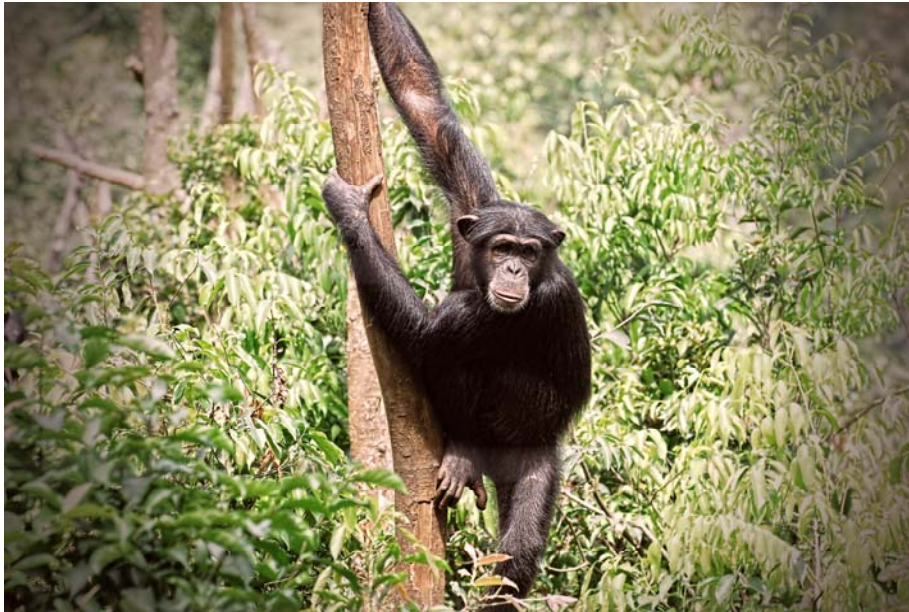


**SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE  
OUTREACH AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE**



**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:**

Thursday, 2 June 2011

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.  
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact  
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Standard Times  
Thursday, 2 June 2011

## Interview with Joseph Kamara, Acting Prosecutor for the Special Court (Part II)

(Courtesy Angela Stavrianou,  
*The Hague in the MONITOR*)  
(PART 2)

BY ISSA B. M. KAMARA

In two previous editions of Monday March 22 and Tuesday March 23, 2010 I presented to you "ADMISSABILITY OF HEARSAY EVIDENCE IN THE SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE" courtesy Angela Stavrianou in the MONITOR.

Today, I have decided to bring to you something close to the minds of many Sierra Leoneans who went through the brutal rebel war and its resultant disastrous consequences as concerns the ongoing trial of Charles Taylor. Read part two of the interview below.

### Interview with Joseph Kamara Former Acting Prosecutor For the Special Court for Sierra Leone

By Angela Stavrianou, The Hague

**CARL:** *What do you think the Special Court has achieved to date, both in Sierra Leone and in terms of International Criminal Law?*

**Kamara:** The Special Court has achieved so much for Sierra Leone, and for the sub-region. Let's start with what it has done to ensure peace.

Without the Special Court, none of the leaders of the rebel groups that tore this country apart would have ever faced justice. They would be free to walk the streets of the country's cities and towns with impunity. In the Lome Peace Accord., the former rebel leader Foday Sankoh was made Vice President and the RUF gained control over the country's diamond mining areas. And we all know the violence that occurred after this accord.

Who can say with confidence there would have been no return to the violence and suffering brought by these leaders?

Further, Charles Taylor would today be a free man in the sub-region, and free to plan as he wished in Liberia and for Sierra Leone, instead of facing justice in a court of law for the crimes he is accused of.

You cannot put a price on peace, and you cannot put a price on justice. The work of the Court has been one of the reasons Sierra Leone and even Liberia has been



IBM Kamara

able to move forward since the dark days of the war.

The BBC and the Special Court have both conducted public opinion surveys, and the results show that the majority of Sierra Leoneans strongly support the work of the Court. They believe it has made a difference to their lives and to the country.

The Court has also greatly encouraged the respect for the rule of law domestically, and has spread knowledge of the importance of this principle throughout the country. The Outreach department has been key in this regard, spreading the message of the Court's work and its principles to every city and town in the country.

The Court has also undertaken activities designed to leave behind a positive legacy. The hope of the SCSL and the OTP is that it has and will achieve something far beyond its mandate and impart skills, legal and non-legal principles and even infrastructure to the country.

One area where this legacy is being ensured is in the trainings the SCSL provides. Hundreds of police officers, lawyers, students and even Parliamentarians and judges have attended seminars or received trainings on a wide variety of topics, from International Humanitarian Law to criminal investigations practices.

As far as International Law, the list of key precedents established by the Court is truly impressive: the world's first recognitions of the use of child soldiers and of forced marriage as crimes under international humanitarian law, and the first ever convictions on these charges; the first-ever convictions on the charge of Attacks on UN Peacekeeper. These rulings have the potential to help protect civilians and soldiers alike in the conflict zones of the world.

Finally, the example of the Charles Taylor on trial, like Slobodan Milosevic at the Yugoslavia tribunal before him, shows that no man is above the law.

It shows that when it comes to indicted accused war criminals, it's not a question of if they will face justice, but when.

**CARL: What is the Prosecution's timeline for the Cross-Examination of Taylor?**

**Kamara:** We are going to try and be as efficient as we can, while still doing justice to our need to effectively challenge Mr. Taylor on the truthfulness of his testimony. We do not intend to take as long as the 13 weeks the Defence took for the direct-examination.

How directly or evasively Mr. Taylor chooses to answer our questions will be a significant factor in how quickly we can proceed.

The judges' 30 November ruling affirmed the Prosecution's right under the established principles of international law to use new materials to impeach the credibility of the Accused. We've

already tested the credibility of Mr. Taylor's claims on a number of fronts, and our cross has only just begun, he challenged us to bring forth evidence of the wealth he accumulated while in power. We were pleased to do this. And throughout our cross we will confront his claim that he was a peacemaker in Sierra Leone. Our evidence shows just the opposite.

**CARL: What is the proposed use of the Special Court facilities in Freetown following the trial?**

**Kamara:** Discussions are ongoing between the Court, the Government, and also the international community, but no final decisions have yet been reached.

One aspect of the Court that has already been determined is the

former prison facility for the inditees who have now all been transferred to Rwanda. That facility has been transferred over to the Government for their own use as a prison facility for women and possibly for younger offenders. As for the rest of the Court, one of the possibilities is to use it as a judicial training facility, possibly for the ECOWAS countries. There is also a planned museum and/or memorial of some kind on the Court premises that will be open to the public. This will focus on the civil war and to a smaller extent on the history of the work of the Court and the cases.

**CARL: Who are you expecting the Defence to call in support of their case?**



**Kamara:** Although they have filed summaries for some 260 witnesses and loudly proclaimed their preference for a public trial during the Prosecution case in chief, the Defence successfully applied to keep the names of those witnesses hidden from the Prosecution until 21 days before each witness testifies. So, to date, the Prosecution is only aware of the names of few Defence witnesses in addition to the Accused.

We hope that however many witnesses they are allowed to call, the Defence proceed with their case in an efficient and responsible manner, as the Prosecution, sought to do during its case.

**CARL:** *In such a high profile case, what is the effect of prejudice on the trial?*

**Kamara:** The Defence likes to say that the public mind has been so "prejudiced" against Mr. Taylor by the Western media that he cannot get a fair trial. This is another ploy to distract from the case against their client. Once again, it is a distortion of the truth.

It is also insulting to the professional and independent judges who are hearing the case. This is a trial before professional judges, chosen for their high moral character, impartiality

and integrity. For that reasons, prejudice should not be a factor. But remember, when you are speaking of prejudice, you must look at the potential impact of prejudice against the Accused, the Prosecution and the Court itself. Public statements such as Mr. Griffiths has been prone to make, evoking emotive language to deflect from the evidence and the legitimacy of the trial, is prejudicial not just to the Prosecution but is also brings the administration of justice by the Court into disrepute.

Demanding accountability and for an indicted person to stand trial is not prejudice. The fact that in 2006 a coalition of dozens of African NGOs called for Taylor to be handed over to stand trial is not indicative of prejudice, but of the belief that impunity is wrong and accused persons should be brought to trial.

The Prosecution's position is very simple. Charles Ghankay Taylor is before this Court because of his choices and his conduct.

Let me conclude by emphasizing this point: the trial of Charles Taylor could not be more fair, open and transparent. And no amount of misinformation from the Defence outside the courtroom can distract from the evidence presented in Court against Mr. Taylor.

We will continue to challenge Mr. Taylor and the other Defence witnesses with the full weight of our evidence. And we call upon his lawyers to focus on the case as well, and refrain from spouting further poisonous dialogue in the public realm. The real victims deserve better.

# Human Rights Tribunal Begins

*By Bampia Bundu*

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) has held its inaugural tribunal session commencing with a case between two hundred and thirty five (235) aggrieved ex-soldiers of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) and the Ministry of Defence.

The session took place yesterday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2011 at the Young Women Christian Association (YWCA) Hall in Freetown.

Chairperson of the HRCSL, Edward Sam explained that the Commission has the authority to receive, investigate, and hear human rights violation complaints. "This power that is quasi-judicial in nature requires that the Commission may from time to time, sit as a court – a human rights tribunal - to determine matters that have been reported to the Commission's Complaints, Investigations and Legal Services Directorate," the Commissioner explained, adding: "These powers are spelt out under

Section 8 of the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone Act 2004 vesting in the Commission powers equivalent to those of a High Court Judge or Justice in a trial".

He described the hearing as very important to the Commission and the people of Sierra Leone, as he puts it: "This is our first public hearing that will test our commitment and capacity to protect the rights of the people of Sierra Leone".

According to him, the matter of the aggrieved 235 ex-servicemen was first reported to the Commission in 2009 with the first statement obtained on the 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2009.

"More statements were to follow and in total we had 311 cases for preliminary assessment and investigations for admission," Edward Sam pointed out, adding: "We ended up with 235 cases and commenced investigations in 2010".

He intimated that the Commission has in the last one year five months being investigating and trying to bring the

parties together for amicable settlement as mandated by the Commission's rules.

"In the process, we have contacted and involved various stakeholders including the Office of the Ombudsman with the aim of building a multi-stakeholders consensus on how to handle the matter under review," Commissioner Sam revealed. He noted that all of those efforts aimed at amicable settlement yielded no dividend thus the tribunal to determine whether the rights of the complainants were violated or not. "It has been a long journey and we are committed to do justice," he said, while assuring that both parties will have equal chances to tell their sides of the story. He further assured that the Commission will continue to protect the rights of the citizens as required of them.

Preliminary hearing was held and the session continues today for further hearing.

**BBC**

Wednesday, 1 June 2011

### **Viewpoint: Hague tribunal justice 'works'**

Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic in the Bosnian Serb capital Pale, undated photo The court decided to go after 'those most responsible' - the leaders  
Continue reading the main story

Former Bosnian Serb military commander Ratko Mladic is now in The Hague, where he will go on trial at the international war crimes tribunal. Will justice be delivered?

Judge Richard Goldstone, former chief prosecutor for the Yugoslavia and Rwanda tribunals, believes the court has set important benchmarks. He held the posts from 1994-96, when indictments were drawn up against Gen Mladic and his political boss, Radovan Karadzic.

When in 1994 I started investigating war crimes in the former Yugoslavia I could not have imagined that the process would be so complex, slow and yet so successful.

The contrast with the 1945 Nuremberg Trials of the Nazi leaders is a stark one. Each of the four Nuremberg chief prosecutors worked with his own team. There was no multi-national office of the prosecutor. I arrived in The Hague on 15 August 1994 as effectively the first chief prosecutor of the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

My task was to set up the first ever international prosecutor's office. There was really no precedent for it. The inordinate delay in the UN Security Council appointing a chief prosecutor resulted in a negative public perception of the ICTY, and if we were to garner funding from the cash-strapped UN we had to show very quickly that the endeavour could succeed.

The first indictment was against a middle-ranking Serb army officer, Dragan Nikolic, the commander of a notorious detention camp. The indictment was issued within two months of my arrival. Nikolic was apprehended in 2000 and after pleading guilty to serious crimes was sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment.  
Indictments

The policy we adopted in the Office of the Prosecutor was to investigate those most responsible for the horrendous war crimes committed during the war in the former Yugoslavia. That meant going for the leaders. In April 1995 we named the so-called president of the Bosnian Serb entity of Bosnia Hercegovina, Radovan Karadzic, and his army commander Ratko Mladic as suspected war criminals, even as the siege of Sarajevo was still going on.  
Continue reading the main story

#### **“Start Quote**

Today, most people in the former Yugoslavia accept that there were victims and perpetrators on all sides - that is important if there is to be any final reconciliation”

#### **End Quote**

But, in the second week of July 1995, the horrendous slaughter of some 8,000 men and boys was carried out by the Bosnian Serb Army at Srebrenica. This was the worst act of genocide committed in Europe since the end of World War II. In the Prosecutor's Office, we were disappointed and even disillusioned that, notwithstanding the naming of Mr Karadzic and Gen Mladic as suspected war criminals in April, they appeared not to be deterred from slaughtering more innocent civilians at Srebrenica.

Some two weeks after the massacre, both men were charged by the ICTY with crimes against humanity and other serious war crimes. The most egregious of these crimes was the murder of children, women and men innocently going about their business in Sarajevo at a time that the Bosnian Serb Army was conducting a cruel siege of the city.

On 16 November, 1995, both Mr Karadzic and Gen Mladic were indicted a second time on charges that included genocide relating to the events in Srebrenica. The two indictments have been amended from time to time and it is the charges contained in them that Mr Karadzic is facing at present in The Hague and that Gen Mladic will face very soon.

Like any human institution, the ICTY has had its successes and failures. It will always be a matter for regret that Slobodan Milosevic, the former president of Serbia, did not survive an over-long prosecution and died in a prison cell of the ICTY.

That said, the successes of the ICTY have been important - the fair trials of many war criminals from Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia Hercegovina, and the conviction and imprisonment of many of them.

These proceedings have undoubtedly brought acknowledgement and some solace to many thousands of victims. I had the privilege of meeting some of them during a visit to the former Yugoslavia at the end of 2010.

### **'End of impunity'**

The proceedings have also put an end to many of the fabricated denials that followed the commission of serious war crimes. In the aftermath of the Srebrenica massacre the official policy of the Bosnian Serb Army was to deny the killings and to ascribe the allegations to dishonest propaganda.

A forensic scientist tries to identify Srebrenica victims - 1 June Mr Karadzic and Gen Mladic had already been indicted when the Srebrenica massacre occurred

The exhumation of the mass graves, the evidence of victims and satellite photographs furnished by the United States put an end to those denials. Today, most people in the former Yugoslavia accept that there were victims and perpetrators on all sides. That is important if there is to be any final reconciliation between the peoples of that region.

The successes of ICTY were also responsible for the subsequent establishment of the UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, mixed tribunals for East Timor, Sierra Leone, Cambodia and Lebanon and, most important of all, the International Criminal Court. These developments have signalled the end of effective impunity for the worst war criminals.

It is in the shadow of the ICTY that there are proceedings currently in progress against Charles Taylor, the former president of Liberia, that there is an arrest warrant awaiting execution against the President of Sudan, Omar Bashir and that the prosecutor of the ICC has requested its judges to issue an arrest warrant for Muammar Gaddafi, the Libyan leader.

It is my hope that the leaders of Sri Lanka and Syria will not be granted immunity for the crimes they are alleged to have committed against innocent civilians in their countries.

The arrest in the past few days of Gen Mladic must cause added discomfort for others alleged to have committed serious war crimes.

They must be concerned that eventually they will be brought to account before relevant domestic or international courts and will have to answer to many tens of thousands of victims for the crimes alleged to have been committed by them.



## Libyan Government forces committed war crimes, says UN human rights panel



*Human Rights Council, Geneva*

A United Nations-ordered panel investigating human rights abuses in Libya says that Government forces have committed war crimes and crimes against humanity during the course of their crackdown on opposition forces seeking the ouster of Colonel Muammar al-Qadhafi.

The three-member International Commission of Inquiry, dispatched by the UN Human Rights Council, submitted its findings to the 47-member body in Geneva today. The report comes as concern grows about the worsening humanitarian situation in the North African country, including dwindling food stocks, and as diplomatic efforts to help resolve the crisis continue.

The commission "has reached the conclusion that crimes against humanity and war crimes have been committed by the Government forces of Libya," according to a news release issued in Geneva.

"The commission received fewer reports of facts which would amount to the commission of international crimes by opposition forces; however, it did find some acts which would constitute war crimes."

The acts falling under crimes against humanity include murder, imprisonment, torture, persecution, enforced disappearance and sexual abuse, which the report stated were committed by Government forces "as part of a widespread or systematic attack against a civilian population."

Serious violations of international humanitarian law committed by Government forces amounting to war crimes include intentionally directing attacks against protected persons and targets such as civilian structures, medical units and transport.

The commission said it had received, but was unable to verify, individual accounts of rape. "It notes, however, that sufficient information was received to justify further investigation to ascertain the extent of sexual violence, including whether cases were linked to incitement by the command of either side."

Further investigation is also warranted, it stated, with regard to the use and recruitment of child soldiers, the use of excessive force by Government forces against demonstrators, arrests and detentions that were carried out in a “blanket” fashion, and a “pattern of enforced disappearances.”

The commission also found that torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment were committed by both the Government and opposition forces in violation of obligations under international human rights law and humanitarian law.

The team, led by Professor Cherif Bassiouni, an Egyptian jurist and war crimes expert, calls on the Government to immediately cease acts of violence against civilians in violation of international humanitarian and human rights law, and to conduct “exhaustive, impartial and transparent” investigations into all alleged violations.

It also calls on the National Transitional Council, the umbrella group representing the opposition, to conduct similar investigations into alleged violations, and to ensure the immediate implementation of applicable international humanitarian and human rights law.

Also serving on the commission is Asma Khader, a Jordanian-Palestinian lawyer who serves on the executive committee of the International Commission of Jurists, and Canada’s Philippe Kirsch, who was the first president of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

The Council is scheduled to consider the report on 6 June, as part of its current session.

## Global Coalition Urges Mauritania to Join the International Criminal Court

By [www.coalitionfortheicc.org](http://www.coalitionfortheicc.org)

*Coalition Says Rome Statute Accession should be a Priority to End Impunity*



Cotonou, Benin / New York, USA – The Coalition for the International Criminal Court—a global network of more than 2,500 non-governmental and civil society organizations in 150 countries advocating for a fair, effective and independent International Criminal Court (ICC)—called on Mauritania to embrace a new system of international justice and advance the rule of law by acceding to the Rome Statute.

The Coalition has chosen Mauritania as the focus for its June 2011 Universal Ratification Campaign, a monthly campaign launched to encourage countries to join the Rome Statute—the founding treaty of the first permanent international court capable of trying perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes.

In a letter dated 1 June 2011 to Mauritanian President H.E. Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, the Coalition urged the government of Mauritania to prioritize its accession to the Rome Statute. The Statute came into force in July 2002 and now has the support of well over half of the world’s nations. With Grenada’s recent accession on 19 May 2011, 115 states have ratified or acceded to the treaty, and 139 are signatories.

The Coalition encouraged Mauritania to engage in serious discussions and advances toward acceding to the Rome Statute. The government of Mauritania recently reaffirmed to the Human Rights Council that it would continue to work for the promotion and protection of human rights. In line with the government’s commitments, and given that the Rome Statute is an important tool to protect human rights and advance the rule of law, the Coalition urged President Aziz to ensure prompt treatment of Mauritania’s accession dossier.

“The recent Arab Spring demonstrates the willingness of the people to advance principles of democracy and ensure accountability for human rights abuses,” noted Francis Dako, CICC Africa Regional Coordinator. “We urge the Government of Mauritania to seize this present momentum and illustrate Mauritania’s commitment to international justice and respect for human rights by acceding to the Rome Statute.”

Mauritania’s accession to the Rome Statute will contribute toward strengthening the African presence at the ICC. In addition, by acceding to the Rome Statute and embracing the principle of complementarity, Mauritania will retain the duty to exercise primary jurisdiction over crimes that could fall under the jurisdiction of the ICC.

“We hope the Mauritanian government will join other reforming governments in North Africa that have made the commitment to ratify the Rome Statute of the ICC,” said William R. Pace, Convenor of the Coalition. “Such commitment advances the goal of ending impunity for the worst crimes in international law, crimes that continue to plague not only North Africa but all regions in the world,” he added.

As a state party, Mauritania would be able to actively participate in the annual Assembly of States Parties (ASP) of the ICC during which states make important decisions in relation to the administration of the Court, including the election of judges and prosecutors. In December 2011, six new judges, a new chief prosecutor and other Court officials will be elected. The deadline for nominating candidates for these important posts is currently 2 September 2011. If Mauritania accedes to the treaty by that date, any nomination for judge becomes valid.

Background: The ICC is the world’s first, permanent international court to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. There are currently 115 ICC states parties. Central to the Court’s mandate is the principle of complementarity, which holds that the Court will only intervene if national legal systems are unable or unwilling to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. There are currently

six active investigations before the Court: the Central African Republic; the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Darfur, the Sudan; Kenya; Libya; and Uganda. The ICC has publicly issued 15 arrest warrants and nine summonses to appear. Three trials are ongoing. The Office of the Prosecutor has made public that it is examining at least nine situations on four continents, including Afghanistan, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Georgia, Guinea, Honduras, Republic of Korea, Nigeria, and Palestine.

The Coalition for the International Criminal Court includes 2,500 civil society organizations in 150 different countries working in partnership to strengthen international cooperation with the ICC; ensure that the Court is fair, effective and independent; make justice both visible and universal; and advance stronger national laws that deliver justice to victims of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. For more information, visit: [www.coalitionfortheicc.org](http://www.coalitionfortheicc.org)

## Satellite Sentinel Project

Wednesday, 1 June 2011

### **Former Prosecutors, State Department War Crimes Officials Affirm Satellite Sentinel Project Findings of Apparent War Crimes in Abyei**

**WASHINGTON** – A bipartisan group of former civilian and military officials has affirmed the Satellite Sentinel Project's (SSP) analysis of visual evidence that the Government of Sudan allegedly committed war crimes during its occupation of the disputed region of Abyei.

The officials include two former US State Department Ambassadors-at-Large for War Crimes, David Scheffer and Pierre Prosper; David Crane, the former Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone; and Michael Newton, the former Senior Advisor to the US Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes.

SSP issued a report on May 29, which documented visual evidence of war crimes by the Government of Sudan in Abyei. The project has conveyed this evidence to the UN Security Council and to the International Criminal Court. The Government of Sudan has stated that the Satellite Sentinel Project has no evidence of war crimes.

#### **Statements in Support of SSP's Findings**

**David Scheffer**, former US State Department Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes:

"The evidence derived from SSP satellite imagery of the assault on and destruction of much of Abyei town reveals actions that appear to violate the principles of military necessity, proportionality, and distinction – primary pillars of the laws of war. The armed clashes between SPLM/A troops and SAF troops in mid-May, about which further reporting contradicts the account of the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Sudan, would not justify this type of military action by SAF troops against Abyei or its civilian population. Furthermore, the presence of tens of thousands of civilians in Abyei and the apparently systematic actions of SAF forces to assault those civilians, destroy their homes and food storage areas, and finally route them from the town constitutes violations, at a minimum, of critical protective provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and the Second Additional Protocol of 1977, both of which bind the Government of Sudan and its military forces as a state party. They may also constitute crimes against humanity given the magnitude and apparent systematic character of destruction and forced displacement of civilians in Abyei. The SSP satellite imagery provides critical 'eyes-on' evidence of illegal military conduct that merits further investigation. There may come a point where the U.N. Security Council will need to consider expanding its original 2005 referral of the Darfur situation to the International Criminal Court to such actions in central Sudan, particularly if the Sudanese authorities do not punish those military and civilian leaders responsible for these atrocity crimes and if further violations of the laws of war and international humanitarian law continue. If Sudan President Omar Hassan Amad al Bashir, who has been indicted for atrocity crimes in

Darfur by the International Criminal Court, is responsible for the assault on Abyei, that fact alone would provide an excellent basis on which to consider expanding the Court's jurisdiction."

**Pierre Prosper**, former US State Department Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes:

"The images of destruction are horrifyingly similar to what we have seen too many times in the past in Sudan. The Government of Sudan is clearly engaged in a continued pattern of systematic atrocities and violations despite the North-South agreement. The imagery provided by the Satellite Sentinel Project contains evidence of actions by Sudan Armed Forces that may well constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity. It is time for the United States and international community to put into place a serious and concerted action plan to end the abuses in Sudan once and for all."

**David Crane**, former Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone:

"Governments who unleash their armed forces against civilians in an intentional military operation to kill, disrupt and destroy for whatever purpose are committing violations of international criminal law. At a certain time in our past such actions, though reprehensible, were largely left unaccounted for. A great deal of the 20th Century is replete with examples of such, but no more. Through political, legal, and practical advances, such governments can no longer justify, explain away, or be absolved of action which are war crimes and crimes against humanity. With the advance of modern technology, particularly those technologies that were once unavailable to nongovernmental organizations, and the proliferation of social media, these governments can no longer sweep such actions "under the rug". To put it more bluntly, they "cannot get away with it". As a former international Chief Prosecutor, such work done by the Enough Project and Harvard, shows credible evidence of international crimes, actionable crimes which the world cannot, must not ignore. The tragedy of Abyei Town reflects all that is wrong with the regime of Sudan and those who rule there. The bright red thread of international criminal law is politics. It is time for politicians and diplomats to act to stop the killing, the rapes, the horror that is Sudan."

**Michael Newton**, former Senior Advisor to the US Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes:

"The Satellite Sentinel Project (SSP) has provided irrefutable and nearly immediate evidence of the new wave of crimes committed against the civilian population in and around Abyei town. The Bashir government has taken a page from its Darfur playbook by waging war once again on civilians and their property. No government or international organization can plausibly plead ignorance or misinformation in the face of the photographic evidence available online and in the SSP report. There is no conceivable basis under the laws and customs of war for the deliberate razing of civilian homes and the theft or destruction of supplies provided by the generosity of other governments to help the population with its urgent requirements. The Security Council should exercise its Chapter VII authority to immediately mandate an independent team of international experts that can assess the scope of the

crimes committed in Abyei and preserve the testimony of witnesses before they can be silenced by the Government of Sudan. The Bashir regime needs to be clearly reminded that the right of collective self defense permits other nations to respond to the pleas for assistance from a newly independent Government of Southern Sudan. By logical extension, the ongoing International Criminal Court investigation into events in Darfur should expand to encompass crimes committed in Abyei as well. It is clear to me that Abyei belongs in a newly formed Southern Sudan. The population should be allowed to freely determine its own future even in the face of regime tanks that continue to trample across Abyei because of the deliberate destruction of Abyei town. The war criminals in Khartoum should have no remaining pretense of moral authority in support of efforts to forcibly hold onto Abyei. Moreover, any influx of 'settlers' from the north should be seen as culprits complicit in the crimes of the regime rather than peaceful civilians building a community."

###

### **About the Satellite Sentinel Project**

The [Satellite Sentinel Project](#) combines satellite imagery analysis and field reports with Google's Map Maker to deter the resumption of full-scale war between North and South Sudan. Not On Our Watch provided seed money to launch the Satellite Sentinel Project. The Enough Project contributes field reports and policy analysis, and, together with Not On Our Watch and our Sudan Now partners, pressures policymakers by urging the public to act. UNOSAT analyzes satellite images and collaborates with Google and Trelon to design the web platform. Harvard Humanitarian Initiative provides research and leads the collection, human rights analysis, and corroboration of on-the-ground reports that contextualizes the imagery. DigitalGlobe provides satellite imagery and additional analysis.

## George Clooney's satellite photos show war crimes in Sudan, say experts

Hollywood activist's satellite images show aggression by north in disputed Abyei.

Andrew Meldrum



*George Clooney in South Sudan in October 2010.  
(Tim Freccia/Enough Project/GlobalPost)*

War crimes were committed by the northern Sudan Army when it seized the contested Abyei territory on the border between North and South Sudan, according to several experts who analyzed satellite photos of settlements that were attacked.

A bipartisan group of former civilian and military officials studied the images taken by Hollywood activist George Clooney's Satellite Sentinel Project.

The experts include two former U.S. State Department Ambassadors-at-Large for War Crimes, David Scheffer and Pierre Prosper; David Crane, the former Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone; and Michael Newton, the former Senior Advisor to the U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes.

The Satellite Sentinel Project was conceived and funded by Clooney to help South Sudan reach independence peacefully. South Sudan is set to become independent on July 9 but the northern army's seizure on May 21 of the Abyei territory has threatened the process. Images taken by the satellite project show destruction and looting of property and documented visual evidence of war crimes by the Government of Sudan in Abyei.

The satellite project sent this evidence to the U.N. Security Council and to the International Criminal Court. The Government of Sudan has stated that the Satellite Sentinel Project has no evidence of war crimes, but several American experts disagree.

"The images of destruction are horrifyingly similar to what we have seen too many times in the past in Sudan," said Pierre Prosper, former U.S. State Department Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes.



"The Government of Sudan is clearly engaged in a continued pattern of systematic atrocities and violations despite the North-South agreement," said Prosper. "The imagery provided by the Satellite Sentinel Project contains evidence of actions by Sudan Armed Forces that may well constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity. It is time for the United States and international community to put into place a serious and concerted action plan to end the abuses in Sudan once and for all."

Michael Newton, former Senior Advisor to the U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes, said the satellite images are solid evidence of war crimes by Sudan President Omar al-Bashir's government in Khartoum.

"The Satellite Sentinel Project (SSP) has provided irrefutable and nearly immediate evidence of the new wave of crimes committed against the civilian population in and around Abyei town," said Newton. "The Bashir government has taken a page from its Darfur playbook by waging war once again on civilians and their property. No government or international organization can plausibly plead ignorance or misinformation in the face of the photographic evidence available online and in the SSP report. There is no conceivable basis under the laws and customs of war for the deliberate razing of civilian homes and the theft or destruction of supplies provided by the generosity of other governments to help the population with its urgent requirements. The Security Council should exercise its Chapter VII authority to immediately mandate an independent team of international experts that can assess the scope of the crimes committed in Abyei and preserve the testimony of witnesses before they can be silenced by the Government of Sudan.

"The Bashir regime needs to be clearly reminded that the right of collective self defense permits other nations to respond to the pleas for assistance from a newly independent Government of Southern Sudan," said Newton.

"By logical extension, the ongoing International Criminal Court investigation into events in Darfur should expand to encompass crimes committed in Abyei as well," he said. "It is clear to me that Abyei belongs in a newly formed Southern Sudan. The population should be allowed to freely determine its own future even in the face of regime tanks that continue to trample across Abyei because of the deliberate destruction of Abyei town. The war criminals in Khartoum should have no remaining pretense of moral authority in support of efforts to forcibly hold onto Abyei. Moreover, any influx of 'settlers' from the north should be seen as culprits complicit in the crimes of the regime rather than peaceful civilians building a community."

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## Ethiopia Commutes Death Sentences for Former Officials Accused of Genocide

Peter Heinlein



**Photo: AP**

*Ethiopia's PM Meles Zenawi in Addis Ababa celebrating the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Dergue regime, May 28, 2011*

Ethiopia has commuted the death sentences of 23 people convicted of genocide for their part in the “Red Terror” purges during the rule of former dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam. The 23 still face life in prison.

Among those spared the death penalty Wednesday are many senior officials in the Mengistu government, including former vice-president Fisseha Desta and former prime minister Fikreselassie Wogderes.

The 23 were imprisoned after Mengistu’s Communist military junta collapsed in 1991. They were convicted of genocide and sentenced to die in 2008 after a lengthy trial.

President Girma Woldegiorgis said he was commuting the sentences to life in prison in response to an appeal by leaders of Ethiopia’s Christian and Muslim communities.

In a telephone interview, government spokesman Shimeles Kemal said all those granted clemency had expressed remorse.

"There was an ongoing movement on the part of religious organizations seeking for pardon and reconciliation and considering the active repentance made by the former ex-Dergue officials and these have been submitted to the president, and by the power vested in him in the constitution, he has granted the request," said Shimeles.

Thousands of the Dergue’s suspected political opponents were believed to have been killed during the military junta’s 17 years in power, many in gruesome fashion.

Spokesman Shimeles Kemal called the presidential clemency a sign that time is healing the wounds of the Dergue era.

"This measure shows the government has come to grips with the country’s horrendous past," he said.

It was not immediately clear when the former Dergue officials might be released. Legal experts say a life term carries with it a maximum of 25 years in prison. Several of those granted clemency Wednesday have already served 20 years.

Colonel Mengistu, who presided over the Red Terror, was tried and sentenced to death in absentia at the same time as the other Dergue officials. Now 73-years-old, he lives in Zimbabwe under the protection of President Robert Mugabe.