said the decision by the military junta to release the former LURD leader followed the intervention of the President of Sierra Leone, Ernest Bai Koroma

3 Logging Companies Consultant Writes Open Letter to Government

(Liberian Express, The Monitor, Plain Truth, Liberian Journal, Public Agenda, The Analyst, The Inquirer)

- A consultant of three logging companies bidding for forest concessions in the country has challenged Government and the people of Liberia to develop the necessary safeguards to encourage suggestions and not instructions in the awarding of forest contract.
- Attorney Syrenius Cephus said it was time to open the forest sector of the country to create jobs for hundreds of thousand of Liberians.
- The companies, Alpha, Atlantic and Southeast Resources Limited are being opposed by the Campaign group, Global Witness saying they should not be awarded forest concessions.
- The group said its opposition stems from the fact that the companies were aligned with Samling, a company allegedly notorious for illegal logging and conflicts with local communities.

Local Media – Star Radio (*culled from website today at 09:00 am*)

US Congressional delegation in Liberia

- A nine-man Congressional Delegation from the United States is in Liberia for a two-day visit.
- Upon arrival the delegation headed by Congressman G. K. Butterfield toured the Freeport of Monrovia.
- The tour was an apparent assessment for US support to dredge the Free Port as promised by former President George Bush.
- While in Liberia, the delegation will hold discussions with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf on progress and challenges in government's development programmes.
- The discussions between the delegation and President Sirleaf will be followed by an address to the press.
- The US Congressional delegation's visit comes barely three days following the visit to Liberia by the American Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton.

(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Sky F.M., Truth F.M. and ELBC)

House of Representatives Denies Receiving Kickbacks for AmLib Mineral Agreement Passage

- The House of Representatives has again denied media reports that it received kickbacks to pass the AMLIB mineral agreement.
- A release from the House described the report as false saying it could undermine investment opportunities.
- According to the House, its passage of concession agreements is intended to increase government's revenue and create more jobs. The House described the report of bribe taking without facts as unethical.
- Last week, members of the House were seen secretly distributing unspecified amount of US dollars in the chambers following the passage of three mineral development agreements with AMLIB.

(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Sky F.M., Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Executive Ends Retreat on PRS... Develops 90-day Deliverables

- Cabinet ministers and other government officials have ended a two-day cabinet retreat in Monrovia which reviewed the current status of the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS).
- At the retreat, a 90 day deliverable plan was drawn up and submitted by every ministry and agency of government to help fast track the PRS.
- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf challenged the participants to win the confidence of the public by achieving the deliverables.
- President Sirleaf reminded the junior ministers that their involvement in the exercise was to help their bosses achieve the goals.
- Chief Justice Johnnie Lewis who also attended the retreat promised to ensure the success of the PRS by maintaining dignity in the judiciary.
- Chief Justice Lewis told the gathering public defenders have been assigned to each of the fifteen counties to represent the legal interests of indigents
- The Chief Justice said with the help of the UNDP, vehicles have been assigned to those public defenders to help carry out their duties.

(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Sky F.M., Truth F.M. and ELBC)

President Sirleaf Gives Public Work Ministry Ultimatum on Old Executive Mansion Renovation

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has asked the Public Works Ministry to begin renovating the old Executive Mansion or remove the zinc fence.
- President Sirleaf said it was unfair to drive away petty traders from the old Executive Grounds in the name of renovation when no work was going on there.
- She said it would have been better for the traders to continue using the facility until the renovation exercise was ready.
- The President's statement came after the Public Works Ministry failed to mention the renovation of the old Executive Mansion in its ninety-day deliverables at the just-ended cabinet retreat.
- The President instructed the Public Works Ministry to empower the private sector in carrying out most of the work while the ministry plays a supervisory role.

(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Sky F.M., Truth F.M. and ELBC)

UN News

Monday, 17 August 2009

Liberia still faces security challenges, despite gains towards peace – UN report

17 August 2009 – Liberia continues to make significant progress in consolidating peace after more than a decade of civil war, but the gains remain fragile, especially with regard to security, rule of law and job creation, according to the latest United Nations report on the work of peacekeepers there.

"It is critically important that the Government of Liberia make every effort to develop national security and the rule of law institutions that are fully independently operational," Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon writes in the report to the Security Council, citing the prevalence of rape, armed robbery, mob violence and ethnic tensions.

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) Human Right Section and UNMIL Police, in coordination with the Liberian National Police, conduct an exercise to close down the operation of an illegally run psychiatric facility

Moreover, the stability of the West African country, which the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) has been instrumental in returning to peace and democracy since the 2003 ceasefire between warring factions, continues to be affected by potentially adverse developments in the sub-region such as the drug trade and various armed groups, Mr. Ban warns.

"I am particularly concerned that drug trafficking could trigger further destabilization," he says, noting a similar threat to Liberia's troubled neighbours, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire. "The claim made by the ruling military authority in Guinea, regarding possible attacks by armed elements based in neighbouring countries, raises the spectre of renewed regional conflict.

"The presence of armed Liberian combatants with uncertain intentions in neighbouring countries also remains a serious cause for concern."

Turning to the economy, which is expected to grow by nearly five per cent this year compared with 7.1 per cent in 2008, Mr. Ban notes that UNMIL, together with the World Bank, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN World Food Programme (WFP) continues to use labour-intensive road repairs to create short-term employment and promote stability in high security risk areas including near unstable rubber plantations.

He also cites "some encouraging progress" in achieving the Government's poverty reduction strategy, although "weak institutional capacity remains a serious constraint at both the national and local levels."

On human rights he notes a continued improvement although weak law institutions, economic insecurity and limited social services continue to pose serious challenges, while the Government still faces serious constraints in furthering its anti-corruption agenda, despite some progress in strengthening oversight mechanisms.

On national election scheduled for 2011, Mr. Ban recommends that UNMIL be mandated to offer logistical support, coordinate international electoral assistance and facilitate the creation of a positive climate for a peaceful poll. He also reiterates his recommendations that UNMIL, which at its height had an authorized total of 15,250 military personnel, be reduced to about 8,200 by next May through the repatriation of a further 8,202 troops, three attack helicopters and 72 armoured personnel carriers. The UNMIL police component would remain at its authorized strength of 1,375.

Justiceinitiative.org

Monday, 17 August 2009

New Anticorruption Measures at Khmer Rouge Tribunal Are Insufficient

New measures to combat corruption at Cambodia Khmer Rouge tribunal fall short, the Open Society Justice Initiative said in a report released today. According to the report, donors to the court must work to further strengthen the anticorruption effort.

The court, officially known as the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, announced last week the appointment of an independent counsellor responsible for pursuing corruption complaints, as part of a broader anticorruption package. While welcoming this effort, the Justice Initiative report (available here: http://www.justiceinitiative.org/db/resource2?res_id=104274) notes that much more must change for the court to root out corruption. The new complaint mechanism must protect witnesses and whistleblowers, operate transparently, have the power to conduct independent investigations, and address previous corruption complaints which have dogged the court for over two years.

The agreement to create the independent counsellor is a good first step in the process of creating an adequate anticorruption mechanism at the court, but much more work remains said James A. Goldston, executive director of the Open Society Justice Initiative. More sustained leadership by donors, particularly the United States "which brokered this deal" is needed in the coming months to ensure that the package can work effectively and that staff can trust it.

According to the Justice Initiative report, the new anticorruption package:

- Â· Lacks any formal process to protect whistleblowers and witnesses;
- Â· Fails to require the independent counsellor to report publicly any information about corruption complaints or his own activities, making it impossible to know if corruption exists and whether it has been addressed effectively;
- Â· Provides no mechanism or human resources for independent investigations in case private consultations fail to resolve complaints;
- Â· Makes no provision for addressing previously existing corruption allegations.

With the first trial nearing its conclusion, now is the time for donors to implement the additional measures to correct the system current flaws, said Goldston. Otherwise, they will lose the opportunity to finally free the court from the corruption allegations that have plagued it for too long.

Recent Developments at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia: August 2009/ is the latest in a series of regular Justice Initiative publications offering news, analysis, and recommendations on the tribunal. Previous reports and other background information on the court are available here: <http://www.justiceinitiative.org/activities/ij/krt>

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Waikato Times

Tuesday, 18 August 2009

Rob Hamill faces brother's killer

By JEFF NEEMS - Waikato Times

Chief Khmer Rouge torturer Kaing Guek Eav, also known as Duch, relevant offers Hamilton man Rob Hamill faced his brother's alleged killer in a Cambodian court yesterday, but the former torture camp commandant claims he can not remember him.



Speaking to the Times from Phnom Penh shortly after testifying at the UN-backed trial of Kaing Guek Eav, better known as Duch and the head of the notorious S21 prison camp under Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge regime, Mr Hamill was not surprised by Duch's claim he did not recall Mr Hamill's older brother Kerry.

Kerry Hamill is believed to have been one of a handful of Westerners killed in the camp between 1975 and 1979. Kerry Hamill's yacht strayed into Cambodian waters in 1978, and while exact details of his death remain unknown, he is believed to have been tortured and executed while in S21.

Duch has testified he carried out orders from the regime's late leader Pol Pot, and Mr Hamill said Duch continued with that defence when he gave the equivalent of a victim impact statement in Phnom Penh's Extraordinary Chambers of Courts of Cambodia.

"His out is that he was just taking orders. It was either that, or be killed himself."

An emotionally drained Mr Hamill said there was sense of relief at having made his statement, aimed at court judges and detailing the huge impact of his brother's death on the Hamill family. He was able to make extensive eye contact with Duch, who sat just metres from him.

"It was very difficult, but he was certainly very attentive," Mr Hamill said. "I didn't look at him that much when I was making my statement - I was really looking up at the judges."

Reading his statement from notes, Mr Hamill said he was able to look directly at Duch when he made "a couple of pointed comments", while Mr Hamill's wife Rachel noticed Duch nervously fidgeting during particularly emotional parts of her husband's testimony.

"I had some emotional moments in there," Mr Hamill said of his appearance, which lasted just under an hour. "I was wiping away a few tears as I was telling the story."

"Whenever I said things that were emotionally charged about him (Duch), he was shuffling, pretty nervy..."

Mr Hamill believed Duch to be a "very sharp cookie, playing the court really well". Mr Hamill was able to directly question Duch, and asked him how long his brother was interned for.

"But the answer I got was that he (Duch) didn't know...which was a bit disappointing. He just didn't remember."

"The longer Kerry was in there, the worse it would've been," Mr Hamill said. "I know he was in there for at least two months."

Ad Feedback Mr Hamill said Duch recalled Kerry Hamill's British crewmate John Dewhurst, "and he just said they both were killed at the same time".

"He said specifically he remembered the British man, but not my brother. It is disappointing, and I find it hard to believe...they were brought in at the same time, two Westerners."

Mr Hamill said although somewhat surreal, events at the trial had transpired much as he had expected. While he had not necessarily gained any more information about his brother's death, Mr Hamill said he felt it was significant to represent the estimated 17,000 people killed in the camp, and their families.

Feedback from lawyers participating in the trial was that Mr Hamill's statement and questioning had made a strong impact on the judges.

"It was pretty powerful, being in there, and being part of that. I really felt I got the message across that I wanted to."

The trip to Cambodia for the trial will be an integral part of a documentary on Mr Hamill's search for justice for his brother, entitled Brother No 1.

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