

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



Pathway between Medina and Cotton Tree on the Lungi Peninsula. Photo credit: Atiq Shaikh

PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

as at:

Thursday, 22 August 2013

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

Sierra Leoneans Reflect on SCSL ‘Seeds of Justice’ / <i>Concord Times</i>	Pages 3-4
Former Liberian Rebel Leader Admits Guinea Support in Civil War / <i>Concord Times</i>	Page 5
Taylor’s Verdict Due Next Month / <i>The Owl</i>	Page 6

International News

Taylor's Verdict Due Next Month / <i>The New Dawn</i>	Page 7
Former Liberian Rebel Leader Admits Guinea Support in Civil War / <i>Voice of America</i>	Page 8
Q & A With International Criminal Court Registrar Herman Von Hebel... / <i>Lubanga Trial Website</i>	Pages 9-11
EU Provides 3 mil. Euros to Khmer Rouge Tribunal in Cambodia / <i>Global Post</i>	Page 12

Concord Times
Thursday, 22 August 2013

Sierra Leoneans Reflect on SCSL 'Seeds of Justice'

FEATURE

This year in Freetown, a unique court will close its doors. The Special Court for Sierra Leone - a hybrid court established jointly by the United Nations and the government of Sierra Leone - is nearing the end of its mandate to prosecute the most responsible perpetrators of crimes during the country's civil war, in which tens of thousands of people were killed, raped, and mutilated, and hundreds of thousands were expelled from their homes.

On International Justice Day, July 17th, ICTJ looks at the legacy of the Special Court for Sierra Leone through the voices of those to whom its work was most important: the citizens of Sierra Leone.

Our new multimedia project, "Seeds of Justice: Sierra Leone," presents five portraits of Sierra Leoneans whose lives were impacted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

We wanted to know: What has the court done for their country? What will it leave behind once it closes its doors? How did the trials affect their lives?

This series of intimate, tender images from award-winning photographer Glenna Gordon helps to tell the stories of daily life in Sierra Leone after more than a decade since the end of the conflict.

In their own words, these individuals speak of the terrifying uncertainty in being forced to flee from home, the devastating heartache of personal loss, the pain of families torn apart by the chaos of war.

They are stories of personal triumph, and a testament to the slow and steady post-conflict recovery of communities of Sierra Leone - the opening of storefronts at dawn, weeding the gardens, or going to the polls - under all of which lies the confidence in the return of rule of law to their country.

These Sierra Leoneans have no illusions about the work still to be done, and each is actively working in their own way to improve the lives of their communities. But each is clear that the SCSL's contribution to accountability after the war has given them a sense of trust in the institutions, and has left them with a sense that in Sierra Leone, justice can be done.

The Voices of "Seeds of Justice"

Aminata Sesay is a businesswoman who owns Amsays Own Goods, a small provisions store located in one of the busiest squares of Freetown. "Without justice, no matter what developments might be going on now, there is no peace." □□□

Mohamad Bah was a student when war broke out in Sierra Leone. He was captured by the rebels and forced to fight with other child soldiers. Now, he is an advocate for others with disabilities. "We want Charles Taylor to remain in jail," he says. "If justice is done, I believe everything will be okay for us."

Claire Carlton Hanciles is the chief of

Credit: International Center for Transitional Justice (New York)



Former Liberian President, Charles Taylor is tried by the Special Court for war crimes committed during Sierra Leone's civil war

the defense office at the Special Court for Sierra Leone. During the war, she was forced to flee Sierra Leone. Today, she protects the due process rights of the accused. "I saw the rule of law turned upside down."

Princess AD Rogers works as a women's rights advocate in Kenema. "Women are still being violated, women are still being beaten, women are still being killed by their boyfriends or husbands, girls are still being raped, all because the doers of these crimes were left free."

Chief Kasanga II is a traditional chief in Makeni, the second biggest town in Sierra Leone. On a daily basis, he is asked for advice and guidance by his community. "Now we have the belief that no matter who you are, no matter the wealth you have, the court will be above you."

Looking at a Legacy of the Special Court for Sierra Leone

"Seeds of Justice: Sierra Leone" is part of an ICTJ project that has brought together Sierra Leoneans and the international community over the past year to reflect upon the work of the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL).

The project "Exploring the Legacy of the Special Court for Sierra Leone" asked the hard questions about the SCSL: How should we understand the impact of its accomplishments, the lessons from its struggles and shortcomings, and its role in larger efforts to promote accountability for serious crimes?

"To help preserve the history of the SCSL, we developed an interactive timeline charting the significant milestones in the eleven years of court's existence. In addition to hosting two major conferences, we produced a series of podcast interviews with experts on the Special Court, including Sierra Leone's Ambassador Allieu Ibrahim Kanu, United States Ambassador-at-Large for Global Criminal Justice Stephen J. Rapp, and international justice practitioner Alison Smith.

For the culmination of the project, we set out to consider the legacy of the court as seen through the eyes of survivors of the conflict in Sierra Leone: a women's rights activist, a lawyer, a traditional chief, a businesswoman, and an advocate for persons with disabilities who is

himself an amputee.

Creating the Special Court for Sierra Leone

After ten years of a brutal civil war, in which tens of thousands of people were killed, raped, and mutilated, and hundreds of thousands were expelled from their homes, the government of Sierra Leone in 2002 joined with the United Nations to create the SCSL, to try those most responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

On June 12th, 2000, Sierra Leone President Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah sent a letter to the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to ask for assistance to establish a credible court to prosecute perpetrators of crimes committed during the civil war.

The Special Court was designed to investigate and prosecute those who bore the greatest responsibility for "serious violations of international humanitarian law and Sierra Leonean law" committed in the territory of Sierra Leone after November 30, 1996.

Over the course of ten years, the SCSL - the first "hybrid" court to combine international and national staff - indicted 13 individuals, including former Liberian President Charles Taylor, the first sitting African head of state to be indicted for war crimes and crimes against humanity. In April 2012, its Trial Chamber found Taylor guilty on 11 charges of planning, aiding and abetting crimes committed by rebel forces in Sierra Leone - and sentenced him to 50 years in prison. His case is now under appeal.

The Special Court has brought a measure of justice for victims, and most Sierra Leoneans have a positive view of the court, according to surveys. Its trials have been an opportunity for citizens to learn the truth about what happened during the conflict, and its courtrooms have provided a legal forum for hundreds of victims to come forward and tell their stories.

Still, the court has been criticized for prosecuting a relatively small number of perpetrators and for failing to provide reparations to victims and their families, many of whom continue to suffer the terrible effects of the conflict.

"Many of us we are pleased when the verdict was passed at The Hague [against Charles Taylor]. But still much needs to be done to address the needs of persons who were amputated during the war," says Mohammed Bah.

On International Justice Day, ICTJ recognizes the contributions of the SCSL to Sierra Leone's own transition from conflict, and to the larger project of international justice as a whole.

Former Liberian Rebel Leader admits Guinea support in civil war



The former leader of one of the rebel groups in Liberia's 14-year civil war has said his movement received support from the government of neighboring Guinea. Sekou Damate Conneh's Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) was accused of committing massacres as it fought with Charles Taylor's former National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) rebels for control the capital, Monrovia. Conneh said Guinea supported him because Conakry and the sub-regional group Mano River Union believed cross-border attacks by Taylor's NPFL rebels made the region unstable. Conneh's comments came as Liberia observed a decade of peace since the 2003 signing of the Comprehensive Peace Accord that ended the country's civil war. "Since after the war, it's about a decade, and we are talking about lasting peace and we just want to tell

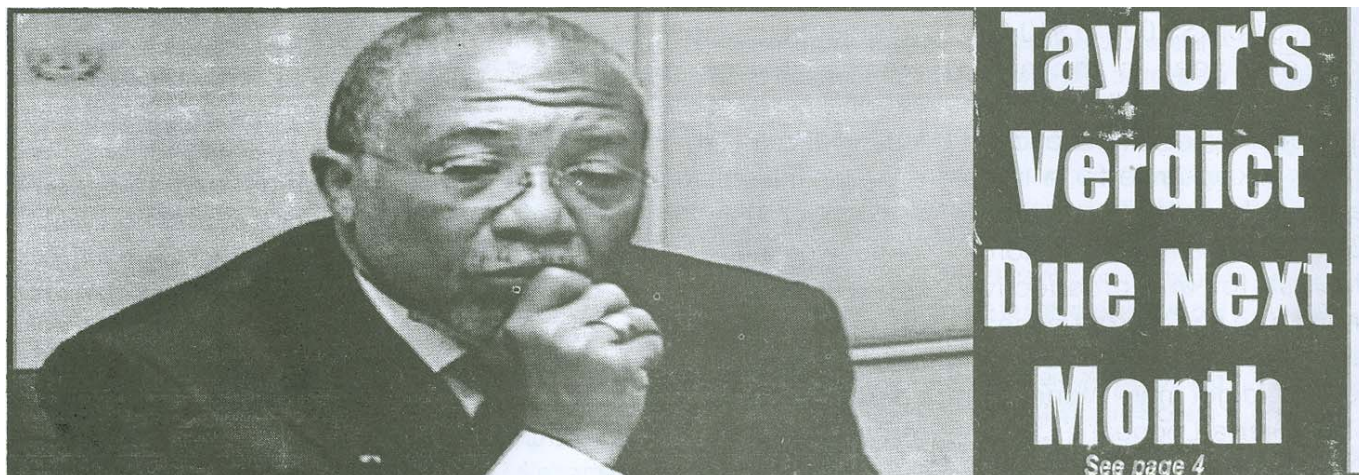
the world that we want no more into war, and we are happy that we are having peace in our country for a decade and there is no gun firing, and we promise that there is more gun going to be fired in Liberia," he said. Conneh said the Guinean government supported him because Conakry and the sub-regional group Mano River Union believed cross-border attacks by Taylor's NPFL rebels made the region unstable. "The Mano River countries were not safe with Charles Taylor. Freetown was not safe, Guinea was not safe. He carried out cross-border attacks, and this is why we were supported. We even drove the Charles Taylor rebels from Guinea, and that is where we got our support from," Conneh said. He said his LURD rebel group should be seen as liberators and not people who should be taken to the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity, as some Liberians have been advocating. "I personally did not commit any atrocities. I came to liberate the

Liberian people, and the whole world saw that. It was not for power, it was not for jobs, and our people are free at last. There were no atrocities committed that warrant my people to go to court," Conneh said. In its 2009 report, Liberia's Truth

and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), formed to look into the causes of the civil conflict, recommended that President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and 51 others be blocked from holding public office for 30 years for helping to form and finance warring factions.

The Owl

Wednesday, 21 August 2013



Taylor's Verdict Due Next Month

A verdict into the appeal filed by ex-President Charles Taylor against his 50-years prison term is due to be handed down by judges at the UN back Special Court for Sierra Leone next month (September 2013), this paper has learnt.

An aide to Taylor told this paper Monday that the actual date scheduled for the verdict next month will soon be confirmed. A source at the Special Court neither told this paper via telephone Monday that he could neither confirm nor deny the information but it was left with judges to make the pronouncement.

Final arguments by prosecutors and lawyers representing Taylor was done in mid-January this year before judges in the Appeals Chamber after days of submissions by both parties. Mr. Taylor had told judges of the Appeal Chambers that he was pleased with the proceedings after both prosecution and defense presented their final arguments.

"I'm very appreciative of the handling of the proceedings so far, and I have the belief that the right thing will be done by the grace of Almighty God," he told the Judges.

Taylor was found guilty on all 11 counts of the indictment, which includes planning of crimes,

and of aiding and abetting crimes, committed by rebel forces in Sierra Leone, on April 26 April 2012 by the Trial Chamber. On 30 May 2012, the Trial Chamber sentenced him to a prison term of 50 years.

During their argument before the five Appeal Judges and one Alternate Judge, lawyers representing Taylor presented 42 grounds of appeal, arguing that the Trial Chamber made systematic errors in the evaluation of evidence and in the application of law sufficiently serious to "reverse all findings of guilt entered against him" and to vacate the judgment.

Mr. Taylor's lawyers also questioned the fairness of the trial and the judicial process itself, and challenged the 50 year sentence imposed by the Chamber as being "manifestly unreasonable."

The Prosecution has also appealed the judgment on four grounds, arguing that Mr. Taylor should have been found guilty of other modes of liability, and that he should have received a significantly longer sentence.

A verdict into the Taylor's appeal will bring an end to a long standing trial full of drama and intrigue. It will also come at the time the court is nearing the completion of its mandate.

The New Dawn (Monrovia)

Tuesday, 20 August 2013

By Othello B. Garblah,

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Voice of America

Wednesday, 21 August 2013

Former Liberian Rebel Leader Admits Guinea Support in Civil War

James Butty

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Conneh's comments came as Liberia observed a decade of peace since the 2003 signing of the Comprehensive Peace Accord that ended the country's civil war.

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Lubanga Trial Website (The Hague)

Wednesday, 21 August 2013

By Taegin Stevenson,

Q & A With International Criminal Court Registrar Herman Von Hebel - Part I

Interview

Herman von Hebel is the newly-elected Registrar of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

He spoke with the Open Society Justice Initiative in June 2013 and answered questions about the work of the Registry and its role in providing administrative and judicial support to the ICC.

Could you describe how the registry helps to achieve the International Criminal Court's mandate to end impunity for mass atrocities and how your role as the Registrar helps carry out this mandate?

Registrar is a misleading title. I don't think it covers the job very well. If you compare it with national legal systems either where the registrar is a non-existing concept or where it is an existing concept, but it often describes the person sitting in the courtroom helping the judges, making summaries of proceedings, etc. My tasks are many-fold, but that is not one of them. It is more of a secretary-general kind of job within a ministry.

Another way of approaching the position [of Registrar] is to describe it in negative terms.

It is not the position of a judge in terms of deciding guilt or innocence over an accused; it is not the position of a prosecutor in terms of bringing cases against an accused before judges; it's not the position of counsel representing the accused or representing victims.

Anything else that needs to be done in order to have the court function well is likely a role of the Registry. It's primarily a behind the scenes service provider making sure everything runs smooth.

This covers a huge variety of issues: the detention of accused persons; security; administration; human resources; budget; and finances.

It [the Registry] is also for the protection of victims and witnesses and the support for victims and witnesses. It is the court management system making sure that parties get the material in time and can walk into the courtroom, can walk out of the courtroom, have their hearings organized, etc. It also includes the victim participation system the court has in place.

The reason it is such a particular job is because the ICC is a jurisdiction on its own. In a national legal system you have a police department, you have the justice department, you have the judiciary, you have the detention facilities, and these types of things.

Over here [at the ICC], everything is part of one organization, and anything that is not specifically a judges role, prosecutors role, or counselors role, is therefore the Registry's role.

You've only been on the job for a few months. In those months can you say what you think the biggest challenges are in your role?

Let me talk about it in terms of different levels: first, looking inward towards the organization, and then more outward. Inward, one of the most important things - it may not be a challenge because it has not proven to be so yet - is good cooperation among the President, the Prosecution, and the Registrar.

We are three different principles having different responsibilities, but there are times we have a need to speak with one voice. I think we have been able to start establishing very good relations.

I find it a great pleasure to work with the Prosecutor and Deputy Prosecutor and a great pleasure to work with the President and his staff.

I'm in contact with the judges on a regular basis. And although there will undoubtedly be moments when we have different interests, at the same time I think it is very important to take a common position on certain issues on the senior management level.

Within the Registry, I think that there are challenges in terms of communication and the internal culture of working. I think there is a need to strengthen the internal communication.

I think there is a need to get a better feeling about what we as a Registry are required to do and what we can do to make the overall functioning of the Registry successful, thereby, contributing to the overall function of the court itself.

At the moment, I think that every section looks primarily from their own perspective on what their job is. I want to create more of a culture of a Registry-overall feeling, rather than looking into all the various separate units. There are a lot of different silos or pillars, but there's not an overall structure in place.

I think this is necessary and important. I also think people [Registry staff] are craving for it. It will be a challenge to change this, but I also see a huge amount of potential. Of course, I cannot do it on my own. It will be a team building exercise.

I think there is also a need for going towards efficiency because I think in the past there was a focus on the different sections doing work on their own. I think there are issues of overlap in responsibility and duplication of work, so there is a possibility of harmonizing that more.

Outward looking, I strongly feel that the Prosecutor needs more resources in order to be able do her job. I've been making some calculations, and the Prosecutor has just over 60 investigators and is dealing with eight different situations. Basically, that leads to seven and a half investigators per situation.

That is grossly inadequate in order to effectively prepare a case. I think if we want to make sure that the Prosecutor is really able to prepare strong cases that withstand the scrutiny of the judges and the high standard that the court has to apply, then we need to address that situation.

I have been making a lot of noises about this so far and will continue to do so. The challenge comes in when amongst many members of the ASP [Assembly of States Parties] have huge financial constraints back home as well.

Simply asking for more money without at the same time showing that you have done your utmost in terms of improving efficiency is a no-go. I understand that, and I agree with that.

At the same time, I think that there is the need for additional resources for the prosecution and there is strong obligation for all organs [of the ICC], in particular the Registry as the biggest organ, to look carefully into our own activities and to really ensure we have the most efficiently functioning registry possible.

It's all about value for money. There's a huge amount of money going into the court; we may need to ask for more, but I think the states parties are only really willing to look into the discussion if at the same time we look for guarantees in other efficiency formulas.

You mention some of the challenges of communication and that the Registry has to interact with a number of actors including the Chambers, the Prosecution, the Defense as well as the ASP. How does the Registry do this while maintaining its neutrality?

The key word is neutral. I can only do my job, and everyone in Registry can only do their jobs, if we show that we are neutral. It is not simply a statement; it's a practice that we have to apply on a daily basis. I think so far, I have seen a very professional approach in this respect.

The VWU [Victims and Witnesses Unit] has to provide support and protection of witnesses regardless of whether they are from the prosecution side or the defense side. We have to be neutral in order to be respected.

There are also limitations on what we can and cannot do. Overall, being able to represent the court in a neutral way is the most effective.

For example, in the situation in Kenya there are a lot of political discussions about the Kenya cases. Obviously, judges are not in a position to deal with criticisms that are often in relation to their own decisions due to their impartiality. They have spoken through their decisions, and that is the right way of doing it.

The Prosecutor has limitations on what she can say also because she brings the case. This is probably where the Registrar can come in and assist with bringing out the messages through outreach by providing clear, simple, clear-cut factual information about our proceedings, the possibilities of our proceedings, the challenges in our proceedings, why things happen in a certain way, making comparisons with other cases in other courts and tribunals, and showing what is happening over here is absolutely nothing out of the ordinary with other proceedings in other courts and tribunals nationally and internationally.

This is just how justice works, and in this case, it is how international justice works.

There is room for us to strengthen our messaging possibilities. I am a great supporter of an effective press and outreach strategy. In my previous jobs as Registrar of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, one of the major achievements of the court was an incredibly effective and well developed system of outreach.

That is something we [the ICC] can do - not to the extent of the Special Court for Sierra Leone was able to do because they were based in the country focusing only one situation and located much closer to the victim communities - but we can do bits and pieces of that.

I think we can be doing more than what we have been doing so far. That is not about big budgets, it is about getting a proper strategy in place, effective implementation, and seeking partners as well.

Global Post

Wednesday, 21 August 2013

EU provides 3 mil. euros to Khmer Rouge tribunal in Cambodia

The European Union announced Wednesday it will provide 3 million euros (about \$4 million) in additional funding for a U.N-backed court established to try former top Khmer Rouge leaders for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

It said the funding for the international component of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, or ECCC, will go to support the payment of salaries in 2013 for international judges, prosecutors and legal support staff.

"This new contribution to the ECCC, the first to its international component, is a renewed proof of the commitment of the European Union to deliver justice for the Cambodian people. It is meant to complement the ongoing EU support to the national component of the ECCC budget for 2012-2013 worth 1.3 million euros," said Jean-Francois Cautain, the EU ambassador to Cambodia.

The European Union and its member states are among the largest international donors to the ECCC, having contributed more than \$43 million to date, corresponding to 24 percent of the total international contributions. Japan is the biggest donor, having provided almost half the total budget.

ECCC spokesman Neth Pheaktra told Kyodo News on Wednesday that the Cambodian component of the ECCC still has a shortfall of \$3 million for full operation from June until the end of this year.

He said some 250 Cambodian staff have not yet received their salaries for June and July.

On Monday, the Cambodian government and the United Nations jointly called on the international community to provide more funding to prevent further delays in the payment of salaries for the national staff.

Between 2006 and 2012, the ECCC spent \$175.3 million, though it has so far concluded only one case -- that of Kaing Guek Euv, alias Duch, who was chief of Tuol Sleng prison.

The court is now proceeding with the joint trial of Khieu Samphan, former head of state and Nuon Chea, former head of parliament.

Khmer Rouge are blamed for the deaths of at least 1.7 million Cambodians in late 1970s.