

**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:

Wednesday, 23 September 2009

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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The Spark
Wednesday, 23 September 2009

“I lost contact with RUF Leader Foday Sankoh after May 1992”

...says Taylor

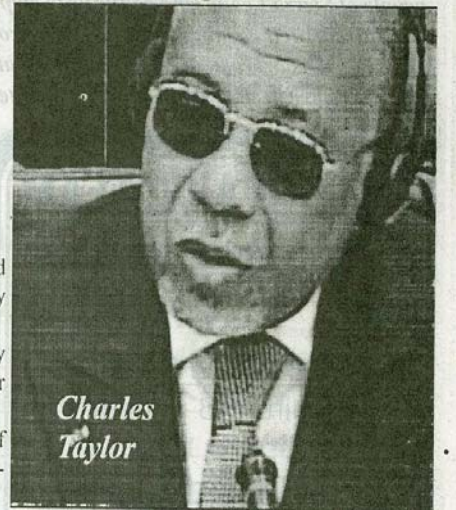
Despite allegations that Charles Taylor backed and controlled Sierra Leone's rebel group during the country's 11-year conflict, the former Liberian president today said

this allegation could not be true because he did not have any contact with top rebel leader Foday Sankoh after May 1992.

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

Mr. Taylor was responding to the evidence of Revolutionary United Front (RUF) radio opera-

Continued page 7



From front page

tor Dauda A. Fornie (alias DAF), who in his December 2008 testimony said that as radio operator for the RUF, he facilitated communication between RUF leader Mr. Sankoh and Mr. Taylor, during which time Mr. Taylor sent arms and ammunition for use by RUF rebels in Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor dismissed the witness's evidence as lies.

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

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

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

"There was no official contact between Mr. Sankoh and me or my defense minister," he added.

Mr. Taylor explained that it is possible for Mr. Sankoh to have been in touch with some of his (Sankoh's) "Special Forces" colleagues who were part of Mr. Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), and with whom Mr. Sankoh might have undergone training

in Libya. Any such contact, Mr. Taylor said, was not within his knowledge and he would have acted to stop it if he had known about it.

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

Witness Fornie said in his December 2008 testimony that as radio operator, he would monitor the movement of weapons from Mr. Sankoh's base in Gbangha until they reached RUF territory. He said that when the weapons arrived, Mr. Sankoh will tell him to contact Mr. Taylor's Tree Top station and inform Mr. Taylor that the weapons had arrived. He said that sometime in 1993, he heard Mr. Sankoh and Mr. Taylor talking directly on a VHF radio.

"That is a direct lie," Mr. Taylor said today as he dismissed the witness's testimony. Mr. Taylor also dismissed the witness's testimony that in late 1997, when the RUF and members of the Sierra Leone Army joined forces to establish the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC)-a junta regime that overthrew the government of president Ahmed Tejan Kabbah in May 1997-two members of the RUF and AFRC merger, Memunatu Deen and Fonte Kanu, traveled to Liberia and returned with loads of arms and ammunition.

"It is not true. Late 1997, AFRC is in power and I am at the infancy of my government. There was no material that will come from Liberia and go to anybody," Mr. Taylor responded.

Witness Fornie in his 2008 testimony

also told the judges that in February 1998, he traveled with RUF Commander Sam Bockarie to Monrovia, during which he used head of Mr. Taylor's Special Security Service (SSS) Benjamin Yeaten's radio to monitor the forceful removal of the AFRC from power by West African peacekeepers in Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor also dismissed this aspect of the witness's testimony as a lie.

"Total false, erroneous. It is misleading. I don't know how they put this thing together. Bockarie does not come to Liberia in February 1998. He came in September 1998 upon my invitation," Mr. Taylor explained.

Also in his 2008 testimony, Witness Fornie said that Mr. Taylor was like the Commander in Chief of the RUF rebels and the RUF leadership would consult

Mr. Taylor before taking any major decisions. According to the witness, when Mr. Sankoh was arrested first from 1997 to 1999 and then in May 2000, Mr. Taylor was effectively the leader of the RUF.

Mr. Taylor dismissed this evidence, saying "It is not true that I am running the RUF at anytime. Foday Sankoh remained in full control of his organization."

The witness further said that after the signing of the peace agreement between the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF in 1999, RUF commander Mr. Bockarie insisted on consulting Mr. Taylor before disarming his fighters, contrary to instructions from the RUF leader Mr. Sankoh that all RUF fighters should be disarmed. Mr. Taylor today called this assertion "impossible."

The New Citizen

Wednesday, 23 September 2009

NACSA to Liberate 7000 War child Victim

By Jusu Amara

The commissioner of the National Commission for Social Action (NACSA) Kontoh Sesay has disclosed to Sierra Express Media that his commission on Tuesday 22nd September will be given educational support to seven thousand war child victims in the country as part of the National Reparation Process in post conflict Sierra Leone.

Speaking to Journalists at a cer-

emony held at the Ministry of Information and Communication; Youyi Building in Freetown he noted that NACSA's mandate was to end in December, 2007 but cabinet and parliament saw the need to grant an extension of its mandate to 2018.

As a result of the extension of its mandate, NaCSA has sourced US\$3M funding from the U.N Peace Building Fund (P.B.F) to kick start the much awaited reparation programme recommended by the

Truth and Reconciliation Report.

The NaCSA boss added that they created 626,250 short term per-day jobs for young people and placed 41 youths in various organizations to acquire work experience and improve their capacity. Kontoh Sesay registered that, the agency has registered approximately 27,992 war victims covering the 149 chiefdoms in the provinces and the Western Area. He noted NaCSA has undertaken 20 symbolic reparation

programmes with another 20 to go before the year ends; revealing that the ADB has been the key sponsor of the projects.

Meanwhile we are made to understand that World Bank funded the National social Action Project (NSAP) to undertake a labour intensive cash-for-work intervention, and a secured funding for pilot youth enterprise development from the Italian government and Islamic Development Bank.

CharlesTaylorTrial.org (The Hague)

Tuesday, 22 September 2009

Liberia: Taylor Did Not Order The RUF to Attack Guinea

By Alpha Sesay

Charles Taylor today denied prosecution allegations that he ordered Sierra Leonean rebels to attack Guinea in 2000 to oust its then president, Lansana Conte, whom Mr. Taylor accused of supporting fighters to attack his own government in Liberia.

"No I did not, no I did not," the accused former Liberian president kept repeating as he answered questions about whether he sent Sierra Leonean rebel forces to attack Guinea. "We were being attacked by LURD [Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy] from Guinea but I was equally busy with other issues that were not war-like."

"It was in my best interest to attack Guinea but why not use Liberians for that?" Mr. Taylor asked.

Among other things, Mr. Taylor is charged with failing to prevent or punish crimes committed by Sierra Leonean rebel forces alleged to be under his control during the country's 11-year conflict, as well as aiding and abetting the crimes they committed. Today, Mr. Taylor was responding to the evidence of two prosecution witnesses, Mohamed Marvin Mansaray and Abu Keita, who both had given evidence to the Special Court for Sierra Leone about Mr. Taylor's alleged control of Sierra Leonean rebel forces and the assistance he provided to the rebels in their attacks.

In his March 2008 testimony, Witness Mansaray testified that sometime in July 2000, Revolutionary United Front (RUF) commander Issa Sesay told RUF fighters that Mr. Taylor had given an order for them to attack Guinea. The witness said that Mr. Taylor provided arms and ammunition, including bombs, for the operation.

Witness Mansaray's testimony reinforced an earlier witness's testimony, Abu Keita, who in his January 2008 testimony told the Special Court for Sierra Leone that after the release of UN peacekeepers who were held hostage by RUF rebels in 2000, Mr. Taylor gave orders to the RUF to attack Guinea. The attack, Witness Keita said, was led by an RUF commander called Short Bai Bureh. The witness said that Mr. Taylor gave RUF commander Mr. Sesay a satellite phone and 50 boxes of ammunition. Mr. Taylor today told the judges in his testimony that this never happened.

"Never happened. Oh my dear, it is just too much. It is a blatant lie. There is no such thing as anybody getting even one box of ammunition from me," he said.

Mr. Taylor also dismissed as "lies" Witness Keita's testimony that sometime in August 1999, he (Taylor) gave orders to the RUF to join the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) and Mr. Taylor's Anti Terrorist Unit (ATU) fighters to fight against LURD rebels in Lofa County, Liberia.

Mr. Taylor also denied allegations by both Witnesses Mansaray and Keita that the former Liberian president supplied weapons to RUF rebels, which they said were used to launch attacks against the government and people of Sierra Leone.

Witness Mansaray in his March 2008 testimony said that sometime in April 1999, Mr. Taylor supplied the RUF with weapons, including an anti aircraft twin barrel gun. The weapons, the witness said, were

presented at a muster parade in Magburaka, northern Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor today denied supplying the RUF with any such weapon.

"No I did not. To have had a weapon of that sort means we did not disarm. A twin barrel anti aircraft gun is not a little piece of equipment. It takes two operators to fire that weapon and it is manned by a squad of ten men. Its not a little toy. It's a blatant, blatant lie," Mr. Taylor said.

Mr. Taylor had the same response for Witness Keita's evidence that Mr. Taylor had provided weapons for use by RUF rebels in Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor further dismissed Witness Keita's allegations that together with RUF Commander Sam Bockarie and Mr. Taylor's Special Security Unit (SSU) commander Benjamin Yeaten, he (Keita) had visited Mr. Taylor's White Flower residence in October 1998. Mr. Taylor today said that he has never even met Witness Keita in person.

"I didn't know the gentleman, never met him," Mr. Taylor said.

"We are talking about October 1998. I was not living in White Flower at this time. I moved there on my birthday in January 1999," he added.

Witness Keita testified in January 2008 that he was recruited by Benjamin Yeaten, on Mr. Taylor's orders, to join the RUF in Sierra Leone and establish a unit there called the Scorpion Unit. Witness Keita said that the letter authorizing his appointment was signed by Mr. Taylor. Mr. Taylor denied the witness's testimony. Mr. Taylor accused Witness Keita of having joined another rebel faction leader, Roosevelt Johnson, to fight against his (Taylor's) forces.

"I would be stupid, very stupid to do that. Keita, who I know had demonstrated his disloyalty as an enemy combatant, to recruit him among thousands, I Charles Taylor, will never do that," he said.

Mr. Taylor dismissed all of Witness Keita's testimony as a "fabrication."

"Abu Keita's evidence is a blatant and intentional fabrication. I think he designed this," he said.

Mr. Taylor's testimony continues tomorrow.

News Blaze

Tuesday, 22 September 2009

Stephen J. Rapp Ambassador-at-Large War Crimes Appointed by President Obama

Stephen J. Rapp of Iowa is Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues. Appointed by President Obama, he was confirmed by the Senate, and assumed his duties on September 8, 2009. Prior to his appointment, he served as Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone beginning in January 2007, leading the prosecutions of former Liberian President Charles Taylor and other persons alleged to bear the greatest responsibility for the atrocities committed during the civil war in Sierra Leone.

During his tenure, his office achieved the first convictions in history for sexual slavery and forced marriage as crimes against humanity, and for attacks on peacekeepers and for recruitment and use of child soldiers as violations of international humanitarian law.

From 2001 to 2007, Mr. Rapp served as Senior Trial Attorney and Chief of Prosecutions at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, personally heading the trial team that achieved convictions of the principals of RTLM radio and "Kangura "newspaper-the first in history for leaders of the mass media for the crime of direct and public incitement to commit genocide.

Mr. Rapp was United States Attorney in the Northern District of Iowa from 1993 to 2001, where his office won historic convictions under the firearms provision of the Violence Against Women Act and the serious violent offender provision of the 1994 Crime Act.

Prior to his tenure as U.S. Attorney, he worked as an attorney in private practice and served as Staff Director of the U.S. Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency and as an elected member of the Iowa Legislature.

He received his BA degree from Harvard College in 1971. He attended Columbia and Drake Law Schools and received his JD degree from Drake in 1974.

Source: U.S. Department of State

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United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 22 September 2009

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

International Clips on Liberia

Liberia / Major Step Forward in Countering Human Trafficking

MONROVIA, **Liberia**, September 22, 2009/African Press Organization (APO)/ — IOM Press Briefing Notes

A national referral system that will identify, refer, protect and provide follow-up services to victims of human trafficking in Liberia is to be set up by the government with support from IOM through a new one-year programme. The referral system will also offer voluntary return and reintegration options for both Liberian and internationals trafficked to the country assisted partly through the setting up of a pilot Return and Reintegration Fund. The fund will be able to assist 35 victims. The programme, funded by IOM's 1035 Facility, a tool designed to respond rapidly and flexibly to important migration challenges faced by IOM's developing Member States and Member States with an economy in transition, will allow IOM to provide vital training to government officials.

International Clips on West Africa **Sierra Leone**

Sierra Leone Women at Risk

Freetown - One in eight women in Sierra Leone risk death during childbirth or pregnancy and the government must act to improve maternal health care, rights group Amnesty International said on Tuesday. "Women and girls are dying in their thousands because they are routinely denied their right to life and health, in spite of promises from the government to provide free health care to all pregnant women," it said. The organization called the one-in-eight number "one of the highest maternal death rates in the world". "Thousands of women bleed to death after giving birth," Amnesty said in a statement. "Most die in their homes. Some die on the way to hospital, in taxis, on motorbikes or on foot." It added that "less than half of deliveries are attended by a skilled birth attendant and less than one in five are carried out in health facilities".

- AFP

Protest of Guinea diplomats in town for UN General Assembly turns ugly nydailynews.com ...September 22, 2009

African diplomats in town for the UN General Assembly were targeted by more than 100 anti-government protesters on Monday - sparking a melee that injured one person and left two others under arrest, police and witnesses said. The angry demonstrators - mainly ex-pat cab drivers from the Bronx - confronted two officials from the Republic of Guinea as they entered the country's UN mission on E. 39th St. "They came out to attack the delegates," said Abraham Keita, 46, of the Bronx, who said he is the nephew of one of the officials. A phalanx of about a dozen government supporters protected the officials as they scurried inside the mission, Keita said. The melee later spilled into the street, where protesters "jumped on a boy" and "beat him down," Keita added. A Fire Department official confirmed one person was taken to Bellevue Hospital in unknown condition at about 3 p.m.

The protesters amassed to show opposition to **Guinea's** leader, army Capt. Moussa Dadis Camara.

Rusal Appeals Guinea Ruling, May Seek Arbitration, FT Reports

Sept. 22 (Bloomberg) -- United Co. Rusal is appealing a court ruling in Guinea that canceled its ownership of the Friguia bauxite and alumina complex and may seek arbitration in Paris, the Financial Times reported, citing an unidentified person familiar with the action.

Nobody at Rusal was available to comment when Bloomberg called its offices in Moscow and mobile numbers for officials. Rusal had 10 days to challenge the Sept. 10 court decision, Momo Sacko, adviser to Guinean President Moussa Camara, said on Sept. 11.

Ivory Coast

UK court to Formalize Trafigura waste case deal

LONDON, Sept 22 (Reuters) - Compensation by global commodities trader Trafigura to people who fell ill from oil waste dumped in the Ivory Coast will be formalised in a British court on Wednesday, the claimants' lawyers said on Tuesday. On Sunday the trader said it had reached a settlement with thousands of people in the West African country who said they fell ill when slops from a ship the company had chartered were dumped in the commercial capital Abidjan in 2006. Trafigura, which has repeatedly denied any wrongdoing, said the settlement of 950 pounds (\$1,553) to each of the 31,000 claimants was not an admission of liability.

Local Media – Newspaper

President Sirleaf to Meet U.S. President Barack Obama

(The Parrot, Daily Observer)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is in the United States of America to meet US President Barack Obama.
- President Obama invited the Liberian leader to participate in a working lunch with Sub-Saharan African leaders slated for today.
- The discussion will centre on the building of a 21st Century partnership that will lead to economic and social development for the people of Africa.
- During the President's four-day stay in the United States, she will participate in luncheon with global women leaders organized by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

General Auditing Commission Wants Information on "Payoff" to Advocacy Group

(The Inquirer, The News, Heritage, The Analyst, New Democrat)

- The General Auditing Commission (GAC) is seeking clarification from the Ministry of Public Works for a US\$4,000.00 "payoff" to an advocacy group, Movement for the Down Trodden for media services.
- The GAC said it wants to know the kind of public relations services provided by the group for which the money was paid.
- The group has however defended its services to the Ministry of Public Works saying it advocacy also involves doing public relations.
- The group and the GAC have a long history of acrimony between them. The group has on a number of occasions accused the GAC of corruption among other things.
- However, the Auditing Commission has always dismissed the group as "paid agents" fighting a proxy war for some of those indicted by the commission's audit.

LNP Reports Reduction in Crimes

(Heritage)

- Authorities of the Liberia National Police (LNP) have reported a sharp reduction in the wave of crimes in Monrovia and other parts of the country.

- According to the police, the reduction is credited to a police foot patrol operation launched recently to track down criminals and their hideouts.
- The Police Spokesman said that since the launch of the police foot patrol operations early this month several high core criminals have been arrested and sent to court.

European Commission, GOL Sign 20.2 Million Euros Budgetary Support

(Daily Observer)

- The European Commission (EC) and the Government of Liberia have signed a 20.2 Million Euros budgetary support grant for Liberia.
- Planning Minister Amara Konneh signed for the Liberian Government while Mr. Michel Arrion, head of delegation of the EC Liberia-Ivory Coast signed for his organization.
- A statement released during the signing ceremony indicated that the budget support is meant to move Liberia from emergency to a regular development phase.
- It is also intended to underpin the significant progress achieved in macroeconomic stability and public finance management.

Chinese Peacekeepers to Stay Until 2011 Exercise

(The Inquirer)

- The Chinese Ambassador to Liberia, Zhou Yuxiao has expressed confident that Chinese troops serving within the United Nations Mission in Liberia would remain in the country up to 2011.
- Ambassador Zhou Yuxiao said though there could be a small reduction in the size of the Chinese troops in the country, they would remain in Liberia to provide the needed support up to 2011 under the UN Mission.

Muslims End Ramadan

(New Democrat)

- Muslims in Liberia on Monday joined the world to celebrate this year's Eid-Al-Fitr, marking the end of the Holy month of Ramadan.
- The Muslims, who converged at their various worship centers in Monrovia and its environs, were unanimous in their prayers for lasting peace in Liberia after years of civil conflict.
- The Imam of the Benson Street Mosque, Sheik Vamuyan Abdullai recalled the difficult times Liberians faced at the height of the civil conflict and reminded them to desist from any thing that could ignite another round of conflict.

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

President Sirleaf Submits Forestry Contracts to Legislature

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has submitted four Forestry Management Contracts to the Legislature for ratification.
- The contracts include Euro-Liberia Logging Company, Geblo Logging Incorporated, International Consortium Capital and Atlantic Resources Incorporated.
- The four companies are to operate in parts of the forests of Grand Gedeh, River Gee, Sinoe, Nimba and Rivercess Counties.
- President Sirleaf wants the Legislature to ratify the Forestry Management Contracts saying they are catalysts to the economic revitalization of Liberia.

(Also reported on Truth F.M)

President Sirleaf to Meet U.S. President Barack Obama

Justice Minister Wants Input in UN Security Decisions

- Justice Minister Christiana Tarr says there's a need for Liberia to partake in UN decisions which affect the Country's security sector.
- Speaking at a UN partnership forum in the United States, Minister Tarr said the decision should not be left with the United Nations alone.
- The partnership forum was aimed at assessing Liberia's security sector and seeking further financial and logistical support.

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

Liberia-Japan Discuss Road Expansion

- A Ministry of Public Works release said discussions for the possible expansion of the Somalia Drive road linking the Freeport of Monrovia to Red Light are ongoing between the Governments of Liberia and Japan.
- The release said the Public Works Ministry and the Japan International Cooperation Agency will next week hold a joint seminar which would focus on the Draft Final Report of the Master plan study on Urban Facilities Restoration and Improvement in Monrovia.
- The Master Plan study consists of urban development, land use, road and transport, ground water development, water supply and storm water drainage.
- The undertaking followed the submission of a request to the Government of Japan in November 2007.

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

Truth FM *(News monitored today at 10:00am)*

Peace and Security, Cardinal to UN Mission in Liberia Says Loj

- The Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in Liberia, Ellen Margrethe Løj has described the maintenance of peace and security as cardinal to the UN mission in Liberia.
- In a message to commemorate International Day of Peace on Monday, the SRSG called on Liberians both at home and the Diaspora to develop an attitude of unity if the peace is to be sustained.
- The message was contained in a statement delivered on her behalf by UNMIL's Chief of Civil Affairs, Francis Kai-kai.
- The day was celebrated globally under the theme "Nuclear Disarmament and Non-proliferation of Weapons".

Radio Netherlands Worldwide

Friday, 18 September 2009

Bagaragaza enters guilty plea at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR)

By International Justice Desk



Arusha, Tanzania

Michel Bagaragaza the former Managing Director of OCIR-Tea, the controlling

organisation for the tea industry in Rwanda during the genocide period, entered a plea of guilty on 17 November to the count of complicity in genocide as contained in an amended indictment.

Bagaragaza, who voluntarily surrendered to the ICTR on 16 August 2005 initially pleaded not guilty to the four counts of which he was indicted including “genocide” and “conspiracy to commit genocide”.

Bagaragaza was later transferred to the UN prison quarters of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia’s (ICTY) detention unit on 18 August 2005. The request came from the ICTR Prosecutor owing to security concerns related to Bagaragaza’s voluntary surrender to the tribunal.

Referral Orders Refused

Following the refusal of the ICTR’s Prosecutor request to have the trial moved to Norway on 19 May 2006 owing to the fact that Norway does not have a specific provision against genocide, the prosecutor requested the trial be moved to the Netherlands on December 12 2006.

On 13 April 2007 the ICTR-Trial Chamber III accepted the transfer of the case. However, in a similar case involving another Rwandan, The Hague District Court afterwards stated that the Dutch Courts do not have any jurisdiction in trying such a case. The referral order was therefore revoked and Bagaragaza was transferred back to Arusha, Tanzania on 20 May 2008.

Sentencing

The Chamber scheduled the hearing of character witnesses for the Defence in preparation for sentencing on 2 November 2009, following the Prosecutor’s presentation of the new indictment and pleas agreement.

The plea agreement was accepted by Trial Chamber III, composed of Judges Vagn Joensen, Bakhtiyar Tuzmukhamedov, and Gberdao Gustave Kam.

Radio Netherlands Worldwide

Thursday, 17 September 2009

Testimony ends at Cambodia genocide trial

By International Justice Desk



Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Cambodia's Khmer Rouge court finished hearing evidence against the regime's prison chief Kaing Guek Eav a.k.a. 'Duch' on Thursday. It ends six months of gruelling testimony about atrocities at the Tuol Sleng prison where up to 15,000 people died.

The UN-backed Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) adjourned the trial of Duch until 23 November when the prosecution and defence are due to present their closing arguments. A verdict is expected early next year.

Fifty-five witnesses have been testifying since late March about Duch's role overseeing the torture and killing of thousands of people at the Tuol Sleng detention centre under the 1975-1979 communist regime.

Cooperating

During the trial, Duch (66) has repeatedly accepted responsibility for his role in governing the prison, and begged for forgiveness from victims and their families.

Sitting calmly in the dock, he has largely cooperated with the court, offering his comments as officials traced how he took part in the Khmer Rouge's rise to power, and then oversaw Tuol Sleng with brutal efficiency.

In his final testimony on Wednesday, Duch invited victims of the regime to visit him in detention. His defence team has indicated it thinks judges could be more lenient after his public displays of contrition and cooperation.

But as prison chief, the ever-meticulous Duch built up a huge archive of photos, confessions and other documents of evidence which prosecutors used to illustrate the final terrible months of thousands of inmates' lives.

Atrocities

Inmates had toenails and fingernails pulled out, had the blood drained from their bodies in primitive medical experiments and had electric shocks administered to their genitals, prosecutors and witnesses said.

Tuol Sleng workers testified that most prisoners were taken to a so-called "Killing Field" at Choeung Ek, near Phnom Penh, killed by a blow to the base of the neck with a steel club and then had their bellies sliced open.

Duch is the only one of the five former Khmer Rouge leaders, currently being held in the purpose-built jail at the war crimes court, to admit guilt for the atrocities committed by the regime. However, he denied several allegations that he personally tortured and killed prisoners, saying throughout proceedings that he feared for his life and his family, and acted under orders from superiors.

(AFA)

(Photo: Iris Smit)

Radio Netherlands Worldwide

Wednesday, 23 September 2009

Testimony Ends at Cambodia General Trial



Ottawa, Canada

A study released Tuesday urges Canada to take a more active role in trying to stop war crimes and other atrocities in foreign countries before they happen.

Drawing on lessons learned from Rwanda and Kosovo in the 1990s, the report's recommendations were endorsed by two of Canada's opposition parties, as well as former senior diplomat Robert

Fowler, and Senator Romeo Dallaire, a former general in charge of UN peacekeeping in Rwanda.

Feeble Response

Its author, professor Frank Chalk of Concordia University in Montreal, interviewed more than 80 senior Canadian and US political leaders over two years.

For his study of what went wrong in Canada and the United States to allow "mass atrocities" elsewhere in the world, Chalk simply asked: "Why was their response so totally feeble?" he told a press conference.

He claimed that the information coming from the field was buried.

"It was put at the bottom of the pile and most importantly it was not disseminated across the government of Canada or of the United States," he said.

Recommendations

Chalk suggested in his report that early intervention in conflicts by means of beefed up diplomacy and development aid, backed by threats of military action was desirable.

He also suggests creating a "super minister" for the prevention of genocides to coordinate information gathering and dissemination.

"This is about protecting victims of genocide, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and serious war crimes overseas," Chalk said. "And it is also an issue of protecting ourselves here in Canada."

He pointed to pandemics that may originate in conflict zones by the displacement of peoples, often left with no access to medicines or clean drinking water. Such situations "create a vast Petri dish for the development of future pandemics and infectious diseases."

World Police

Dallaire and Fowler also said they are not urging Canada to become "the world's police" or heralding the start of an "era of setting everything right around the world."

Fowler added, "The things I'm talking about are not debatable, they are simply so horrendous that they require an engagement."

Source: AFA, Photo: Flickr

The Jerusalem Post

Tuesday, 22 September 2009

Terra Incognita: Strange justice: The ICC, Europe and the world

By SETH FRANTZMAN

The recent revelation that the gas-station-attendant-turned-Liberian-warlord Charles Taylor has converted to Judaism once again reminds us that he is in the International Criminal Court (ICC) prison in The Hague. With the publication of the Goldstone report accusing Israel of "war crimes" there is a chance that Israelis might one day share his fate. Yet at the same time, other European courts are releasing terrorists and elderly Nazis due to "ill health."

This begs the question: Why are UN prisoners of the ICC not given the same rights as Nazis and terrorists? Just what is this ICC, and why do Africans and East Europeans disappear into its halls of justice, while 'western' Europeans seem to be free from its jurisdiction? European justice systems are "humane" rather than "punishment" facilities. Once a prisoner is not a threat to society, he or she is eligible for release.

Another side to the European justice system is the definition of a "life sentence" as being around 15 years. Thus John Demjanjuk, accused of having a role in the murder of 27,000 people during the Holocaust, faces only 15 years in a German prison.

BUT FOR those indicted by the International Criminal Court, the procedure and punishment are quite different. This raises serious questions about the court and its legitimacy. If the Lockerbie bomber can walk free from a Scottish prison due to compassion and former SS guard Erich Priebke can be released to house arrest in Italy due to poor health, despite his role in the murder of 335 people, why should war criminals from the former Yugoslavia and Africa die in UN custody? Are Europeans who committed war crimes during World War II seemingly beyond the jurisdiction of the ICC? The court excels at prosecuting Eastern Europeans (primarily Serbs) and Africans.

The ICC, established by the UN in 1993, has four ongoing investigations, all in Africa (Sudan, Congo, Uganda and Central African Republic). Of 14 individuals currently indicted, two have died and four are in custody. The others are "fugitives." However, over the past decade and a half, the ICC has also prosecuted war crimes in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda through special tribunals. The one established for Yugoslavia prosecuted dozens of individuals and has sentenced more than 25 to terms of over 15 years. Several of them have died while awaiting trial. Consider the case of Slobodan Milosevic, the highest-profile case. Although he was transferred to the court's custody in 2001, the prosecution took two years to present its case. Milosevic died in his cell in 2006, in the midst of a seemingly endless trial. Consider that the Nuremberg trials, which investigated millions of deaths, took just one year to complete. The right to a speedy trial is a hallmark of most justice systems, but not the UN's.

ANOTHER ASSOCIATED problem with the ICC is its method of justice, which includes its lack of jurisdiction, its convoluted bureaucracy, its lack of an appeal process and its lack of a trial by jury. It has 16 permanent judges and 12 temporary ad litem judges. Seven of the permanent judges are from European countries, one is from the US and one is from Australia. Of the 12 temporary judges, eight are from European countries. Thus the court is primarily European run.

Yet those it judges are not from Europe; they are usually kidnapped from their home countries, without the ability to appeal their extradition, and shipped to Europe to sit in a European prison where they have

no access to legal protections that other Europeans enjoy. This is at best an unfair system and at worst a colonialist one, which places even a former SS officer above suspects from Africa or elsewhere.

From where does the UN derive its power to detain people? When UN workers commit crimes in foreign countries, they are sent home for prosecution. But those same workers can place locals in UN custody without the local having a right to appeal!

It is important to note that the prisoners have no access to habeas corpus - probably the most important concept in law. It allows a person to request relief from unlawful detention. This was called the "great writ" in English law and allowed a person to request by what authority a court held him or her. No such right exists for those held at The Hague. Even inmates at Guantanamo Bay have successfully petitioned for their rights under this concept.

Europeans, quick to criticize the US war on terror, deny this basic right to inmates held on European soil. The same European Court of Human Rights that safeguards the European does not even provide these inmates' rights. It is no wonder that criminals are on the run from this court, established without the consent of the people who may one day be charged by it and which has no mechanism for appeal or any other basic legal right. Until the ICC grants the same rights to Charles Taylor that it does to Nazis and other Europeans, it cannot be considered a legitimate court, and should be spurned by the world.

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