

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



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

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Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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SIERRA LEONEANS REFLECT ON SCSL IN 'SEEDS OF JUSTICE'

This year in Freetown, a unique court will close its doors.



The Special Court for Sierra Leone- a hybrid court established jointly by the United Nations and the government of Sierra Leone-is nearing the end of its mandate to prosecute the most responsible perpetrators of crimes during the country's civil war, in which tens of thousands of people were killed, raped, and mutilated, and hundreds of thousands were expelled from their homes.

On International Justice Day, July 17th, ICTJ looks at the legacy of the Special Court for Sierra Leone through the voices of those to whom its work was most important: the citizens of Sierra Leone.

Our new multimedia project, "Seeds of Justice: Sierra Leone," presents five portraits of Sierra Leoneans whose lives were impacted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

We wanted to know: What has the court done for their country? What will it leave behind once it closes its doors? How did the trials affect their lives?

This series of intimate, tender images from award-winning photographer Glenna Gordon helps to tell the stories of daily life in Sierra Leone after more than a decade since the end of the conflict. In their own words, these individuals speak of the terrifying uncertainty in being forced to flee from home, the devastating heartache of personal loss, the pain of families torn apart by the chaos of war.

They are stories of personal triumph, and a testament to the slow and steady post-conflict recovery of communities of Sierra Leone-the opening of storefronts at dawn, weeding the gardens, or going to the polls-under all of which lies the confidence in the return of rule of law to their country.

These Sierra Leoneans have no illusions about the work still to be done, and each is actively working in their own way to improve the lives of their communities. But each is clear that the SCSL's contribution to accountability after the war has given them a sense of trust in the institutions, and has left them with a sense that in Sierra Leone, justice can be done.

The Voices of "Seeds of Justice"

Aminata Sesay is a businesswoman who owns Amsays Own Goods, a small provisions store located in one of the busiest squares of Freetown. "Without justice, no matter what developments might be go-



ing on now, there is no peace." ?

Mohamad Bah was a student when war broke out in Sierra Leone. He was captured by the rebels and forced to fight with other child soldiers. Now, he is an advocate for others with disabilities. "We want Charles Taylor to remain in jail," he says. "If justice is done, I believe everything will be okay for us."

Claire Carlton Hanciles is the chief of the defense office at the Special Court for Sierra Leone. During the war, she was forced to flee Sierra Leone. Today, she protects the due process rights of the accused. "I saw the rule of law turned upside down."

Princess AD Rogers works as a women's rights advocate in Kenema. "Women are still being violated, women are still being beaten, women are still being killed by their boyfriends or husbands, girls are still being raped, all because the doers of these crimes were left free."

Chief Kasanga II is a traditional chief in Makeni, the second biggest town in Sierra Leone. On a daily basis, he is asked for advice and guidance by his community. "Now we have the belief that no matter who you are, no matter the wealth you have, the court will be above you."

Looking at a Legacy of the Special Court for Sierra Leone

"Seeds of Justice: Sierra Leone" is part of an ICTJ project that has brought together Sierra Leoneans and the international community over the past year to reflect upon the work of the Special Court for Sierra Leone



(SCSL).

The project "Exploring the Legacy of the Special Court for Sierra Leone" asked the hard questions about the SCSL: How should we understand the impact of its accomplishments, the lessons from its struggles and shortcomings, and its role in larger efforts to promote accountability for serious crimes?

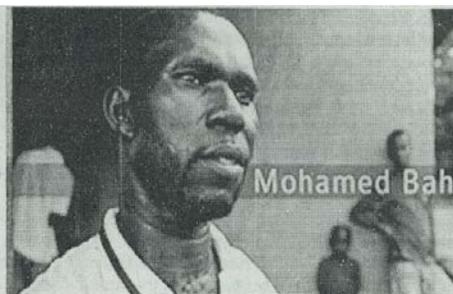
To help preserve the history of the SCSL, we developed an interactive timeline charting the significant milestones in the eleven years of court's existence. In addition to hosting two major conferences, we produced a series of podcast interviews with experts on the Special Court, including Sierra Leone's Ambassador Allieu Ibrahim Kanu, United States Ambassador-at-Large for Global Criminal Justice Stephen J. Rapp, and international justice practitioner Alison Smith.

"If justice is done, I believe everything will be okay for us." - Mohamad Bah, former child soldier

For the culmination of the project, we set out to consider the legacy of the court as seen through the eyes of survivors of the conflict in Sierra Leone: a women's rights activist, a lawyer, a traditional chief, a businesswoman, and an advocate for persons with disabilities who is himself an amputee.

Creating the Special Court for Sierra Leone

After ten years of a brutal civil war, in which tens of thousands of people were killed, raped, and mutilated, and hundreds of thousands were expelled from their homes, the government of Sierra Leone in 2002 joined



with the United Nations to create the SCSL, to try those most responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

On June 12th, 2000, Sierra Leone President Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah sent a letter to the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to ask for assistance to establish a credible court to prosecute perpetrators of crimes committed during the civil war.

The Special Court was designed to investigate and prosecute those who bore the greatest responsibility for "serious violations of international humanitarian law and Sierra Leonean law" committed in the territory of Sierra Leone after November 30, 1996.

Over the course of ten years, the SCSL - the first "hybrid" court to combine international and national staff - indicted 13 individuals, including former Liberian President Charles Taylor, the first sitting African head of state to be indicted for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

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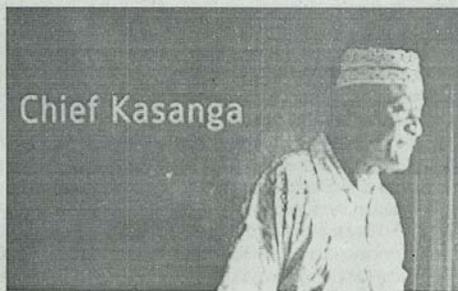
In April 2012, its Trial Chamber found Taylor guilty on 11 charges of planning, aiding and abetting crimes committed by rebel forces in Sierra Leone - and sentenced him to 50 years in prison. His case is now under appeal.

The Special Court has brought a measure of justice for victims, and most Sierra Leoneans have a positive view of the court, according to surveys. Its trials have been an opportunity for citizens to learn the truth about what happened during the conflict, and its courtrooms have provided a legal forum for hundreds of victims to come forward and tell their stories.

Still, the court has been criticized for prosecuting a relatively small number of perpetrators and for failing to provide reparations to victims and their families, many of whom continue to suffer the terrible effects of the conflict.

"Many of us we are pleased when the verdict was passed at The Hague [against Charles Taylor]. But still much needs to be done to address the needs of persons who were amputated during the war," says Mohammed Bah.

On International Justice Day, ICTJ recognizes the contributions of the SCSL to Sierra Leone's own transition from conflict, and to the larger project of international justice as a whole.





African Union Disappoints Criminal Court

"Nigeria, not a safe heaven" - say Human Rights Activists

Sudanese leader Omar al-Bashir has left Nigeria, the spokesman at his embassy confirmed last Tuesday, following demands from human rights activists for his arrest over charges of genocide and war crimes in Darfur. Spokesman, Mohammed Moiz said al-Bashir left to fulfill another engagement. Moiz said he left Abuja, Nigeria's capital, at 3 p.m. Monday, less than 24 hours after he arrived and in the middle of a two-day summit ending Tuesday.

Nigeria's Vanguard newspaper reported that the Sudanese leader was expected to make a presentation Monday afternoon at an African Union summit but failed to show up.

"Business as usual is over for this head of state suspected of the most serious crimes committed in Darfur," said Elise Keppler of the New York-based Human Rights Watch. "Al-Bashir is faced with intense pressure for his arrest from local activists when he tried to visit Nigeria, including court action."

Rights lawyers filed a suit in the Federal High Court on Monday to try to compel Nigeria's government to arrest al-Bashir. And a civil rights group urgently appealed to the International Criminal Court to refer the government to the United Nations Security Council for allowing the visit.

Presidential spokesman Reuben Abati told The Associated Press that al-Bashir had come to attend the African Union summit, and not at Nigeria's invitation. He said Nigeria allowed him to come in line with instructions from the African Union, which has told its 53 member states not to cooperate with the European-based court that some accused of targeting Africans.

The International Criminal Court said it demanded Monday that Nigeria "immediately arrest" the fugitive. It noted that it could refer the Nigerian government to the United Nations Security Council for failing to execute an order of the court, of which it is a member.

A statement issued out last Tuesday recalled that the court has issued two arrest warrants for al-Bashir, in 2009 and 2010, to stand trial for five counts of crimes against humanity, two counts of war crimes and three counts of genocide against the Fur, Masalit and Zagawa tribes in Darfur.

The violence continues in Darfur, where black tribes are battling soldiers loyal to al-Bashir's Arab-led government in Khartoum.

On Tuesday, European Union High Representative Catherine Ashton urged Nigeria "to respect its obligations under international law to arrest and surrender those subject to an

arrest warrant from the ICC."

The United States Embassy said it regrets Nigeria's decision to welcome an indicted criminal. Former colonizer Britain expressed its "disappointment."

The furor around al-Bashir's presence totally eclipsed the conference, which is looking for ways to fight communicable diseases like AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

A statement after the conference ended Tuesday devoted more space to al-Bashir than the health issues, saying Nigeria's welcome of al-Bashir complied with its obligations as a member state of the African Union.

"Any attempt to make an issue out of the attendance of President El-Bashir at the AU Summit will only serve to unnecessarily shift focus away from the important objectives of the Special Summit," it said. "It is therefore a matter between the African Union and the international community."

Leaders from eight other African countries attended the summit, including Kenya, which has shunned al-Bashir.

On Tuesday, a group of human rights activists gathered outside the government secretariat carrying signs saying "No to al-Bashir, No to impunity" and "Nigeria not a safe haven for war criminals."

South Africa, Malawi, Uganda, Kenya, Zambia, and Central Africa Republic "have specifically made clear Bashir will be arrested on their territory, seen to it that other Sudanese officials visit instead of Bashir, relocated conferences or otherwise avoided his visits," according to human rights lawyer Chino Obiagwu, who heads the Nigerian Coalition on the ICC.

Al-Bashir has visited several African countries since the warrants against him were issued, including Chad, Djibouti and Malawi.

The 69-year-old leader seized power in a bloodless coup in 1989.

Sierra Express Media Online

Wednesday, 17 July 2013

Johnny Paul is alive and kicking

Johnny Paul is alive and kicking thumbnail

It is now an open secret that leader of Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) junta regime is here within the walls of Sierra Leone and he is very much alive and kicking.

A close confidante and a relative of the indisposed junta leader who begged for anonymity argued strongly that Retired Brigadier Johnny Paul Koroma is currently residing in a secluded venue in Freetown.

Our source said Koroma has decided to conduct himself in a pensive mood owing to scandals of a Special Court indictment hanging over him. He further boasted that Jonny Paul has been in close collaboration with a renowned Paramount Chief, whose name he did not disclose, and who has promised to facilitate a meeting between Johnny Paul Koroma and President Ernest Bai Koroma in the not too distant future.

During his nine months in power, Johnny Paul proved himself a benevolent dictator thus providing an astute leadership for the people. He was held in captivity in the maximum security prison on charges of treason but was latter liberated by colleagues soldiers in the other ranks and imposed leadership on him after the overthrow of ex-president Tejan Kabbah in the May 25th 1996 coup d'état.

During his hold on to power, Johnny Paul tended to burst international sanctions and embargos when he paid a backlog of salaries to civil servants and teachers; he was able to produce enough food items locally for his people and electricity supply were in abundance.

During the interregnum, Johnny Paul secured the release of 300 ECOMOG soldiers that were captured by the RSLAF on June 2nd.

Johnny Paul Koroma was the first to bring out the rebels of Revolutionary United Front from the jungle to engage themselves in peace talks.

He was a very religious and God fearing soldier who could fondly be remembered on the day he ordered the entire nation to yell the name 'JESUS' at 6 p.m. to solicit divine intervention for an end to the war ,so that the people could enjoy peace again.

The Rtd. Brigadier was later appointed National Chairman for the Consolidation of Peace in the country.

He further demonstrated his belief in the tenets of democracy when he formed the Peoples Liberation Party (PLP), a political party under which umbrella he contested the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections and polled an overwhelmingly significant vote.

Although an international criminal court indictment threatens, much has not been heard of it lately, but many Sierra Leoneans would like to see Johnny Paul Koroma walk through the streets as a free and peaceful citizen, one of the key architects of the peace we are now enjoying.

Scoop World

Friday, 19 July 2013

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/WO1307/S00486/justice-is-for-us-all-statement-by-justice-king.htm>

“Justice is for Us All”: Statement by Special Court President Justice George Gelaga King to Mark International Criminal Justice Day

Eleven years ago, in 2002, we marked two significant moments in the short history of international justice. The first, on January 16th, was the ratification of the Special Court Agreement that set up the Special Court for Sierra Leone. The second, on July 17th, was the ratification of the Rome Statute which, drafted four years earlier – fifteen years ago today, in fact – set up the International Criminal Court.

The establishment of both these courts, along with the ICTY and the ICTR which preceded them and the other tribunals which came after, represent not only milestones in international criminal justice, but also an international awakening of conscience for the plight of victims around the world. Let me state it thus: A just world cannot turn its back on victims, no matter where they may live, and a stable international order cannot rest on a fragile foundation of justice. Justice is about fairness, and due process. Justice is for us all.

As the Special Court for Sierra Leone nears the completion of its mandate in just a few months time, it is fitting on International Criminal Justice Day to consider what we have accomplished.

I have no doubt the Special Court will be remembered for its jurisprudence on such important issues as head of state immunity, on the enlistment, recruitment and use of child soldiers, and on forced marriage as a crime against humanity. We will certainly be remembered as the first international tribunal to try and convict those responsible for abducting children and forcing them to fight in war; for abducting women and girls and forcing them to be “wives” of rebel combatants; and for attacks directed against United Nations peacekeepers. We will also be remembered as the first international court since Nuremberg to indict and to try a sitting head of state, former Liberian President Charles Taylor, who is currently appealing his conviction and sentence.

We should be remembered for our Outreach programme. The Special Court was the first to put people on the ground who, in community town hall meetings, through local radio call-in shows and school visits, with video screenings of the trials in remote villages, by reaching out to victims and civil society groups, and in many other ways brought the workings of the Special Court and an understanding of international justice to the people of Sierra Leone and Liberia.

Soon – very soon in fact – we will be remembered as the first modern tribunal to achieve its mandate and to transition to the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone.

But on International Criminal Justice Day, it is even more important for us to remember those for whom these courts were established – and by this I refer to the victims. We should recall the thousands of men, women and children who were murdered during a decade of conflict in Sierra Leone, who were deprived of their families, or their homes or their villages. We should not forget the thousands of children who were taken forcibly from their families and forced to fight. We must not forget the thousands of women subjected to rape, sexual slavery and forced marriage.

It is my hope for International Criminal Justice Day that we will look back to what we have accomplished and feel honoured to have been a part of it; that we will look forward to what remains to be done and be determined to do even better, and that we will continue to build a consensus aimed at the ending of impunity for international crimes and in bringing about of a more just world.

Policymic

Thursday, 18 July 2013

Witnesses Vanish in Congo Leader's Human-Rights Trial

Three years later, and the trial of Jean-Pierre Bemba Gombo at the International Criminal Court continues to drag on. The ICC arrested Bemba, former vice president of the Democratic Republic of Congo and leader the Congolese militia group and political party “Movement for the Liberation of Congo” (MLC), in 2008 for atrocities committed by his militia in neighboring Central African Republic (CAR) in 2002-2003, and his trial began in 2010.

The five counts of crimes against humanity and war crimes against Bemba include systematic and widespread murder, rape, and pillaging carried out by his MLC militia in CAR. The MLC was recruited by former Central African Republic President Ange-Felix Patasse to help put down a coup attempt in his country. Although Bemba was not in CAR at the time of the crimes, he bears the responsibility for them as commander of the militia.

The trial, held in The Hague, a world away from the remote and impoverished jungle villages of Central Africa where the crimes took place, has hit snag after snag. Not least among the proceeding’s problems is the increasing number of defense witnesses who have disappeared from court, or have failed to show at all.



In the past weeks, proceedings have repeatedly been cancelled and delayed due to the unavailability of defense witnesses. Having already cut the number of witnesses it intends to call from 63 down to 45, the defense may have to cut that further. On Monday, after weeks of delays due to “medical and logistical difficulties” on behalf of the witness “D04-15,” the witness was scheduled to give testimony remotely via video link, but the proceedings were abruptly cancelled. The court will resume August 12 after its summer recess.

In September, witness “D04-07,” who had been testifying at The Hague for three days, mysteriously vanished before completing his testimony. The following week, another witness failed to board his plane to The Hague and was deemed “untraceable.” Witness “D04-07” was a former CAR armed forces intelligence officer and testified about the logistical support the MLC provided to CAR. He also testified that CAR, not Bemba, was the primary commander controlling the criminal militia.

Given the brevity of the allegations, it is no wonder that these defense witnesses may be fearful of laying the guilt on the former CAR administration, an administration that many of these witnesses, especially the former military intelligence officer, would have close ties with.

The U.S., which has refused to sign on to the ICC charter, has criticized the court for not providing adequate protections for the accused. Organizations like Human Rights Watch disagree, claiming the ICC provides fair trials. Other critics insist that the court is a tool of Western imperialism imposed upon developing countries, and point out its entirely African case docket.

The ICC’s Director of Court Services, Marc Dubuisson, said that while the court offers witness protection measures, they received no specific requests for protective services from the defense in this trial. As a result, even

thought the witnesses were protected in court, other security concerns may have arisen outside of the court and in their home countries of residence. Due to the inconvenience and security issues associated with international travel, the court is considering moving operations from The Hague to Arusha, Tanzania (where the International Criminal Tribunal on Rwanda is also located), in an effort to expedite the proceedings.

Bemba's trial illustrates some of the many challenges that the court will continue to face in prosecuting suspected war criminals. The slow-moving nature of the court, the unavailability of witnesses, travel issues, and potential political repercussions of testimonies and decisions, are all factors that are sure to come into play during the upcoming high-profile trial of M23 warlord Bosco Ntaganda, scheduled to begin this September.