

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE



Newsmaker 23 March 2006: Deputy Prosecutor Christopher Staker on the BBC's Africa Have Your Say

PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

Friday, 24 March 2006

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.
If you are aware of omissions or have any comments or suggestions please contact
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Awoko

24 March 2006

Zambian Lt. Col. explained how they were abducted

By Betty Milton

A Lieutenant Colonel (Lt. Col) in the Zambian Army, Kasoma Edward has told the Special Court of how a total of about 100 Zambian peacekeepers, including himself, were abducted by members of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF).

The witness, whose code number TF1-288 during his evidence in chief, narrated

Kenema gets TV station

President Tejan Kabbah recently commissioned the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service Television (SLBS- TV) in the eastern Kenema town.

In his opening remarks the chairman of the occasion who happened to be the Resident Minister East Hon, Sahr Fillie Faboe thanked

Government for it numerous strides in making information accessible to all in the nation.

He noted, "that is why it has decided to establish TV station for all regions, Bo in the South, Kenema in the East, and Makeni in the North is to start soon".

In her contribution, the chairman of the Independent Media Commission (IMC), Mrs. Bernadette Cole described the occasion as a milestone for the country as it was the first time for a TV

station to be established
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Zambian Lt. Col. explained how they were abducted

From Front Page

outside the capital Freetown.

Talking about the rules and regulations guiding the media in Sierra Leone, she said, "Government is committed to creating freedom of expression, and the right of the citizen against undue harassment must be maintained, journalists must be checked and controlled".

She appealed to journalists not to report anything or the truth that they thought would create problems for the country. She disclosed that the country could now boast of 32 radio stations and that

most of them were community owned, three TV stations now and 39 newspapers, and that four agencies had direct satellite services.

She called on journalists to criticize constructively and then suggest alternatives to issues they wanted addressed. She asked them to talk to people of integrity, by so doing the country would be assured of growth and development.

In his keynote address, President Dr. Ahmad Tejan Kabbah said the realization of the TV in Kenema was the effort of everyone. He said what he saw in the

country in the past was very bad.

He appealed to all to love one another and the country, as there was nowhere else called Sierra Leone.

The President called on all to practice democracy without hating each other, as multi party democracy was not about hatred. "We should be friends and brothers as we go ahead with it". He made special appeal to SLBS TV to pay attention to national cohesion programmes that could educate people and address the concerns of the people in areas such as agriculture, health and education.

New Citizen
24 March 2006

"RUF Fighters Stripped UN Peacekeepers Naked" -

Zambian Colonel

By Samuel M. Serry Jr.

A Zambia Colonel who in 2000 was attached to the UN peacekeeper force in Sierra Leone UNAMSIL, Kasuma Edwin, serving as a key witness (TF1288) at the ongoing RUF trials at the Special Court in Freetown yesterday narrated the ordeal in which he and his men were subjected to when they were abducted by RUF fighters in January 2000 be-

tween Lunsar and Makeni in the Northern Province.

Three RUF leaders, Issa Sesay, Morris Kallon and Augustine Gbao are standing trial at the Special Court to answer to charges of committing crimes against humanity, including the abduction of UN peacekeepers.

Under cross-examination by Defense Counsel, Wayne Jordash,

Cont. back page

RUF FIGHTERS

resolve a dispute between the Kenyan UN peacekeepers and the RUF fighters when the Zambian troops encountered Morris Kallon who was in charge of over a 100 RUF fighters at a village between Lunsar and Makeni Town.

The witness further explained that the convoy of the Zambia peacekeepers stopped on the way so as to negotiate their safe passage to Makeni and that it was during this process of negotiation, according to Colonel Kasuma Edwin, that the RUF fighters ambushed him and members of his contingent and that they were subsequently put under arrest by well-armed RUF fighters, including child soldiers. He continued his testimony to the Special Court when he said that the RUF fighters searched the Zambia peacekeepers, dis-

armed them and took away their personal belongings, including their military boots.

He went on, "my men were stripped-off their uniforms leaving them with their bare pants on."

The witness further explained that he and his men were escorted to Makeni by the RUF fighters and were later taken to Yengema in the Kono District where Issa Sesay and Morris Kallon paid them visits and that his men together with 15 Kenyan peacekeepers were put under guard in a school building while he and the Kenyan contingent commander, Commander Mulinga were placed under house arrest under the command of a female RUF Colonel named Monica.

Colonel Kasuma Edwin further explained that their 23 days stay at Colonel Monica's residence was not quite a

comfortable experience as he continued, "we were treated badly, we were not properly fed and we were not allowed to take a bath until after the 23 days."

He further informed the court yesterday that their situation in detention was worsened by the arrest of Foday Sankoh in Freetown as they were threatened that they could be killed by Issa Sesay if Foday Sankoh was not released.

He also revealed that during one tense moment, he was threatened with torture when the RUF fighters suspected that he was taking down notes while in rebel captivity.

The eventual release of the peacekeepers, Colonel Kasuma Edwin explained yesterday in court, came in the wake of extreme pressure from the international community which prevailed upon Charles Taylor, former president of Liberia for their release.

Spectator
24 March 2006

As we mark 15th Anniversary of conflict....

Civil Society calls on Obasanjo to surrender

Charles Taylor

The Campaign Against Impunity, a merger between the Amnesty International (SL) and the Coalition for Justice and Accountability (COJA) has yesterday put out a press release calling on the Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo to promptly, comply with

Liberian President Johnson Sirleaf's request for former Liberian President Charles Taylor to face trial at the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

To mark the 15th anniversary of the devastating armed conflict in Sierra Leone, which began on the 23rd March 1991, when rebels
continued page 2

as the presence of the... and to address the... Civil Society calls on Obasanjo to surrender Charles Taylor from front page

launched a cross-border attack from Liberia in a small village in the Kailahun District. Members of the Campaign Against Impunity are holding similar news conferences simultaneously in Monrovia Freetown and Lagos to press for Taylor's surrender to the Special Court according to the release. The Director of the Center for Democratic Empowerment in Liberia, Ezekiel Pajibo maintained that President Johnson Sirleaf has taken a crucial stand against impunity in Africa by requesting Taylor's surrender," while the Director of programmes for the Committee for the defence of Human Rights a Nigerian Organisation that is also part of the campaign, Shina Loremukan, stressed that "President Obasanjo must demonstrate that he too cares

about justice in the continent by handing Taylor over to the Special Court now."

Charles Taylor has been indicted on 17 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, for his role in the armed conflict that lasted from 1991 to 2002. The crime included killings, mutilation, rape and other forms of sexual violation, sexual slavery, the recruitment and use of Child soldiers abduction, forced labour by armed opposition groups.

President Obasanjo has resisted surrendering Taylor to the Special Court. He has indicated however that he would consider returning Charles Taylor to Liberia upon a request from a duly-elected Liberian government. Accordingly reported, Johnson Sirleaf made a request to Obasanjo, a move published on the 17th March. In a statement issued by the Nigeria government

last Friday, Obasanjo said he would consult with the A.U and the ECOWAS on the request. Johnson Sirleaf has also indicated that she wants consultations between Obasanjo and the regional Leaders on this issue. Nevertheless, Johnson Sirleaf is equally clear that following such consultation Taylor should face trial. The Campaign Against Impunity is a coalition made up of some 300 Africans and International Civil Society Groups formed to ensure the surrender of Charles Taylor to the Special Court. Statements were made by Roland N. Johnson Head of Chancery Liberian Embassy in Freetown; Alfred Carew of National Forum for Human Rights, Ibrahim Bangura Coordinator P.R.I.D.E and the conference was chaired by Brima Sheriff Acting Director, Amnesty International Sierra Leone Chapter.

For di People
24 March 2006

CAI calls for Obasanjo's compliance on Taylor

CAMPAIGN AGAINST Impunity has called upon the Nigerian president, Olusegun Obasanjo to promptly comply with Liberian president, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf's request for former Liberian president, Charles Taylor to face trial at the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

by **ALPHA B KAMARA**

A statement read yesterday at the Amnesty International office stated that the 23 March 2006 marked the 15 Anniversary of the devastating conflict in Sierra Leone, which began on that same date in 1991, when rebel groups launched a cross-border attack from Liberia on a small village in the Kailahun district.

"President Johnson-Sirleaf has taken a crucial stand against impunity in Africa by requesting Taylor's surrender," said Ezekiel Pajibo, director of the Centre for Democratic empowerment in Liberia.

The director of programmes for the Committee for the Defence of Human Rights in Nigeria, Shina Loremikari, said Obasanjo must demonstrate that he too cares about justice on the continent, by handing Taylor over to the Special Court.

In a statement issued by the Nigerian government last Friday, Obasanjo said he would consult with the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on the request.

Johnson-Sirleaf has also indicated that she wants consultation between Obasanjo and the regional leaders on this issue. She further said that following such consultation Taylor should face trial.

Charles Taylor has been indicted on 17 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity for his role in the armed conflict that lasted from 1991 to 2002 in Sierra Leone. The crimes include killings, mutilations,


rape and other forms of sexual violence, sexual slavery, the recruitment and use of child soldiers, abductions and the use of forced labour by armed groups.

In 2003, Charles Taylor left Liberia for Nigeria where he still remains as a temporary measure to secure a peaceful transition in Liberia. Nigeria acted with the support of the United States, the African Union and other actors in the international community.


"It is a fundamental principle of criminal justice that justice delayed is justice denied," said Kolawole Olaniyan, African Programme director at Amnesty International.

The Campaign Against Impunity is a coalition made up of some 300 African and international civil society groups formed to ensure the surrender of Charles Taylor to the Special Court.

Interpol Wanted Interpol



TAYLOR, Charles Ghankay



"Heads of State and Governments paid tribute to the courage and sense of sacrifice of all **ECOMOG** servicemen who have fallen in Liberia and Sierra Leone in the senseless war waged by **Charles Taylor**. They express condolences to the families"

-ECOWAS November 1992.

"Les chefs d'Etats et de Gouvernements ont rendu hommage au courage et au sens du sacrifice de tous les hommes au service de l'**ECOMOG** qui sont morts au Libéria et en Sierra Leone au cours de la guerre insensée livrée par Charles Taylor. Ils expriment leur condoléances aux familles"

-CEDEAO, Novembre 1992.

New Vision
24 March 2006

Surrender Taylor Now

By Mohamed Kallon

Campaign Against Impunity (Amnesty International) and the Coalition for Justice and Accountability (COJA) have called on the Nigerian leader, President Obasanjo to surrender former Liberian President

AI, COJA Urge

Charles Taylor to the Special Court for Sierra Leone to face trial. Mr. Charles Taylor

has been indicted on 17 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity he is said to

The crimes includes killings, mutilations, rapes and other forms of sexual violence, sexual

have committed during the decade long armed conflict.

Charles Taylor, wanted

slavery etc.

Speaking yesterday at a press conference at the Amnesty International, AI's head office Pademba Road, in
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War In

TAYLOR, Charles Ghankay




WANTED


which mandates the electoral

Surrender Taylor Now

Interpol
War
Interpol



TAYLOR, Charles Ghankay



"Heads of State and Governments paid tribute to the courage and sense of sacrifice of all ECOMOG servicemen who have fallen in Liberia and Sierra Leone in the senseless war waged by Charles Taylor. They express condolences to the families"

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commemoration of the 15th Anniversary of the armed conflict that ravaged this country, the Acting Director of Amnesty International, Mr. Brima Sheriff said that they have been working tirelessly in order for President Obasanjo to release Mr. Taylor unconditionally, adding that AI/COJA have prepared several releases directed to Mr. Obasanjo, the African Union etc for Mr. Taylor to be transferred to Freetown to face justice.

The overall objective of campaign against impunity, Mr. Sheriff said is to address the issue of impunity.

In a press release, AI requested the Nigerian leader to comply with the Liberian President, Johnson Sirleaf's request for Mr. Taylor to face trial at the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

"President Johnson Sirleaf has taken a crucial stand against impunity in Africa by requesting Taylor's surrender," the release states, quoting Ezekiel Pajibo, Director of the Center for Democratic Empowerment in Liberia, a group that is part of the Campaign Against Humanity.

The release emphasized that

President Obasanjo must demonstrate that he cares about justice on the continent by giving in Taylor to the Special Court.

President Obasanjo has so far resisted in handing Mr. Taylor. "How many years must the victims keep waiting to see justice done" queried Suliaman Jabati, the Executive Secretary of the Sierra Leone Coalition for Justice and Accountability (COJA). He maintained that it is time for Mr. Taylor to be brought to book for his alleged crimes.

The Campaign Against Impunity is a Coalition made up of 300 African and International Civil Society groups formed to ensure Mr. Taylor is surrendered to the Special Court.

According to Mr. Sheriff, the day was commemorated simultaneously in Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

In his contribution, Mr. Alfred Carew, Executive Director of National Forum for Human Right sum up that Taylor was the pinnacle for the Sierra Leone crisis and that his release will send strong message to other African heads that they are not serious when it comes to matter of addressing impunity.

PERSPECTIVE

By John Momo-Kaizolu

Charles Taylor At Cross Roads

The exiled ex-Liberian President Charles Taylor is apparently at the crossroads of staying in Nigeria or being extradited out of Nigeria to face War Crimes charges at the United Nations Special Court in Freetown, Sierra Leone. It is now only a matter of the decisions that will be reached after President Olusegun Obasanjo would consult with other stakeholders.

As it stands President Charles Taylor has for the first time breaking silence on the issue of his extradition. Speaking through, his Indian advisor on spiritual Affairs, the ex-Liberia leader has warned that extraditing him to face prosecution at the United Nations backed Special Court has the potential to plunged Liberia into another chaos.

Taylor's statement is apt to provoke reactions from several quarters. It tends credence to doubts as to whether Liberians are now totally tired of war should Charles Taylor be made to face trail in Freetown. As a school teacher puts it, "the question is if Liberians will still be willing to be loyal to Taylor up to now". Evidently only few people are so mesmerized into supporting Taylor to the point of taking up arms to cause havoc and panic. The great majority of Liberians are no longer interested in risking their precious lives for the sake of Charles Taylor.

What some observers of the Liberian political scene since the outbreak of the war are saying is that whatever the case may be Charles Taylor will soon be extradited to face war crime charges. This is because over the years, and due to his own brutal method of eliminating political opponents within the rebel movement that he headed, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), Taylor has lost credibility and trust even within his own ranks.

The NPFL of Charles Taylor was a rebel movement with an ethnic and regional base. It was dominated by the Gio and Mano ethnic who are mainly from Nimba County that constitutes the border with the Ivory Coast and Guinea. the fact is that there are more Gio and Mano in the Ivorian and Guinean sides of the border than those in Liberia.

The Liberian Civil War started as a tribal war between the people of Nimba County and their Southern neighbours who also share ethnic and tribal borders with the Ivory Coast, the Krah ethnic of Late President Samuel Doe of Grand Gedeh County. The genesis of the war dates to personality conflict between President Doe and the Army Chief of Staff General Thomas Quiwonkpa who hail from Nimba County. After a

Quiwonkpa-led foiled coup plot, the coup leader was killed and there was a spate of reprisal killings against Nimba people all over Monrovia by the Armed Forces of Liberia.

What happened next is that a lot of people from Nimba fled the country into the Ivory Coast. In the Ivory Coast they joined forces with Americo-Liberians who fled Liberia when Doe seized power in a military coup in 1980.

This was the origin of the solidarity of Liberian dissidents against Doe's regime in the Ivory Coast that gave rise to the founding of the NPFL headed by Charles Taylor.

Essentially Taylor wielded strong support those days out of the common concern to depose the Samuel Doe regime, due to its human right abuses. It can be recalled that soon after seizing power the Doe military junta hurriedly sent to a military tribunal 22 ex-government officials and executed all of them. Since then a period of instability set in.

Charles Taylor's management of the rebellion was not satisfactory to many Nimbains and Americo-Liberians. Over the years there were reports of systematic eliminations of people who disagree with him on policy matters or whose personality he perceive to be threats.

Moses duopu, Ex-Education Minister Jackson F. Doe and a host of others were murdered by Taylor in Cold Blood. At a point in time reports filtering in from Gbarnga, Bong County which became Taylor's headquarters confirm of 85 commandos of the NPFL being executed for alleged plots to topple Charles Taylor. Taylor's insatiable greed for power extended to several attempts to wage war on ECOMOG and seize power in Monrovia. It was during one of such rebel raids on Monrovia that the Prince Johnson base became a theatre of war and eventually demolished.

This is why if Taylor is to be extradited to Freetown for war crimes trial at the Special Court, this time around after 14 years of conflict Liberians are tired of war only few people will even sympathize with Taylor.

Since then a period of instability set in Charles Taylor's management of the rebellion was not satisfactory to many Nimbains and Americo-Liberians. Over the years there were reports of systematic eliminations of people who disagree with him on policy matters or whose personality he perceive to be threats.

Standard Times
24 March 2006

Taylor killed over three thousand people

- NGO directors say

BY ISHMAEL DUMBUYA

The coordinator for PRIDE, a local non-governmental organization, Mr. Ibrahim Bangura yesterday reminded journalists at a press conference organized by Amnesty International in Freetown that the former Liberian president, Charles G. Taylor is personally responsible directly or indirectly for the deaths of over three thousand people in the Mano River Union sub-region.

The press conference was organized to sensitize the public about the activities of Amnesty International and their campaign against impunity especially for crimes committed by people in high places.

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Taylor killed over three thousand people

FROM PAGE 1

The pride coordinator said Taylor contributed to the death of many thousands other innocent people by aiding, planning and carrying out his war of attrition against the people of this country.

"It is better for Taylor to face trail for his crimes," said Sulaiman Jabati, executive secretary of the Sierra Leone Coalition for Justice and Accountability, adding, "How many years must the victims keep waiting to see justice done?"

This was supported by the Afri-

can programme director of Amnesty International, Kalawole Olaniyan, who noted that it is a fundamental principle of criminal justice that "justice delayed is justice denied".

Mr. Ibrahim Bangura was disappointed that since Taylor was indicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone, the government of Sierra Leone has not made any effort for him to be extradited to the court for the crimes he is known to have been committed.

Exclusive
24 March 2006

MY PEN
With David A Jabati Jnr



'Give us food, shelter, electricity and water supply, clean the city, provide us jobs, pay us decent salaries...' those and more are the things the people are asking for and those are what they are concerned about. Not the coming of Charles Taylor. As far as the ordinary man is concerned, Taylor is not an issue. Mr. Taylor can as well die and go to hell, who really cares, only the 'All Mighty' Special Court.

Why should the extradition of Ex-President Charles Taylor be a headache to Sierra Leoneans? What direct or indirect profit would the people of this country benefit should Charles Taylor be brought here, tried or even killed? And what do the people of this country stand to lose if it happens that Taylor is not tried at all? By the way, if the extradition of Taylor is really that important and the Special Court really serious, why should it take the Court more than three years to have this Indicttee here? And if I should ask, is Taylor the only Indicttee left to face the awesome court? What about the fugitive, Johnny Paul Koroma, who has been exonerated or should we take it that he is dead? What has the Interpol done so far in this regard?

I have stated in one of my articles that the United Nations backed Special Court is fast becoming a fiasco. It came here to try those who "bear the greatest responsibility" - the big fishes of the war. Who are these big fishes? Sankoh? 'Nar die man' (dead), Sam Bockarie? 'Nar die man' (dead), Johnny Paul Koroma? 'Nar run away boy' (fugitive), presumed dead; who else? Detained, Sam Hinga Norman? 'Nar lef-am, lef-am' (Norman has a big question mark attached to his indictment) And now we want Taylor, the only external actor who has sworn to his mother's breast that he will never in his life, set his feet in Sierra Leone, let alone go to New England where the Special Court is situated.

Even before the setting up of the Special Court, a lot of Sierra Leoneans have raised eyebrows at the rationale behind its establishment, particularly when we were

Whether Taylor Comes Or Not... *Who Cares*

talking about reconciliation. This school of thought argued that the funds allocated for the Special Court could be diverted to other post-war development programmes that will, one way or the other, benefit every Sierra Leonean, while the other argued otherwise. As far as this group is concerned, there is so much need for the establishment of a superior court with the mandate to try key players of this senseless war, by way of check-mating the circle of violence and at the same point an end to impunity by punishing those who bear the greatest responsibility. This, to a great extent is a sensible argument. At least, our

I'm not the least enthusiastic about the latest move made by the Liberian President, Helen Johnson Sirleaf to hand over Charles Taylor to the Special Court. By the way is that part of her job description when she was taking her oath of office? Or is she an employee of the Court or a staff at the Interpol?

unborn children will want to know what happened to these perpetrators. They will quickly turn the pages of their history books to read about what happened after the war. And if they discover that nothing was done to those perpetrators, they will perhaps become resentful and would want to repeat the same thing and expect to go free. The setting up of the Special Court was therefore necessary. But judging from what is happening at New England, one would be correct to state that the whole Special Court idea is becoming more or less counterproductive. Which lives us with the question: "who really did the Special Court come to try?" Taylor and Norman? (The rest are either dead or small fishes).

I'm not the least enthusiastic about the latest move made by the Liberian President, Helen Johnson Sirleaf to hand over Charles Taylor to the Special Court. By the way is that part of her job description when she was taking her oath of office? Or is she an employee of the Court or a staff at the Interpol?

And with all the noise about extraditing Taylor, what will the Special Court do if Taylor dies a natural death one morning. To me, it is all a mere waist of time and resources. Let's think about something better; something developmental. Taylor or no Taylor, Sierra Leone should forge ahead.

Let's live Taylor and the Special Court in their tug of war and think about something sober.
Taylor, Taylor, Taylor, my Foot!

Voice of America

23 March 2006

Former Special Court Chief Prosecutor Says No Peace in Liberia Until Charles Taylor Faces Justice

By Joe De Capua
Washington

The former chief prosecutor for the Sierra Leone Special Court says unless Charles Taylor is brought to justice the new government of Liberia is at risk.

David Crane says the time to bring the former Liberian leader to trial is now. He signed the war crimes indictment against Taylor about three years ago. Taylor is in exile in Nigeria, but Liberia's new president, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, says she recently asked Nigeria to turn him over for prosecution. David Crane is now a law professor at Syracuse University in New York State. He was asked by English to Africa reporter Joe De Capua whether he's confident Taylor would be turned over.

"Well, I'm not confident he will be turned over. (Nigerian) President Obasanjo does not want to turn him over. But the ball clearly is in his court and he's also clearly in violation of international law and Nigerian law. It's a crack in the wall of impunity in Africa. The good old boy network of Africa, the heads of state, many of which have skeletons in their closet, do not want to see a sitting head of state indicted, which has happened. But certainly don't want to see him turned over for justice at an international level," he says.

Asked why he doubts Obasanjo would act since he is a founding member of Transparency International and campaigned on an anti-corruption platform, Crane replies, "There's the West Africa that is and there's the West Africa that you see. It's the West Africa that is that he operates in and certainly he has to work with and deal with the other heads of state." He also says Nigeria's Foreign Minister has stated that Taylor would not be turned over.

As for the accusation Taylor is putting the new Liberian government at risk, he says, "Charles Taylor hangs like a sword over Liberia. Politicians, heads of state, various cabinet ministers, civil society, businessmen are all looking over their shoulder...As Charles Taylor was being pulled out of Liberia after the indictment stripped him of his power he said, 'God willing, I'll be back.' And all of us that were there at the time certainly believed it and they believe it now."

Nigerian Tribune

24 March 2006

Taylor may seek exile in another African country

AS pressure continues to mount on Nigeria to extradite former Liberian president, Mr. Charles Taylor, to face a United Nations-backed war crimes tribunal in Sierra Leone, Nigeria's Foreign Affairs Minister, Mr. Oluyemi Adeniji, flew into Calabar on Tuesday on a presidential jet to hold talks with Taylor on the extradition modalities.

But the embattled former president was said to have pleaded for a safe exit from Nigeria to a sister African country that was ready to protect him from prosecution. Nigerian Tribune gathered that Mr. Adeniji held many hours of talks with Taylor and the minister returned to Abuja the same day.

Only last week, the Nigerian government finally came out to admit that the new government of Liberia had formally demanded the return of Mr. Taylor to Liberia. Presidential spokeswoman, Mrs. Oluremi Oyo, disclosed that President Olusegun Obasanjo was consulting with other African leaders on the request of the new Liberian government.

The speed with which the new government asked for his return to Liberia was said to have surprised Mr. Taylor who has been living quietly in Calabar. He stood down as Liberian leader and went into exile in Nigeria in 2003 under an international deal to end Liberia's 14-year civil war.

Obasanjo has always refused to send Mr Taylor to Sierra Leone, saying he would only extradite him following a request from an elected Liberian leader. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf took power in Liberia in January after winning last year's elections and visited Nigeria earlier this month.

Mr Taylor's supporters have said that he enjoys immunity from prosecution under the peace deal which saw his exit from the country. But human rights activists have accused him of breaking the terms of that deal by trying to influence Liberian politics.

Mrs Johnson-Sirleaf, during an official visit to the United States, had said that prosecuting her predecessor was "secondary" to her agenda but her sudden change of heart has been seen as resulting from pressure from the United States government.

The Analyst

23 March 2006

Taylor Loyalists In Frequent Meetings

Individuals claiming to be insiders of the series of recent meetings of Taylor loyalists say they have resolved to use terrorist tactics to prevent Taylor's extradition to Sierra Leone.

The primary targets for elimination of the plan reportedly hatched by top loyalists of Mr. Taylor, according to the insiders, are staunch human rights activists and other individuals that are believed to have played roles "pivotal to the resolution by President Obasanjo to release Taylor to the Liberian government." It is not known why the loyalists would want to get at these activists, but the reports indicate that the plan is a diversionary scheme intended to divert the attentions of the government and the international community from the Taylor issue.

"By targeting these individuals and throwing grenades in market or crowded places, they hope to compel policy makers at the Security Council, the government of Liberia, ECOWAS, AU, and the U.S. to change their minds and perhaps open up new dialogue," claimed the spokesman of the insiders who walked into the offices of The Analyst yesterday.

According to our sources, there have been frequent meetings at the homes of some prominent loyalists of the former president in order to strategize on the alleged elimination scheme.

The latest of the series of meetings were reportedly held under the cover of darkness on Tuesday and early Wednesday morning of this week at the homes of close relatives of Taylor in the ELWA and Congo Town areas.

Several former ace fighters, some of whom are serving in the UP-led government were reportedly in attendance when the decision was reached to get rid of human rights activists and vocal pro-Taylor extradition advocates.

As part of the scheme, a crack unit of the so-called loyalists is assigned with the task of using unconventional military methods like the same elimination tactics being employed by insurgents in Iraq.

The unit that will be non-descript, according to the insiders who refused to be identified on ground that their lives would be jeopardized, is accordingly poised to use roadside bombing, sniper fire, and hauling grenades at moving targets including commercial vehicles to achieve its goal.

The loyalists have resorted to the scheme according to the report because they have realized that they cannot easily depose the UP-led government and would be using the scheme to register their annoyance against the activists who had launched a vociferous anti-Taylor campaign.

The reports also indicate that a close aide to former president Taylor (name withheld) who has been with him in Calabar, Nigeria is currently in town and is also the chief strategist facilitating the accomplishment of the elimination plan.

Observers fear that an elimination scheme that has reportedly been hatched by the so-called may also cover journalists and unsuspecting Liberians.

When one human rights activist was contacted by this paper upon receipt of the information, he said that his organization had received similar information, but that he could not ascertain the authenticity of the information.

He however said that they were not taking anything for granted as they know the potential of the group concerned.

"We know what happened in 1992 when NPFL terrorists murdered Larry Milton in a crowded pup in Mamba Point, hauled grenade at hapless students, workers, and market women who were waiting for vehicles at the Freeport of Monrovia, set a car-bomb at the Rivoli Cinema on Broad Street. We know them and this is why we are not taking report lightly and we are not expecting UNMIL and the security forces not to do so either. Even the October 2004 communal fighting in Monrovia is a sufficient reminder," said one human rights activist in a telephone chat with The Analyst yesterday.

According to him, giving the ingrained allegiance of these men to the former president, he has no reason to doubt, but wondered what would be the essence of the scheme at a time when Liberians are focusing on positive reforms.

But observers are questioning the reason for an elimination campaign now when the Taylor issue has international connections in which Liberia is a virtual pawn in an aura of power-play.

"Not a Liberian, whether close to Taylor or not, should blame another Liberian for what has become of the Taylor issue," observed one analyst in reaction to a question posed by our reporter.

It may be recalled that the Liberian government through the National Security Agency (NSA) recently summoned three Taylor loyalists for questioning in connection with an alleged plan to in cause chaos in the city if the government insisted on Taylor's extradition.

The men were released upon the intervention of their lawyer who argued that it was illegal to hold his clients without charge.

State security forces were however reported to have said that the men would be recalled if the need arises.

The Analyst was unable to contact state security officials and UNMIL yesterday for comment on the reported destabilization plan, but a source said there was no indication that any such plan was underway.

"They are on top alert and are prepared in conjunction with the peacekeepers to handle any disturbances," said the source that preferred anonymity.

Meanwhile, UNMIL Chief of Mission, Alan Doss told newsmen recently that UNMIL was ready to protect the Liberian people against hooligans and troublemakers.

The Analyst (Monrovia)

22 March 2006

Opinion

Public Agenda Silence & Apathy Are Not Options In The Prosecution Of Charles Taylor

There is an ongoing debate about whether or not the deposed and exiled Liberian ruler Charles Taylor should be brought to justice. Essentially, three major positions have been expressed. One school of thought is that Taylor should be tried in Liberian courts.

Another view is that he should face justice at the war crimes tribunal in Sierra Leone. The third view is that he should be sent to the International Court in The Hague. There is a fourth view, but generally unpopular with a large number of Liberians, although endorsed by those for whom Taylor's prosecution may foretell their own futures. The latter position is that Taylor should not be prosecuted, and we should let bygone be bygone.

Although the venue of Taylor's prosecution is important, what is critical is that he be made to face justice and answer for all the unspeakable crimes that he committed. Bringing Charles Taylor to justice is in our view a lynchpin to long-term stability and security in the West African sub-region, and particularly in Liberia. We believe that all peace-loving Liberians should support Taylor's prosecution for his enormous role in the destabilization of the West African sub-region. Taylor was indicted by the international community "for bearing the greatest responsibility for war crimes (murder, taking hostages, crimes against humanity extermination, rape, sexual slavery), and other serious violations of international humanitarian law (use of child soldiers in Sierra Leone)," Human Rights Watch, 2003.

We need not remind our readers that Taylor initiated the 1989 civil war in Liberia, which ultimately deposed Liberia's military ruler dictator Samuel Kanyon Doe in 1990. In so doing, he presided over a militia of child soldiers, hoodlums, and thugs that killed tens of thousands of Liberians and foreigners within Liberia's territorial borders.

Taylor and his gang of thugs also looted the resources of Liberia and Sierra Leone, and left these nations and their citizens economically indigent and haunted by widespread trauma. If there is no other reason to bring Taylor to justice, the young children he recruited and drugged to fight his war, who are scarred forever, need to witness in their life time, that when people commit crimes, there are reciprocal consequences. They cannot live believing that people can do what Taylor did and walk away free of any accountability. This lesson will deter others from ever engaging in such lawless acts.

There are other important reasons why we should support the immediate prosecution of Charles Taylor and those whom such a prosecution would make culpable.

Taylor's trial has the strong potential to bring closure to the emotional wounds that many suffered as a result of the circle of violence that Liberia and the West African sub-region suffered for the past quarter of a century. Taylor's victims span Liberia, Sierra Leone and many other nations around the world.

When the key perpetrator of their suffering is prosecuted, it is likely to spur a sense of vindication and healing, feeling that these atrocities will not be repeated.

Taylor's prosecution would also serve as a deterrent to future dictators that "they can no longer be allowed to disregard the rule of law, and abuse human rights with impunity,"
WWW.nigeriafirst.org.

Nigeria has pushed responsibility for prosecuting Taylor on the Liberian people, and the Liberian people should not sidestep this important patriotic duty.

Although some African leaders may fear that they would fall victim to Taylor's fate, if they become agents of instability in their countries and/or commit crimes against humanity, Liberians need to be the pacesetters. We will be sending a strong message to African leaders that a legal and political precedent is established. You will not harm/kill your citizens and/or foreigners and get away with it.

If Liberia fails to pressure Nigeria to turn Taylor over for prosecution, it would undermine socio-economic development in Liberia, because sooner or later Western European democracies, certain elements within official Washington, and human rights groups would tie the prosecution of Taylor to economic assistance to Liberia. The future of Liberia is more important than Taylor and those who support the argument that he should not be prosecuted. The nation needs all the economic support that it can, especially when it is linked to the fate of a despot.

It is an outstanding stance for peace and justice that President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf has vowed not bow to pressure from Taylor's apologists in Liberia or elsewhere (Sirleaf's speech to the Joint Session of the United States Legislature 3/15/06). Hopefully, she will not submit the issue of Taylor's prosecution to the Liberian Legislature for consideration simply because it is dominated by Taylor's foot- soldiers.

Recall that some of these legislators were allegedly bankrolled by Taylor during the recent elections in Liberia. Taylor bankrolled some of the people in the Liberian legislature to serve as his watch-dogs, and to stifle any attempt to have him prosecuted.

His estranged wife, Bong County Senator Jewell Taylor and Nimba County Senator Aldophus Dolo, a former General in Taylor's militia, are leading the charge to avert Taylor's prosecution. They should be reminded that the prosecution of Taylor in Sierra Leone is driven by an international mandate and the Liberian government has no authority to prevent it. To stand in the way would be to the nation's peril politically and economically. Elected officials who stand in the way of this nationalistic effort would be abdicating their duty as representatives of the Liberian people because they will be exposing the nation to international ridicule and possible sanctions (informal or otherwise). Taylor was indicted by the international community for crimes against humanity.

According to local media reports, former National Patriotic Party (NPP) executives alleged on a local radio talk show in Monrovia that Liberian President Sirleaf suggested to the Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo that Taylor could be tried in The Hague, at the international war crimes court, and Liberia and Nigeria could shoulder his legal responsibility. We have not ascertained the validity of the attribution.

However, the confusion surrounding this issue leaves us with no alternative, but to err on the side that alleges that the statements were made.

In view of this, we believe that it is a bad idea to prosecute Taylor in The Hague because most of his victims in Sierra Leone and Liberia will not have the opportunity to witness the trial because of economic constraints, and other factors beyond their control.

It is also bad idea for Liberians to pay for Mr. Taylor's legal bills because he and his cronies looted substantial sum of money from Liberia and Sierra Leone. They can therefore afford to pay for his defense. Taylor is also reported to receive millions of dollars yearly from Lone Star Company, a cell phone company in Liberia which he is a major share holder, according to the May 2005 Committee for International Justice (CIJ) reports. Why should Liberian tax payers subsidize his legal expenses in the face of his ill-gotten wealth?

Mr. Taylor must be turned over for prosecution because he does not deserve a second chance. He did not afford second chance to the ten of thousands of Liberians and Sierra Leoneans who lost their lives or their limbs as the result of the mayhem he caused in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Liberians who believe in justice, freedom, and the rule of law must support efforts to have Taylor prosecuted at the earliest possible time. Not only will we bury the painful past that Taylor's freedom arouses, but we will be burying an ethic of despotism that has been with us for 159 years of existence as a nation state.

The personal stories of Liberians, Sierra Leoneans, and others or their relatives who experienced these atrocities provide us a compelling reason why we should not remain silent in the face of injustice. We have let dictatorial rule and associated human rights violations go unpunished for too long, and we have paid the price in lives lost and resources squandered.

For example, Taylor grew into a more vicious brute because other monsters before him were allowed to commit their crimes with impunity. Taylor and his cronies have not been held accountable for this reckless disregard for the well being of their victims. Indeed, Taylor's prosecution will be a hopeful moment and a significant milestone in Liberia's quest for social justice. Following Taylor's prosecution, what needs to change is not just the chronic nature of the citizens' apathy, but the systems of governance that are erected to prevent reoccurrence of such travesty of justice.

About the authors: Winsley Nanka, CPA, and Emmanuel Dolo, Ph.D, are Liberian professionals based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Coon Rapids/Cottage Grove, Minnesota. They write frequently about political, social and economic issues facing Liberia and Africa.

Reuters

23 March 2006

Let's end Taylor saga, says Johnson-Sirleaf

By Lesley Wroughton

Washington - Liberia's new president Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf on Tuesday called for a decision on the fate of exiled former leader Charles Taylor whose forced departure in 2003 helped end the country's 14-year civil war.

Johnson-Sirleaf said the decision on whether to hand Taylor over to a special United Nations court to face war crimes charges was in the hands of African leaders like Nigerian President Olugesun Obasanjo.

Taylor, considered Liberia's worst human rights offender, has been living in exile in southeastern Nigeria after Obasanjo helped broker a peace deal in 2003 that later led to elections won by Johnson-Sirleaf in November.

'Liberia's fragile peace is tied to the dynamics of the region'

Johnson-Sirleaf said many Liberians were tired of war but Taylor still wielded influence in the West African country.

"Liberia believes this matter ought to be brought to a closure, that we want to get on with the business of pursuing our development agenda and responding to the needs of our people," Johnson-Sirleaf told the Council on Foreign Relations.

"The African leadership, in conjunction with the United States and the UN, had the arrangements that took Mr Taylor into exile. We think they now must - since we've given the word that we want it brought to closure - take the decision on the next step to take it to the court," she added.

Johnson-Sirleaf has denied that she requested Taylor's extradition, but said he should face war crimes charges in the special UN-backed court probing the civil war in neighbouring Sierra Leone.

Earlier Johnson-Sirleaf met US President George Bush at the White House to discuss ways his administration could help Liberia.

Bush told her he would consult with other African leaders so a "fair decision is taken that would ensure not only the stability of Liberia is secured, but that the Liberian people can move ahead and have a new life, and also that the conditions upon which the African leaders have agreed for Mr Taylor will be respected," she said.

She acknowledged that her government needs to act swiftly to meet the growing expectations of a country where the entire army has been dismantled under the 2003 peace agreement and security is in the hands of UN peacekeepers.

"Liberia's fragile peace is tied to the dynamics of the region," Johnson-Sirleaf said. "Our peace will never be secure until there is peace in the sub-region," she said, citing problems in the Ivory Coast and Guinea.

"Once peace is secured then the options for making sure we have sustained peace is then development and that means economic cooperation and economic integration."

She set out her main priorities as reconstructing Liberia's shattered infrastructure, particularly restoring electricity which has been cut off for 15 years, rebuilding schools and hospitals, and recruiting and training a new Liberian security force.

(Additional reporting by Tabassum Zakaria)

Daily Independent (Nigeria)

24 March 2006

Civil Society Groups Reiterate Call For Taylor's Extradition

By Onyema Omenuwa and
Maxwell Oditta, Lagos

A coalition of civil society groups has reiterated its call on President Olusegun Obasanjo to transfer former Liberian President, Charles Taylor from his exile home in Calabar to Sierra Leone, where he would face trial at the International Criminal Court.

Speaking at a press conference to mark the 15th anniversary of what the groups described as “the devastating armed conflict in Sierra Leone, which began on March 23, 1991,” the coalition said it has no objection to Obasanjo consulting with Heads of Government in the ECOWAS and AU fold. It, however, warned that it would be detrimental to justice and peace in the West African sub-region, if Taylor were not released on time to face trial at the Special Court.

On March 23, 1991, rebel groups said to be loyal to ex-President Charles Taylor of Liberia, allegedly launched a cross-border attack from Liberia on a small village in the Kailahun district of Sierra-Leone. That action was believed to have heralded the protracted war in Sierra-Leone, which claimed uncountable number of lives. Presently, Taylor is on exile in Nigeria, even as a 17-count charge is pending against him at the Special Court in Sierra-Leone.

The coalition, acting on behalf of the Campaign Against Immunity, used the opportunity of the anniversary to call on Obasanjo to surrender the fugitive Taylor to the Special Court, in line with the Liberian President, Ellen Sirleaf-Johnson's request.

Since the Special Court might soon begin to round off its sittings, it would be fatal to the entrenchment of justice and peace in the West African sub-region, if Mr. Taylor is not transferred on time to face trial, noted Secretary of the NCICC, Voke Ighorodje.

He enjoined the FG to expedite action and not let the idea of consultation with ECOWAS and the AU become an excuse for avoiding prompt response to this request from the government and people of Liberia.

“The AU and all African States have repudiated the kinds of crimes for which Charles Taylor is indicted. Now is the moment for President Obasanjo to show that Nigeria and West Africa take these commitments seriously”, he said.

Chidi Odinkalu, a Director of the Open Society Institute Justice Initiative assured journalists of the coalition's interest in justice not only for Taylor's victims, but also for Taylor himself. He expressed hope that the media and court of public opinion would not prejudice proceedings at the Special Court should Taylor be transferred.

A survivor of amputation by rebels in Sierra Leone and Executive Director of Amputees Rehabilitation Foundation averred that it is now up to the Nigerian President to decide whether or not to squander the unique opportunity to bring Taylor to justice offered by Sirleaf-Johnson's request “as the Special Court is presently at an advanced stage in its operation and will not be around for much longer”.

United Nations



Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 23 March 2006

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

International Clips on Liberia

VOA

Exclusive Interview with Liberian President Sirleaf

By James Butty
Washington
23 March 2006

Liberian president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has discussed the accomplishments of her first official visit to the United States. President Sirleaf talked about her trip in an exclusive interview with English to Africa reporter James Butty. She began with her meeting with President Bush Tuesday at the White House. She says it was fruitful.

“The meeting went exceptionally well. I thanked the president on behalf of the Liberian people for all the support that we have received in making this transition from war to peace. I went over some of our plans for the development of the country, some of the challenges which we face. The president was forthcoming; he was positive. He even made suggestions in some areas that I did not mention. And so I think the results of the meeting are very good and in the interest of the Liberian people.”

VOA

Former Special Court Chief Prosecutor Says No Peace in Liberia until Charles Taylor Faces Justice

By Joe De Capua
Washington
23 March 2006

The former chief prosecutor for the Sierra Leone Special Court says unless Charles Taylor is brought to justice the new government of Liberia is at risk.

David Crane says the time to bring the former Liberian leader to trial is now. He signed the war crimes indictment against Taylor about three years ago. Taylor is in exile in Nigeria, but Liberia’s new president, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, says she recently asked Nigeria to turn him over for prosecution. David Crane is now a law professor at Syracuse University in New York State. He was asked by English to Africa reporter Joe De Capua whether he’s confident Taylor would be turned over.

Local Media – Newspapers

Taylor Expected in Freetown

(Liberia Business Digest, New Vision and The Analyst)

- The fate of former President Charles Taylor is believed to have been sealed. According to reports, President Obasanjo has begun consultations with the current AU President Denis Sassou-Nguessou of the Republic of Congo based on the request made to him by President Sirleaf that Mr. Taylor should be extradited.
- According to Diplomatic sources, plans have been finalized for Mr. Taylor to be dragged before the UN-backed court in Sierra Leone to answer to charges levelled against him by the international community.

UNMIL Ukrainians Donate To Orphans

(The Democrat and The Inquirer)

- The 56th Helicopter Detachment of the Aviation Unit of the United Nations Mission in Liberia donated various items to orphanages in Margibi County which included rice, milk, cookies and other assorted food.
- Col. Verzbitcky Leonid, Deputy Commander of the Ukrainian contingent made the donation on behalf of the Liberian/Ukrainian Friendship Organization which was established six months ago to create a social and economic link between the two countries.

UNMIL's Mandate to be extended

(Liberian Express)

- Describing the security situation in Liberia as still “fragile” United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan has called for the extension of the UN Mission in Liberia until March 2007 and in addition police as military personnel are withdrawn.
- Mr. Annan said that despite “considerable overall improvement” in security, a number of tasks critical to the sustainability of peace and stability remained to be accomplished.

Justice Minister Vows to Uphold Human Rights and Rule of Law

(The Inquirer and New Vision)

- Justice Minister Cllr. Frances Johnson-Morris said that the hallmark of her administration will be respect for human rights and the rule of law.
- Counsellor Johnson-Morris said no one person would be presumed guilty until proven so before a competent court of jurisdiction.

Local Media – Radio Veritas *(News monitored yesterday at 18:45 pm)*

President Appoints Local Government Administrators

- An Executive Mansion press statement issued in Monrovia yesterday said that President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf has appointed Madame Gertrude Lamini as Gbarpolu County Superintendent and Moses Monlonporlor as Assistant Superintendent for Development, Ranney Jackson as Bong County Superintendent and Madame Lucia Herbert as Assistant Superintendent for Development.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Justice Minister Allays Fears of Witch-Hunting at the Ministry

- Speaking at a ceremony to take over as Minister of Justice yesterday, Madame Frances Johnson-Morris assured the public that there would be no witch-hunting during her tenure and added that they would strengthen the rule of law by dispensing justice without fear or favor.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

African Union to Decide Taylor's Handover Soon

- In a press interview yesterday, the African Union Representative to Liberia Muumuu Diakite said that in a matter of days when a decision on handing over former

President Charles Taylor to the Special Court for Sierra Leone, would be taken by the Union.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Liberia's Revenue Intake Increases Says Customs Commissioner

- Speaking to journalists yesterday, Customs Commissioner Alphonso Gaye said that government's revenue intake was increasing with the increase in import activities. He added that the Ministry has started to audit its rural revenue collectorates to check the illegal uses of funds.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Former Bank Workers Complain of Unwholesome Labor Practices

- In a letter of complaint to the Minister of Labor, former employees of the former International Trust Company (ITC) alleged that the ITC management had terminated their services for questioning the unwholesome labor practices they had being subjected to, citing unpaid housing, medical and insurance benefits.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Lawmaker to confront JPC Director on Suspected Russian Gang Rapists Escape

- Addressing a news conference yesterday, Sinoe County Senator Joseph Nagbe said that he would challenge Catholic Justice and Peace Commission Executive Director Attorney Augustine Toe if he petitioned the Senate to impeach him in connection with the suspected Russian gang rapists because the Police had not established criminal charges against the suspects when he represented them.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Lawmakers to Probe Stolen Rubber Trade with Ex-Combatants

- A National Legislature Press Bureau source yesterday said that House of Representatives Speaker Edwin Snowe had constituted a committee to probe allegations that the Firestone Rubber Plantation Company was buying stolen rubber from ex-combatants who are illegally tapping the Guthrie Rubber Plantation in Bomi County.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Complete versions of the UNMIL International Press Clips, UNMIL Daily Liberian Radio Summary and UNMIL Liberian Newspapers Summary are posted each day on the UNMIL Bulletin Board. If you are unable to access the UNMIL Bulletin Board or would like further information on the content of the summaries, please contact Mr. Jeddi Armah at armahj@un.org.

Cleveland Jewish News

24 March 2006

Milosevic mishaps guided rules for Saddam tribunal

By: [MARILYN H. KARFELD](#), Senior Staff Reporter

Long before Slobodan Milosevic died last week in his prison cell in The Hague, the world had lost interest in his war crimes trial, says Michael Scharf, an expert in international law.

The court proceedings concluded with Milosevic's death, with no judgment. In the end, the former Yugoslav president - whom Richard Holbrooke, U.S. mediator at the 1995 Dayton peace accords ending the war in Bosnia, called "this monster who wrecked southeastern Europe" - eluded justice.

The lessons of Milosevic's prolonged trial were uppermost in the minds of those establishing the war crimes tribunal for Saddam Hussein, now underway in Baghdad.

Keeping the trial short, fair and under control was a primary concern, says Scharf, who helped train the judges in the Saddam tribunal. Despite the best of intentions, however, thus far, Saddam's trial has not been a success, says the professor and director of the Cox International Law Center at Case Western Reserve School of Law.

Milosevic's trial dealt with a mega-case. It involved atrocities committed over a decade in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo, said Scharf, in an e-mail from Prague where he was traveling. The Milosevic trial dragged on for over four years, with testimony from hundreds of witnesses and thousands of documents admitted into evidence.

To avoid this evidentiary overload, the Iraqi tribunal decided to conduct a dozen mini-trials, explains Scharf, a 2005 Nobel peace prize nominee for co-founding a legal group that gives pro bono legal help to foreign governments involved in peace talks and to tribunals prosecuting war criminals.

The first case focused on Saddam's 1982 retaliatory attack on the town of Dujail and the torture and murder of 143 of its inhabitants. The "air tight" case was supposed to conclude in three months.

But postponements to allow the defense more time to prepare its case, as well security issues, religious holidays, national elections, and a defense boycott have caused major delays. In over five months, the tribunal held only a dozen days of trial, Scharf notes.

Most Serbs never thought the Milosevic trial was fair. First, one British judge, and upon his death, a second Briton, presided over the trial. British forces participated in the 1999



Former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein addresses court during his trial.



Supporters of Milosevic gathered in Belgrade this week to pay last respects.

military intervention against Serbia, creating the perception of bias, Scharf says.

Furthermore, Milosevic's many outbursts and tactics provoked the first British judge, who repeatedly shouted at him. To cut costs, the tribunal appointed no alternative judges. So when the first judge died of a brain tumor, the second judge had not even been present during the first two years of the proceedings, Scharf says.

To avoid the same potential problems in the Saddam trial, the Iraqis chose a Kurdish judge with a calm courtroom demeanor to preside over the Dujail case, which involved Shi'ite victims and Sunni perpetrators. They also appointed two alternate judges from the outset. But after five days of trial, intense criticism of the first judge's leniency and jocular style led him to resign.

A subsequent judge quit almost immediately because he was accused of belonging to the Ba'ath party. The current judge, who was not even one of the alternates, has been accused of bias, Scharf notes. Media reports say that judge may even have been tried in absentia and sentenced to life in prison in the 1970s.

This latest judge also yelled at defendants and their lawyers within minutes of taking over. Then he threw defense counsel out of the courtroom.

"The damage all of this has done to the credibility of the proceedings may be hard for the tribunal to overcome, no matter how much evidence is submitted proving Saddam Hussein's guilt," predicts Scharf.

Keeping order in the court was a big issue in the Milosevic trial. The first judge allowed the former Serb leader to represent himself. The defendant disparaged the tribunal in court, threatened and insulted witnesses, and tried to make the trial about the U.S. and British military action against Serbia.

The second judge appointed a lawyer to stand by in case Milosevic's behavior became too disruptive. This dramatically lessened the Serbian defendant's courtroom antics and the trial proceeded far more quickly, the Case law professor says.

With this example in mind, a year ago, Scharf wrote a 60-page memo to the Iraqi tribunal, demonstrating why Saddam had no international right to represent himself. The tribunal listened.

Last August, the Iraqi National Assembly enacted revised rules for the tribunal. Saddam had to be represented by legal counsel so he couldn't use the courtroom as a political forum to attack the U.S. and the new Iraqi government.

However, in keeping with Iraqi legal tradition, the judges have allowed Saddam to question the witnesses, Scharf says. This has given Saddam a platform to disparage witnesses, the tribunal, the U.S., and the Iraqi government.

Chaos has ensued. The judge tried to restore order, and the defense lawyers walked out. In response, the judge fired them and has continued the trial with court-appointed public defenders.

In protest, Saddam and his co-defendants have refused to return to court. Media and

human-rights organizations have slammed the tribunal as an unfair trial in absentia, Scharf continues.

What happens now? The judge has to make his case to the public, clearly explaining his rulings.

"He needs to cite the precedents of the Yugoslavia tribunal, the Rwanda tribunal, the Special Court for Sierra Leone, and domestic courts, which indicate that his response to the situation is perfectly consistent with international due process and fair trial standards," Scharf adds.

Last year, during training sessions for the Saddam trial, one of the judges asked the international trainers if future war crimes trial judges in other parts of the world would examine the precedents set by the Iraqi proceedings, just as Scharf and others have looked at the decisions of the Nuremberg and the Yugoslav tribunals.

"For good and for bad," Scharf says, "the answer is clearly yes."

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