

**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:

Wednesday, 22 August 2007

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Awareness Times

Wednesday, 22 August 2007

Charles Taylor charges Defence Team

The on going trial of former Liberian President, Charles Taylor who stands accused in the Hague for perpetrating crimes against humanity in the sub-region has been again adjourned to January 7th 2008. It can be recalled that the war crimes indietee has not made any visible appearance before that court since he was transferred by the Freetown based Special Courts as he changes Defence Counsel regularly. He has recently sacked a British born Lawyer Karin Khan replacing him ridiculously though, with another Jamaican born British Lawyer, Courtenay Griffiths. The latter Taylor Defence lawyer and his team have therefore asked the court for sufficient time to enable them study the indictments against his client and prepare his Defence.

Concord Times
Wednesday 22 August 2007

SALONE NEWS

*By Ibrahim
Tarawallie*

The trial in The Hague of former Liberian president, Charles Gankay Taylor, indicted for war crimes by the United Nations backed Special Court for Sierra Leone, has been

Taylor's trial postponed to January 2008

postponed to January 7, 2008.

The pronouncement was made by the presiding judge, Justice Julia Sebutinde at a status conference held on Tuesday at The Hague in the Netherlands.

The postponement came about due to submissions made by lead counsel

Courtenay Griffiths, on behalf of the newly appointed defence team for Charles Taylor, to give them the opportunity to analyze all important documents in relation to the trial.

Justice Sebutinde, before making the pronouncement, concede that the new

defence team needs enough time to prepare for the start of the trial, adding that a status conference will be held every month to know how far it has gone with preparation.

According to Griffiths, "The trial has not heard a single word of evidence yet."

He added that the team is seriously anxious to go ahead with the trial.

"Until the 1st of August when the contract was signed by the registrar, we have no knowledge about the case," Griffiths said, adding "We need an international investigator."

He noted that they have

been provided with the necessary funds for an additional legal assistant.

The trial which is being conducted as part of the Special Court for Sierra Leone has been relocated to the Netherlands because of fear of insecurity in Sierra Leone.

Awoko

Wednesday, 22 August 2007

Expert decries bad management of ferries and hovercraft

The Sierra Leone Maritime Administration SLMA has contracted an expert to report on commercial Ferries and hovercraft that are operational in the country.

According to the SLMA Boss Mr Philip Lukulay "the exercise is with the view to ensuring the sea worthiness of the ferries and the hovercraft.

He pointed out that they have secured the services of

Mr Willem Wynand Deyzel to examine the Mahera, Fanta and Murzuk Ferries and the "Prince Michael Double O Seven" Hovercraft at Aberdeen Creek, Aberdeen Village. A Chartered Engineer and

fellow of the Institute of Marine Engineers, Science and Technology in London, Mr Deyzel is also past Principal Surveyor for Africa and President of the Institute of Marine Engineers in South Africa.

Mr Deyzel told journalists that he had inspected the deck, engine and management of all the ferries and the hovercraft.

The Chartered Engineer said he discovered that the management systems in all of the sea transports he inspected were very bad and that there was no proper system in place

to verify the number of people on board those transports. He pointed out that in case of an accident there will be no data which anybody could go by for rescue or any other intervention.

Mr Deyzel also noted the poor staff conditions in some of the ferries stating that they need immediate attention. However the expert inspector stopped short of commenting about his finding on his inspections of the engines.

SLMA boss Philip Lukulay assured journalists that after the South African expert submits his comprehensive report to the Ministry of Transport and Communication they will take the necessary action based on his recommendations.

The SLMA was established as an autonomous body for the registration of ships and other vessels and for the licensing and safety of maritime personnel along with the regulations and development generally of maritime, coastal and inland water transport.

United Press International

Monday, 20 August 2007

Charles Taylor war crimes trial postponed

THE HAGUE, Netherlands, Aug. 20 (UPI) -- The war crimes trial of Liberia's former president has been postponed until early next year to give his lawyers more time to prepare.

Charles Taylor was to have stood trial this month in The Hague on charges he was responsible for atrocities committed in neighboring Sierra Leone during its civil war in the 1990s.

The BBC said the court agreed to move the trial date to Jan. 7 after Taylor's British attorney, Courtenay Griffiths, announced the discovery of a new trove of Taylor's presidential papers that required examination.

Griffiths only recently took over the case while prosecutors have had years to prepare, the BBC said.

Afrol News

Monday, 20 August 2007

Taylor's trial pushed to next year

Afrol News, 20 August - The UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone today adjourned the trial of the ex-Liberian President, Charles Taylor, to 7 January next year.

Since 4 June, Mr Taylor - the first African leader to be tried to be arraigned before an international war crimes court - has been charged for his roles in supporting the rebels during Sierra Leone's decade-long brutal civil war.

The delay of the trial was a response to a motion filed by Taylor's defence lawyers last week, applying for the postponement of the trial until 7 January to allow "adequate time and facilities for the preparation of [Taylor's] defence, as required by Article 17 of the Statute of the Special Court of Sierra Leone."

The defence team believed a long delay would give them more time to evaluate new evidence against its client so that it can better prepare itself for the case.

Courtenay Griffiths, Mr Taylor's lawyer said an vital archives containing vital documents and letters [including one from the former US President, Jimmy Carter] belonging to his client had been discovered. He said the archives could contain some documents that are vital to the case.

The prosecution did not file an objection to the motion and therefore left the matter to the court's discretion.

Taylor, who faces 11 counts of war crimes, pleaded his innocence.

By staff writer

Charlestaylortrial.

Monday, 20 August 2007

Court Delays Taylor Trial until January 7, 2008

The Hague

The Special Court for Sierra Leone today ordered a delay in Charles Taylor's trial until January 7, 2008. Presiding Judge Sebutinde granted the Defense request for a four-month delay based in part on the newly composed defense team's need for additional time to prepare for trial, as well as the Prosecution's lack of opposition to such a delay. As Brenda Hollis from the Office of the Prosecutor stated, the Prosecution agrees that the defense has shown "good cause for reasonable delay." Justice Sebutinde emphasized that it is entirely within the Trial Chamber's discretion to order such a delay.

Defense Arguments for Delay

Present at the status conference was Taylor's new defense team: Courtenay Griffiths, QC, Terry Munyard, and Andrew Cayley. Taylor, dressed in a gray pinstripe suit and shielded by gold-rimmed sunglasses, conferred with defense counsel prior to the start of the status conference and took notes during various stages of the proceeding. Griffiths argued that a delay was reasonable and that "a myopic insistence on expeditiousness" would render the accused's right to counsel "an empty formality."

Both the Prosecution and the Defense, as well as the Court, believe that granting additional time to the Defense to prepare its case will prevent further delays. The defense team affirmed that it is anxious for the trial to start and end as quickly as possible. Griffiths, in a press briefing following the status conference, stated assuredly that he doubts there will be further delays in the trial because the Court is under too much pressure both politically and economically.

Status of Defense Team and Access to Disclosed Documents

Judge Sebutinde questioned Griffiths as to the status of the defense team and the extent of their access to the Prosecution's disclosed documents. Griffiths responded by noting that the Court must look at all of the circumstances in the present case to determine what will constitute a "reasonable" amount of time for the defense to prepare for the trial. In support of their request for a four-month delay, Griffiths stated that all of the core legal team are new to the case (having signed their contracts to represent Taylor on August 1), two former legal assistants are no longer a part of the defense team, and the team is still in need of an international investigator.

Judge Sebutinde questioned Griffiths about the stated 40,000 pages of disclosed materials from the Prosecution that contain items related to crime-based witnesses, linkage witnesses, and expert evidence. Griffiths said that he first had "sight" of the materials three weeks ago when he visited The Hague and saw the materials stored in the defense office. Charles Jalloh of the Office of the Principal Defender told Justice Sebutinde that the new defense team has access to approximately 80 percent of the Prosecution's disclosed materials. The Office of the Principal Defender is reviewing and cross-checking the materials and has yet to catalogue the remaining 20 percent of materials.

According to Griffiths, an investigator appointed in Liberia had discovered some 50,000 pages of materials that may contain original documentation that is relevant to the case. Although acknowledging that these materials fall outside the disclosure obligations of the Prosecution, Griffiths stated that the materials came from the personal archives of the accused and include items such as a personal letter from Jimmy Carter to the accused. Although Griffiths argued that "proper perusal of that material is a necessary pre-condition for [the defense] to be in a position to challenge the prosecution's case," the Prosecution questioned why these materials were not discovered sooner.

Defense Motion for Extension of Time to Respond to Expert Witnesses

The Special Court also granted a Defense motion for an extension of time to respond to two expert witness' testimony. The Defense sought additional time to examine and potentially challenge the prosecution's expert testimony under Rule 94bis(B) of the Special Court's Rules of Procedure and Evidence. Under this rule, an opposing party has 14 days within the filing of an expert witness statement to file a notice indicating whether it accepts the witness statement or wishes to cross-examine the witness.

Defense Arguments Against Prosecution's Use of Live Testimony

Griffiths revealed the defense team's interest in avoiding the use of live testimony and eliminating any "emotional baggage" the Prosecution intends to put before the Court. He questioned why the Prosecution would want traumatized women who had been raped and individuals who were mutilated to travel to The Hague when their evidence would be of little relevance to the trial. Griffiths argued that such crime-based testimony is irrelevant because the Defense concedes that atrocities occurred in Sierra Leone. According to Griffiths, the Prosecution is not arguing that Taylor was on the ground issuing commands in Sierra Leone; therefore, the relevant evidence is that of the linkage witnesses and not the crime-based witnesses. Hollis argued, however, that live testimony is "of course" relevant to detail the facts and circumstances surrounding the alleged crimes.

Defense Motion to Address UN Travel Bans

The defense team expressed concern over the UN-imposed travel bans on certain individuals connected to the accused. According to Griffiths, many individuals are afraid to testify for the Defense because they may be subject to such travel bans. Given the "climate of fear in Liberia," Griffiths argued that these travel bans may have a chilling effect on Taylor's ability to receive a fair trial. Griffiths urged the Special Court to rule on the Defense Motion to address this matter with the Security Council.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 21 August 2007

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

International Clips on Liberia

UN praises Indian women police officers deployed in Liberia

New York, Aug 19 (PTI) Indian women police officers - members of the first ever all female unit deployed by the UN - have come in for high praise from the world body's officials who commended their work in emergency situations as also in crime prevention in Liberia where they are posted. As a mark of the appreciation, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's Special Representative Alan Doss decorated the officers - who have also been praised for their unflinching support to the National Police in Liberia (NPL) - with the UN Peacekeeping Medals at an impressive ceremony in the Liberian capital, Monrovia.

International Clips on West Africa

VOA 21 August 2007

Sierra Leone Opposition Candidates to Ally Themselves Ahead of Runoff Election

By Kari Barber, Dakar

The top two opposition candidates in Sierra Leone's presidential election have said they will ally themselves to run against ruling party candidate Vice President Solomon Berewa in an anticipated runoff. The most recent results show that with more than 90 percent of votes counted, no candidate is near the 55 percent required to win in the first round. Kari Barber has more from VOA's West Africa bureau in Dakar.

Local Media – Newspaper

Taylor's Trial Adjourned Until January 2008

(New Democrat, The Analyst, Daily Observer and The Daily Guide)

- The war crimes trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor was on Monday rescheduled for 7 January next year. The adjournment followed pleas from Taylor's new defense team for more time.

Government Launches Poverty Reduction Strategy

(The News, Heritage, Daily Observer, New Democrat, The Analyst and The Inquirer)

- Liberia's President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf on Monday launched her Government's Poverty Reduction Strategy with a call on all Liberians to engage government constructively to ensure that measurable progress is made in reducing poverty across the country.
- The Poverty Reduction Strategy was a key part of the President's inaugural speech and is intended to help pave the way and accelerate progress in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Local Media – Radio Veritas *(News monitored today at 9:45 am)*

President Launches Poverty Reduction Strategy

(Also reported on Star and ELBC Radio)

Envoys Present Letters of Credence to President Sirleaf

- Presenting her letter of credence to President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf Canadian Ambassador Marie Isidore Masseh said that she admired the Liberian leader's desire to make Liberia a beacon of democracy promising that she would use Canadian companies to ensure that the Government succeeds. For his part, Israeli Ambassador Daniel Kadem extended an invitation to the Liberian leader to serve as guest speaker at a conference on the importance of women as leaders.
- An Executive Mansion statement said that President Sirleaf praised the Governments of Israel and Canada for their support in Liberia's development process and expressed her Government's commitment to further strengthen relations with both Canada and Israel.

(Also reported on Star and ELBC Radio)

Bong Citizens Unearth Weapons at Notorious Rebel Base

- Bong County Police Criminal Investigator Abraham Dolleh said that residents of Gbartala, a notorious rebel base used by former President Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia, in the County, discovered some weapons including LARs, RPGs, AK-47s and other light weapons during a clean-up exercise and turned them over to joint security forces.

(Also reported on Star and ELBC Radio)

Development Group Launches Research into Informal Businesses

- A programme to research into the contribution informal businesses have made to the enhancement of Liberia's private sector development was launched in Monrovia yesterday, stressing that it would focus on areas of health, education, job creation and food security.

(Also reported on Star and ELBC Radio)

Conservation Boss Says Liberia has Largest Forest in West Africa

- In an interview yesterday, the visiting Conservation International President Russell Mittermeier said that Liberia has the largest portion of forest reserves in the Guinean forest region of West Africa, being one of the 44 biodiversity hotspots currently in the world.
- However, he lamented that the Country's forest and its inhabitants are exposed to danger unless government protects them, by battling rapid deforestation and hunting of endangered species.

(Also reported on Star and ELBC Radio)

Sinkor Residents Fear Health Hazard from Dumpsite

- Correspondents said that residents of the Fiamah community have alarmed of a possible outbreak of disease in the community due to the health hazard posed by a dumpsite in the area. The residents called on the Monrovia City Corporation to ensure that the dumpsite is sprayed weekly to avoid disease outbreaks.

(Also reported on Star and ELBC Radio)

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