

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

Thursday, 22 June 2006

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

Thursday, 22 June 2006

32,000 pages of evidence against Taylor

By Betty Milton

The Special Assistant to the Prosecutor of the Special Court, Harpinder Athwal, has disclosed that the Prosecution has submitted 32,000 pages of evidence to support the indictment against Former President Charles Taylor.

The evidence has already been submitted to the Defence who will go through them to know what the Prosecution's case is.

The Special Assistant told the media yesterday that, "the initial appearance had been done here and other steps will continue with the trial preparation as if the trial was here so it won't make any difference that Charles Taylor is in The Hague."

She added that, "the next

step is now in the defence counsels' court room; they will have to go through the evidence; they should start reading it to see what our case is. Determine what their perspective is on it and work with us to settle date for the beginning of the trial."

Ms. Harpinder Athwal also revealed that they were anticipating that the trial of Charles Taylor would begin in January 2007 and, based on the different steps they would take, "there is going to be a few other Status Conferences, which will be held at The Hague over the next few months to ensure the rights of the accused are safeguarded and the trial is free and fair".

"That would be the priority of the Prosecution to ensure that whatever happens, wherever this trial is, it is a fair trial and all the rights of the accused are guaranteed," she said.

The Special Assistant also stated that the case would not be limited or affected in any way so the witnesses they would be calling would be the same witnesses they would call regardless of where the trial was, as the change in venue could not in anyway affect their case.

Talking about the logistics that had put in place for the trial, Peter Andersen who is the Acting Chief of Public Affairs, said since the Prosecution had mentioned that they were going to call all of the witnesses, the defence would also be going

to be accorded the same right, "as Charles Taylor has absolute right to a fair trial and absolute right to all of the witnesses, the evidence, the materials which will be used to prepare his case".

He disclosed that they

had a Witness and Victim Protection Section, which would be responsible for moving witnesses to The Hague. This, he said, was not something unprecedented as the other two tribunals for Rwanda and former Yugoslavia had been doing it.

The only thing they would need, he disclosed, was the money but said he was quite confident that they would have the finance as the international support for the Court "is there and when we are in need of finance they have always responded".

Awoko

Thursday, 22 June 2006

Taylor refuses to comment from The Hague

Speaking at a Status Conference yesterday at the Special Court in Freetown, Prosecutor Brenda Hollis stated that it might be the wish of Charles Taylor, who is currently in The Hague, not to speak to anyone.

During the Conference Mr. Taylor's lawyer, Karim Ahmed Khan, submitted to the Trial Chamber II that he had not been able to get in contact with his client after he was transferred to The Hague.

He added that when he called on the Court Management in The Hague to enquire about his client, he was told, "Mr. Taylor is not allowed to receive phone calls from anyone".

Lawyer Khan also informed the Chamber that the transfer was not done in accordance with certain rules of the Special Court and that immediately the decision of the President was made, his client was whisked to The Hague without the knowledge of his family and lawyer.

Rule 23 of the Special Court, he said, mandated that the President should consult with the judges in relation to any matters of the Court and after the decision of the President, no meeting was held in accordance with that rule.

The matter, he went on, had been pre-handled but all this was not the fault of the Trial Chamber.

The lawyer further stated that before his client could have been transferred to The Hague, they should have made enquiries

about his health and other detention facilities.

The lawyer also stated that through the help of some of his [Taylor] family members, Charles Taylor had been able to get his wife, sister and brother in Sierra Leone and they could not go to The Hague without visas and therefore he wanted the Court to give orders that the relatives of his client be given visas to travel to The Hague.

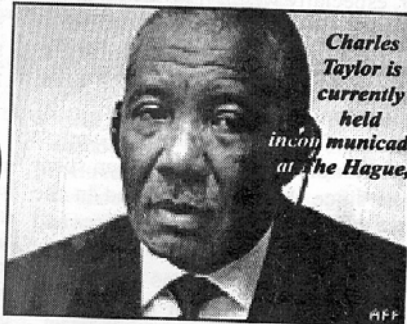
Lawyer Khan also informed the judges that until proper arrangements were made, he would not continue with the Status Conference and submitted that subsequent conferences should take place in The Hague.

In response, Prosecutor Brenda Hollis submitted that the issuance of visas to Mr. Taylor's relatives to The Hague "is not a fundamental right of the accused."

At The Hague...

Taylor not allowed phone calls

Story:
Sahr Musa
Yamba and
Tanu Jalloh



Charles Taylor is currently held incommunicado at The Hague,

Charles Taylor is currently held incommunicado at The Hague, Karim Khan, defense council for

the accused revealed at a Special Court status conference Wednesday.

Khan, while addressing the conference submitted his client was transferred to The Hague "precipitously."

The defense counsel complained that he was not even contacted by the Special Court when his client was taken away to The Hague. "I have not been officially contacted by the court whether my client arrived safely in The Hague. I have been asked by his family members but my response was I don't know,"

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Taylor not allowed phone calls

From page 1

Khan submitted. "I only saw my client arriving in The Hague when I tuned to CNN," he said. Khan revealed that he has not been able to get access to his client since his transfer to The Hague Tuesday. Taylor's defense council revealed he called The ICC in The Hague demanding to speak to his client but was refused. "I was told sorry, Taylor is not allowed to receive or make telephone calls," Khan said. He pleaded with the court to ensure that Taylor is allowed to make and receive telephone calls as he used to do while in detention in Freetown. "It cannot be right if the accused in Sierra Leone have such facilities while my client is deprived of that," Khan submitted adding, "the accused is currently presumed innocent." Khan asked the Trial Chamber 11, to ensure that family members of Charles Taylor are granted visas to see him. He emphasized that there are no Dutch Embassies in Sierra Leone or Guinea and the nearest is in Accra, Ghana.

Reacting to the submissions of Karim Khan, Prosecutor, Christopher Staker submitted it was proper for enquiries to be made why the defense counsel had no contacts with the accused since his transfer to The Hague.

Staker however challenged that issuing of visas to family members of the accused is not a fundamental right of the accused person.

Presiding Judge, Richard Lussick said the court would take decisions on the concerns raised later.

Meanwhile, Special Court Deputy Chief of Press and Public Affairs, Peter Andersen Wednesday confirmed during a press briefing at the offices of the Sierra Leone News Agency (SLENA) on Lightfoot Boston Street that former Liberian president, Charles Taylor's trial still remains under the Court's Rules.

"While the Taylor trial will take place in a courtroom of the International Criminal Court in The Hague, it will be a trial of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, as permitted under the Special Court's Rules," he says

adding that the headquarters of the Special court remain in Freetown, where three other trials are continuing. Taylor was Tuesday taken by a United Nations helicopter from the Special Court compound in the morning hours and flown to Lungi International Airport, where he was transferred under heavy UN security to a chattered jet and was subsequently flown out of the country.

Responding to questions from the press, Special Assistant to the Prosecutor, Harpinder Athwal explained United Kingdom's offer to host Taylor if convicted; "the offer of the Dutch government to allow Taylor's trial to take place in The Hague is conditional upon a third country agreeing to host Taylor if he is convicted. The UK has agreed to allow Taylor to serve a prison sentence there should he be convicted by the Special Court," she averred maintaining that the offer is without prejudice to the eventual outcome of the trial, which has not yet been decided.

Exclusive

Thursday, 22 June 2006

As Taylor's Trial Starts January 2007...

Johnny Paul's Capture Planned

By Joseph Turay
Harpinder Athwal, the
Special Assistant to the

Prosecutor of the Special
Court Mr. Love Monlo, yes-
terday said in Freetown that

the court is still searching
for the former AFRC junta
leader; Johnny Paul

Koroma, to answer to war
crime charges brought
against him by the prosecu-

tion of the court.

"We have not given up on

Contd. page 2

Johnny Paul's Capture Planned

From front page

Johnny Paul, we'll not terminate his indictment," Arthwal said while responding to questions put to her by journalists at the Sierra Leone News Agency's office (SLENA), Wallace Johnson Street during a press briefing organized by the court.

She explained that the court cannot confirm whether Paul Koroma is dead, but that the court

was still investigating the whereabouts of the fugitive leader, who she says, will be arrested and tried when ever he shows up.

Althwal further disclosed that if the former leader fails to show up to answer to the charges, until the court completes it mandate in Sierra Leone, his indictment, "still sands" as the court would still take up the matter whenever the former

AFRC leader is arrested. She also disclosed that the court is, "anticipating" that trial for the former Liberian President Charles Taylor, will commence in the Hague, in January 2008. She noted that the prosecuting is presently carrying out its investigations on Taylor both in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The prosecution she disclosed has put in place, 32,000 pages of evidence in preparation for Taylor's prosecution.

Exclusive

Thursday, 22 June 2006

Britain Ready for Taylor If...

The British Foreign Secretary, Margaret Beckett has today welcomed the arrival in

the Netherlands of former Liberian President Charles Taylor, who will face trial

before the Special Court for Sierra Leone sitting in The Hague.

Mrs. Beckett said today:

"I was pleased to learn of the transfer of Charles Tay-

lor from Freetown to The Hague. A real threat to

peace and security in Sierra Leone and the wider region

Contd. page 2

Britain Ready for Taylor If...

From front page

has been removed.

By agreeing that, subject to Parliament passing the necessary legislation, we would allow Taylor to serve his sentence here if convicted, the UK played a key role in helping the transfer proceed.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone, and the Governments of Sierra Leone and Liberia, asked for Taylor's trial to be transferred to The Hague because of security concerns about his continued presence in

Freetown. The UN Security Council agreed and its unanimous adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1688 demonstrates the international community's commitment to see Taylor face justice.

Taylor will still be tried by the Special Court for Sierra Leone, but sitting in The Hague. I know the Special Court and its supporters are committed to ensuring that the people of Sierra Leone and Liberia are kept fully informed of the progress of the trial. It is,

after all, against them that Taylor is alleged to have committed the serious crimes with which he is charged.

I pay tribute to the ongoing contribution of the Netherlands to the cause of international justice, and welcome the International Criminal Court's willingness to make its facilities available to the Special Court for Sierra Leone. It is now for the Special Court to determine the truth regarding Taylor's alleged involvement in the horrors of Sierra Leone's civil war."

Independent Observer
Thursday, 22 June 2006

Charles Taylor Flown Out To Holland

Charles Taylor spent last night in his new cell in the The Hague, Netherlands were he was transferred yesterday in accordance with an order on Monday by Special Court Presi-

dent Justice George Gelaga-King. A press statement from the Special Court last evening and posted on the internet says Mr. Taylor was taken by UN helicopter from the Special Court

compound shortly after 9.00 a.m yesterday morning and flown to Lungi International Airport, where he was transferred under heavy UN security to a chartered commercial jet. He departed from Si-


erra Leone at 9.40 a.m local time.

Also on the flight were the Special Court's Registrar, Mr. Lovemore Munlo SC, the Chief of Security, and the Court's Medical Officer.

The Court will this morning hold a press conference on the transfer of Mr. Taylor. While the Taylor trial will take place in a courtroom of the International Criminal Court, it will be a trial of the Special Court for

Sierra Leone, as permitted under the Special Court's rule. The headquarters of the Special Court remains in Freetown, where three other trials are continuing.

Independent Observer
Thursday, 22 June 2006



BELMARSH PRISON

This is where Charles Taylor will serve his jail term if convicted

The prison where Charles Taylor is to serve his imprisonment if convicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone expected to hold his trial in The Hague, is being identified. Belmarsh Prison in South East London is a high security maximum jail and Taylor would be one of the

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BELMARSH PRISON

Anan who had to persuade the British Government to agree for Taylor to serve his prison sentence in the UK if found guilty by the court for war crimes.

Based on this agreement, the government of The Netherlands gave approval for him to be tried there following a UN Security Council resolution last week.

From front page

most high profile foreign leaders to be held in a British jail since Hitler's deputy Rudolf Hess was incarcerated before his transfer to Spandau Prison in

West Berlin. British Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett said last week, Parliament would have to pass a bill in the next session to clear the way for imprisonment of Mr. Taylor in Britain because existing

laws cover only the UN war crimes tribunal for Rwanda (UNCTR), and the Sierra Leone Special Court does not fall under that jurisdiction as it is a hybrid court. It was UN Secretary-General Kofi

Salone Times
Thursday, 22 June 2006

Taylor's Hague Trial A Big Loss To Salone

COMMENTARY by Christian Keili

The transfer of ex- Liberian President Charles Taylor to The Hague for trial is being hailed by Special Court and UN officials as a victory in the fight against impunity in West Africa and indeed the world a large. But most Sierra Leoneans, in a sense, have been robbed of the opportunity of celebrating that victory.

SEE PAGE 2

COMMENTARY

They would have loved to see Mr. Taylor being docked here, where his terror gangs wreaked untold havoc for a decade or so. The spectacle of seeing the former warlord in flesh, trying to defend his actions would have pleased them mightily.

Alas, those who rule the world have decreed that it should not be so. Sierra Leone, yea, the sub region is not secure enough, the Americans, the British and other powerful nations say. Liberia's Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, a friend of the West if ever there was one, agrees with them, citing a possible backlash by Taylor supporters should the trial be held in her backyard. And so it is that Mr. Taylor is now going to be docked in a country thousands of miles away that few Sierra Leoneans or Liberians had ever heard of.

But by preferring that the trial take place in The Hague rather than the Special Court court room in Sierra Leone, the great powers whose efforts were so crucial in restoring peace to this country and the sub region are signalling their lack of confidence in the post-war security arrangements they themselves have helped set up and into which millions of dollars have been invested. They are saying that the IMATT-trained Salone army, the British-trained and equipped police force are no good when faced with real security challenges.

What all this proves is that, ultimately, Sierra Leone must rely on outside powers to guarantee its own security, and that the peace that we now enjoy is a fragile one despite all the talk about Sierra Leone's being one of the most successful UN peace-keeping operations ever.

Given this apparently brutal fact, the government of Sierra Leone has been notably silent on the debate over where to try Mr. Taylor. Since the former president was

whisked from Nigeria to the Special Court prison here in Freetown, the government has not even bothered to issue a statement as to what its position is on the issue of where to try him. It is almost hard to believe that the Special Court is a joint enterprise involving the government and the UN. In this matter of trying the warlords in Sierra Leone's conflict, the government of Sierra Leone is clearly a silent and largely ineffective partner.

But the question may be asked: does it have a choice? Is there any way it could have prevailed on the so-called international community to hold Mr. Taylor's trial in Sierra Leone? Could it not, for instance, have called instead for help with more effective security arrangements for Mr. Taylor's trial? By keeping mute over this whole affair, it seems to be giving credence to the view that the country is not at all secure. And for a country in desperate need of foreign investment, that's a big minus.

But the government and people of Sierra Leone are not the only losers in this decision to try Taylor in The Hague. The Special Court itself stood to gain a lot of public relations mileage if it had been held in Freetown. Before Mr. Taylor's arrest, interest in the work of the court among Sierra Leoneans had considerably waned, with all the indictees in the court's custody considered either small fry in the hierarchies of the fighting forces or- in the case of Hinga Norman and his fellow CDF accused- as heroes of national resistance. The court needed a real "kakatoa" (to use former prosecutor, David Crane's words) or kingpin to revive interest in its work. Mr. Taylor was supposed to be that "kakatoa."

And now, the anti-climax of him not being tried here at all. Of course, we will be watching the trial in The Hague here on TV or video, but it's never going to have the same feel. The trial has been effectively "Europeanised."

Standard Times
Thursday, 22 June 2006

Sierra Leone 'Dear President Obasanjo... We Have all Being Duped'

The former interim leader of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and now an alleged war criminal standing trial at the UN Special Court for Sierra Leone, wrote from his prison cell on 15 September 2004 (a copy of which New African has recently obtained), appealing to the Nigerian president, Olusegun Obasanjo, who, according to Issa, convinced him to take up the leadership of the RUF, not to leave him in the lurch in his hour of need.

The letter reads

"Your Excellency told me that you personally wanted me to lead the RUF in order to assist you and the other ECOWAS leaders to disarm the combatants of the RUF so that peace could be achieved in Sierra Leone... Now we have all been duped, and I am being blamed for believing and trusting your Excellency and relying on your assurances without guarantees".

It is with pain and regret that I summed up courage to write your Excellency this letter after a series of attempts without any positive response from you. I still consider myself the grandchild that you assured me I was to you when you personally asked me to accept the leadership of the RUF (Revolutionary United Front) at a time when a leader was being sought by your Excellency and your colleagues, including your colleague and brother, Alhaji Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, president of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

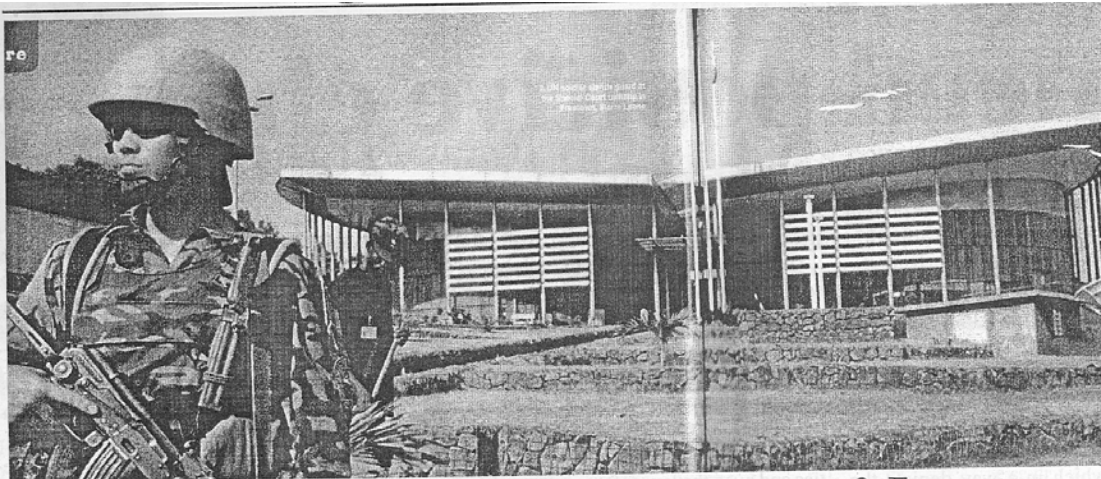
As I told your Excellency, at the time I was only a child and I was not fighting for leadership of the RUF. I remember telling you and your colleagues that I did not want the position of leadership of the RUF as the leader was alive even though he might be in jail, as indeed the late Pa Foday Sankoh was then in jail at the Pademba Road Prison.

But your Excellency told me that you personally wanted me to lead the RUF in order to assist you and the other ECOWAS leaders to disarm the combatants of the RUF so that peace could be achieved in Sierra Leone. Your Excellency assured me that if I succeeded in convincing my colleagues and the combatants to disarm without putting you to shame, I would ever remain your grandchild, and that I would always be treated as such, and you would never leave me to suffer.

"I am being tormented by my colleagues and the rank and file of the RUF that I had betrayed the organization by convincing them to disarm, relying upon your Excellency's assurances without guarantees."

From our meeting in Sefadu, Kono, to the date of the signing of the "Document" by the president of Sierra Leone and myself was clearing the end of war in Sierra Leone (18 January 2002), your Excellency of yours.

But I am sure your Excellency is aware that after the disarmament was completed, the RUF transformed itself into RUF (RUF Party), contested the general elections in 2002 and lost.



Sierra Leone 'Dear President Obasanjo...we have all been duped'

Then early in 2003, I and some members of the RUF were arrested and charged with alleged war crimes. We are currently being tried and could be imprisoned for life. Now I am being tormented by my colleagues and the rank and file of the RUF that I had betrayed the organization convincing them to disarm, replying upon your Excellency's assurances without guarantees. The arrest and prosecution of the RUF members is seen by us as a game of political elimination of the organization by President Kabbah,

believing and trusting your Excellency, but who knows tomorrow? You and your colleague Ecomas presidents are older and more powerful, and may have decided to support your colleague Alhaji Tejan Kabbah who has now gone back on the promises he made to me before your Excellencies.

He also signed undertakings before honorable people like yourself and other guarantors in Lomé which he has abandoned by establishing the Special Court against the expressed terms of the Lomé Agreement (singled

The Agreement went further in Article IX (3) to categorically state that no official or judicial action would be taken against any member of the RUF/SL, ex-AFRC, ex-SLA or CDF, for anything done by them from March 1991 to the time of the signing of the Agreement.

I am sure, Grandpa that you as the president of your people cannot go back on your own free and absolute pardon granted unconditionally to your people in exchange for reconciliation and

ing in perpetual fear throughout Sierra Leone, so that I can at least have peace of mind for the safety of my parents and my young family.

Please Grandpa, kindly intervene to save our country from degenerating into another problem as all the signatories were in favour of lasting peace based on the condition of no winner, no loser reconciliation, so that all Sierra Leoneans could reconcile and freely go about their legitimate business without fear of prosecution and persecution.

I would also like to humbly bring to your Excellency's attention and the attention of all Ecomas leaders that the charges against me, and for that matter the entire RUF, are categorically political and not war crimes under the Geneva Convention and its Added Protocols I & II as President Kabbah would want you to believe.

May I finally respectfully draw your Excellency's attention to Article IX (2) & (3) (pardon and amnesty) of the Lomé Agreement between the government of Sierra Leone and the RUF dated 7 July 1999, which your Excellency was one of the 12 signatories representing nations and organizations that were chosen under Article xxxIV as moral guarantors to see that the Lomé

Agreement was implemented with integrity and in good faith by both parties.

Maybe my previous communication never reached your Excellency. So I have decided to make another attempt, which I hope may reach you this time. I am looking forward to hearing favourably from your Excellency at your earliest convenience.

Faithfully,
Your Grandchild
Issa Hassan Sesay
Interim Leader (RUF/SL)

I would also like to humbly bring to your Excellency's attention and the attention of all Ecomas leaders that the charges against me, and for that matter the entire RUF, are categorically political and not war crimes under the Geneva Convention

aided by the secretary general of the United Nations.

Your Excellency, I find myself entrapped, dumped and woefully let down. My parents and my young family are all now living in danger and fear with thousands of ex-combatants at home and abroad, being of the opinion that I have betrayed them.

Your Excellency, as a young man, I did everything in order not to let you down in your efforts to have the combatants disarmed; which efforts were fruitless with Pa Foday Sankoh.

I do not deserve being humiliated and treated the way I and others are now being treated for convincing the RUF to disarm. Your Excellency, we are only three at present on trial and may be jailed for life by judges specially selected and appointed by President Kabbah and Mr. Kofi Annan, in violation of the constitution of the sovereign state of Sierra Leone, with many thousands of RUF members at large, mostly young, unemployed and frustrated-suffering from some of the same ills for which the war was fought.

We have all been duped, so it now

not by me) but I am now being held responsible because you, my Grandpa, whom I believed and trusted, convinced me to take up the leadership of the RUF which I never opted for nor contested.

Rather, it was your Excellency who virtually threw the leadership at me and pleaded with me as your grandchild to assist you in getting the RUF to disarm. I am sure that by succeeding in convincing the RUF to disarm, I did not disappoint you.

Now, I wonder why your Excellency seems to have abandoned me and become disturbingly quite in respect of the RUF and myself, over the issue of the Special Court, especially as the Sierra Leone problem was concluded in favour of reconciliation (Lomé Agreement) and not prosecution.

Your colleague and brother president of Sierra Leone decided to abrogate the Lomé Agreement dated 7 July 1999, containing Article IX, Section (2) & (3) which granted absolute and free pardon and reprieve to all combatants and

peace. South Africa did not arrest and prosecute. Why should Sierra Leone? It was your Excellency and your Ecomas colleagues who guaranteed and assured me and the RUF of our safety and continued protection against the fears and doubts that we expressed about the insincerity of President Kabbah.

I could remember even as a child that your Excellency and President Charles Taylor of Liberia were at one state vexed with us and both of you angrily told us that presidents and heads of state of respectable nations do not withdraw their undertakings once stated and witnessed. Your Excellency has now seen that your colleague, President Kabbah, has gone back on his words and done exactly what you assured me and my colleagues that he would not do.

I wish, on behalf of my colleagues and the entire RUF organization, to appeal to your Excellency to please do something at your earlier convenience for the members of the entire RUF organization who are now virtually liv-

Spectator

Thursday, 22 June 2006

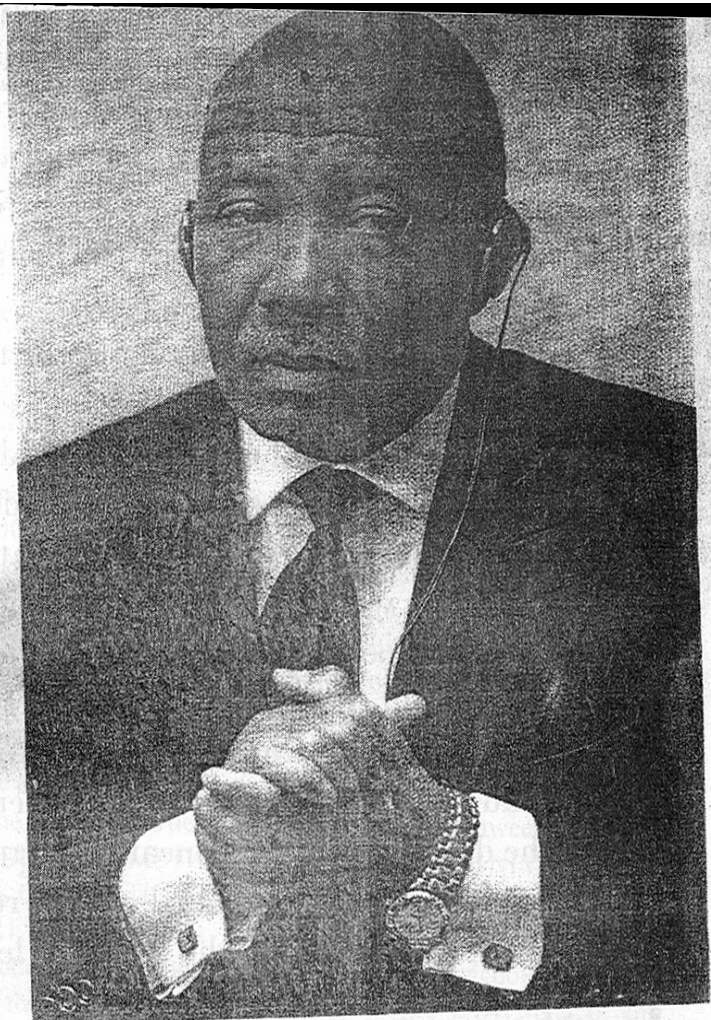
Taylor's Trial might start in January 2007

By Alex T. Paila

The Chief of Public Affairs and Spokesman Peter Anderson of the Special Court for Sierra Leone and the Special Assistant to the Prosecutor Harpinder Athwal have briefed journalists about Charles Taylor's transfer to The Hague and his trial. According to the officials of the Special Court, Taylor's trial is anticipated to

commence in The Hague in January 2007. External forces, they informed journalists, would not influence Charles Taylor's trial. "The court is willing to take to The Hague all witnesses who are willing to testify. We are very concerned to get Sierra Leonean journalists and representatives of human rights organisations to travel to The Hague for the proceedings. Discussions are

Continued page 2



Charles Taylor: Sierra Leone will never forget you

Taylor's Trial might start in January 2007

from front page

ongoing and we hope to make a breakthrough. Charles Taylor, the former President of Liberia, was on Tuesday 20th June, 2006 transferred to The Hague in accordance with an Order on Monday by Special Court President Justice George Gelaga- King. Mr. Taylor was taken by UN helicopter from the Special Court compound shortly after 9:00am that morning and flown to Lungi International Airport, where he was transferred under heavy UN security to a chartered commercial jet. He departed from Sierra Leone at 9:40 a.m local time. Also on the flight were the Special Court's Registrar, Mr. Lovemore Munlo SC, the Chief of Security and the Court's Medical Officer. While Taylor's trial will take

place in a courtroom of the International Criminal Court, it will be a trial of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, as permitted under the Special Court's rules. The headquarters of the Special Court remains in Freetown, where three other trials are presently going on," they read the press statement on the case. It could be recalled that the Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone at that time, David Crane indicted Charles Taylor on 7th March 2003 on 17 counts of crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious crimes. Taylor's indictment was amended to eleven counts. The crimes Taylor is accused of include unlawful killings, mutilations, sexual violence, the use of child soldiers, abduction, forced labour and looting.

Spectator

Thursday, 22 June 2006

Goodbye Charles Taylor – Special Feature

Sierra Leoneans alive and those yet unborn will never forget the household name in the West African sub region, Charles G. Taylor. According to the views of most Sierra Leoneans he is the monster in West Africa, Africa and the world at large.

Taylor allegedly committed crimes in the United States of America. The United States which is regarded as the most sophisticated nation on planet Earth could not apprehend Charles Taylor after he mysteriously escaped from prison in the U.S. He later surfaced in the Liberian territories with a well-planned and executed rebel war. Due to his thirst for power, he overthrew the Samuel Doe regime and mounted the throne of the President of Liberia. During his years of rebel war, his troops were accused of unleashing mayhem on the people of Liberia. As a result of the bloody rebel war in Liberia, properties worth millions of dollars destroyed and human lives were lost. As President of Liberia, Taylor stifled the freedom of the press and silenced political opponents who challenged him during the race for the presidency of Liberia. Moreover, many Liberians were displaced by the war. As President of Liberia, Taylor thought he was all powerful and could not face justice. The people of Sierra Leone will remember Charles Taylor for his public pronouncement that Sierra Leone would face the bitterness of war. During his reign as the President, news of his indictment was published by the Special Court for Sierra Leone. The Special Court for Sierra Leone was established jointly by the United Nations and the government of Sierra Leone for those who bear the greatest responsibility for atrocities committed after 30 November 1996. A fact sheet from the Special Court for Sierra Leone titled: 'The Trial of Charles Taylor gives details about the pending trial.

When and on what charges was Charles Taylor Indicted?

The Prosecutor of the Special Court at that time, David Crane indicted Charles Taylor on 7th March 2003 on 17 counts of crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious violations of international humanitarian law. His indictment was amended to eleven counts on 16 March 2006. They are related to Charles Taylor's alleged backing of the rebel group (Revolutionary United Front) during the war in Sierra Leone. The crimes that Charles is accused of include unlawful killings, mutilations,

sexual violence, the use of child soldiers, abductions, forced labour and looting.

Does the Special Court accuse the Liberian People for having waged war against Sierra Leone?

No. It is Charles Taylor as an individual who is accused of crimes before the Special Court. The Liberian people cannot be held accountable for his alleged role in the war in Sierra Leone.

Why did it take so long to arrest Charles Taylor?

Since 2003, Charles Taylor has been in exile in Calabar, Nigeria, under an agreement brokered to end the war in Liberia. It was only when the new President-elect of Liberia, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, requested his transfer to Liberia that Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo agreed to his surrender on 23 March 2006. Charles Taylor was transferred from Nigeria to Liberia on 29 March 2006. Soldiers from the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) then transferred him to Sierra Leone, where he was placed in the custody of the Special Court.

What happened since Charles Taylor was arrested and transferred to the Special Court?

Charles Taylor had his initial appearance before a Judge of the Special Court on 3 April 2006 in Freetown, Sierra Leone. He read Taylor's indictment and asked him to plead 'guilty' or 'not guilty' of the charges made against him. Charles Taylor pleaded 'not guilty' to all eleven counts. Justice Richard Lussick made sure that the rights of the accused, such as the assistance of legal counsel, were respected. Before the actual trial will start, adequate time will be given to Charles Taylor and his counsel to prepare his defence.

How will the trial of Charles Taylor proceed?

On 30 March 2006, the President of the Special Court, Justice Raja N. Fernando, made a request to the government of the Netherlands and the President of the ICC to allow the trial of Charles Taylor to take place in the premises of the ICC in The Hague. The request referred to concerns raised to the Special Court about the stability in the region if the trial was to take place in

Freetown. Whether the trial of Charles Taylor will indeed be held in The Hague depends on the answers from the Dutch government, the ICC, and the international community. (UN Security Council).

How can the Special Court hold a trial outside of Freetown?

Under Rule 4 of the Special Court's rules of procedure and evidence, the President of the Special Court can authorize a trial chamber to conduct a trial away from the seat of the court in Freetown.

Would a trial in The Hague mean that Charles Taylor was tried by the ICC?

No. Even if the trial of Charles Taylor was to take place in The Hague, it would still be Trial Chamber of the Special Court, sitting in The Hague, trying him, the ICC cannot prosecute crimes committed before 1 July 2002. The Special Court would only sit outside of Freetown and use the ICC premises. The rest of the proceedings will be conducted under the rules and regulations of the Special Court.

What is meant by the UK's offer to host Taylor if he is convicted?

The offer of the Dutch government to allow Taylor's trial to take place in The Hague is conditional upon a third country agreeing to host Taylor if he is convicted. The United Kingdom has agreed to allow Taylor to serve a prison sentence in the UK, should he be convicted by the Special Court. The UK offer is without prejudice to the eventual outcome of the trial, which has not yet been decided. The court will make any offer to ensure that Taylor receive a free and fair trial in The Hague.

Charles Taylor's transfer to The Hague

Charles Taylor, the former President of Liberia, was transferred to The Hague on Tuesday 20 June 2006 in accordance with an Order on Monday by Special Court President Justice George Gelaga-King.

Mr. Taylor was taken by UN helicopter from the Special Court compound shortly after 9:00am and flown to Lungi International Airport, where he was transferred

under heavy UN security to a chartered commercial jet. He departed from Sierra Leone at 9:40 a.m local time. Also on the flight were the Special Court's Registrar, Mr. Lovemore Munlo SC, the Chief of Security and the Court Medical Officer.

While the Taylor trial will take place in a courtroom of the International Criminal Court, it will be a trial of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, as permitted under the Special Court's rules. The headquarters of the Special Court remains in Freetown, where three other trials are continuing.

The very moment the people of Sierra Leone got wind of the news that Charles Taylor had been brought to a cell in the Special Court, the news was greeted with mixed feelings. Many took a retrospective view of the effects of war in Sierra Leone and the untold suffering they encountered. On other hand, some Sierra Leoneans believe that Charles Taylor committed the crimes he is being tried for in Sierra Leone and should be tried in this country. Another segment of the population in Sierra Leone expressed grave concerns over Taylor's trial in Sierra Leone. They actually took into consideration our present security situation in the country. A good number of people are quite relieved now that Taylor has been flown to The Hague for trial.

Thanks to the British Government

During colonial period, Britain was our colonial master. At the dawn of slavery, they continued to stretch a helping hand to Sierra Leone. Sierra Leoneans in general were taken aback by the news when the British government announced that they would provide a prison for Taylor if he was convicted. The provision of a prison for Taylor was another condition for him to be transferred to The Hague for trial. In this regard, we thank the British Prime Minister Tony Blair, the people and government of Great Britain for their kind gesture towards Sierra Leone. To sum up, Shakespeare once said the evil that men do lives after them, and so let it be with Charles Taylor. No one man can fight the world. Taylor a former Warlord, guerrilla fighter and Liberia President is not taller than justice. As long as the United Nations continues to exist, there will be no impunity for those who commit crimes against humanity. Farewell Charles G. Taylor. You said you would be back, but we don't know whether that is possible this time round.

New Vision
Thursday, 22 June 2006

Taylor's Trial In The Hague Fumed At

The Chairman of the Coalition of Civil Society and Human Rights Activities (CCHRA) Mr. Charles Mambu on Wednesday said that the Civil Society Movement will not accept the outcome of Charles Taylor's trial in the Hague if they are not involved or present

at the Court.

Responding to questions from journalists about his opinion on the transfer of the former Liberia President to the Hague, Netherlands for trials, Mr. Mambu said considering the heinous crimes for which he was indicted by the Special

Court for Sierra Leone, and his criminal connections both within and outside Africa, it is necessary for Civil Society representatives and witnesses to be there to witness the trials.

Mr. Mambu said they are going to officially inform the out reach

Contd. Page 5

Taylor's Trial In The Hague Fumed At

section of the Special Court for action on the issue.

The Chairman accused Taylor for being involved in the instability in the entire West African Sub-region, pointing out how children suffered brutality as a result of the conflict alleged to be backed by the former war-lord.

The CCHRA chairman maintained that

as human rights defenders, they want to see justice done in the trials.

Before his transfer, Taylor was standing trial on 11 count charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity at the Special Court in Sierra Leone. His transfer however came amidst fears of security threat to the country. If convicted, he will be jailed in the UK.

New Vision
Thursday, 22 June 2006

THE TRIAL OF CHARLES TAYLOR

1. When and on what charges was Charles Taylor indicted?

The prosecutor of the Special Court indicted Charles Taylor on 7 March 2003 on 17 counts of crimes against humanity, war crimes and other series violations of International Humanitarian Law. His indictment was amended to 11 counts on 16 March 2006. They are related to Charles Taylor's alleged backing of the rebel group RUF (Revolutionary United Front) during the war in Sierra Leone. The crimes that Charles Taylor is accused of include unlawful killings, sexual violence, the use of child soldiers, abductions, forced labour, and looting.



2. Does the Special Court accuse the Liberian people for having waged war against Sierra Leone?

No. It is Charles Taylor as an individual who is accused of crimes before the Special Court. The Liberian people cannot be held accountable for his alleged role in the war in Sierra Leone.

3. Why did it take so long to arrest Charles Taylor?

Since 2003, Charles Taylor has been in exile in Calabar, Nigeria, under an agreement brokered to end the war in Liberia. It was only when the new President-elect of Liberia, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, requested his transfer from Nigeria to Liberia on 29 March, 2006.

Soldiers from the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) then transferred him to Sierra Leone, where he was placed in the custody of the Special Court.

4. What happened since Charles Taylor was arrested and transferred to the Special Court?

Charles Taylor had his initial appearance before a judge of the Special Court on 3 April 2006 in Freetown, Sierra Leone. He was read his indictment and asked to plead 'guilty' or 'not guilty' of the charges made against him. Charles Taylor pleaded 'not guilty' to all eleven counts. Justice Richard Lussick made sure that the rights of the accused, such as the assistance of legal counsel, were respected. Before the actual trial will start, adequate time be given to Charles Taylor and his counsel to prepare his defence.

5. How will the trial of Charles Taylor proceed?

On 30 March 2006, the President of the Special Court, Justice Raja N. Fernando, made a request to the Government of the Netherlands and the President of the ICC to allow the trial of Charles Taylor to take place in the premises of the ICC in The Hague. The request referred to concerns raised to the Special Court about the stability in the region if the trial was to take place in Freetown.

Whether the trial of Charles Taylor will indeed be held in The Hague depends on the answers from the Dutch Government, the ICC, and the International Community (UN Security Council),

6. How can the Special Court hold a trial outside of Freetown?

Under Rule 4 of the Special Court's Rules of Procedure and Evidence, the President of the Special Court can authorize a Trial Chamber to conduct a trial away from the seat of the Court in Freetown.

7. Would a trial in The Hague mean that Charles Taylor was tried by the ICC?

No. Even if the trial of Charles Taylor was to take place in The Hague, it would still be Trial Chamber of the Special Court, sitting in The Hague, trying him; the ICC cannot prosecute crimes committed before 1 July 2002. The Special Court would only sit outside of Freetown and use the ICC's premises. The rest of the proceedings will be conducted under the rules and regulations of the Special Court.

8. What is meant by the UK's offer to host Taylor if he is convicted?

The offer of the Dutch Government to allow Taylor's trials to take place in The Hague is conditional upon a third country agreeing to host Taylor if he is convicted. The United Kingdom has agreed to allow Taylor to serve a prison sentence in the UK, should he be convicted by the Special Court. The UK offer is without prejudice to the eventual outcome of the trial, which has not yet been decided.

The Court will make every effort to ensure that Taylor receives a free and fair trial in The Hague.

Concord Times

Wednesday, 21 June 2006

Government Welcomes Taylor's Transfer to the Hague

By Ibrahim Seibure
Freetown

Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Prof. Septimus Kaikai Tuesday echoed that the transfer of the trial of former Liberia President Charles Taylor is a welcome initiative that is in the interest of the West African sub-region.

"We believe that the decision was made in the interest of the sub-region," Kaikai states and adds that this was an administrative decision by the Special Court and the United Nations to effect the change of venue for the trial. Prof. Kaikai pointed out that the citizens of this sub-region believe there is wisdom in that decision.

When asked whether Taylor was transferred because of security reasons, Kaikai replied, "We have to look at the overall good and the public good." The Professor assured the people of the sub-region that with the availability of technology now, the trials would be made available on radio, TV, Internet etc.

Peter Andersen, Deputy Chief of Press and Public Affairs at the Special Court confirmed Tuesday that Taylor was air lifted by helicopter from his detention centre to Lungi International airport under tight security at about 9:40am to board a United Nations chartered flight to The Hague. Andersen says Taylor's immediate transfer follows Fridays Security Council Resolution issuing an order for the ex-Liberian leader to be transferred to The Hague.

The Liberian leader, wearing a brown suit and bullet-proof was escorted out of the country amid very tight security.

African News Dimension

Thursday, 22 June 2006

Sierra Leoneans laud Taylor's transfer

Many Sierra Leoneans have hailed the transfer of the former president of Liberia, Charles Taylor, for trial at the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

They also expressed happiness for the approval given by the United Kingdom to serve as jailer for the war crimes suspect if found guilty.

Taylor is charged with 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, allegedly perpetrated during the decade-long brutal civil war that devastated Sierra Leone in the 90s.

He has, however, denied the charges during his initial appearance at the Special Court for Sierra Leone based in Freetown.

A Security Council Resolution paved the way for the transfer and trial of Taylor at The Hague. Resolution 1688 provides the legal basis for the Government of the Netherlands to conclude a Headquarters Agreement with the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Taylor spent his first night at The Hague detention facility on Tuesday, following his transfer.

Alhaji Ibrahim Ben Kargbo, president of the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists said that the transfer of Taylor has "certainly freed the country from possible threat".

"Taylor's presence at the Special Court's premises had been causing anxious moments for a large number of people" in Freetown, Kargbo told PANA.

Sierra Leone's Ombudsman, Francis Gabbidon expressed optimism that Taylor will get a fair trial at The Hague.

Gabbidon described Taylor's lawyer, Ghanaian-born Karim as "one of the best criminal lawyers in the world.

Suleiman Fofanah, a resident of Bo, Southern Sierra Leone, said the transfer of Taylor to The Hague was a preferable choice, " because it will help restore peace to both Sierra Leone and Liberia".

He described the presence of Taylor in Freetown as "a threat because he has wealth and supporters in Liberia who are very loyal to him.

"With money, every evil whether failed or successful can be influenced. We should not forget that not all the arms in Liberia were collected...they are at the reach of destructive elements like the ex-fighters," he warned.

But taxicab driver Momodu Koroma said he had preferred Taylor's trial in Sierra Leone because he wanted the people to watch it live on television and hear him speak on radio, as was the case of late Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic.

"Taking him to The Hague has certainly denied us this opportunity," he complained.

Agence France Presse

Thursday, 22 June 2006

Taylor's trial set to start in January 2007

The war crimes trial of the former president of Liberia Charles Taylor could start in The Hague in January next year, a court official in the Sierra Leonean capital Freetown said on Wednesday.

"At the moment we anticipate the beginning of the trial to be January 2007," Harpinder Athwal, a special assistant to the court's prosecutor, told a news conference.

Athwal said the prosecution had handed over 32 000 pages of evidence to Taylor's defence team.

"This is the evidence we have on him. We still have more evidence coming in," said Athwal.

"Now the defence would have to start going through them to determine what their perspective is on it and work with us to settle a date to begin the trial," she said.

Taylor, once one of Africa's most feared warlords, was flown to The Netherlands on Tuesday from Sierra Leone where he had been detained since his capture in late March.

Defence lawyer Karim Khan has meantime complained that the transfer of his client without notice had disrupted defence preparations.

"One of the repercussions of the movement of Charles Taylor to The Hague is that we are not able to finalise the composition of our team," Khan said at the war crimes tribunal in Freetown.

Khan complained to the court presided over by Sri Lankan-born judge Richard Lussick: "I was not able to speak to my client as he was whisked off without any notice to me."

The British-based lawyer also made an application for Taylor "to receive and make calls in the same way he was previously allowed to while in Freetown to ensure the proper administration of justice".

Prosecutor Brenda Hollis said there was "no objection for Mr Taylor to have access to communications with his lawyers" and that the court would ensure a fair trial for the man accused of being behind the one of the most brutal civil wars in recent history.

Khan also urged the court to ensure "all necessary steps to facilitate the travels of Mr Taylor's family to the Hague with regards to visas".

Meanwhile, the United States on Wednesday welcomed the transfer of Taylor to The Hague.

"This action is an important step forward for justice and accountability and will contribute to stability in West Africa after decades of civil conflict," deputy State Department spokesperson Adam Ereli said. - Sapa-AFP

Xinhua

Thursday, 22 June 2006

United States welcomes transfer of ex-Liberian president to Hague for trial

The United States welcomed the transfer of former Liberian president Charles Taylor from Freetown, Sierra Leone to The Hague, deputy State Department spokesman Adam Ereli said here on Wednesday.

"The United States and our international partners in Africa and the (UN) Security Council have been working tirelessly over the last several years to bring Charles Taylor to justice. Today's transfer to The Hague is an important step in that effort," Ereli said at a news briefing.

"We are grateful and appreciative to the efforts of Nigeria, Liberia, the British, the Dutch, and the Security Council in making possible this move," Ereli said.

Taylor, who had been taken into custody in Sierra Leone since March, arrived Tuesday in the Netherlands after a flight by a UN- chartered plane.

He is due to stand trial in The Hague on 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity allegedly committed during his Liberian presidency.

Independent Online

Thursday, 22 June 2006

Taylor could wait months for war crimes trial

By Stephanie van den Berg

The Hague - Liberia's former president Charles Taylor spent his first day in detention in The Hague on Wednesday awaiting trial for war crimes as preparations to put him in the dock gathered pace.

Once one of Africa's most feared warlords, Taylor was flown on Tuesday to the Netherlands from Sierra Leone, where he had been detained since his capture in late March.

His trial could start in January, a court official in the capital of Sierra Leone Freetown said on Wednesday.

"At the moment we anticipate the beginning of the trial to be January 2007," Harpinder Athwal, a special assistant to the court's prosecutor, told a news conference.

Athwal said the prosecution had handed over 32 000 pages of evidence to Taylor's defence team.

"Now the defence would have to start going through them to determine what their perspective is on it and work with us to settle a date to begin the trial," she said.

Defence lawyer Karim Khan has complained that the transfer of his client without notice had disrupted the defence's preparations.

"One of the repercussions of the movement of Charles Taylor to The Hague is that we are not able to finalise the composition of our team," Khan told a scheduled status conference at the war crimes tribunal in Freetown.

The British-based lawyer also made an application for Taylor "to receive and make calls in previously the same way he was allowed while in Freetown to ensure the proper administration of justice".

Prosecutor Brenda Hollis said there was "no objection for Mr Taylor to have access to communications with his lawyers" and that the court would ensure a fair trial for the man accused of being behind the one of the most brutal civil wars in recent history.

Taylor is seen as the single most powerful figure behind a series of civil wars in Liberia and neighbouring Sierra Leone between 1989 and 2003 which left around 400 000 people dead.

He faces a total of 11 charges of crimes against humanity, war crimes and violations of international human rights, specifically accused of aiding rebel groups which murdered, enslaved and mutilated civilians during a civil war in Sierra Leone, Liberia's neighbour.

Taylor, who pleaded not guilty to all charges on his first appearance before court in Freetown in April, was captured as he tried to flee Nigeria where he had been living comfortably in exile since August 2003.

He will be tried by the United Nations-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) - which normally sits in Freetown - using the premises of the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

With the move to The Hague the entire proceedings will remain in the hands of the SCSL which means the judges, prosecutors, lawyers, registrar and other court personnel will have to be moved there.

Late Tuesday, UN chief Kofi Annan welcomed Taylor's transfer to The Hague, saying he was confident the trial "will mark a further victory in the struggle to end impunity and will contribute to reconciliation in Liberia and the restoration of peace and stability in Liberia and in Sierra Leone".

However, human rights groups expressed concern that a Taylor trial in The Hague could feel too distant for people in West Africa.

Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and the special court had asked for the move because it feared his presence in Sierra Leone, even in custody, could destabilise the entire region.

The transfer to The Hague was given the green light last Friday by the UN Security Council, two days after Britain said that it would provide a prison for him to serve his sentence should he be found guilty.

EuroNews

Thursday, 22 June 2006

Taylor facing charges after transfer to The Hague

According to Jewel Taylor, Charles Taylor's wife, the former Liberian president was looking forward to telling his side of the story after being transferred to The Hague. But it is unlikely that Taylor, when in exile in Nigeria, expected the latest chapter to involve him being turned over to stand trial for war crimes.

Taylor has proved to be a slippery customer in the past. Back in 1984, he was arrested in the US, charged with embezzling a million dollars of Liberian government funds.

But he escaped from jail and eventually turned up in Ivory Coast. This year he tried to flee Nigeria, but failed. He then decided the best form of defence was attack. He rejected the legitimacy of the UN-backed court in Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, and said he was innocent.

Charles Taylor has been accused of involvement in war crimes both in his own country and in neighbouring Sierra Leone. In December 1989, he launched an armed uprising, with his National Patriotic Front of Liberia rapidly taking control of most of the country.

Then-president Samuel Doe was overthrown and murdered. The subsequent 14 years of civil war killed up to 200,000 people and forced more than a million from their homes. But the charges in The Hague refer to Sierra Leone.

Rebels there were known for cutting off civilians' limbs or raping them, and using drugged-up child soldiers. Taylor allegedly supported the Revolutionary United Front by selling diamonds and buying weapons for them. Taylor was elected President of Liberia in 1997, two years after a peace agreement ended the civil war.

But he has remained a hugely controversial figure, and the Netherlands only agreed to host his trial because Britain said it would jail him if he was convicted.

EuroNews

Thursday, 22 June 2006

Officials prepare for resumption of Taylor trial



Netherlands

After the arrival of the former Liberian leader Charles Taylor in The Hague, officials are busy preparing for the resumption of his war crimes trial. The former president was flown to the Netherlands from a UN-backed court in Sierra Leone, where his trial on 11 charges had already begun. The African court has asked to use the facilities of the International Criminal Court because of concerns about security in Sierra Leone.

Christopher Staker, the acting prosecutor, said: "I have to say it's very hard to predict precisely when the trial will start, or how long it will take, because that's not a matter that is ever entirely in the hands of any one party. It will depend on the prosecution in part, but it will also depend on the defence, and it will depend on the chambers."

Taylor will serve a prison term in Britain if found guilty. He is accused of backing rebels who raped and mutilated civilians during Sierra Leone's decade-long civil war in the 90s.

The Post (Lusaka)

Wednesday, 21 June 2006

Transferring Taylor

OPINION

By Aubrey Chindefu

Lusaka

The recent pronouncements by British Ambassador to the UN that a draft resolution which would allow the transfer of former Liberia President Charles Taylor to the Hague is under way, is really demeaning the status of African legal landscape. Charles Taylor is still being held for purportedly crimes "committed" in Sierra Leone.

Both Sierra Leone and Liberia are recovering from years of conflict, in which Taylor has been accused of having played a critical role.

The decision to transfer Taylor follows fears of Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, who took office in January, that putting Taylor on trial in any West African country could lead to renewed instability in the region.

The article on Charles Taylor that appeared in The Post of June 17, 2006, reminds me of the words said by Libyan President Muammar Gaddafi in Tripoli recently.

He said "handing TAYLOR to International Court of Justice-ICC would undermine Africans credibility and seriously harm Nigeria, which could no longer be considered a haven".

Nigeria deported Taylor to Liberia, which in turn sent him to Sierra Leone where he awaits trial. Gaddafi reminded the African heads of state that attended a semi summit in Tripoli, who included Sirleaf and Obassajo, that what has befallen Taylor sets a bad precedent for African leaders.

"This also means that every African head of state could meet a similar fate". In as much as I and Colonel Gaddafi don't agree with Charles Taylor's policies in West Africa, a principle should be applied. If what American President George Bush and British Tony Blair are doing to other countries like Iraq, Afghanistan and Iran could also be subjected to the International Court of Justice, then the move to transfer Taylor is valid.

But knowing the western style of selective justice, what they do to others prevails as a benchmark of justice and freedom. Then Charles Taylor has been unfairly treated. Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and her Nigerian counterpart Obassajo, have set a worst precedent on the Africa political landscape. We should not be subjected to colonial legal representations as though we are still a continent in colonial hands.

For crying out loud, Africa is a free continent able to legislate as and the way it deems fit. Whether we clumsily wish to deal with him in this manner, Charles Taylor is a former head of state of Liberia, who should befittingly be treated as such, and not as a mere criminal.

Voice of America

Tuesday, 21 June 2006

In Sierra Leone, Mixed Reaction to Taylor's Trial Transfer

By Howard Lesser

Washington, DC

Yesterday's transfer of former Liberian president Charles Taylor to the Netherlands for trial is getting a mixed reaction in Sierra Leone. To date, Taylor has been held in Sierra Leone under the custody of a UN-backed tribunal. Some believe the jurisdiction in which Taylor is charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity is where his trial should be conducted. But others say security concerns and political pressures from the international community played a part in the decision. VOA English to Africa reporter Howard Lesser discussed the situation with the Freetown director of Sierra Leone's Campaign for Good Governance, Valnora Edwin.

"We are aware that it's a highly political thing, and even the transfer of Taylor from Nigeria to Sierra Leone, hearing that Taylor had escaped somewhat, we know there is a lot of push from the western countries and there were even rumours here in Sierra Leone that the president of Liberia is doing all of this because she is being pressured by donor countries that if she doesn't comply, get Taylor put on trial, she will not be funded."

The Good Governance advocate says her campaign has close ties with the Freetown Special Court, which has custody of Taylor during his detention in Europe. She says Sierra Leoneans will be able to make use of the Court's extensive resources to monitor day-to-day progress of the judicial proceedings and to provide input necessary for the Court to carry out its tasks.

Edwin spoke of yesterday's transfer. "I think everybody is happy about it, but you have a lot of mixed feelings, now that he has been taken to The Hague. You have some of us, and I am part of that group, who feel he should be tried in Sierra Leone because this is why the Special Court was established. And then you have others who feel a bit relieved that he is physically not here, so that there would not be any further problems."

Although Sierra Leone is expected to pay a lot of attention to the Taylor trial in the coming months, Valnora Edwin says Sierra Leoneans are satisfied that proceedings have begun and are eager to move on with their lives.

Voice Of America

Wednesday, 21 June 2006

Prosecution Ready to 'Move Quickly' in Taylor Trial

Prosecutors for the Special Court of Sierra Leone say they are ready to move quickly in the war crimes trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor.

However, prosecutor Christopher Staker said Wednesday that it is not clear when proceedings will begin.

Taylor arrived in handcuffs in The Hague on Tuesday. He is being held in a maximum-security Dutch prison.

The U.N.-backed Sierra Leone tribunal will hold the trial in the facilities of the International Criminal Court.

Some African leaders, including Liberia's President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, had asked the U.N. to hold the trial in Europe, fearing the trial could destabilize west Africa.

Taylor is charged with 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity for his alleged support of rebels who raped, mutilated and killed civilians during Sierra Leone's civil war.

The United Nations approved the transfer last week, after Britain agreed to imprison Taylor if he is convicted. Finding a third country to jail Taylor was one of the Netherlands' conditions for accepting the trial.

United Nations

Wednesday, 21 June 2006

Daily Press Briefing by the Office of the Spokesman for the Secretary-General (Excerpt)

****Charles Taylor**

Turning to The Hague, the transfer of former Liberian President Charles Taylor from the Freetown headquarters of the Special Court for Sierra Leone to The Hague was successfully completed yesterday under United Nations supervision. Charles Taylor is now being held at the International Criminal Court Detention Facility in The Hague pending his next court appearance.

Earlier today in The Hague, the Special Court Registrar and the Acting Prosecutor held a press conference, at which they updated journalists on logistical and other arrangements for the pending trial of Charles Taylor.

We expect more information on this from the Special Court.

CNN

Wednesday, 21 June 2006

Prosecutors seek quick start to Taylor trial

LONDON, England (CNN) -- Former Liberian President Charles Taylor spent his first night in a Dutch prison as prosecutors prepared to move quickly to bring him to trial on 11 war crimes charges.

Taylor, who arrived Tuesday in The Hague, is accused of being responsible for the murder, rape and mutilation of thousands of people during Sierra Leone's 10-year civil war.

"The prosecution itself is prepared to move very quickly and to begin as soon as possible," Christopher Staker, prosecutor for the Special Court for Sierra Leone, said Wednesday in The Hague.

"It is our hope that this case will prove to be an example of the efficiency with which international criminal trials can be conducted."

Staker added that the prosecution "must give sufficient time to the defendant to study what he is accused of and give him sufficient time to prepare his defense," Reuters reported.

The United Nations-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone in Freetown sent Taylor to the Hague, where the court will use the facilities of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Taylor is being held in the detention center of the ICC in Scheveningen in The Hague.

It is the same center where former Yugoslav leader Slobodan Milosevic, who died of a heart attack earlier this year, was held. Milosevic also faced war crimes charges.

Taylor is accused of fueling a bloody civil war in Sierra Leone that led to widespread murder, rape and mutilation.

In April, appearing before the tribunal in Sierra Leone, he pleaded not guilty to the charges against him, which include crimes against humanity, terrorizing a civilian population, unlawful killing, murder, mutilation and sexual slavery, among others.

They involve the civil war that devastated much of Sierra Leone. Involving riches of the diamond trade, the war was fought largely by teenagers who were forced to kill, given addictive drugs to provoke violent behavior and often instructed to rape and plunder.

Taylor was president of Liberia -- where he is also blamed for fueling a lengthy civil war -- until 2003, when he was forced from office under heavy international pressure, much of it from the United States.

He lived in exile in Nigeria until that nation, earlier this year, was persuaded by political pressure to hand him over for the tribunal. He was caught attempting to cross into Chad and arrested by border guards.

In November, Liberia elected Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf as president, making her the first female elected president on the African continent. , under a resolution adopted Friday by the U.N. Security Council authorizing the transfer.

Reuters

Tuesday, 21 June 2006

Taylor in Hague, prepares defence for trial

THE HAGUE (Reuters) - Former Liberian president Charles Taylor was in jail in The Hague on Wednesday awaiting the start of his war crimes trial after flying to the Netherlands from Sierra Leone.

The U.N.-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone in Freetown sent Taylor to the Hague, where the court will use the facilities of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

The court in the Hague is not involved in the trial but the Sierra Leone court asked to use its facilities because of fears that a trial in Freetown could spur unrest in Sierra Leone or Liberia.

Taylor's trial is set to begin as soon as Taylor and his lawyer have prepared his defence, officials from the Special Court said.

"One must give sufficient time to the defendant to study what he is accused of and give him sufficient time to prepare his defence," said Christopher Staker, prosecutor for the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), adding that the prosecution was ready to begin as soon as possible.

Taylor already appeared in court in Freetown for his initial hearing in April, when he pleaded innocent to 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity for backing rebels who raped and mutilated civilians during a brutal 1991-2002 civil war in Sierra Leone, Liberia's neighbour.

Taylor arrived late on Tuesday and was in handcuffs as he got off the plane at Rotterdam's airport.

He was transported to a prison in Scheveningen near The Hague, where Slobodan Milosevic and other suspects were jailed to stand trial by the U.N. warcrimes tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

At Scheveningen, there is a special section for detainees from the ICC and Munlo said prisoners will not be separated.

His transfer was authorised by the U.N. Security Council on June 16. The Freetown tribunal had asked the Netherlands to host the case but needed a third country to volunteer as Taylor's jailer.

Britain drafted the U.N. resolution after promising last week to jail Taylor if he is found guilty.

Taylor's rise to power in 1989 led to a 14-year, on-and-off civil war in Liberia that spilt across regional borders.

He fled into exile in Nigeria in 2003 but was returned to Liberia and quickly transferred to the special U.N. court in Sierra Leone on March 29.

Reuters

Wednesday, 21 June 2006

Taylor move offers Liberia new start

By Peter Murphy

MONROVIA (Reuters) - Liberians hailed ex-warlord Charles Taylor's transfer for trial at The Hague as offering their war-ravaged country a fresh start and serving as a warning to other African leaders to govern wisely.

Taylor was flown from a U.N.-backed Special Court in Sierra Leone on Tuesday to stand trial in The Hague on war crimes charges stemming from his role in Sierra Leone's brutal civil war after fears his presence in the region could trigger unrest.

"I am a widow. My husband was killed by Mr Taylor's people," said Oretha Bracewell, a 35-year-old seamstress. "He was very wicked. I think his presence in any country is a threat."

Taylor began Liberia's bloody civil war in 1989 and fighting continued sporadically for 14 years, even after he secured election as president in 1997 with the unofficial slogan "You killed my ma, you killed my pa. I'll vote for you."

But the 11 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity he faces relate to neighboring Sierra Leone's parallel 1990s civil war, in which he traded diamonds and guns with rebels whose drugged child soldiers killed, raped and sliced off the hands and feet of men, women and children.

"I suffered a whole lot, so for Charles Taylor to go to the Hague I think is the best idea. Because this is a country that each and every one of us ought to enjoy," said Mike Leva, who sells books at a roadside stall by a muddy, potholed road.

"You are president for a nation and a people within a country so you have to look after their lives and improve them. You don't take the president job only to secure yourself," he said, speaking loudly to make himself heard over a cacophony of horn-honking from battered yellow taxis.

Conspiracy Theories

On Monrovia's potholed streets, people lapped up the headlines.

"Charles Taylor finally flown to the Hague," the Heritage newspaper headlined.

"Charles Taylor is kidnapped again. International Conspiracy continues," proclaimed the National Chronicle, reflecting the widespread conspiracy theories and hostility from some quarters to trying Taylor, who retains support among some Liberians.

George Nuwon, a photographer on his way to get photos developed, said he would have liked Taylor to stand trial in Sierra Leone instead of The Hague, where Sierra Leone's special war crimes court will hold his trial.

"Most Africans would have preferred the case being heard in Sierra Leone, where we would be closer to the scene and to follow up the day to day transactions in the court," he said.

But Nuwon said Taylor's trial would serve as a warning to other leaders tempted to abuse their positions at the expense of ordinary people.

"We see the cases all around us where people's rights have been violated and sometimes our judicial system is not good enough to come out against our leaders. This is the problem in Africa," he said.

At least Dio Garvey, a typist on her way to work, had some words of comfort for her former president.

"God will leave him alone to his destiny and help him," she said. "No man is problem free. No man is infallible. Everybody makes mistakes in life."

(Additional reporting by Alphonso Toweh)

Cocorioko website

Wednesday, 21 June 2006

TAYLOR SUPPORTERS BEMOAN LOSS OF ACCESS TO HIM

COCORIOKO has learnt that supporters of former Liberian President Charles Taylor are sorely displeased with his transfer to the Hague where he is going to be tried for alleged war crimes.

Mr. Taylor was yesterday taken from his prison cell in Freetown and flown to the Netherlands where the Special Court of Sierra Leone will try him in the facilities of the International war crimes tribunal

.Our Monrovia correspondent, Jlateh Doe, said that Taylor's transfer to the Hague did not go down well with supporters of the former Liberian President. They complained that it will be difficult for them to see Taylor in the Hague, unlike Freetown. But some Sierra Leoneans in the diaspora who were interviewed by COCORIOKO hailed Taylor's transfer, saying that it has spared Sierra Leone another era of instability and uncertainty. "The mere fact that his supporters are so concerned shows that eventually, they would have caused trouble ", said Francis Conteh of East Orange, NJ.

Some other Sierra Leoneans expressed sighs of relief that Taylor had been taken to the Hague for trial. They said they were satisfied that at least there was no longer any danger of Taylor being sprung from jail by former rebels . Many of them said they were sure that Taylor will be given a fair trial in the Hague.

Afrol News

Tuesday, 20 June

Ex-Dictator Taylor sent to The Hague

Liberia's ex-Dictator Charles Taylor today was flown out of Sierra Leone to stand trial at the International Criminal Court in The Hague, accused of war crimes in Sierra Leone and Liberia. The transfer to the Netherlands was made possible after the UN security Council had approved of the airlift and after Britain had offered prison facilities for Mr Taylor if found guilty.

Today, the long discussion on what to do with the war crimes indicted Liberian leader finally found a sudden conclusion. Without any prior announcement, the UN-backed war crimes court of Sierra Leone sent Mr Taylor out of the country. Accompanied with a large number of armed UN soldiers, he was taken in helicopter from his detention at the court to the Freetown airport. Here again, armed UN peacekeepers firmly led Mr Taylor to a waiting UN aircraft, which took the Liberian to the Netherlands.

The secrecy surrounding the action, together with the high security alert, were a result of the supposed threat from Mr Taylor's many remaining armed followers in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The same security concerns had led to a plea by the governments of Liberia and Sierra Leone to try the ex-Dictator outside the region. His prolonged stay in Sierra Leone could provoke instability in the two countries, it was feared.

But a quick deportation of Mr Taylor after he was handed over to Liberia from Nigeria in March was to become complicated. The International Criminal Court in The Hague rapidly agreed to lend its ventures to the Sierra Leonean special court, but the Dutch government demanded guarantees for what would happen after Mr Taylor's possible conviction. Prison facilities in the Netherlands would not be available for Mr Taylor, the Dutch government said, and neither Liberia nor Sierra Leone wanted to house the ex-Dictator after a possible conviction.

The UN was involved in finding a possible host country for Mr Taylor, but received negative answers from Denmark, Swe

den and Austria. Only last week, the United Kingdom offered to provide prison facilities for Mr Taylor if convicted, finally providing a solution to the three-month discussion on what to do with the 58-year-old Liberian.

The last formal hinder for his transfer to The Hague was cleared on Friday, as the UN Security Council approved of a transfer from Sierra Leone to the Netherlands. Being indicted for war crimes, Mr Taylor was not free to travel, thus necessitating an approval from the top world body. The UN resolution noted that Mr Taylor's presence in the region "is an impediment to stability and a threat to the peace of Liberia and of Sierra Leone."

Following the airlifting of the Liberian ex-leader to The Hague, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan praised the London government for its helping hand. Mr Annan further said he was "confident that Charles Taylor's trial will mark a further victory in the struggle to end impunity and will contribute to reconciliation in Liberia and the restoration of peace and stability in Liberia and in Sierra Leone."

In The Hague, Mr Taylor will have to answer accusations against him regarding his involvement in the civil wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia and attacks on Guinea. The Special Court says it can document that Mr Taylor financed and trained the brutal RUF rebels of Sierra Leone during the 1991-2001 civil war, where an estimated 120,000 persons were killed. A large number of civilians suffered from mutilations and rape. The Liberian ex-President is said to have been deeply involved in the RUF's illegal diamond trade.

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 21 June 2006

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

International Clips on Liberia

Liberia must 'look forward' beyond Taylor trial: Sirleaf

MONROVIA, June 21, 2006 (AFP) - Liberia must "look forward" to its future now that former president and war crimes indicted Charles Taylor has been transferred to The Hague, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf said Wednesday. Asked for a response on the transfer of Taylor's war crimes trial from Sierra Leone due to fears it could throw the region into turmoil, Sirleaf said Liberia should forget about the case and move on.

Hindustan Times

SECRETARY-GENERAL WELCOMES TRANSFER OF CHARLES TAYLOR TO NETHERLANDS TO STAND BEFORE SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE

UNITED NATIONS, June 20 -- The United Nations Office of the Secretary General issued the text of the following statement: The following statement was issued today by the Spokesman for UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan: The Secretary-General welcomes the transfer of the former President of Liberia, Charles Taylor, to the Netherlands, to stand trial before the Special Court for Sierra Leone sitting in The Hague. He wishes to thank all who have made this transfer possible, in particular the Government of the Netherlands for its willingness to host the Special Court for the conduct of Mr. Taylor's trial, the International Criminal Court for agreeing to the use of its premises by the Special Court and the Government of the United Kingdom for agreeing, subject to Parliamentary approval, to allow Charles Taylor, if convicted, to enter the United Kingdom to serve any sentence that the Special Court might impose.

International Clips on West Africa

Start of Taylor's trial difficult to predict: Sierra Leone court

THE HAGUE, June 21, 2006 (AFP) - Former Liberian president Charles Taylor on Wednesday spent the first day of what could prove to be a long prison stay in The Hague while the Sierra Leone court sought to move war crimes proceedings against him from Africa to Europe. A starting date for his trial is "hard to predict", court officials said Wednesday.

Local Media - Newspapers

Taylor Transferred to The Hague

(Daily Observer, The News, The Inquirer, The Analyst, New Democrat, Heritage, The Informer, Plain Truth, The New Liberian and The West African Pilot)

- The Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) yesterday transferred former President Charles Taylor to The Hague, Netherlands where he is to be tried for war crimes in a courtroom of the International Criminal Court by the SCSL. Mr. Taylor arrived aboard a chartered commercial flight from Freetown. Reports said he was due to occupy the cell in which former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic died.
- A group under the banner of the Association for the Legal Defense of Charles Taylor said in a press release yesterday said that it was greatly shocked by the "clandestine and sudden" transfer of Mr. Taylor which denied him the opportunity to make last-minute contact with his lawyers who had anticipated a pre-trial conference in Freetown today.

Newspaper Says "Taylor Is Kidnapped Again"

(National Chronicle)

- *National Chronicle* reports that in the face of a pre-trial conference which was scheduled to take place in Freetown today, the international community immediately transferred Mr. Taylor to The Hague. The paper termed the move as an international conspiracy and another kidnap—as was Mr. Taylor's transfer from his asylum home in Nigeria.

UN Secretary-General Welcomes Taylor's Transfer

(Daily Observer and The Informer)

- In a statement yesterday, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan welcomed Mr. Taylor's transfer to The Hague, adding that his trial will mark a further victory in the struggle to end impunity, contribute to reconciliation in Liberia and the restoration of peace and stability in Liberia and Sierra Leone. He commended all those who made Mr. Taylor's transfer possible, especially the Dutch government for accepting to host the trial and the British government for accepting to imprison Mr. Taylor if he is convicted.

UN Lifts Timber Sanctions on Liberia

(Daily Observer, The News, New Democrat and The Informer)

- The UN Security Council voted overwhelmingly yesterday to lift the timber sanctions on Liberia to help stimulate economic growth. However the Security Council said it would review the decision in 90 days and reinstate the sanctions if the Liberia does not adopt legislation on forestry reforms by the time.

UNMIL and American Bar Association Seek Mediation Law for Liberia

(New Democrat and The Informer)

- UNMIL Legal and Judicial System Support Division and the American Bar Association Africa Law Initiative earlier this week held a one-day workshop in Monrovia on seeking consensus on the need to establish a legal framework on mediation in Liberia, according an UNMIL press release. Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Rule of Law Luiz Carlos da Costa said the concept of mediation was not new to Africa.

University Faculty Advocates President's Ousting

(Daily Observer, The Inquirer, New Democrat, Heritage and The Informer)

- Addressing a press conference in Monrovia yesterday, the University of Liberia Faculty Association acting President Clifford Young called on President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf to replace University of Liberia (UL) President Al Hassan Conteh and his five vice presidents and the comptroller for alleged corruption.

UN University Donates to University of Liberia

(The Analyst, Heritage and The Informer)

- On behalf of the Tokyo-based United Nations University (UNU), UNDP yesterday presented a consignment of books on peace-building to the University of Liberia.
- Making the presentation, UNDP Program Advisor Goder Yohannes said the UNU was delighted to make the contribution to UL and hoped that it might be the first step toward some form of future partnership.

Nigerian Business Delegation Donates to Liberian Orphans

(Daily Observer, Heritage and The Informer)

- At the head of a delegation of the National Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the First Lady of Lagos State Oluremi Tinubu donated bags of rice and US\$3,700 to five orphanages in Liberia. Chief Tinubu said that the delegation was in Liberia to pay a courtesy call on President Johnson-Sirleaf and show solidarity with the government and people of Liberia in the reconstruction of the country.

Local Media – Radio Veritas

UN Security Council Removes Timber Sanction on Liberia

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Nigerian Women Industrialists Assess Investment Climate in Liberia

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Government of Sierra Leone Says Taylor Has Been Transferred

- Sierra Leonean President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah's spokesman, Kanji Daramy, confirmed to correspondents in Freetown yesterday that detained former President Charles Taylor was flown out of Sierra Leone on Tuesday morning and was en route to the International War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Government Assesses Sub-regional Security after Taylor's Transfer

- President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf said that the Liberian government was assessing the security situation in West Africa after the transfer to The Hague of detained former President Charles Taylor yesterday. President Johnson-Sirleaf told CNN in an interview that she was hopeful the transfer of Mr. Taylor would reduce security risks in the sub-region.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Family Spokesman Says Taylor's Early Transfer Was Unfair

- Detained former President Charles Taylor's family spokesman, Sando Johnson, told journalists yesterday that the early transfer of Mr. Taylor to The Hague was unfair, adding that he had been scheduled to leave Freetown for The Hague on Friday. Mr. Johnson said that family members of the former president were scheduled to pay a final visit to him on Wednesday but were surprised to hear that he had left Tuesday morning.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Party Stalwart Blames International Community for Taylor's Ordeal

- The National Patriotic Party's former chairman, Cyril Allen, yesterday blamed the international community for the plight of the party's former standard bearer, Charles Taylor. In an interview in Monrovia yesterday, Mr. Allen said that Taylor's arrest, detention and subsequent transfer to The Hague was the will of the international community which nobody in Liberia and Sierra Leone could stop.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Special Court Ex-Prosecutor Says Taylor's Trial Will Expose Qadhafi

- Former prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, David Crane said that Taylor's trial would likely shed light on the activities of Libyan leader Muammar al-Qadhafi and a network of war profiteers.
- In his remarks after Mr. Taylor was transferred to The Hague yesterday, Mr. Crane said he had considered indicting Col. Qadhafi for alleged involvement in plots to control West Africa through surrogates such as Charles Taylor.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Solicitor-General Calls Rebuilding Justice System a Challenge

- Speaking at the opening of a seminar to strengthen the rule of law and human rights yesterday, Solicitor-General Tiawan Gongloe said that rebuilding Liberia's justice system remained one of the greatest challenges. Cllr. Gongloe said that the protection of Liberians would depend on a strong and credible justice system.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Labor Ministry to Ascertain Contract Terms of Dismissed UNMIL Workers

- Labor Minister Kofi Woods said that the Ministry would review the terms of the contract of some dismissed United Nations contractors in the country. Minister Woods told journalists yesterday that it was important to ascertain what the contract originally stated.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

IRIN

Tuesday, 21 June 2006

SENEGAL: Impunity on trial

© Human Rights Watch

Former Chadian President Hissene Habre

DAKAR, 21 Jun 2006 (IRIN) - Now that former Liberian President Charles Taylor has been flown off the continent to face charges of war crimes at The Hague, West Africans are turning their attention to another African leader who could face prosecution away from home.

Ex Chadian President Hissene Habre, who has been living in exile in Senegal since 1990, is waiting for the African Union (AU) to determine his fate during its annual summit next month in the Gambian capital Banjul.

Alleged victims of Habre's eight-year regime filed charges of war crimes against him in Senegal and he was indicted in 2000. But then Senegalese courts ruled that he must be tried elsewhere. Habre's alleged victims then turned to Belgium, where some of them lived, and Belgium indicted him last September.

But a Senegalese court early this year said it was not competent to rule on the case and turned the decision over to the AU.

Western nations and international donors are increasingly conditioning aid on respect for human rights and good governance. Analysts consider impunity to be a major impediment to development. They say without justice, there is no security, no rule of law, no transparency and little respect for human rights.

Governments, including those in Africa, appear to have taken note.

"I think there has been a real sea change," said Reed Brody, special counsel for New York-based Human Rights Watch. "There's no doubt that around the world justice is on the march."

He pointed to Charles Taylor as an example of leaders facing justice. Others include former Iraqi ruler Saddam Hussein, Yugoslavia's Slobodan Milosevic and Chile's Augusto Pinochet.

Some have dubbed Habre the "Pinochet of Africa." Pinochet presided over a military dictatorship for nearly 20 years, during which time thousands of government opponents were killed or disappeared. Habre is accused of murder, torture and other atrocities inflicted on thousands of people.

"I think the days when tyrants could brutalize their people and pillage their treasury and then meet up with their bank accounts in some other country is gone," Brody said. "The question of justice is always on the table. One of the big resistances has been that of African leaders."

But Brody said that the decision by Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo and Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf to hand Taylor over to the Special Court for Sierra Leone last year might

have broken a psychological barrier in terms of impunity for African leaders. Taylor had been living in exile in Nigeria since he was deposed in August 2003.

Local human rights advocates are more cynical.

“For the moment we can’t say that things have changed regarding the violation of human rights in Africa. There has been no court decision yet regarding Charles Taylor and the case of Hissene Habre is still being discussed,” said Fatou Kama, a lawyer with the Dakar-based African Meeting for the Defense of Human Rights (RADDHO).

“We can say there is an awareness - at least there is that. Today, African leaders know that they might appear in court and answer to accusations of human rights abuses,” Kama said.

The momentum for ending impunity in Africa began in 1994 with two pivotal events: the Rwandan genocide and the end of apartheid in South Africa.

South Africans established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which in 1996 began hearing cases of racial crimes committed by all sectors of society during the period of white minority rule. There were no prosecutions in an effort to promote reconciliation.

Rwanda and the United Nations formed the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda to try suspected perpetrators of the genocide.

Other nations took note.

Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone are among countries that established truth commissions to either heal the wounds inflicted under military regimes or during civil wars. With the backing of the United Nations, the Special Court for Sierra Leone was established. It indicted Charles Taylor and retains jurisdiction, but the trial will be held at The Hague because of fears that Taylor might attempt to destabilize the West African sub-region from his jail cell.

Although Taylor and Habre have recently grabbed headlines because of the international angle to their cases, they are not the only African leaders to face the courts.

Others have been summoned to tribunals in their own countries. They include Moussa Traore of Mali and Jean-Bedel Bokassa of the Central African Republic.

Traore was jailed for 11 years with his wife, Mariam, on corruption charges. They had been sentenced to death but those sentences were commuted to life imprisonment. They were pardoned in 2002.

Bokassa was arrested in 1986 and tried for treason, murder and embezzlement. He was sentenced to death, but the sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment and then to 20 years. Bokassa was released in 1993 under a general amnesty.

Ethiopia has been trying former leader Mengistu Haile Mariam in absentia on charges of genocide. A verdict has been postponed until next year. Mengistu has been living in exile in Zimbabwe since 1991.

Other long-serving African leaders repeatedly accused of human rights abuse include Uganda’s Idi Amin, who died in exile in Saudi Arabia in 2003, Zaire’s Mobutu Sese Seko, who died in

exile in Morocco in 1997, and Togo's Gnassingbe Eyadema, who died last year after nearly four decades in power.

As the reformed Organization of African Unity, the AU has sought to distance itself from its post-colonial predecessor's reputation as a "dictators club."

The AU is currently establishing an African Court on Human and People's Rights, based in Arusha, Tanzania, comprised of 11 judges from around the continent. They will be sworn in during the AU summit in July. The court is not designed to try criminal cases or hold individuals accountable; its aim is to address human rights complaints against governments.

The AU chose seven jurists in June to study the Habre case and present recommendations at the AU summit. African heads of state will then determine Habre's fate. Possible outcomes include a trial in Belgium, Senegal or another African country. Or, Habre could escape facing court altogether. Human Rights Watch says Habre would unlikely get a fair trial in Chad because the judiciary is weak and subject to executive influence. In addition, Habre's security could not be guaranteed.

"I think this is a chance for the AU to speak up for justice and against impunity," said Brody. "Obviously, there is a reluctance by African leaders to send a former leader to Europe" to be tried, he said, alluding to Europe's colonial legacy in Africa. "We think that if the African Union insists that Habre be tried in Africa that the best solution is to request Senegal to reverse itself and allow Habre to be tried there."

But, he said, that is no guarantee that justice will be served. Brody said Habre has used millions of dollars that he allegedly took from the Chadian treasury to create a shield of protection in Senegal.

"It's unfortunate because Senegal is a country that in many respects is the avant-garde in terms of democracy and human rights and it would be an honour for Senegal, it would be to Senegal's credit, to hold the trial of Hissene Habre," he said.