

**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

as at:

Friday, 2 December 2011

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Local NewsHundreds Walk for Peace / *Awoko*

Page 3

International NewsTaylor's Verdict Due Next Month? / *The New Dawn*

Page 4

Ivory Coast Gbagbo Joins Taylor / *New Dawn*

Pages 5-6

Mexico Seeks Sierra Leone's Support / *Embassy of the Republic of Sierra Leone– Ethiopia*

Pages 7-8

Gambia's Fatou Bensouda to be New ICC Chief Prosecutor / *BBC*

Pages 9-10

Awoko

Friday, 2 December 2011

Hundreds walk for peace

By Abibatu Kamara

People from all walks of life including school children and disabled persons have converged at the Special Court for Sierra Leone after a peaceful walk from Up-Gun Roundabout in the east-end and Lumley Roundabout in the west-end respectively.

The programme was organized by the Sierra Leone Peace Museum and the theme was "Sierra Leone Na we all yone walk for peace."

At the Special Court, the Registrar, Binta Mansaray, thanked the Court Interactive Programme, One Family People and the West Africa Human Rights Commission for their efforts in making the programme a success.

UNIPSIL/OHCHR Representative, Beatriz Baldin, said

that justice should be given to all war victims and they must be respected at all times.

Speaking on behalf of the government, Mrs. Lona Frendu, gave government's full support to the project at all times.

Joseph Dumbuya, Site Project Consultant, Special Court, explained the overview of the project (Peace Museum) and encouraged all to contribute meaningfully towards the success of the project.

Edward Conteh, President of War Victims Association and Abdul Konta, President of Children's Forum Network were also key speakers.

The programme was climaxed by a musical performance led by the disabled dance band and a showcase of an architectural design of Special Court and its environs by the Mongolian contingent.

The New Dawn (Liberia)

Friday, 2 February 2011

<http://www.thenewdawnliberia.com>

Taylor's Verdict Due Next Month?

The UN backed Special Court for Sierra Leone says it is yet to set an exact date for the handling down of its verdict in the Charles Taylor's trial, though it said it could be next month, January 2012.



Taylor is facing eleven counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity and other serious violations of international law, for the war in Sierra Leone.

The arguments in his trial ended some eight months ago after a three and a half year of proceedings. Since then the court is yet to decide whether evidence presented during the trial indicates

Taylor's guilt or innocence.

The UN backed Special Court for Sierra Leone Communications Director Peter Andersen told this paper via telephone Thursday that he could not give an exact date for the ruling but it could be early next year.

Mr. Andersen said this was so because the court had earlier planned to give its ruling in September of this year but that was pushed to October and later December and as it stands the court is now thinking of early next year, which is January but again warning that he could not be definite.

Mr. Andersen had informed this paper in an earlier publication that the delay in the trial's verdict is related to the more than 50,000 pages of transcripts, the 1,100+ exhibits, and other matters relating to the judicial process.

The judges received all of the evidence tendered by the parties—amounting to testimony from 115 witnesses and 1097 exhibits.

There had been speculations that the delay was tied to the just ended presidential and legislative polls here. But Andersen in an email in October that it was only an unconfirmed report.

“Also, if you have "unconfirmed reports" that the judges are taking the Liberian elections into consideration, and then I can only say that it is "unconfirmed speculation" by people not close to the court. Those of us here know that the delay has nothing to do with politics,” Mr. Andersen added.

New Dawn (Liberia)

Thursday, 1 December 2011

Ivory Coast Gbagbo Joins Taylor

Former Ivorian President Laurent Gbagbo has joined ex-president Charles Taylor in The Hague as he faces four charges of crimes against humanity, the International Criminal Court (ICC) has said.

Gbagbo accused of being an "indirect co-perpetrator" of murder, rape, persecution and other inhuman acts, during the aftermath of the Ivorian elections is the second former West African president to be tried in The Hague, though not by the same court.

Mr. Gbagbo, 66, unlike Mr. Taylor had been under house arrest in his native Ivory Coast for some time now until Tuesday night when he was flown from Ivory Coast and placed in a detention cell in The Hague early Wednesday.

He is the first former head of state to be detained to face trial in The Hague by the ICC since its founding in 2002, a BBC report said. Taylor is being tried by the UN backed Special Court for Sierra Leone, although the court is sitting in The Hague.

Human rights groups have welcomed his arrest, but also cautioned against "victor's justice". There are fears a perception of this could stoke further tensions in Ivory Coast, says the BBC's Anna Holligan in The Hague.

'Widespread and systematic'

The ICC has been investigating four months of conflict in Ivory Coast, which began when Mr Gbagbo refused to give up power to Alassane Ouattara in the presidential election of December 2010.

The charges relate to events between 16 December 2010 and 12 April 2011, the ICC said. Prosecutors say about 3,000 people died in violence by both sides and there were other abuses including sexual violence.

The attacks Mr Gbagbo is accused of "were committed pursuant to an organizational policy and were also widespread and systematic as they were committed over an extended time period, over large geographic areas, and following a similar general pattern", the ICC said.

Mr Gbagbo is expected to make an initial appearance in court within a few days. Before his transfer to The Hague, he had been under house arrest in Korhogo in the north of Ivory Coast since April, when he was ousted with the help of UN and French forces who carried out air strikes.

ICC chief prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo visited the country in mid-October as part of the inquiry. He said his investigation would be impartial and that he would focus on up to six people who, he said, were most to blame for the violence.

A statement read on Ivorian national television, signed by state prosecutor Simplicie Kouadio, said the ICC had issued an arrest warrant for Mr. Gbagbo last week. The warrant was issued secretly and he received it on Tuesday in the presence of his lawyers. The transfer comes at a sensitive time - just two weeks ahead of legislative elections.

Human rights groups welcomed the arrest warrant but said that, while Mr Gbagbo's forces had triggered the violence, both sides had been implicated in grave crimes.

"Victims of abuse meted out by forces loyal to President Ouattara [also] deserve to see justice done," said Elise Keppler of Human Rights Watch.

'Victor's justice'

Laurent Gbagbo and his wife, Simone, after his arrest on 11 April 2011 Laurent Gbagbo has been detained since his arrest in April after he refused to stand down as president

His arrest was a "welcome step", Ali Ouattara of human rights group Cote d'Ivoire Coalition for the ICC (CI-CPI) said in a statement, quoted by Reuters news agency.

"But it is critical that the court investigate all serious crimes committed by all parties since the outbreak of armed conflict in 2002."

In a statement to Reuters, an adviser to Mr Gbagbo, Toussaint Alain, called the former president's transfer "victor's justice... a political manoeuvring designed to liquidate President Gbagbo".

But Mr Moreno-Ocampo vowed in a statement that Mr Gbagbo would not be the last person to be brought to account, saying: "Ivorian victims will see justice for massive crimes: Mr Gbagbo is the first to be brought to account, there is more to come."

Although Ivory Coast is not one of the member countries covered by the ICC, it has accepted its jurisdiction. Mr. Gbagbo is also being investigated by Ivorian justice officials for "economic crimes". He has been charged with looting, armed robbery and embezzlement.

Laurent Gbagbo was the president of Ivory Coast for 10 years, during which time the country was virtually partitioned by civil war.

Embassy of the Republic of Sierra Leone – Ethiopia

Thursday, 1 December 2011

Press Release

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA



P. O. Box 5619

Mexico seeks Sierra Leone's support

The Charge d' Affaires of the Mexican Embassy to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Madam Paola Ramirez on Thursday 1st December 2011 sought Sierra Leone's support for Dr. Javier Laynez's candidacy to the International Criminal Court (ICC) for the term, 2012-2021.

The elections will be held during the Tenth Session of the Assembly of States Parties in New York from 12th-21st December 2011.

Madam Ramirez made the request when she paid a courtesy visit on His Excellency Mr. Andrew Gbebay Bangali, Sierra Leone's Ambassador to Addis Ababa to present Dr. Laynez's Candidature.

She said that Dr. Laynez has a strong background in international legal issues, adding that he played an instrumental role in reforming the Mexican judicial system.

"I am asking your Government to support the candidacy of Dr. Laynez," she said.

Responding, Ambassador Andrew Gbebay Bangali said he was glad that the Mexican Envoy came to solicit his country's support for the ICC position.

Ambassador Bangali informed her about Sierra Leone's Candidate, Honourable Justice Rosolu John Bankole Thompson who is also vying to fill one of the vacant seats allocated to the African Region on the ICC at the forthcoming elections.

He said that Justice Thompson has served as a Member of the Trial Chamber 1 of the United Nations backed Special Court for Sierra Leone and has also held different positions in the country's judicial system.

"I will communicate your country's request to Headquarters for a decision to be taken on it. In the meantime, we will request your country's support for our Candidate on a reciprocal basis," he said and thus informed her that Mexico's Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York was well aware of Justice Thompson's Candidature.

Madam Ramirez assured Ambassador Bangali that she will notify her principals accordingly about Justice Thompson's Candidacy.

The duo also discussed among other things, the workings of the African Union Commission (AUC) and the Commission's upcoming elections for the positions of Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Commissioners which many people believe is going to be keenly contested.

Dr. Nkosazana Clarice Dlamini Zuma from South Africa will be contesting against the incumbent Chairperson, Dr. Jean Ping who is seeking a second term of office.

The meeting was also attended by Mr. Amadu Koroma, Sierra Leone's Deputy Head of Mission to Ethiopia and Mr. Francis Kandeh, Counsellor and Head of Chancery, Embassy of the Republic of Sierra Leone in Addis Ababa.

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BBC

Thursday, 1 December 2011

Gambia's Fatou Bensouda to be new ICC chief prosecutor

Fatou Bensouda in Abidjan on 28 June 2011 Fatou Bensouda is currently the deputy chief prosecutor at the ICC

Fatou Bensouda is set to be named the new International Criminal Court chief prosecutor, diplomats say.

The 50-year-old lawyer from The Gambia serves as the deputy to Luis Moreno-Ocampo, whose term ends next year.

She previously worked as a legal adviser at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in Tanzania.

The ICC's cases are currently all in Africa, and some of the continent's leaders have accused it of only pursuing Africans.

A successor to Luis Moreno-Ocampo will be formally elected by the Assembly of States Parties - the body representing the 119 countries that support the tribunal - at its annual meeting in New York on 12 December.



However, the president of the ASP, Liechtenstein's UN ambassador Christian Wenaweser, says she is now the only candidate.

It had been agreed that Mr Ocampo's successor should be an African and the only other candidate, Tanzania's Mohamed Chande Othman, is said to have withdrawn.

Profile: Fatou Bensouda

- Grew up in Gambian capital Banjul
- Studied law in Lagos, Nigeria
- Joined Gambia's justice ministry in 1987 as a deputy public prosecutor
- Became Gambian attorney general and justice minister in 1998
- Worked for Tanzania-based International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
- Deputy Chief Prosecutor at the ICC since 2004

"I will recommend to the [12 December] meeting that, based on my consultations, we go forward with a single candidate, Fatou Bensouda," Mr Wenaweser told Reuters news agency by telephone.

The ICC, based in The Hague, is the world's first permanent war crimes tribunal and began operating in 2002.

Ms Bensouda told the AFP news agency that she was working for the victims of Africa. "That's where I get my inspiration and my pride," she said.
African cases

Nine years after the court came into being it still has not secured a conviction.

The ICC is currently holding suspects in custody who are accused of committing atrocities in the following countries:

Democratic Republic of Congo
Central African Republic
Kenya
Ivory Coast

Arrest warrants have also been issued relating to alleged crimes in Uganda, Libya and Darfur in Sudan.

While preliminary investigations are being carried out into suspected crimes in other countries, including Afghanistan and Georgia, no arrest warrant has been issued for a non-African.

Laurent Gbagbo and his wife Simone at the Golf Hotel in Abidjan after their arrest on April 11, 2011
Former Ivory Coast President Laurent Gbagbo is the most high-profile suspect to be taken to the ICC

The former Ivory Coast President, Laurent Gbagbo, arrived in The Hague early on Wednesday after being flown from Ivory Coast. He is accused of being an "indirect co-perpetrator" of murder, rape, persecution and other inhuman acts following the elections in Ivory Coast last year.

He is the first former head of state to be taken to The Hague for prosecution.

Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir is wanted by the ICC for alleged war crimes in Darfur. He was the first serving head of state to be indicted by the ICC.

The African Union says that its member states should "disregard" the ICC's arrest warrant for Mr Bashir, arguing that arresting Sudan's president would hamper the search for peace in Darfur.