

**SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
PRESS 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:

Monday, 21 April 2008

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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The Democrat
Monday, 21 April 2008

Revealed

How Charles Taylor Armed AFRC/RUF Junta

What
Is
NRA
Bamba
Up
To?

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A prosecution witness (name undisclosed) in the ongoing trial at the Hague of former Liberian president and warlord Charles Taylor revealed past Friday how Mr. Taylor armed the AFRC/RUF junta in 1997, to consolidate their position after violently ousting the democratically elected government of former president Tejan Kabba.

Testifying at the court with Mr. Taylor watching, Sesay, a former fighter, said he was aware of communications between Taylor and the junta, with

specific instructions given to them to defend Kono for its rich mineral resource, diamond.

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How Charles Taylor Armed AFRC/RUF Junta

From Front Page

Sesay added that in communications between Taylor and Sam 'Maskita' Bockarie, Taylor stressed that Kono was very strategic and that they (junta) should never cede or allow it to fall.

He said Taylor told them that with the diamonds from Kono they can buy arms and ammunition to sustain their bloody campaign and entrench themselves in power.

According to the witness, Taylor had already shipped some arms and ammunition to the junta in exchange for diamonds.

Mr. Taylor's lawyer however put it to the prosecution witness that he was lying. He said what the witness was telling the court contradicted an earlier statement he had made indicating his unawareness of communications between his client and the junta.

The trial of Charles Taylor by the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone is a landmark in the history of international criminal justice. The first African leader to face trial at an international tribunal, Taylor now stands accused of 11 counts of crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious violations of international humanitarian law in an indictment which places him at the centre of a systematic campaign of terror waged against civilians in Sierra Leone, which included murder; rape; sexual slavery; amputation of limbs; looting; setting fire to property and conscripting child soldiers.

Concord Times
Monday, 21 April 2008

How Taylor backed Westside Boys

By Alphonsus Zeon and Adolphus Williams
at The Hague

Prosecution witness Friday told UN backed Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague that Charles Taylor helped Westside Boys decapitate civilians and mount the heads as signposts at checkpoints on Okra Hill, outside Freetown.

Alimamy Sesay, whose chilling accounts linked the former Liberian President to atrocities committed in the country, said the former renegade soldiers also sealed off houses and set them on fire with civilians crying inside them until they died. He said anyone who attempted to come out of the house was shot dead.

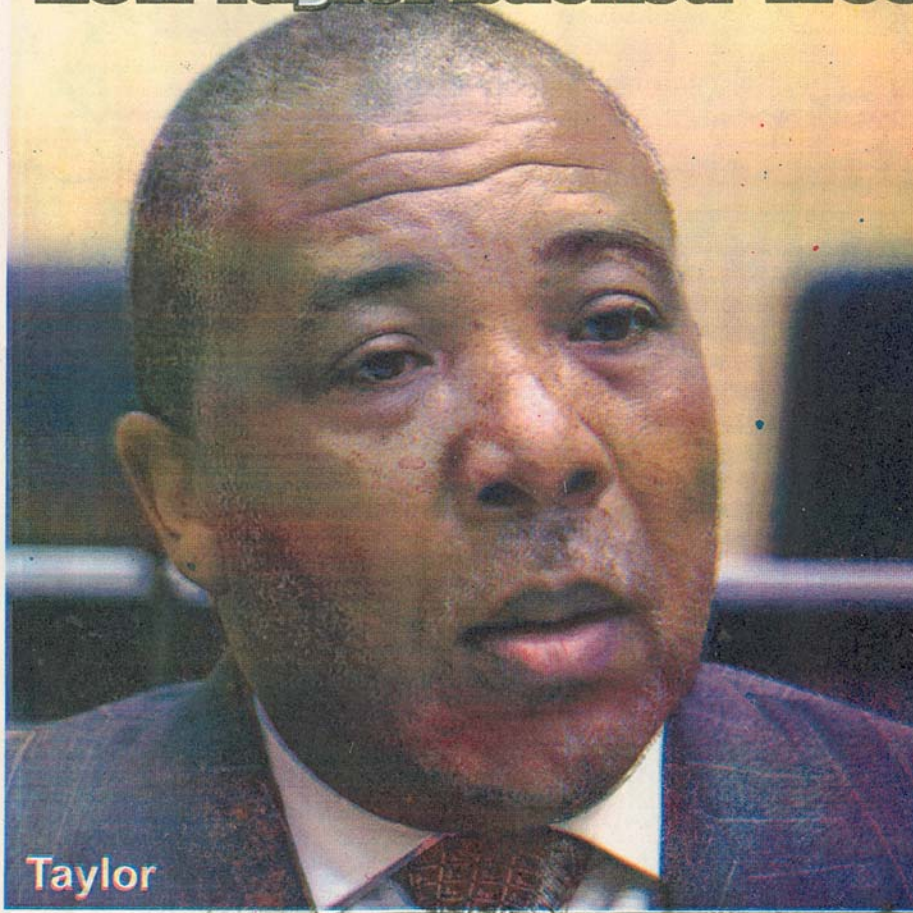
Testifying further, Sesay said Taylor supplied the deposed Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, who temporarily seized power in 1997, with arms and ammunition.

Sitting upright in the courtroom and swinging his chair, while Taylor looked on quietly, Sesay said the former Liberian President remained their prime supporter, supplying them with arms to hold on to grounds while they reined terror on the people.

"Mr Taylor said Kono was the diamond rich town, so by capturing diamonds, we would be able to get diamonds and go to Liberia to purchase arms and ammunition which could support us to defend Kono," Sesay said.

The prosecution accused Taylor of ordering the AFRC/RUF Junta in and around

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How Taylor backed Westside Boys

From page 1

March 1998 to capture Kono, and provided them with much-needed arms and ammunition in exchange for diamonds, enhancing their ability to continue the war.

Sesay's testimony followed those of prosecution witness TF1-516 who left the stand Wednesday after Taylor's lawyer, Morris Anyan accused him of contradicting an earlier testimony that he never saw diamonds with Sam Mosquito Bockarie nor heard Taylor on the RUF

radio network.

He said he took part in a joint "mission" by AFRC/RUF fighters which rounded up civilians, forced them into houses and burned them alive. As the fire blazed, he went on the fighters positioned themselves to shoot anyone who attempted to jump out of the flame.

Sesay said they ordered 8 to 15-year-old boys they had forcibly conscripted to have sex with 8 to 10 year-old girls, with a view to create fear in the minds

of civilians and enemy forces, as well as drive them out of the diamond-rich Kono district.

Under cross-examination by the prosecution lawyer, Shyamala Alegendra, Sesay said the rebel commanders were aware of the abuses saying, "...no body did anything about it". Rather they told the boys, "enjoy yourselves".

*Courtesy of BBC
World Service Trust
and Search for
Common Ground*

Awareness Times
Monday, 21 April 2008

Witness Testifies on Taylor's Backing of AFRC

- *Witness tells court*

By Alphonsus Zeon and Adolphus Williams at The Hague

The trial of the former Liberian President, Charles Taylor at the UN backed Sierra Leone for Sierra Leone heard some chilling accounts of rebel atrocities against civilians during Sierra Leone brutal war.

Prosecution witness, Alimamy Sesay told the court of how they decapitated civilians and mounted the heads as sign posts at check points. The former West Side Boys combatant said they also sealed off houses and set them on fire with civilians crying inside them until death. He said anyone who attempted to come out of the house was shot dead. Testifying on Friday, Sesay said the former Liberian president supplied the deposed Armed Forces Revolutionary Council who temporarily seized power in 1997.

Sitting upright in the courtroom and swinging his chair, while Taylor looked on quietly, Sesay said the former Liberian President remained their prime supporter, supplying them with arms to hold on to grounds while they reined terror on the people. "[Mr. Taylor] said Kono was the diamond rich town, so by capturing diamonds, we would be able to get diamonds and go to Liberia to purchase arms and ammunition which could support us to defend Kono," Sesay said.

The prosecution accused Taylor of ordering the AFRC/RUF Junta in and around March 1998 to capture Kono, and provided them with much-needed arms and ammunition in exchange for diamonds, enhancing their ability to continue the war.

Sesay's testimony follows those of prosecution witness TF1-516 who left the stand Wednesday after Taylor's lawyer, Morris Anyan accused him of contradicting an earlier testimony that he never saw diamonds with Sam Mosquito Bockarie nor heard Taylor on the RUF radio network.

He said he took part in a joint "mission" by AFRC/RUF fighters which rounded up civilians, forced them into houses and burned them alive. As the fire blazed, he went on the fighters positioned themselves to shoot anyone who attempted to jump out of the flame.

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Under cross-examination by the prosecution lawyer, Shyamala Alegendra, Sesay said the rebel commanders were aware of the abuses saying, "...no body did anything about it". Rather they told the boys, "enjoy yourselves".

Courtesy of BBC World Service Trust and Search for Common Ground

Sierra Express (website)

Thursday, 17 April 2008

<http://www.sierraexpressmedia.com/id638.html>

Charles Taylor's Trial in The Hague

TF1-516 said Taylor instructed RUF forces to attack the position of the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy, LURD rebels in Voinjama, after they invaded Liberia in 1999.

The witness told the court, RUF Former Frontline Commander, Sam Buckarie led one batch of the RUF forces in countering Sekou Konnehs LURD.

TF1-516 said Former Special Security Service Director, Benjamin Yeaten, on a number of occasions used Taylor's ATU helicopter to travel to the battlefield in Lofa. Defense lawyer Morris Anyan however said that Buckarie never participated in any operations after 1999 when he crossed over to Liberia.

Prosecution lawyer Mohammed Bangura objected to Anyans line of questioning.

During all these exchanges, Taylor sat quietly. Dressed in a blue suit, white shirt with a gold tie with an eagle eyed staring through his glasses, which hung over his nose in the direction of the protection witnesses.

He scribbled on pieces of paper fashioning his wedding ring and later passed the notes over to his British-trained Ghanaian lawyer, Morris Anyan who was leading the cross examination.

Former Liberian President Moses Blah is expected to testify against Taylor this week, who replaced the late Vice President Enoch Dogolea and later became president after Taylor self-exiled himself to Nigeria.

Awoko
Monday, 21 April 2008

Monday April 21, 2008

Awoko Newspaper

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Courting disaster in Sierra Leone: The £75m bureaucratic farce

Called From The Daily Mail By David Matthews
How the UN Special Court in Sierra Leone, which was set up to try the country's warlords and mass murderers, has turned into a £75m bureaucratic farce...

Draw up a league table of Third World poverty and Sierra Leone is not poor, nor one of the most poor.

It is, by official measure, the poorest.

Of all the world's 177 nations, it is ranked 177th.

Life expectancy is 41 and infant mortality is the worst in the world.

Sixty-five per cent of its GDP is in aid donations, of which the UK contributes £40 million per annum.



A large amount of this investment sits just outside the capital, Freetown, surrounded by razor wire and armed guards.

The Special Court in Sierra Leone: An ongoing war crimes tribunal set up by the Sierra Leonean government and the UN, in 2002, to prosecute those who have violated against

Like an alien craft descended on the jungle from another world, the Special Court was for a long time the only place in Sierra Leone that had 24-hour electricity, phone lines, internet access and air conditioning. It houses a modern-day Jarndyce v Jarndyce, Dickens's almost endless Bleak House legal case; an ongoing war-crimes tribunal set up by the Sierra Leonean Government and the UN in 2002 to prosecute those "who bear the greatest responsibility" for human rights violations during the country's ten-year civil war.

Small gangs of low-paid workmen spent months breaking rocks in the baking heat, laying cement and even constructing a helipad in readiness for the day when former Liberian President Charles Taylor would be brought to justice.

"Bring Taylor to the Special Court and there'll be a queue around the block," a local told me.

"Without Taylor, people aren't interested." Only bagging the 59-year-old widely held responsible for the civil war would justify the £75 million Special Court bill being met by the international community, which means mostly the UK and the US.

But when Taylor was finally brought to justice, he was sent for diplomatic reasons to The Hague his trial began in January and is expected to go on for a year.

The Special Court in Sierra Leone may well, therefore, be the most expensive and ill-advised

expression of UN posturing in history.

Thus, the court justifies its existence meting out justice to lesser protagonists.

Defendants picked apparently by lottery from the embers of civil strife sit in the dock intermittently, as trials that lumber on for years are rotated.

In between, they go down to the cells guarded by former warders from the H-blocks of Ulster's Maze prison.

The prisoners are prosecuted and defended by QCs, many from Britain, who are constantly on the hunt for witnesses to help build their cases.

Go-betweens are paid with UN money to scour Sierra Leone with "expenses" to draw in rare witnesses reluctant ex-soldiers, amputees whose limbs were hacked off in the conflict, time-wasters and foreign officials.

Who are these go-betweens?

They are freelance investigators, ex-CIA men, or journalist friends of the London barristers; people who, after a few months in Freetown, find themselves living on a Graham Greene novel and wondering at the Kafka-esque process where vast sums of money change hands to establish truths that cannot be truly established and are only truths depending on one's point of view.

People like me.

The ex-military chopper clattered its way up into the night sky, fighting to get airborne.

I looked around the shabby cabin at my stony-faced fellow travellers, and then out of the porthole at the dense bush below.

Suddenly, we were over an expanse of water.

I heard mumbled prayers.

For a moment, the noise and vibration of the helicopter had me thinking the rotor was about to snap.

To allay this fear, I tried to imagine the chopper as just one big funfair ride. It worked, until I noticed the rusting, second-rate safety equipment with emergency instructions in Russian.

I knew of at least three Russian-built choppers that had crashed in the past few years, including one the previous summer. All 22 people on board died in the crash.

But what was safer this machine or the ground beneath me?

I was largely on my own if I got into trouble.

As a UN employee, I'd been provided with the standard "security handbook".

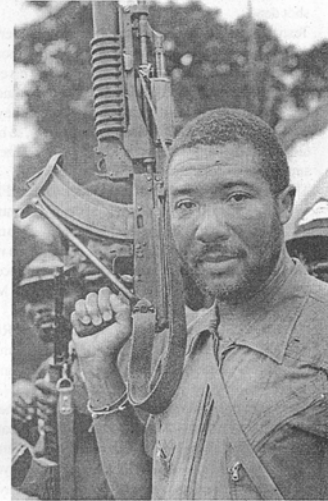
Useful tips on personal safety included "keep a low profile" and "maintain a seven-day supply of food, water, medication and necessary equipment".

Armed robberies and residential burglaries are frequent in Sierra Leone, the handbook noted.

My favourite section, however, was on hostage

survival.

Top of the list of helpful hints were "your only job is to survive", and, "fear is a normal reaction immediately after you have been taken. Pause, take a deep breath and try to



Former Liberian leader Charles Taylor (above in 1990) is widely held responsible for the civil war. He was sent for diplomatic reasons to The Hague - his trial began in January and is expected to go on for a year

relax".

It wasn't working. I was already tense from a turbulent flight from Gatwick and an unofficial reception committee at Lungui International Airport that included an amputee who accosted me for money with two stumps where his hands once were.

The chopper into Freetown landed safely.

Twenty minutes later I was in a UN 4x4 stuck

in a traffic jam at a chaotic intersection called Lumley roundabout.

Gangs of scrawny youths lurked in the shadows.

Hawkers pressed up against car windows with bread rolls, cigarettes, tea towels and assorted cheap junk.

But for flickering candles, gas lamps and the odd rickety light powered by a clattering generator, the area the whole city in fact was enveloped in complete darkness.

The atmosphere matched the lighting: dark, foreboding, tense.

Masses of people with blank expressions moved like zombies; faces were backlit

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Courting disaster in Sierra Leone: The £75m bureaucratic farce

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from car headlights; figures appeared from nowhere, then disappeared.

With youth unemployment standing at 80 per cent, there's no shortage of feral kids sitting around smoking weed and drinking gin from plastic bags in this poor, grim, deadbeat city.

I'm a journalist, but I'd gone to Sierra Leone to moonlight as a private investigator.

My invitation had come from a barrister friend, Wayne Jordash, who for three years has represented General Issa Hassan Sesay, one of the rebel leaders on trial at the Special Court.

Jordash shares his chambers with QCs Helena Kennedy and Geoffrey Robertson.

A pugnacious human rights lawyer specialising in criminal defence, he got the gig on the strength of his advocacy skills.

I got the gig on my gift of the gab.

"You know a bit about Sierra Leone, don't you?" Wayne had asked, his voice fading in and out over the crackling mobile phone from Freetown.

"A bit, I guess," I'd replied. I'd read a bit about it, watched a few documentaries, and knew it was in West Africa. "Why do you ask?"

"Well, I've got a little job for you, if you're interested. Cases like this don't come along every day," he told me.

He wasn't kidding. I was to track down witnesses for the defence of General Sesay. I had a few misgivings. Jordash had none.

"To my mind there is no moral dilemma about

representing someone charged with crimes against humanity or war crimes," he said firmly.

"The idea that you can create a court to promote the rule of law, but then don't provide them with a strong defence is morally repugnant."

Morally repugnant is how most of us would assess the Sierra Leone conflict.



Issa Sesay (centre in orange robe) laughs during his trial. He is charged with murder, rape, mutilation, use of child soldiers, abduction, looting and burning

Over ten years, it cost an estimated 75,000 lives in a country of just over five million, there is no Sierra Leonean alive today who has not been touched by the fighting in some way.

The case against 37-year-old father of two Sesay is this: as commanding officer of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) he was responsible for war crimes committed by his subordinates and himself.

Included in the 18 counts on his indictment are charges of terrorising the civilian population, the unlawful killing of "several hundred civilians in various locations..." extermination, murder, forced "marriage", rape, physical violence including mutilations involving "cutting off limbs and carving RUF on the bodies of civilians", use of child soldiers, abductions and forced labour, looting, burning and attacks on UN personnel.

He, however, argues that he shouldn't bear responsibility for war crimes because he was fighting for what he believed was a legitimate cause.

From my reading of the case, and from speaking to Sierra Leoneans on the ground, Sesay is something of a patsy, a fall guy caught in the wrong place at the wrong time.

The chief of the detention facility, Barry Wallace, met me at the cell block attached to the Special Court.

He is in his sixties, grey-haired, physically unimposing; a man of few words, to me at least.

He had a steely calm about him. He was a bit like Tom Hanks as the chief warden in a Sierra Leonean version of *The Green Mile*.

The Maze guys, and the local screws for that matter, seemed to take everything in their stride.

I didn't know what to expect from my first meeting with Issa Sesay.

To be continued

[This article was also published in the Awareness Times]

New Democrat (Liberia)
Monday, 21 April 2008

Blah Vs Taylor


Face To Face In May



It has now emerged that former President Moses Z. Blah will be testifying against his former boss Charles Taylor in May after he was expected to take the stand on 14 April.

Lead Prosecutor the American Stephen Rapp told journalists that Mr Blah will be testifying for the prosecution when he arrives in The Hague inn May, but he gave no specific date.

The press office of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, quoting Mr Rapp, said Mr Blah will face his former ally in May. The prosecution had issued a subpoena to Blah to testify on April 14, but Blah requested more time to respond to the subpoena due to health considerations and his

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Face To Face In May

wife's current absence from Liberia. As it stands now, Blah is expected to testify sometime in May.

According to media reports, Blah is expected to serve as a fact witness and testify about the death of former Revolutionary United Front commander Sam Bockarie.

Travel ban victims plea with UN

-As SG arrives today



UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon



Rep. Edwin M. Snowe



George Dweh



Sen. Jewel Howard-Taylor



Reginald Goodridge Sr.

The secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon arrives in the country today, Monday for a two-day official visit. This is the UN envoy first visit to West Africa since he took over

from Kofi Annan as Secretary General of the world body about two years ago.

According to UNMIL Public Information Office (PIO) Ki-moon is expected to hold talks with Vice President Joseph Boakai and other senior members of the Liberian

government. The UN envoy is also expected to address the Joint Assembly of the National Legislature on Capitol Hill in Monrovia.

Ambassador Ki-Moon who is expected to hold a news conference Tuesday, April 22 at the Foreign Ministry to mark

the end of his two-day tour in the country will hold talks with the high command of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) on the status of peacekeeping operations in post conflict Liberia.

However, sources close

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Travel ban

to the National legislature hinted *The Monitor* late last night that members of the august body under the United Nations Security Council travel ban and other officials of the former Taylor regime affected by the UNSC action are poised to present a petition to the UN envoy to plea with the world body for the lifting of the travel ban.

Some of the former officials of detained former president Charles Taylor including his wife, Jewel Howard-Taylor on the UNSC travel ban currently

serving as legislators in the Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf led government include, Representative Edwin Snowe and Senators Jewel Howard Taylor and Adolphus Dolo. Former Speaker George Dweh and Representative Kai Farley are expected to be joined by Benoni Urey, Emmanuel Shaw, Cyril Allen and others for the presentation ceremony.

Up to press time. It was still not established whether the UN boss will give audience to the sanctions' victims.

Plain Truth (Liberia)
Monday, 21 April 2008

Citizens Want Sanctions, Travel Ban Lifted -On Fellow Compatriots

By Aletha Hawa Francis (Ms.)
In the wake of the planned visit of the United Nations Secretary-general to Liberia today, several Liberians have joined President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in arguing that the conditions that necessitated the imposition of sanctions on Liberia no longer exist, and are therefore calling on the United Nations to lift sanctions and travel restrictions imposed on the number of their fellow compatriots in the interest of peace and national reconciliation. A joint Pres release by the

Government of Liberia and UNMIL says Mr. BAN Ki-moon, accompanied by his wife, Mrs. BAN Soon-taek, will arrive in Monrovia on today Monday, 21 April 2008 for a two-day visit to Liberia and will hold discussions with Vice President Joseph N. Boakai and officials of the Liberian Government. The release said Ban is expected to address a joint session of the National Legislature and meet with the leadership of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the UN Country Team here. But some Liberians are

very much eager to see their country united and are therefore airing their views and calling on the UN Secretary General to use the visit to hear the side of the story of those Liberians who are perpetually placed on UN Sanctions and Travel ban. Some time in 2007, President Sirleaf while visiting Great Britain, argued that the conditions that led to the imposition of sanctions on Liberian diamonds and timbers no longer existed and maintained that keeping in place these were now hurt-



UN S/G. Mr. BAN Ki-moon



V.P. Joseph Boakai



Speaker Alex Tyler

ing the very people that they were intended to save. The UN imposed smart sanctions on Liberian timbers and diamonds and travel restrictions on former Liberian President Charles Ghankay Taylor, his associates and relatives on allegations of gunrunning, and

for allegedly financing and training of RUF fighters to destabilize neighboring Sierra Leone in 2003. The former Liberian President has since been arrested and is now standing trial for his alleged support to the RUF in The Hague, thus removing the alleged

banshee of destabilization and other forms of regional conflicts in the subregion. Ban's visit according to the joint press statement will focus mainly on peace building efforts and on the progress being made by Liberia on the Millennium

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Travel Ban Lifted

Development Goals
Most Liberians believe that the continued, updating, renewal and extension of travel ban and sanctions on certain of their fellow compatriots is counterproductive to the ongoing peace process and tends to reignite the division that once existed during the war years. A survey conducted by this paper revealed that the continued impositions of sanctions on one segment of the Liberian society is undermining what they called a collective national cohesion towards national reconciliation and reintegration and expressed outrage as to the motive of these sanctions. Speaking to this paper, a resident of Point Four, Monrovia, and Madame Mary Doe wondered why these sanctions and travel restrictions are continually revisited, updated and extended against former officials from the Taylor regime when the alleged conditions of gunrunning, the igniting of regional conflict and the alleged "blood diamonds" trade in neighboring Sierra Leone which triggered these sanctions no longer exist in the words of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

She observed that the sanctions are dividing Liberians rather than uniting them because according to her people are constantly reminded that there two types of Liberians, the "Taylor people and Ellen people", something she described as unhealthy. Madame Doe accused the UN sanctions committee of trying to divide and rule the country by creating the impression that those who worked with the former Liberian President are outcasts who must suffer an unnecessary fate. Madame Doe statement's was buttressed by Richard Harrison of Stephen Tolbert Estate who accused the UN of hiding behind the travel restrictions and sanctions to hold in servitude people it considers as "Taylor people" for its own interest rather the Liberian people. Harrison said the UN is doing nothing political to create a forum that will enable all of the varied interests to sit at a round table to trash out their differences, instead it is waging what he called an "undeclared war" on innocent Liberians who have not been investigated and proven guilty.

"The continued imposition of travel ban and sanctions on certain Liberians without affording them a day in court, amounts to a verdict without trial", he noted.

Truly, hundreds of thousands of Liberians no longer see the necessity of maintaining these sanctions and travel restrictions on their fellow compatriots.

They have begun to amplify calls for the immediate and unconditional lifting of these sanctions and travel restrictions in the interest of peace.

The renewed calls come in the wake of a planned address the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon to the joint session of National legislature.

Sources say the Speaker of the House might in his response to Ban's speech most likely restate the people's concern about the reported drawdown plan of UNMIL, and how the continued updating and extension of sanctions and travel restrictions is constantly fueling division rather than uniting the people of Liberia.

Also expected to meet with Ban might be the religious community which vehemently opposes the travel restrictions and sanctions from the religious perspective and described them as the abuse of the human rights and civil liberties of some Liberians and are therefore demanding their timely removal.

The joint press release concluded that the visit is the first to Liberia by Mr. BAN since assuming the post of Secretary-General of the United Nations and is part of his four-nation West African tour. The trip will afford him the opportunity to get a first hand account of events unfolding on the ground.

Cocorioko website

Saturday, 19 April 2008

Charles Taylor war crimes trial in the Hague continues

Written by Cocorioko Newspaper Limited

Saturday, 19 April 2008

On the May 1997 AFRC coup, the witness said he heard RUF leader Foday Sankoh on BBC radio saying that the RUF should join the AFRC junta and take orders from junta leader Johnny Paul Koroma. Finally, he heard Koroma himself on the radio announcing the members of his Council. **READ THE WHOLE ARTICLE :**

Witness describes AFRC-RUF cooperation, crimes and links to Charles Taylor

APA – Dakar (Senegal) The prosecution in the trial of the ongoing former Liberian president Charles Taylor at the Special Criminal Court for Sierra Leone at The Hague on Thursday continued examining its witness Alimamy Bobson Sesay, a former member of the Sierra Leone army, according to a press release from the court.

According to the release, Sesay told Prosecutor Shyamala Alagendra that he had been an officer with the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) after it seized power in Sierra Leone in May 1997.

He said that he remained in Freetown until the ECOMOG intervention in February 1998 that drove the AFRC/RUF forces from the capital.

On the May 1997 AFRC coup, the witness said he heard RUF leader Foday Sankoh on BBC radio saying that the RUF should join the AFRC junta and take orders from junta leader Johnny Paul Koroma. Finally, he heard Koroma himself on the radio announcing the members of his Council.

Asked about the relationship between the AFRC and RUF at the time, Sesay said it was very good, and throughout his testimony he described mixed AFRC/RUF brigades, a unified command under Koroma, and joint operations.

During the junta period, Sesay told of a three-day student strike against AFRC/RUF rule, and said that the troops had been sent to quell the demonstrations. He said he was with a group of AFRC men who shot and killed two students.

At the meeting, of AFRC/RUF commanders convened by Johnny Paul Koroma in Koidu Town; Kono district shortly after AFRC/RUF forces captured it in March 1998, which the witness said he attended, Koroma explained that the civilians of Kono were against them and ordered their houses should be burned, the able-bodied should be put to work, and all other civilians should be executed. The witness said Koroma also announced that he was going to meet Charles Taylor in Liberia to get arms and ammunition, which he felt would be forthcoming because these would help them to secure diamond-rich Kono.

The witness said that after this meeting, he went with Hassan Papa Bangura, other AFRC and RUF members to Yardo Road in Koidu, where they encountered a group of civilians and shot them all dead. They then displayed the corpses at road junctions because the chairman (Koroma) had said they should create fear so that other civilians would not come to Koidu.

While Sesay was naming AFRC and RUF members assigned as military supervisors in 1998, he spoke of an Idrissa Kamara who he said also went by another name.

However, the witness said he did not want to provide the nickname for security reasons because Kamara was now a close protection officer for Sierra Leone's new president (Ernest Bai Koroma), and remains more commonly known by his wartime nickname. After brief deliberations, the judges ordered Sesay to state the nickname. The witness said it was "Leatherboot", a name already mentioned by previous witnesses in the trial.

Charles Taylor is being tried for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the conflict in Sierra Leone. AD/daj/APA

BBC World Service Trust

Friday, 18 April 2008

The war crimes trial of former President Charles Taylor in The Hague will continue to make headlines back home, not only because of Mr. Taylor as a former president, but more and more key figures with strong connections to Mr. Taylor will be appearing before the court to face Taylor.

Last week, the prosecution announced former president Moses Blah will now be appearing some time next month after he failed to show up on the 14th as he himself had announced.

Now, Special Court Chief Prosecutor Stephen Rapp has told BBC World Service Trust and Search For Common Ground producer Alphonsus Zeon in The Hague, more significant figures with strong ties to Mr. Taylor have also been summoned.

RAPP: There certainly are other significant figures from Liberia who will testify now.

ZEON: You wouldn't like to talk about them.

RAPP: Well I can't – I mean they haven't called press conferences and announced and showed the public a copy of their subpoenas and correspondence.

ZEON: But how many are you [indistinct]

RAPP: Well I mean there are other individuals. They certainly aren't at the level of a former president.

ZEON: Five or six or seven?

RAPP: No. I mean there are other individuals that have had different positions in Liberia in the past, some of whom were quite close to former President Taylor. None rise to the level of the president who succeeded him. But each of these individuals are thus far on the protected witness list known only by their "TF" numbers. Until they arrive, and until they agree in court to waive their protection, I can't talk about who they are.

ZEON: The former Senate President Pro Tem [phrase indistinct] she's in Ghana at present, but many people before I came here, there was speculation she would testify against President Taylor.

RAPP: Well I can't indicate anybody specifically that's coming to testify, but I would say we have no plans at this time to call her as a witness specifically. There certainly can be other individuals, but those other individuals know who they are and have been [indistinct] in our documents that we have filed with the Court. But as I indicate, those that are Liberians on the list are protected witnesses. Their identities have not been disclosed publicly and we can't disclose them publicly without their permission.

ZEON: They would testify *in camera*.

RAPP: Well they will testify under some kind of protective measure. Now all these witnesses are protected in the sense that we are asking for measures to be taken to protect them both before and after their testimony. They can be in safe houses. They may be relocated to another part of the country or even outside the country. They're protected in that sense. Additionally – and we anticipate they would testify to a large extent in public so people would hear what they are saying and you could report on what they were saying, but their actual identities would not be revealed to the public such as the witness that's in the box

right now. And so that's how many of them will testify. Now there are certain other individuals of which we've had three or four to date, that actually testified in completely closed session. That's going to be a relatively rare situation, and as you know the Judges filed a public ruling several weeks ago that denied the application of some people, which included [indistinct] to testify in closed session. And so there are some situations that witnesses that wanted to testify in closed session that have been denied that by the Court pending further showing about its necessity. Why do people want that? Well they're very afraid that they will go back to where they came from, or family members or others will be attacked and face intimidation. That's why they're asking for it. If they are going to be in a more public session where people will be able to guess at their identity, or in a situation where they would testify under their own true name, then we have to have more protection than we would otherwise.

ZEON: When you go in the streets of Monrovia, you ask people, actually want to know who are those testifying, because sometimes [phrase indistinct] people will want to know who's actually saying what, because many people have an idea as to people who were close to Mr. Taylor and would like to listen to some of them.

RAPP: Well the most important thing that we have to deal with in the case is that people be protected. We can't have a situation where someone is injured or even killed because of their testimony, and that's what weighs on us every day. And so protective measures are there for that purpose. And the accused, Mr. Taylor, always knows who the witnesses are against him, and his team knows who the witnesses are against him. They're entitled to that information at least six weeks before they testify so they're able to investigate and do an effective job in cross-examination. The question is whether the public should know who those people are, and we think public knowledge and information about the case is very important, but weighed against the safety of a human being we have to put greater weight on the safety of the human being. The fact that they live in certain areas of the country where Taylor was very popular, where there are a lot of ex-combatants who may be bitter about what happened in the past. They come in and tell us what's happening. In some of those situations to have their testimony we're going to have to provide them with protection and anonymity as witnesses, and in some cases closed session.

United Nations  **Nations Unies**

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries
18 April 2008

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

Newspaper Summary

Liberian Senate Rejects Presidential Nominee over False Credentials

(The News, The New Liberia, Heritage, The Analyst, National Chronicle)

- The Liberian Senate has finally denied the Minister designate of National Security, Anthony Kromah, for supposedly lying about his credentials. The Senate's Plenary took the decision on Thursday in a closed door session following what Senate Pro Tempore Isaac Nyenebo said was a recommendation from its Defense and National Security Committee.
- Mr. Kromah recently appeared before the Senate to provide evidence that he holds a masters degree in Criminal Justice as reflected in his résumé. But the rejected minister-designate said he actually holds a masters degree in Trauma Counseling, admitting to 'typographical error' in his résumé submitted to the body.
- Mr. Kromah is the first minister designate to be completely rejected by the Senate in the Ellen Johnson Sirleaf-led administration.

US Ambassador Renews Country's Commitment to Liberia's Security Sector Reform

(New Democrat, The Analyst, The News, Daily Observer)

- Addressing a news conference in Monrovia Thursday, United States Ambassador to Liberia, Donald Booth says the security sector reform programme is on track and that suspicion that the programme was marred with flaw is far from reality.
- Ambassador Booth reaffirmed the U.S. Government's commitment to the security sector reform process of Liberia.
- Ambassador Booth's comments followed reservations over feeding and housing facilities for soldiers of the newly trained Liberian army.

Lawmakers Assure Passage of Media Reform Laws

(The News, Public Agenda, The New Liberia, Heritage, The parrot, The Inquirer)

- Members of the National Legislature Thursday assured the Press Union of Liberia(PUL) that it would ensure the passage of the three draft media reform laws presented to them.
- The bills are an Act to establish an Independent Broadcasting Regulatory body for Liberia, Freedom of Information Act and an Act to transform the Liberia Broadcasting System into a Public Service Broadcaster.
- Senator Gbenzongar Findley, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Information and Telecommunications and Representative Vinicious Hodges, Chairman of the House Committee on Information and Broadcasting gave the assurance when members of the PUL and civil society organizations presented three draft media reform laws and petitioned the Legislators to enact them into laws at the Capitol.
- The two lawmakers, in a separate statements lauded members of the Press Union of Liberia for submitting the draft Acts and promised to lobby with their colleagues to pass the bills into law.

Radio Summary

Local Media – Radio Veritas *(News monitored today at 9:45 am)***Vice President Boakai says Government Committed to Making Economy Enterprising**

- Speaking at the launch of a local bank Automated Teller Machine (ATM) yesterday, Vice President Joseph Boakai said government's mission for this year is to make the country a dynamic and competent enterprising economy based on openness, flexibility and entrepreneur principles.
- V.P. Boakai said government will also need to make long term decisions to help transform the Liberian society, saying for this to be achieved forge partnership was needed to make globalization work for the country.

(Also reported on Star Radio, Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Poor Credit Inhibits Viability of Banking Sector, Deputy CBL Governor Says

- The Central Bank of Liberia(CBL) has identified poor credit as a threat to the viability of the banking sector in the country but said measures are being taken to correct the problem
- Delivering the keynote address at the launch of the Ecobank Liberia Automated Teller Machine (ATM), CBL Deputy Governor, Ethel Davies said reform strategy will consider setting up mechanisms including the possible establishment of a commercial court to fast track the enforcement of financial contracts and thereby improve loan payment and recovery.

(Also reported on Star Radio, Truth F.M. and ELBC)

U.S. Ambassador Debunks Reports of Flaw in Liberia's Security Sector Reform Programme

(Also reported on Star Radio, Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Star Radio *(News culled from website today at 09:00 am)***Another of Taylor Confidante Removed From UN Travel Ban List**

- The UN Security Council's Committee on Liberia has removed another person, Mr. Gerald Cooper, from the travel ban list.
- Mr. Cooper, an associate of ex-President Charles Taylor served as former Liberian Maritime Registry Liaison to International Maritime Organization based in London, England.

Denmark Offers US\$22M for Liberia's Millennium Development Goals

- The Government of the Kingdom of Denmark says it will provide 100 million Danish kronens (US\$22 million) to support Liberia's Millennium Development Goals (MDG).
- The Danish Government has also announced that it will relieve Liberia of its bilateral debt of 160,000,000 Danish Kronens (US\$3,305,785.1).
- Danish Prime Minister, Anders Fogh Rasmussen made the disclosure Thursday following talks with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and said the country was pleased to announce a beginning of what he referred to as 'a strong Millennium Development Goals-three partnership between both countries'.
- For her part, President Sirleaf said she was extremely pleased that Denmark had chosen Liberia to be an MDG-3 model country.

Truth FM *(News monitored today at 2:00 pm)***Paris Club cancels a quarter of Liberia's national debt**

- The Paris Club of rich creditor nations agreed Thursday to cancel almost a quarter of Liberia's public debt, with the rest suspended until 2011, it said in a statement.
- The deal sees "the immediate cancellation of 254 million dollars" (160 million euros) and the restructuring of around 789 million dollars of further debt for the west African nation, where 14 years of civil war ended in 2003.
- Liberia's total Paris Club debt was estimated on January 1 at "over 1.5 billion dollars in nominal value, of which more than 97 percent is made up of overdue arrears and interest," the Paris Club statement said.
- "Considering Liberia's very limited capacity of payment, and provided that this country continues to implement satisfactorily an IMF-supported programme, no payments are expected from Liberia (until) December 31, 2010."

- The Paris Club is made up of creditor nations including Britain, France, Germany, Japan, Russia and the United States, and meets about 10 times a year to discuss debts owed to them.

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