

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



**PRESS CLIPPINGS**

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

**as at:**

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Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.  
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### Local News

The birth of a dark era in Sierra Leone / <i>Standard Times</i>	Pages 3-4
Charles Taylor's Sierra Leone's War Crimes Trial Attacked / <i>Sierra Express Media</i>	Page 5
Human Rights Council Exhibits TRC Vision / <i>Premier News</i>	Page 6

### International News

Kenya Seeks Another Way to Stall Hague Proceedings / <i>Voice of America</i>	Pages 7-8
Kenyan Judge To Preside Over Darfur ICC Case / <i>Daily Nation</i>	Pages 9-10
ICC Official Says Court Cannot Prosecute Hissene Habré / <i>Africa Review</i>	Page 11

# Standard Times

Tuesday, 22 March 2011

## The birth of a dark era in Sierra Leone

### VIEWPOINT

BY MUSTAPHA SESAY

**D**o they have tails or are they human beings? was the question asked by many in the city of Freetown when it was reported a band of rebels have crossed over from Liberia and have attacked the boarder towns in the south and eastern parts of the country.

It is this note that March 23rd every year is being referred to as a moment of reflection in the history of this nation when the Revolutionary United Front Rebels under the leadership of ex-Corporal Foday Sankoh and group first shot their guns in Bomaru, Kailahun District in the eastern town of Sierra Leone.

It was in the early hours of that unfaithful day when residents of Bomaru, Kailahun District were rudely waken up with gun shots flying the sky as the police station was overran by the rebels with some people killed.

Millions who were in the urban towns downplayed the situation with the saying that it was a chieftaincy dispute, which would be put under control within the shortest pace of time and should not be worried about.

One can recall that prior to this era, the All Peoples Congress Government under the leadership of Rtd. Joseph Saidu Momoh was plagued with corruption, strike actions, no salary for workers and low moral for their forces to an extent that many were calling for a bloody revolution that would change the rotten political system as the only way forward for a decent life for the ordinary masses.

It was also said that groups of Sierra Leoneans had sneaked out of the country to join others in neighbouring states who were brainwashed by the revolutionary ideas of Col. Ghadaffi in Libya known as the GREEN BOOK. This group was made up of Liberians and Burkinabe rebels.

In Libya, the Liberian group was led by Charles Taylor, who many believed that time was serving as prisoner in one of the cells in America, but later escaped and resurfaced in Libya where he was trained to lead a rebellion against a young military Head of state, Master Sgt. Samuel K. Doe.

After various attempts to capture the seat of powers, the rebel group known as the National Patriotic Front started disintegrating into fractions with each having its own sole propose.

In the midst of all these, the city of Monrovia was engulfed in a civil conflict with the Prince Johnson fraction, Alhaji Koroma group all striving for political gains.

While this battle was ongoing, the West Africa regional body decided to intervene with troops; ECOMOG and Sierra Leone was used as a base for their mission.

Infantry groups in trucks and armoured carriers crossed into Liberia from Sierra Leone to salvage the massacre in Monrovia.

This was viewed by rebel leader Charles Taylor as an attempt by neighbouring states to block its path to the seat of power and since Sierra Leone was used as a base, Taylor in an interview with the British Broadcasting Corporation BBC promised that Sierra Leone would taste the bitterness of the war.

During that dark era, looted goods were ferried in and out of the embattled



# ...23<sup>rd</sup> March 1991

state and business rogues made use of the opportunity to get them at reasonable cost and sold at higher prices.

Rebels were spotted along the neighbouring borders eager to sell so as to buy essential goods needed at the front. There were confrontations with some selfish traders who tried to dupe them. So many thought the first shots at Bomaru was as a result of this incidence little realizing that it was a state of a protracted war that would engulf the country.

It was the conviction of many that Foday Sankoh was among a group of Sierra Leoneans that was undergoing military training with the intension to kick out of power a government he referred to as, an incompetent single party dictatorship that excluded many Sierra Leoneans and one that was also accused of being corrupt and tribalistic.

It was on this note that his intention in Libya was to return home for a civil war against the APC government that was accused of being a centralizing and incompetent dictatorship, that excluded many Sierra Leoneans.

Furthermore, the political system was also accused of poor microfinance policy, lavish developing of unearned wealth by the political class that resulted in poor economic performance, high rate of unemployment and the marginalization of the youths. Acute poverty, drop in the education standard and a host of other ills were the factors advanced by rebel Sankoh as the basis for his revolutionary vision in Sierra Leone.

It must also be recalled that Sankoh was a Corporal that had earlier been dismissed for the Sierra Leone Army and was serving a twenty year jail term for his involvement in a coup plot.

Upon his release, he took up photography in the eastern part of the country. At this time, himself and other dissidents went underground and received secret training in Libya.

There were two groups; the elitists and the Vanguard. In the course of the military training a dispute arose as to how and when the revolution should come into play. In 1988, the radical students group headed by Alie Kabbah wanted more time to plan and put structures in places. For the Sankoh group, it was a time to travel to Sierra Leone and launch the attack. So the



*Foday Sankoh*

chance was utilized by Taylor who immediately called them onboard to join the fighting forces against the Samuel K. Doe regime and later to cross over to Sierra Leone.

With this spirit, this NPFL leader utilized the opportunity to win over the Foday Sankoh side. With this, Sankoh and a handful of Sierra Leoneans joined forces with the Taylor group.

As tension mounted Taylor traveled to Sierra Leone to meet with President Momoh requesting that a base be used from Sierra Leone as a path for his operation into Liberia.

The refusal to grant him and the use of Sierra Leone as a base for ECOMOG military, Taylor sponsored the RUF to attack Sierra Leone.

On the day, 13 civilian and one major Foday were killed.

The months following witnessed a full scale war as the RUF with its sophisticated weapons and guerrilla trained mercenaries were able to capture major towns along the boarder areas in the south and east of the country.

According to Foday Sankoh, the ideal of his revolution was to kick out the Momoh APC government which was described as "tribalistic, corrupt and lacking population mandate.

Things took a different dimension

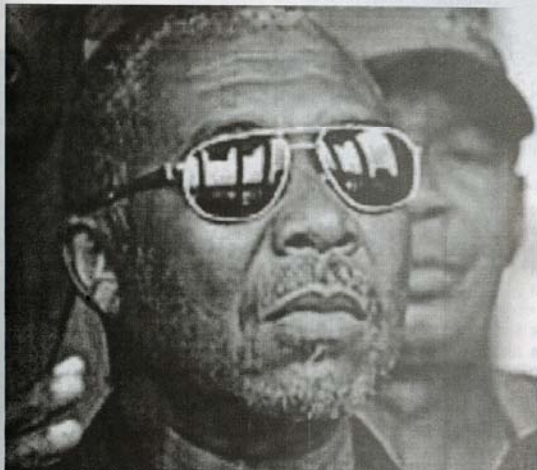
when the RUF resorted into vices like looting, mandatory amputation, rape, use of women as sex slaves and the drugging of young children who were used as child labour.

As more territory were captured, the RUF used the palm front as a symbol of their operation so as to win the hearts of the marginalized youths in the south and east of the country in Kailahun and Pujehun Districts were they first captured as it was used by these people during the battle against the hut tax war.

Recruitment of young men as soldiers was on a massive scale.

Young and inexperienced youth who volunteered were not a match for these trained guerrillas with sophisticated weapons. It was as if they were no match for the RUF and this resulted into devastated consequence.

In the midst of all these, some junior officers for the eastern war zone stormed the city in the early hours of April 29 with the view of protesting against the poor conditions of service for the soldiers and later toppled the Momoh reign.



*Charles Taylor*



## Charles Taylor's Sierra Leone war crimes trial attacked

The lawyer for Liberia's ex-President Charles Taylor has said the prosecution has turned his war crimes trial into a "21st Century form of neo-colonialism".

Courtenay Griffiths made the comments in his closing arguments at the special UN Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague.

Mr Taylor is the first former African leader to face such an international tribunal.

He denies 11 counts, including murder, rape, and using child soldiers during the civil war in Sierra Leone.

He is accused of arming and controlling the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels during a 10-year campaign of terror conducted largely against civilians.

The RUF became infamous for hacking off the limbs of their victims, and using rape and murder to terrorise the population.

'Why not Gaddafi?'

During his closing argument, Mr Griffiths told judges that justice should be applied equally to all.

He asked why Libya's leader Colonel Muammar Gaddafi

was not in the dock.

He said that it was because the British government of former Prime Minister Tony Blair had wanted to pursue their economic interests in Libya.

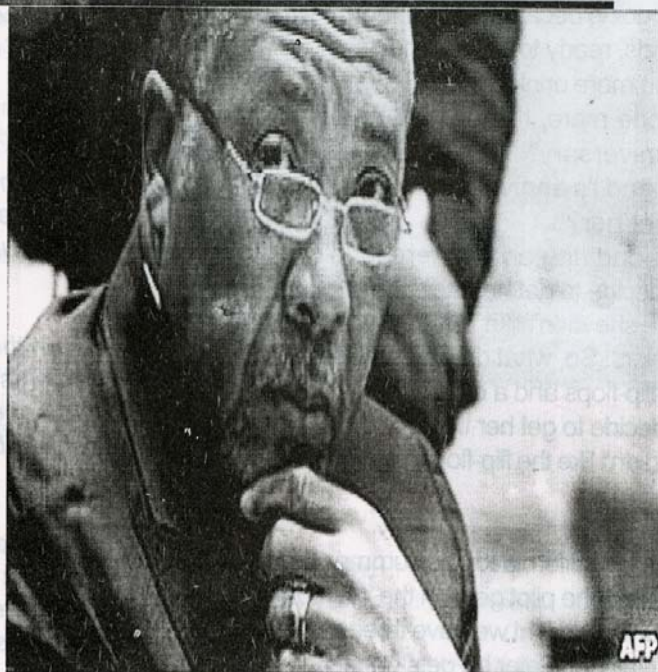
"It is to the shame of this prosecution that it has besmirched the lofty ideals of international criminal law by turning this case into a 21st Century form of neo-colonialism," Mr Griffiths said.

The defence lawyer also said no-one had taken any notice of the case until supermodel Naomi Campbell and a Hollywood actress had turned up, and since then it had returned to obscurity.

Ms Campbell and actress Mia Farrow were summoned to give evidence at the trial last August.

The prosecution was trying to establish a link between Mr Taylor and a number of uncut diamonds that Ms Campbell said she was given in South Africa in 1997. Mr Taylor is accused of selling "blood diamonds" for the rebels, in return for supplying them with weapons.

The defence has argued that



Mr Taylor tried to broker peace in Sierra Leone at the request of regional powers.

The trial, which is entering its final phase, was delayed for several weeks over a legal wrangle, but last week the defence team won its appeal to file its final brief.

It had missed its January deadline because it said new evidence had come to

light.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague has heard from more than 100 witnesses in what is the first international trial of an African former head of state.

The trial has already lasted more than three years and the judges are expected to deliver a verdict later in the year.

If convicted, Mr Taylor would serve a prison sentence in the UK.

Premier News  
 Tuesday, 22 March 2011

## Human Rights Council Exhibits TRC Vision

**T**he Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone has started exhibiting the Truth and Reconciliation National Vision to Secondary Schools.

Over the weekend, the Commission went to the Dele School at Allen School after they had exhibited the document at the Freetown Secondary School for Girls.

Since the TRC concluded its mandate,

its artifacts were handed over to the Human Rights Commission as custodian.

In popularizing the National Vision, the TRC Liaison Officer of the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone,

Madam Josephine Thompson-Shaw, told pupils of Dele School that the TRC was created to prove an impartial historical record of the conflict.

She also said it was to address impunity, respond to the needs of victims, promote healing and reconciliation and to prevent repetition of the violations and abuse.

Josephine Thompson-Shaw also explained that the TRC gave opportunities to both victims and perpetrators to vent out their grievances and to also reconcile.

She therefore said the National Vision was one way the TRC sought to fulfil the fifth objective of its mandate, to avoid a repetition of the violence and abuses suffered.

The Monitoring and Research Officer of HRCSL, Mrs. Patricia Narsu-Ndanema, gave a brief background for

the creation of the human rights commission and reiterated that the Commission was the custodian of 250 visions contributed by people.

Mrs. Ndanema also spoke that the 250 contributions contained drawings and painting from the public signifying the national vision for Sierra Leone. She however explained that, the need for such exhibition was to discuss the way forward and to find a way for the realization of the vision.

The pupils of Dele also presented their own vision and commented on some of the visions in custody of HRCSL after it had being explained to them by the TRC Liaison officer.

The Head Teacher of Dele, Frances Browne remarked that she was grateful to have had the Human Rights Commission explain the TRC vision to her pupils.



Voice of America  
Monday, 21 March 2011

## Kenya Seeks Another Way to Stall Hague Proceedings

Michael Onyiego



**Photo: AP**

*President of the Assembly of State Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal court, Christian Wenaweser, says Kenya's quest to seek a deferral of the cases against six prominent and powerful Kenyans in connection with the country's post election violence will run into political and legal hurdles, in Nairobi, Kenya, January 2011 (file photo)*

Musyoka, along with a team of Kenyan Members of Parliament and Ministers, worked to convince members of the Security Council that Kenya be allowed to try those suspected of being behind post-poll violence in 2008.

While Musyoka claimed to have the support of certain members of the Council, the United States, France and the United Kingdom - permanent members with veto power - all rejected the request Friday. The decision, which took place during an informal meeting, has dashed the hopes of Kenya's leaders.

But, Gilbert Bitti, a senior legal advisor at the ICC said there is still hope that Kenya may be able to hold the proceedings in country. He said the ICC is governed by a principle that favors local proceedings to trials at The Hague.

"According to article 19 of the Rome Statute, the Kenyan government can now challenge the admissibility of those cases. However, the challenge has to be based on actual national proceedings. Actual national proceedings, prosecutions against the same persons and for the same crimes. You cannot challenge the admissibility of cases on the basis of future proceedings."

Those accused, including the deputy prime minister, an former-minister and an former-police chief, have been summoned to appear at The Hague on April 7 and April 8.

In the peace deal that followed in early 2008, it was agreed that people accused of crimes would face justice in Kenya or at the ICC in The Hague.

But after Kenyan MPs blocked moves to set up a local tribunal, the ICC's chief prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo accused six high-profile Kenyans in December of murder, deportations and persecutions.

Despite its intentions, Kenya has yet to set up any mechanism to bring suspects of the post-election violence to justice. In 2009, the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission was established to investigate alleged crimes during the chaos, but an ethics scandal surrounding Chairman Bethuel Kiplagat has arrested the group's work.

In a recent interview with VOA, the director of the Nairobi-based International Center of Policy and Conflict, Ndungu Wainaina, rejected the government's promise to try suspects in Kenya. "It is not possible in this country, maybe in another country but not in Kenya. It is as practical as that."

More than 1,300 people were killed and 300,000 displaced in two months of ethnic violence following a disputed election between President Mwai Kibaki and Prime Minister Raila Odinga.

Finance Minister Uhuru Kenyatta, former Higher Education Minister William Ruto and Head of Civil Service Francis Muthaura are among those accused by the Court of plotting and organizing the mayhem.



Daily Nation (Kenya)

Tuesday, 22 March 2011

## Kenyan judge to preside over Darfur ICC case

By NATION Reporter



*Justice Joyce Aluoch has been elected as presiding judge in the Darfur case at the International Criminal Court March 16, 2011. FILE*

A former Kenyan appellate judge has been elected presiding judge in the Darfur case at the International Criminal Court.

Justice Joyce Aluoch was elected by her peers to be the lead judge in the case at The Hague against Abdallah Banda Abakaer Nourain and Saleh Mohammed Jerbo Jamus over their alleged crimes in the Darfur region of Sudan.

The case was referred to the three judges by the presidency of the ICC after constituting Trial Chamber IV on March 16.

The other judges on the bench are Fatoumata Dembele Diarra and Silvia Fernandez de Gurmendi.

According to a statement posted on the ICC website, Pre-Trial Chamber I found that there are reasonable grounds to believe that Banda and Jerbo are criminally responsible as co-perpetrators or as indirect co-perpetrators for three war crimes under the Rome Statute.

The charges against the accused include murder, intentionally directing attacks against personnel, installations, material, units or vehicles involved in a peacekeeping mission; and pillaging.

### **Elected**

Justice Aluoch was elected to the International Criminal Court in The Hague in January 2009.

She was picked during elections held in New York at the Seventh session of the Association of State Parties to the Rome Statute, where she garnered 100 votes out of the 107 cast. She is the first Kenyan to sit at the court.

The elections attracted 18 candidates, out of which six were picked. The other five judges were from Botswana, Japan, Guyana, Italy and Belgium. The Foreign Affairs Ministry termed her election as "an achievement that does this country proud".

Her nine-year term as an ICC judge started on March 11, 2009.

## Africa Review

Tuesday, 22 March 2011

By TAMBA JEAN-MATTHEW in Dakar

### ICC official says court cannot prosecute Hissene Habré



*ICC deputy prosecutor  
Fatou Bensouda.*  
FILE | AFRICA REVIEW |

The deputy prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Ms Fatou Bensouda, has said that the court cannot pursue former Chadian dictator Hissene Habré for alleged crimes against humanity.

Speaking in Dakar, Ms Bensouda said the court was incompetent to try Habré because the crimes he is accused of were committed before the institution was set up.

The international legal expert made the statement at the end of a seminar held in Dakar on theme: 'Women and Conflict'.

The ICC does not prosecute retroactively and therefore cannot try Habre, whose alleged crimes were committed in the 80s, whereas the ICC was set up in 2000.

Habré's lawyers breathed a great sigh of relief following Ms Bensouda's statement.

The legal team have for three years now been making frantic efforts to forestall an international warrant of arrest initiated by Belgium to have their client arrested for the crimes.

Belgium is among several countries that have agreed to help apprehend the former Chadian dictator after victims and families of victims of Habré's regime solicited international assistance.

The African Union and Ecowas have also been requesting the facilitation of a Habre trial by Senegal, where the former ruler sought asylum after his overthrow in 1990.

Since then, a labyrinthine legal process has been undertaken by a long list of stakeholders in the case including Canada, France and the European Union.