

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



Detention certification ceremony. Photo by Simona Arnold

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, 20 August 2009

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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The Exclusive
Thursday, 20 August 2009

Si Leone War...

ECOMOG Traded In Diamonds

- UN 2000 Report Reveals; Taylor Confirms

Former Liberian President, Charles Taylor has confirmed a United Nations 2000 report that Nigerian ECOMOG Soldiers in Sierra Leone traded their guns for diamonds with the RUF Rebels. Mr. Taylor admitted that

Continued page 2

Corrigendum

In one of our front page stories published Tuesday 19 August, 2009, captioned "GST deferred To 2011, Importers Happy," we stated that an advertising company, SLMcCANN had been contracted by the National Revenue Authority (NRA) and paid Le. 140m to publicize the GST since 2004 but that nothing has been done the company in that direction.

We must state that we were hoaxed by our source and according to reliable sources, the time and money stated are not correct.

SLMcCANN we are informed was contracted two months ago and that it has no direct contact with the NRA but the Crown Agent, a consultancy for the GST.

We therefore apologize for any inconvenience the article may have caused the Management of SLMcCANN.



Charles Taylor - Still
Confident

ECOMOG Traded In Diamonds

From front page

he too traded with ECOMOG during the Liberian Civil War.

A United Nations report road in court alleged that Nigerian ECOMOG Soldiers abandoned their peacekeeping mission in Sierra Leone and engaged in an illegal diamond trade with the rebels.

The UN report stated that an RUF radio message intercepted by the Sierra Leone Army pointed to the illicit diamond trade between some Nigerian ECOMOG Officers and RUF Leader Foday Sankoh.

The Prosecution in this war crimes trial alleged that Charles Taylor was the mastermind behind the RUF diamond trade for

guns. During his testimonies on Tuesday, Mr. Taylor vehemently dismissed the prosecution's allegation.

The Former Liberian Leader said he's not a stranger to the ECOMOG gun trade. Mr. Taylor said he too had a business relationship with ECOMOG during the Liberian Civil war.

Mr. Taylor's role in the release of over 500 UN Peacekeepers from the captivity of the RUF Rebels in Sierra Leone was highlighted in Tuesday's testimonies. Mr. Taylor said he facilitated the release of the UN Peacekeepers at the request of the international community including the United States and

Great Britain. He said after series of meetings in 2000 with ECOWAS and UN Officials; he invited Former RUF Commander, Issa Sesay to Monrovia.

Mr. Taylor told the court as a Mediator for ECOWAS in the Sierra Leonean crisis, he warned Issa Sesay to release the peacekeepers. The over 500 UN Peacekeepers mainly Zambians, Kenyans, Malaysians and Norwegians were taken hostage by the RUF in demand for the release of their Leader, Foday Sankoh. Mr. Taylor said only Libya and the United Nations assisted him when he secured the release of the UN Peacekeepers.

Independent Observer

Thursday, 20 August 2009

Statement by Steven Rapp, Prosecutor of Special Court to Liberian Media

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

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

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

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

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

Sierra Leone. In this new position, I will continue that work on behalf of the US Government to assist countries in achieving accountability after the widespread commission of violations of international humanitarian law, and by doing so help prevent the recurrence of these atrocities.

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

The Special Court's jurisdiction is limited to

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

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

In July, I was nominated by President Barack Obama to be United States Ambassador at Large for War Crimes Issues. The nomination has now been confirmed by the US Senate, and I have given notice to the UN Secretary General that I will resign as Special Court Prosecutor on September

I will then immediately take up the new post, which is based in the US State Department in Washington in the office of Secretary Hillary Clinton.

For almost a decade, I have been working to bring justice to the victims of the most serious crimes committed by humankind, first at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and then at the Special Court for Si-

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

Thank you.

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

Total News

Thursday, 20 August 2009

RUF Commander Sam Bockarie's Relocation to Liberia was Sanctioned by the International Community

By Alpha Sesay

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

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

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

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

to Mr. Taylor, "it appears Bockarie wants to challenge Sankoh."

Mr. Taylor said he got involved to settle the conflict between the two rebel leaders by inviting them to a meeting in Liberia. This, Mr. Taylor said, happened with the consent of the United Nations, ECOWAS leaders and the government of Sierra Leone. "Everyone knew about it. The Committee of Six [originally Committee of 5, this body was set up by West African leaders to facilitate a peaceful end to the conflict in Sierra Leone], the United Nations Secretary General, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in Liberia (SRSG) and [Sierra Leonean] president Kabbah knew about it. In fact, Sankoh was taken to Liberia on board a UN air craft," he explained.

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

Mr. Taylor said that when the clashes continued in the RUF, ECOWAS had no option but to get Sam Bockarie out of Sierra Leone. The decision to take Sam Bockarie out of Sierra Leone, Mr. Taylor said, was taken at a meeting with former Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo at the Roberts International Airport in Liberia. In December 1999, Sam Bockarie eventually left Sierra Leone for Liberia with about 300-400 RUF fighters who were loyal to

him (Bockarie). Mr. Taylor said that Sam Bockarie and all his fighters were granted Liberian citizenship in order to integrate them into the Liberian society. Members of the international community, he said, were fully informed of everything he did.

As part of the arrangement to get Sam Bockarie out of Sierra Leone and relocate him to Liberia, Mr. Taylor said that the United States government agreed to provide scholarship for Sam Bockarie to undergo military training in the United States. "The United States promised that they would assist, not the upkeep of the people but the discussion was held as to what to do for Bockarie and they had said that they would probably help to give him a scholarship to do extended military train-

ing at one of their military bases in the United States but that did not come to pass," he said.

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

Mr. Taylor said he later on found it strange when the United Nations and the United States opposed Sam Bockarie's presence in Liberia. "This is strange. The man has just come in after agreeing with me and now you want me to throw him out? The same US had said they would give Bockarie training so he will cease to be a rebel." Mr. Taylor said that once Sam Bockarie and his men were in Liberia and had obtained Liberian citizenship, his government decided to recruit them into the security sector. They were all trained and became part of Mr. Taylor's Anti Terrorist Unit (ATU)-an elite force that provided security for Mr. Taylor. The ATU was headed by Mr. Taylor's son Chuckie Taylor, who himself has been convicted in the United States for crimes of torture committed in Liberia.

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

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Premier News

Thursday, 20 August 2009

Media Coverage of The Special Court for Sierra Leone

As the first international war crimes court since Nuremberg to be located in the country where the crimes occurred, the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) has had a unique opportunity to directly impact its primary audience Sierra Leoneans. This article examines the interactions between the SCSL and the local, West African media (rather than the international media) in particular, Sierra Leonean journalists. Based on interviews with Special Court officials, third-party observers, and West African journalists, this paper analyzes the approach the SCSL has adopted with regard to media relations and its subsequent effect on both local coverage of the Court and the development of journalism in Sierra Leone. This topic remains unexplored with regard to the Special Court.

By Jessica Feinstein

This article argues that the SCSL has succeeded in its relations with local media where past international criminal courts have failed, largely through the early creation of proactive outreach and public affairs sections. The Court has provided unprecedented access to the local media, facilitating media coverage through both traditional and innovative means. However, there remain areas of improvement for future courts: the SCSL has failed to invest in local media as part of its legacy, overlooking outreach to journalists and leaving the task of training and support to the patchy work of NGOs. In the long run, this undermines the legacy of the SCSL, which remains a predominantly foreign institution in a country facing major issues of corruption and government accountability.

The Hybrid's Handmaiden:

Media Coverage of the Special Court for Sierra Leone

In her analysis of Adolf Eichmann's war crimes trial in Israel, Hannah Arendt compared the courtroom in Jerusalem to a theater. The proceedings, she said, "happen on a stage before an audience, with the usher's marvelous shout at the beginning of each session producing the effect of the rising curtain." This observation is critical; Arendt implied that the trappings of a theater with "orchestra and gallery" and "side doors for the actors' entrance" abandoned higher principles of justice in favor of a show trial. But it ought to be asked: can there be justice without an audience?

Forty-eight years after Eichmann's trial, the cumulative experience of international criminal trials indicates that the answer is no. Or more particularly: the multiple goals of international trials are frustrated when the intended audience is barred, through distance and a dearth of media coverage, from accessing courtroom proceedings.

As Warren Burger observed in 1980, most people acquire their information about trials through the press: "this validates the media claim of functioning as surrogates for the public." Despite this fact, in most developed countries with well-established judiciaries, an often antagonistic relationship exists between the third branch of the government and the "fourth estate." Media coverage of trials is viewed as prejudicing defendants and turning prosecutors, defenders, and judges into the "actors" that Arendt abhorred. In the United States, for example, television coverage of the O.J. Simpson trial created an "anticamera backlash;" likewise, one commentator argued that inflammatory media coverage of the so-called Central Park jogger case led to a hasty police investigation and false confessions. In the United Kingdom, cameras are barred from courtrooms altogether.

In the realm of international criminal justice, however, the old adage that justice must be "seen to be done" reigns with particular force. International criminal courts, from the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), have demonstrated that the media's power to publicize is a vital tool in the creation of legitimacy and lasting legacy for nascent legal traditions. Nevertheless, the process of fully engaging the media has been gradual in the international criminal arena, especially given logistical hurdles of distance and resources.

As the first international war crimes court since Nuremberg to be located in the country where the crimes occurred, the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) has had a unique opportunity to directly impact its primary audience Sierra Leoneans. This paper examines the interactions between the SCSL and the local, West African media (rather than the international media) in particular, Sierra Leonean journalists. Through interviews with Special Court officials, third-party observers, and West African journalists, I sought to analyze the approach the SCSL has adopted with regard to media relations and its subsequent effect on both local coverage of the Court and the development of journalism in Sierra Leone.

This paper argues that the SCSL has succeeded in its relations with local media where past international criminal courts have failed, largely through the early creation of proactive outreach and public affairs sections. The Court has provided unprecedented access to the local media, facilitating media coverage through both traditional and innovative means. However, there remain areas of improvement for future courts: the SCSL has failed to invest in local media as part of its legacy, overlooking outreach to journalists and leaving the task of training and support to the patchy work of NGOs. In the long run, this undermines the

legacy of the SCSL, which remains a predominantly foreign institution in a country facing major issues of corruption and government accountability.

I. The Media as 'Surrogates for the Public'

The common law tradition views the media as the "handmaiden of effective judicial administration, especially in the criminal field." There are several reasons frequently offered for the importance of media coverage of criminal trials; these may be grouped under two general roles of the press: 1) as facilitator of public awareness and distributor of information; and 2) as "watchdog," a critical check on abuse of power.

A. Publicity

First, in broadcasting trial proceedings and outcomes to the public, the media enables several of the broader goals of criminal justice: the deterrent effect of ordered justice, the fostering of peace and reconciliation after discord, and the promotion of the rule of law. Each of these applies equally to domestic and international proceedings, although the later the promotion of rule of law is particularly urgent for post-conflict nations. Commonsense indicates that any impact criminal trials may have beyond those actors in the courtroom depends largely on media publicity. Kingsley Moghalu, formerly the Legal Adviser to the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), thus wrote that "deterrence and reconciliation the stated aims of the tribunals rely on the public's awareness and perception of its work." The deterrent effect of criminal justice on potential criminals depends entirely on public awareness of trial proceedings and outcomes, in particular, of the convictions rendered and punishments administered. In 1996, Justice Richard J. Goldstone, then Chief Prosecutor for the newly created ICTY, acknowledged to Court TV the part that journalism plays in deterrence of future war

crimes: "[T]he media is a partner in the whole criminal justice system," he said. "If people in the country are not told what their criminal courts are doing, then there's certain to be the deterrent aspect of criminal justice is going to fail." Although the deterrent effect of criminal trials is difficult to gage, particularly in an international context, there is some evidence that today, war criminals may be at least aware of the probability of criminal accountability.

In addition to the prevention of future crimes, criminal trials provide catharsis for victims, pacifying anger, grief, and the desire for revenge. Especially after war, criminal trials can therefore support the restoration of peace as well as reconciliation by laying blame on the few rather than the many. This catharsis, again, depends on public awareness of the trial. Victims must hear and see the processes of justice at work. In Richmond Newspapers, Justice Burger wrote that

[O]pen processes of justice serve an important prophylactic purpose, providing an outlet for community concern, hostility, and emotion. Without awareness that society's responses to criminal conduct are underway, natural human reactions of outrage and protest are frustrated and may manifest themselves in some form of vengeful 'self-help'...

The catharsis that criminal justice provides is innately understood. For example, Peter Kahler, Station Manager of West Africa Democracy Radio, told me that he thinks victims of the conflict in Sierra Leone must feel some "relief" when they hear over the radio about the trial of Charles Taylor.

Of course, through covering the details of a particular trial the media also promotes knowledge of the generalized criminal justice processes. The media therefore performs a didactic function, informing the public on matters of procedure and punishment otherwise outside the ambit of the average citizen. As Wigmore put it,

'The educative effect of public attendance is a material advantage. Not only is respect of the law increased and intelligent acquaintance acquired with the methods of government, but a strong confidence in judicial remedies is secured which could never be inspired by a system of secrecy.'

Although in nations with well-established judiciaries, there



exists a general knowledge of how criminal trials work, many commentators argue that in post-conflict nations, establishment of the rule of law depends on the public demonstration of often Byzantine criminal procedure. In establishing the SCSL, the U.N. Secretary-General anticipated that "[i]f the role of the Special Court in dealing with impunity and developing respect for the rule of law in Sierra Leone is to be fully understood and its educative message conveyed to Sierra Leoneans of all ages, a broad public information and education campaign will have to be undertaken as an integral part of the Court's activities.

Although he did not specifically mention media coverage of the Court, this would eventually become a tool in the SCSL's

educative mission.

B. Watchdog

Second, while facilitating public awareness of criminal justice, the media may also play the role of watchdog over the judiciary or court. Bentham described publicity as the greatest check on abuse of power: the U.S. Supreme Court likewise stated in Richmond Newspapers that an open trial "gave assurance that the proceedings were conducted fairly to all concerned, and it discouraged perjury, the misconduct of participants, and decisions based on secret bias or partiality." In a similar vein, media coverage of court proceedings allows the public to monitor the judiciary's performance of its allotted duties, insuring that it is doing so without economic, jurisdictional, or political mismanagement. When the eye of the broader public is trained on a trial through the media, every participant in that process judges, prosecutors, witnesses, and defense attorneys alike face judgment. Simone Monasebian, who served as a prosecutor at the ICTR, noticed that tribunal judges sat straighter when the international media was present; positive press analysis of her own performance ultimately allowed her greater influence on prosecution strategy.

Media coverage therefore amplifies and in the modern world, is arguably inseparable from the oft-cited beneficial effects of the public trial; it produces greater judicial accountability, educates on the rule of law, enables deterrence of future crimes, and promotes communal catharsis, peace, and reconciliation. Further, because continued cooperation and attention. However, while international war crimes courts and tribunals have to some degree recognized the significance of the press to the promotion of criminal justice, historically these institutions have been slow to proactively harness the media as an ally.

II. Local Media Coverage of Preceding International Criminal Trials

International legal institutions have long recognized the power of journalism to stir the public if only because journalists have several times found themselves defendants in war crimes tribunals. In the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, the first international war crimes court, Julius Streicher was sentenced to death for the anti-Semitic articles he published as the editor of the newspaper *Der Stürmer*. Based on Streicher's words and writing alone, the Nuremberg Tribunal found him guilty of incitement to murder and extermination of the Jews. More recently, the ICTR "media trial" convicted three members of the Rwandan press who encouraged the 1994 genocide through their media outlets. In finding thus, ICTR Trial Chamber I warned, "The power of the media to create and destroy fundamental human values comes with great responsibility."

A. Nuremberg

It is a pity that historically the Tribunals have focused more on the abuse of journalistic power rather than its positive uses. As much as journalism can cause crimes, it may also, as noted above, prevent them. Something of the usefulness of the media was recognized from the outset at Nuremberg: "The Allies were determined that the Nuremberg trial would resonate with the international public. Explicitly by means of the publicity with which it was carried out, an enlightening and deterring effect, indeed a catharsis, was intended." Coverage of the trials was "prescribed" for the local German media as part of the Allied Occupying Powers' re-education of the German people. The trial was an international as well as a "national news event." Most German news items were produced by centralized German news agencies, in part because this allowed the Allies closer management of the coverage, and in part because few German journalists could attend the trials. Despite this fact, the difficulty of producing consistent, accurate coverage of Nuremberg foreshadowed the experiences of future international courts, including the SCSL.

Contd. Next Issue

Awoko

Thursday, 20 August 2009

Charles Taylor admits buying guns from ECOMOG

A United Nations report read in the Special Court trial of Charles Taylor in The Hague, The Netherlands has alleged that Nigerian ECOMOG soldiers abandoned their peacekeeping mission in Sierra Leone and engaged in an illegal diamond trade with the RUF rebels.

The UN report stated that an RUF radio message intercepted by the Sierra Leone Army pointed to the illicit diamond trade between some Nigerian ECOMOG Officers and RUF Leader Foday Sankoh.

The Prosecution had alleged that Charles Taylor was the mastermind behind the RUF diamond trade for guns. During his testimonies on Tuesday, Mr. Taylor vehemently dismissed the prosecution's allegation.

The Former Liberian Leader said he's not a stranger to the ECOMOG gun trade adding that he too had a business relationship with ECOMOG during the Liberian Civil war.

Mr. Taylor's role in the release of over 500 UN Peacekeepers from the captivity of the RUF Rebels in Sierra Leone was highlighted in Tuesday's testimonies.

Mr. Taylor said he facilitated the release of the UN Peacekeepers at the request of the International Community including the United States and Great Britain. He said after series of meetings in 2000 with ECOWAS and UN Officials; he invited Former RUF Commander, Issa Sesay to Monrovia.

Mr. Taylor told the court as a mediator for ECOWAS in the Sierra Leonean crisis, he warned Issa Sesay to release the peacekeepers. The over 500 UN Peacekeepers mainly Zambians, Kenyans, Malaysians and Norwegians were taken hostage by the RUF in demand for the release of their Leader, Foday Sankoh.

Mr. Taylor said only Libya and the United Nations assisted him when he secured the release of the UN Peacekeepers.

Awoko

Thursday, 20 August 2009

Aftermath of heavy rain

Five Killed

By Saidu Bah & Jon -Bu

Hheavy downpour of rain lasting for hours yesterday left many areas around Freetown partly flooded and a 30m fence at the Libyan Embassy at Wilberforce collapsed on three adjacent houses killing five people on the spot leaving scores wounded.

Mohamed Feika who lost a child in the disaster told Awoko that his wife was swept away by the torrent of water but was later rescued helpless and taken to hospital for treatment. His three other children were also seriously injured and also had to receive medical attention.

“Had it not been for the help of God my brother’s

children who had earlier left for Summer School would have been killed” Kallon said.

Another tenant Hassan Kallon who lost his two daughters in the disaster said in tears that he was away at work when the disaster struck. He also explained that his six months old toddler was rescued by neighbours slightly injured.

Mustapha Bangura also a victim had his wife waist cut completely by the broken fence and she remained trapped underneath the rubble until she was rescued and rushed to hospital. His younger brother Alhaji suffered a broken leg.

Initially victims were rushed to the 34 Military Hospital for medical attention but they were referred to the Emergency Hospital at Goderich.

The deputy Minister Health Minister Mohamed Daudis Koroma and the Defense Minister Paolo Conteh were at the scene when the rescue team made up of the Army personnel and the City Council worked through the rubble retrieving bodies and the injured.

In another development, the Lumley Bridge and expansion of drainages was partly submerged in the torrential rain yesterday and brought normal traffic and businesses to a halt.

The Freetown Road, Lumley was not accessible by motorist and pedestrians during the morning hours of yesterday. Motorists were forced to abandon their cars at the middle of the flooded street while pedestrians walked through the water half naked. According to flood victims, the lack of proper drainage system is one of the major problems affecting the community because both SLRA and the Freetown City Council have failed to intervene so as to rescue the community from disaster.

A taxi driver that was caught up in the flood expressed frustration and disappointment over poor drainage facilities within Lumley “this place has been flooding over the years without Government intervention it is disgraceful” he said.

s for speedy Disability Law

with disability would be at stake.

The intervention of vision for the blind and disability awareness action group she said is very timely to the enhancement of people living with disability.

She further stated that a person living with disability will continue to exist without enjoying the same opportunities as other people because of lack of access to essential services, noting that they will miss out on the rights of non-discrimination, independent, living, integration and equal justice.

High level of vigorous advocacy campaigns and awareness raising activities she stated should be undertaken by all stakeholders especially persons living with disability so as to ensure that the bill is passed into

Continued on Page 6

CharlesTaylorTrial.org (The Hague)

Wednesday, 19 August 2009

Liberia: ECOWAS Leaders Changed Rebel Leadership, not Charles Taylor Acting Alone, Taylor Says

Alpha Sesay

Charles Taylor did not use his personal influence or control over Sierra Leone's rebel force to choose a new leader when its head commander was arrested in 2000, Mr. Taylor told the Special Court for Sierra Leone judges today. Instead, West African leaders worked together to appoint a new rebel leader with whom they could negotiate in order to bring peace to Sierra Leone, he said.

In May 2000, Revolutionary United Front (RUF) leader Foday Sankoh was arrested and detained by the government of Sierra Leone after the rebel group abducted over 500 United Nations peacekeepers and held them as hostages. Mr. Taylor said he was able to negotiate the release of the UN peacekeepers after meeting with the RUF's most senior commander at the time, Issa Sesay. Mr. Taylor said that the next concern was to determine who to negotiate with on behalf of the RUF so that peace would return to Sierra Leone.

"After the release of the UN hostages, we were concerned about who was in charge of the RUF in Sierra Leone," Mr. Taylor said.

Mr. Taylor said that at a July 26, 2000 meeting in Liberia, six Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) leaders asked Mr. Sesay to take over the leadership of the RUF since Mr. Sankoh was no longer in a position to run the rebel movement. Mr. Sesay, according to Mr. Taylor, told the West African leaders that he needed to get the approval of Mr. Sankoh, who was imprisoned in Sierra Leone. He said that Nigerian president, Olusegun Obasanjo, and Malian president, Alpha Oumar Konare, traveled together to Sierra Leone and met with Mr. Sankoh in his prison cell. They obtained a letter from him which approved Mr. Sesay as the RUF's interim leader.

The Inquirer

Wednesday, 19 August 2009

Special Court Chief Prosecutor Resigns Sept 7...Vows To Raise Funds For Taylor's Trial



The Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court in Sierra Leone Mr. Stephen Rapp

The Chief Prosecutor of the United Nations (UN) backed Court on Sierra Leone, Mr. Stephen Rapp, who has been confirmed as the United States Ambassador-At-Large for War Crimes Issues, says he will use his new position to raise funds for the Court.

He said the Court is currently struggling to raise money to continue the trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor who is currently on trial for crime against humanity by the Special Court for Sierra

Leone in the Hague.

Mr. Rapp said the constraints for financial resources have caused the Court to seek financial support to cater to its US\$2.5 M weekly expenditure. He told a news conference in Monrovia yesterday that the Court is expecting US\$ 1.2M from the United Kingdom to fund the operations of the Court next year. Mr. Rapp also spoke of the commitment of Germany and the United States to provide funding to cover the operations of the court for the rest of the year, He said the prosecution is looking forward to cross-examine former President Taylor as his testimony appears contrary to evidence the prosecution has in his possession.

Mr. Rapp frowned on the delay by the defense and said the presentation of evidence will be over by February 2010.

The Analyst (Liberia)

Wednesday, 19 August 2009

“INT’L COMMUNITY WILL SUPPORT PROSECUTION OF WARLORDS”

New US Envoy For War Crimes Discloses

By J. Nathaniel Daygbor

Mr. Stephen Rapp, Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, now United States Ambassador at Large for War Crimes Issues, has disclosed that the international Community especially the United States government, will support war crimes court and prosecution of warlords if the Liberian government and people request the international community and the Barrack Obama administration for the establishment of the court.

Speaking at a press conference held at the headquarters of the Press Union of Liberia, Mr. Rapp said, the United States and the international community will not make decision on behalf of Liberians; something he termed as ‘unacceptable’ and it violates international norms.

Earlier, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said, the United States Government supports the Liberian government, adding she won’t go any further with questions for the prosecution of warlords. Mr. Rapp indicated that implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations which calls for the prosecution of over 98 persons and exclusion of 50 persons including President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and others is based on what Liberia will put forward.



Many Liberians including civil society groups in the country have in recent time called for the full implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) recommendations, they feel is the only sound that will served as deterrent for others who may want to trend the path of wars as a means of ascending to state power.

It can be recalled that in July of this year, the former chief prosecutor was nominated by President Obama to be the United States Ambassador at Large for war crimes issues, and was later confirmed by the United States Senate. He also disclosed that if the government and people of Liberia believe that the prosecution of former warlords and those who carried out major human violations in the 15 years of protracted civil wars are the problems and their prosecution is the best alternative, the United States government will fully support the entire exercise, he promised.

He revealed that the prosecution team in The Hague was pleased that the trial of former Liberian president Charles Taylor was proceeding accordingly, adding that Mr. Taylor is entitled to present his own account and respond to the charges leveled against him. “I must note that I am not able to comment on the specifics of his testimony, as the evaluation of his testimony is a matter for the judges”, he said.

Mr. Rapp maintained that “the Accused (Taylor) is presenting a story that is very different from the evidence offered by the Prosecution”, he narrated.

He noted that the prosecution calls for over 90 witnesses to appear in person before the court, more than 50 of these witnesses told the judges and world about the grave crimes committed against tens of thousands of innocent victims in Sierra Leone, more than 30 witnesses provided the linkage evidence showing Taylor’s

responsibility for the commission of these atrocities”, he briefed several journalists who attended the conference.

According to him, the prosecution is waiting patiently while the Accused (Taylor) gives his contrary version of events and denies all the charges against him. “We are looking forward to questioning him on cross examination in the coming weeks. When our time comes to ask the questions, we will confront Charles Taylor with the full weight of the case”, he averred.

Meanwhile, after the press conference, members of the Press Union of Liberia (PUL) bitterly quarreled the PUL’s President Peter Quaqua and Secretary General Philip Sandi for allowing the former Chief Prosecutor to use the facilities of the union, including the conference room which hosted the press conference. They also frowned on Mr. Quaqua for using the letter head of the union to send out citations.

Many members who were held in the lobby of the building said, the trial of former President Charles Taylor is highly political, and many supporters of Taylor may feel that the Union is in support of the prosecution. The aggrieved media practitioners maintained that the role of the media should be neutral, and taking side in the process, as this may bring them to public ridicule as well as putting their credibility at risk.

They argued further that the media as the watch dog in society should not take interest or be part of issues that will damage the image of the institution, they warned. Responding to his accusers, Mr. Quaqua informed his colleagues that he allowed the chief prosecutor to use the facilities of the Union because, “the Union is a neutral body and that any institution can use the conference room of the Union to host their press conferences.”

ADA/LAP Fortifies Operations - Braces Itself For Productivity

The African Development Aid (ADA) with its collaborating partner in agriculture, the Libya African Portfolio (LAP) is not leaving any stones unturned in ensuring that their goals and objectives are achieved. ADA/LAP has embarked on a landmark agriculture project in Foya, Lofa County with the aim of producing more food in Liberia to help reduce dependency on foreign food, particularly rice and in the same vein get rid of and hunger.

The organization began the project last year and it is endeavoring to fortify its operations to meet targeted goals as evident by the bringing of more land moving equipment. Recently, ADA/LAP held a press conference to give the Liberian people an insight of where they are in terms of their operations and to announce other gains they have made.

Amongst several issues addressed was the timetable for harvest, the bringing of more machines to effectively do the work as well as other germane concerns which are relevant to the operations of the company.

“This is to give you an update of where we are. The first batch of equipment arrived in November; second batch arrived in January/February; and the third batch arrived last weekend,” ADA/LPA’s General Manager, Elvis G. Morris, began by outlining the progress they are making.

At least, analysts say the bringing in of more equipment by the company proves and further consolidates its determination to remain in contention and to uphold and sustain its commitment to the Liberian people. ADA/LAP is one of the major investments the Ellen-led administration has secured, which is providing job opportunities to as many Liberians as possible and working towards giving Liberia’s lost status in food security.

“We have been working in Foya very intensively in the past two to three months to have what we promised to ourselves and the Liberian people, that we should be able to start producing rice hopefully at the end of this

year and beginning 2010. We have cleared 700 acres and we have planted 1700 hectares,” Mr. Morris elatedly told the Liberian people.

According to him, they have been able to put into place what he called “safety procedures” to avoid unfortunate circumstances for people who may want to visit the farm. The safety measures were put in place significantly due to the largeness of the farm.

“The farm is not a little place. A huge machine is running on the farm so we have asked people who would like to go there to let us know; we have put in place a logistic system that will take people around,” he said. This could also mean that a well planned and coordinated security system has been instituted there.

The Liberian government last year broke ground for the official kickoff of operations of the project, which is valued over US\$30 million, which stands to create ambience for food sufficiency in Liberia. As a way of trying to fortify its operations to meet its targets, the organization is in the process of shipping as many equipment to Liberia. Some of the equipment in transit includes a mill, a machine that would be used to package rice for the market.

The management could not give any specific date for the arrival of the equipment, but indicated that they would inform the nation if they get here. ADA/LAP said its intention to flood the Liberian market with food to enable everyone has food on their table to eat.

When asked whether they have intention to extend their market across the borders of Liberia, General Manager Morris responded in the negative, saying “that is not in our plan for now. What we want to do is to make sure there is enough food in Liberia.”

The Informer (Liberia)

Wednesday, 19 August 2009

Liberia: 'Go After Charles Taylor's Millions'

Roland Perry

The Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Stephen Rapp, has urged the Government of Liberia to go after the millions of dollars allegedly pocketed by former Liberian President Charles Taylor, now facing trial in The Hague for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Mr. Rapp added that the million of dollars, when found will help Liberia to solve some of the many problems the country is faced with, and will afford the government to build more schools, hospitals, and provide easy access to farm-to-market roads.

Meanwhile, Taylor has since denied that he has millions in foreign banks, challenging his accusers to identify the banks, and to withdraw said millions they claim he deposited.

Rapp continues that Mr. Taylor, over the years, exploited the country's resources through illegal sales of timbers, gold and diamond, and save huge amount of dollars in names of relatives and family members in foreign banks around the world.

Speaking to journalists yesterday at the headquarters of the Press Union of Liberia, Mr. Rapp disclosed that Taylor's trial has reached an important stage that is very essential that Liberians and Sierra Leonean be fully informed of the proceedings in court, adding that people must know that the trial continues in a fair, transparent and efficient manner.

Taylor, has, again, described as false and diabolical the 11-count charges levied against him, terming it as a conspiracy by western powers, mainly the US and Great Britain.

He said the Prosecution is pleased that the trial process is going well and that Charles Taylor is entitled to present his own account and respond to the charges against him.

The Chief Prosecutor however accused Mr. Taylor of presenting a story that is very different from the evidence offered by the Prosecution.

Mr. Rapp said the prosecution called over 90 witnesses to appear in person before the Court, of which more than fifty of the witnesses told the judges, and the world, about the grave crimes committed against tens of thousands of innocent victims in Sierra Leone.

He stressed that thirty of the witnesses also provided the linkage evidence showing Taylor is responsible for the commission of these atrocities.

"We have been waiting patiently, while the Accused gives his own contrary version of events, and denies all the charges against him. We are looking forward to questioning him on cross-examination in the coming weeks," Rapp, who has been appointed by the US as Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes, said he is particularly proud to have been part of judicial proceedings that resulted in the first convictions in history for the recruitment and use of child soldiers as a war crime, the first convictions for attacks on peace-keepers as a violation of international humanitarian law, and the first convictions for sexual slavery and forced marriage as crimes against humanity. "I am also pleased to have seen through the presentation of the Prosecution's case against Charles Taylor, the start of defiance evidence, and our presentations to meet the defense case."

Commenting in the Liberia Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report, Mr. Rapp said the report squarely lies in the jurisdiction of the Liberian people and the Government of Liberia. He said what is sure is that when Liberians write the international community, calling for war crime court, they would surely be supported.

Mr. Rapp, nominated by US President Barack Obama as United States Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues, and confirmed by Congress, added that he has notified the United Nations Secretary General that he will resign as Special Court Prosecutor on September 7, 2009 to take up his new post, which according to him is based in the US State Department, in the office of Secretary Hillary Clinton, Washington D.C.

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 19 August 2009

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

International Clips on Liberia

Liberian oil tanker, British ship collide

(DPA)

19 August 2009

KUALA LUMPUR - Malaysian rescuers scrambled on Wednesday to search for survivors and contain a major oil spill after a Liberian oil tanker burst into flames in the Malacca Strait, officials said. The tanker collided with a British bulk carrier late Tuesday, resulting in a massive explosion and flames visible from the beach town of Port Dickson in the southern state of Negeri Sembilan. The cause of the collision between the tanker, which was carrying 58,000 tons of naphtha oil from the Britain to Singapore, and the charcoal-laden MV Ostende Max, has yet to be determined, rescue officers said. Firefighters and marine rescue department officers began searching for nine missing crew members from the oil tanker early Wednesday, Port Dickson police chief Mazlan Othman said. Mazlan said the oil tanker had a total of 25 crew, 23 of them Chinese nationals and two from Taiwan. He said the rescued crew was found on a life raft not far from the vessel. He said 13 of the rescued crew members received outpatient treatment at a local hospital and were currently staying at a hotel, while three others have been admitted for treatment of smoke inhalation and minor burns, the Star online news portal reported.

Inside Liberia's other Executive Mansion

August 19, 2009 GlobalPost, — Liberia's Executive Mansion was once a marvel of modern architecture in West Africa. It's been empty since 2006, when a small fire caused Liberia's President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to shift her residence to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which to this day remains her base of operations. Officially, the fire was caused by electrical problems though rumors circulate of arson. Just 40 feet behind the official and empty Executive Mansion is a second Executive Mansion, this one is unofficial and very, very full. A community of squatters has named their beachside residence Executive Mansion in honor of their nearby (former) neighbor. This Executive Mansion is a once-grand apartment building, complete with a wide staircase entry, glass brick windows, a veranda and columns. The former home to high-ranking civil servants is now cordoned off into mini-residences for squatter families. Dozens of tin and thatch makeshift homes surround the perimeter of the building.

River search for missing girl resumes

Source: McClatchy-Tribune Information Services Date: August 19, 2009

The search for a 9-year-old girl playfully pushed into the Schuylkill last night was resumed this morning by the Coast Guard and the Philadelphia Police Marine Unit. The girl was pushed into the river around 7:30 p.m. by a boy, who said apparently did it as a joke, and crews, including the Fire Department, searched until late last night. The girl and the boy were with six other Liberian immigrant children playing at a boat ramp near the Hess refinery in Southwest Philadelphia. "We'll have a boat. We'll have divers. We'll be doing underwater sonar searches," Lt. Andrew Napoli said shortly after 6:30 this morning. The tricky part is estimating how far downstream to look. "It really depends on what the currents were doing last night," he said. "We'll expand the search as needed." He expected the Marine Unit would continue to search for at least several hours. At first, this morning, the Coast Guard boat stayed within view of 56th Street, near Bartram's Park, where the incident happened. Hopes are not high to find the girl alive.

International Clips on West Africa

Nurses blamed for patient deaths in Sierra Leone

FREETOWN, Aug 19, 2009 (AFP) - Thirteen nurses in Sierra Leone have been accused of neglect resulting in patient deaths, health officials said Wednesday, with unofficial sources putting the number of dead at up to 25. Authorities said late Tuesday the deaths took place within a six week timeframe at two hospitals in the capital Freetwon. They gave no official figures, but said that the dead included pregnant women and children. The 13 nurses have been suspended from duty pending an investigation. Some patients were said to have died as a result of uncontrolled bleeding after surgery, others fell off their beds or were not given their prescribed medications on time. The deaths could be as high as 25 people repeatedly abandoned by the nurses during their night shifts, according to a doctor linked to a government panel formed to probe the affair, citing unofficial sources. The scandal came to light during unannounced night trips by Deputy Health Minister Dawdis Kamara, who said, "I visited the hospitals several times and found no nurses in the various wards and patients uncared for.

Guinea

Ivoirian Refugees Want Training Centre Back

Kouankan, Aug 19, 2009 (UN Integrated Regional Information Networks/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- Ivoirians at 'Kouankan 2' refugee camp in southeastern Guinea are working to keep alive a vocational training centre, which refugees and aid workers say is important to the camp community's future and present. On 4 August a food distribution was underway at the camp, in Guinea's N'zerekore region, and the training centre was empty but for two men seated at foot-pedalled sewing machines. But, they told IRIN, even on a normal day the centre is not nearly as bustling as it was a few years ago. "It used to be that hundreds of people would come to the centre daily," 39-year-old Sanogo Moriba, one of 3,369 Ivoirians at Kouankan 2, told IRIN. He volunteers to teach sewing at the centre. "Now people are so discouraged." Thousands of Ivoirians have sought refuge in Guinea and other neighboring countries since a 2002 rebellion in Cote d'Ivoire.

Local Media – Newspaper

SCSL Prosecution Gears Up to Confront Former President Taylor... Says He's Giving Contrary Version in Testimony

(New Democrat, The News, The Inquirer, The Informer, Heritage, The Analyst, Daily Observer, Public Agenda, Liberian Express, Liberian Journal)

- The Chief Prosecutor of the UN backed Special Court for Sierra Leone, Mr. Stephen Rapp says former President Charles Taylor is giving testimonies that are contrary to the evidence presented by the prosecution.
- Mr. Rapp said the Prosecution has strong and compelling evidence to confront Mr. Taylor who has consistently denied the 11-count charges brought against him at the Special Court sitting in The Hague.
- Addressing a news conference in Monrovia, he said the court was struggling to raise money to continue the trial of former President Taylor.
- Mr. Rapp said the constraints have caused the court to seek financial support to cater to its US\$2.5 million weekly expenditure.
- Meanwhile, the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Chief Prosecutor has announced that he will shortly resign from the Court next month to take up a new assignment as US ambassador-at-large for war crimes issues.
- He however expressed confidence that the prosecution team was ready to handle the trial and promise to use his new position to raised money for the court.

Legislature Approves New LISCR Agreement

(The News, Public Agenda, Daily Observer, New Democrat)

- The National Legislature has ratified the extended and restated agency agreement between Liberia and Liberia International Shipping and Corporate Registry (LISCR), a company that manages the maritime sector of the Country.
- The Legislature approved the new LISCR agreement following weeks of review by both Houses.
- The agreement provides for the agency to run the Liberian maritime sector for an additional ten years and that government would receive 67 percent of revenues generated from the maritime sector while the remaining 33 percent would go to LISCR.
- Both, the Senate and House of Representatives ratified the LISCR agreement without much controversy.
- Before the ratification of the LISCR deal, the Maritime Bureau cautioned the lawmakers against making sensitive documents of the agreement public.

FBI Report says President Sirleaf, Others Signature Forged in CBL over US\$1M Transfer Deal

(New Democrat, Public Agenda)

- A Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) report into the Central Bank of Liberia over US\$1 million transfer deal reveals that the signatures of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and three Finance Ministry officials were forged.
- In early July, the General Auditing Commission(GAC) solicited the expertise of FBI Forensic document examiner, Meredith Dekalb Miller to determine whether the signatures on the over US\$1 million transfer deal from the Central Bank to an Ecobank account were forged or not.
- The report which indicted the Special Assistant to the Governor of the Bank, Boima Taylor recommended that he is reprimanded for giving the instructions that led to the transfer.
- The former Deputy Governor, Ethel Davies was also recommended for reprimand for failing to exercise "due diligence" while two employees detained in connection with the scandal were vindicated by the report.

New UN Report Says Security, Rule of Law Still Fragile in Liberia

(New Democrat, Liberian Express)

- A new UN report says Rule of Law and Security remains fragile in the country.
- In a report to the Security Council, UN Secretary General Ban ki-Moon said it is important for Government to make every effort to develop National Security and Rule of Law institutions.
- Mr. Ban also said the burgeoning drugs trade in Liberia is a serious threat to the country's long-term stability and that independent security institutions needed to be implemented in order to deal with the problem.

Former President Taylor says International Community Sanctioned former RUF Commander Asylum in Liberia

(Heritage, National Chronicle, New Democrat, The Inquirer)

- Former President Charles Taylor said he had the international community's approval to grant political asylum to Sam Bockarie after the rebel commander left Sierra Leone in December 1999.
- Mr. Taylor told the war crimes court that the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) leaders realized that Sam Bockarie's continued presence in Sierra Leone was a hindrance to the peace process and decided for him to get political asylum in Liberia.

Twenty Three Liberians Get Chinese Government Medical Scholarship

(The News)

- Twenty three Liberians beneficiaries of a Chinese Government medical scholarship are expected to leave the country this Sunday.
- The students will study at various Universities in that country for a period of five to six years.
- The beneficiaries of the scholarship are expected to specialize in various medical disciplines including General Surgery, Pediatrics, Gynecology and Dentistry among others.

House Summons Education Minister over Abrupt Hike in Tuition Fees

(The Inquirer)

- The House of Representatives has summoned Education Minister, Dr. Joseph Korto over the abrupt increase in tuition fees across the country.
- The House reached the decision Tuesday following a letter of concern by Montserrado Representative Rufus Neufville which cited the breakdown of government's regulatory authority over schools operating in Liberia.
- He complained that schools continue to arbitrarily increase their tuition and other fees annually to the disadvantage of parents and self-supported students.
- According to him, the increment runs contrary to the poverty reduction strategy and negatively impacts government's subsidy to learning institutions.
- He identified some learning institutions benefiting from government's subsidy as the Catholic, Methodist, Lutheran and Baptist School Systems.

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

New Police Chief Halts Increment in Police Salary

- [SIC]Star Radio has obtained a confidential letter written by Police Inspector General, Marc Amblard placing a halt to a US\$30 dollar increment in police salary.
- The increment was ordered by his predecessor, Muna Sieh-Brown, but Mr. Amblard overturned the mandate, thus sparking dissatisfaction among the police.
- Mr. Amblard said his action was justified on grounds that there was no documentary explanation left by his predecessor.
- According to the New Police Chief his administration could not support the increment based on the current constraints on the police budget.
- It remains unclear whether the Muna Sieh Brown administration ever consulted the Finance Ministry prior to the increment decision.

Special Court Struggles to Raise Money for Taylor's trial

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

Taylor Confirms ECOMOG's Guns for Diamond Deal

- Former Liberian President, Charles Taylor has confirmed a United Nations 2000 report that Nigerian ECOMOG Soldiers in Sierra Leone traded their guns for diamonds with Revolutionary United Front (RUF) Rebels.
- The UN report indicated an RUF radio Message intercepted by the Sierra Leone Army pointed to the illicit diamond trade.
- The UN report claims the deal was between some Nigerian ECOMOG Soldiers and RUF Leader Foday Sankoh.
- The prosecution had insisted that Mr. Taylor is the mastermind behind the RUF diamond trade for guns.
- During his testimony in court, Mr. Taylor strongly dismissed the prosecution's claims but said he was not a stranger to the ECOMOG gun trade. He admitting dealing with ECOMOG during the Liberian Civil War.

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

House Approves New LISCR Agreement

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

House Summons Education Minister over Abrupt Hike in Tuition Fees

Defense Minister says No Plan to Deploy New AFL Soldiers

- Defense Minister Brownie Samukai says the deployment of soldiers of the new Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) across the country would take some time saying the army needs to be financially and logistically equip.

- Minister Samukai said government has a huge responsibility to cater to the welfare of the soldiers to enable them effectively carry out their duties.
- The Defense Ministry Boss however disclosed plans for the rehabilitation of all military barracks in the country beginning with the Todee Military barracks in Montserrado County.
- Although, the Defense Minister could not say when the exercise will begin, he said it would require a substantial amount of money.

Radio Veritas *(Monitored today at 9:45 am)*

SCSL Chief Prosecutor Says US will Endorse Liberia's Decision on TRC Report

- The Chief Prosecutor of the UN backed Special Court for Sierra Leone, Mr. Stephen Rapp have reiterated an earlier statement by US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton that the United States will support any decision of the Liberian Government concerning the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) final report.
- He said the US and the Special Court will support Liberia if it recommends the setting up of a war crimes court to prosecute those who committed heinous crimes against humanity.

The Analyst (Liberia)

Wednesday, 19 August 2009

TRC Advisor Grills Report

Points to “Irregularities” and “Anomalies” Where’s The Reconciliatory Process Headed?

TRC International Technical Advisor, Dr. Jeremy Levitt, says certain aspects the Final Consolidated Unedited Report Vol. II of the TRC must be withdrawn to address the problems, irregularities, and anomalies it contains.

He said this was a necessary requirement to streamline certain potential problem areas of the report in order to ensure its authenticity, ease of implementation, and effectiveness on the nation’s peace and reconciliation process and not as a subject of further bickering and positioning as seen in the last two months since the report’s release.

Agence France Presses

Thursday, 20 August 2009

Khmer Rouge court vows 'fair and just' verdict

By International Justice Desk



*Phnom Pehn,
Cambodia*

Cambodia's UN-backed war crimes court Thursday promised a "fair and just" verdict in the trial of Khmer Rouge prison chief Duch, after days of emotional testimony from the relatives of victims.

Jail supremo Duch (66)

is on trial before the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) for overseeing the torture and execution of roughly 15,000 people at the notorious Tuol Sleng detention centre during the hardline communist regime's 1975-79 rule.

Several foreigners and Cambodians have come to the court in Phnom Pehn in recent weeks to testify about the effects on their lives of losing loved ones in the prison-turned high school.

Head judge Nil Nonn warned them on Thursday to only give evidence and not to use the hearing "to take revenge", after some witnesses spoke out harshly against Duch.

"At the end, the chamber would consider all this information and evidence, and then we would issue a judgement which is fair and just and is acceptable by all the parties to the proceedings," Nil Nonn added.

New Zealand Olympic rower Rob Hamill, whose brother Kerry was murdered by the Khmer Rouge after his yacht was blown off course and into Cambodian waters, told the court on Monday how he had sometimes felt like killing Duch himself.

Court officials have said Duch's trial is expected to wrap up in October, with the judges likely to issue a verdict some months later.

Duch, a former maths teacher whose real name is Kaing Guek Eav, has previously accepted responsibility for his role in governing the jail under the regime and begged forgiveness from the families of the victims.

The jail chief last week asked for the "strictest level of punishment" -- even death by stoning -- for his crimes against the Cambodian people.

But he has denied that he played a leading role in the Khmer Rouge's hierarchy, saying that he obeyed orders from the top because he feared for his own and his family's lives.

Led by Pol Pot, who died in 1998, the Khmer Rouge emptied Cambodia's cities in a bid to forge an agrarian utopia, resulting in the deaths of up to two million people from starvation, overwork and torture.

(Source: AFP)

(Photo: Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia on [Flickr](#))

Voice of America

Wednesday, 19 August 2009

Kenya MP Leads Final Effort to Try Violence Suspects Locally

By Alan Boswell
Nairobi

A rogue Kenyan minister of parliament is working with the nation's civil society in a final effort to pass a bill forming a special tribunal to try perpetrators of post-election violence. The bill has received the endorsement of the nation's prime minister but faces an uphill battle against time and political ill-will.

A divided Kenyan cabinet last month decided to forego its efforts to create a local court, opting instead to refer the cases to an investigative body that currently has no prosecutorial powers.

The cabinet decision has appeared to put the fate of the nation's top suspects in the hands of the International Criminal Court at The Hague, which was given a list of key suspects by former United Nations chief Kofi Annan.

But not all Kenyans are ready to accept its country's lack of political resolve to prosecute masterminds of the chaos internally. Kenyan MP Gitobu Imanyara is leading a campaign to get a local tribunal bill passed by Parliament before the legislative body goes on a two-month recess late next week.

Kenya was reportedly given a September deadline by the ICC chief prosecutor to try set up an internationally-acceptable local court.

The MP leading the charge has met extensively with Kenya's civil society to help draft a bill that would give the court complete independence from the nation's executive and judiciary branches, neither of which are trusted to fully prosecute the suspects.

Because the bill must amend the country's constitution, the act must receive two-thirds support in Parliament to be successful.

Imanyara has appealed to Kenyans directly to put pressure on their local MPs to support the bill, creating the Web site EndImpunityInKenya.org which solicits comments and suggestions from Kenyans on the act.

"We MPs are the product of the people. We are delegates," he said. "And if the people of Kenya demand certain things from us certain things and we fail, then we've failed. So they will be entitled to rise against us to force us to do what was expected of us, what we were elected to do. We cannot afford to fail. If we address this issue objectively, without the ethnic emotions attached to it, we will be able pass this bill with more than two-thirds."

The bill received a boost from the public endorsements from Kenya's prime minister and its minister of justice. Prime Minister Raila Odinga's party holds the majority in Parliament.

But the vote is complicated by the belief that key leaders of two major ethnic groups are named as top suspects in the list handed over to The Hague. These two ethnic groups are part of opposing political coalitions, meaning the vote is unlikely to fall along strict party lines.

And some MPs are taking issue with their colleague's highly-publicized mobilization of public pressure through the Internet, a relatively new tactic in the country's political scene.

George Thuo, a senior leader in Parliament for the party led by President Mwai Kibaki, says that his caucus had not yet seen the draft and had no official position on the proposed bill. But he is blaming his likely opposition to the bill on what he sees as unwarranted bullying from its proponents.

"When you see him launching with civil society and they attempt to intimidate MPs by saying that they are going to have a list on a website of who votes how," he said. "It already starts with a very bad taste. I can't possibly with something because something thought they could intimidate me. So I'm tempted to vote against it intimidation by civil society to vote against it."

In the end of the day, political analyst Adam Oloo predicts Mr. Imanyara's efforts will fall short.

"Those who are 'for' might win the day, but I doubt if they will be able to get the two-thirds," said Oloo.

But according to Oloo, if the bill does manage to go through, it would constitute an unprecedented attempt by the Parliament to stand up against the nation's often-criticized executive, which normally views the legislative body as a rubber stamp for its initiatives.

Daily News

Thursday, 20 August 2009

Stop the world court from hauling Israelis off to the Hague

By Jay Sekulow and Brett Joshpe

Israel's supporters, beware. The Jewish state's adversaries have been lobbying the International Criminal Court to assert jurisdiction over Israelis - and prosecute them for war crimes - for events that occurred during the December 2008-January 2009 war in Gaza, Operation Cast Lead.

The especially depressing part is this: The Obama administration has done nothing publicly to discourage the prospect. In fact, Secretary of State Clinton recently expressed "great regret" that the U.S. is not a member of the court, even as it considers this outrageous prosecution.

The administration had better wake up to this threat, and quickly. Should the campaign to prosecute Israelis for acting in self-defense prove successful, it will undermine what legitimacy the court currently has, register as a major victory for those who want to weaken Israel and set a horrible precedent for all nations fighting to stop terrorists from doing their worst.

Israel, as many know, launched Operation Cast Lead because of persistent Hamas terrorist and rocket attacks. During the military action, Israel painstakingly sought to avoid civilian casualties - dropping millions of leaflet warnings, making phone calls to residents and employing a "knock-on-the-roof" warning prior to striking military targets that might house civilians. Nonetheless, given the terrorists' propensity to use civilians as human shields and operate from residential neighborhoods, tragedies occurred.

Now, Israel's antagonists are seeking revenge in the courts.

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have published multiple reports accusing Israelis of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The Arab League has gotten in on the action as well, sending the court its first-ever fact-finding report on alleged Israeli crimes. While the report claims to be independent and objective, it consistently refers to the Israeli "offensive" and says of Hamas terrorists, "There are a number of factors that reduce their moral blameworthiness," such as the fact that "Palestinians have been denied their right to self-determination by Israel and have long been subjected to a cruel siege by Israel."

The report concludes that the results of an internal Israel Defense Forces investigation into allegations of Israeli war crimes are "unconvincing" because Palestinian sources were not considered and the "IDF investigation was conducted for a number of days only." (Meanwhile, the Arab League report was based upon a five-day investigation without any discussions with the Israeli government, and internal Israeli investigations remain ongoing.)

The anti-Israel drumbeat is steady and getting louder. Before long, the International Criminal Court could very well drag Israelis into The Hague and put them on trial for defending themselves from terrorists.

If that isn't turning the world upside down, what is?

There's just one hitch - or at least there ought to be, if court officials care to obey the rules. The Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court limits access to actual states. Meaning, the government of Palestine doesn't have standing to make this claim.

But that may not stop the court.

Luis Moreno-Ocampo, who serves as its chief prosecutor and earlier this year said that the court does not have jurisdiction in Gaza because of Palestine's nonstate status, seems to be buckling to the growing pressure.

Last month, Moreno-Ocampo wrote an Op-Ed boasting that "the Palestinian National Authority accepted the jurisdiction of the court," clearly laying the groundwork for a possible investigation.

So, brace yourselves. Those who have waged war against Israel using suicide bombers and rockets may have found themselves a new battlefield: The International Criminal Court. Unless, that is, someone has the guts to stand in their way.

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Bashir doesn't need Hague trial

Written by Bwesigye Brian

Moreno Ocampo's visit to Uganda at a time when the African Union (AU) has resolved not to enforce an ICC arrest warrant against Bashir has rekindled the debate on whether Africa needs the Hague-based International Criminal Court in order to deliver justice to thousands of victims of war crimes and crimes against humanity on the continent.

Former South African President Thabo Mbeki is chairing an AU panel charged with helping to bring peace to Darfur by making recommendations to the AU's Peace and Security Council as an alternative to the ICC indictment.

The occurrence of such events as well as the fact that we have several war crimes and crimes against humanity suspects at large, including Joseph Kony, Omar el Bashir's case calls for a serious review of the current international criminal law system.

In particular it requires us to determine whether justice for war crimes and crimes against humanity is best served by the ICC or regional blocks such as the AU.

The Bashir case pertinently exposes the clash of the international and regional systems.

Those that argue that Bashir should appear in The Hague to face the music say that Africa has no solution for the victims of the brunt of the janjaweed militia in Darfur.

If we Africans keep looking elsewhere for solutions for our problems, when will we ever develop? What is even more disagreeable is the superfluous argument put by proponents of the ICC that because existing African judicial systems have not handled cases of such magnitude before, Africa is inept as a continent and consequently must look elsewhere to obtain justice!

Being an enthusiast of justice and fairness for those who commit war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, I am interested in seeing Bashir answer all charges that are being brought against him. However, I disagree with the pro ICC group with regards to the system that should try him.

That Africa has not done this before and so cannot pull it off is as misleading as it is deceptive. Every system has a history which tells of evolution from a practically non-existent system to a fully grown and proficient one.

The ICC was nothing but words in the period leading up to 1998. Now it has judges, prosecutors and a registry and it has gradually become a fully operational court, though no case has been heard to its conclusion to date.

By 1900 and during the period that Hitler and his clique were slaughtering civilians in what became the Second World War, no institution existed to try crimes of the magnitude that characterised the Holocaust, and then the Nuremberg and Tokyo International Military Tribunals were born.

Now we can refer to several cases and decisions that have enriched jurisprudence on International Humanitarian and Criminal Law as a result of this innovation.

Next door in Rwanda, before common sense went on leave to expose close to a million Tutsis and moderate Hutus to axe and panga wielding extremist Hutus who were out to exterminate them, none,

neither in Rwanda nor elsewhere, considered “Gacaca”, a traditional system originally used in the nineteenth century to solve simple disputes in the Rwandan society, a potential system of trying genocide crimes.

As we discovered while on a law study tour of Rwanda organised by Uganda Law Students’ Society recently, Gacaca is the biggest success story of transitional justice in the world today.

We found out that within eight years, Gacaca courts have delivered over 1.1 million judgments, with just about 3,000 pending cases.

Such impressive statistics are found nowhere else in the world.

Interestingly, the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda had as at June 2009, only managed to complete a paltry forty five cases at a cost of more than one billion US dollars over a period of over one decade!

With the manifest success story of Gacaca in Rwanda, as distinguished from the ICTR system, why can’t we give the African Union the benefit of doubt that it can create a Pan African system that will deliver justice in the Bashir-Darfur case?

Virtue certainly prevails over Vice. Bashir is suspected of having committed war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide in Darfur and in my view there is a prima facie case. Though the Sudanese national judicial system is no fit substitute for the ICC, the African Union can create the much desired alternative.

Darfurians will certainly not see justice as a fruit of a Hague based trial, but in all this melodrama, Africa may just lose another opportunity. Leave Bashir to the African Union. We can handle him.

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