

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



PRESS CLIPPINGS

Enclosed are clippings of local and international press on the Special Court and related issues obtained by the Outreach and Public Affairs Office

as at:

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Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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GLOBAL JUSTICE GAP CONDEMNS MILLIONS OF ABUSES

THE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL Report 2010 State of the World's Human Rights documents abuses in 159 countries. The Global Justice Gap organization reveals that powerful governments are blocking advances in international justice by standing above the law on human rights, shielding allies from criticism and acting only when politically convenient.

"REPRESSION AND INJUSTICE are flourishing in the global justice gap, condemning millions of people to abuse, oppression and poverty," said Caludio Cordone, interim Secretary General of Amnesty International.

"GOVERNMENT MUST ENSURE that no one is above the law, and that everyone has access to justice for all human rights violations. Unit governments stop subordinating justice to political self-interest, freedom from fear and freedom from want will remain elusive for most of humanity."

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CALLED on governments to ensure accountability for their own actions, fully sign up to the International Criminal Court (ICC) and ensure that crimes under International law can be prosecuted anywhere in the world. It said that states claiming global leadership, including the G20, have a particular responsibility to set an example.

THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL Court's 2009 arrest warrant for Sudanese President Omar Hassan Al Bashir, for crimes against humanity and war crimes, was a landmark event demonstrating that even sitting heads of state are not above the law. However, the African Union's refusal to cooperate despite the nightmare of violence that has affected hundreds of thousands of people in Darfur, was a stark example of governmental failure to put justice before politics.

THE UN HUMAN Rights Council's paralysis over Sri Lanka, despite serious abuses including possible war crimes carried out by both government forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eeem, also stood as a testament to the international community's failure to act when needed. Meanwhile, the recommendations of the Human Rights Council's Goldstone report calling for accountability for the conflict in Gaza still need to be heeded by Israel and Hamas.

WORLDWIDE, the Justice Gap sustained a pernicious web of repression. Amnesty International's research records torture or other ill-treatment in at least 111 countries, unfair trials in at least 55 countries, re-

strictions on free speech in at least 96 countries and prisoners of conscience imprisoned in at least 48 countries. HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS and human right defenders came under attack in many countries, with governments preventing their work or failing to protect them.

IN THE MIDDLE East and North African, there were patterns of governmental intolerance of criticism in Saudi Arabia, Syria and Tunisia, and mounting repression in Iran. In Asia, the Chinese government increased pressure on challenges to its authority, detaining and harassing human rights defenders, while thousand fled severe repression and economic hardship in North Korea and Myanmar.

SPACE OF INDEPENDENT voices and civil society shrank in parts of Europe and Central Asia, and there were unfair restrictions on freedom of expression in Russia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Belarus and Uzbekistan. The Americas were plagued by hundreds of unlawful killings by security forces, including in Brazil, Jamaica, Colombia and Mexico, while impunity for US violations related to counter-terrorism persisted. Governments in Africa such as Guinea and Madagascar met dissent with excessive use of force and unlawful killings, while Ethiopia and Uganda among others repressed criticism.

CALLOUS DISREGARD FOR civilians marked conflicts. Armed groups and government forces breached international law in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sri Lanka and Yemen. In the conflict in Gaza and southern Israel, Israeli forces and Palestinian armed group unlawfully killed and injured civilians.

THOUSANDS OF CIVILIANS suffered abuses in escalating violence by the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan, or bore the brunt of the conflicts in Iraq and Somalia. Women and girls suffered rape and other violence carried out by government forces and armed groups in most conflict.

Other trends included:

MASS FORCED EVICTIONS of people from their homes in Africa, for example in Angola, Ghana, Kenya and Nigeria, often driving people deeper into poverty,

INCREASED REPORTS OF domestic violence against women, rape, sexual abuse, and murder and mutilation after rape, in Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Jamaica,

MILLIONS OF MIGRANTS in Asia-pacific countries including South Korea, Japan and Malaysia faced exploitation, violence and abuse,

A SHARP RISES in racism, xenophobia and intolerance in Europe and Central Asia.

IN THE MIDDLE East and North Africa, attacks by armed groups some apparently aligned to al-Qa'ida in states such as Iraq and Yemen, heightened insecurity.

GLOBALLY, with millions of people push into poverty by the food, energy and financial crisis, events showed the urgent need to tackle the abuses that affect poverty.

"GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE held accountable for the human rights abuses that drive and deepen poverty.

THE UN REVIEW meeting on the Millennium Development Goals in New York, USA, this September is an opportunity for world leaders to move from promises to legally enforceable commitment," said Claudio Cordone.

WOMEN, especially the poor, bore the brunt of the failure to deliver one these goals. Pregnancy-related complication claimed the Millennium Development Goals in New York, USA this September is an opportunity for world leaders to move from promises to legally enforceable commitments," said Claudio Cordone.

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AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL ALSO called on G20 states that have failed to fully sign up to the International Criminal Court-USA, China, Russia, turkey, India, Indonesia, and Saudi Arabia-to do so. The International review meeting on the court, beginning in Kampala, Uganda on 31 May, is a chance for governments to show their commitment to the court.

IN LATIN AMERICA, investigations into crimes shielded by amnesty laws were reopened, with landmark judgment involving former leaders including the convictions of former President Alberto Fujimori of Peru for crimes against humanity an Argentina's last military president, Reynaldo Bigone for kidnapping and torture. Al trials in the Special Court for Sierra Leone were concluded apart from the on-going trial of former president of Liberia Charles Taylor.

"THE NEED FOR effective Global Justice is a key lesson from the past year. Justice provides fairness and truth to those who suffer violations, deters human rights abuses, and ultimately delivers a more stable and secure world," said Claudio Cordone.

New Vision
Wednesday, 21 July 2010

Human Right Commission Abridges TRC Reports

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone has reproduced the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report, the head of public relations unit of the Commission has revealed.

Mr. Henry Sheku said the essence for reproducing the report is for the general public to understand it better noting that not everybody has read the three volumes of the report let alone

understand the recommendations. "This will help throw light on key issues in the report including the much debated extra judicial killings of late Inspector General of Police, James Bambay Kamara and

twenty-seven others by the then Captain Strasser led National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) military junta in December 1992," Mr. Sheku said.

The PRO stressed that the Commission wants the populace to know about the report, and by reproducing it will assist achieve that goal. Very soon, he went on they will engage radio stations across the country to explain to the public the

recommendations of the report given that since its formal launching not much has been done to propagate it.

Henry Sheku said the Commission does not really intend to reproduce the whole report. "We shall be reproducing excerpts of the report like the area of the James Bambay Kamara killing and others for people to know what it clearly states about the matter," he concluded.

AllAfrica.Com

Monday, 19 July 2010

Sierra Leone: As Court Takes Break, News That Supermodel Testimony May Be Delayed

Alpha Sesay

As the trial of Charles Taylor moved into a week-long judicial recess today, news broke that the much anticipated appearance by British Supermodel Naomi Campbell may no longer take place at the end of July.

According to prosecution counsel, Nicholas Koumjian, Ms. Campbell planned to ask the judges to reschedule her appearance and would soon put her request in writing. The judges, however, could not rule on her request until after the judicial break.

Mr. Koumjian assured the court that Ms. Campbell's preferred date of testimony is close to the one indicated in her subpoena (July 29) - and will likely take place before the current witness - former Sierra Leonean rebel leader, Issa Sesay - leaves the witness stand.

Testimony by actress Mia Farrow and Ms Campbell's former agent, Carole White, will likely follow that of the British supermodel. The three high profile women are set to testify about allegations that in 1997, while on a visit to South Africa - and after a star studded dinner hosted by former South African president Nelson Mandela - Mr. Taylor sent men to deliver rough diamonds to Ms. Campbell.

Prosecutors suggest that the rough diamonds were given to Mr. Taylor by Sierra Leonean rebels in the hope that the former Liberian president would exchange them during his travels for arms and ammunition, which helped to fuel the rebels' crimes during the conflict. Mr. Taylor has denied the allegations.

In Mr. Sesay's testimony as a witness for Mr. Taylor, the former Revolutionary United Front (RUF) leader has denied that the RUF gave diamonds to Mr. Taylor, and dismissed as false allegations that Mr. Taylor bought weapons and ammunition for RUF rebels.

Mr. Taylor's trial resumes on Monday, July 26, with Mr. Sesay again taking the witness stand.

Darfur Jem rebels to sign deal to stop child soldiers



Jem says it has no child soldiers in its ranks now

A Sudanese rebel group is to sign an agreement to allow the UN access to its bases to check children are not being recruited as soldiers.

The Justice and Equality Movement told the BBC it had been trying to protect children since the beginning of the seven-year conflict in Darfur.

The UN said children found in military areas or in conflict zones could be removed under the deal.

An estimated 6,000 children have been caught up in Darfur's unrest.

The BBC's Imogen Foulkes in Geneva said the UN children's organisation was hailing the agreement, which took more than a year to negotiate, as a very valuable precedent which it hoped other rebel groups would follow.

Jem leaders, who have travelled to Geneva for the signing, said the movement had no child soldiers but that it was signing up to the agreement as a gesture of goodwill.

Fighting intensified in Darfur in May after Jem pulled out of peace talks with the government, accusing it of acting in bad faith.

The conflict between rebels and government-backed militias in Sudan's western region is estimated by the UN to have cost the lives of 300,000 people and driven 2.7m people from their homes.

Voice of America

Tuesday, 20 July 2010

Expanded Arrest Warrant Does Not Slow Sudanese Leader's Travels

Peter Clottey



Photo: AP

In this May 27, 2010 file photo, Sudan's president Omar al-Bashir gestures prior to being sworn in, at the parliament in Khartoum, Sudan. On Monday, July, 12, 2010, the International Criminal Court in The Hague, Netherlands, charged Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir with three counts of genocide in Darfur, a move that will pile further diplomatic pressure on his isolated regime. The decision marked the first time the world's first permanent war crimes tribunal has issued genocide

charges. (AP Photo/Abd Raouf, File)

A top official of Sudan's ruling National Congress Party (NCP) says the expanded International Criminal Court's arrest warrant against President Omar Hassan al-Bashir will not prevent him from making his scheduled trip to neighboring Chad.

Rabie Abdullati Obeid said President Bashir's trip Wednesday to Chad will seek to strengthen bilateral relations with Ndjamen and show that the additional arrest warrant issued by the Hague-based court does not have any effect on his travels to other countries.

"This visit proves that we are not [bothered by] ICC steps or procedures as we are not members of the Rome Charter on which this ICC [was] established... and the program of the government, especially and particularly, on the relationship between Sudan and neighboring countries whether in Africa or the Arab world is going on," he said.

Last week, the Hague-based court issued a second arrest warrant against the embattled Sudanese leader adding genocide charges against Mr. Bashir over his alleged involvement in the violence in the Darfur region.



Chadian President Idriss Deby

In a released statement, the ICC said, "There are reasonable grounds to believe that Mr. al-Bashir is criminally responsible for five counts of crimes against humanity (murder, extermination, forcible transfer, torture and rape), and two counts for war crimes (intentionally directing attacks against a civilian

population, as such, or against individual civilians not taking direct part in hostilities, and pillaging).”

In 2009, the same court issued an international arrest warrant against President Bashir for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

But, supporters of Mr. Bashir dismissed the charges as “political” saying western countries often manipulate decisions of the Hague-based court against Sudan.

While in the Chadian capital, President Bashir is scheduled to attend the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CENSAD) summit Thursday.

On the eve of his trip, the Sudanese government expelled Chadian rebels living in the country, a move senior NCP official Obeid described as a mere coincidence.

“This is only coming like that, but there is no connection with the visit of the president. Actually, [his trip] is planned according to the schedule already made by the government. I don’t think that this is connected to each other,” Obeid said.

Analysts say President Bashir is unlikely to be arrested by Chadian officials despite Ndjamenana being a signatory of the Rome Statute that obliges the government to enforce the arrest warrants against the Sudanese leader.

Both President Bashir and his Chadian counterpart, Idriss Deby, have normalized official relations after years of tensions.

Aljazeera

Wednesday, 21 July 2010

War crimes retrial for ex-Kosovo PM

A UN war crimes court has ordered the former prime minister of Kosovo to face a retrial two years after he was acquitted on charges of murder, torture and rape.

The president of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) said the original trial of Ramush Haradinaj was hampered by witness intimidation.

Patrick Robinson said on Wednesday that the trial chamber in The Hague, the Netherlands, had "failed to appreciate the gravity" of the intimidation.

Haradinaj had been charged, along with two former commanders in the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), with abusing Serbs as Kosovo fought for independence from Serbia in 1998.



Ramush Haradinaj had previously been acquitted over charges relating to the 1998 conflict [AFP]

'Miscarriage of justice'

Judges had thrown out charges against Haradinaj for lack of evidence, during a trial marked by the reluctance and witnesses to testify.

"The trial chamber failed to take sufficient steps to counter witness intimidation that permeated the trial," Robinson said.

"Given the potential importance of these witnesses to the prosecution's case, the error undermined the fairness of the proceedings and resulted in a miscarriage of justice."

Haradinaj, 42, and Idriz Balaj, 38, who allegedly headed a paramilitary unit, were acquitted in April 2008 on numerous counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Co-accused Lahi Brahimaj, 40, a deputy commander of the KLA and ran the Jablanica prison camp, was convicted of torture.

Haradinaj, the most senior Kosovo leader to stand trial at the ICTY, was a commander of the KLA at the time of the alleged atrocities, as was Balaj.

He showed no emotion as Robinson ordered the retrial and told guards to take the former leader into custody.

No date has been set for the trial.

Independence ruling

The development comes a day before the International Court of Justice rules on Kosovo's independence from Serbia.

Serbia lost control over Kosovo in 1999 when Nato bombed it to halt the killing of ethnic Albanians in a two-year counterinsurgency war.

After nine years under an international mandate, the Albanian majority, backed by the United States and most EU member states, declared independence, which Belgrade vowed never to accept.

Serbia hopes the ICJ decision, which is only advisory, can help restore its claim on the Balkans' smallest country, one of the poorest corners of Europe.

Daily Nation (Kenya)

Tuesday, 20 July 2010

By DAVE OPIYO and ANDREW DOUGHMAN

Poll Chaos Witnesses Flown out



Opposition supporters burn objects and brandish crude weapons during protests at the height of the post- election violence. PHOTO/ FILE

Three spirited out by the ICC after ministry fails to assure their safety their safety

The International Criminal Court has placed three key post-election violence witnesses under its protection.

The disclosure came as it became evident that the government had not set aside funds for a Witness Protection Agency meant to offer security to people with crucial information on the chaos that followed the 2007 elections.

The three, sources said, were among nine people who were under the protection of the Kenya National Commission for Human Rights (KNCHR).

Six hotspots

The ICC took them in following fears they could be targets of the violence masterminds.

They are said to have been flown out three weeks ago as The Hague steps up investigations into the planners, financiers and executors of the chaos that killed 1,133 people and displaced 650,000.

Even though the ICC has declined to reveal anything, sources said a fresh team of detectives was flown in last week and has zeroed in on the six hotspots of Naivasha, Eldoret, Kisumu, Kericho, and Nairobi's Mathare and Kibera slums.

Last week, Justice minister Mutula Kilonzo confirmed that the investigators were here and were racing to tie up loose ends to meet a December deadline for chief prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo to bring his case before The Hague.

On Tuesday, one of the sources said financial constraints had made it difficult for the KNCHR to accommodate all the witnesses in safe houses.

The source said the government agency had already spent Sh11 million in the last four months on the nine witnesses.

Mr Hassan Omar of the KNCHR confirmed that some key witnesses had been flown out.

“It is a very expensive venture... the government must set aside adequate funds for witness protection,” he said.

He said on Tuesday that the committee was disappointed by the amount of money allocated to the programme.

Mr Kilonzo was also disappointed by the lack of funds for the Witness Protection Agency.

Attorney general Amos Wako said Sh1.2 billion had been requested to roll out the programme, but the Treasury did not allocate any funds in last month’s Budget.

Reports of threats against potential witnesses have been on the increase, with the KNCHR warning that the ICC may not succeed in its mission unless security was provided.