

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



Anna Malin is the newly born daughter of Simon Meisenberg of Chambers

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:

Monday, 24 August 2009

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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The Senator
Monday, 24 August 2009

How ECOWAS Assisted RUF

-Court Told



Charles Taylor

Charles Taylor did not use his personal influence or control over Sierra Leone's rebel force to choose a new leader when its head commander was arrested in 2000, Mr. Taylor told the Special Court for Sierra Leone judges.

Instead, West African leaders worked together to appoint a new rebel leader with whom they could negotiate in order to bring peace to Sierra Leone, he said.

In May 2000, Revolutionary United Front (RUF) leader Foday Sankoh was arrested and detained by the government of Sierra Leone after the rebel group

abducted over 500 United Nations peacekeepers and held them as hostages. Mr. Taylor said he was able to negotiate the release of the UN peacekeepers after meeting with the RUF's most senior commander at the time, Issa Sesay. Mr. Taylor said that the next concern was to determine who to negotiate with on behalf of the RUF so that peace would return to Sierra Leone.

"After the release of the UN hostages, we were concerned about who was in charge of the RUF in Sierra Leone," Mr. Taylor said.

Mr. Taylor said that at a July 26, 2000 meeting in Liberia, six Economic Community of West African

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How ECOWAS Assisted RUF

From Front Page

States (ECOWAS) leaders asked Mr. Sesay to take over the leadership of the RUF since Mr. Sankoh was no longer in a position to run the rebel movement. Mr. Sesay, according to Mr. Taylor, told the West African leaders that he needed to get the approval of Mr. Sankoh, who was imprisoned in Sierra Leone. He said that Nigerian president, Olusegun Obasanjo, and Malian president, Alpha Oumar Konare, traveled together to Sierra Leone and met with Mr. Sankoh in his prison cell. They obtained a letter from him which approved Mr. Sesay as the RUF's interim leader.

Referencing the release of the UN hostages, Mr. Taylor responded to prosecution allegations that the rebels listened to Mr. Taylor because of his individual and personal influence over the RUF. Denying this allegation, Mr. Taylor said "No, I am doing this with ECOWAS and everybody, not because of any individual influence."

The prosecution has led evidence that when Mr. Sankoh gave his approval to Mr. Sesay's leadership of the RUF, he told Mr. Sesay to take instructions from Mr. Taylor, and ordered Mr. Sesay not to disarm his rebel forces in Sierra Leone. A number of prosecution witnesses also testified that it was Mr. Taylor who changed the leadership of the RUF. Mr. Taylor dismissed this allegation as "total nonsense."

Mr. Taylor said that the "circumstances surrounding Issa Sesay's appointment was public knowledge."

Mr. Taylor said that ECOWAS leaders, including Sierra Leonean president Ahmed Tejan Kabbah saw Mr. Sesay as the most ideal person to work with in order to bring peace to Sierra Leone. "We saw him to be a very good fellow," Mr. Taylor said. "Some credit is due to him for getting on with the process of Lome [The peace agreement between the government of Sierra Leone and the RUF was signed in the Togolese capital Lome in June 1999]."

Mr. Taylor also today accused the United Kingdom and the United States as the two key states responsible for wrongly accusing him of supporting the RUF rebels in the Sierra Leonean conflict. He dismissed these allegations as "false" and "without proof."

Mr. Taylor's testimony continues.

-allAfrica.com

Premier News
Monday, 24 August 2009

Media Courage of The Special Court for Sierra Leone

From last issue
By Jessica Feinstein

In contrast to radio, accessible in most parts of the country, the vast bulk of newspapers are concentrated in Freetown, where the literacy rate is the highest. Freetown features a glutted newspaper market of around 50 newspapers, mostly weekly or bi-monthly, of which about ten to fifteen are daily papers. The most widely read are the Concord Times, Awoko, Awareness Times, For Di People, Standard Times, and Premier News, although only 11% of the population reads newspapers at any time. Indeed, the largest newspaper in Freetown has a circulation of only around 2,000.

In general, newspapers are not regarded as the most credible sources of information. Nevertheless, the Chief of the Special Court's Outreach and Public Affairs section emphasized that newspapers are still important because many now have websites that distribute articles far afield, for example, to foreign governments and other agencies that do not monitor the radio.

C. Challenges

The largest challenge facing journalists in Sierra Leone is economic. In 2008, Sierra Leone's GDP ranked number 169 out of 179 countries. David Tam-Baryoh of the Center for Media Education and Technology in Freetown said that Sierra Leonean newspapers and other media suffer from lack of external investment, in particular, investment by those outside the media sector with business acumen. According to Mr. Tam-Baryoh, nearly all newspapers are owned by journalists who lack solid business models. Scarce advertising revenue and over-competition barely keeps most papers afloat from day to day. This translates into a low pay scale for journalists. "Journalists often have to struggle to earn a reasonable standard of living," said Anne Bennett, Country Director for Foundation Hironnelle in Sierra Leone. Umaru Fofana, president of the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists, said that his organization is working to establish a minimum wage for journalists to alleviate "the rampant appalling conditions of service." The poor pay scale, compounded with "enormous" technological hurdles—a lack of basic infrastructure such as electricity, few computers and spotty internet access—means that journalists face basic, every day struggles to research, physically cover events, and then write and distribute their reports. According to Mariama Fornah, a reporter for Cotton Tree News, many reporters lack equipment like digital recorders and laptop computers. This can make sourcing information difficult.

Several problems result from the poor economic situation of journalists and media organizations, among them, corruption as well as a siphoning of talent away from journalism. Several individuals noted that many journalists seek kickbacks for positive reporting and threaten negative press coverage or omission of coverage if they are not paid for their services. Often, NGOs or other agencies will accept the scheme and pay for coverage. Simultaneously, young talented journalists are quickly lured away from journalism into more lucrative and influential career tracks, such as public relations, work for NGO agencies, or government. This results in a constant "brain drain" away from the media sector.

The preceding years of suppression and war have also affected the quality of reporting produced by Sierra Leonean journalists. In large part, this is due to a lack of basic training on reporting, writing, and ethics. As noted earlier, during the previous twenty years, training opportunities were scarce. Since the end of the war, the University of Sierra Leone has started a communications department and other opportunities for media education have arisen in the country itself. As will be discussed later, several NGOs, such as Foundation Hironnelle, train journalists as part of their own media organizations. In Contd. addition, the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists provides local and international training for its members when resources are available; but Mr. Fofana says that, in general, “resources are few and far between.” Three observers who have interacted with Sierra Leonean journalists say that, on average, journalists lack very basic reporting skills. Mr. Andersen recalled a SCSL press conference where many of the younger reporters remained silent, even when solicited for questions. Further, the dearth of training feeds the production of biased and ill-informed reporting. Many of the newspapers have overt political leanings or political backing. Articles can lean toward inflammatory, imbalanced speech, rather than careful, fact-based arguments. And, after years of suppression and intimidation by the government some of which continues today journalists without political backing are cautious in their criticisms. Anne Bennett cites the “subculture of self-censorship created by a history of authoritarian rule” as one of the ills that plagues the Sierra Leonean press. Afua Hirsch, Legal Correspondent for The Guardian, likewise said there is very little investigative journalism in Sierra Leone; instead, journalists tend to reproduce government press releases. The watchdog function of the media in Sierra Leone is thus underdeveloped due to historic and economic factors.

IV. The Special Court's Approach to the Media

Against this journalistic backdrop, beset by economic, infrastructural, and historical challenges, the SCSL has sought to publicize its proceedings. The Special Court's successes in this regard have been substantial, the result of a proactive and facilitative attitude toward the media.

The SCSL's particular approach to the media is due in large part to the Court's unprecedented concern with its “legacy.” More than any past international tribunal, the SCSL began to pay attention early in its development to the lasting imprint the Court would leave on its host nation. As early as 2002, SCSL Justice Pierre Boutet said that “[t]he main objective of the court is to reestablish the rule of law in this country and then show the people of Sierra Leone that justice can be done in this country.” This focus on “rule of law” legacy, rather than solely on adjudication, is arguably the largest contribution the Special Court has made to the area of international criminal law. No doubt, this focus stems from the same impulse that planted the SCSL in the nation where the crimes occurred. In general, the SCSL has placed greater emphasis on the “consumers” of justice than its predecessors.

Over the years, the SCSL has shifted more and more of its energy to legacy building. The Special Court's 5th Annual Report lists legacy as “one of the Court's topmost priorities;” to help establish the rule of law, the SCSL seeks to make its trials “accessible to people of the West African sub-region, who were most affected by the sub-regional civil conflicts and instabilities.” Communication and hence, involvement of the local media is a tool necessary to enable this goal. Thus, the SCSL has sought to engage the local media as a means to an end.

Continued next edition

Standard Times
Monday, 24 August 2009

Court Marshall Verdict... ONE TO DIE BY FIRING

BY ISHMAEL K. DUMBUYA

The Republic of Sierra Leone Court Marshall on the 21st of July 2009 convicted one RSLAF military personnel to death by firing squad but subject to the final consent of the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, Dr. Ernest Koroma. The military personnel, Private Johannes Kekura alias Abdul Sesay killed Private Jongo Pie on the 23rd February in Kabala.

The Court Marshall Trial started in August and was prosecuted by Captain Lawyer Fallah Gevao, the first army prosecutor at the Court Marshall. The hearing took place at the Sierra Leone Military headquarters, Cockerill

The verdict was passed by Jus-



tice Ademusu and the trial was supervised by five board members of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces headed by Lt. Commander Mansaray of the Sierra Leone Navy.

The International Military Ad-

visory Training Team (IMATT) Legal Adviser to the Sierra Leone Army, Captain Rice played an important role in ensuring that he solicited the services of both the prosecutors and the defence for the convicted murderer of Private Jongo Pie.

Standard Times

Monday, 24 August 2009

A Critique of the Traditional Justice System in Sierra Leone

FEATURE

BY ABDUL SAMAD KAMARA

Traditional justice systems have existed since pre-colonial days. During those days, local authorities were respected; they commanded authority and could settle disputes to maintain law and order.

However, the brutal civil conflict collapsed a dysfunctional traditional justice system. Structures failed and there was general lawlessness and anarchy. In fact, social injustice was one of the primary causes of the war.

Political patronage and imposition of section chiefs and paramount chiefs that were very unpopular led dissent, and some of the aggrieved people joined forces with the rebels to cause unwanted destruction in many communities. Many paramount chiefs and other local authorities that were imposed on the people were either killed or maimed and the traditional justice system hit the rock.

The post-conflict Sierra Leone's traditional justice system is slowly waking from slumber, but it is suffering from a myriad of problems; seventy percent of the population lives under the jurisdiction of traditional/customary law that is practiced in the 149 chiefdoms across the country.

There is seemingly a great reliance on traditional dispute resolution methods, i.e. through paramount chiefs and section chiefs because the formal justice system is far removed from the people.

The people perceive the formal justice system as expensive, time wasting, and complex. The formal justice system is hardly accessed due to its distance from the population.

But the traditional justice system is facing criticism because of its excess. Local authorities are levying heavy fines on poor, innocent, and vulnerable people. Witnesses are asked to swear on very dangerous charms and accused persons are arbitrarily detained. For example, in the north, a girl was chained like a slave. Recently in Masiaka a young girl quarreled with another girl under the traditional rite of passage to become a "sowe".

She apparently removed the head tie from her head during a scuffle and hell was cut loose. When the owei" is got wind of this, the poor young girl was severely beaten and forcefully

A CRITIQUE OF THE TRADITIONAL JUSTICE SYSTEM IN SIERRA LEONE

initiated into the "bondo" society. What a cruelty. When the matter was taken to the traditional authorities, the girl's parents were fined a sum up to Le600,000. Additionally, they were asked to produce a sheep, a bushel of rice, five gallons palm oil and more.

Women and girls are more vulnerable to various forms of abuse in silence. These traditional leaders are becoming so powerful that they are at mercy whether the Ministry of Local Government monitors the activities of these traditional authorities remains a question.

Another problem is the establishment of kangaroo courts by paramount chiefs. The establishment of these courts is completely at variance with the Local Court Act of 1963. Such courts have no jurisdiction in civil and criminal cases and

therefore their decisions do not have the force of law nor do they have statutory powers as established by parliament.

In another development, a schoolgirl unknowingly stepped into a sacred bush. She was arrested by the "sowe" and whisked off to a traditional court. The young unsuspecting girl was fined Le500,000 and asked to apologize to the elders in the village.

The young girl maintained her innocence and narrated that she was passing through a bush path when someone accused her that she has stepped into a sacred bush.

Furthermore, a nineteen-year-old girl in the southern province was forced by her parents to marry to a 45-year-old businessman. The relationship became estranged and the lady absconded. The man took

the issue to the local court and paid bribes to get his way. The local authorities asked the girl's parents to return the bride price and all the money the man has expended since he betrothed her. The girl said she is not interested in the relationship and that she was forced by the parents to marry to the businessman; he showered gifts upon the parents to win her love. This writer hopes that the Registration of Customary Marriage Act can successfully deal with this problem of early marriage.

Also, a ten-year-old boy was accused of witchcraft. The boy was detained for three days and asked to confess. The so-called chief threatened to beat the boy mercilessly because he had bewitched his court and people were no longer reporting cases in his court. Our office wrote a

warning letter asking the section chief to hand the boy over to his parents or he will be prosecuted for child cruelty. When the boy was brought to our office he denied the allegation and said he was used as a scapegoat.

The above events are pointers to the human rights abuses suffered by people in the hands of traditional authorities. The rights of the people should be upheld and protected. Although a lot of people are suffering various forms of abuse in silence, we only hope the government will setup a mechanism to monitor the activities of the traditional authorities. Though the concept of human rights is slowly gaining momentum, the traditional authorities i.e. paramount chiefs, section chiefs, headmen, must be told about their limitations.

Charlestaylortrial.org

Sunday, 23 August 2009

Sierra Leone: International Community Sanctioned RUF Commander Sam Bockarie's Relocation To Liberia; ECOWAS Leaders Changed Rebel Leadership In Sierra Leone, Not Taylor Acting Alone

Alpha Sesay

Charles Taylor last week told Special Court for Sierra Leone judges that he had the approval of the international community to grant political asylum to Sam Bockarie after the rebel commander left Sierra Leone in December 1999. Mr. Taylor also told the judges that West African leaders unanimously agreed to change the leadership of Sierra Leone's rebel group when the group's leader Foday Sankoh was arrested in 2000.

On Monday, Mr. Taylor told the judges that Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) leaders realized that Sam Bockarie's continued presence in Sierra Leone was a hindrance to the peace process in the country and a unanimous decision was taken that he should leave the country and obtain political asylum in Liberia.

"Bockarie did not voluntarily leave Sierra Leone. ECOWAS extracted Bockarie from Sierra Leone. That's how he left. He did not leave Sierra Leone voluntarily. He came to Liberia in December of 1999. People did not know the inside story. But this is what happened. It was an ECOWAS extraction, they took him out of Sierra Leone, he had no choice," Mr. Taylor said.

When the government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels signed a peace agreement in June 1999, the disarmament of combatants started in the country. Reports indicate that while RUF leader, Foday Sankoh, wanted all his forces to be disarmed, his deputy Sam Bockarie was opposed to such a move. This led to a conflict between Mr. Sankoh and Mr. Bockarie, and at the time, according to Mr. Taylor, "it appears Bockarie wants to challenge Sankoh." Mr. Bockarie eventually left Sierra Leone for Liberia with about 400 rebel fighters who were loyal to him.

As part of the arrangement to get Mr. Bockarie out of Sierra Leone and relocate him to Liberia, Mr. Taylor said that the United States government agreed to provide scholarship for Mr. Bockarie to undergo military training in the United States.

"The United States promised that they would assist, not the upkeep of the people but the discussion was held as to what to do for Bockarie and they had said that they would probably help to give him a scholarship to do extended military training at one of their military bases in the United States but that did not come to pass," he said.

Mr. Taylor also said that Nigerian president, Olusegun Obasanjo, gave a sum of 50,000 United States dollars to sustain Mr. Bockarie and his men in Liberia.

Mr. Taylor said he later on found it strange when the United Nations and the United States opposed Mr. Bockarie's presence in Liberia. "This is strange. The man has just come in after agreeing with me and now you want me to throw him out? The same US had said they would give Bockarie training so he will cease to be a rebel."

Mr. Taylor said that once Mr. Bockarie and his men were in Liberia and had obtained Liberian citizenship, his government decided to recruit them into the security sector. They were all trained and became part of Mr. Taylor's Anti Terrorist Unit (ATU)—an elite force that provided security for Mr. Taylor. The ATU was headed by Mr. Taylor's son Chuckie Taylor, who himself has been convicted in the United States for crimes of torture committed in Liberia.

Several prosecution witnesses testified that in 1999, when Mr. Bockarie fell out with RUF leader Mr. Sankoh, Mr. Taylor willingly offered to host Mr. Bockarie in Liberia, providing houses for him and his family and sending him and his fighters to launch attacks in Ivory Coast. Mr. Taylor has denied these allegations.

On Tuesday, Mr. Taylor explained how he successfully negotiated the release of United Nations peacekeepers who were held hostage by rebel forces in Sierra Leone.

In May 2000, when RUF rebels took United Nations peacekeepers hostage in Sierra Leone, Mr. Taylor said that he was mandated by ECOWAS leaders and the United Nations to negotiate with the RUF rebels and secure the release of the hostages. Speaking on behalf of the international community, Mr. Taylor said he expressed his anger to the RUF rebels and told them the hostages needed to be released without any conditions.

Mr. Taylor said he called Issa Sesay, the RUF commander who was in possession of the UN hostages, to meet him in Liberia where the release of the peacekeepers was agreed. Mr. Taylor said ECOWAS leaders, UN and the United States Embassy officials were all informed that he was meeting with Mr. Sesay.

"I was very tied up with this particular situation. I made it clear to Issa Sesay that the UN peacekeepers must be released unconditionally and voiced to him the outrage of the international community," Mr. Taylor said.

"I was not speaking with Issa Sesay as Taylor but I was speaking for ECOWAS, the African Union and the entire international community. I told Issa that the worst they could play with was the United Nations. I was very upset and thought they were very stupid. I told him the UN people had to be released unconditionally. This was not a friendly chat," Mr. Taylor explained.

Mr. Sesay, Mr. Taylor said, eventually facilitated the release of the hostages to Liberian authorities in Liberia before they were all handed over to the UN.

On Wednesday, Mr. Taylor denied allegations that he used his personal influence to change the leadership of the RUF in 2000. He explained that after the arrest of the RUF's leader Foday Sankoh in 2000, the ECOWAS heads of state needed a leader for the RUF with whom to negotiate and at a meeting in Liberia, they all agreed that Mr. Sesay was to take up the leadership of the rebel group.

"After the release of the UN hostages, we were concerned about who was in charge of the RUF in Sierra Leone," Mr. Taylor said.

Mr. Taylor said that at a July 26, 2000 meeting in Liberia, six ECOWAS leaders asked Mr. Sesay to take over the leadership of the RUF since Mr. Sankoh was no longer in a position to run the rebel movement. Mr. Sesay, according to Mr. Taylor, told the West African leaders that he needed to get the approval of Mr. Sankoh, who was imprisoned in Sierra Leone. He said that Nigerian president, Olusegun Obasanjo, and Malian president, Alpha Oumar Konare, traveled together to Sierra Leone and met with Mr. Sankoh in his prison cell. They obtained a letter from him which approved Mr. Sesay as the RUF's interim leader.

The prosecution has led evidence that when Mr. Sankoh gave his approval to Mr. Sesay's leadership of the RUF, he told Mr. Sesay to take instructions from Mr. Taylor, and ordered Mr. Sesay not to disarm his rebel forces in Sierra Leone. A number of prosecution witnesses also testified that it was Mr. Taylor who changed the leadership of the RUF. Mr. Taylor dismissed this allegation as "total nonsense."

Mr. Taylor said that the "circumstances surrounding Issa Sesay's appointment was public knowledge."

Mr. Taylor said that ECOWAS leaders, including Sierra Leonean president Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, saw Mr. Sesay as the most ideal person to work with in order to bring peace to Sierra Leone. "We saw him to be a very good fellow," Mr. Taylor said. "Some credit is due to him for getting on with the process of Lome [The peace agreement between the government of Sierra Leone and the RUF was signed in the Togolese capital Lome in June 1999]."

On Thursday, Mr. Taylor again denied allegations that he had individual influence over the RUF rebels in Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor reinforced to the judges that he was only able to convince the leadership of the RUF rebels to yield to the demands of peace in Sierra Leone because he had "built the confidence and trust which is necessary in any mediation efforts."

Asked by his defense counsel Courtenay Griffiths whether he exercised any influence over the RUF rebels, Mr. Taylor said "none whatsoever."

Mr. Taylor told judges that the rebel leadership listened to him just like they did to other West African leaders who were involved in facilitating a peaceful end to the conflict in Sierra Leone.

"Nigeria had very good contact with the RUF. Burkina Faso and Mali also had very good contact with the RUF. We built confidence and trust with them. They therefore took us seriously," Mr. Taylor said.

Mr. Taylor also discussed a September 9 2000 Guardian Newspaper article which reported that Nigerian peacekeepers in Sierra Leone were involved in diamond trade with RUF rebels. "There were indications that Nigerian soldiers were involved in the trade of diamonds," Mr. Taylor said.

Mr. Taylor said that Nigerian military commander, Maxwell Kobe (who was head of the Sierra Leone army) received up to 10 million USD from the RUF, and that former Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) commander General Kpamber (also from Nigeria) worked with RUF leader Foday Sankoh. Mr. Taylor said that "some people referred to Kpamber as Sankoh's ADC [aide-de-camp]."

Mr. Taylor is being tried on allegations that he provided support to RUF rebels in Sierra Leone through the supply of arms and ammunition in return for diamonds. Diamonds, the prosecution says, were used by Mr. Taylor and RUF rebel leaders to fuel the conflict in Sierra Leone and that through his acts or omissions, Mr. Taylor bears responsibility for the crimes committed by RUF rebels in Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor has denied the allegations. He is presently testifying as a witness in his own defense.

The Guardian

Monday, 24 August, 2009

Justice in Sierra Leone: apathy is folly

By Paul Kingsley Clark

The RUF case will end almost unnoticed, but indifference to prosecutions like this amounts to complicity in the worst crimes



Next week, in a now quiet corner of west Africa, the special court for Sierra Leone will be in session for its final three days in Freetown: the appeal of the five-year long RUF (Revolutionary United Front) case.

The special court is one of a generation of tribunals prosecuting crimes against humanity and war crimes in the name of the international community. Those addressing the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda and Cambodia are also among them, as is the international criminal court. Like the idea of an internationally shared morality that they espouse, they are a curiously modern phenomenon. In fact, these institutions are peculiar to the last 15 years or so, notwithstanding the relatively brief post-second world war efforts. And yet, like their predecessors in Nuremberg and Tokyo, they have quickly captured the imagination as lone bringers of justice in an international wilderness of brutality – until the latter half of the last century, no more than a utopian dream.

As the last of the special court's cases to take place in Freetown, the closing of proceedings in the RUF case should be a key event for Sierra Leone and indeed, the world. The special court is the only international court to have considered child soldiers. The RUF trial also covered, among other things, sexual violence, extermination and enslavement. More generally, the success of international intervention in Sierra Leone is, perhaps, even more interesting from a UK perspective, given the activities of the crusading Tony Blair.

But if the existence of war crime tribunals captures the imagination, the individual trials tend to engender apathy in equal measure. Like many such prosecutions, the RUF case will pass almost unnoticed internationally.

Is this because the harm caused is simply beyond comprehension? Doubtful: this has never been a reason for popular attention to shy away. Or perhaps it is because trials like those at the special court are just too far away? Maybe so, but my conversations with Sierra Leoneans also indicated a profound indifference towards the court.

The lack of attention is certainly not for want of reasons for concern. While the diminution of due process in UK courts is subject to close scrutiny – not least at this newspaper – strong allegations of bribing witnesses against the international prosecutor in Sierra Leone fell on deaf ears. They provoked only one response in the world's press and were dismissed without substantive examination by the court. The experiences of defence lawyers teem with further examples.

More likely, the apathy is down to an assumption that the cases are a foregone conclusion – an idea that dogs international justice. At Nuremberg, this was due to the clear "victors' justice" aspect of proceedings.

Nowadays, a number of factors contribute: horrific events and the concomitant desire to punish, vastly expensive tribunals and a tiny number of persons successfully arrested. "How could you possibly defend these people?" my friends and family frequently ask. "No smoke without fire ... " Given that the vast majority of international trials end in convictions, we rest assured that all is well. We are getting the outcome we desire: the enemies of us all are, indeed, being punished. Why bother about procedural technicalities?

One need look only briefly at the facts of the RUF case to discern the nuances that extinguish the "no smoke without fire" theory once and for all. While undoubtedly involved in numerous atrocious acts during the Sierra Leonean conflict, the RUF also protected vast numbers of civilians. It is common ground between prosecution and defence that the RUF provided education and healthcare to significant parts of the population. The principal defendant, Issa Sesay, had a large and widely acknowledged role in bringing peace to the country. In finally deciding whether to lay the blame for countless atrocities upon three men, none of whom were the most powerful in the RUF, the appeals chamber has an unenviable task indeed.

But regardless of the facts of a particular case, seeing the bigger problem with our indifference about international prosecutions is deeply unsettling. It is this indifference, I think, that could make us complicit, not in eradicating the evil of international crimes, but in entrenching it.

We must look beyond, for a moment, the outcome of these crimes: death, depredation and horror. In fact, the very thing that distinguishes crimes against humanity, genocide, etc, is that they are, in the view of the perpetrators, acts in service of a utopia – acts done in order to be rid of enemies. This reveals an unexpected, and shocking, link between our indifference about fairness in international justice and the atrocities that it seeks to punish. Of course, no one would suggest that the harm caused by degradation of procedure in an international court is even remotely comparable to the devastation wreaked by the atrocities they consider. Nevertheless, the importance of the way we go about achieving our aims could not be clearer. Cases set precedents – and can change them.

The world should be watching Sierra Leone. Let's hope, at least, that it opens its eyes.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 21 August 2009

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

International Clips on Liberia

79 Liberian students to undergo postgraduate studies in China

BEIJING, Aug. 21 (Xinhua) -- The Chinese government has finalized arrangement for the enrollment of 79 Liberian students to undergo postgraduate studies under the Chinese Government Scholarship Program during the 2009/2010 academic year, according to a statement released by Liberia's Foreign Ministry on Thursday. The release said the beneficiaries include twenty-two new applicants, while the other fifty-seven students are already pursuing studies in China. The students were selected following vetting and subsequent recommendations by the Ministry of Education. Meanwhile, the 22 successful candidates who have gone through the vetting exercise are majoring in various disciplines including Accounting, Gynaecology, Clinical Veterinary Medicine, Paediatrics, Neurology, Pharmacy, Mathematics, Public health, Analytical Chemistry, Applied Chemistry and Stomatology, among others.

Drowned girl's kin struggling to give her a proper funeral

By BARBARA LAKER
Philadelphia Daily News

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Mawa Trawally, a single mom with seven children, fled war-torn Liberia for Southwest Philadelphia and struggles to feed and clothe her family working as a dishwasher. Now, she has no money to bury her 9-year-old daughter, Madousou Konneh, whose body was recovered in the Schuykill yesterday morning, some 36 hours after she drowned while playing with friends. "It feels so bad that we have no money for the funeral," said Vajomah Konneh, Madousou's 22-year-old brother. "No one knew this would happen," he said. "If one of us gets married, we save money for the wedding. "But this, no one expected." Mohammed Bility, president of the Liberian Mandingo Association of Pennsylvania, said that the city's Liberian community will meet this afternoon to raise money for the family. "We will help them all we can," he said. Richmond Mohammed Konneh, a cousin, said that a Madousou Konneh Memorial Fund has been established at Sovereign Bank, at 6500 Woodland Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19142. Madousou, her 12-year-old sister, Mafata, and five other friends walked from their homes in the Bartram Gardens section of the city to the river near 56th Street Tuesday night to cool off in the summer heat.

A 13-year-old boy, a family friend, accidentally pulled Madousou into the river and she was swept into a strong undercurrent. Madousou couldn't swim.

"President's Young Professional Program" Launched

Aug 21, 2009 (Liberia Government/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- A competitive program, intended to tap the talents of young Liberian professionals has been launched in Monrovia. The President's Young Professional Program (PYPP) was launched Thursday at the Monrovia City Hall, with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf admonishing participants to take the initiative seriously. The Liberian leader urged participants to develop their professional life for the development of the country. She described the program as another added dimension of national capacity building as its sponsors endeavor to identify, enhance and reward talents. An Executive Mansion release quoting the President said, although the program has begun on a lower scale with the selection of fewer

beneficiaries, there is room for expansion that could attract more recognition and support from other Foundations. The President said Liberia is in need of more trained professionals to succeed the current core of professionals, some of whom now serve the country with support provided by Foundations and other capacity building programs, including TOKTEN, Senior Executive Service (SES) and Scott Fellows.

International Clips on West Africa

Sierra Leone

08/21/2009 10:38:44

Language Studies Empower Students

Windhoek, Aug 21, 2009 (New Era/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- A wide variety of foreign and local students recently completed language courses at the Unam Language Centre. The students, from such diverse countries as Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Mozambique, People's Republic of China and Korea, successfully completed language courses in Afrikaans, German, Portuguese, Chinese, French, Oshikwanyama and English. These newly acquired language skills, according to Unam's Vice Chancellor Prof Lazarus Hangula, will empower the successful candidates to be able to study, communicate and interact in a world that is acceleratedly becoming a real global village.

Ivory Coast

08/21/2009 08:12:17

ANALYSIS-Bad beans to weigh on Ivory Coast cocoa prices

DALOA, Aug 21 (Reuters) - Ivory Coast's upcoming cocoa crop may exceed last season in size, but not quality, as a lack of investment continues to dog the No. 1 world supplier - setting the stage for softer prices next year. Quality issues during the current mid-crop harvest have already started hitting local prices in Ivory Coast.

A kilogram of cocoa at the port of Abidjan fetched between 640 CFA (\$1.39) and 670 CFA, from between 670 CFA and 700 CFA the previous week, due to improperly dried beans, a purchases manager of a European cocoa exporter said. "Ivory Coast is the Middle East of cocoa," said Ralph Preston, analyst at Heritage West Futures in San Diego. "When the beans are of poor quality, to the extent that it is serious, that will tend to put downward pressure on the futures market." The country, still suffering the after-effects of a 2002-03 civil war, launched a programme in March aimed at improving cocoa quality as some 17 percent of the nation's beans are exported in poor condition.

Local Media – Newspaper

President Sirleaf Concern over Tuition Hike, Demands Report from Education Ministry

(Daily Observer, Public Agenda, The Analyst)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has mandated the Education Ministry to submit a report giving reasons for the hike in tuition in private schools.
- Acting Information Minister Cletus Sieh said the President was concerned because the decision has the power to negatively impact the Poverty Reduction Strategy.
- Although he did not say when the report is to be submitted, Minister Sieh believes it would not take a long period
- He said the Education Minister was already holding consultations with relevant stake holders to come up with the report.
- There are fears that the report would make little impact as registration for the 2009/10 school year is in progress.

Finance Minister Clarifies Police Salary Increment

(The Inquirer, New Democrat, Daily Observer, The Analyst, The News)

- Finance Minister, Augustine Ngafuan has clarified that the salary increment for the police has been done through budgetary appropriation.
- Minister Ngafuan said the 2009/2010 fiscal budget allows for an average increase of US\$15 and not US\$30 as was apparently suggested by the previous police administration.
- On Wednesday, the media reported that there was discontent among police officers over the halt by Police Inspector General, Marc Amblard of a US\$30 dollar increment in police salary.
- But the Police Inspector General has since justified his action saying such increase would have run the police budget into deficit.

US\$30M Debt Haunts Liberia Produce Marketing Corporation

(Liberian Express, The News, The Inquirer)

- Speaking at a consultative forum on enhancing agricultural export and trade promotion, Vice President Joseph Boakai said the Liberia Produce Marketing Corporation (LPMC) is indebted to partners in the tune of US\$30 million.
- Vice President Boakai said any exportation of produce by the entity could be seized and the vessel impounded by the creditors.
- Earlier in an interview, LPMC Managing Director, Nyahn Mantein said agriculture was vital to nation building and called for more allotment to decentralize the sector.
- The interactive forum was organized by the Liberia Produce Marketing Corporation.

UNMIL Pledges to work with Liberia National Red Cross Society

(Heritage, The News)

- The UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) has pledged to work with the Liberia National Red Cross Society in improving the living condition of Liberians in Nimba County.
- Speaking on behalf of the UN Secretary General Special Representative to Liberia at the ground breaking ceremony of the Red Cross Disaster Management Centre in Nimba, the Head of the United Nations System Office in Sanniquellie, Wesley Bakati Natana said they would work in all areas of development as stipulated in the County Development Agenda and Poverty Reduction Strategy.
- The multi-purpose Disaster Management Centre and Guest House will serve as a rapid response mechanism for disasters in central and north eastern Liberia.
- When completed, it will include training facilities, a warehouse for disaster preparedness and a 20 bed room guest house.

President Sirleaf Signs Aviation Act ...As New American Company Takes Over RIA

(The Inquirer)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has signed into law the new Aviation Act granting independence to the Liberia Aviation Authority.
- The General Manager of the Liberia Aviation Authority, Mr. Richelieu Williams made the disclosure on Thursday at a turning-over ceremony of the Roberts International Airport (RIA) to an American company contracted by the United States Government to manage the affairs of the airport.
- The new American group, Lockheed Martin Global Services government has provided similar services in other countries.
- Speaking at the turning-over ceremony, Mr. Williams said the decision by the President means the Liberian Civil Aviation will be allowed to operate independently.

LACC Receives Former Nigerian Anti-Corruption Chairman

(The News, Daily Observer, The Informer, New Democrat)

- The former Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) of Nigeria, Nuhu Ribadu, has arrived in Liberia for a four-day working visit.
- Mr. Ribadu is to assess the technical needs of the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC) and make appropriate recommendations for possible intervention.

- Speaking during a meeting with Mr. Ribadu, the Head of the LACC, Frances Johnson-Morris reiterated calls for the enactment of anti-corruption laws and increased government's funding to the Commission.
- Mr. Ribadu said fighting corruption was a difficult challenge, but noted that the Commission can succeed once there is political will as well as practical actions by the Commission.

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

“Liberia Not Transit For Drug Traffickers”, Government Dismisses DEA Claim

- Government has denied reports that Liberia is a major transit for drug trafficking.
- The denial comes a day after the DEA confirmed a United Nations report that Liberia is a transit point for drug trafficking.
- Acting Information Minister Cletus Sieh said the UN report did not directly point out Liberia but the West African sub region.
- In an interview, Minister Sieh said the country had not reached the point of being considered a major transit for drug trafficking.

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

President Sirleaf Seeks Explanation over Tuition Hike

Radio Veritas (*Monitored today at 9:45 am*)

US\$30M Debt Haunts Liberia Produce Marketing Corporation

Concern Lawyers Push for Resignation of Solicitor General Wright as LNBA President

- Some lawyers of the Liberia National Bar Association are calling on Solicitor General, Wilkins Wright to resign his post as President of the LNBA.
- The lawyers said the resignation of the Solicitor General will create an atmosphere of neutrality in the Bar.
- Counselor Wright has not resigned as President of the Bar since his appointment as Solicitor General of Liberia.
- The lawyers said his refusal to resign though is not in violation of the Bar's constitution but it is unethical for him to serve the two positions at the same time.

Finance Minister Clarifies Police Salary Increment

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Radio Netherlands Worldwide

Monday, 24 August 2009

Female KRouge soldier says Duch threatened her with gun

By International Justice Desk



Phnom Pehn, Cambodia

A female Khmer Rouge soldier told Cambodia's UN-backed war crimes court Monday that the regime's main jail chief threatened her with a gun when he heard she tried to leave the communist group.

Chum Noeu (60) was testifying at the trial of Duch, who stands accused of overseeing the torture and execution of roughly 15,000 people at the notorious Tuol Sleng detention centre during the communist regime's 1975-79 rule.

The woman, a former ammunition logistics officer, told the court that she was removed from her post and assigned to work in the paddy fields after her husband was killed at the prison in 1977 for allegedly being a CIA agent.

Chum Noeu said that at one point she saw Duch carrying a pistol on his way to examine the rice fields on the outskirts of the capital.

"I saw him walking alone with no bodyguards. I saw him wearing a hat, a scarf on his neck, and a pistol on his waist. He looked handsome, happy and he did not care about the burden that we faced," she told the court.

Chum Noeu went on to explain that on one day in 1979, while fleeing the invading Vietnamese troops, Duch threatened her with the gun at a camp after he was told that she tried to leave the Khmer Rouge group.

"I was very polite. I called him brother, I was not scared. I smiled at him. Before he asked me, he already pulled out his gun...and he pointed the gun at me," she said, adding that she saw the gun lock was not on at the time.

"He asked (me) what happened. And I told him that I have no idea," said the woman, who filed a complaint against Duch for the death of her husband.

She added that the former prison chief then ordered her to stay with the group.

Duch, whose real name is Kaing Guek Eav, has previously accepted responsibility for his role in governing the jail under the regime and begged for forgiveness from the families of the victims.

Led by Pol Pot, who died in 1998, the Khmer Rouge emptied Cambodia's cities in a bid to forge an agrarian utopia, resulting in the deaths of up to two million people from starvation, overwork and torture.

Kenya Braodcasting Service

Friday, 21 August 2009

TJRC cannot prosecute suspects-Kiplagat

Written By:Naisula Lesuuda

Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) chairman Bethwel Kiplagat has maintained that the commission has no powers to either prosecute or judge the perpetrators of post election violence.

Kiplagat is nevertheless urging Kenyans to co-operate with members of the commission to ensure it bears fruit.

Even with many Kenyans viewing the TJRC with scepticism the chairman remains adamant that the commission is committed to ensuring it fosters peace, forgiveness and understanding among Kenyans.

Kiplagat says for TJRC to work the reports by previous commissions must be incorporated and fully implemented.

Kiplagat who was giving a key note address at a one-day conference on gender and transitional justice in Kenya said Kenyans have to embrace the commission and to actively participate once it starts hearings around the country to ensure its success.

According to Kiplagat, TJRC is not a new concept in Kenya as other previous commissions were also aimed at achieving justice.

He says the commission's role is to revive the work started years back and ensure this time it succeeds.