

**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 Press and Public Affairs Office
as at:**

Monday, 21 January 2008

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
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Martin Royston-Wright
Ext 7217

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Standard Times Online

Friday, 18 January 2008

Justice Teresa Doherty Elected Presiding Judge of Trial Chamber II

Justice Teresa Doherty C.B.E. of Northern Ireland has been elected to a one-year term as Presiding Judge of Trial Chamber II. She succeeds Justice Julia Sebutinde of Uganda. Justice Sebutinde's one-year term ended on 17 January 2008.

Justice Teresa Doherty was called to the bar 1978. From 1976-1987 she practiced law in Northern Ireland and Papua New Guinea. In 1987 she was appointed a Principal Magistrate in Papua New Guinea and from 1988-1997 she served as a Judge of the Supreme and National Courts and was the first woman to hold high judicial office in Papua New Guinea.

In 1998 she returned to private law practice in Northern Ireland, where she worked until 2003. From 2003-2005, just prior to joining the Special Court, Justice Doherty served as a Judge of the High Court and the Court of Appeal of Sierra Leone. From 1998 to 2002 she was a member of the board of visitors of Maghaberry Prison. Since 2002 she has served as Life Sentence Review Commissioner for Northern Ireland and a part-time chairman of the Appeals Services of Northern Ireland.

She joined the Special Court in January 2005.

Trial Chamber II, consisting of Justice Doherty, Justice Sebutinde, and Justice Richard Lussick, recently concluded the trial in Freetown of three former leaders of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council. They are currently hearing evidence in the trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor in The Hague.

This is Justice Doherty's second term as Presiding Judge of Trial Chamber II. She also served as Presiding Judge from January 2005 to January 2006.

The Special Court is an independent tribunal established jointly by the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone. It is mandated to bring to justice those who bear the greatest responsibility for atrocities committed in Sierra Leone after 30 November 1996

Independent Observer
Monday, 21 January 2008

Justice Teresa Doherty elected Presiding Judge of Trial Chamber

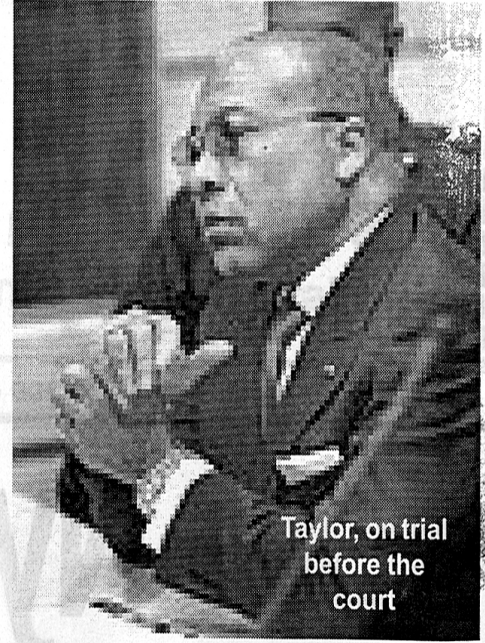
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Taylor, on trial
before the
court

Awoko

Monday, 21 January 2008

Human rights plans road map

The National Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) over the weekend concluded a retreat for a strategic plan for the commission at its Wellington Street office in Freetown.

The brainstorming exercise was to analyze the situation in relation to human rights in Sierra Leone, discuss the elements of a vision and mission and articulate values for the HRCSL, and to identify and discuss programme priorities for the commission's strategic plan.

The meeting was attended by commissioners, civil society groups, the government, human rights organizations, consultants and the media.

The commission, which is a year old, reported that it was able to start the monitoring of human rights and its promotion immediately after it was set up.

They were able to advise government on human rights issues and on legislations; they are currently recruiting more staff to stabilize the full operations of the commission and that they were able to maintain local and international interactions.

The strategic planning group made several suggestions which it defined as 'expectations'. And key among these expectations were to set up a commission that would be impartial and decentralized; develop a data base of violence all around the country; develop strategic partnership with both local and international organizations; to develop a communication and dissemination strategy; address systemic violations, advocate for social and economic and cultural rights.

These expectations were prioritized and the priorities were also ranked and developed into the goals of the commission.

The report from this strategic meeting would be the basis for a five-year strategic plan. The commission, which comprises five commissioners, was established as an independent national human rights institution.

BBC World Service Trust

Friday, 18 January 2008

New Trial Chamber President

Abdul Rashid at The Hague

RASHID: Justice Teresa Doherty takes over the Presidency of the Special Court for Sierra Leone at The Hague.

JUSTICE DOHERTY: The Presidency of the Trial Chamber rotates once a year. Justice Sebutinde's term is just completed. Mine starts again for another year, and I wish particularly to thank Justice Sebutinde for her hard and patient work in the year that has passed. I look forward to working with you. Thank you. I note that appearances are as...

RASHID: She leaves Ugandan Judge Julia Sebutinde. Justice Teresa Doherty was called to the bar 1978. From 1976-1987 she practiced law in Northern Ireland and Papua New Guinea. In 1987 she was appointed a Principal Magistrate in Papua New Guinea and from 1988-1997 she served as a Judge of the Supreme and National Courts. In 1998 she returned to private law practice in Northern Ireland, where she worked until 2003. Most recently, from 2003-2005, Judge Doherty has served as a Judge of the High Court and the Court of Appeal of Sierra Leone. Since 2002 she has served as Life Sentence Review Commissioner for Northern Ireland.

Abdul Rashid for Search for Common Ground and BBC World Service Trust, at The Hague.

New Democrat (Liberia)
Friday, 18 January 2008

Sankoh Lived Here



THE LATE FODAY SANKOH

As testimonies continue against former President Charles Taylor, accused of 11 counts of war crimes, a prosecution witness says Mr Taylor did acknowledge the atrocities that were being committed in Sierra Leone.

Dr. Stephen Ellis, an extensive researcher on Liberia and Sierra Leone, told the court:

"Taylor was acknowledging the terrible atrocities taking place in Sierra Leone."

The British man, author of *The Mask of Anarchy*, dwelled into the history of the NPFL, telling the court that the late RUF leader, Foday Sankoh, lived in Liberia as part of the NPFL along with other foreigners: "Sankoh was spending a lot of time in Liberia. That's the background to the start of the war in Sierra Leone in 1991. A number of West African governments were aware that the invading party included people of various nationality - some had been trained in Libya or Burkina Faso. Gambians who had been involved in a coup attempt were involved. They feared if a revolutionary government took hold in Liberia, conflict would spread. In a way, that's what happened..."

New Democrat (Liberia)
Friday, 18 January 2008

Above All Else, Money

The Limits of Loyalty in Military-Criminal Enterprise



Revelations pouring from the current trial of former President Charles Taylor, with more expected to come, point to one fact: loyalty and reward in political systems built on criminal enterprise is tied to one thing, and that thing is called money. In societies in which institutions are absent or are dysfunctional, he or she who commands money commands loyalty, but such loyalty is transient, since it is built on something transient and that is money. Ideals and beliefs, for which people die, are not transient as money, although many more die in the name of money and for it.

Dr. Stephen Ellis, with rare knowledge of the intricacies of the Liberia-Sierra Leone wars, touched on the money factor in his testimony:

"All wars have to be financed. In the case of SL, at a certain point diamonds became the main means of financing the RUF. Some groups, including ECOMOG, would try to control the flow of diamonds in order to profit themselves. There was a risk that the war might continue indefinitely. It wasn't always that way."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



CHARLES TAYLOR, PICTURED DURING THE EARLY 90s

Control and marketing of diamonds came to be a very important factor in the SL war. I disagree with the analysis that the SL war was about diamonds from beginning to end. It's clear that at the beginning of the war it was not primarily about diamonds. The nature of the war changed. By the end of the war, the control of diamonds was a major factor, because some of the com-

proven. He who laughs last laughs the best laugh indeed. Money loyalty is dangerous, for it is temporary.

But if the Varmuyan testimony is any guide, and there is no reason why it should not be, then bought loyalty has its serious pitfalls, since such loyalty goes the highest bidder. But it would be wrong to conclude that money was the only factor that

If you don't see them there, just wait a bit." I went back to the house and took Bockarie men and vehicle and drove to Walsu. Bockarie came ten minutes later. We drove together...

"We drove together. Bockarie thanked me for taking him to see Taylor. He said he had started small, and until then he'd only communicated with Taylor by radio, and

that tied him to the late Sierra Leone rebel commander?

Money has been at the center of the Taylor political career, and he willingly gave it to loyalists who assured him of their diehard backing regardless what the world said.

This helps to explain recent gathering of former officials to pray to their god for a fair trial, which to them is acquittal. But the history of fallen leaders in this country and elsewhere, dotted by benefiting loyalists' denunciation and betrayal, makes it quite unique to some extent, to some extent because if all loyalists had shown up it would have taken far more churches to accommodate them.

But those that stormed the little Baptist church to hear prayers and pray for their hero's redemption are arguably the diehards, a coterie of inner circle backers who, no matter what the world unveils, believe their man is innocent, a victim of a conspiracy. Facts here are irrelevant. Belief system is.

The intense loyalty Taylor commands amongst selected individuals contrasts from the disdain his name evokes amongst others such as Kenneth L. Cain, a UN human rights worker here during the war

proximating a chain-of-command Taylor has latterly mutated into: elected president and currently enjoys status as the Head of State of recognized

government. Predictably, his new government immediately kidnapped, tortured, assassinated, or mutilated a

leading opposition figure at his family, appointed an infamous murderous former rebel commander as Police Chief, and closed independent radio stations and newspapers. Evil Triumphant.

The one looming factor of attracting loyalty, particularly in Liberia, is reward. This comes primarily in the form of material reward, expressed in the form of money. Those familiar with Charles Taylor's past confirm his unquestioned willingness to throw money and protect allies unbendingly loyal to him without qualifications. This explains the sudden rise of many of his allies to sudden wealth after he consolidated power. Even as the country sunk into abject poverty as a result of the massive destruction and looting of economic entities, loyal allies fared well in plenty. Accountability was a strange word in their minds and it meant accounting only to or individual—Taylor in charge of state economic institutions in accordance with an Act of the Legislature—the Strategic Commodities Act—which made him the sole custodian of the country's resources.

Convinced that his political survival depended on the concrete loyalty of those around him, and not on general democratic principles, he defended at all costs. When cries of corruption rose, he blamed the international community, saying his Ministers were stealing only what was available because the international community had denied him aid.

But it would be erroneous to conclude that only officials remain loyal to Taylor and the ideals he speaks. Thousands of ex-fighters and their hangers-on continue to idolize him although as years pass, the attachment wanes. Here, too, the material reward, meaning empowering to earn money via predatory means such as looting and extortion since he offered no structured means for reward, formed the pillars of loyalty.

It is Charles Taylor that proclaimed "Above all else, the people." He should have been correct if had he declared, "Above all else, money for that represents his credo.

— TOM KAMARA —



WEAPONS REQUIRE MONEY

ants were able to sell diamonds to finance the continuation of the war."

During his testimony against former president Charles Taylor, Varmuyan Sheriff, an enemy turned ally, made this point clear, although not directly. He was a key commander of ULIMO. After Taylor's 1997 victory at the polls, he was offered a job within the new government. He said he accepted because he wanted peace, a word most Liberians during the crisis use to advance self-interest. But it is probable even before the elections, Taylor's wooing key ULIMO commanders, enticing them with money. He is more willing to give than other lords, and one reason is that he has more access to money than others. On the other hand, those close to Taylor confess that he rewards allies handsomely once his interests are advanced without question.

This period, after the elections, of intense wooing of rebel commanders willing to cross carpet, just as the politicians, with all eyes on money, Taylor concluded, rightly so, that his money would unearth the hidden weapons and dismantle the links of competing rebel factions, cementing his rule. He was not, but also wrong, as Sheriff has

propelled Sheriff to dump his one-time chief. After all, he is an agent

"All wars have to be financed. In the case of SL, at a certain point diamonds became the main means of financing the RUF..."

grieved person, a point the prosecution sought to build its case on. He served a man whose rebels gunned down his family members, telling the court, "I was pushed against the wall..."

But that money played a key role in winning him over to Taylor's world, under the confusing and opportunist ridden formula of wanting peace, can be deduced from his testimony, portions of it reproduced here.

"Bockarie left my house. The next day, Taylor sent my deputy to call me to White Flower, the residence of Mr. Taylor. Musa Cisse was there, and my deputy was present. Taylor was very happy with me. He gave me some money. He asked me if I knew where Yeaten and Musa Cisse took Sam Bockarie from you, from your vehicle. Just drive back there.

He was very happy to meet Taylor. He said Taylor had given him a sum

of elite phone and money. He showed me the money. I can't tell how much it was, but it was US dollars. The money Taylor had given me at White Flower was also in US dollars.

"Under the Constitution of Liberia, foreigners could not be recruited into the Liberian army or police, including the SSS. ATU acted outside of this. Mr. Taylor paid them directly, not from government money. Sam Bockarie brought over 350 RUF soldiers to join the Anti-Terrorist Unit..."

Several questions fall from Sheriff's testimony. Did Bockarie know that the diamonds he allegedly delivered could have given a container-full of satellite phones and more? If he knew the worth of the stones, would he have been so elated at the crumbs Taylor is said to have given him? Was this ignorance the bound

who writes:

"While addressing the conduct of all factions, this analysis (his inspiring work *The Rape of Dina: Human Rights, Civil War in Liberia, and Evil Triumphant*)

emphasizes the culpability of Charles Taylor and the NPFL. Taylor warrants heightened scrutiny for the following reasons, inter alia: the NPFL initiated armed conflict; inaugurated the use of grade school-age children as scouts, spies, and cannon fodder; explicitly employed terror tactics, ethnic cleansing, and political assassinations; was numerically the largest faction by threefold; consistently controlled the most territory, including intermittent control of all areas of Liberia outside

Monrovia; deployed sophisticated arms; and exhibited something ap-

The Liberian Diaspora
Friday, 18 January 2008

Editorial

Taylor's Trial & TRC Hearings! A Strange Coincidence

It appears that the cards have been stacked against former Liberian President Charles Ghankay Taylor from day one. A Western diplomat has confided to some insiders that Taylor's trial is simply a showcase.

He knows for a fact that the verdict has already been passed by the powers that be. "They will convict him on one, maybe two of the counts...that's why they brought so many charges against him to make sure that some of them stick", he said.

At home, we have watched in fascination as those who fought mightily to ensure that Taylor got where he is now, manipulated their games to pepper the record.

The current chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Jerome Verdier of Sierra Leone extract was one of those in the vanguard, through his advocacy organization, that campaigned against the Taylor Government.

Now he sits atop a lucrative job at the well-financed Truth and Reconciliation Commission to record confessions of a detraumatized and war-weary people for the purpose of reconfirming his campaign against alleged Taylor 'mis-rule'.

So then, the coincidence between the start of Taylor's trial at the Hague and the TRC hearings in Monrovia is no surprise.

It may be recalled that last year June, 2007, when Taylor's trial was slated to begin, the TRC put forth its first witness, who pointed eleven fingers at Charles Taylor's NPFL for just about everything that went wrong in Liberia.

The bias was so glaring that the TRC breathed a big sigh of relief when the Hague trial was postponed; it simply followed suit and postponed its hearings in Monrovia.

Coincidentally, again, the TRC hearings were scheduled for September 2007 at the same time Taylor's trial was to get going. Again, TRC hearings were postponed to follow the postponement at the Hague.

Sure enough, the Taylor trial at the Hague got going in earnest on January 8, 2008. And guess what? so did the TRC hearings in Monrovia.

Now we are all waiting with bated breath to see if the verdict at the Hague will be coincidental with Verdier's verdict at the TRC Hearings.

Inter Press Service (Johannesburg)

Friday, 18 January 2008

Virtual Eyes On Taylor Trial

By Irene De Vette
The Hague

After a delay of six months, the Charles Taylor case resumed at the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) on Jan. 7. The former president of Liberia is charged with crimes against humanity and war crimes during the civil war in Sierra Leone (1991-2001), including murder, rape, enslavement, acts of terrorism and the recruitment of child soldiers.

Taylor has pleaded 'not guilty' on all counts.

The prosecution, lead by chief prosecutor Stephen Rapp, wishes to prove the involvement of Charles Ghankay Taylor (59) in alleged crimes of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), two warring factions who fought for control over the country and access to diamond fields.

It is the first time that an African president is being tried before an International court.

"It is an important case in many respects," prosecutor Rapp told IPS. Taylor's arrest and transfer to the court "sent a powerful message across the world that there is no escaping justice," he said.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) was established in 2002 by the Sierra Leonean Government and the United Nations. It is a 'hybrid court', consisting of national and international officials, which "tries those who bear greatest responsibility for violating international humanitarian law and Sierra Leonean law in the territory of Sierra Leone since 30 November 1996." Thirteen persons have so far been indicted, ten are facing trial.

The SCSL resides in Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, but has relocated this case to the facilities of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague for security reasons.

When Taylor was indicted in 2003, he was offered exile in Nigeria. In 1996, newly elected president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf requested Nigeria to hand him over. Taylor immediately disappeared, but was apprehended on the Nigerian-Cameroon border on March 29, 2006. He was taken into UN Custody in Sierra Leone, and eventually transported to the Netherlands. The trial began Jun. 4, 2007.

The proceedings were delayed in June because Taylor had boycotted the case and had sent away his lawyers. Taylor's new attorney, Courtenay Griffiths, asked for more time to prepare his defence.

In the past weeks, prosecution has presented expert witnesses, such as a Canadian Ian Smillie, who is knowledgeable on so-called 'blood diamonds'. These resources, smuggled through Liberia, allegedly provided Taylor money to arm the rebels.

A Sierra Leonean pastor was called in as crime-based witness, and described in detail a horrendous massacre. A former security guard of Taylor and a former fighter of AFRC were called in as 'linkage witnesses', to testify to alleged links between Taylor and crimes committed in Sierra Leone.

"[This trial] chips away at impunity that has all too often prevailed in human rights abuses, especially in West Africa," Elise Keppler, senior counsel of the International Justice Programme of Human Rights Watch (HRW) told IPS. HRW had previously lobbied for Taylor's surrender to face trial.

HRW and other organisations are also looking at fair trial rights. "It is critically important that Taylor receive a fair trial and be given a full range of protections, accorded under international fair trial standards, including the right to be presumed innocent," Keppler said.

"The defence is not contesting that crimes were committed in Sierra Leone, it is really the question of the linkage that will be the ultimate issue in the case," Keppler said.

Dr. Tim Kelsall, senior lecturer at the University of Newcastle, whose main research focuses on the culture of accountability in Africa, said he believed that putting an end to impunity can act as a deterrent to further destabilisation, but that it was also only a small part of the solution for West Africa.

"As long as the social-economic structure of these countries remains the same, there are going to be people who have the motivation and the incentives to risk going to war," Kelsall told IPS.

The proceedings can be followed via online streaming, with a half-hour delay. Furthermore, a regularly updated blog has been set up with detailed summaries and transcripts of the trial. International justice experts supplement these with weekly reports, analyses and essays.

"We want to reach out to people in West Africa," Jennifer Maki, one of the attorneys at the international law firm Clifford Chance told IPS. CharlesTaylorTrial.org is a joint project of the firm, the Open Society Justice Initiative of the New York based Open Society Institute, and the International Senior Lawyers Project, also based in New York.

Mohamed Suma, programme director of the Sierra Leone Court Monitoring Programme, has advocated the trial be held in Sierra Leone. Although Suma said he approved of the proceedings so far, access is central to the case, he said.

"When Charles Taylor was brought in, the court in its initial hearing, here in Freetown, was filled to the brim," he said. "Everyone was pointing at him, so everyone wanted to see him tried."

According to Suma, people seem to be more disinterested right now, which he ascribes to the fact that people have little access to technology.

Abdul Rashid, a public information campaign co-coordinator for Search for Common Ground (SFCG), also said people experience difficulties in getting access. Through SFCG, a conflict resolution and conflict prevention NGO in Sierra Leone, Rashid is now reporting back to some of its 23 partner community radio stations from The Hague on a daily basis, as well as to BBC World Service Trust.

According to Rashid, people of Sierra Leone were disappointed with the lack of international attention during the war. With this trial, the international community is "at least owning up to their expectations," he told IPS.

The prosecution has said it needs eight months in court to present its case. To date "we are quite pleased with the pace and we think that we might be able to finish earlier than that," Rapp told IPS.

On Jun. 15, 2006, Britain announced it would respond to the request of the United Nations to jail Taylor in case of his conviction. This was a condition that the Dutch government demanded before agreeing to facilitate the case at the International Criminal Court in the Netherlands.

The question arises what happens if Taylor is acquitted. "I think that could be very disappointing for people in the region and also possibly destabilising," Tim Kelsall said. Kelsall said he would not be surprised if Taylor would return to West Africa. "Taylor is a man who seems to have limitless ambition and who is also extremely vengeful."

Associated Press

Monday, 21 January 2008

Liberian Ex-Rebel Confesses to Killings

By JONATHAN PAYE-LAYLEH

MONROVIA, Liberia (AP) — One of Liberia's most notorious rebel commanders, known as Gen. Butt Naked, has returned to confess his role in terrorizing the nation, saying he is responsible for 20,000 deaths.

Joshua Milton Blahyi, who now lives in Ghana, returned this week to face his homeland's truth and reconciliation commission, this time wearing a suit and tie. His nom de guerre is derived from his platoon's practice of charging naked into battle, a technique meant to terrify the enemy.

Other warlords, though, have refused to ask forgiveness, dismissing a commission many in Liberia see as toothless. Blahyi is urging other former killers to come forward as the country founded by freed American slaves in 1847 struggles to recover from past horrors.

"I could be electrocuted. I could be hanged. I could be given any other punishment," the 37-year-old Blahyi said in a weekend interview following his truth commission appearance last week. "But I think forgiveness and reconciliation is the right way to go.

"I have been looking for an opportunity to tell the true story about my life — and every time I tell people my story, I feel relieved."

The civil war, which killed an estimated 250,000 people in this nation of 3 million, was characterized by the eating of human hearts and soccer matches played with human skulls. Drugged fighters waltzed into battle wearing women's wigs, flowing gowns and carrying dainty purses stolen from civilians.

Before he led his fighters into battle, wearing only a pair of lace-up boots, Blahyi said he made a human sacrifice to the devil.

The sacrifice was typically "the killing of an innocent child and plucking out the heart which was divided into pieces for us to eat," he told The Associated Press on Saturday. He appeared before the commission Jan. 15.

Between the time he made a pact with the devil circa 1980 and began his rampage and the time he stopped fighting in 1996, he said "more than 20,000 people fell victim (to me and my men). They were killed."

Some say Blahyi's confession is proof Liberia needs a war crimes court, not a commission.

The commission, modeled on post-apartheid South Africa's commission, has been taking testimony from victims as well as former rebels for the last two years, urging a full accounting of wartime atrocities. While the truth commission cannot charge killers with a crime, it can recommend charges be brought.

Meanwhile, several notorious killers have refashioned themselves as influential politicians in Liberia.

"If you have an individual admitting that he and his group killed over 20,000 people, certainly there should be a mechanism put in place for such people to face justice," Mulbah Morlue, who heads the Forum for the Establishment of a War Crimes Court in Liberia, said in response to Blahyi's confession.

Yet there are also those that praise Blahyi.

"You can't have true reconciliation without knowing the truth," said Johnny Lamine, a Monrovia resident. "Blahyi's story is alarming, but ... let's know who did what in Liberia during the war."

Others in a country where some feel everyone is tainted said they would rather not dig up the past. Because the violence was so widespread it's not uncommon to find Liberian families that have both victim and perpetrator under the same roof — a daughter that was raped and a son that took up a gun and went on to rape the daughters of other families.

"Liberians have tried to forget these stories," Mary Kollie said as she went home from church service Sunday.

In his interview, Blahyi told The Associated Press: "Some people see me and congratulate me. Others see me and say I should not be walking down the streets of Monrovia posing proud. But I continue to tell such people I am not proud, I am ashamed."

In 1996, while charging naked into a battle, Blahyi said God appeared and told him he was a slave to Satan, not the hero he considered himself to be, according to an earlier interview with The Associated Press.

He became a born-again Christian and for a while, traversed the war-wracked streets of Monrovia selling cassettes of his sermons.

Liberia's violence began in 1979 when security forces killed dozens of people during massive riots. The following year, President William Tolbert was ousted in a coup by Samuel K. Doe, an illiterate master sergeant, who ordered Tolbert's Cabinet members tied to poles on a beach and executed.

Rebels led by ex-rebel Charles Taylor invaded in 1989, plunging the country into another civil war. The war went into a momentary lull after 1997 when Taylor was elected president and again surged, ending only when Taylor was forced into exile in Nigeria in 2003. He is now facing charges of crimes against humanity at a tribunal in the Hague for atrocities committed by a rebel movement he allegedly supported in neighboring Sierra Leone.

While Taylor faces trial for crimes committed in another country, one of his former rivals in Liberia, Prince Johnson, is now a senator who last year accompanied a group of U.S. politicians as they toured the country. Johnson videotaped his men torturing and then killing Doe. That videotape is still widely available in street side stalls here.

Associated Press writer Rukmini Callimachi contributed to this report from Dakar, Senegal.

charlestaylortrial.org

Monday, 21 January 2008

Father Chema completes his testimony

Posted by Webmaster on January 21, 2008

Court is in session.

Prosecutor Shymala Alagandre continues her direct examination of prosecution witness, Father Jose Maria Caballero, also known as Father Chema.

Pros: On Friday, you testified that the children were 14-17 years old. Was that their age when they came to you, or when they fought?

Wit: That was their age when they came to us. They started fighting at ages 7-8.

Through a series of questions, his account continues as follows:

They mentioned that some of their training camps were Camp Lyon at Zagoda, where Foday Sankoh was present, Camp Burkina, Camp Kangari Hills where Gibril Massaquoi was, Northern Jungle behind Kabala, Camp Rosor.

I always spoke in Krio with the children. We used drawing as a therapy. At first a psychologist interpreted the drawings, then our social workers did. The children were given a topic to draw about. They were asked to explain to other children what it was they drew. It could help explain what had happened to them. We tape-recorded the presentations and sometimes took notes. We kept the drawings and published a book of them to help explain to the public what happened to the children. The English translation of the Krio book title is "I didn't want to do it". All of the drawings in the book were done by children who were with the RUF. (Prosecution refers the witness to a drawing.) The witness says drawing shows a child with someone in charge of an ammunition room and a person with an RPG on the roof. He was 11 years-old when he was abducted by the RUF, spent three years with them and was 17 when he made the drawing. The next drawing is by a child who was 13-years old when he was abducted by the RUF, spent two years with the RUF and was 15 when he drew this. The child's explanation states: "I cannot forget. I was captured by Rambo, a famous fighter whose name is very well known in Sierra Leone. He took me to Liberia together with other people to be trained and later to fight against our enemies. I took drugs to feel secure. The training was hard and difficult. Many people died. The 6 of January 1999, we entered the city with heavy weapons and the commander in charge was Sam Bockarie (Mosquito) and Rambo. Because I was not afraid, I was promoted to Lieutenant. I still remember all these things. I have problems concentrating on my studies." (Refers to another picture.) The next picture is drawn by a boy who was abducted by the RUF at age 12 and spent one year with the RUF. His explanation states: "My boss at Camp Lion was Target. The RUF soldiers didn't like him because he was smart. Target shot and killed a rebel named Tama Bodo. Tama Bodo had miraculous powers that allowed him to appear and disappear at his wish. He was the one who helped us in the successful attacks launched by the rebels near Koindugu in the Northern Province of Sierra Leone. However, my boss saw him fighting. Target shot and killed him. The rebels organized a rebellion and summarily killed Target. I loved Target. He was good to me. I was not able to hide my feelings and started shouting. The people who rebelled against my boss wanted to kill me. This fact comes to me over and over." (Refers to another drawing.) This was drawn by a boy kidnapped by the RUF when he was nine years-old and who spent nine years with the RUF. His explanation: "I will never forget the day they kidnapped me and took

me to camp called Sagoda. Foday Sankoh was there. I will never forget the day Sagoda was attacked. They attacked us from four sides, but with the tactics we'd learned, we repelled the attacks. They ran out of ammunition and couldn't turn back. We surrounded them and killed them. I cannot forget these things." (Refers to another drawing.) This was drawn by a boy who was ten years-old when he was abducted by the RUF. His explanation of the drawing: "I learned how to loot and to take things from people by force and threatening. I learned how to use drugs: cocaine, blue boat and marijuana." (Refers to another drawing.) This was drawn by a boy kidnapped by the RUF when he was 12. His explanation: "I was trained how to use weapons. I also smoked and drank." (Refers to another drawing.) This was drawn by a boy who was 10 when captured by the RUF. His explanation: "I learned to use weapons and I wounded and maltreated people of all ages. I learned to steal money and loot." (Refers to another drawing.) This boy was 11 when captured by the RUF and spent three years with them. The explanation: "During one week they trained me how to prepare an ambush. I also shot from a helicopter into the city of Lunsar. I drank, raped and killed everybody I wanted to." (Refers to another drawing.) This was drawn by a boy who was 13 when captured by the RUF. His explanation: "I learned to use weapons. This is a bazooka. It is very difficult to use - very big. Up it fires bullets and down bombs. Below is my commander, Rambo." (Refers to another drawing.) This was drawn by a boy who was 9 when captured by the RUF and spent 9 years with them. His explanation: "I learned how to assemble weapons and use them. I learned to fire them." (Refers to another drawing.) This is by a boy who was 6 years-old when captured and spent over 8 years with the RUF. "Before I became a rebel I was obedient and quiet. I learned to take drugs, to kill, to loot and burn houses. This drawing shows how I burned and destroyed houses."

At St. Michael's, we tried to reunify the children with their families. We had a team of social workers that would go to the area or village to try to find the family. If they could find the family, they would ask the family if they were ready to take the child back, and if they were, they would also talk with community groups. If everyone agreed, the social workers would take the child back. We took information from the children. We received a hand-over certificate signed by the family and the agency involved if it was outside the Western Area. The ministry of social welfare kept a database. Following the handover, an NGO would follow-up with the families. The children still needed counselling. They would visit them in their houses, schools, or training workshops. It was not easy for children to re-adapt to civilian lives. They were used to having slaves in the bush, but at home they'd have to get water, food, and wash their clothes. One particular child reunified with his family in Freetown. Sent for water at a public tap, he moved ahead of a long line of people waiting. When they complained, he said "you don't know who you're dealing with". They beat him up. An NGO worker had to go to counsel the family and community.

For children whose families couldn't be found, or whose families rejected them, they stayed in foster families, group homes, or supervised independent living for older children.

Foday Sankoh came to St. Michael's Lodge in May 2000. It was a Sunday and children were at the beach with social workers. I heard all the children running in the compound. I saw them saluting someone I couldn't see. When I approached, I saw Sankoh addressing the children. He made them pray, then they sang the RUF anthem. He told them "I am your father, you are my children." I approached and told Sankoh that this was a private institution and he had no right to be there. He accused me of not taking care of the children. He got angry and started threatening me. He said I was stealing government money and he was going to send a commission to investigate. There were armed people with him in a vehicle. They left. One of the social workers took some pictures of us talking. A Spanish journalist published that picture in a book. The English translation of the Spanish title is "Save the Child Soldiers". (Witness identifies a picture in the book as being a photo of the incident with Sankoh.)

The children at St. Michael's Lodge were aggressive and violent when they first came. Many were on drugs. They calmed down over time through work of the social workers. Most of them - 95% of them - have been rehabilitated. Many have professional skills, or are married with children. We have children in college or finishing secondary school. Few never made it because they couldn't quit the drugs. Many of them are in the streets, involved in petty crime. Some are in Pademba Road prison in Freetown. Some children ran from the program and ran back to their commanders. After January 2002, some crossed into Liberia and were fighting there. I know that two of them went to Ivory Coast to fight. Other children told me about them. Girls who were in the program were much more difficult to work with. It was difficult to discuss abuse. Many couldn't adapt to their families and their new lives. Many became prostitutes on the beach in Freetown. I see many of them there or at Victoria Park.

Prosecution has no further questions.

Defense Counsel Andrew Cayley will now cross-examine Father Chema. The defense is handing out copies of previous statements made by Father Chema to the Office of the Prosecutor (OTP).

Def: You stated on Friday and today that most of the children you had in the program had been in the RUF. You also had children with the AFRC?

Wit: Yes.

Def: The CDF or Kamajors also used children?

Wit: Yes.

Def: At one stage, at least in April 1992, the SLA itself made use of children?

Wit: Yes.

Def: All fighting forces made use of children?

Wit: Yes.

Def: In many other parts of Africa, children have been used as child soldiers?

Wit: Yes.

Def: In Angola, the DRC, Uganda?

Wit: Yes.

Def: And around the world, like Burma, Lebanon?

Wit: Yes.

Def: (Referring to the report of prosecution witness Stephen Ellis). Ellis addressed the use of child soldiers. He wrote that although the NPFL made use of other use of coercion, it did not abduct child soldiers on the scale of that used by the RUF. It is traditional in many rural areas of West Africa for adolescent boys to assume the position of warriors as part of their initiation into adulthood. It is not clear to what extent the use of child soldiers by the RUF represents an innovation. Are you aware that there was an historically embedded practice in using children as soldiers?

Wit: That's right, but there's a small difference. I only recall one child telling me that he joined voluntarily. The others were forced.

Def: But there was a historical practice of using children in armed fighting units?

Wit: Yes.

Def: Are you right that you made five statements to the OTP over four years?

Wit: Yes.

Def: (References a statement from July 2003). This was your first statement. Did you sign it?

Wit: I don't recall reading through it or signing it. I think I signed at the second interview.

Def: (References a statement from May 2007). You met with Brian Huthinson, Shymala Alagendra, and Mohamed Bangura. How did you get there?

Wit: I drove in my vehicle from Madina (ph.)

Def: Did you read these notes and sign it?

Wit: I read the notes the third time I came. They gave it to me to read and make corrections.

Def: I want to go through the changes you made. Corrections regard the dates of his stay in Kenema. What accounts for the need for corrections?

Wit: I could give more detailed information at the second interview because I'd had an opportunity to review my notes from St. Michaels.

Def: When did you arrive in The Hague?

Wit: Last Wednesday.

Def: How much time did you spend with Ms. Alagendra of the OTP to prepare for your testimony?

Wit: Two hours. We also had met in Freetown, the last time was January 7th. It was to inform me that I was coming to The Hague, make travel arrangements, and read through my statements to refresh my memory. I was only told that questions would be based on the statements I'd given.

Def: Regarding your first statement of July 2003, it says you had only RUF and AFRC children, that they had to be kept apart. The RUF children thought they were the real fighters. Was there fighting between children who had been with the RUF and those with the AFRC?

Wit: Yes, several times.

Def: Did this reflect divisions among the adults in the two groups?

Wit: I don't know.

Def: You spoke on Friday of groups arriving in November 1999. One group had been led by Issa Sesay?

Wit: It was the group that arrived in October. One part was led by Sesay, one by Superman.

Def: By November you had one group that had been with Sesay, and one group led by Superman?

Wit: Yes.

Def: And they fought each other because of a split between Superman and Sesay?

Wit: I think so, yes.

Def: You had to call on UN soldiers?

Wit: Yes.

Def: On Friday you said children explained to you that he'd seen a helicopter. You said that the children told you that helicopters came to their bases with weapons and drugs, and that they didn't know where the helicopters came from. You said that the helicopters were white?

Wit: Yes.

Def: The UN used white helicopters?

Wit: Yes, but not only the UN. Other international orgs used white helicopters.

Def: You said you traveled to Freetown for five hours to meet with the OTP. Did they pay you?

Wit: They paid the fuel only. I think it was 120,000 Leones for each trip.

Def: On occasions when children arrived, they wouldn't tell the truth?

Wit: Yes.

Def: Is it fair to say that some children probably never told you the truth?

Wit: Probably.

Def: So your statistics may have some errors?

Wit: It could be. The statistics include plus/minus signs to reflect ambiguities.

Def: You accept that because of their untruthfulness, there may be some inaccuracies in your report?

Wit: Yes, it could happen. Sometimes we learned that a child in the program wasn't really a child soldier, but was only in the program for the benefits.

Def: Regarding Sankoh's visit in May 2000, did he ever send a commission to investigate?

Wit: No.

Defense has no further questions. Prosecution has no questions on re-direct examination.

Judge Sebutinde has a question for the witness: You read the explanations from the book. Were those your interpretations or those of the children?

Wit: Those were the children's explanations. We tape recorded them and I translated them into Spanish for the book.

Judge Doherty asks about about discrepancies in some of the statistics on the child soldiers whose drawings appeared in the book.

Wit: There were a couple of typos, perhaps.

Prosecution seeks to enter into evidence all documents used during examination of the witness.

Judge Doherty thanks Father Chema for his testimony and excuses him.

Court adjourns for the mid-morning break until 11:30. Our live-blogging will continue at 12:00, as the prosecution calls its next witness.

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Day 11 of witness testimony

Posted by [Webmaster](#) on January 21, 2008

The trial of Charles Taylor before the Special Court for Sierra Leone, sitting in The Hague, resumes this morning with continued testimony from prosecution witness Father Chema. This morning's session began at 9:30, but with the half-hour delay in video and audio to the media center here at the facilities of the International Criminal Court, our live-blog will begin at 10:00 (9:00 in Sierra Leone and Liberia). Our account is not a transcript, but a summary that aims to be as accurate as possible. We cannot guarantee accuracy, however.

UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries 18 January 2008

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

Newspaper Summary

New UN Secretary-General Special Representative Assumes Duties

(Plain Truth, The Informer, The News, Heritage and Public Agenda)

- The new Special Representative of the Secretary –General, Ms Ellen Margrethe Løj, is in Liberia and has assumed her duties. Ms. Løj, a Danish diplomat, replaces Mr. Alan Doss who has taken up the same post in the Congo.

CENTAL's Anti-Corruption Campaign Goes Nationwide

(The Analyst and Daily Observer)

- Another significant development which was only reported in The Analyst and Daily Observer is the commencement of a one-year nationwide sensitization campaign on the adopted National Anti-corruption Strategy of Liberia. According to the publications, the Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia has commenced the campaign with support from the Open Society Initiative for West Africa. The anti-corruption campaign seeks to combat the perennial issue of corruption through a coordinated approach that involves the entire nation.

Two Witnesses Link former Taylor Militia Generals to Massacre

(The News, Heritage, The Informer, Public Agenda, New Democrat and National Chronicle)

- In separate testimonies before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Thursday, two men who claimed to be survivors of the Maher River Bridge massacre in 2002 accused ex-government militia generals Roland Duo and Benjamin Yeaten of supervising the killing of more than 350 civilians mostly women and children in Bomi County.
- Mannah Massallay, 20, and an elderly man, James Kabah, said Duo told a group of civilians that he would transport them to Monrovia to avoid being caught up in cross fire between his forces and the LURD rebels.

Radio Summary

New SRSG Starts Duty in Liberia

(Also reported on Star Radio, Truth FM, SKY FM and ELBS)

Advocacy Group Sensitizes Public on Anti-Corruption Strategy

(Also reported on Star Radio, Truth FM, SKY FM and ELBS)

Court Witnesses Say former Taylor Militias Participated in Massacre

(Also reported on Star Radio, Truth FM, SKY FM and ELBS)

BBC Online

Friday, 18 January 2008

Rwanda 'still teaching genocide'

Rwanda's education minister is under strong pressure from MPs, over what they call "genocide ideology" present in some schools in the country.

A parliamentary investigation found cases where students were made to wear different uniforms according to their ethnic group and books inciting hatred.

Minister Jeanne d'Arc Mujawamariya, who MPs could sack, says those behind such incidents have been punished.



More than 800,000 people died in the 1994 genocide

Some 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus died in 100 days in the 1994 genocide.

Minister of State for Primary and Secondary Education Joseph Murekeraho has also been questioned by law makers.

Poems of hatred

Ms Mujawamariya says that the teachers responsible have been taken to court and those found guilty of inciting ethnic hatred sacked.

But the MPs say she has still not adequately answered their questions and have summoned her to appear before a commission for a third time.

Last month's parliamentary report said old books "distorting history" had been found in libraries.

Some claimed, for instance, that Tutsis should not be considered Rwandan.

The Hutu extremists behind the genocide said the Tutsis had come to Rwanda from Ethiopia.

Poems promoting hatred and division were also found in school libraries.

After the report was presented to parliament, a special commission was set up to deal with the matter as it was felt the education ministry had not done enough to resolve the problems - five years after they first surfaced.

The BBC's Geoffrey Mutagoma in the capital, Kigali, says the issue has shown the problems prevailing in Rwandan society 13 years after the genocide.

Many believe that if ethnic division is visible in schools, then the situation might be even worse at home, he says.

The present Tutsi-dominated government seized power in 1994, ending the genocide.

Christian Science Monitor

Tuesday, 15 January 2008

Don't pave Cambodia's flawed path to justice Christian Science

John A. Hall
Orange, Calif.

Five high-profile members of Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge government are finally in detention awaiting trial. It's historic progress toward long-awaited justice for the brutal regime that caused the deaths of 1.7 million Cambodians in the late-1970s.

The United Nations-backed tribunal set up in Cambodia to try these men is running out of money and is seeking additional funds from donor nations. The United States indicated last month that it may reverse policy and begin funding the court.

There remain, however, legitimate concerns about the potential for corruption and the lack of judicial independence in Cambodia. A shift in US policy would be premature.

The tribunal - established to bring to trial "senior leaders" and "those most responsible" for the country's massive death toll - has undoubtedly made significant progress. The symbolism of having five ex-leaders of the notorious Khmer Rouge under arrest is enormous in a country where impunity is the norm. Clint Williamson, US ambassador for war crimes, has noted that the tribunal "is making progress and moving in a very positive direction."

Not all the news from Phnom Penh is so good. In recent months the tribunal has been shaken by a series of scandals. Open Society Justice Initiative, a legal group, raised allegations last February of chronic mismanagement and indicated that the Cambodian staff - including the judges - have to kick back part of their salaries in exchange for their appointments.

An internal audit, made public in October only after portions of it were leaked, uncovered a raft of problems at the tribunal. These included: an inadequate oversight mechanism, Cambodian staff hired without meeting the minimum job requirements, artificially high pay scales, and hiring practices so flawed that the auditors recommended that every Cambodian hired at the tribunal be fired.

An expert report, also leaked from the tribunal, paints a similarly bleak picture. The split Cambodia/international tribunal structure is "divisive and unhelpful," claimed Robin Vincent, former registrar for the Special Court for Sierra Leone, and Kevin St. Louis, chief of administration for the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. They recommended that managerial responsibilities for the tribunal be transferred to the UN, and that crucial areas such as translation and witness protection be immediately assumed by the international staff.

Some positive but limited changes have taken place: There is now a written personnel manual that formalizes future recruitment procedures, a code of ethics, and an "anticorruption" pledge. International managers are now allowed to participate in evaluations of their Cambodian staff.

While these may be promising signs, they fail to address the heart of the matter. The auditors' suggestion that the Cambodian staff be fired and new employees hired under careful UN supervision was simply dismissed. The artificially high pay scales remain. The flawed split-tribunal structure is unchanged.

As for the kickback allegations, which go to the crux of the court's credibility, there appears to be no political will at the tribunal or the UN to launch any genuine and thorough investigation. The UN may be reluctant to press this matter, fearing Prime Minister Hun Sen would pull the plug on the tribunal rather than permit an independent and thorough investigation that might implicate individuals within his government.

With the taint of political influence, corruption, and mismanagement continuing to surround the tribunal, why is the US now considering providing direct funding? The answer may be oil. Vast deposits have been discovered off the coast of Cambodia in recent years - perhaps as many as 2 billion barrels and a further 10 trillion cubic feet of gas.

Firms from China, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Kuwait, Australia, and France are seeking permits to explore and develop Cambodia's energy riches. Beijing has recently provided Cambodia with hundreds of millions of dollars of aid. Washington does not want to be left out, and it is looking to improve diplomatic relations with Cambodia.

Ambassador Williamson has stated that the court must address allegations of mismanagement and corruption before the US will consider funding it. Washington should uphold that promise.

Meanwhile, it should also work aggressively with the UN to pressure the tribunal and the Cambodian government to agree to the reforms the auditors and experts deemed necessary. Only this will ensure that the tribunal can function honestly and efficiently.

** John A. Hall is a professor at Chapman University School of Law and director of the Center for Global Trade & Development.*