

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



Who emerged victorious in Saturday's Zain tournament championship match between the Special Court and UNIPSIL? Find out in today's *'Special Court Supplement'*.

PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

as at:

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Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
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'Mosquito' Was Given A Liberian Passport

The accused former Liberian president, Charles Taylor has said during the on-going cross-examination at The Hague trial that Sam Bockarie was given a Liberian passport in 1998.

By Alpha Bedoh Kamara

His cross-examination will continue today when he is expected to respond to his alleged involvement with the former RUF commander, Sam Bockarie, aka Mosquito. The prosecution, Ms. Hollis told him on Friday that he was not honest with the United Nations panel of experts. At the session, he responded that "the RUF commander and his followers were given Liberian citizenship only when they left Sierra Leone for Liberia in December 1999."

Ms. Brenda Hollis further pointed out to him that Bockarie traveled on a Liberian passport with the name Solomon Johnson.

"Charles Taylor was not honest with the United Nations Panel of Experts set up to investigate his alleged dealings with Sierra Leonean rebels," prosecutors told the Court.

The UN Panel of Experts report released in 2000

accused Taylor of fuelling the conflict in Sierra Leone through diamonds and arms trade with RUF rebels.

The prosecution also pointed out that when the UN Panel met with Taylor in 2000, he lied to them about the whereabouts of Sam Bockarie.

Taylor also denied prosecution claims that when asked by the UN Panel about the whereabouts of Bockarie, he told them he did not know.

"Well, I could not tell where he was," Taylor said.

When told by Ms. Hollis that Bockarie was carrying out his duties undermining other governments, Taylor said it was a blatant hallucination.

"Charles Taylor had no money, so why is he undermining other governments?" Taylor asked, insisting that he was honest in his response to the UN Panel and that he was not asked directly where Bockarie was.

"I was never asked precisely where he was. I was being honest with the UN because as president of Liberia, I needed to be sure of where he was. I told them the official position of my government that he was escorted to the Ivorian border," he said.

Mr. Taylor explained that when Mr. Bockarie indicated that he wanted to relocate to Burkina Faso, he asked to be escorted through Ivory Coast and therefore the Liberian government had to escort him to the Liberian border with Ivory Coast.

When asked whether he informed the Ivorian government that Mr. Bockarie, though on a UN travel ban, was being escorted to their border and was passing through their territory, Taylor said he did not see the need to share such information with the Ivorian government.

"I did not feel the obligation to tell them. It is not the function of the government to tell other governments that somebody is on a travel ban and was on his way to their country," he said.

The Torchlight

Monday, 23 November 2009

Special Court: Rwanda, Money and Legacy

In the midst of the general despair and charged political atmosphere, the announcement on 27 October by the Acting Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) the court has concluded the trials of all eight accused who had been in its detention for well over five years in Sierra Leone looked rather furtive. The court has so far – amazingly – registered a 100 per cent conviction rate; only the Charles Taylor trial remains, in The Hague.

The last of the cases decided by the Appeals Chamber of the court upheld the convictions of three leaders of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), Issa Sesay (the group's very reluctant "interim leader"), Morris Kallon (his acolyte) and Augustine Gbao (an anodyne-looking former police officer said to have been one of the group's key enforcers). Almost immediately after, all eight – two from the Civil Defence Force (Allieu Kondema and Moinina Fofana), three from the Armed Forces Ruling Council, AFRC (Alex Tamba Brima, Bazzy Kamara and Santigie Borbor Kanu) and the three RUF figures – were flown to Rwanda, there to serve their lengthy jail sentences.

I happened to have been in Kailahun, in the east of the country, when the convictions were announced. It wasn't a news item on the local FM radio station, and no one that I met there in the two days I spent in the town mentioned the trials. But I got a call from someone from the BBC World Service asking me, as someone who has been critical of the court, to make comments on the convictions. I hadn't read the judgments, so the interview didn't happen. Well, now I have, all of it – running to hundreds of pages. By the way, the war for which the court was set up began after the RUF overran Kailahun District and occupied the town. It remained a base for the RUF throughout the war, and marks of that presence are still highly visible – in the awful number of scorched houses; in the square at the center of the town where 12 pregnant women were buried alive by Sam Bockarie, the RUF key commander (there is no memorials dedicated to them); and in the ruins of a redbrick house at the edge of the town, a few yards from the fading elegance of a Roman Catholic Cathedral, where dozens of civilians had their heads sawed off by Bockarie and his men; among many others. The district in fact recorded the highest number

of refugees fleeing to neighbouring countries per ratio of population, over 60 per cent – and that's not counting the thousands who fled to other places in Sierra Leone, the internally displaced. It is also the home of 8,307 registered ex-combatants, again the highest per ratio of population – an issue of raw relevance, obviously.

That there was no evident interest in the happenings at the Special Court in Kailahun would suggest, at least in part, that the entire exercise in international justice, which has now cost nearly \$300 million and taken over six years, is probably ineffective. The rigours of eking out a living in a place physically almost cut off from Freetown – where the Court is based – overrides almost every other consideration: the road to

Kailahun from the capital is so atrocious that the district is farther away from Freetown than London is from the Sierra Leonean capital, and there is certainly far greater human traffic between the European city and Freetown than between the Sierra Leonean capital and Kailahun. Such are the functions of the neocolonial consumer squalour...

Notice that the Rwanda jail term is the first time in postcolonial Sierra Leone that its citizens have been taken out of the country to serve jail sentences decided in Sierra Leone. There is a colonial precedent, however. In 1898, after the most serious anti-colonial struggle was brutally suppressed, the British – in a less squeamish age – hanged 83 Sierra Leoneans and deported the key figure in the rebellion, Bai Bureh, to the then Gold Coast; Bureh was brought back years later, blind and decrepit, and died soon after.

The recent convictions, the Special Court's Acting Prosecutor Joseph Kamara said in formulaic language, "is a final condemnation of one of the most brutal and notorious rebel groups in modern times." With the end of the trials, he added, "there is now a final recognition of their crimes. And there is a strong measure of justice and accountability for their victims – the families of those who were slaughtered, the women who were raped, the children forced to fight and kill, the many thousands who were mutilated and terrorized."

In this context it almost beside the point to analyse judgments delivered so far by the Court, but one must try – for they magnify the strange fatuity of this very expensive and prolonged exercise. When it was set up in 2002, the hope was that the trials would last

for three years and would cost \$75 million dollars – ten times more than that for the Truth Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which was set up at the same time and mandated to last for the same period. The Special Court was to be less dilatory and more immediate than the tribunal for Rwanda – which has now cost more than a billion dollars and registered few convictions. The UN optimistically hoped that the Special Court would "correct the perceived excesses of the *ad hoc* tribunals and shrink the enforcement of international criminal justice to a manageable and sustainable size." The Court was denied the Article 7 mandate, insistently demanded by the first Chief Prosecutor, a crusading US army lawyer, David Crane; it would have made total support for the court mandatory on the Security Council.

The UN reckoned, of course, without the prosecution and judges,

who gave themselves such attractive salaries that there was a definite interest to drag the trials on and on. A judge is paid \$170,000 tax free per annum, and when other allowances and operating costs are added, this rises to nearly \$3 million a year; and ditto for the prosecutors: the office of the prosecutor, in fact, had an annual budget of more than \$4 million. The Court hired a permanent staff of 422, so that about 70 per cent of its entire budget is used up as salaries and bonuses of these employees, most of them foreign nationals.

With the completion of the Sierra Leonean-based trials, there now remains the ongoing trial of former Liberia President Charles Taylor at The Hague; this is set to be concluded by February next year. But don't expect to see the end of the matter then. Every year since 2005 the court has been issuing out a "completion strategy": this year's envisaged, after judgment in the Taylor trial, "putative appeals." This could be either by Taylor or by the prosecutors, as it happened in the AFRC cases. In plain words, the court – and its now largely idle and extravagantly paid staff – is likely to be around till the end of 2010.

So what has international justice or Sierra Leone gotten out of this huge investment? The great merit of international tribunals, from the Nuremberg trials on, is the satisfaction it serves to previously helpless victims who now see their former powerful tormentors humbled and punished. This is a species of primal vengefulness, but it is perfectly human. The other is the great contribution which such trials make in establishing the historical record – of the war, the atrocities, the repugnant methodologies used. In the process particular methods are criminalised, thus contributing to the global advance of the rule of law and therefore of humanity.

In the first instance – victim satisfaction from the punishment of the perpetrator – the Special Court's record is mixed. All those it has so far convicted were lesser figures during the war; few were well known or particularly notorious as perpetrators. The key players – Foday Sankoh, the RUF founder-leader; Sam Bockarie, his psychotic enforcer; and Johnny Paul Koroma, the mercurial leader of the AFRC – were indicted but all died before their trials. With rather more doubtful validity the court also indicted Sam Hinga Norman, the putative leader of the CDF, which

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mobilised to resist the nihilistic rebels and help restore constitutional order. Norman, too, died in the detention of the court in circumstances that did no credit to the court. He was, of course, widely acknowledged as a hero by many Sierra Leoneans, and the Special Court's case against him was a particularly clumsy one, as we will see below.

In the second instance – the contribution to international jurisprudence and humanity – the court can claim setting at least four new international precedents, though one can quibble against some of these. The convictions of all three RUF members for the crimes of 'forced marriage' and of 'attacks on peacekeepers' can pass without comment: they are important legal steps taken, though at least one judge raised sapient issues about what constitutes 'forced marriage'; and attacking peacekeepers has long been known to have been a particularly obnoxious offence. The court also pronounced convictions for the crimes of the use of child soldiers and of sexual slavery, both important legal precedents as well. Again these are noxious offences, and several UN protocols and national statutes have long recognised them

as such. The Special Court's distinction is to specifically pursue actions that amounted to recruitment of child soldiers and sexual slavery – the latter seemed at least to one judge, reasonably, as not distinguishable from 'forced marriage' – and actually passed sentences on people for committing them.

It should be noted, however, that these latter crimes have been so integral to warfare in all ages – the word infantry, for example, is from the Latin word 'infant': elaboration will be unnecessary – that probably the only guarantee of these convictions serving as a deterrent is in fact to ban all wars. It is in fact the singular distinction of the Special Court that it made a most vigorous attempt to criminalise not just specific acts concomitant to depraved warfare but warfare itself. This approach drove the entire indictments, and it is only by taking it into account that one can understand both the sweeping nature of the indictments and the incoherent and often confusing judgments that were passed.

The Nuremberg trials after the Second World War, of course, did not seek to criminalise warfare; that would have meant that the victorious Allies who set up the trials for their defeated enemies would themselves also be in the dock – for they fought the war just as viciously, and sometimes to more

devastating effect, as the Axis powers who initiated it. That trials focused on those who "started an aggressive war" which provided the context for the atrocities committed during the war. And the statute setting up the Special Court provided for the trial of only those "who bear the greatest responsibility" for the war and its atrocities. This is obviously a very problematic distinction, only partially captured by the UN Assistant Secretary Zechin, when he noted early on that it "pitches the personal jurisdiction very narrowly and perhaps too high to capture all those who bear some degree of command or leadership responsibility" in culpable offences. In fact it would create a more profound philosophical tangle: by indicting so many people from all the three factions and elsewhere, the word 'greatest' completely loses its heuristic value. Little wonder that none of the judgments delivered so far makes mention of this important benchmark. Instead the proceedings of the court and its judgments stressed another very problematic catch-all refrain: 'joint criminal enterprise.'

All the RUF, AFRC and CDF members tried (and convicted) by the court are alleged to have participated in this joint criminal enterprise, but in fact only in the trial of the RUF and AFRC are specific acts relating to any 'joint' criminality is even discussed during the trials. In the case of the CDF, the notion is simply a very fraudulent and perplexing definition of its acts of resistance and warfare, defensive warfare. Here, it is warfare that is criminalised, full stop. This approach in all three cases imposed its own, very limiting, logic: it meant that the entire war period – from 1991 to 2002 – is largely ignored (the court was mandated to punish crimes happening after the November 1996 Abidjan Peace Accord): the trial focused only on the period from May 1997, when the AFRC coup happened and the RUF was invited to join the junta, to February 1999, after the devastating attacks on Freetown by rebel (mainly AFRC) forces. An objection by a number of judges that in fact the 'joint' criminality between the RUF and the AFRC ended before the January 1999 attacks and that the AFRC forces were solely responsible was upheld: there are reasonable grounds for this, but the view is based on a misunderstanding of the modus operandi of the RUF: since Dennis Mingo's RUF group joined the AFRC forces in the attack, and in fact the main RUF force under Sam Bockarie entered Freetown

shortly after the AFRC forces did, it is reasonable – for anyone who has followed the RUF closely – to conclude that this was in effect a joint operation.

An unintentional comedy leaps out of the convictions: the majority of the judges ruled that Gbao was an ideologue who used his ideas to spur the RUF into violent action, and was given sentences for this. The dour Canadian judge Boutet, who had always struck me as having a stenographer's approach to the trials, demonstrated a singular insight: he rejected the notion of Gbao's influential ideology. In fact by stressing this ideology, the court undermined its own argument which sought to depoliticise the war and depict it as purely criminal.

And what about the Norman case. No judgment was pronounced, but it is reasonable reading the judgments on his co-CDF defendants – they were tried jointly (ah, joint criminality!) – that he would himself have been pronounced guilty. But the key evidence against Norman is provided by Albert Nallo, a self-confessed murderer whose testimony, on other grave matters, were dismissed as lies even by the credulous judges at the Court. The

prosecutors consciously modeled Nallo's testimony on that of General Halder, Hitler's military commander in the eastern front who the Nazi leader detained in a concentration camp in 1942 for not going far enough in his murderous, and foolish, war plans in Russia. The Nuremberg prosecutors used Halder's diary entry of an address Hitler gave in March 1941 to the chiefs of the three armed services and key Army field commanders on how the Russia campaign was to be conducted: "The war against Russia," he quoted Hitler as saying, "will be such that it cannot be conducted in a knightly fashion. This struggle is one of ideologies and racial differences and will have to be conducted with unprecedented, unmerciful and unrelenting harshness... German soldiers guilty of breaking international law... should be excused... Russia has not participated in the Hague Convention and therefore has no rights to it." Compare this very precise and coherent rendering, detailing statements that would surely provide the context of Nazi bestiality in Russia, to Nallo's illiterate, malicious and drunken blather, which the Special Court presented as evidence. Notice that this was not a public meeting but a private one between Norman and Nallo, and the latter did not take notes; he only recalled Norman's

statement after he was hired as chief prosecution witness in the trial. Nallo, in fact, had done all of the planning for a crucial attack on Koribondo, a strategic southern town occupied by rampaging rebel forces, who had repulsed two earlier attacks by the Kamajors. According to the judgment in the case, "Norman stated that when Nallo goes to Koribondo anyone he met there should be killed because they were all spies and collaborators and "nothing should be left 'not even a farm' or 'fowl.'" Norman allegedly provided Nallo with petrol for the great incineration...

I went to the Special Court on my return from Kailahun. It is still a huge military barricade, with epicene Mongolian troops (paid by the UN) perched high on the barbed wired, and razor-taped, walls of the court, whiling away their vacancies by fidgeting with their shining rifles. The curiously domestic jail-house is now empty, but the armed security detail still pretends to be busy around it. The large, well-dressed and professional-looking, staff still goes there each morning, surf the internet, eat at the canteen, and collect their fat salaries at the end of each month. Life, it seems, must go on, even though the reason for this presence has now moved to Rwanda and The Hague. International justice, in other words, can happen without any accused, and it is a never-ending bonanza.

The spokespeople for the Special Court always bristled when the huge cost of the war is mentioned. It is crass, they would say, to measure justice in monetary terms – even if, one may add, a lot of that money is going into the pockets of those who proclaim this justice, and then proclaim it again. Once out of the court, however, they appear more honest. In an interview with Time magazine shortly after he left the court as Chief Prosecutor to take a job in Obama's administration, Stephen Rapp said of the Special Court: "The concern all of us [at the Special Court] had," he said, " was that we were conducting justice in a comfortable courtroom with long trials and well-paid attorneys. Prisoners had single cells, and they had committed the worst crimes. A mile away in the local prison there were simply no resources. Cases can't go forward, witnesses are lost, and people stay in detention for many years at a stretch. [If I was] to do it over, I would try to develop a court within the national system. That would be my preference. Maybe not a court that costs \$30 million a year like the Special Court, but an appropriate court."

Cynicism, indeed, has its uses: moments of truth can be revealed....

Sierra Leone Blind Activist Seeks to Elevate Blind Through Education

By James Butty

A Sierra Leone blind activist said the blind in his country and Africa in general should be given the necessary educational and social tools so that they can become partners in nation building.

Thomas Alieu, director of the Educational Center for the Blind and the Visually Impaired in Sierra Leone said his institution wants to elevate the status of the blind through education and by advocating for change in national policies affecting the blind.

"Generally the blindness education in that country is still in a state of shamble. So this institution was specifically designed to enhance blindness education in Sierra Leone and to even go beyond the boundaries of Sierra Leone and go across Africa," he said.

Alieu said the challenges facing the blind in Sierra Leone and Africa in general are daunting.

"Our culture in Africa generally is very, very negative toward blind people because this category of people is expected to be limited to the four corners of their homes without any meaningful contribution to our society," Alieu said.

He said his educational center is working to turn blind people into useful tools and partners in nation building.

"Our institution wants to target two forms of education – the formal education and informal education. The formal education embraces teaching the blind to learn the Braille and using the computers," he said.

Alieu said his institution will provide other skills training like soap making carpentry, tailoring and bread making for those who will not be able to reach the university level in formal education.

"And that is why I'm here in the United States to really solicit support from Sierra Leoneans as well as non-Sierra Leoneans and Africans generally to really help the work of the Educational Center for the Blind and the Visually Impaired in Sierra Leone so that this institution can be an international institution that could enhance blindness education in Africa as a whole," Alieu said.

He said the government of Sierra Leone and other African governments should emulate the example of the United States by enacting laws to improve the interests of the blind.

"What I want the governments of Africa or my country Sierra Leone to do is to

really legislate policies that will seek and give respect to this marginalized group in our society," he said.

Alieu said blind people in Sierra Leone and in Africa can become partners in nation building if only African governments can give them the necessary support to conquer their visual impairment.

He said he is looking for funding to build a new structure for his educational center for the blind and the visually impaired.

"We want to have boarding facilities for these blind people; we want to have a classroom structure and quarters. And we want this institution to grow and serve Africa as a whole," he said.

Alieu said he is in the United States to appeal for basic tools like computers, Braille embossers, and even vehicles to transport students to and from the center.

[Note: Thomas Alieu worked at the Outreach section as an Outreach Assistant for disability issues.]

Sierra Express Media
Monday, 23 November 2009

Support for war victims

Over 30,000 registered war victims are going to be beneficiaries from a Trust Fund that will be launched by President Ernest Bai Koroma, on 5th December 2009.

The Trust Fund titled "War Victims Trust Fund" is part of the policy decision derived from the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliations Commission-TRC to pay victims of the war. The recommendation by the TRC has long been made but it is only under the present government that action has been undertaken in making the recommendation into reality.

“Fambul Tok is Healing our Wounds”

"Fambul Tok ...Section Chief says

"We experienced a devastating war for 11 years, government set up the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Sierra Leoneans to explain to the world what went wrong, the Special Court was also established to try those that bear the greatest responsibilities of war crimes and crimes against humanity but all these did not bring total stability as many communities are still divided against themselves for the fact that they have not forgiven or reconcile with one another"

These were the words of Section Chief of Maninga, Pa Robert Konjor as he addressed hundreds of villagers during Fambul Tok reconciliation ceremony in Rogboya village, Fakunya chiefdom, Moyamba district.

Chief Konjor said they did not have the opportunity to testify at the TRC as it only targeted major towns, adding that people see Fambul Tok as a big opportunity and relief to blow their mind and reconcile with one another for the development of this country.

He told his audience that a good number of those affected by the war live in remote areas and have a lot of untold stories. He said many are still grappling to survive because of their physical conditions. He called on his people to participate in Fambul Tok ceremonies, adding that it is the only means to heal communities.

"Fambul Tok is healing our wounds" Chief stressed, adding, we still have pains in our hearts and therefore if they are not healed then we would never be together and this would impact negatively on our communities"

He continued; "I'm calling on all of you here tonight to forgive and reconcile with one another for the development of our community in particular and our country as a whole"

Buttressing his call to forgive and reconcile, host village chief Alie Lavai said if people did not forgive one

another, communities would not be peaceful. He said Fambul Tok's idea to reconcile communities worth

More than a millio dollars project and assured that they are always ready to embrace activities.

Meanwhile, fambul Tok reconciliation ceremony is expected to take place over the week end in Jayahun village, Dasse chiefdom, Moyamba district.

As Prosecutors Say That Charles Taylor Was Not Honest With United Nations Panel of Experts, Taylor Admits That Liberian Rebels and Government Shared Information With The CIA

By Alpha Sesay

As the cross-examination of former Liberian president Charles Taylor continued into a second week, Prosecutors this week told Special Court for Sierra Leone that the former Liberian president was “not honest” with the United Nations Panel of Experts set up to investigate his alleged dealings with Sierra Leonean rebels. Mr. Taylor also this week admitted to prosecutors that he shared information with the spy agency of the same country he has accused of plotting his downfall: the United States.

The UN Panel of Experts report released in 2000 accused Mr. Taylor of fuelling the conflict in Sierra Leone through diamonds and arms trade with Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels, a group that fought an 11-year conflict in Sierra Leone. In cross-examining Mr. Taylor on Thursday, lead prosecution counsel Ms. Brenda Hollis pointed out that when the UN Panel of Experts met with Mr. Taylor in 2000, the former president lied to them about the whereabouts of notorious Sierra Leonean rebel commander Sam Bockarie. In 1999, Mr. Bockarie, having fallen out with the leadership of the RUF, relocated to Liberia where Sierra Leonean rebels loyal to him were recruited into Mr. Taylor’s Anti-Terrorist Unit (ATU). According to some prosecution witnesses, Mr. Bockarie relocated to Liberia on Mr. Taylor’s invitation. Mr. Taylor on the other hand has said that Mr. Bockarie’s relocation to Liberia was based on a decision by West African leaders. In 2000, reports indicate that Mr. Bockarie left Liberia for Ivory Coast, where he was involved in the conflict there, allegedly on Mr. Taylor’s orders. Mr. Taylor has refuted such assertions. In his cross-examination today, the former president denied prosecution claims that when asked by the UN Panel of Experts about the whereabouts of Mr. Bockarie, he told them he “did not know where Bockarie was.”

“Well, I could not tell where he was,” Mr. Taylor said.

When told by Ms. Hollis that Mr. Bockarie “was carrying out your duties undermining other governments,” Mr. Taylor responded that such an assertion was “a blatant hallucination.”

“Charles Taylor had no money, so why is he undermining other governments?” Mr. Taylor asked.

Mr. Taylor insisted that he was honest in his response to the UN Panel of Experts, asserting that he was not asked directly where Mr. Bockarie was.

“I was never asked precisely where he was. I was being honest with the UN because as president of Liberia, I needed to be sure of where he was. I told them the official position of my government that he was escorted to the Ivorian border,” he said.

Mr. Taylor explained that when Mr. Bockarie indicated that he wanted to relocate to Burkina Faso, he asked to be escorted through Ivory Coast and therefore the Liberian government had to escort him to the Liberian border with Ivory Coast.

Asked by Ms. Hollis whether he informed the Ivorian government that Mr. Bockarie, though on a UN travel ban, was being escorted to their border and was passing through their territory, Mr. Taylor said that he did not see the need to share such information with the Ivorian government.

“I did not feel the obligation to tell them. It is not the function of the government to tell other governments that somebody is on a travel ban and was on his way to their country,” he said.

Ms. Hollis further pointed out that Mr. Bockarie travelled on a Liberian passport with the name Solomon Johnson.

“This could have been a travel document given to him in 1998 because we gave him a passport in 1998. I don’t know what name he travelled on,” Mr. Taylor responded.

Mr. Taylor agreed that when Mr. Bockarie was given a Liberian passport in 1998, he was not a Liberian citizen. He said the RUF commander and his followers were given Liberian citizenship only when they left Sierra Leone for Liberia in December 1999.

Ms. Hollis also pointed out that in Mr. Taylor's direct-examination, he had said that the UN Panel of Experts had not asked him about diamonds from Sierra Leone during their interview with him in Liberia. Ms. Hollis read portions of notes prepared by a member of the Panel of Experts, Ian Smillie, on his October 6, 2000 meeting with Mr. Taylor. The notes indicate that the UN Panel of Experts asked Mr. Taylor about comments made by the then United States Under-Secretary of State, Thomas Pickering, to Mr. Taylor that he had evidence of Mr. Taylor's dealings in diamond with RUF rebels. Mr. Taylor insisted that those notes were prepared by Mr. Smillie and could well not reflect what was discussed in the meeting.

Mr. Taylor's association with RUF commander Mr. Bockarie has occupied a huge portion of the case against him. Witnesses have testified that Mr. Bockarie used to take orders from Mr. Taylor and that when the RUF commander left Sierra Leone in 1999 and relocated to Liberia, the former Liberian president sent him to launch attacks in Ivory Coast, with an aim of destabilizing that country. These allegations add to charges against Mr. Taylor that he was involved in a joint criminal enterprise with RUF rebels in Sierra Leone. It is alleged that while the RUF rebels took orders from him, he also received diamonds from the rebels in return for supplies of arms and ammunition. The prosecution argues that Mr. Taylor bears responsibility for crimes such as rape, murder, terrorizing the civilian population and recruitment of child soldiers by the RUF in Sierra Leone.

On Monday, Mr. Taylor denied suggestions that he was an agent of the United States' Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). He admitted, however, that his rebel group, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), exchanged information with the CIA – a collaboration and exchange that continued into his presidency.

"The organization [NPFL] provided information to the CIA. The NPFL at the time did provide information to the CIA and there was information from the CIA to us too. There was exchange of information, mostly from between 1991-92," Mr. Taylor said.

"The NPFL and the CIA exchanged information on certain operations. They were mostly internal to the Liberia operation," he added.

Mr. Taylor explained that the collaboration with the CIA continued when he became president in 1997.

"The government of Liberia associated in so many ways in exchange of information with the CIA. Throughout my presidency, an agency of my government collaborated with the CIA," the former president said.

Despite this previous collaboration with an agency of the United States, the accused former president has consistently accused the United States of plotting his downfall through support to rebel forces who fought to unseat him in Liberia, and his subsequent trial at the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Also in his cross-examination on Monday, the prosecution accused Mr. Taylor of misusing his phone services in his Hague cell to influence prospective defense witnesses to tell lies in his favor. Mr. Taylor denied Ms. Hollis' suggestion that he has been calling prospective defense witnesses in Sierra Leone and Liberia, telling them to "testify in a certain way" or promising to give them money if they travelled to The Hague and told lies in his favor. Mr. Taylor has been "misusing the privileged access lines," Ms. Hollis suggested. Mr. Taylor denied these claims.

"I have never misused the privileged access lines. To the best of my knowledge, I have never been advised that I cannot use the privileged access lines to talk to prospective witnesses," he said.

Mr. Taylor also on Monday dismissed as "nonsense" Ms. Hollis' suggestions that when he (Taylor) resigned as president of Liberia and sought asylum in Nigeria, West African leaders had to accompany him to Nigeria because they wanted to make sure that he got to where he was supposed to go.

"Maybe that is your assessment. Your assertion that I would have escaped to another country is totally nonsense," he said.

Ms. Hollis spent much of Tuesday's cross-examination of Mr. Taylor reading out statements by other West African leaders condemning Mr. Taylor's NPFL for crimes committed against Liberians and members of international humanitarian agencies, including American Catholic nuns and peacekeepers during his country's civil war.

In a 1992 statement read by Ms. Hollis, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) leaders condemned Mr. Taylor's rebel group (the NPFL) for their actions against West African peacekeepers serving in Liberia under the banner ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). The ECOWAS leaders had "warned all warring factions against the commission of war crimes" in Liberia. The statement alluded to the killing of civilians, peacekeepers and American Catholic nuns during "Operation Octopus," an operation launched by Mr. Taylor's NPFL on the Liberian capital Monrovia in October 1992.

Mr. Taylor, in his response explained the circumstances surrounding the death of the nuns.

"That issue remains contested. They were killed in the area controlled by Senegalese forces. It remains contested. The United States raised that issue, we investigated it and it was determined that they were not killed deliberately by the NPFL but they were killed by crossfire," Mr. Taylor explained.

"If you have a document showing that they were deliberately killed by NPFL, then you can bring it here," the former Liberian president challenged the prosecution counsel.

"We will bring it later," prosecutor counsel Ms. Hollis responded.

On Wednesday, Mr. Taylor told the court that he did not support plans to attack Sierra Leone while he was in Libya in the late 1980s. Mr. Taylor was responding to questions under cross-examination on his associations in Libya where rebel forces were being trained to eventually invade Liberia and Sierra Leone in 1989 and 1991 respectively. Mr. Taylor has on numerous occasions insisted that he never knew about the formation of the RUF and that he never met the group's leader, Foday Sankoh, in Libya. The former president has said that he instead met the leader of Sierra Leone Pan-Africanist Movement, Ali Kabbah, who was a former University of Sierra Leone student leader.

As Mr. Taylor was being cross-examined on Wednesday, he challenged prosecution claims that Mr. Kabbah and Mr. Sankoh had a schism in Libya because they both had disagreements as to what measures were needed to bring about change in Sierra Leone. Mr. Kabbah, the prosecution claimed, met with Mr. Taylor and told him he wanted to embark on ideological education in Sierra Leone as a means of bringing about change in the country, while Mr. Sankoh preferred a military revolution. The prosecution put it to Mr. Taylor that he supported Mr. Sankoh over Mr. Kabbah because he (Taylor) was also in favour of a military revolution in Sierra Leone, just like the one he was planning for Liberia. Mr. Taylor denied the prosecution's claim, insisting that he never knew Mr. Sankoh in Libya.

"You favoured Foday Sankoh over Ali Kabbah because Sankoh was in favour of a military option right?" Ms. Hollis asked Mr. Taylor on Wednesday.

"I could have only favoured one over the other if I knew the other but I did not know Sankoh," the former president responded.

"I do not know what happened behind the scenes but that is not what Ali Kabbah told me and other people," Mr. Taylor added.

Mr. Taylor challenged prosecution claims that Mr. Kabbah had told him (Taylor) that he did not want a military solution to Sierra Leone's problems but rather an "ideological training as a means of taking power" in the country.

"That is not my information," Mr. Taylor said. "The Ali Kabbah I met did tell Charles Taylor that he had contacts within the government and the military in Sierra Leone and that he only needed a spark for a military takeover in the country," he added.

Mr. Taylor is responding to charges that he was involved in a joint criminal enterprise with RUF rebels in Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor has denied allegations that he supplied arms and ammunition to the rebels in return for Sierra

Leone's blood diamonds and that he helped them plan certain operations during which atrocities such as rape, murder and amputation of civilian arms were committed. From July 14 to November 10, 2009, Mr. Taylor testified in direct-examination as a witness in his own defense. He is currently being cross-examined by the prosecution.

Mr. Taylor's cross-examination continues on Monday.

Taylor Denies Jailing Journalists for Investigating Diamond Smuggling

Former Liberian president Charles Taylor says he jailed foreign journalists because they were trying to assassinate him, not because they were investigating his alleged involvement with diamond smuggling in Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor is facing an 11-count indictment of crimes against humanity before a U.N. special court in The Hague. While president of Liberia, Charles Taylor says a foreign television crew was detained for being part of a plot to assassinate him with a cancer-causing laser beam. They were later released and expelled when his security forces could not determine who was behind the plot.

As part of her cross-examination, Principal Trial Attorney Brenda Hollis says the journalists were detained for investigating his involvement with Sierra Leone's rebel Revolutionary United Front.

Hollis: "The truth of it is, these journalists were put in jail because they were going to investigate things that were really going on in your country. That is the truth of it, isn't it Mr. Taylor?"

Taylor: "Totally untrue. Total nonsense.

Hollis: "Things like the lack of good governance in your country. They were going to investigate that weren't they?"

Taylor: "Total nonsense, no."

Hollis: "And they were going to investigate the ongoing criminal conduct of your subordinates against civilians in your country. Isn't that correct Mr. Taylor?"

Taylor: "Totally incorrect."

Hollis: "And they were going to investigate your criminal involvement with the RUF and Sierra Leone diamonds. Correct Mr. Taylor?"

Taylor: "That's the essence of your fallacy with my criminal conduct. There was no such criminal conduct on my part, and I was not aware that they were there to investigate such."

The former Liberian leader is pleading not guilty to an 11-count indictment that includes murder, rape, enslavement, and conscription of child soldiers.

Prosecutors say he led RUF members across the border and acted as their effective leader for much of Sierra Leone's civil war. Mr. Taylor's lawyers say any contact he had with those rebels ended before the jurisdiction of the U.N. Special Court for Sierra Leone begins.

Mr. Taylor says journalists were free to report during his presidency. He rejects the prosecution assertion that he knew members of the imprisoned television crew were mistreated in Liberian custody.

Hollis: "And indeed you said you did not believe they had been mistreated, isn't that correct?"

Taylor: "I have said to you that it was not brought to my attention."

Hollis: "And indeed you said that if you were given evidence of that, then you would have the Liberian Attorney General take a tough stand against anyone involved. You said that, did you not?"

Taylor: "Well, I did say that. You have to remember I was President of Liberia, Miss Hollis. I was not working for the president. I was president."

Hollis: "Mr. Taylor, I asked you a simple question. Did you say that?"

Taylor: "I have answered your question, I was president."

Hollis: "Did you say that?"

Taylor: "You asked me the question and I have said to you that such matters were not brought to my attention. And if they had been brought to my attention, of course as president at my level, I would have insisted that something happen to those responsible. But such matters would not be brought to my attention. They were not."

This is the last case before the U.N. Special Court. The court's Freetown session has closed after sentencing the last of the rebels indicted. Mr. Taylor's trial was moved to The Hague because of concerns that his supporters might disrupt proceedings held in West Africa.

Daily Observer (Liberia)

Monday, 23 November 2009

'I Did Not Know Where Bockarie Was'



Charles Taylor
--Taylor Says in Defense of His
Statements to UN Panel of
Experts in 2000

THE HAGUE – Charles Taylor was “not honest” with the United Nations Panel of Experts set up to investigate his alleged dealings with Sierra Leonean rebels, prosecutors told the Special Court for Sierra Leone yesterday during cross-examination of the accused

former Liberian president.

The UN Panel of Experts report, released in 2000, accused Taylor of fuelling the conflict in Sierra Leone through diamonds and arms trade with Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels, a group that fought an 11-year civil war in Sierra Leone.

In cross-examining Taylor Friday, lead prosecution counsel, Brenda Hollis, pointed out that when the UN Panel of Experts met with Taylor in 2000, the former president lied to them about the whereabouts of notorious Sierra Leonean rebel commander, Sam Bockarie. In 1999, Bockarie, having fallen out with the leadership of the RUF, relocated to Liberia where Sierra Leonean rebels loyal to him were recruited into Taylor’s Anti-Terrorist Unit (ATU).

According to prosecution witnesses, Bockarie relocated to Liberia at Taylor’s invitation. Taylor, however, has said that Bockarie’s relocation to Liberia was based on a decision by West African leaders. Reports indicate that in 2000, Bockarie left Liberia for the Ivory Coast, where he was involved in the conflict there, allegedly on Taylor’s orders. Taylor has refuted those assertions. During his cross-examination Friday, the former president denied prosecution claims that when asked by the UN Panel of Experts about the whereabouts of Bockarie, he told them he “did not know where Bockarie was.”

“Well, I could not tell where he was,” Taylor said.

When told by Hollis that Bockarie “was carrying out your duties undermining other governments,” Taylor responded that such an assertion was “a blatant hallucination.”

“Charles Taylor had no money, so why is he undermining other governments?” Taylor asked.

The accused former warlord insisted that he had been honest in his response to the UN Panel of Experts, asserting that he was not asked directly where Bockarie was.

“I was never asked precisely where he was. I was being honest with the UN because as president of Liberia, I needed to be sure of where he was. I told them the official position of my government that he was escorted to the Ivorian border,” he said.

Taylor explained that when Bockarie indicated that he wanted to relocate to Burkina Faso, he asked to be escorted through the Ivory Coast, and that therefore the Liberian government had to escort him to the Liberian border with Ivory Coast.

Asked by Hollis whether he informed the Ivorian government that Bockarie, though on a UN travel ban, was being escorted to their border and was passing through their territory, Taylor said that he did not see the need to share such information with the Ivorian government.

“I did not feel the obligation to tell them. It is not the function of the government to tell other governments that somebody is on a travel ban and was on his way to their country,” he said.

Hollis further pointed out that Bockarie traveled on a Liberian passport under the name, Solomon Johnson.

“This could have been a travel document given to him in 1998 because we gave him a passport in 1998. I don’t know what name he traveled on,” Taylor responded.

He agreed that when Bockarie was given a Liberian passport in 1998, he was not a Liberian citizen. He said the RUF commander and his followers were given Liberian citizenship only when they left Sierra Leone for Liberia in December 1999.

Hollis also pointed out that during direct-examination, Taylor had said that the UN Panel of Experts had not asked him about diamonds from Sierra Leone during their interview with him in Liberia. She then proceeded to read portions of notes prepared by a member of the Panel of Experts, Ian Smillie, from his October 6, 2000 meeting with Taylor. The notes indicate that the UN Panel of Experts asked Taylor about comments made by the then United States Under-Secretary of State, Thomas Pickering, to Taylor that he had evidence of Taylor’s dealings in diamond with RUF rebels. But Taylor insisted that those notes had been prepared by Smillie and could well not reflect what was discussed in the meeting.

Taylor’s association with RUF commander, Bockarie, has accounted for a much of the case against him. Witnesses have testified that Bockarie took orders from Taylor, and that when the RUF commander left Sierra Leone in 1999 and relocated to Liberia, the former Liberian president sent him to launch attacks in Ivory Coast, with the aim of destabilizing that country. These allegations add to charges against Taylor that he was involved in a joint criminal enterprise with RUF rebels in Sierra Leone. It is alleged that while the RUF rebels took orders from him, he also received diamonds from the rebels in return for supplies of arms and ammunition. The prosecution argues that Taylor bears responsibility for crimes such as rape, murder, terrorizing the civilian population and recruitment of child soldiers by the RUF in Sierra Leone.

To buttress these claims against the former president, the prosecution has also pointed out atrocities allegedly committed by Taylor’s rebel forces in Liberia as a means of showing a consistent pattern with those committed by the RUF in Sierra Leone. Taylor has denied these claims.

During cross-examination Friday, Hollis also pointed out to Taylor that “forces under your control such as the ATU committed crimes against civilians. Crimes committed by your faction were definitely systematic,” she said.

“No. Not to my knowledge. It is possible that individuals in those units did commit crimes. In some parts of the country, I’ll say that was possible,” Taylor said.

He denied prosecution claims, however, that his forces burned entire villages and killed civilians.

“In fact, the best kept places in the country were those under NPFL [National Patriotic Front of Liberia] control. Winning 70 percent in an election does not seem like reigning terror on people. You lost on that, Ms. Hollis. You are wrong,” Taylor told the lead prosecutor.

Cross-examination of the accused former president continues Tuesday

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 20 November 2009

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

International Clips on Liberia

'We Need Roads; We Need Them Now,' President Tells High-Level Retreat On Infrastructure

Nov 20, 2009 (Liberia Government/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has again expressed concern over the slow pace of implementing the country's infrastructure program particularly road construction and rehabilitation, being supported by the country's development partners. The President expressed impatience at the delays and called for a special session to address the situation. Speaking Wednesday at the SKD Sports Complex, at a High-level Retreat on Infrastructure, the Liberian leader welcomed the technical details being drawn up to meet the country's infrastructure needs, but observed that tangible progress on the Pillar IV of the Poverty Reduction Strategy is taking too long. According to an Executive Mansion release, the President noted that it has taken three years to draw up what she described as a sophisticated system, which, while very good and wonderful, left her wondering whether Liberia, emerging out of a civil conflict was ready for such a system.

Charles Taylor Was Not Honest With The United Nations Panel Of Experts, Prosecutors Say

Nov 20, 2009 (CharlesTaylorTrial.org/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- Charles Taylor was "not honest" with the United Nations Panel of Experts set up to investigate his alleged dealings with Sierra Leonean rebels, prosecutors told the Special Court for Sierra Leone today during cross-examination of the accused former Liberian president. The UN Panel of Experts report released in 2000 accused Mr. Taylor of fuelling the conflict in Sierra Leone through diamonds and arms trade with Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels, a group that fought an 11-year conflict in Sierra Leone. In cross-examining Mr. Taylor today, lead prosecution counsel Ms. Brenda Hollis pointed out that when the UN Panel of Experts met with Mr. Taylor in 2000, the former president lied to them about the whereabouts of notorious Sierra Leonean rebel commander Sam Bockarie. In 1999, Mr. Bockarie, having fallen out with the leadership of the RUF, relocated to Liberia where Sierra Leonean rebels loyal to him were recruited into Mr. Taylor's Anti-Terrorist Unit (ATU).

Student wants to share love of going to school

Source: McClatchy-Tribune Information Services Date: November 20, 2009 -- Jessica Arnold has had a different childhood than the Liberian children she wants to help, but one thing bonds her to kids in this African country, still struggling to rebound after a 14-year civil war that kept many students from going to school. "I've always loved school, and I've always loved learning," said Jessica, 16, a junior at Waterford Mott High School. "I just understand how the children in Africa are feeling -- wanting to learn and wanting to excel." Jessica wants to give them that chance. She created a foundation, complete with a board of directors, and tonight that foundation -- the C.W. Duncan School Mission Project -- is to hold its first fund-raiser. The goal, to raise money to not only provides scholarships for children to attend the school, but also to fund supplies, books and teacher training.

International Clips on West Africa **Guinea**

Guinean mediator wants junta leader to stay in power

OUAGADOUGOU, Nov 20, 2009 (AFP) - Burkina Faso President Blaise Compaore, who is mediating in Guinea's crisis, has recommended that junta leader Captain Moussa Dadis Camara stay in power during a transition government, in a document seen by AFP Friday. While the opposition, which has repeatedly insisted that Camara should relinquish power, would not officially react Friday, sources said they rejected the mediator's plans. In the document, Compaore proposes forming a national transition council led by Camara, who would be the head of state and the army's supreme commander, with a government chief from the opposition. "The national transition council will be charged with organizing presidential elections within ten months," the document says.

Mercenary sightings complicate Guinea peace bid

DAKAR, Nov 20 (Reuters) - Sightings of mercenaries at work for Guinea's junta are a potential blow to international efforts to stave off new violence in the West African country and press its military leaders to step down. South Africa said this week it was investigating evidence that its nationals were training a new militia for junta leader Captain Moussa Dadis Camara, globally vilified after a Sept. 28 crackdown on opposition protesters ended in a massacre. While their nationality has not been confirmed, the presence of mercenaries on Guinean soil flies in the face of diplomatic efforts to isolate Camara and weaken his grip on the world's top exporter of bauxite, the lucrative ore used for aluminum. "The training of the militia could change the balance of things," said Corinne Dufka, West Africa regional director for Human Rights Watch (HRW). "This new unit appears designed to further entrench control by the military government over every aspect of Guinean life."

Sierra Leone

Charles Taylor Denies Supporting Plans To Attack Sierra Leone While In Libya

Nov 20, 2009 (CharlesTaylorTrial.org/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- Charles Taylor did not support plans to attack Sierra Leone while he was in Libya, the accused former Liberian president told Special Court for Sierra Leone judges today while being cross-examined by the prosecution. Mr. Taylor was today responding to questions under cross-examination by lead prosecution counsel Ms. Brenda Hollis on his associations in Libya where rebel forces were being trained to eventually invade Liberia and Sierra Leone in 1989 and 1991 respectively. Mr. Taylor has on numerous occasions insisted that he never knew about the formation of the Sierra Leonean rebel group Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and that he never met the group's leader, Foday Sankoh, in Libya. The former president has said that he instead met the leader of Sierra Leone Pan-Africanist Movement, Ali Kabbah, who was a former University of Sierra Leone student leader.

Cote d'Ivoire

UN mission: Cote d'Ivoire's electoral lists delivery completed

ABIDJAN, Nov. 20 (Xinhua) -- The United Nations Operations in Cote d'Ivoire (ONUCI) has completed the distribution of the provisional electoral lists to all centers across the country in preparation for the eminent polls, a UN source said. "The mission has completed the distribution of the electoral lists; on Nov. 13, all lists had been deposited to the regional or communal electoral commission centers," ONUCI spokesman Hamadoun Toure told a press conference on Thursday. Having started on Nov. 11, the operation mobilized "several means especially an aircraft, three helicopters and 300 vehicles," Toure said, adding that "more than 400 civilians and military personnel were deployed to cover more than 206 routes." "ONUCI is worried about the technical and logistical delays, the

display of the electoral lists, and would therefore hope that the display which is anxiously being waited for by the population is organized by the independent electoral commission (CEI)," the spokesman added.

Local Media – Newspaper

President Sirleaf Concern about Slow Pace of Development

(The Informer, Public Agenda, The Informer, Liberian Express)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has again expressed concern over the slow pace of implementing the country's infrastructure program particularly road construction and rehabilitation being supported by the country's development partners.
- President Sirleaf expressed impatience at the delays and called for a special session to address the situation.
- Speaking Wednesday at a High-level Retreat on Infrastructure, the President welcomed the technical details being drawn up to meet the country's infrastructure needs but said the tangible progress on the Pillar IV of the Poverty Reduction Strategy is taking too long. Pillar IV of the PRS evolves around infrastructure and basic social services.

UN Envoy Says Civil Society Organizations Are Bridge Builders

(Liberia Express, New Vision, Public Agenda, Heritage, The Independent)

- The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ellen Margrethe Løj, has lauded Civil Society Organizations in the as the bridge builders between the government and the people.
- Speaking during a one-day visit to Bopolu, Gbarpolu County, SRSG Løj said civil society organizations had a greater effect in addressing challenges such as sexual and gender-based violence in their communities.
- During her interaction with county authorities, the SRSG underscored the need to actively engage the Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy in the effort to prevent illegal mining in the County.
- She said UNMIL and other partners will assist the Liberian National Police and Immigration Officers saying efforts would be made to control and prevent the illegal influx of foreigners and illegal mining activities.
- Meanwhile, the UN envoy participated in a groundbreaking ceremony for the Bopolu Women and Youth Centre.
- The initiative is the joint effort of the Ministries of Agriculture and Youth and Sports with support from Nigerian peacekeepers in Gbarpolu County.

Transparency International Releases New Report...Liberia Performs Well

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

- Transparency International has released its 2009 annual report with an improvement on Liberia.
- According to the report, Liberia is ranked 13th out of 47 countries in sub-Saharan Africa compared to its 30th place in 2008.
- The latest ranking also places Liberia in the 97th position out of 180 countries the report covered in the world.
- Despite the improvement, the report said the perception that too many government officials are political appointees, continue to undermine transparency, accountability and public trust.
- In October this year, Afro-Barometer ranked Liberia high in the areas of education, health, women empowerment and other social services.

UNMIL SRSG Denounces Sexual Abuse

(New Democrat)

- The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ellen Margrethe Løj has warned members of UN mission in Liberia against sexual exploitation and abuse.
- Ms. Løj spoke Wednesday when she presented medals to several Indian Female Police Formed Unit peacekeepers serving within UNMIL.

Police to Intensify Security Patrols

(The News, The Informer)

- Authorities of the Liberia National Police (LNP) have renewed their commitment to intensify security patrols to combat crimes throughout the country.
- Deputy Police Director for Administration, Samuel Darkina said the LNP has put in place a plan to constantly patrol the leeward counties.
- Mr. Darkina also said the LNP has begun the decentralization of its officers to ensure its presence was felt throughout the country.
- The Deputy Police Director spoke Thursday when the Lone Star Communications Corporation presented several royal motorbikes to the LNP valued at over US\$10,000.00.

Suspended Information Minister Begging... But GAC Evidence Strong

(The News)

- [SIC] There are indications that suspended Information Minister Laurence Bropleh could be acquitted in the coming days or week following the intervention of influential people in society multiple sources say.
- The sources say police wants to exonerate the suspended Minister who is implicated in a US\$300,000 financial scandal at the Information Ministry.
- However, information coming from the General Auditing Commission said there are overwhelming evidence against the Minister.

National Elections Commission Steps Up Civic Education Ahead of Run-off

(New Democrat, The Inquirer)

- The National Elections Commission has launched a massive civic education campaign throughout the 14 districts of Montserrado County ahead of the senatorial run-off election slated for Tuesday, November 24.
- The Chairman of the National Elections Commission (NEC), Mr. James Fromayan said the exercise include announcements in the various Liberian languages educating voters as what to do on Tuesday.
- Meanwhile, the commission has announced that all is set for the run-off of the Montserrado County Senatorial by-election.
- The two candidates, Clemenceau Urey of the ruling Unity Party and the opposition Congress for Democratic Change candidate, Geraldine Doe-Sheriff are hoping to get the majority of the 477,000 registered voters in the County.
- Observers however believe that victory will depend on whose supporters storm out to vote in the midst of voters' apathy.

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

Carter Center Official/Acting Information Boss Discuss Information Bill

- Acting Information Minister Elizabeth Hoff says the passage of the Freedom of Information Bill is critical to Liberia's democratic governance.
- Minister Hoff believes the passage of the bill should be high on the agenda when the Legislature resumes session next January.
- The Acting Information boss spoke when she met with Carter Center's Access to Information Project Director, Madam Laura Neuman.

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

Tension Brews At Guthrie Rubber Plantation

- Reports say tension is said to be mounting at the controversial Guthrie Rubber Plantation in Bomi and Grand Cape Mount Counties.
- The general workforce at the plantation is reportedly demanding four months severance and security benefits.
- The workers warned denying them such benefits could provoke anger and bring the plantation to a standstill.
- The warning followed a mass meeting Thursday intended to draw the attention of the Boakai Sirleaf's interim management team to the gravity of the situation at the plantation.

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

Transparency International Releases New Report...Liberia Performs Well

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

Police To Intensify Security Patrols

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

Liberian Journalist Wins Good News For Africa Award

- The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has announced awards for three African journalists for their roles in promoting positive news about Africa.
- A statement named the winners as Star Radio's Emmanuel Wheinyue of Liberia, Kristin Palitza of South Africa and Millicent Mwololo of Kenya.
- The winners of the Good News for Africa competition were announced at the IFRC's General Assembly held in Nairobi, Kenya Thursday.

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

National Traditional Council Says Senatorial Run-off Technical

- The National Traditional Council of Liberia has described the pending November 24 Montserrado Senatorial run-off election as technical because it would determine the country's democratic process.
- The Council's head Chief Zanzan Karwor believes Montserrado is a strategic county with a huge population representing the fifteen political sub-divisions of the country.
- Chief Karwor advised the National Elections Commission (NEC) to ensure that the run-off election is free, fair and transparent.
- Meanwhile, the National Elections Commission has launched a massive civic education campaign throughout the 14 districts of Montserrado County ahead of the senatorial run-off election slated for Tuesday, November 24.

Radio Veritas *(News monitored today at 09:45 am)*

GOL Generates L\$3M in Japanese Donated Rice Sale

- Deputy Commerce Minister Frederick Norkeh has disclosed that the Government of Liberia has raised nearly three million Liberian Dollars from the sale of the Japanese donated rice.
- The Government of Japan last year donated 284,000 bags of rice to the Liberian Government following a request by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to Japan.
- Minister Norkeh at a Tuesday news conference said the money is deposited in an escrow account at the Central Bank of Liberia.
- Dr. Norkeh said the current sale represents 90 percent of the entire donation and the funds would go to improving food security in the country.

Legalbrief

Monday, 23 November 2009

IBA urges states to back ICC

The International Bar Association (IBA) has urged States Parties to the Rome Statute to take the lead in supporting and reinforcing the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the Rome Statute system.

The IBA notes that while the ICC must continue striving to fulfil its mandate, states can and should do more to support the court in order to realise the Rome Statute's vision of ending impunity for egregious crimes. The report from the IBA/ICC Monitoring and Outreach Programme, *Sustaining the International Criminal Court: Issues for consideration at the 2010 Review Conference and beyond*, examines some of the challenges facing the ICC as preparations advance for the 2010 Review Conference in Kampala, Uganda. The IBA views the 2010 Review Conference as an important opportunity for States Parties to reiterate their unwavering commitment to the court. The report highlights a number of components critical to sustaining the court and ensuring its long-term success: robust governance and internal co-ordination; the co-operation of States Parties; and effective and efficient judicial proceedings.

The Phnom Penh Post

Monday, 23 November 2009

Duch trial enters final arguments

Robbie Corey Boulet



Photo by: AFP

Kaing Guek Eav, alias Duch, stands before the court of the ECCC.

IN 1999, photographer Nic Dunlop was on a trip shooting mine-clearance operations in Battambang province when he happened upon the fugitive he had been chasing for more than a year.

At the time, the man was going by the name Hang Pin and working as the head of education in Samlot district, but Dunlop almost immediately recognised him as Tuol Sleng prison commandant Kaing Guek Eav, alias Duch.

Writing about his discovery in 2005's *The Lost Executioner*, Dunlop speculated on what a trial of Duch might look like, using as models other men who had been made to answer for mass crimes.

"When the table is turned," he wrote, "the guilty either deny their involvement completely, readily identify with their victims as lesser victims, or create elaborate and complex arguments to muddy the clarity of moral responsibility. In some cases they even continue to attack the veracity of their victims' claims."

Ten years after finding Duch, Dunlop has had the chance to watch the 67-year-old former maths teacher reject the first of those strategies while embracing the other three during his trial for war crimes and crimes against humanity, which enters closing arguments today.

While accepting responsibility for the deaths of more than 12,000 prisoners, Duch has presented himself as a man who lived in fear of top Khmer Rouge leaders and did not participate in the interrogations, torture and executions for which Tuol Sleng became notorious. His defence team has also challenged the applications of nearly one-third of the direct or indirect victims registered as civil parties in the case.

The prosecution, meanwhile, has reportedly been hampered by problems such as high turnover, and civil parties have complained that their role in the case has been too vaguely defined, leaving some with the sense that Duch has been permitted to dominate the proceedings at the expense of his victims.

"There was an expectation raised. The civil parties believed that they would be able to look this man in the eye and finally ask him direct questions about their loved ones and experiences," Dunlop said by phone from Bangkok. "Some had that chance. But these people were waiting for what was to be their day in court. Not Duch's day, but theirs."

Legal strategies

As Khmer Rouge scholar Alex Hinton has noted, the contours of the defence team's strategy emerged early and haven't wavered.

"The defence has set Duch up as an almost tragic hero, who, blinded by hubris and a lack of foresight, found himself swept up in great tragedy," Hinton said via email. "He joined the revolution to help liberate the country only to find himself unwillingly caught in a machine of death that he could not stop. Like a tragic hero, he comes to

understand what has happened too late and tries to repent in the end.”

The prosecution’s argument, Hinton said, has been equally clear. “For them, Duch is a highly effective, cold-blooded mass murderer who not only knew what was going on, but actively and eagerly contributed to the process, often in ways that far exceeded his orders. His hands drip with the blood of 12,380 victims.”

Some observers, however, have criticised the prosecution for failing to present a coherent and compelling case.

A report to be released today by the Asian International Justice Initiative highlights logistical problems, including a “noticeable lack of coordination between the different prosecutors assigned to different stages of the proceedings”. Acting international co-prosecutor William Smith told the authors of the report that the resignation of four attorneys, including his predecessor, Robert Petit, had been a “major obstacle to the smooth implementation” of the prosecution’s strategy.

To Dunlop, though, the prosecution’s problem seems more fundamental. “To my mind, in terms of pursuing an argument, they seem to be poorly briefed,” he said.

He cited as an example the case of Sou Sath, a former classmate of Duch’s who appeared as a character witness. Sou Sath told judges that Duch “didn’t say anything” about his political leanings when the two were students, an assertion that went unchallenged by the prosecution even though, Dunlop said, Duch was known to be progressive “even as a schoolboy”. Witness statements to this effect, Dunlop added, “would have described [Duch] as something of a fanatic, as someone who was beating a path towards a fairly fanatical communist supporter, which would obviously inform his later emergence as commandant of S-21”.

Dunlop said the prosecution had also failed to convincingly challenge one of Duch’s central claims: that he was not involved in the day-to-day operations of the torture facility.

“If I were a prosecution lawyer, I’d want to establish beyond a reasonable doubt that, in order for him to maintain that position of authority within this prison, it was essential that he was regularly seen in interrogations, that he participated, and that he killed,” Dunlop said. “In order to maintain this climate of total fear which both victim and perpetrator occupy, he has to have had a hand in that personally. And that hasn’t been established.”

Youk Chhang, director of the Documentation Center of Cambodia, also questioned the strength of the prosecution’s case, though he said the format of the hearings was at the root of the issue – in particular the fact that Duch has been able to respond directly to witnesses and civil parties.

He expressed concern about how this would affect the final verdict. “If [the defence] can manage to reduce Duch’s sentence by even a day, then they can declare victory over the millions of victims and continue to condemn the weakness of Cambodia’s rule of law,” he said.

For Bou Meng, one of only a handful of Tuol Sleng survivors and a civil party in the case, the closure expected to result from a verdict will outweigh anything that has emerged in the case thus far. “Right now, I am only 20 percent relieved from the sorrow of the loss of my family and the torture I suffered at S-21,” he said. “The other 80 percent is not yet relieved. I am awaiting the reading of the verdict for Duch.”

The most important open questions, he said, centre on the extent of Duch’s sincerity during the hearings, especially with respect to his professions of remorse. “We’ve wept together,” Bou Meng said. “I know my tears are coming from my sorrow. But I don’t know about Duch’s tears.”

This is a question Dunlop has been grappling with for the past 10 years. The *Lost Executioner* includes several passages pondering whether Duch’s conversion to Christianity had been “a lie or simply an attempt to avoid arrest”, and whether his statements of remorse had been “just an elaborate smokescreen”.

Dunlop described Duch’s public statements at the trial thus far as scripted and contrived. “When he stands up in court and he reads his apology from a piece of paper, and he’s obviously enjoying his day in court, he has absolutely no idea of how that comes across because the man lacks total empathy,” he said.

But even if Duch strikes a sympathetic chord this week, Dunlop said the question of his sincerity may prove secondary to many survivors of the regime. "From the people I've talked to, what they've been looking for is an accounting. They want something approaching the truth for what occurred," he said. "I don't think any measure of contrition from Duch is enough."

The New Times (Rwanda)

Saturday, 21 November 2009

Rwanda: Ibuka Stages Demo Against ICTR

Innocent Niyonshuti

Kigali — The umbrella body of genocide survivors and other organizations promoting interests of genocide survivors yesterday held a peaceful demonstration against what they described as "malpractices" by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR).

The demonstration that stretched from the tribunal's documentation centre in downtown Kigali to the court's Rwanda liaison office based in Remera, was in protest of the recent acquittal of two suspects by the Tanzania-based court.

"We are all against ICTR's decisions. Releasing genocide perpetrators is outright denial of genocide, releasing a person like (Protais) Zigiranyirazo, (Emmanuel) Bagambiki, Andre Ntagerura, Ignace Bagirishema, Gen Gratiien Kabirigi and others, proves injustice and we are against this, we are protesting this," chanted a demonstrator from a loudspeaker.

The demos were sparked off by this week's release of Zigiranyirazo, commonly known as " Mr. Z" and Catholic priest Hormisdas Nsengimana.

Theodore Simburudari, Ibuka president, urged the government of Rwanda to ask UN Security Council to investigate ICTR judges over their unfair rulings.

He said Ibuka was halting its cooperation with the Arusha based tribunal.

Special Court Supplement
Special Court 1-0 victory over UNIPSIL in Zain Tournament
Saturday, 21 September 2009 at the St. Edward's Field









