

**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:**

Friday, 22 August 2008

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.  
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact  
Martin Royston-Wright  
Ext 7217

### Local News

Journalists Trained on Charles Taylor's Trial / <i>Salone Times</i>	Page 3
Journalists Conclude Training on Taylor Trial / <i>Awoko</i>	Page 4
Injustice and Human Rights Violations Caused Salone War... / <i>Awoko</i>	Page 5

### International News

GOL on Taylor's Treatment in The Hague / <i>The Inquirer</i>	Pages 6-7
"I Was Trained in Camp Namaah" / <i>National Chronicle</i>	Pages 8-9
Witness Traces NPFL Role, Invasion / <i>New Democrat</i>	Pages 10-11
(Untitled) / <i>BBC World Service Trust</i>	Page 12
UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries / <i>UNMIL</i>	Pages 13-15

Salone Times  
Friday, 22 August 2008

# JOURNALISTS TRAINED ON CHARLES TAYLOR'S TRIAL

*Over twenty journalists from both the electronic and print media have undergone a three day training on reporting the on-going Charles Taylor Trial.*

The training was organised by the Sierra Leone Court Monitoring Group and the Charles Taylor Trail project. The training took place at the Grass Root Gender Empowerment movement (GGEM), John Street Freetown. The journalists were trained on how to source the on-going trail in The Hague.

Among topics dis-

cussed were .

- \*the overview of International Criminal Justice and the special court for Sierra Leone presented by the Sierra Leone Court Monitoring Programme director, Mohamed Suma.

- \*The trial of Charles Taylor from a prosecution perspective by special court Trial Attorney Mohamed Bangura,

- \*the Charles Taylor Trial .Org Project and how it can be used by journalists in Sierra Leone presented

project coordinator Alpha Sesay,

- \*media court monitoring techniques by Tonya Musa,

- \*the trial of Charles Taylor from a defence perspective by Principal Defender Elizabeth Nahamya.

Other topics discussed were Professional Standards in reporting the Taylor Trial and fundamental principles of trial monitoring and report. The journalists also visited the special court to observe the Taylor Trial on Thursday.

Awoko

Friday, 22 August 2008

## Journalists conclude training on Taylor Trial

*By Betty Milton*

About 25 journalists from both the print and electronic media on Wednesday

concluded training on reporting the Charles Taylor trial, which is presently going on in The Hague in Netherlands.

Mohamed Suma, Programme Director of the Sierra Leone Court Monitoring Programme Group (SLCMP), in addressing media practitioners said that the training “aims to provide journalist with a better understanding of the Taylor trial proceedings, including the purpose of the trial, the role of the prosecution and defence and the right of the accused to a fair trial.”

Mr Suma stated that after the three-day interactive training session, journalists will have a wider and better perspective on reporting the Taylor trial and also to report any other international tribunals.

Mohamed Bangura, trial attorney of the special court, provided the prosecutor’s perspective on the Taylor trial, noting that the training comes at the right time, taking into consideration the commencement of the trial in The Hague. Mr Bangura said that the BBC World Service Trust has done a good job by training reporters and also sending them to The Hague, but added that such training should not be limited to the BBC trust.

“Other institutions should come on board and engage media practitioners so that they will disseminate the

message about the trial in The Hague,” he said.

Mr Bangura stressed the importance of journalists’ understanding of the procedures, and said they (journalists) need to understand the legal terms used during the course of trials.

Without legal knowledge, he explained, the reporter will not report accurately.

Giving legal implications of the trials, the attorney spoke about the strategies of gathering evidence and putting witnesses together, individual criminal responsibility and command responsibilities. He explained that even if the individual is not present when the crimes are committed, that individuals can still be prosecuted if he was aware of the crimes committed by his subordinate or if he failed to punish his subordinate after committing a crime.

Speaking about the defence office, Principal Defender Elizabeth Nahamya said that the defence office was created by rules of the court, whereas the Office of the Prosecution (OTP) was created by the statute of the court – a big difference between the two offices.

She stressed that the defence office’s role is to ensure the rights of the accused are protected by all and that they get a free and fair trial and that they also provide a list of lawyers among which the accused have a right to choose.

Awoko

Friday, 22 August 2008

## Injustice and human rights violations caused Salone War – Alpha Kanu

By Solomon Rogers

Presidential Affairs Minister Alpha Kanu has said that injustice and other human rights violations in the political past were responsible for the 11 years rebel war in Sierra Leone – though the minister refused to specifically point the finger at the political regime during that period.

During the war, he said, there was “a complete breakdown in law and order,” and there were hardly any developments until after 2001, when former President Kabbah declared the war over.

Mr Kanu said the TRC report is “a prescription” for everyone in Sierra Leone to know about the cause of the war and to avoid recurrence of such war.

The Minister made this statement at the official launching of the State of

Human Rights in Sierra Leone 2007 at the YMCA hall at Kroobay in Freetown.

He said the selection of Kroobay for the launching of the report was symbolic, given the fact that people perceive Kroobay as a slum.

He stated that most communities in Sierra Leone are identical to the Kroobay community, saying Kroobay is “75 percent representative of all Sierra Leoneans.”

“I have known Kroobay for the past 45 years, since I was a school boy at the Collegiate Secondary School,” Mr Kanu said. “But there is little or no development in the community, except for the construction of a bypass street a couple of years ago.” Deputizing the Executive Representative of the Secretary General, Benedict Sannoh noted that the things that ignited the war in Sierra Leone are still with us, and if something is not done to address them it would

lead to repetition.

“Human rights are all about gender equality and access to basic services to enhancing human dignity,” he said. “We cannot move as a nation if the TRC recommendations are not implemented.”

Mr Sannoh added that the Human Rights Commission should not only focus on the statutory aspect of things, but should also play a leadership role in promoting human rights issues throughout the country. In giving the overview of the commission, Deputy Chairman of the Human Rights Commission Edward Sam outlined that the report handles both the geographical and historical content of Sierra Leone. The commission started off with collaboration, interaction and consultation with all the stakeholders in the country, he noted. Mr Sam said their primary objective was to make sure government

complies with all the international treaties that have been signed. He added that his commission was very much instrumental in the passing into law of the gender and child rights bills.

Chairman of the Kroobay steering committee Morry Alieu Kamara said Kroobay community has an estimate of 10,200 inhabitants, 95 percent of which are poor.

The chairman of the occasion, Abdul Tejan Cole, observed that the description of Kroobay by some NGOs as a slum is an indictment to the country, adding that there is a lot to be done under the economic social rights, in spite of some of the bottle necks, Sierra Leone achieved in passing into law certain controversial bills in 2007 and in conducting democratic elections in which people were given the opportunity to exercise their franchise.

The Inquirer (Liberia)

Friday, 22 August 2008

of Liberia responsible for

# GOL On Taylor's Treatment In The Hague



*Mr. Taylor*

The government of Liberia has given its official reaction to news reportedly coming out of The Hague, that former Liberian President Charles Taylor has been subjected to some rigid security measures while attending his trial.

Information Minister, Lawrence Bropleh, who spoke on the issue of the alleged mal-treatment of

the former President, iterated the government's position that it considered Mr. Taylor to be innocent and as such, he should be treated in keeping with international acceptable standards as a detainee of the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Minister Bropleh who had just arrived from the country from the

**Cont'd on Page 10**

## **GOL On Taylor's Treatment**

*Cont'd from front Page*

Dominican Republic, located in South America, told journalists yesterday at the Ministry of Information that the government's stance is that Mr. Taylor should be treated within the confines of international acceptable standards stressing that from the way the government sees it, whatever measures would be applied by the court are internationally accepted.

Addressing himself to the issue as to whether the government is concerned or worried over the issue that Mr. Taylor is allegedly being badly treated, Minister Bropleh simply said, "Government is not worried." He added that Mr. Taylor being a former President of the country has been charged for grave crimes but he reasoned that the former President is innocent until he is found guilty.

He said the government supports the idea that Mr. Taylor gets a free and fair trial something, which he noted the government could hold the court to its feet to do.

Minister Bropleh made it clear that until then, the government cannot raise any issue as of now with the court.

Meanwhile, Minister Bropleh has spoken on the on-going truth and reconciliation hearings taking place in Monrovia.

He said it was the desire of the President and the government in general to unite the Liberian people but acknowledged that this cannot be done overnight.

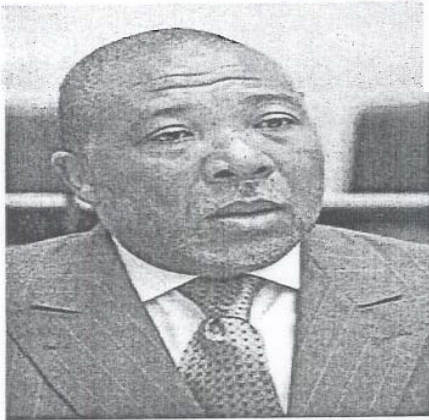
Minister Bropleh said that the process of truth telling will not always lead us to true reconciliation but that it is a very important first step in the process. He expressed the hope that those appearing before the commission would be honest in their testimonies so as to help the process.

On the issue of the President's appearance before the commission, Minister Bropleh said the President is willing and prepared to appear at the wish of the country and will give her testimonies whether in public or in camera, as the commission may deem necessary.

National Chronicle (Liberia)  
Friday, 22 August 2008

# “I WAS TRAINED IN CAMP NAMAHAH”

## -Former RUF Rebel Tells Special Court -Linked Taylor To Foday Sankor



A former rebel of the defunct Revolutionary United Front (RUF) of Sierra Leone has told the Special Court sitting

in the Hague that he was recruited in Kakata, Margibi County and later trained at the Camp

Namaah Military Barracks.

The witness whose identity was not disclosed as a result of security measures, said the

defunct National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) headed by detained former

*Cont'd on Page 6*



**TRAINED**

Liberian leader, Charles Taylor launched the first attack in Kwendo, Sierra Leone and not the RUF.

He said the RUF fighters were later taken to Sierra Leone, after the NPFL had captured the town.

The witness said before the attack, he went to a meeting which was addressed by former RUF leader, Foday Sankor, describing in a graphic detail, atrocities which he said, had been carried out by Charles Taylor's rebel force (NPFL) in Liberia in 1990. The unidentified witness said that decapitated heads of members of the Mandingo tribe had been planted on poles at check-points manned by the NPFL around Kakata, Margibi County.

Meanwhile, the Special Court has clarified that the detained former Liberian leader has not been chained as reported by the media.

The spokesman of the court said the international court is against the use of chain on a prisoner or detainee.

Spokesman Anderson clarified what the prison authorities used on Taylor, was a cord which passed around his waist with a security officer holding the end of the cord at some distance behind him.

According to Anderson the use of chain as reported, was what he termed an "unfortunate expression" from the Hague and recalled the new measure was initiated following a security breach on July 12, but clarified that the incident did not have anything to do with Taylor.

He said as a consequence the court authorities have increased the security level and put into place certain security measures.

New Democrat  
Friday, 22 August 2008

# Witness Traces NPFL Role, Invasion

## Says Lofa Was RUF Main Supply Route

A witness testifying against Charles Taylor has revealed how Taylor coordinated with the RUF to invade Guinea in 2000 through a third area Giguadu via Liberia.

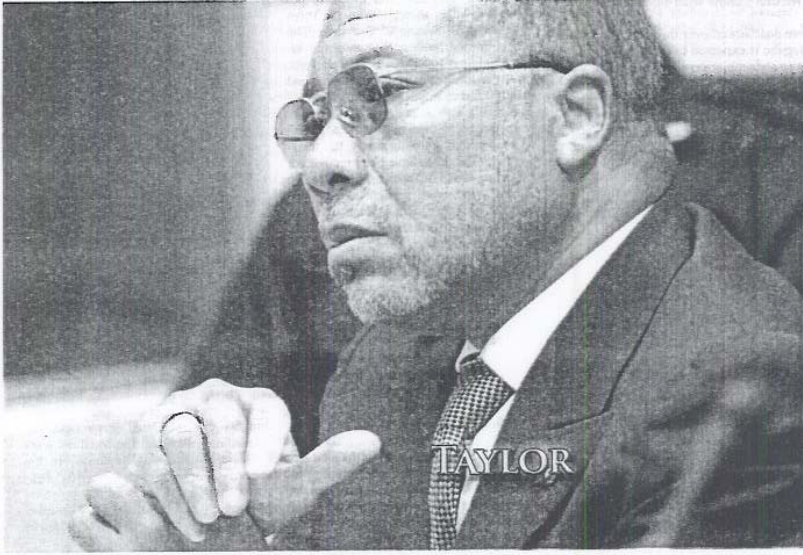
The witness a former RUF mining commander, Witness TF1-367 told the Court Thursday that Lofa County was the main supply route for arms and ammunition for the RUF, as Charles Taylor entrusted the county's security in the hands of RUF commanders.

Witness TF1-367 told the Court that at one point in time while on their way back from Monrovia, said Taylor and Sam Bockarie discussed the security situation in Lofa at which time he reminded Bockarie not to forget about Lofa because that was the RUF's main supply route.

Witness further told the UN backed Special Court for Sierra Leone as the Prosecution wraps up its cross-examination that the Guinea mission was not successful because the morale amongst the RUF soldiers were low.

"The RUF soldiers did not feel like this was an RUF mission as Guinea was not its target," the Witness said.

Excerpts from the Court: The Prosecu-



tion opened the second court ses- by readdressing the Witness' travel Monrovia with Sam Bockarie. The Witness said that Sam Bockarie gave him a brief explanation of the meeting Bockarie had with Charles Taylor. According to the Witness, Sam Bockarie and Charles Taylor discussed the security situation in Lofa County. Charles Taylor told the Witness that Bockarie should not forget about Lofa County's security because Lofa County was RUF's main supply route into Liberia. The Witness also testified that he and Sam Bockarie left and returned to Sierra Leone with a jeep and a truck. The return, the truck contained missiles obtained in Monrovia.

Recalling his tenure as mining commander, the Witness said that he left post as commander in the same month that the Guinea war started in 2000. He stated that Issa Sesay, the high commander at that time, made the decision regarding his post as mining commander. Bockarie was not present because he had gone to Monrovia to visit Charles Taylor. The Witness stated that the reason he was removed was because he was seen as too harsh enough with the civilians. He testified that he hid a bible under his arm, as explained by Issa Sesay. It was believed that he was another commander. Pa

## Witness Traces NPFL Role

and Issa Sesay that this light treatment resulted in fewer diamonds.

He was replaced by another RUF officer, the individual that he previously testified about as having been involved in a bank robbery. The Witness described several other officers that were mining during this time. The Witness said that after he was replaced the camps produced a lot more diamonds because the people were more afraid and because the RUF was focused almost entirely on mining. He recalled that the machines during his administration were used by the next commander.

The Witness testified that he had seen Foday Sankoh in the town of Kwadu, after Mr. Sankoh was released from Nigeria. According to the Witness, Sankoh traveled with a former ambassador to Liberia to Kono. He said that he spoke with Sankoh in Kwadu town and gave him 15 pieces of diamonds (which Issa Sesay saw and approved of). He spoke with Sankoh about his investigation and his administration as mining commander. After that meeting, Foday Sankoh returned to Freetown. The Witness said he was relieved of his post shortly thereafter this meeting. He was still the mining commander when he learned of Sankoh's arrest at his home in Freetown. He recalled that within three months of receiving this news he was relieved his duties as mining commander. He did not receive a replacement assignment.

The Witness said that he does not know the terms Opera or Jotown. Jotown is near Kwadu town. Jotown is a small village that was also a mining town. Other mining sites he knows are Number 6 and Number 7. Number 6 is in the Kono District. He stated never visited these places; there was no war in these areas. He also confirmed that he was familiar with several names of RUF officers involved in mining.

Evidentiary issue: The Prosecution attempted to introduce a mining log into evidence through the Witness. The Defense objected arguing that an appropriate foundation had not laid.

According to the Defense, the mining log was dated in 2001 after the Witness ended his term as mining commander. Further, the document had not been authenticated as to its origin or author. The Prosecution argued that the Witness was appropriate for entry to the Court because of his knowledge of the people and places referenced therein. The Court refused the document, relying upon Rule 89(c) which states that a document introduced through a witness must have the appropriate foundation. A document can be tendered without a witness under Rule 92.



Regarding the "Guinea war", the Witness testified that the war began in 2000 at the end of the dry season. He said that he had been to Guinea during Issa Sesay's rule of the RUF on Sesay's orders. Before going, he received a Guinean visitor, Mohammed Toure, and Issa

Sesay, both coming from Monrovia. At that time the arrangements were made for the RUF to launch a war in Guinea. He was told to join another RUF commander and Toure, a "rebel leader", in fighting in Guinea.

The Witness stated that his role at this time was as an advisor who was there to ensure that the troops did what the officers commanded. He was within the troops and not a commander at this time. He named several RUF commanders involved in the Guinea war. The Witness said the RUF captured two Guinean towns: Madina Wola, where he was located, and another area Pamelap, led by another RUF commander. He said that the RUF attacked these areas from Sierra Leone. According to the Witness, RUF coordinated with Liberia and the NPFL to enter a third area Gigadu via Liberia. The Witness stated the mission was not successful because the RUF soldiers were discouraged and morale was low. The RUF soldiers did not feel like this was an RUF mission as Guinea was not its target. Issa Sesay was the commanding officer at this time, and motivated by money according to the Witness. Therefore the RUF retreated on its own initiative, not because of any pressure from opposing forces, but this distinction was not understood by many when the RUF returned to Sierra Leone. He also explained that at this time the Sierra Leonean government and the Guinean government were considered enemies of the RUF and the NPFL. The Witness testified that two people died during the Guinean attacks. He was also wounded during this fighting.

The Witness testified about Sam Bockarie. He stated that he spent a lot of time with Sam Bockarie. He was also very familiar with Bockarie's signature through letters and seeing Bockarie's signature on documents and other things. The Witness reviewed Exhibit D9 and said that he recognized one of the signature's as belonging to Bockarie. The Witness also reviewed document Tab 2, Exhibit P20, and stated that he recognized Bockarie's signature.

The Witness said that Sam Bockarie had a wife and that he knew Bockarie's wife's family. He named several family members. He said he was informed of Sam Bockarie's death and his family's death by the wife's eldest sister. The Witness said that the sister told him that the family was taken from their Monrovia home in the middle of the night. The sister escaped to Sierra Leone and that is how the Witness heard the story.

## BBC World Service Trust

Thursday, 21 August 2008

For the second day running indicted former Liberian President Charles Taylor has submitted himself to the new security measures instituted by the Dutch security. As the BBC World Service Trust Mariama Khai Fornah reports from The Hague, Mr. Taylor was present in court today dressed in a grey western-style suit.

FORNAH: As he listened to a former Sierra Leonean rebel fighter testified against him, Mr. Taylor shook his head on one occasion and constantly conferred with his lawyers and passed on to them notes written on pink pieces of paper.

The witness, on the first day of his direct examination, told the Court it was Charles Taylor's NPFL that first invaded Koindu Town in the Kailahun District and paved the way for the RUF to settle in Sierra Leone. He said to sustained the rebel war in Sierra Leone Sam Bockarie took diamonds to Monrovia to acquire arms and ammunition.

WITNESS: The diamonds that we got were the diamonds that he took to Monrovia to Charles Taylor for us to get our supply...

The witness told the Court he and Sam Bockarie took training together at the Camp Naama military barracks in Liberia. When asked what he knew about Sam Bokarie and his family, the prosecution witness said he got information from Bockarie's sister that they were killed in Liberia.

WITNESS: she told me that Sam Bockarie is dead and Hawa too is dead, that is Sam Bockarie's wife, including the children, Sam Bockarie's mother, Sam Bockarie's other brother Mohamed. She said they are all dead. And I asked who killed them? She said Charles Taylor, he gave the order for them to be killed. That was what Kadie told me. And Amara too, when I asked him that was the same thing he told me.

The Defence team of Charles Taylor started the cross-examination of the Prosecution 36th witness when it was announced that the Defence lawyer, Terry Munyard who fell ill few days ago had recovered so this witness testimony would be suspended to give way to the return of the 35th witness who was earlier on the stand.

For the BBC World Service Trust, this is Mariama Khai Fornah reporting from The Hague.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

---

**UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries  
21 August 2008**

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

**Newspaper Summary**

**UNMIL Reports Decrease in Sexual Exploitation and Abuse**

(The Analyst, Daily Observer, Heritage, The News, The Monitor, National Chronicle, New Democrat, The Inquirer)

- The latest Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) report of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) says five cases of SEA were reported against the staff of the Mission from January to June 2008.
- The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General (SRSG) in Liberia, Ms. Ellen M. Løj who read the report Wednesday at the Mission's regular press briefing in Monrovia said these allegations involving UNMIL personnel are four less than the nine cases of SEA that were reported from July to December 2007.
- However, she did not disclose the identities of UNMIL personnel who were accused.
- According to the report, out of two allegations, one was not substantiated while investigation into the other is ongoing.
- The report disclosed that the third reported allegation led to the repatriation on administrative grounds of the personnel prior to completion of investigation by UNMIL.
- It revealed that of the remaining two allegations, one staff of the Mission resigned for unrelated reasons prior to the on-set of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) investigation.
- The personnel connected with the last SEA allegation, the report said, is undergoing investigation by the OIOS while the final investigation report is awaited.
- SRSG Løj said the Mission takes seriously allegations of SEA against its personnel; therefore, it does not allow its personnel to go with impunity when found guilty.
- She said UNMIL is committed to ensuring that its good work in Liberia is not overshadowed by misconduct of any of its personnel.
- The UNMIL boss said UN has a strong mandate of zero tolerance against SEA by its personnel as such; it would not hesitate to take the necessary action against any of its personnel.
- She said the Mission would remain firm and resolute in ensuring that appropriate disciplinary measures are instituted against its personnel for any proven SEA conduct.

**UN Special Court Clarifies Misreading in Taylor's Trial**

(The News, Heritage, The Informer)

- The war crimes court has clarified that ex-Liberian President Charles Taylor was 'cord' and not 'chained,' and that he has not been blindfolded or hooded. However, Mr. Taylor complained to his lawyer and objected to a cord being passed around his waist, the end of which is held by a security officer at some distance behind him.
- The court explained that on July 12, a security breach took place at The Hague, which involved a detainee of another international tribunal, but which did not have anything to do with Mr. Taylor.
- As a consequence, Dutch authorities increased the security level and put in place certain additional security measures to contain the situation.
- According to Peter C. Andersen, Chief of Outreach and Public Affairs of the special court, a number of security measures were relaxed in respect of Mr. Taylor.

- According reports, lawyers defending Mr. Taylor have raised the issues with judges of the court concerning the latest security measures that he (Taylor) had to undergo in order to attend court proceedings.
- Mr. Taylor is said to have reiterated his objection to a cord being passed around his waist, the end of which is held by a security officer at some distance behind him while en route to court or from court.
- Taylor's lead Defense counsel, Courtenay Griffiths, informed the judges that Dutch securities have adopted a complete lack of flexibility due to stringent measures that have been put into place.
- Meantime, Judges of the Court have expressed concern about the issue raised by Mr. Taylor's lawyers and ordered the Registrar to "continue to investigate" a speedy resolution of the situation and ensure that a report is made on 25 August.

### **Secretary-General Ban Recommends Extension of UNMIL's Mandate**

(Daily Observer, Heritage, The News, New Democrat, The Inquirer, Liberian Express, The Monitor)

- U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has recommended to the Security Council another 12-month extension of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) through September 2009. Secretary General Ban also proposed expanding the size of the UNMIL police units from 605 to 845 officers and called on Liberia's international partners to urgently provide assistance in building a national police force. He pointed out that the delay in the reinforcement of the national police and the establishment of an Emergency Response Unit is making it difficult for UNMIL police unit in Monrovia to reduce its tasks and redeploy to other 'hotspots' around the country.
- The News newspaper reports that in his Seventeenth Progress Report on the United Nations Mission in Liberia to the Security Council, Mr. Ban said despite the commendable overall economic progress Liberia has made, it remains among the lowest in the world in key social indicators thus posing a potential risk to a delicate peace building process. He said it is estimated that more than 60 percent of the population continue to live below the national poverty line especially in rural areas.

### **Governance Commission Head Suggests Fast Track Court for Land Dispute**

(The News)

- [sic:] The Chairman of the Governance Commission Dr. Amos C. Sawyer has suggested the establishment of a fast track court to investigate land dispute in the country. He said a special court is necessary to speedily adjudicate land cases to avoid delay. Dr. Sawyer made the recommendation Tuesday when he appeared before the Senate Committee on Lands, Mines and Energy to provide information on a draft Act for the creation of a Land Commission. The former Interim President told members of the committee that land dispute was a serious problem in every sector of society and as such, the lawmakers should pass the draft act into law to avoid conflict among citizens. According to Dr. Sawyer, the World Bank and other international partners are prepared to provide funding for the operations of the commission for five years. The Governance Commission Chairman also noted that land disputes were one of the most complex issues that need to be addressed if Liberians must live in peace and harmony. Commenting further, Dr. Sawyer explained that most of the land disputes were due to insincerity on the part of authorities at the Archive Center and the Probate Court.
- According to the draft Act, the commission shall be an independent body of government responsible to deal with land issues in the country.

## **Radio Summary**

**Star Radio** *(News culled today from website at 9:00am)*

**Justice Wolokollie Issues Stay Order in Pro-Temp's Suspension Case**

*(Also reported on Truth F.M. and ELBC)*

**Special Court Clarifies Reports in Taylor's Trial**

**Chief Justice Warns Court Authorities Against Misused of Facilities**

- Speaking at the dedication of a local Magisterial Court, the Baypoo Magisterial Court, Chief Justice Johnnie Lewis said he would be constrained to use the salaries of magistrates to replace items missing from the court.
- Justice Lewis said it should be the priority of the court authorities' to serve as custodians of the facilities at the court.

*(Also reported on Truth F.M. and ELBC)*

**Senator Kaine's Murder Case Transfers to Monrovia**

- The murder case involving detained Margibi County Senator, Roland Kaine and others has been transferred to the First Judicial Circuit Court.
- Defense Lawyers asked for the transfer of the case to Montserrado County citing local prejudice among other things for the request.
- Roland Kaine and 16 others are in detention in connection with the June 7, Kolleh Town massacre in which more than 14 men were killed.
- The massacre followed a dispute over a farmland in the border town of Margibi and Grand Bassa Counties.

*(Also reported on Truth F.M. and ELBC)*

## The Daily Star (Lebanon)

Friday, 22 August 2008

### **Sudan's crimes, China, and losing the moral high ground**

By David M. Crane

Commentary

It is ironic that the president of the United States, George W. Bush, while in Thailand, recently called upon the Chinese government to be more mindful of fundamental freedoms for Chinese citizens. In another time, such comments by a president would not be that noteworthy; they would be expected, backed with a moral force that is lacking in Bush's statement to the Chinese government. Today they ring hollow.

With the specter of the past hanging over him, Bush traveled to the Olympic Games under a cloud. The ghosts of Bagram airfield, Abu Ghraib prison, secret camps, extraordinary rendition and of course the legal black hole that is the Guantanamo Bay prison follow this president wherever he goes. His administration's policies have caused the United States to lose the moral high ground as one of the longtime champions of human rights. It will take decades for that high ground to be regained to the extent that the international community will listen once again to Washington when it speaks of fundamental human rights.

Nations have no more precious resource than their moral standing in the world. Political, economic and military power are important to the security of a nation, but it is that moral force that gives a nation its true standing and ultimate strength. The US is a perfect example of this point.

The cornerstone to a nation's moral standing is the rule of law. It is through the adherence to law that fundamental freedoms are protected and nurtured. Closely allied to this is a nation's care for its own citizens. A nation's responsibility to protect those living within its own borders is a solemn and sovereign duty. Nations that ignore that duty become pariahs within the family of nations; they too lose the moral high ground.

Nowhere is this more so than in the Sudan. Though not alone in its ability to feed ravenously on its own citizenry, Sudan has taken this duty to protect and thrown it aside in a widespread and systematic policy to eliminate its own citizens in Darfur. Because of this policy the president of Sudan, Omar al-Bashir, has now been charged with a 10-count indictment for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Because of this, Sudan has no moral standing; this undercuts its ability to exist politically within the United Nations paradigm.

China is another example of a nation that has no moral standing. It cynically provides political cover to Bashir as it continues to hold on to its oil interests in Sudan, looking the other way as thousands die. The Chinese hope that there will be harmony throughout the Olympic Games they are hosting. Imagine if they had the moral high ground from which to actually achieve that harmony. The Potemkin village constructed to mask human rights violations of the past and present makes a mockery of the long and honored history of the Chinese people and their culture. The "harmony" they have spent billions to create as host to the games is built on sand. It will all crumble away after the games are over.

Other nations have in recent years also lost the moral high ground, many of them in the Middle East. Accordingly, their ability to actively engage in credible efforts for peace is hamstrung. They have no moral standing to negotiate a true peace while civilians are harmed. Because the major players within the



region have such little moral standing an atmosphere of mistrust prevails, like a dust cloud in the air, the clarity of a peace uncle

It is interesting how little respect is paid to the moral high ground in the 21st century. The last century was mankind's bloodiest and it was hoped with the fall of the iron curtain and the end of the cold war that this new century would turn out better than it has thus far. With the advent of modern international criminal law, just 15 years old, it was hoped that events in the Sudan and elsewhere would not happen again.

The International Criminal Court is the cornerstone for facing down the beast of impunity and it has acted against Bashir and his henchmen as the United Nations asked it to do. Yet regional organizations like the Arab League and the African Union mock such action. This mockery cheapens their moral standing in the world as well.

The moral high ground is like personal honor: when lost, it takes many years of hard work to regain. Without question, Sudan has lost the moral high ground. It can only regain it by taking positive and concrete steps such as stopping the killing in Darfur, protecting and nurturing those harmed in the various conflict zones and seeking justice for the tens of thousand of victims there. This would include the eventual handover of Bashir to the International Criminal Court for a fair and open trial.

As we celebrate the 60th anniversary of various key human rights instruments such as the Genocide Convention and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and in the spirit of the Olympic Games, we should pause to reflect upon how important the moral high ground is to a nation and its true standing in the world. The Bush administration will depart next January along with its skewed and dangerous policies; Bashir will continue to be politically isolated; and a solution by the regional and international players will be fashioned to turn him over for trial within the coming years. They did so with President Charles Taylor of Liberia in 2006, they will do the same with Bashir.

China will stumble forward fueled by an economic boom, but stumble it will over its poor human rights record. China has lost face and, though feared, it has no respect in the world because of its low moral standing. What makes a nation great is moral standing under the rule of law.

*David M. Crane is a professor at Syracuse University College of Law and a former founding chief prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, 2002-2005. This commentary first appeared at [bitterlemons-international.org](http://bitterlemons-international.org), an online newsletter.*