

**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:

Tuesday, 23 June 2009

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Concord Times
Tuesday, 23 June 2009

Date set for Taylor's defence

The United Nations-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone has announced that lawyers for the former Presi-

dent of Liberia, Charles Taylor, will begin their defence against charges of war crimes

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Charles Taylor...

Bo, Kenema en

*By Mohamed Vandi
in Kenema*

The Bo/Kenema power services (BKPS) that supplies electricity to Bo and Kenema - the two headquarter towns of the south and the east respectively - has resumed

ply in the areas.

The management of BKPS has been under intense criticism during the dry season, especially when the water table at the Dodo hydro dropped to a lower level, a development that caused the

Date set for Taylor's defence

From page 1
and crimes against humanity on 13 July.

Mr. Taylor's lawyers will make their opening arguments on that day in The Hague, where the Court is based, and the preparatory hearing is slated for 6 July. In 2006, the Security Council authorized the trial to be held in the Netherlands, instead of its usual venue in Sierra Leone's capital, Freetown, citing security reasons.

The Prosecution rested its case against Mr. Tay-

lor in February after presenting 91 witnesses to provide testimony.

The former President has pleaded not guilty to the 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, which include pillage, slavery for forced marriage purposes, collective punishment, and the recruitment and use of child soldiers.

The charges relate to his alleged support for two rebel groups in neighbouring Sierra Leone, the Armed Forces

Revolutionary Council and the Revolutionary United Front, during that country's civil war from 1996 to 2002.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone was established in January 2002 through an agreement between Sierra Leone's government and the UN. It cannot impose a life sentence, but it has already sentenced two defendants in another case to 50 years in jail. Britain has said it would be willing to imprison Mr. Taylor if he is found guilty.

Concord Times
Tuesday, 23 June 2009

Did Liberian Government Boycott TRC?

Concord Times

June 23, 2009

Opinion Did Liberian Govt Bo

As the much-hailed Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) winds-up its activities with reports that it could present many political actors for prosecution due to their war-time roles, one of its last conferences is being held without the presence of the President, her ministers and members of the Legislature.

TRC chairman, Jerome Verdier, confirmed Tuesday that invitations

were extended the President, members of the National Legislature including the Speaker and the Senate Pro-tempt, but said they give no reason why they failed to attend or designate a proxy.

Contacted Monday as to why she did not attend the current conference that has brought together many international actors, the President's office said the invitation arrived too late and that it coincided with another meeting of the Methodist Church on climate change that the President had to

attend.

Presidential Press Secretary Cyrus Badio, contacted for more details Tuesday, said the TRC also seemed disorganized, since at the time of the invitation, it had no idea who its guest speaker would be. He said the TRC was toying with a speaker from Nigeria and former Ghanaian President JJ Rawlings. Moreover, he said invitations to the President are given at least one month in advance due to many activities and schedules. The TRC invitation arrived at the Executive Mansion on

June 1 2009.

He said a contributing factor for the President not attending is that the TRC conference seemed in disarray, and that she could not send a proxy because the process is too important to demand her presence. He also regretted that the letter inviting the President came from the TRC's Executive Secretary, Mr. Nathaniel Kwabo, instead of its chairman, Mr. Verdier.

Asked why not a single minister of Government or legislator attended the reconciliation coherence, Mr. Badio said he could not speak for them.

At the National Legislature where an invitations were equally extended to members and its leadership, Senate Pro-tempt, Cletus Wotorson, according to his spokesperson could not also honor the invitation because according to him, it arrived two days to the program, meaning last Saturday. The program began on Monday.

Senator Wotorson's spokesman, Herbert Johnson said the Pro-tempt was also busy handling the funeral ceremony of his childhood friend, but questions whether the TRC held any consultation leading to the conference.

At the House of Representative, Speaker Alex Tyler could not be reached for comment because according to the House's spokesperson, Isaac Reed, Speaker Tyler was at the 2009/2010 budget hearing.

Also absence from the opening of the TRC Reconciliation Conference Monday were two Commissioners, Vice Chair Dede Dolopei and Commissioner Pearl Brown-Bull, Both Commissioners were two of three Commissioners who dissented on the TRC's first preliminary report recommending prosecution for various warlords.

The TRC's week long National Reconciliation Conference is expected to afford Liberians a final opportunity in the current TRC process to impact the TRC's peace building initiatives, discuss the issues that led the nation to conflict and division and begin the process of reconciliation aimed at bringing closure to Liberia's conflict past.

The deliberations will also complement issues that featured during the TRC Regional County Consultations and the TRC process in general.

Delegates from the political subdivision of Liberia, civil society and other stakeholders will make presentations on how cohesiveness and national reconciliation can be attained in Liberia.

The opening ceremony was graced by foreign diplomats, amongst them the International Contact Group on Liberia (ICGL), and Ambassadors of some foreign missions here but some key national players such as the President, Speaker, and Senate Pro-tempt, were absence.

REPORTING THE TAYLOR TRIAL FROM THE HAGUE

By Mariama Khai Fornah



The training of Sierra Leonean journalists by the local and international media institutions as well as the Mass Communication Department at Fourah Bay College has indeed yielded much dividend for the profession. It is now common to see Sierra Leonean journalists covering events abroad for the benefit of all Sierra Leoneans, especially those affecting us directly. Therefore, it is no surprise that the author of this article has been covering the day-to-day proceedings of Taylor's trial at the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, Netherlands. Her experience is quite challenging, exciting and revealing.

Being the first African female journalist to cover the trial of former President of Liberia, Charles Taylor, at the International Criminal Court (ICC) is something very exciting though full of challenges. I enjoyed covering every bit of the trial in The Hague, Netherlands. As many are aware, the Special Court for Sierra Leone sitting in The Hague is trying Charles Taylor for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The former president of Liberia was charged with eleven counts of allegedly abetting and supporting the ten-year rebel war in Sierra Leone, which started on 23rd March 1992 in a small border town in Kailahun District called Bomaru.

Taylor was to be tried in Sierra Leone but the trial was transferred to The Hague after African leaders raised concern about security in the sub-region, particularly the current President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Serleaf, who thought at the time that trying the former president of Liberia in neighbouring Sierra Leone would lead to a backlash in her country.

But taking into cognizance the distance where Taylor is being tried from the country where it was alleged he committed the crimes, the people of Sierra Leone needed to have full update about what was going on in The Hague.

To draw Sierra Leoneans – the victims of the war – closer to the court, the BBC World Service Trust recruited and trained Sierra Leonean journalists to report on transitional Justice. I was fortunate to be one of the journalists who successfully went through the programme. I learnt a special course on reporting Transitional Justice in Sierra Leone with the BBC WST

I was employed by the World Service Trust to cover the trial in The Hague thus reporting from The Hague the day-to-day proceedings from the court.

My first month was not easy as I was trying to adjust to the terrible windy climate. As a typical African coming from a hot tropical zone, the winter and windy land in The Hague was so cold for me that it took some time to get acclimatized.

The total change of diet was another thing I found difficult to adjust to during the first month of my stay. I am used to spicy food and foodstuffs in The Hague are not as spicy as those in Sierra Leone. Consequently, I had to look for an Afro shop to make sure I had a flavour of my choice.

Also, trying to adjust to the reporting system from the court in a well balanced, fair and accurate manner was another challenge. I always tried to cover both the Defence and Prosecution sides of the case. I made sure that I tried very hard to capture decisions of the judges and also what the witnesses were testifying in court.

The other challenge I was faced with was to determine the angle of the story for the day. Having listened to the day's proceedings, I had to choose the appropriate clips to support the angle I was writing the story. I used to record in Krio and English, and I always packaged the reports in those two languages that are widely spoken in Sierra Leone, especially Krio which is the lingua franca that provides mutual understanding among Sierra Leoneans.

Moreover, I would listen to the whole day's proceedings and in the final analysis disseminate a report that would last for at least five minutes.

Also, the case was made more interesting by the personality of the accused, Charles Taylor, who carefully chose attire that included a variety of suits to his personal mood in court. The former president of Liberia was the real centre of attraction in the whole proceedings. I still recall when the usually well dressed Taylor sometimes steered at me, colleague journalists and members of the public, which often comprised his relatives from the accused box.

Being in The Hague as the only Sierra Leonean journalist was like standing in the middle of a circle. Every radio station was expecting story for the day-to-day proceeding from The Hague. So expectedly, I was there as a mediator between the court and the people of Sierra Leone who were highly interested in listening to the reports on Taylor's trial from The Hague.

My experience in covering the trial of former president of Liberia in The Hague cannot be over emphasized. I must be grateful to the BBC World Service Trust for giving me the opportunity as the first female journalist from Sierra Leone to report on an international tribunal.

It was an experience I cherished and valued so much. I only hope that other female journalists will have the golden opportunity to report at international level in the not-too-distant future. To have such opportunity is not down to magic but a clear vision, hard work and compassion for the profession.

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 22 June 2009

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

International Clips on Liberia

More Market Women Acquire Writing Skills

Jun 22, 2009 (All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has formally launched a grassroots literacy movement, Literate Liberia, in Monrovia, with an assurance that Government will continue to support efforts to provide educational opportunities for Liberians who wish to learn, particularly market women. The President commended the organizers of the campaign for providing an opportunity for market women to learn how to read and write. She also lauded women who have volunteered their time to attend the literacy classes. An Executive Mansion release says the Liberian leader urged all women to take advantage of the program. She encouraged those who can read and write to provide whatever little time they can to teach others.

International Clips on West Africa

The American dream: Widowed African father honors wife's wish for children

Source: McClatchy-Tribune Information Services Date

Ganieyou Salamy never wanted a new life. In Abidjan, the Ivory Coast capital, he taught high school physics and chemistry. Nothing suited him better. But his wife, Lysette, had died without realizing a dream. A computer operator, she envisioned her son and three daughters coming to the United States some day. There, she believed, they could have a richer education, a brighter future. Into her wish Salamy leaped. He sold his belongings and came alone to State College in spring 2001, starting over in a foreign land of falling leaves and snow with little English and useless teaching credentials. At one point, he juggled three jobs as he worked to save enough money for his children to join him. He served late-night hamburgers so his oldest daughter, Ade- Jelila, 24, could be a nurse in Philadelphia. Slicing meat and washing dishes paved the way for Anissat, 20, now a Penn State senior, to study counseling and become an award-winning African dance choreographer. Because he worked behind a supermarket deli counter, Seymira, 18, can play rugby on the USA Under-20 National Team as she goes into her sophomore year at Penn State. And Aziz, 10, can thrive at Radio Park Elementary School and enjoy his Nintendo Wii at home.

Local Media – Newspaper

President Sirleaf Instructs Ministers to Sack Corrupt Official without Hesitation

(New Democrat, Liberian Express)

- In a confidential memo to Cabinet Ministers, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has mandated them to fire corrupt officials without hesitation.
- The President's memo comes just days after the U.N. Under Secretary for Peacekeeping, Mr. Alain Le Roy underlined the importance of transparency in the management of public funding saying that corruption deters donors.
- The President said continuing international and national reports on corruption were beginning to hurt the government.

Delegates at TRC National Reconciliation Conference Want Prosecution for Perpetrators of Conflict

(The Inquirer, Heritage, The News, Liberian Express, New Democrat, The Monitor, Liberia Journal, Public Agenda, Daily Observer)

- Delegates at the just-ended National Reconciliation Conference have recommended prosecution for perpetrators of the civil conflict.
- The delegates in a 38-count resolution also called for the banning of perpetrators to elected or appointed positions among other things.
- The over 400 participants recommended a review of the constitution and the rewriting of Liberia's history.
- Receiving the participants' resolution, TRC Chairman Jerome Verdier thanked the delegates and promised to place the recommendations in the Commission's final report.

Finance Minister Suspends Two Officials over Budget Error

(Liberian Express, Heritage, New Democrat, Plain Truth, Liberian Journal)

- Finance Minister Augustine Ngafuan says two versions of the 2009/2010 draft national budget are in circulation.
- In an interview, Minister Ngafuan said one of the budgets contains inconsistencies in figures while the other is without error.
- Addressing a news conference in Monrovia at the weekend, he said the budget with no error had limited copies and during the re-printing of the budget for distribution to members of the legislature and public the error came about.
- Meanwhile, two officials of the budget bureau who have oversight responsibility for printing of the budget have been suspended.

KRTTI Holds First Graduates in 20 Years, Graduates over 170 Teachers

(The Informer, The News, The Inquirer)

- The Kakata Rural Teachers Training Institute (KRTTI) in Kakata, Margibi County, has held its first graduation in 20 years, with 178 teachers awarded certificates.
- Speaking at the occasion, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf said the graduation was a manifestation of Government's commitment to addressing the country's weak school system.
- The President commended the country's partners, particularly the United States of America, the Ministry of Education and the faculty and staff of KRTTI for their contribution to the success of the programme.
- Earlier, in a keynote address, United States Ambassador to Liberia, Linda Thomas-Greenfield urged teachers in the country to demonstrate commitment to the recovery of Liberia through their contributions to the education.

US\$4M Microfinance Programme Launched

(Daily Observer)

- A Bangladeshi non-governmental development organization, BRAC Liberia, has officially launched an over US\$4 million microfinance programme in the country.
- Speaking at the launch of the program over the weekend, BRAC Country Manager, Mohammad Salam said the programme was aimed as their contributing to the poverty reduction and the creation of employment opportunities.
- Mr. Salam said the program seeks to enhance the income of the poor with emphasis on women in the country.

President Sirleaf Launches Literate Liberia Movement

(The Informer)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has formally launched a grassroots literacy movement, Literate Liberia, in Monrovia, with an assurance that Government will continue to support efforts to provide educational opportunities for Liberians who wish to learn, particularly market women.

Liberian University Graduates Face Enrollment Problems Abroad

(Daily Observer)

- The National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) has expressed serious concern over the non-enforcement by universities and colleges in the country of basic requirements for meeting international standards of universities.
- Dr. Michael Slawon named the requirements as 'preparation of accreditation standard of higher education, mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation, synchronizing curricula, data collection and research surveys'.
- He said as a result of this problem Universality graduates face enrollment problems abroad.

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

President Sirleaf in Abuja, Nigeria for ECOWAS Summit

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is in Abuja, Nigeria to take part in the 36th Summit of Heads of State of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).
- The two day mid-year summit of ECOWAS is expected to bring together leaders of the 15-nation regional grouping.

Finance Minister Suspends Two Officials over Budget Error

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

Delegates at TRC National Reconciliation Conference Want Prosecution for Perpetrators of Conflict

Maryland Authorities Welcome ERU Police Officers

- Authorities of Maryland County have officially received ten newly deployed officers of the Emergency Response Unit of the Liberia National Police.
- In an interview, the Mayor of Harper, Regina Sampson said the deployment of the ERU in Harper would help improve of security in the county.
- At present, there is dusk to dawn curfew which was imposed in the city following a violent demonstration there.
- The Harper City Mayor called on residents of Harper to cooperate with the ERU and other police forces in their endeavour to restore total calm to Harper.

E.L.B.C. (*News monitored today at 9:00 am*)

KRTTI Holds First Graduates in 20 Years, Graduates over 170 Teachers

President Sirleaf Launches Literate Liberia Movement

The Liberian Times

Monday, 22 June 2009

Taylor's Rebel War Hunts Pres. Sirleaf, May Be Banned In 2011 Elections



Despite efforts by individuals considered as Pro-Unity Party partisans' quest to petition President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to run for next term come 2011 general and presidential elections may not succeed.

According to sources from the just ended Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) conference delegates have reportedly recommended that President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf will be barred from holding public office in Liberia as a consequence for her alleged moral and financial support to the atrocities committed by Charles Taylor and his National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL).

According to the source, President Sirleaf's debarment from holding public office is expected to be included in the TRC just ended conference delegate's final report at the end of this month, June, 2009.

Sources at the TRC, on the basis of anonymity confirmed that the TRC's final report will contain recommendation for the President's debarment from holding public office.

During her appearance last year at the TRC, President Sirleaf conceded that she gave financial contribution to the NPFL during the early days of its operation.

Observers believed this recent report of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's disbarment for 2011 gives room for countless allegations from her detractors that she was once involved in the war machinery of the NPFL.



BBC Online

Monday, 23 June 2009

Ex-minister jailed for genocide

A Rwandan ex-deputy interior minister who tricked thousands of people into hiding on a hill where they were butchered has been jailed for genocide.

Callixte Kalimanzira, 54, was sentenced to 30 years for his role in the 1994 slaughter. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda heard he supervised massacres in the southern region of Butare.



Some 800,000 people were killed during Rwanda's 1994 genocide

More than 800,000 ethnic Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed in the 100-day genocide that shocked the world.

The international tribunal - which sits in Tanzania - is due to complete its work by the end of this year, but has asked for more time.

In his 2005 indictment, Kalimanzira was accused of luring thousands of Tutsi civilians to take refuge at Kabuye Hill in Ndora commune.

But when they arrived, hoping to find food and shelter, militias murdered them.

Kalimanzira - who was arrested in 2005 and pleaded not guilty - was also accused of seeking military and police reinforcements for the massacre.

He is said to have been a close ally of Rwanda's president and prime minister during the genocide.

According to Reuters news agency, Kalimanzira's sentencing raises the number of ICTR's judgments to 38, six of which were acquittals.

The ICTR was set up to try the ringleaders of the genocide.

Voice of America

Monday, 22 June 2009

Tribunal Sentences Former Rwandan Interior Minister to 30 Years for Genocide Role

By Derek Kilner
Nairobi

A United Nations court has sentenced a former interior minister of Rwanda to a 30-year prison term for his role in that country's 1994 genocide. Callixte Kalimanzira was convicted on charges of genocide and incitement to commit genocide.

"The trial chamber finds unanimously in respect of Callixte Kalimanzira as follows. Count one: guilty of genocide. Count two: dismissed. Count three: guilty of direct and public incitement to commit genocide," said Judge Dennis Byron, head of a three-judge panel, as he announced the decision of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.



AFP Photo

The U.N.-sponsored court, based in Arusha, Tanzania, convicted Callixte Kalimanzira, 58, on charges of genocide and "direct and public incitement to commit genocide". Kalimanzira had been close to both Rwanda's president and prime minister at the time of the 1994 genocide.

According to the court, Kalimanzira did not kill anyone directly, but rather directed thousands of ethnic Tutsis to a hill near Butare, Rwanda's second city in the south of the country, offering food and safety. He then supervised an attack by militias on the location, and ordered police and military reinforcements, according to the 2005 indictment.

The judges also said Kalimanzira abused the influence and trust of his role as a high-ranking official.

Former Rwandan Interior Minister Callixte Kalimanzira at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in Arusha, Tanzania on 14 Nov 2005 (file)

would be killed in thousands. He abused the public's trust that he like other officials would protect them."

"The influence he derived from this and his important status within the ministry of the interior made it likely that others would follow his example, which is an aggravating factor," Judge Byron said. "Most significantly by encouraging Tutsi refugees to gather at Kibuye Hill, where he knew they

He was also found guilty of publicly inciting genocide on multiple occasions in April and May 1994. However, the judges denied the prosecution's request for a life sentence, the maximum allowed under the tribunal.

Kalimanzira was arrested in 2005, after an indictment by the court. His time served will be credited towards his sentence. His trial began in May of 2008.

Over 800,000 people, most of them Tutsis, were killed over a 100-day period in 1994.

The international tribunal established in November 1994 by the U.N. Security Council to try those most responsible for orchestrating the genocide, is scheduled to finish at the end of the year, but the court has asked for additional time. So far, the court has produced 38 decisions, including six acquittals.

Agence France Presse

Monday, 22 June 2009

Syria sets terms for cooperation with UN court

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad outlined "conditions" for cooperating with the UN special court probing the murder of Lebanon's ex-premier Rafiq Hariri, in a French television interview Monday.

Asked whether he was ready to assist the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL), Assad told France 5 television: "Definitely, as we co-operated with the United Nations committees" investigating the 2005 assassination.

"We are ready to cooperate with the tribunal but within our conditions," Assad said in the interview.

"Because any Syrian, whether in the government or outside the government, is within our rule, our authority," he added.

He pointed at an agreement between the United Nations and Lebanon, which he said ensured that a Lebanese judge sat on the tribunal, saying Damascus would expect a similar accord in order to uphold the rights of Syrian nationals.

"If they want to have any co-operation from Syria, there must be an agreement," he said. "If there is an agreement, a clear agreement, we don't have a problem."

Hariri's murder in a massive bomb blast on the Beirut seafront in February 2005 was widely blamed on Syria but Damascus has denied any involvement.

But in April of that year Syria withdrew its troops from Lebanon, under international pressure, ending a 29-year presence in the country.

A UN investigative commission has found evidence that Syrian and Lebanese intelligence services were linked to Hariri's killing.

The STL's head, Antonio Cassese, said last month he planned to strike agreements with Lebanon's neighbours, including Syria, to facilitate the handover of possible suspects.

The tribunal has no suspects in custody since ordering the release last month of four pro-Syrian generals held by Lebanon for nearly four years without charge.

The International Criminal Court should be defended and strengthened

By Thomas Hammarberg, Commissioner of Human Rights, Council of Europe



Story tools

The new administration in Washington has taken several encouraging steps to undo the damage to human rights protection caused by its predecessors.

Torture is no longer accepted, the Guantanamo detention centre will be closed and secret interrogation prisons will no longer be used. Yet, another major change is needed: the undermining of the International Criminal Court has to stop.

The atrocities in the Balkans in the early 1990s were a reminder that an effective and independent international justice mechanism was needed to end impunity for the gravest of crimes: genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. The Rome Statute was agreed in 1998 after lengthy inter-governmental negotiations and the International Criminal Court (ICC) was established in 2002 after 60 States had ratified the treaty. Now with 108 State parties, the Court still faces major challenges.

From the start, the United States Administration has looked at the Court with suspicion and hostility. Within the Clinton administration there was fear that the Court might be misused for politically motivated prosecutions against US nationals. Yet, President Clinton signed the Statute on 31 December 2000, the very last day it was open for signature. He said that ratification was not imminent and that such a proposal to the Senate would depend on whether the Court demonstrated political impartiality.