

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



**PRESS CLIPPINGS**

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

**as at:**

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

Special Court Convicts Protest / Concord Times	Pages 3-4
'No Contact with RUF Leader After May 1992' / The Senator	Page 5
NaCSA To Launch Trust Fund for War Victims / Standard Times	Page 6
Reparation Process Delayed / The Exclusive	Page 7

### International News

Sierra Leonean Heads UN Special Court's Prosecution Team / <i>Newstime Africa</i>	Pages 8-9
Interview Stephen Rapp, US Ambassador for War Crimes / <i>International Justice Tribune</i>	Pages 10-12
Liberia: City Littered with Mass Graves, TRC discovers / <i>New Democrat</i>	Page 13
UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary / <i>UNMIL</i>	Pages 14-17
Ocampo Wants Trials Split in 3 / <i>Daily Nation</i>	Page 18
Sudan Says No to Hybrid Courts for Darfur Crimes / <i>Sudan Tribune</i>	Pages 19-20
Ex-tea Boss Took Part in Genocide / <i>BBC Online</i>	Page 21
DR Congo Deports Genocide Suspect / <i>BBC Online</i>	Page 22
Congo Transfers Suspect to Rwanda Genocide Court / <i>Reuters</i>	Page 23
Africa And The International Criminal Court Of [In]justice / <i>Swans Commentary</i>	Pages 24-28

# Special Court convicts protest

to 40 years and Gbao to 25 years. Others include Alex Tamba Brima, Ibrahim Bazy Kamara, Santigie Borbor Kanu, of the AFRC and Moinina Fofanah and Allieu Kondewai of the CDF.

*Contd. Page 3*

*By Tanu Jalloh*

Convicted CDF, RUF and AFRC former warlords have written a letter dated September 11, 2009, signed by all of them and addressed to the registrar of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, protesting their proposed

transfer to a Rwandan prison.

The Court convicted rebel leaders, Issa Sesay, Morris Kallon, Augustine Gbao, of crimes against humanity and war crimes in February last year. Sesay was sentenced to 52 years, Kallon



*Issa Sesay*

*Morris Kallon*

*Augustine Gbao*

# Special Court convicts protest

*From page 1*

It could be recalled that in early August the Lower Chamber of Parliament in Rwanda unanimously adopted the bill to allow convicts, currently in the facilities of the UN-backed tribunal, serve their remaining jail terms in the Mpanga prison.

The bill followed an agreement signed between Rwanda and the court in Freetown. After the passing of the bill, Rwanda was expected to sign a memorandum of understanding with the Court that would detail how the prisoners would be treated while in detention.

However, Human Rights Watch has condemned conditions at the Mpanga prison. In its July 24, 2008 report the group stated that: "conditions are always harsh in Rwandan prisons and at times when overcrowding has been most severe, conditions have been inhumane..."

According to the letter, "Rwanda like other countries in Central Africa does not have Sierra Leoneans as consuls or ambassadors. Mpanga prison as confirmed by the United Nations, is one of the worse prisons in the world with underground cells. Genocide prisoners in Rwanda had refused to serve their sentences at such a prison because of its poor... facilities.

"Up until now there is no genocide prisoner serving sentences in Mpanga prison... is now

an isolated... prison building. In 2008 the minister of justice in Rwanda stated that the prison conditions are so difficult that prisoners 'will regret not having been hanged'."

Rwanda is the only African country to have signed the agreement to take up some of the convicts. According to the agreement, the prisoners who could be transferred to Rwanda are those whose sentences vary from between 15 years to life imprisonment.

Meanwhile, the public affairs office of the Special Court in Freetown told Concord Times that both present and past governments had officially informed the Court of their inability to enforce the sentences of the convicted rebel leaders in the country.

"The decision on where the prisoners will serve their sentences is made by the President of the Special Court, not the Registrar. Any decision on where the prisoners will serve their sentences, or when they will be moved, will not be publicly disclosed in advance. I will only note that the Special Court has enforcement agreements with several countries in addition to Rwanda," said Peter Andersen, head of outreach and public affairs of the Court.

He made reference to Article 22 of the Special Court Statute, "Enforcement of Sentences" which states that: 'Imprisonment shall be

served in Sierra Leone. If circumstances so require, imprisonment may also be served in any of the States which have concluded with the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda or the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia an agreement for the enforcement of sentences, and which have indicated to the Registrar of the Special Court their willingness to accept convicted persons. The Special Court may conclude similar agreements for the enforcement of sentences with other States.'

"The Government of Sierra Leone has notified us that Sierra Leone will not be in a position to enforce sentences handed down by the Special Court. The Court has therefore concluded enforcement agreements with countries where those convicted by the Special Court will be imprisoned in accordance with international standards required of all international tribunals.

"At the time the (former) Registrar signed an enforcement agreement with Rwanda, he personally inspected the wing of Mpanga Prison originally built for use by the ICTR, and stated that it exceeded international standards."

The Court is an independent judicial body set up to try those accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Sierra Leone during the civil war.

## The Senator

Tuesday, 22 September 2009

### 'No Contact with RUF Leader After May 1992'

## special report

*By Alpha Sesay, AllAfrica.com*

Despite allegations that Charles Taylor backed and controlled Sierra Leone's rebel group during the country's 11-year conflict, the former Liberian president today said this allegation could not be true because he did not have any contact with top rebel leader Foday Sankoh after May 1992.

"I never talked to Foday Sankoh after May 1992. I only saw him again in 1999," Mr. Taylor said during his testimony today.

Mr. Taylor was responding to the evidence of Revolutionary United Front (RUF) radio operator Dauda A. Fornie (alias DAF), who in his December 2008 testimony said that as radio operator for the RUF, he facilitated communication between RUF leader Mr.

Sankoh and Mr. Taylor, during which time Mr. Taylor sent arms and ammunition for use by RUF rebels in Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor dismissed the witness's evidence as lies.

"O Boy, I swear. It is so big a lie. I'll just be repeating myself that it's a lie and I don't want to sound like a broken record," Mr. Taylor said.

In his December 2008 testimony, Witness Fornie told the court that while he served as radio operator for Mr. Sankoh, he contacted Mr. Taylor's radio operator regularly with messages for Mr. Taylor. The witness said that every morning, he would contact Mr. Taylor's radio station called Tree Top to know if there was any information for Mr. Sankoh from Mr. Taylor. He said that around mid 1993, Mr. Sankoh used to instruct him to contact Mr. Taylor's station Tree Top with messages for Mr. Taylor to send weapons for the RUF.

Mr. Taylor today dismissed the witness's assertions as "total nonsense."

"There was no official contact between Mr. Sankoh and me or my defense minister," he added. Mr. Taylor explained that it is possible for Mr. Sankoh to have been in touch with some of his (Sankoh's) "Special Forces" colleagues who were part of Mr. Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), and with whom Mr. Sankoh might have undergone training in Libya. Any such contact, Mr. Taylor said, was not within his knowledge and he would have acted to stop it if he had known about it.

"If I had known that any senior operator was in contact with Sankoh, he would have been removed and punished," he told the judges.

## NACSA TO LAUNCH TRUST FUND FOR WAR VICTIMS

BY SANTI GIE KAMARA

The Commissioner of the National Commission for Social Action, Mr. Conton has informed journalists about the country's Reparations Programs and the Proposed Trust Fund his institution will be launching on the 16th October 2009 for War Victims.

Mr. Saidu Conton Sesay made this disclosure on Friday 18th September 2009 at the Ministry of Information and Communication conference hall in Freetown. The NaCSA Commissioner revealed that section 7 (6) of the TRC Act, recommended for the establishment of a special fund for war victims and that contributions, financial and other relevant issues should be provided to the fund through some of the following: government allocation, donor support, fund from other legal sources and contributions from corporate entities, benefactors and friends of Sierra Leone.

Mr. Saidu Sesay Conton told the news gathering that the beneficiaries of the trust fund are the registered and validated

victims within the five categories to it; amputees, other war wounded, sexually violated women, child victims, war widows and dependents of victims with fifty percent reduction in earning capacity.

He categorically stated that the fund will be used to administer benefits/services inter alia, pension; micro grant; skills training, free physical health care; psychosocial counselling, educational support for school children and symbolic reparation for community healing. "Shelters for the most vulnerable will also be provided to support the efforts of the Norwegian friends of Sierra Leone" he affirmed.

Giving an overview of their programmes, the head of NaCSA maintained that they have made significant progress in all of the following areas since November 2007, and have successfully fulfilled the requirements for lifting the suspension of funding for the ADB funded Social Action Support Project (SASP) and resuscitated the programme which is now running, secured an extension of the World Bank funded National Social Action

for a labour-intensive cash for-work intervention; secured funding for a Pilot Youth Enterprise Development (POSYE) funded by the Italian Government; sourced a US\$3m funding from the UN Peace building Fund (PBF) to kick start the reparations programme and so many other developments.

He also informed the press that NaCSA has registered approximate 27,992 victims covering the 149 chiefdoms and western area; facilitated the provision of fistula surgery and gynaecological assistance to 135 victims of sexual violence and a total number of twenty symbolic reparations have been completed nationwide and it remains another twenty to go before the end of the year.

They also provided emergency medical assistance including removal of bullet fragments to twenty-one victims with more to follow.

Mr. Conton assured, they will commence paying educational support to 6,968 child victims and part payment of microgrant to 12,967 victims especially amputees, other war wounded and sexually violated women across the Country.

# Reparation Process Delayed

The Commissioner of the National Commission for Social Action, Mr. Conton Sesay has disclosed that the reparation process has been delayed due to lack of funding.

Mr. Sesay made this statement at the weekly press conference held at the Ministry of Information and Communication.

According to him, they received the sum of 3 million dollars from the Peace Building Fund which he said they are going to be used to start the process. Part of the said sum, he said will be used to give education support to 6,988 children victims.

Out of 27, 949 victims registered in the country, 12, 967 victims, he said are going to receive part payment of micro grant some of the victims particularly the amputees and the war wounded.

The reparation process, he said is guided by the recommendations of the TRC report and that the areas focused are education, health, shelter and training.

*Also read this story on [www.exclusivepress.net](http://www.exclusivepress.net)*

## Newstime Africa

Thursday, 17 September 2009

### Sierra Leonean Heads UN Special Court's Prosecution Team

By Daniel Nbompa-Turay



*UN Special Court Chief Prosecutor Joseph Kamara*

Joseph Kamara, Deputy Prosecutor at the UN backed Special Court in Sierra Leone, a Sierra Leonean in his 40s have been appointed Acting Prosecutor by the UN Secretary General with effect from 8th September, 2009. He leads the entire prosecution in the Special Court. He succeeded Stephen Rapp who resigned to become the US Ambassador-at-Large for war crimes. Others who have served in that position include David Crane and Desmond De Silver.

He joined the Special Court Office of the Prosecution in 2004 after working 8 years in the Office of the Director of Public Prosecution as state-counsel, senior-state-counsel, in private practice and with several law firms in Washington, D.C. In 2005 he led the Civil Defense Force Prosecution Team as Senior Trial Attorney and was appointed Deputy Prosecutor in 2008. Speaking to Newstime Africa, Kamara identified his immediate focus as pursuing right prosecutorial strategies with fairness and justice to bring the Taylor's trial to a successful conclusion by 2010.

Highlighting some of the legacies of the Special Court, Kamara pointed the enforcement of the rule of law in Sierra Leone. He continued that the Court indicted a government minister, a sitting head of state, rebels and soldiers and they were all given fair trials. (No man is above the law, he noted). The Court also established justice and fair play for the victims. In addition, the Court is the first international tribunal that prosecuted recruitment of child soldiers, force marriage and sexual slavery.

This, coupled with the regular briefings to parliament on the workings of the Court and the Rome Statute, contributed in no small way to the enactment of the 2007 Child Rights Act and Gender Acts by the Sierra Leone Parliament. He assured that trained staff of the Court who will be going into other spheres of work at the close of the Court will undoubtedly exhibit their expertise which will certainly add to the national output.

The Court also provides capacity building training to the judiciary, police, prisons, Anti-Corruption Commission, et al. It also modelled the course structure at the Sierra Leone Law School, where Kamara voluntarily lectures 'International Criminal Law and Procedures', to reflect international standard. The Court also has successfully incorporated 'International Humanitarian Law' into the University curriculum. Through a memorandum of understanding between the University and the Court, senior legal practitioners deliver public lectures at the University from time to time.

He noted that the AFRC and CDF cases have been closed and that appeal judgments for the RUF cases are due in October, 2009. For security reasons and the fact prisons for ICC convicts should meet international requirements, convicts will serve their jail terms in Rwanda or Sweden. They will be moved by the first quarter of 2010. He speculated that the court will wrap up in the first quarter of 2011 or before that.



The Court building in Freetown will be the property of the Government of Sierra Leone which can be used as wish.

As President of the BAR Association, his immediate challenges are lifting the standards of legal practice in Sierra Leone. This will involve the introduction of a code of ethics which all lawyers will abide to, facilitating training and exchange programmes for young lawyers, the setting up of a standard law library and availing the jurisprudence of the Special Court to all lawyers so as to deepen their understanding of international justice system.

The Special Court is an independent tribunal established jointly by the UN and the Government of Sierra Leone to bring to justice those who bear the greatest responsibility for atrocities committed in Sierra Leone after 30th November. In similar UN trials such as in Rwanda and Yugoslavia, indigenous legal practitioners were never appointed to such a high office. So, Joseph Kamara's appointment is a test case but he is confident that with his good team of competent and committed staff, he is determined to live up to expectations.

## International Justice Tribune

Wednesday, 16 September 2009

### Interview Stephen Rapp, US Ambassador for War Crimes

By International Justice Tribune



The Hague,  
Cambodia

**“It’s important that we get back into a position of leadership”**

Since 2005, Stephen Rapp has been prosecuting war criminals – first as Chief of Prosecutions for the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, then as Chief Prosecutor for the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), where he led the case against former President of Liberia, Charles Taylor.

He’s now back in Washington D.C., as head of the US State Department’s Office for War Crimes Issues.

Mr. Rapp spoke to the IJT’s Hermione Gee on September 7th – his last day as prosecutor for the SCSL.

#### **What was the greatest challenge in making the prosecution case against Taylor?**

There is no dispute about the horrendous atrocities committed in Sierra Leone – the amputations, the rape, the sexual slavery, the murders, the use of child soldiers, the ways in which people were enslaved to dig diamonds - but you have to show the responsibility of someone that never set foot in the country.

Here you have to rely upon oral testimony and you also have to rely on individuals who themselves have been involved in some of the atrocities.

And when you have to go beyond Sierra Leone - which is the country in which we have the power to ask for cooperation of the police and other authorities - and go to Liberia where we don’t have that, and find credible witnesses and assure them of protection and bring them to the Hague and present their testimony...That is an enormous challenge.

#### **As a model of a hybrid court, do you think the SCSL was successful?**

I think so.

[D]oing it the way we did it, which was to build it as a partnership between the country and the international community, I think it’s been justice that’s been a whole lot closer to the people and a whole lot more meaningful.

Was it a blow to US policy of “renationalising” international justice that the Taylor case couldn’t be tried in Sierra Leone but had to be brought to The Hague?

Obviously, moving it here, symbolically, was not useful.

It was possible then for some to say it was a case of Europe judging Africa and we have to say, wait just a second here, this is the Special Court for Sierra Leone, 60 per cent of its people are Sierra Leonean, and a substantial number of its judges, etc, in a court with a statute that was built on agreement with the country.

It's not a bunch of strangers and it's the internationals working in collaboration with them.

### **But is the hybrid model still central to US policy?**

Very much so. Keep in mind that the US is prepared to engage with the ICC when the ICC has jurisdiction over cases and when there really isn't a national option available because there's no ability or willingness to investigate or prosecute.

But as a general rule, it makes so much more sense to do it where the crime has occurred, and the process helps build the justice system so that it's able to deal with other challenges in the future, so it's able to deal with the mid-level or lower level offenders that an international institution can't deal with.

And then to the extent you have the problems that lead to internationalisation, that you've got perhaps the perception of victor's justice, that the national system isn't sufficiently independent, that it doesn't have the capacity to do sophisticated investigations with forensic science and all of that, then you can inject into that process international participation to improve it and to increase the independence of it.

### **How do you understand the new US administration's policy towards the ICC?**

It's already to some extent an American policy to engage with the ICC, to work with the ICC, and I think we can very much look forward to that continuing and being strengthened.

At the same time, if you look at quotations from President Obama and Secretary Clinton, they both have indicated that it's premature for the US to join the ICC, that there are still issues about the fact that the United States is involved in worldwide security and humanitarian assistance and efforts against terrorism, and it could find its forces subject to politicised prosecutions.

The position that I've said that the US should take, at least before stepping forward to deal with whether we ratify the ICC, is to basically take a firm position that if we have any of these crimes committed by Americans, we've got tough laws on genocide and war crimes, etc, that we will investigate and prosecute our own. Because the ICC basically says it's up to the country to do it themselves and it's only when it can't or won't that the ICC steps in. And our position should be that we'll never give cause for any legitimately motivated prosecutor to take a case against an American.

### **Two major issues that President Obama has had to tackle since taking office are the status of the US military prison at Guantanamo Bay, and ongoing revelations about the CIA torturing terrorism suspects. What sort of judicial solution would you propose to these very political cases?**

First of all, I want to note that as Ambassador for War Crimes, I'm not a prosecutor. I'll [be dealing] with the diplomacy of encouraging appropriate methods – including prosecution – to bringing accountability to situations of mass atrocities.

My office doesn't have any direct role on the Guantanamo situation. Obviously the President has spoken on that, we'll be closing Guantanamo within a year, that there's a review process going on in terms of the individuals who remain there in terms of where they can be tried.

And certainly to the extent I'm involved in policy, I'll be urging that we adhere to our international obligations. We'll never again take the position that Geneva doesn't apply to the United States, a sad position taken not that long ago by the previous administration.

And in regard to the torture allegations, I think what's happening there is entirely appropriate and consistent with any country, even if they were in the ICC, which is that you deal with that yourself.

Just because there are allegations doesn't mean necessarily that these are cases that can be prosecuted. So we can't say for sure that there will be prosecutions but what we can say is there's a good faith investigation on going and if there are sustainable cases, they'll be brought.

**As you say, your role is now diplomatic. Is that a challenging position to take on at the moment given the many current allegations of US complicity in torture and prisoner abuse?**

Exactly. We've had the difficult perception created that America is opposed to the enforcement of international humanitarian law. It's important that we get back into a position of leadership and that we are consistent in thought, word and deed.

And given what President Obama said in terms of our values and what we believe in as a country and the reason people have traditionally admired the United States, because of its adherence to democratic values and human rights, that will be clear again, and we'll have to deal with those situations that occurred when we weren't so observant to those values....

But whatever might have happened last year, two years ago, ten years ago, fifty years ago, shouldn't prevent us from exercising leadership now.

## New Democrat (Monrovia)

Monday, 21 September 2009

### **Liberia: City Littered with Mass Graves, TRC discovers**

A. Abbas Dulleh

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has identified several mass graves have been discovered and memorialized in Monrovia and its environs.

The mass graves of war victims, some containing over 200 bodies, are amongst the 200 mass graves the TRC discovered across the country as part of the 2005 Act that created the Commission.

During a tour of the sites Sunday, it was discovered that one of the mass graves in the Lakpazee Zoo, Airfield community, contains over 200 bodies.

Residents told journalists that the fighters who committed the atrocities slaughtered the animals in the zoo first and then ate them turned on residents. At the Tweh Farm Cemetery, 18 bodies were buried in a mass grave. Wilson said the victims were those killed when ECOMOG opened the New Bridge for the first time in 1992.

The exercise is for the TRC to identify mass graves around the country and give them befitting burial in keeping with its mandates.

## UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 18 September 2009

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

### International Clips on Liberia

#### **Visiting Indian Minister of State And President Sirleaf Hold Bilateral Talks**

Sep 18, 2009 (Liberia Government/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- The visiting Indian Minister of State for External Affairs, Dr. Shashi Tharoor, has held bilateral talks with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, pledging his Government's support to Liberia's development programme. During the talks, the Indian official announced that his Government would provide about 25 buses to aid Liberia's public transport sector. Dr. Tharoor also announced that 96-thousand, 600 metric tons of rice has been allocated for Liberia by the Indian Government. India, he said had said had planned to allocate more rice for Liberia, but could not do so due to the unfavorable weather which adversely affected harvest levels in India. Dr. Tharoor also spoke of his Government's preparedness to offer police training to some Liberian police officers. Liberia, he said should recommend training areas which would be more desirable for the country.

#### **Phoenix police release reports in abuse case of Liberian girl**

The Arizona Republic

Police released a set of reports Thursday detailing several incidents of suspected child abuse and neglect in which a pair of Liberian refugee parents are accused of putting their 8-year-old daughter at risk. The parents, whose daughter drew international headlines after she was gang-raped by a group of Liberian refugee boys in July, could face felony charges for the string of incidents dating back as early as 2005 when the girl was first found wandering unsupervised and trying to start the ignition on random vehicles parked near the family's home. Phoenix investigators compiled a list of incidents in which Child Protective Services was called to aid the girl dating back to 2007, when Glendale police documented abuse allegations made by the girl's elementary school teachers. None of the cases resulted in criminal charges.

### International Clips on West Africa

#### **Sierra Leone**

#### **Three dead, 11 injured in Sierra Leone demo –police**

FREETOWN (Reuters) - At least three people died and 11 more were injured on Thursday when police in Sierra Leone's capital used live ammunition to break up a demonstration about crime levels. The crowds were demonstrating against what they said is the police force's inability to curb crime. At least one of the dead and most of the injured were hit by live ammunition used by the police officers in the Rotifunk neighbourhood, a hospital source said. The demonstration highlights simmering frustrations in large sections of the West African state's population, despite an overall return to stability since the end of a 1991-2002 war. "(The) dead are three, the injured are 11," Chris Charly, Sierra Leone's assistant inspector general of police, told Reuters without giving any details of how people were killed or injured.

## Sierra Leone welcomes oil find off coast

[www.moneybiz.co.za/](http://www.moneybiz.co.za/)

FREETOWN - Sierra Leone welcomed on Thursday news of the discovery of oil off its coast with cautious optimism, saying that the whole country should benefit. The first find of oil in the west African nation was announced earlier by a consortium led by US firm Anadarko, with Australia's Woodside Petroleum Ltd, Spain's Repsol YPF and Britain's Tullow Oil PLC as partners. "We are evaluating the first results we have obtained and we expect to drill new exploratory wells shortly that will allow us to determine the commercial potential of the area," Repsol said in a statement. Sierra Leone's Information Minister Ibrahim Ben Kargbo told journalists, "President Ernest Koroma is extremely happy about the discovery but has advised that we must all be cautious and watch further developments."

## Guinea

### Guinea RUSAL dispute sends warning sign to miners

[Steelguru.com/news](http://Steelguru.com/news)

Reuters reported that Resources firms with operations in Guinea will be unsettled by a court decision to rescind a deal with RUSAL but even a jumpy Guinean administration is unlikely to throw out the economically vital miners. A court in the world's biggest bauxite exporter said last week that the 2006 sale of the Friguia alumina refinery to Russian metals giant UC RUSAL was unlawful and the Guinean state was retaking ownership of its largest industrial operation. Since then, the government has said that it is opening to talks with RUSAL about the deal.

## Ivory Coast

### Ivory Coast deal is 'not enough'

<http://news.bbc.co.uk>

**A group of Ivory Coast residents who were victims of dumped toxic waste have said a compensation deal offered by a London-based oil firm is not enough.**

Trafigura has said it is close to agreeing compensation to settle a case against it by 30,000 claimants. Under the deal, the company would pay an undisclosed sum to those who suffered less serious illnesses. On Wednesday, the UN published a report suggesting a strong link between 15 deaths and the toxic waste dumps. The oil trading company has always insisted that it was not responsible for the dumping of the waste as this was carried out by a sub-contractor. It also denies that the waste - gasoline residues mixed with caustic washings - could have led to the serious illnesses the residents claim, which include skin burns, bleeding and breathing problems.

## Local Media – Newspaper

### **India Earmarks Huge Assistance for Liberia, Promises 25 Buses**

(The News, The Analyst, Heritage, Daily Observer, The Inquirer, New Vision)

- The Indian Minister of State for External Affairs, Dr. Shashi Tharoor yesterday held bilateral talks with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.
- During the talks, he pledged his Government's support to Liberia's development programme and announced that his Government would provide about 25 buses to aid Liberia's public transport sector.
- Dr. Tharoor also announced that 96-thousand, 600 metric tons of rice has been allocated for Liberia by the Indian Government.
- In response, President Johnson Sirleaf acknowledged the progress India has made in its agricultural sector.
- The President indicated that India's experience in the sector would be an invaluable asset for Liberia's agricultural programme and called for stronger collaboration between the two countries.

## **Sinoe Superintendent-Designate Confirmation Faces Hitches**

(Public Agenda, Heritage, Liberian Express)

- The confirmation proceeding of the “controversial” Sinoe County Superintendent-designate Milton Teahjay has experienced serious complications in the Senate.
- The complications relate to the decision of the Senate to reject a report from its Internal Affairs, Governance and Reconciliation Committee.
- The Committee which conducted the confirmation hearing of Mr. Teahjay recommended he appears before the plenary for further clarifications.
- The recommendation sparked controversy in the Senate with some Senators describing it as highly unclear.
- Amidst the debate, the President of the Senate, Vice President Joseph Boakai ordered the Committee to submit a detailed report.
- However, the Chairman of the Senate Internal Affairs Committee Adolphus Dolo told reporters his Committee would not present any other report.

## **President Sirleaf Endorses Legislative Resolution to Suspend TRC Report** (Heritage, The Analyst)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has signed into law a Joint Resolution of the Legislature suspending all actions on the TRC final report.
- During the signing ceremony, President Sirleaf said every Liberian needed to study the report and engage in consultations.
- President Sirleaf said she would work with the Liberia Council of Churches in leading a process of dialogue on the TRC findings.
- The President hopes the dialogue process involving the Council of Churches will lead to true reconciliation.
- The Chairman of the Senate’s Executive Committee, Senator Daniel Naatehn said the Joint Resolution was intended to place a stay order on the TRC final report.

## **Reports Say Liberia Agriculture Plantation Under Siege**

(New Democrat, Heritage, The Inquirer)

- Reports say one of the country’s largest rubber plantations, the Liberia Agricultural Company (LAC) is under siege by a group of marauding armed men.
- The men said to be armed with AK-47 assault rifles and single barrel guns have forced workers to desert the plantation. Reports say one person has been killed and over 16 others wounded.
- Correspondents say a tour of the plantation revealed that the management offices have been shut down while efforts to speak to managers on the situation proved futile.

**Local Media – Star Radio** (*culled from website today at 09:00 am*)

### **Setback for Threshold bill...President Vetoes**

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has vetoed the passage of the threshold bill after seeking legal opinion on grounds that the conditionality was unconstitutional.
- The House of Representatives passed the bill at 40,000 provided no county gets less than 2 seats and sent it to the President for signature.
- The President also cited lack of finance to service the over 20 additional seats.
- Reports say the House of Representatives is discussing the veto by the President.
- Under article 35 of the constitution, the Legislature can over-ride the veto if two third of each House vote a re-passage.

(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Sky F.M., Truth F.M. and ELBC)

### **President Sirleaf endorses Legislative resolution to suspend TRC report**

(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Sky F.M., Truth F.M. and ELBC)

### **Government, UN to Launch new Software Today**

- Reports say the Liberian Government in collaboration with the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) would on Friday officially launch the LiberiaInfo Version 2.0.



- The LiberiaInfo Version 2.0 is a customized version of DevInfo, software that compiles and disseminates human development data.
- The system was endorsed by the United Nations development group to assist countries in monitoring the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
- DevInfo also contains simple and users friendly features that reduce tables, graphs and maps for inclusion in reports, presentation and advocacy materials.
- According to the Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS) the launch of the software followed series of database administration and users training workshops for over 40 persons from governmental and private sectors.

*(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Sky F.M., Truth F.M. and ELBC)*

#### **Deputy Finance Minister on Fighting Poverty**

- Deputy Finance Minister for Administration Tarnue Mawolo has identified agriculture as one of the best means of addressing the high poverty rate in the country.
- Minister Mawolo challenged Liberians to focus on agriculture because the sector has the ability to create jobs at all levels including skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled.
- He said with 62.9 percent of the rural population under the age of 30, poverty can be best addressed through the enhancement of production in the agriculture sector.
- The Deputy Finance Minister said government believes that creating a robust agriculture sector would enhance food security and help generate income. He spoke at a gathering of agricultural students on Thursday at the University of Liberia.

*(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Sky F.M., and ELBC)*

#### **Since Superintendent-Designate Confirmation Faces Hitches at Senate**

*(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Sky F.M., and ELBC)*

#### **Controversial Newspaper Editor Submits Documents**

- The "controversial" Managing Editor of the New Broom Newspaper Roland Worwee has finally submitted his documents to the Information Ministry for ratification.
- Mr. Worwee in an interview said he discovered some errors in his documents and needed to have them corrected.
- On the issue of the lawsuit against him by President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Mr. Worwee said he would not comment because the matter was in court.
- Information Minister Lawrence Bropleh told a news conference that his Ministry welcomes the step taken by Mr. Worwee and noted that once the necessary ratification processes are followed Mr. Worwee would be given his permit as required by law.

*(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Sky F.M., and ELBC)*

#### **EITI Chairman Due in The Country**

- The Chairman of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), Dr. Peter Eigen arrives in Liberia Sunday for a 3-day visit.
- A statement from LEITI said while in the country Dr. Eigen will meet with President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, other stakeholders of EITI and acquaint himself with the status of the group.
- Dr. Eigen's visit is in furtherance of the increasing recognitions Liberia continues to receive relative to the pace-setting performance of EITI program in the country.
- Liberia is the first country in the world to include forestry and agriculture in its EITI program and the first African country to undertake EITI validation.
- Besides Nigeria, Liberia is the second country in the world to have a dedicated EITI legislation.

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## Daily Nation (Kenya)

Friday, 18 September 2009

### Ocampo wants trials split in 3

By PETER LEFTIE



*Chief Prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo of the International Criminal Court, The Hague, Netherlands.*

*PHOTO/FILE*

The International Criminal Court chief prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo on Thursday proposed a three-tier approach to deal with architects of the post-election violence.

Mr Moreno-Ocampo, at a meeting with Lands minister James Orengo, proposed the creation of special courts in Kenya to try those who committed atrocities during the violence.

The ICC will deal with those who bore the biggest responsibility for the chaos, he added. The two met at the ICC headquarters at The Hague.

#### **Confessions**

Mr Moreno-Ocampo proposed that the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) be involved in delivering justice to victims of the violence by obtaining confessions from the perpetrators with a view to promoting forgiveness and national healing.

The chief prosecutor, however, said the TJRC should not stray from its mandate. Mr Orengo is at The Hague in the Netherlands at the invitation of the Dutch Government for a human rights conference. Both Mr Orengo and the ICC prosecutor addressed the conference, with the Lands minister presenting a paper on fighting impunity and peace building.

Also at The Hague to push for the prosecution of architects of post-election violence by the ICC are vice-chairman of the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights Hassan Omar and the organisation's former boss Maina Kiai.

International Commission of Jurists Kenya executive director George Kegoro is also at The Hague. They will hold talks with the ICC chief prosecutor on Friday.

Mr Orengo told the *Nation* that the ICC chief prosecutor had informed him that he intended to hold another round of talks with President Kibaki and Prime Minister Raila Odinga to encourage them to push for a local process to try the suspects.

## Sudan Tribune

Tuesday, 22 September 2009

### Sudan says no to hybrid courts for Darfur crimes

Sudan will not accept any recommendations by an African Union (AU) commission recommending hybrid courts to try Darfur war crimes suspects, the head of a pro-government group said.



*Fathi Khalil, head of Sudan bar association*

Fathi Khalil who leads the Sudanese bar association told the Hague based Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) that any such step is in violation of the country's laws.

"The Sudanese constitution and laws reject the participation of foreign judges in Sudanese courts," Khalil said.

"We have an independent and fair judicial system and so there is no need for hybrid courts," he added.

A panel headed by former South African president Thabo Mbeki is wrapping up a set of recommendations for submission to the AU in the coming weeks on harmonizing accountability in Darfur with seeking peace.

The AU formed the panel last February in response to the imminent issuance of an arrest warrant by the International Criminal Court (ICC) based court for Sudanese president Omer Hassan Al-Bashir.

The timing of the formation of the panel caused many Darfuris to accuse the AU of attempting to shield Bashir from prosecution through recommending that he does not face the ICC.

The conviction was reinforced after the AU summit in Libya last month adopted a resolution not to cooperate with the ICC in arresting the Sudanese head of state.

The panel gave little indications of its recommendations on justice mechanisms but it appears all but certain that with propose hybrid courts as a compromise between international justice and local judiciary.

Sudanese figures interviewed by Mbeki's panel have overwhelmingly dismissed the ability or willingness of Sudanese judiciary to prosecute Darfur criminals.

Barney Afako, a spokesperson for the AUPD told IWPR that that things are far more complex than prosecuting the perpetrators of war crimes.

"We shouldn't just concentrate on the narrow context of justice, but on the long-term stability of Sudan," he told IWPR. "Stability in Sudan is crucial for the whole region. Nine states border the country, and all are directly affected by conflict within its borders.

"Moreover, Sudan reflects many of the diversities that other African countries have. If these differences can co-exist in Sudan, this sends a powerful message to other countries in the region. That is why a solution must be found for Sudan and why the African Union is investing this kind of support," he added.

It remains to be seen how Khartoum will react to the findings of the panel but Khalil said Sudan is open to a South Africa style Truth and reconciliation commission only.

A senior official at the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) in New York, who asked not to be named, told Sudan Tribune last week that he expects the panel to make a finding that the Sudanese judiciary “is unable and unwilling to carry out credible and genuine prosecutions in Darfur”.

“Based on what I know it is likely that the panel will recommend hybrid courts with the participation of Arab and African judges that conforms with international standards to try those not already charged by the ICC which means that Bashir and others will still have to answer at the Hague. Neither the panel nor the AU have the power to strip the ICC from its mandate particularly when Sudan has done little in that department,” the official said.

“I also expect them to call for a truth and reconciliation commission in Darfur,” he added.

The UN Security Council (UNSC) referred the situation in Darfur in March 2005 to the International Criminal Court (ICC) on recommendation from the UN Commission of Inquiry, Sudan insisted that it is capable of trying the suspects itself and rejected the jurisdiction of the international tribunal.

The ICC has so far charged Bashir along with former Sudanese state minister for humanitarian affairs and governor of South Kordofan Ahmed Haroun, militia leader Ali Kushayb and Bahr Idriss Abu Garda, the leader of the Darfur United Resistance Front (URF).

All the suspects remain at large with the exception of Abu Garda who appeared voluntarily before the ICC judges on charges related to attack on AU peacekeepers in Haskanita in 2007.

## BBC Online

Friday, 18 September 2009

### Ex-tea boss took part in genocide

The former head of Rwanda's tea industry has pleaded guilty to complicity in the 1994 genocide.

Michel Bagaragaza admitted playing a role in the massacre at the international Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) which sits in Tanzania.

He said he allowed a militia to use tea factory vehicles on their rampages.



Michel Bagaragaza decided to plead guilty as part of a plea agreement

The ex-tea boss had originally pleaded not guilty in 2005 to four counts of genocide charges, but has amended his plea as part of a plea agreement.

Rwanda's former tea chief was seen as being close to ex-President Juvenal Habyarimana, whose death when his plane was shot down on 6 April, 1994, sparked the 100-day massacres.

An estimated 800,000 ethnic Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed during that time. Mr Bagaragaza voluntarily surrendered to the ICTR in 2005 and has testified against others accused of taking part in the killings.

In return for his co-operation, he requested that he be tried outside Africa. But attempts to have his trial in Norway and the Netherlands failed and he was transferred back to Arusha last year.

He was originally charged with conspiracy to commit genocide, genocide, complicity in genocide and violations of the Geneva Conventions, the ICTR said in a statement. But in a plea agreement, the prosecution amended the indictment on Thursday and Mr Bagaragaza pleaded guilty to complicity in genocide.

The ICTR, which is based in Arusha, Tanzania, has completed 47 cases.



Some 800,000 people were killed during the 1994 genocide

It was initially due to complete its prosecutions by the end of 2008, but the UN Security Council has given the court until the end of 2010 to finish the trials.

## BBC Online

Sunday, 20 September 2009

### DR Congo deports genocide suspect

A former mayor accused of taking part in the 1994 Rwandan genocide has been sent from the Democratic Republic of Congo to a UN-backed tribunal.

Gregoire Ndahimana is accused of responsibility for the massacre of some 2,000 ethnic Tutsis sheltering in a church which was bulldozed.

He was arrested in August during operations against Rwandan rebels in North Kivu, eastern DR Congo.



Gregoire Ndahimana's family will be sent to Rwanda

His transfer is seen as a sign of improved DR Congo-Rwanda relations.

"We have done humanity a service, because the crime of genocide is an attack upon the peace and security of humankind," said DR Congo Justice Minister Luzolo Bambi Lessa, quoted by Reuters news agency.

Mr Ndahimana was sent from Kinshasa to Arusha, Tanzania, where the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) is based.

His wife and five children will be sent to Rwanda, reports the AFP news agency.

ICTR prosecutors believe that almost the entire 6,000-strong population of the town of Kivumu - where Mr Ndahimana was mayor - was killed during the genocide.



After the 1994 killing spree, some of those responsible fled across the border to DR Congo, sparking years of unrest in the region.

After years of mutual mistrust, DR Congo and Rwanda earlier this year started working together against both countries' rebel groups based along their common border.

Congolese Communication Minister Lambert Mende used the example of Mr Ndahimana to renew calls that Rwanda send Congolese rebel leader Laurent Nkunda to Kinshasa to face trial, AFP says. Gen Nkunda was captured at the start of this year's joint operations and is believed to be under house arrest in Rwanda.

## Reuters

Sunday, 20 September 2009

### **Congo Transfers Suspect to Rwanda Genocide Court**

By REUTERS

Democratic Republic of Congo transferred to the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) Sunday a man accused of the massacre of at least 2,000 Rwandan Tutsis during the 1994 genocide.

Gregoire Ndahimana will go on trial at the ICTR, a tribunal set up in Tanzania to tackle the most serious crimes committed during the 1994 genocide, when around 800,000 Rwandan Tutsis and moderate Hutus were slaughtered during 100 days.

"We have done humanity a service, because the crime of genocide is an attack upon the peace and security of humankind," Congo's Justice Minister Luzolo Bambi Lessa said after Ndahimana boarded a plane to take him to the court.

Ndahimana, a local administrator in the Rwandan town of Kivumu in 1994, was arrested last month by Congolese soldiers.

According to his ICTR indictment, he is responsible for the deaths of at least 2,000 Tutsis, most of whom were killed when Hutus bulldozed the church where they were being held.

ICTR prosecutors believe almost all of Kivumu's 6,000 Tutsi residents had been killed by July 1994.

The tribunal, based in the Tanzanian city of Arusha, was seeking Ndahimana's arrest for genocide or complicity in genocide, conspiracy to commit genocide, and crimes against humanity for extermination.

Ndahimana was captured during operations by Congo's army against Rwandan Hutu rebels, who are known as the FDLR and include in their ranks some members of the Hutu militia that carried out the 1994 killings.

Most of the former Rwandan military and Interahamwe militia members responsible for the genocide fled to Congo after Tutsi rebels, led by Rwanda's current president, Paul Kagame, came to power and ended the killing.

Their presence in eastern Congo, Rwanda's giant western neighbour, served as a pretext for two Rwandan interventions, which sparked a 1998-2003 war and humanitarian catastrophe that has claimed 5.4 million lives over the past decade.

However, relations between the two countries have dramatically improved this year and Ndahimana's arrest follows joint operations between Congo and Rwanda's army against the Rwandan Hutu rebels still in Congo's east.

Twelve other ICTR indictees remain at large.

(Editing by David Lewis)

## Swans Commentary

Monday, 21 September 2009

<http://www.swans.com>

### Africa And The International Criminal Court Of [In]justice

**By Femi Akomolafe**

"Until the philosophy that holds one race superior and another inferior is finally and permanently discredited and abandoned, there will always be war."

-Emperor Haile Sellassie

"The ICC is not a court set up to bring to book prime ministers of the United Kingdom or presidents of the United States."-Robin Cook, former British Minister.

*(Swans - September 21, 2009)* Angered by the callous disrespect shown it by the UN Security Council (UNSC), the African Union (AU) at its last summit in Sitre, Libya, (July 1-3, 2009) decided to withdraw cooperation with the International Criminal Court (ICC).

What seems to have made the AU angry was the decision by the ICC to indict Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir and issue an arrest warrant against him. The AU had asked the UNSC to suspend the indictment against al-Bashir for a year because it [AU] was involved in very delicate negotiations over the Darfur case, which the AU believed could be derailed by any indictment.

The AU had established a High Level Panel on Darfur chaired by former South African president Thabo Mbeki. The panel is tasked to look comprehensively into the Darfur crisis and make a holistic recommendation on how it could be resolved, taking into recognition the AU position that there is a complementary relationship between peace and justice, and that neither should be pursued at the expense of the other.

The UNSC decided to ignore the pleas of the African leaders. And as though to rub salt to the collective wounds of the African leaders, the ICC decided to issue its warrant a few days before they (African leaders) gathered for their annual summit; hence their fury.

It must have meant a great deal for these leaders to take that significant decision. It looks like this time the ire of Africans has been provoked beyond the threshold of tolerance. Except for NGOs and their local supporters (who know where their bread is buttered), Africans across the length and breadth of the continent are hopping mad. They are angry, very angry. They are indignant.

Having been taken for granted for so long by the West, they are protesting the latest insult from the hypocritical countries. They are angry at the West's latest assault on their collective psyches. They are fuming over the sickening double-standards of the West in dealing with black people. Their anger is well justified when we look closely at the issue at stake.

On March 4, 2009, the ICC issued an arrest warrant against the president of Sudan, Omar al-Bashir. The ICC was created on July 1, 2002, by virtue of the Treaty of Rome to try four categories of crimes: war crimes, crimes of genocide, crimes of aggression, and crimes against humanity. One hundred eight of the world's 192 countries are members of the court. The U.S., Russia, India, and China are among the countries that have refused to join. Sudan is also not a member!



As usual, the USA is busy playing the hypocrite. The most-influential country in the world, which refused to recognize the ICC, has suddenly become its most vociferous heavyweight champion. The U.S. is widely believed to have arm-twisted several African countries into signing the Treaty of Rome.

Under heavy pressure from the U.S. and its sidekick, Britain, the Security Council of the UN (minus China) voted to refer charges of indictment against president al-Bashir to the ICC, unlike in previous cases whereby countries have done the referring. This was necessary because Sudan, like the U.S., has not ratified the Rome Statute that founded the ICC. However, Sudan is, like most countries, bound by decisions of the UNSC.

The ICC charges against al-Bashir list five counts of "individual criminal responsibility" for crimes against humanity -- murder, extermination, forcibly transfer, torture, and rape. There are also two additional counts for war crimes. One of the twists in the Sudan drama and the engulfing crises was that in January 2005, Judge Antoni Cassese, the first president of International Criminal Tribunal, headed the United Nations International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur. The commission dismissed genocide charges against the Sudanese president, Omar al-Bashir. Four years later, the UN (albeit its Security Council) yielded to heavy pressure to issue an indictment against a man who had been cleared by a commission of the same UN!

The London-based *New African* magazine is currently airing views on the ICC-Sudan saga and it is evident that many Africans are clearly angry by the decision to indict. And this should also be understandable when we look closely at the [apparent] racial bias of the ICC.

As Courtenay Griffiths, the lead counsel for former Liberian leader Charles Taylor, pointed out on a Ghana's Joy FM interview: "[...] By October 2007, the ICC prosecutor, Luis Moreno-Ocampo had received 2,889 communications about alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity in at least 139 countries, and yet by March 2009, the prosecutor had opened investigations into just four cases: Uganda, DR Congo, the Central African Republic, and Sudan Darfur. All of them in Africa! Thirteen public warrants of arrest have been issued, all against Africans."

From here, Griffiths, a Jamaican-born British Queen's Counsel (QC) went thermo-nuclear: "The spectacle of an African president being led in chains to Europe makes my blood boil with rage!" He thundered. "It is slavery time, all again." He went on to lament the seeming apathy of the African Union and Africans generally to this humiliation. He queried why the AU has not deemed it fit to sort itself out so that Africa can start to solve its own problems. "Why did this trial not take place in Africa? Why has the African Union not established its own court to deal with issues that affect Africans in Africa? If a corporal in the American Army cannot be tried in the International Criminal Court for war crimes and crimes against humanity, how come an African president can?"

Among the things that leave Africans fuming about the ICC is the inherent racism involved. To them the international law (as advocated by the West) is just another Western ploy to maintain its hegemony over their lives. Both Tony Blair and George Bush, Jr. committed more heinous crimes than either Taylor or al-Bashir; their non-prosecution by the "international community" smacks of rank racism. To many Africans the so-called international justice is being exercised on racial basis. Both Bush and Blair are clearly indictable under several articles of the Rome Statute. By any definition both men are war criminals (even if unindicted). Their crimes include but are not limited to murder, torture, and forcible transfer of prisoners (rendition). But since both the U.S. and the U.K. enjoy veto power at the UNSC, no one realistically expect either Bush or Blair to

be referred anytime soon to the ICC for criminal prosecution. This is what's getting the Africans goat and no amount of rationalization can wish these feelings away.

Another reason has to do with Africans' definition of justice. In the West justice is equated with punishment; this is not so in Africa. The traditional African system always emphasizes harmony over retribution. Africans generally do not confuse justice with vengeance as Westerners do. That explains why former colonialists who had behaved like predatory beasts were allowed to go away scot-free. That was also the only reason why the Bothas and the Ian Smiths of Africa were allowed to keep their heads. We also witness how Rwanda was able to heal the traumas of the recent genocide by employing purely traditional system of justice.

Africans also believe that there can be no peace wherever justice is lacking. We can glean some of the Africans attitude towards the notion of justice by some of the proverbs they use. My Yoruba people say:

i. *Omo ale ni iri inu ti ki nbi; omo ale la si nbe ti ko ki ngba.* It is only a bastard who does not get angry when provoked; it is equally a bastard who refuses to be appeased.

ii. *Ti a ko ba gbagbe oro ana, a ko ni ri eni ba sere.* If we do not forget yesterday's quarrel, we will have no one to play with.

We can contrast this with the Western notion of heavily punishing the slightest transgression even as they preach forgiveness when the criminals happen to be white -- like the colonialists in Africa. The duplicitous nature of the West is best revealed in their sending missionaries all over the world to teach the rest of us a so-called Lord's Prayer which says, inter alia: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us."

Where in the wide, wide world have Westerners forgiven those that trespassed against them? Where it has been impossible to hunt down and kill foes -- real or imaginary -- the West has slapped punitive sanctions on those that transgressed against them? Cuba, pre-invasion Iraq, Iran, Zimbabwe, and North Korea are some of the countries that are under one form of sanction or the other for offending the all-powerful West.

We all witnessed George Bush proclamation of wanting his enemies dead or alive. And the recent hullabaloo over the Scottish government's decision to release the jailed Libyan, Abdel Basset Ali al-Megrahi, on compassionate grounds is another case in point. What manner of people are Americans when they cannot find it within their hearts to forgive a terminally ill felon? Even Barack (the change we can no longer believe in) Obama waded in to condemn the release. That was after US senators and officials, with FBI director Robert Mueller leading them, had nastily berated the Scottish Minister of Justice.

The essential differences between the Western notion of justice (actually revenge) that seek "an eye-for-an-eye" and the African belief in reconciliation is best summed up in a brilliant article written by Nigeria's former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Professor Bolaji Akinyemi from which I quote:

The issue at stake [in Charles Taylor's arrest in Nigeria] should not be perceived as a conflict between the US and Nigeria. It is much more serious than that. That competing versions of the strategic doctrine of the regional enforcer as played out in the Liberian case are in fact an illustration of clash of civilizations. African civilization does not emphasise revenge. It emphasizes conciliation and forgiveness. This has been amply demonstrated in post-colonial attitudes towards former colonizers and in the most dramatic case, in the attitude of Nelson Mandela towards his persecutors.

Western civilization, on the other hand, with its roots in the "eye-for-an-eye syndrome" emphasizes vengeance in

the name of justice. While few African societies have blood feud going back centuries, European culture is noted for such blood feuds. Getting this distinction right is important as Africa and the rest of the world square of over Darfur and whatever African conflict may be in the pipeline.

Africans were baffled [by Taylor's arrest], and quite a lot of people (puzzled at the timing of the arrest warrant) wondered at the motive of the chief prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, who also happened to be an American... At this juncture, one must wonder at how American domestic opinion and an administration that are basically hostile to their citizens being tried by an international tribunal, and who have gone to a considerable extent, both legal and illegal, to undermine the credibility of the international judicial system, would now be the arrowhead of the firestorm driving Taylor. It simply shows the capacity for hypocrisy.

There are also geostrategic considerations that are not mentioned in the Western media which, as usual, offer simplistic explanations for very complex issues. Sudan, with some 2.5 million square kilometers is Africa's largest country, and at 17 people per sq km, is one of the lowest population density countries in the world.

And (don't mention this to Western journalists) Sudan is rich, very rich in oil, among other minerals. The trouble is that Sudan has fallen out with the West (or is it the West that has fallen out with Sudan?) This leaves Asian companies -- Malaysia's Petronas and China's China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) holding the bulk of Sudan's oil concessions. And the twist is getting knottier; the bulk of Sudan's oil is located in the southern part of the country -- just like in Nigeria. Darfur (much beloved by Western busy-bodies) is in southern region of Sudan. But contrary to the simplistic interpretations offered by Western commentators, Darfur is multi-ethnic as is the rest of Sudan (and one might say much of Africa).

Like in most of the colonial inventions called countries in Africa, the colonialists deliberately left no strong institutions to equitably allocate the vast resources at the disposal of these nascent nations. As soon as the colonialists with their heavy artillery and rapacious police apparatuses pulled out, the pot-pourri of ethnic and national groups, thrown together by the colonialists to satisfy imperialist ambitions, are soon at loggerhead on how to share the resources. It was never in the interest of the colonialists to build viable nation-states to begin with. So, people occupy the same geographic space called countries, but they share absolutely nothing further in common. The divide-and-rule tactics adopted by the colonialists also ensure that the various ethnic groups have enough acrimony and historic animosity to be at each other's throats long after the colonialists have left the scene. It was so the Congo (which has been fighting since the 1960s to date); it was so in Kenya (which conflagrated into tribal hell in 2008); it happened in Nigeria (which experienced a most horrible 30-month long civil war from 1967-70). It is exactly what is happening in the Sudan.

Western media pretend not to know all this and they do their best to confuse an already confusing issue. They tell us that the struggle in Sudan is between an Arab and Africans or between Muslims and Africans practicing their traditional religious beliefs, which were further reduced into animism. Kindly look up the picture of Sudan's president al-Bashir and tell me whether you see an Arab or a pure Bantu African.

The struggle in the Sudan is multi-dimensional and it has at its heart the clash over resource allocation. It isn't (never was) a straightforward fight between Northern Arabs and Southern Africans. Even among themselves, Southern Sudanese have enough factions to give headache to a demographer. Yet, Western ANALysts continually tell stupid lies that it was a straightforward fight between Arab Janjaweed (horse-borne fighters) and Africans. By definition, every human being that is a native of the geographical space call Africa ought to be an African. Yet, when it comes to Africa, Euro-American commentators continue to draw arbitrary dividing lines in order to continue to divide an already over-divided

continent! We do not see them do this in Europe where the blondest, blue-eyed Swede is simply called a European as is the darkest, curly-haired Portuguese. We never heard of a Sub-Arctic or a Sub-Mediterranean Europe!

The cry about Darfur has little to do with humanitarian concerns and much to do with the naked pursuit of strategic interests. As usual the West is masking its true intentions with humanitarian halo. The calculations are either to split oil-rich South Sudan (including Darfur) from Sudan or to promote a regime change, which will see a West-friendly government installed in Khartoum.

Through the efforts of the UN and the AU, the government of Sudan and the Southern Sudan military group, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) signed a Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005 under which a referendum will take place in 2011 about secession, for which some Southern Sudanese clamour. The SPLA is sponsored and heavily supported by the West. Under this agreement, the SPLA provides the vice president of Sudan. The current vice president of Sudan and president of South Sudan is Salva Kiir, a US-trained officer.

Were South Sudan to secede, the Asian countries viz: China, Malaysia, and India would be the losers. The West will be the biggest winner. According to reports, the SPLA has already signed unilateral oil contracts with some Western oil companies. And were the ICC to successfully prosecute al-Bashir, pro-West Vice President Salva Kiir, who has never hidden his presidential ambitions, will emerge as Sudan's president. So, heads or tails, the West wins.

Can you spell REGIME CHANGE?