

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE



The coronation of Outreach Officer Mohammed SD Kargbo (dressed in white and pictured with Outreach staff) as Pa Komrabai Kargbo. The ceremony took place 12 May in Koya Chiefdom, Port Loko District. The position is ceremonial, and it means he is the chiefdom's custodian of customary rites and law.

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**

Friday, 19 May 2006

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Concord Times
Friday, 19 May 2006

Sub-Regional leaders call..

Take Taylor away

Story: Moses Kargbo

Deputy Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Christopher Staker, Tuesday

evening revealed that many political leaders in the sub-region have made series of calls to the

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Take Taylor away

From page 1

Court asking for former Liberian leader, Charles Taylor, to be taken to The Hague for trial.

Speaking during a symposium organized by the Fourah Bay College Student Union government at the Mary Kinsley Auditorium, Staker said the Special Court has to be courteous in the manner in which it deals with the Taylor issue so as not to do anything that will destabilize Sierra Leone.

"There is an outcry that Mr. Taylor's trial in Sierra Leone may destabilize the sub-region. The Court therefore has to listen to these people because had it not been for the fact that President Johnson-Sirleaf

requested for Mr. Taylor's handing over, and also had it not been that President Obasanjo readily handed him over, he shouldn't have been here," Staker maintained and continued: "Therefore, if there is an outcry that his trial in this country may destabilize the sub-region, then the Court must look into that."

He however said that the Court, being here, makes it more effective and accessible although it also has the power to move the proceedings outside Sierra Leone.

Staker said it does not matter where Taylor is tried but that as long as he is tried he will always be tried under the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Chief Political Officer at the British High Commission, James Roscoe said the Commission is very much interested in the issue of Charles Taylor since they are part of the administration of the Special Court and also a major contributor to it.

He said having Taylor tried here is a threat not just to Sierra Leone but to the sub-region as well, as he noted: "the most important thing is to see the success of his trial". SLAJ president, Alhaji Ibrahim Ben Kargbo said the former Liberian president's acts led to the destruction of many infrastructure in the country and that he should answer for such acts.

"A political leader who breaks laws of his country and other countries must account for those acts," he said. Kargbo said SLAJ does not care where Taylor is tried as long as he is being given a fair trial that is problem free.

Awareness Times
Friday, 19 May 2006

Suspected Special Court spies rearrested

By Juliet Ansumana

American born Micheal Chemilidine and three others, who were recently arrested by the Sierra Leone Police on charges related to espionage and subsequently acquitted and discharged by Magistrate Adrian Fischer for want of evidence, have been rearrested and charged with a new offence.

It could be recalled that the four accused persons were arrested a fortnight ago at the vicinity of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, surreptitiously taking photographs of the court.

It could also be recalled that the said photographing of the court occurred at a time when security had been stepped up at the court which is currently hosting in its detention facility, the former war lord and ex-president of the Republic of Liberia, Charles Taylor. The suspects made an initial appearance before the widely perceived no-nonsense Magistrate

Adrian Fischer a few days later, and were refused bail and sent down to the Pademba Road Prison, pending further hearing.

The next hearing was seen by many as a surprised swift of stance, when without much ado, Magistrate Fischer ordered the acquittal and discharge of the suspects, arguing that the prosecution lacked substantial evidence to continue with the matter. It therefore came as no surprise when news broke out that the suspects have been rearrested and charged with a new offence relating to conspiracy, to be heard this time round by Magistrate Sam Margai of Court No.1. The suspects made their first appearance before Magistrate Margai yesterday, and were denied bail and sent back to Pademba Road Prison. According to the acting Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) Mr. Robin Mason, the new charge is a substantial one, stressing that the issue deals with the security of the state.

Awareness Times

Friday, 19 May 2006

Lawyer Hassan Kamara: I Disagree With You Completely!

Ishmael Al-Sankoh, President- NYC

Standard Times' edition of May 3rd 2006, carried an exclusive interview of a legal luminary, a Sierra Leonean based in Washington DC, Lawyer Hassan Saybana Kamara, who according to that brilliant and thought provoking interview, is one of the defence counsels for the indicted ex-Liberian President, Charles Taylor.

It was indeed a commendable intellectual exercise on the part of Standard Times.

I enjoyed the ceaseless and unchecked grandiloquence of the learned legal pundit ranting in splendid confidence about his intention to defend the former war lord and now indicted war criminal (Charles Taylor), who has to account for the role he played in fueling one of the bloodiest wars ever fought in West Africa.

Charles Taylor has been identified (yet to be proved in the trials) as one of those who bear the greatest responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity perpetuated during the course of the decade long civil war that took place in Sierra Leone.

The Standard Times reporter was articulate enough to insinuate certain explosive facts about the perception of several Sierra Leoneans on the issue of Charles Taylor.

The responses given to those questions were a mixture of sarcasm and blatant human belligerence to the stark realities on the ground.

Mr. Hassan Kamara was blunt to accept some presumptuous facts which bother on wishful thinking. Hear him, "His Excellency Charles Taylor is more likely going to be poisoned while detained at the Special Court."

Does this hypothetical statement not bother on irrational presumption of doom? Or is Mr. Kamara releasing his legal arsenal against the prosecutor of the perceived diabolical hero? Lawyers are indeed interesting people.

Even when their consciences are telling them different things, they show case their talents in defending the absolute untruths. Modern jurisprudence taken centre stage in weak settings; and in a country like Sierra Leone that is yet to sanitize its justice sector, the unfathomable defence theories of Lawyer Hassan Kamara can be food poison for our gullible public.

Thank God the Special Court has an international clock, backed by the UN with all the resources to perform to international standards.

Lawyer Hassan Kamara is merely doing his own work and being watched very closely by the victims of the brutal war (the amputees) who are yet to receive reparation from the government, as recommended in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report.

As a legal luminary with vast experience and training, I am sure Mr. Kamara's conscious or unconscious pronouncements may be due to his dealings with previous case scenarios of this type.

Hear him again. "One could therefore infer that there are many powerful individuals the world over who would want the former president dead or mentally incapacitated before his trial concludes".

This is another explosive bomb in preparedness for a marathon trial of his client- Charles Taylor. I beg to differ Lawyer Kamara. Without inferring, I believe many leaders would wish to see Charles Taylor live so as to share the looted largesse he has accrued over the year in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Where are your facts! Sorry you said you were inferring!

To me, it is against international law for you to continue to address the indicated war criminal as His Excellency!

Mr. Kamara sir, please let us stop deviating from our traditional norms as Sierra Leoneans by disrespecting basic tenets just because we are now swimming in a 'polluted' western culture.

Infact, one must no longer address ex-president Clinton as President Clinton, whatever sentimental attachment one has to him.

Mr. Kamara even indicted the international community with this statement: “Charles Taylor was hounded out of the presidency of Liberia, forced into exile and subsequently illegally arrested and jailed by a racist international criminal conspiracy”.

Lawyers are fearless indeed! But such explosive utterance could only come from those Sierra Leoneans who had spent the greater part of their lives in the Diaspora and completely cut off from the realities back home.

The victims of Charles Taylor’s pernicious wrath will hardly forgive you for such intellectual rhetoric predicated upon the fact that provisions of the law have given legal minds the opportunity and leverage to make unholy statements even in their home land. Let me also arrest the point you stated that President Taylor was elected in an open, free and fair election in Liberia.

Any way, some of us who at least lived very close to the Liberia territory unlike you in the far, far west, are aware of the fact that there was a lot of bickering and sorrow as the people of Liberia were psychologically and physically forced to vote for their ‘public enemy’, just so as to bring peace to their land.

I admire the courage, the determination, and the public spiritedness of Lawyer Hassan Kamara, an ex-Student Union President of FBC (1971- 1973); a Lawyer with vast experience, and a native born of Tonkolili district.

But I am particularly not impressed with your outburst on Charles Taylor, the country’s big catch for the Special Court.

I know you have the right and ability to show case your tremendous talents in law in your place of birth. But I tell you this, the more pompous and itchy you become about this big fish (Charles Taylor), the more your kith and kin in Tonkolili district (who suffered gross human rights abuses from your client) will develop hatred for you.

I am not in any way dampening your legal spirit, but as a youth leader who has spent time in Sierra Leone throughout the war, I need to barricade all frontiers of despicable intention to provide a safe passage for someone who led to the destruction of our beloved country.

That ‘mago mago’ lawyer of Foday Sankoh from Nigeria tasted the bitterness of reckless legal exuberance when he was handled properly by the press and other human right activists in the country.

I strongly believe you do not have monopoly of the law.

The vast majority of Sierra Leoneans may not be legally minded but when the issue of Charles Taylor comes up, every Sierra Leonean is always alert to speak out or provide evidence to make nonsense of those who defend him.

Democrat
Friday, 19 May 2006

Students Demand Taylor's Trial In Sierra Leone

Students of the country's premier university, Fourah Bay College, have demanded that former Liberian president, Charles Taylor, face trial in Sierra Leone.

Speaker after speaker made the clarion call at a symposium organized by the college's student union government at the Mary Kingsley Auditorium on the theme: 'The arrest and indictment of Charles Taylor and its impact on Security and Justice in the Subregion and Sierra Leone in particular.'

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Students Demand Taylor's Trial In Sierra Leone

From Front Page

The students argued that Taylor's trial in the country would create access for Sierra Leonean victims and provide young lawyers the opportunity to participate in the landmark trial.

According to a first year female student, "We don't see any reason why Taylor should be taken to the Hague when the Special Court was established here and has been trying other indictees within the facility."

In his remarks on the theme, the Secretary General of FBC Students' Union, Abdulai Chernor Bah, endorsed the views of his colleagues and asked the Court to sensitize the entire citizenry in order for them to be au fait with the court proceedings.

Another student informed the panelists that Parliament had already rejected the idea of trying Charles Taylor here. The panelists however assured him that the international community would take into consideration the views of Sierra Leoneans in deciding the fate of the erstwhile Liberian leader.

The Deputy Chief Prosecutor of the Court Dr. Chris Staker who was also a member of the panel said the facility was heavily fortified, better secured than many places in the world. He allayed fears raised mainly over the trials' security implications in the subregion. "Where Taylor is tried the rules of procedures of the Court, the judges and prosecutors would be maintained."

SLAJ president Alhaji I.B.Kargbo said his organization strongly believed that the Court would maintain its integrity by giving Taylor a fair trial irrespective of its location.

A student panelist Musa Mewa expressed concern over respect for Taylor's human rights and hoped that the Court would work in the best interest of the country. The Chairman of the occasion George Colledge-Taylor underscored the fact that Taylor's trial has been a subject of controversy in the subregion.

Exclusive

Friday, 19 May 2006

American Spy Back to Pademba Road Prison

By Mohamed Kai

An alleged American spy; Michael Cheimildline and two Sierra Leoneans, Felix Rogers Damusco and

Collin Koroma were yesterday remanded at the maximum prison centre by Magistrate Sam Margai

Contd. page 2

American Spy Back to Pademba Road Prison

From front page

of Court No. 1 in Freetown.

In his application for bail on behalf of the accused persons, Defence Counsel Momoh Fofanah told the well-attended court that the United Nations backed Special Court supersedes Sierra Leone's constitutional provisions. Lawyer Fofanah further told the bench that the provisions in the Special Court's statute is not part of our laws and therefore lacks the legal authority to adjudicate any trial with regards the charges proffered against the accused persons.

He further stated that any offence committed against the Special Court, especially one that involves the unauthorized taking of photographs should be dealt with the Special Court.

According to him, it is illegal for the national court to adjudicate a case against people who are alleged to have violated the Special Court's statute and pleaded with Magistrate Sam Margai to grant bail to the accused persons.

Speaking to this medium whilst being led to his court cell, Michael Chiemildle disclosed that his health status has deteriorated considerably and added that he is totally baffled over the judiciary for re-arresting them when Magistrate Adrian Fisher of Court No. 1 who initially discharged them on the basis of insufficient evidence by the persecutions, only to be re-arrested and charged for the same offence.

The matter comes up for hearing today.

In a separate development, a surgeon specialist who is attached to the government Emergency Hospital at Goderich Daniel John Lawalie, has testified in a murder trial involving Donald Bull. Mr. Lawalie said that he did not recognize the accused in the dock but that he recalled 26 November 2005 and on that day, he was on duty at the hospital when the deceased Emma Bull was brought in a critical condition with blood gushing out from some part of her body where the accused is alleged to stabbed her. He said he subsequently administered treatment to the deceased but Emma Bull succumbed to the cold hands of death due to the deep cuts she received from the alleged accused.

The trial continues.

Awoko

Friday, 19 May 2006

New President for the Special Court for Sierra Leone

Justice George Gelaga King of Sierra Leone has been elected Presiding Judge of the Appeals Chamber, a post which makes him President of the Special Court for a period

of one year.

Justice King will succeed as President Justice Raja Fernando of Sri Lanka, whose term ends on 26 May.

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New President for the Special Court for Sierra Leone

From Page 2

Justice George Gelaga King has been President of the Sierra Leone Court of Appeal and of Court of Appeal of the Gambia.

He served as Sierra Leone Ambassador to France, Spain, Portugal and Switzerland from 1974 to 1978, and was at the same time Sierra Leone's Permanent Representative

to UNESCO. Between 1978 and 1980 he served as Sierra Leone Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

Justice King taught law at the Sierra Leone Law School from 1990 to 2005. He is Chairman of both the Sierra Leone Law Journal and the Gambian National Council for Law Reporting, and was a member of the Sierra

Leone Council of Legal Education. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.

He has been a Judge of the Special Court for Sierra Leone since December 2002.

The Appeals Court Judges also selected Justice Emmanuel Ayoola of Nigeria as Vice-President. He will succeed Justice Renate Winter of Austria.

For di People
Friday, 19 May 2006

The Place To Try Taylor Does Not Matter-Deputy Chief Prosecutor

THE DEPUTY Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Christopher Stober stated on Tuesday that former President of Liberia, Charles Taylor will be tried in the Hague even though some members of the public want him to be tried in this country.

Making a statement at a symposium organized by the Fourah Bay College Students Union on the topic: "The indictment of Charles Taylor; its implication to Sierra Leone's peace and security," Mr Stober noted that: "It does not matter where Charles Taylor is tried as long as he is tried and his trial will be done under the Special Court for Sierra Leone."

avoid instability

He said people in and outside the country have expressed fear over the trial of Charles Taylor in Sierra Leone and stated that it would be fine to listen to those concerns. Mr Stober also stated that the presidents of Liberia and Nigeria have played a great role in bringing Charles Taylor to face the court and they have expressed concern that he be taken outside Sierra Leone in order to avoid instability in the sub region. He therefore assured the people of this country that even if Charles Taylor faces trial outside Sierra Leone the detailed information will be given of the proceedings.

major contributor

The Chief Political Officer of the British High Commission in Sierra Leone, James Ruscoe said his government in Britain has an interest in the Special Court as they are major contributors to the court and that they also form most of the administration. He concluded that having Taylor tried in this country is a threat not just to Sierra Leone, but the sub region as a whole.

The president of the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists, Alhaji Ibrahim Ben-Kargbo said Taylor's involvement in the conflict in Sierra Leone led to the destruction of lives and property for which he should answer. He said his association does not care about where Charles Taylor is tried as long as the issue of impunity is addressed.

For di People

Friday, 19 May 2006

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GELAGA-KING:-now heads the Special Court

Voice of America

Thursday, 18 May 2006

Charles Taylor Trial Awaiting Transfer To The Hague

By Howard Lesser

Washington, DC

Since March 29th, former Liberian president Charles Taylor has been held in a detention center in Freetown, Sierra Leone. He is to face trial for crimes allegedly committed during the Sierra Leone civil war in the 1990s. Talks are underway to have Taylor transferred to The Hague in the Netherlands, where the Special Court on Sierra Leone would judge him in a more secure environment.

The Dutch government has agreed to host the trial on the condition that Taylor, if convicted, be jailed in a third nation.

Attorney Elise Keppler is Counsel to the International Justice Program of the New York-based organization, Human Rights Watch (HRW). She spoke with English to Africa reporter, Howard Lesser, about the important role of the European community in this situation.

“From our perspective, countries really should be lining up to address this issue, and given that the Court requested the transfer of Taylor’s trial on the basis of security concerns, and in fact, the Liberian President has endorsed this request and echoed concerns about security, we think this issue really needs to be urgently resolved.”

Keppler says HRW believes the European community can take a number of approaches to resolving this problem. “If a particular E-U state doesn’t step forward, we see this as a collective E-U issue and think that the E-U needs to come together and collectively commit to take Taylor if convicted and figure out the details later.”

After three days of discussion, the participants at the Brussels meeting have failed to reach a decision.

Keppler says the next round of deliberations will consist of an EU ministerial meeting with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) planned for Monday in Vienna, Austria. She says, “This issue needs to be dealt with at that meeting and is a crucial opportunity for the European Union to step up and do the right thing by offering to take Taylor if convicted.”

The Independent

Friday, 19 May 2006

Crimes against humanity: Anatomy of an arms dealer

How a Dutch Del Boy went from trading in used cars to acting as right-hand man for a murderous dictator.

By Daniel Howden

For those that remember it in its heyday, the Hotel Africa was like a scene straight out of Casablanca. A seedy mix of businessmen, flight attendants, government ministers and cheap prostitutes would prop up the bar. There was even a piano. Patrons remember a world of Montecristo cigars and Rolex watches.

Outside in the equatorial African sun, expats would float in the swimming pool, sipping cocktails while looking out over the Atlantic Ocean. Liberia's VIPs would wander among the resort's 52 villas and the 300 rooms of the five-star main hotel.

At the centre of this world within a world was Mr Guus, a Dutch entrepreneur, hotelier, timber trader, dealer in luxury cars, gambling tycoon and everyone's friend. Anybody who needed anything in Liberia went to Guus Kouwenhoven, a tall, thick-set Dutchman in trademark gold-rimmed sunglasses.

A former guard, who gives his name only as Timothy, remembers a who's who of Monrovia coming and going from the hotel's Bacardi Club disco and the casino on the floor above. "Mr Guus had a lot of contact with government officials," he remembers. "Every day there would be a parade of senators and ministers."

Gert Jan Hoogland, a fellow Dutchman who tried his luck in Liberia during the Eighties, remembers him as the oil in the west African country's machine: "Guus really knew everybody. Every important man with any power in Liberia conducted business at Guus's kitchen table. It was called the 'kitchen cabinet'."

Kouwenhoven himself recalls it as a golden age. "Everybody thought I was crazy when I took over the hotel," he told the Dutch magazine *De Nieuwe Revu*. "To get people in I arranged for entertainment: a discotheque, a restaurant, a pool. Soon the hotel became the calling card for Liberia; the oasis of Monrovia."

These days Mr Guus's accommodation is more modest. He spends his days in a holding cell in The Hague, back home in Holland, awaiting a possible life sentence as the first arms dealer to be tried for crimes against humanity. The eight counts against him include breaking a UN arms embargo to deliver arms and logistical support to a crazed dictator in return for a steady supply of illegal rainforest timber and blood diamonds. Through his

firm, the Oriental Timber Company, he is alleged to have run a private militia of 2,500 men and boys. Human-rights lawyers say the case could set a vital precedent in bringing to book European businessmen who are guilty of large-scale human rights abuses abroad.

According to Global Witness, a British group that investigates the use of natural resources to finance conflict and human-rights abuses, the case against Mr Kouwenhoven is vital for the future of the international law, and the stability of Africa itself.

For the boy from Den Bosch it's an inglorious end to a remarkable journey that took him from used-car salesman to the right-hand man of Charles Taylor, the disgraced former Liberian president, who himself faces charges of attempted genocide at the war crimes tribunal in Sierra Leone. To those who knew Mr Kouwenhoven as a young man, it might be less of a surprise. "He was a bit of a Del Boy even back in those days," says one old friend who prefers not to be named. "I believe he got into trouble while he was in the army for stealing gasoline."

After military service he embarked on a career of buying and selling anything he could get his hands on, starting with tax-free cars for Nato personnel and moving on to bulk supplies of rice from South-east Asia.

By the Seventies, he was a regular in Amsterdam nightspots such as the bar Castel on the Leidseplein. An old bartender remembers him well: "He was a flashy guy with the gift of the gab, fast cars and fast women. He would be out with the property [developer] guys every Monday and it would be champagne and caviar all round."

By this stage Mr Kouwenhoven was criss-crossing the world, spotted in diplomatic parties in Beirut and Los Angeles. In fact, his career nearly came to an end in LA after he was caught in an FBI sting, attempting - along with his then business partner Peter Rombouts - to fence six stolen paintings, including a Rembrandt. Sentenced to two years, he served only 17 days and was deported from the US. Mr Kouwenhoven referred to it as his "greatest mistake".

This *mea culpa* over a stolen painting is at odds with the scene that confronted David Crane, a professor of law, who was sent to neighbouring Sierra Leone as special prosecutor by the UN secretary general Kofi Annan in January 2002. "When I arrived in Freetown it was 90 per cent destroyed ... There was no running water or electricity. We showered in the rain, which was cleaner and more plentiful."

What Professor Crane found, beyond the heavily guarded walls of compounds like Hotel Africa defies description. "You are going to have to believe the unbelievable," he says. Plagued since the early Eighties by coup attempts and later by civil war, Liberia's rival ethnic fighters outdid each other in brutal savagery.

Arbitrary rule and economic collapse culminated in civil war when Mr Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) militia overran much of the countryside, entering the capital in 1990. The deposed president, Samuel Doe, was hacked to death with machetes.

A once flourishing economy built on exports of rubber, coffee and cocoa, iron ore, diamonds and gold had been channelled into the coffers of a few individuals. Fighting intensified as the rebels battled each other, along with the Liberian army and west African peacekeepers. In 2003 the United Nations estimated that as many as 1.2 million people had lost their lives in the most appalling circumstances.

"They didn't just die, they died in horrible agony," says Professor Crane. "Imagine standing in a mass grave of dead children. I could describe to you the horror but you wouldn't take it in, you couldn't ... People like Kouwenhoven did this."

The government had become one vast criminal enterprise. By the Nineties, Mr Guus was the director of two lumber companies. One of those, the Oriental Timber Company, was Liberia's largest, thought to control up to 40 per cent of the country's valuable hardwood rainforests.

According to the prosecution in The Hague, Mr Kouwenhoven's company used a fleet to export tons of tropical hardwoods as far as Greece, France and China. His ships would come into the port in Buchanan, unload Serbian and Chinese arms, bought via a Russian arms dealer - a regular at Hotel Africa - then load up with freshly felled rainforest timber.

The prosecution has presented ships' manifests and logbooks, backed up by personal testimony from former employees of OTC and members of Mr Kouwenhoven's militia. Timber was the Liberian government's biggest source of income, worth \$100m (£53m) a year, the UN says.

The OTC was granted huge timber concessions in Liberia's ancient rainforest and the environmental impact of the illegal logging that saw trade increase tenfold in the space of four years was massive. The rainforest is home to 9,000 species of plants and 1,300 species of vertebrate animals. According to Greenpeace, it is the last bastion of the forest elephant in west Africa.

"These were thugs," says Professor Crane of Mr Taylor and his Dutch business partner. "Small-time crooks and bit-players who took advantage of the absence of law. They were nobodies. But they became mobsters who will go down in history as horrors. They thrive on the corruption and greed in the dark corners of the world."

OTC was given permission by President Taylor to build roads to export the timber and these roads were in turn used to funnel arms to rebel groups in border areas destabilising Sierra Leone, said prosecutors.

Professor Crane, the author of the indictment against Mr Taylor, who is now in jail in Sierra Leone, awaiting probable trial at The Hague, adds: "(Mr Kouwenhoven) represents the kind of financier that has ruined large parts of West Africa for personal gain. He was a close intimate of Charles Taylor. We exposed the rule of blood diamonds, rainforest timber and guns. What we found was horrendous."

In court this month, Mr Kouwenhoven's lawyer, Inez Weski, painted a very different portrait of her client. "There is no proof that my client committed any offence," she said in her closing arguments. According to the defence, UN and NGO reports accusing OTC of illegal logging and exchanging guns for timber were an attempt by opponents of Mr Taylor to cut him off from his biggest source of income. She further claimed prosecution witnesses implicating Mr Kouwenhoven had been paid for testifying and thus could not be trusted. A spokeswoman for the Dutch prosecutors' office said that defence claims that witnesses were paid off were laughable. Under the legal system in the Netherlands, witnesses are entitled to a living expenses allowance of \$30 per day.

Mr Kouwenhoven claims he is the victim of a conspiracy and was never close to Mr Taylor. "I never once ate with him or played tennis with him. We were not the best of friends. My heart stopped every time I was called to go up and see him," he said.

"I never once personally experienced the war. We just knew there was a war through the media. We never heard anything about the killing of civilians."

But that is not how the prosecution and its legion of witnesses remembered it. According to their testimony, OTC's 2,500-strong militia was at the beck and call of Mr Taylor.

"Guus knew exactly what was going on," said Natalie Ashworth from Global Witness. She says Taylor used to call him his "pepper bush", a local reference to someone very close.

The two may be close again very soon. Both Sierra Leone and the newly elected government of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in Liberia want Mr Taylor transferred to the war crimes tribunal at The Hague. Mr Kouwenhoven, who had no idea he was being investigated by Dutch authorities, was picked up in France and transferred to the Netherlands last year.

For those who spent years putting Mr Taylor and his associates in the dock it can be an unsettling experience to see them there. "They look ordinary when they're sitting in the courtroom," said Professor Crane. "But if you look into their eyes you see a darkness that is uncanny. The devil does walk this earth. It will make your hair stand on end when they look at you."

Additional reporting by Vincent Smits

African News Dimension

Thursday, 18 May 2006

Charles Taylor's party begins 'image makeover'

Monrovia (AND) Former Liberian President Charles Taylor's party, The National Patriotic Party (NPP), has set up a human rights center that promotes human rights. Taylor himself is being held at the United Nations War Crimes Court in Sierra Leone for war crimes.

The human rights center which is named, "Center for the Defense of Human Rights and Legal Services," is currently behind the advocacy for the creation of a war crime court in Liberia, NPP officials told AND in Monrovia.

According some officials of NPP who spoke to AND the decision to set up the center is to gather data on human rights abuses especially those that will be committed under the government of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

The former Taylor's officials who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the center is the leading force behind the advocacy of a war crime court in Liberia and has already began the documentation of human rights abuses.

According to them, Mr. Taylor alone is not responsible for the persecution of the Liberian civil war which, eventually spilled into other countries.

The NPP officials said the turn over of. Taylor by President Sirleaf, is an act of betrayal alleging that she too, assisted and participated in the war that was prosecuted by their leader. Taylor's legal counsel Francis Garlawolo, is one of those reported to be heading the legal center.

By Patrick Wrokpoh

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 18 May 2006

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

International Clips on Liberia

Fearful Liberians return home after night of ethnic clashes

By Zoom Dosso

GANTA, Liberia, May 18, 2006 (AFP) - Thousands of people who fled ethnic clashes in the northern Liberian city of Ganta started trekking home Thursday after fleeing an attack by rival ethnic militias.

The Boston Globe 18 May 2006

AFTER FLEEING LIBERIA IN POVERTY, EMIGRE RETURNS WITH BOUNTY

Raja Mishra

Joseph Deranamie yesterday embarked from Logan International Airport for his homeland of Liberia bearing hundreds of shoes, mindful of the time in his life when simple sneakers were the greatest of luxuries. The 49-year-old Worcester resident, who spent a decade in squalid African refugee camps before immigrating here, recently completed a charity drive that gathered enough shoes, clothes, furniture, and useful odds and ends including a van to fill a 40-foot-long cargo container. During the next three weeks, he will deliver it all to Liberia's poor. "The majority are in extreme poverty. There's no schools, no healthcare. The infrastructure is broken down," Deranamie said. "They need help."

International Clips on West Africa

Ivory Coast's long-awaited pre-vote census kicks off

ABIDJAN, May 18, 2006 (AFP) - Ivory Coast's Prime Minister Charles Konan Banny Thursday officially launched a process to issue identity documents to people so they can vote in UN-supervised general and presidential elections that must be held by October 31, witnesses said. Banny set in motion one of the long-awaited exercise at Meagui, some 350 kilometers (220 miles) west of the capital at a ceremony witnessed by several hundred people including Justice Minister Mamadou Kone.

Last-minute dispute delays Ivory Coast disarmament

By Herve Bar

ABIDJAN, May 18, 2006 (AFP) - The disarming of warring factions in Ivory Coast, a crucial step in a delicate peace process, was delayed Thursday by a last-minute dispute, rebels said. An 11th-hour meeting on Wednesday between loyalist and rebel military leaders failed to agree on practical details of an operation to regroup fighters, and talks were not due to resume until May 31.

Local Media – Newspapers

Calms Returns to Ganta, Nimba County Following Ethnic Tension

(Daily Observer, The News, The Inquirer, Liberian Express)

- Ganta City in Nimba County returned to calm yesterday following tension, which was sparked by widespread rumours that members of the Mandingo ethnic group were preparing for a war to repossess their properties, including land from the Manos and Gios. UNMIL Bangladeshi troops under the command of Lt.-Col. Abdul Mohammed Hoque assured the residents that all was calm and they could go about their normal businesses.

Rivercess County By-Election in Runoff

(Daily Observer and Liberian Express)

- The National Elections Commission (NEC) yesterday announced a runoff in the Rivercess County legislative by-election as no one of the five candidates won an outright majority. NEC Chairman James Fromoyan said that the contestants in the rerun election would be Elizabeth Williams of Unity Party with 41 percent of the total votes cast and New DEAL Movement's Charles Bartee with 25 percent.

ECOWAS Launches Peace Fund

(Daily Observer)

- Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Executive Secretary Mohammed Ibn Chambas this week launched the ECOWAS Peace Fund in Monrovia during a workshop on the ECOWAS drafted programs. The Peace Fund is to manage donor contributions earmarked for peace and sub-regional security. It will also provide funding for the rebuilding of devastated local communities as in the cases of Liberia and Sierra Leone, Dr. Chambas added.

Truth Commission Chairman Attends International Conference

(The Analyst and The Informer)

- Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Chairman Jerome Verdier recently traveled to the U.S. to participate in an International Center for Transitional Justice-sponsored conference on Gender and Reparation, a TRC release said.

Local Media – Radio Veritas *(News monitored yesterday at 18:45 pm)*

President Calls for a Liberal Telecommunications System in Liberia

- In her message to mark World Telecommunications Day yesterday, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf said that the civil war had hampered development of Liberia's telecommunications industry. President Johnson-Sirleaf said she has

authorized the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications to ensure that the sector is liberalized to meet international standards.
(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

African Development Bank Prepares Development Package for Liberia

- Speaking at the annual meeting of the African Development Bank (ADB) in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso recently, ADB President Donald Kabaruka announced that an assistance package for Liberia was being organized. President Johnson-Sirleaf had earlier called on the Bank to adopt practical measures to help Liberia to recover from its current problems, including joblessness.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Peacemakers Take Steps to Resolve Land Dispute in Nimba County

- Correspondents said yesterday that efforts were underway to prevent further disputes over land and other property in Nimba County. County's officials, tribal leaders, UNMIL and state security officials met in Ganta Wednesday to address the problem.

(Also reported on Star Radio)

Disarmament Commission Chairman Warns Ex-Combatants Against Rioting

- Speaking at a skills training center for women yesterday, the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (NCDDRR) Executive Director Moses Jarbo urged ex-combatants to refrain from rioting.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio)

Workshop on Agriculture Investment Opens Today

- According to a Ministry of Agriculture press release issued yesterday, a workshop focusing on priority-investment projects in the agriculture sector will start in Monrovia today under the auspices of the Ministry and the Food and Agriculture Organization. The workshop will also discuss a draft resolution from an African Union assembly calling on African governments to allocate 10 percent of the national budget to implementing agriculture projects.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

STAR RADIO (News culled from website today at 09:00 am)

Governance Commission Chairman Calls for Constitutional Changes

- Governance Reform Commission (GRC) Chairman Dr. Amos Sawyer has called for some amendments to the Constitution of Liberia to ensure the participation of local governments in decisions related to national development.

Complete versions of the UNMIL International Press Clips, UNMIL Daily Liberian Radio Summary and UNMIL Liberian Newspapers Summary are posted each day on the UNMIL Bulletin Board. If you are unable to access the UNMIL Bulletin Board or would like further information on the content of the summaries, please contact Mr. Jeddi Armah at armahj@un.org.