

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



September is the month to pay school fees

**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:**

Thursday, 24 September 2009

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

Thursday, 24 September 2009

### Robert Blair in Defense of Taylor

*By Robert Blair*

*It is beyond my imagination that anyone would believe the president of Liberia would go into Sierra Leone because he wants to terrorize the people and take their wealth.*

That was Liberian warlord-turned-president Charles Taylor testifying at The Hague recently for his role in the Sierra Leonean civil war, a conflict that raged for 11 years and claimed nearly 50,000 lives. Taylor has been alternately cogent and bombastic in his own defense. Not surprisingly, the more lurid details from the trial have provided the most popular grist for the media mill both in Liberia and abroad. With every headline, the charges that Taylor ridicules as beyond the imagination seem only more irrefutable, his crimes more outrageous and cruel.

Meanwhile, to many Liberians, Taylor remains a hero. For foreigners like myself, this is not an easy thing to understand. At times, his popularity seems a byproduct of his savagery. During the Liberian civil war, recruits for Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) were often heard chanting a grim refrain: "He killed my ma, he killed my pa, I'll fight for him." A decade later, this mystique has not dissipated in many pockets of the country. While we in the international peanut gallery gape at the spectacle of the trial - a murderer defending indefensible acts - many Liberians continue to endorse Taylor and his charismatic brutality.

Why?

Over lunch the other day, I asked two Liberian colleagues and ardent Taylor fans to explain to me their views on the trial. Johannson Dahn and Zeleh Kolubah once fought as rebels in the NPFL. They now work at the National Ex-combatant Peacebuilding Initiative, a local NGO that provides psychosocial counseling for veterans of the war. Taking particularly sharp aim at the U.S. and its inept meddling in Liberia over the past two decades, Dahn and Kolubah offered an eloquent if not always convincing defense of their former commander-in-chief. This is what they told me.

For my Liberian colleagues, the sham of Taylor's trial began with his election as president in 1997 and the almost instantaneous calls for his resignation from around the world. "There was a serious war being fought in Liberia," explains Dahn. "Taylor was elected by the Liberian people. He had a mandate to protect their lives and property." Of the voices demanding Taylor's removal, none was so hypocritical as that of the Americans. When the war erupted in 1989, some 2,000 heavily-armed American Marines were stationed just off the Liberian coast. But then-President George H.W. Bush refused to send a single American soldier to help diffuse the crisis, and when a smaller contingent finally grounded in Monrovia, they were ordered only to protect the enormous embassy compound and the American civilians hiding inside. Throughout the subsequent 14 years of war, the American government sat on its hands as thousands of Liberians were slaughtered. Asks

Dahn: "What interest did the Americans have in telling Taylor to leave if they did not have any interest in protecting the Liberians themselves?" Taylor's indictment was no more lawful or legitimate than his exile in 2003. Now it was Bush the Younger's turn to tinker with Liberian politics. "The indictment was carried to the White House for review and revision," says Dahn. "Why? Is that the advisory board to The Hague?" Taylor is accused of 11 counts of war crimes in Sierra Leone. This is the stuff you'll recognize from Hollywood: cannibalism, child soldiers, sex slaves, hands, ears, and noses hacked off as punishment for minor misdeeds or for no reason at all. To Kolubah, this is nonsense. "I fought with the NPFL," he explains. "We did not forcefully amputate people." The fact that forced amputation never entered the NPFL's repertoire suggests that someone other than Taylor must have been calling the shots in Sierra Leone. "If Taylor cannot be



*Ex- Liberia President Charles Taylor*

to instill fear in the advancing enemy." But this, he argues, is no different from the signage we use in the West to warn each other away from hazardous things. "On some of the chemicals you produce, we see signs with human skulls and cross-bones. What do those signs mean? They mean death. They mean danger."

When I suggest that there is a difference between a drawing of a skull and the real thing - and that, in any event, the dead deserve a proper burial - Dahn agrees. "But this was a warzone," he says. "There was no chance to bury the dead because of sustained gunfire and enemy attacks. And which one will be more fearful? A head that is dead and rotting? Or a silly picture?"

These arguments may not persuade you of Taylor's innocence, just as the trial will not convince many Liberians of his guilt. Loyalties die hard. For those of us watching from the comfort of our Western sensibilities, it is tempting to explain away this devotion as the result of ignorance or dogma. How can so many Liberians still adore Taylor after all we've learned about his crimes? Don't these people read the newspaper?

In reality, loyalties survive for reasons steeped in culture and history, story-telling and myth-making. The same lesson that Dahn and Kolubah teach about Liberia applies to the U.S. as well, where our own political allegiances seem sometimes to defy empirical evidence. The experiences of our two countries are hardly comparable, but the point is the same.

Meanwhile, as Taylor takes the stand for crimes that Dahn and Kolubah insist he did not commit, the other architects of the Liberian crisis are free

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***Taking particularly sharp aim at the U.S. and its inept meddling in Liberia over the past two decades, Dahn and Kolubah offered an eloquent if not always convincing defense of their former commander-in-chief. This is what they told me.***

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linked to forced amputation," asks Dahn, "then how can he be linked to massacres and other war crimes?" Who, then, is responsible for the atrocities perpetrated there? Dahn offers a categorical answer: "The Sierra Leoneans themselves."

And what of the crimes committed in Liberia? In the press, much has been made of Taylor's justifications for the grisly NPFL tactic of mounting human heads at road blocks as warnings to passersby. "Yes, it's true," says Dahn. "When enemy soldiers got killed, the bodies were used

to live, work, and hold office in their home country. Dahn calls them Charlie's Angels: "They're clean. Pure from heaven. No spot on them. But they are imposters." Taylor is their "sacrificial lamb" - a "brave, generous man," a man "who does not lie," a "humanitarian." Says Dahn: "All these white collar guys you see around here in the big vehicles, supported by Americans. They are very good planners of very bad things. And they have met their match: Charles Taylor. Oh yeah."

*-Culled from Huffington Post, UK*

## Standard Times

Thursday, 24 September 2009

# 416 TRC Recommendations at stake

## ...says Bishop Humper

BY EDWARD MARAH

**T**he former Chairman of the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Bishop Dr. Joseph Humper has said in Freetown that 416 TRC recommendations are currently at stake as much has not been done both by the former and present Governments in implementing the recommendations, especially the key recommendation of the protection of human rights.

He made this disclosure yesterday at the YWCA Hall in Freetown to mark the International day of Peace organized by the Civil Peace Service (CPS) partners in Sierra Leone.

Speaking on the theme "Building Peace from Within-Action Beyond the TRC Recommendation", he said that since the submission of the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee to Government very little has been done to address the very immediate issues which among others gave rise to the eleven year civil.

He said that a key recommendation that is yet to be implemented is the protection of human dignity as a fundamental right; the abolishment of the death penalty, establishment of the rule of law, separation of the office of Attorney General and the Minister of Justices, the adoption of a new principle of national security among others were also listed as recommendations which need to be addressed in order to prevent further conflict.

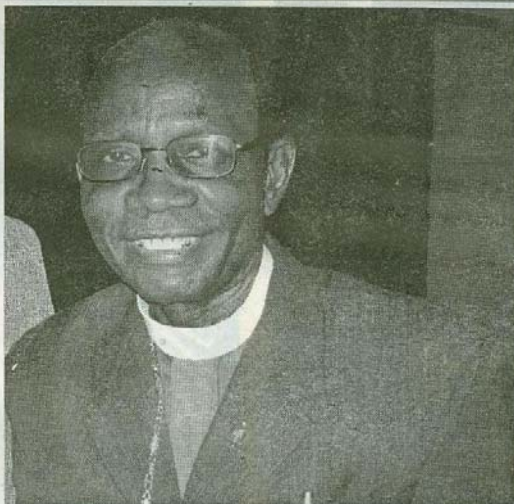
He maintained that peace is a necessary commodity that everybody should be yearning for, noting that it is a treasure which every Nation must as a matter of necessity seek and pursue with diligence and unrelenting determination.

He pointed out that peace should be built on common destiny, solidarity, vision and common security that can enable us move together for the good and totality of the peace of humanity, which ensures development in every sector of life, produces love, unity, peaceful co-existence, long suffering, tolerance, reconciliation and forgiveness and spiritual enlightenment that will promote social, political and economic development.

He stated that with Sierra Leone after having gone through eleven years of civil war can only now enjoy the resources of the country and establish peace and harmony among the citizens if and only when the recommendations of the TRC are faithfully and timorously implemented, adding that the peace we are experiencing now is a fragile peace, which all must work concertedly to ensure it is sustained.

The Chairman of the ceremony Mr. Peter Koroma said that the International Day of Peace which is observed on the 21st September every year is a day declared by the United Nations General Assembly devoted to commemorating and strengthening the ideas of peace.

He said that the celebration should not be considered as a



*Bishop Humper\**

mere assemble, but rather a gathering of people with the firm conviction that peace is a necessity of life, adding that without peace there can be no human, social, economic and cultural development.

He said that as the world commemorates the International day of Peace, a number of countries around the world are facing conflict, insecurity and instability, stressing that in Africa millions of people are displaced, thousands having lost their lives, thousands of children are malnourished while thousands are refugees in other lands.

He said that the event is not an attempt to over emphasize the importance of the celebration but to give a wake-up call to all war torn nations and warlords in Africa and elsewhere to give peace a chance, stressing that "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed" he said.

The President of SLADEA Prof. Joe. A. D. Alie said that since the declaration of "Di War don done" in January 2002 by former President Dr. Alhaji Ahmed Tejan Kabbah much has been achieved by his organization including the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), Council of Churches Sierra Leone (CCSL) and Christian Health Association of Sierra Leone (CHASL) in building the peace, through a long-term strategy of their peace building schemes in the country.

He said that during the 2002 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections their civic education contributed significantly towards the peaceful conduct of the elections. Statements were also made by representatives of the Liberian Embassy, Mano Ricer Union, Police, NUSS and Civil Society while the Secretary General of CCSL Mr. Kemoore Salia chaired the Ceremony.

## Voice of America

Wednesday, 23 September 2009

### **Taylor Denies Meeting With Rebel Leader on Eve of Sierra Leone War**

By Kate Thomas  
Dakar

Former Liberian President Charles Taylor denies testimony by a prosecution witness that he met with rebel-leader Foday Sankoh on the eve of the Revolutionary United Front's invasion of Sierra Leone.

Former Liberian President Charles Taylor has testified at his war crimes trial that he did not meet with a rebel leader on the eve of the invasion of Sierra Leone.

The 61-year-old is facing 11 counts of war crimes allegedly committed during the civil war in Sierra Leone. His defense case, conducted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague, is now in its ninth week.

Among the allegations, prosecutors say he provided weapons to the Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone in exchange for access to so-called "blood diamonds."

The 1991 invasion of Sierra Leone sparked a brutal civil war in the West African country, marked by tussles over diamonds and participation by child soldiers. At least 50,000 people were killed in the 11 year conflict, which ended in 2002.

Taylor refuted claims that he met with Foday Sankoh, the leader of the Revolutionary United Front rebel group, the day before Sierra Leone was invaded.

Sankoh, a former army corporal and photographer, led the first attacks on villages in a diamond-rich province of Sierra Leone in 1991.

A prosecution witness alleged that the former Liberian president had traveled on the road to Voinjama, the main city in northern Liberia, close to the borders of Guinea and Sierra Leone, a day earlier.

But Taylor said he did not. "He is lying," he said. "There is no way I was in any convoy on the road. He made that up. It is a lie."

Since his defense case began in July, the former president has repeatedly dismissed the prosecution's claims as lies.

He continued to do so today. "If I was on that road, I would say I was on that road," said the former Liberian president. "I was never on that road in February or March or April or May or June or July of `1991, ever. No, he lied."

The defense case continues Thursday.

## CharlesTaylorTrial.org (The Hague)

Wednesday, 23 September 2009

### **Liberia: 'I Did Not Know Of Any Prior Plans For The Invasion Of Sierra Leone In 1991,' Taylor Says**

Alpha Sesay

Charles Taylor did not have any knowledge of plans by rebel forces to invade Sierra Leone in 1991, he told Special Court for Sierra Leone judges in The Hague today. In rebuffing prosecution charges that he was a key planner in the major rebel attack on his neighboring country during its 11-year conflict, Mr. Taylor dismissed the allegations as "lies."

"I did not know of any prior plans for the invasion of Sierra Leone in 1991," the accused former Liberian president said today.

Mr. Taylor was responding to the evidence of a protected prosecution witness who testified in 2008 that Mr. Taylor was part of a common plan with Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels to invade Sierra Leone. For purposes of protecting the witness's identity, a huge portion of today's hearings was held in closed session.

In his 2008 testimony, the witness said that in February 1991, he saw Mr. Taylor and RUF leader Foday Sankoh in a convoy. When they got to the Liberian town of Voinjama, they made plans for the RUF to invade Sierra Leone, the witness had testified. The witness further said that he personally sat with Mr. Taylor and discussed the invasion of Sierra Leone.

Dismissing the witness's account as a lie, Mr. Taylor told the court that by February 1991, he had not yet gone to Voinjama.

"It's a lie. I had not even gone from Kakata to Gbangha and so I would not have moved to Voinjama," Mr. Taylor said. "There is no way you can get to Voinjama except you go through Gbangha."

The witness testified to being present at Voinjama in 1991, where he said Mr. Taylor and Mr. Sankoh developed a strategy to attack Sierra Leone from Voinjama, Vahun and Zimmi. Mr. Taylor denied the witness's claim.

"May be he saw a ghost of someone looking like Charles Taylor, its all a lie," he said. "I was never present there. I never discussed any strategies or plans with Sankoh because I was not there."

Mr. Taylor further denied the witness's allegations that he (Taylor) dominated the meeting where the plan to attack Sierra Leone in 1991 was discussed.

"How would I dominate a meeting that I never attended?" he asked. "How can I dominate a meeting when I'd never gone through military training?"

The witness' testimony reinforced prosecution allegations that Mr. Taylor was part of a common plan and purpose with the RUF to attack Sierra Leone in March 1991 and that throughout the duration of the 11-year conflict in Sierra Leone, Mr. Taylor exercised some control or influence over the RUF. The prosecution further alleges that Mr. Taylor supplied arms and ammunition to RUF rebels and that all diamonds mined by the RUF were taken to Mr. Taylor in Liberia. Mr. Taylor has denied these allegations.

Mr. Taylor today also told the court how he executed four of his National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) Generals for conniving against him and helping the RUF in attacking Sierra Leone. The four men who were executed were Sam Lato, Oliver Vanney, Anthony Menkunagbe and Sam Towah.

"They put together a group called Black Ghadafa, an anti-NPFL group planning later on to kill me and destroy the leadership of the NPFL," Mr. Taylor said. "They were arrested and it was at that investigation that it comes out that they were involved with Foday Sankoh. That is why they were killed."

Several prosecution witnesses who claimed they were forcefully recruited when the RUF invaded Sierra Leone in 1991 had mentioned the names of these executed Generals as part of the group(s) that recruited and trained them in Sierra Leone. These men, they said, were Liberians.



**United Nations**  **Nations Unies**

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

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## UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 23 September 2009

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

### **International Clips on Liberia**

#### **India to train Liberian police force**

IANS, New Delhi, Sep 23 : Two years after sending female peacekeepers to Liberia that is rebuilding itself from the ashes of a protracted civil war, India will help the west African country train its police force in coordination with the United Nations. "We have extended to them an offer to send 30-40 Liberian police officers to be trained in India. They will determine the level of officers and the kind of training they want," Minister of State for External Affairs Shashi Tharoor told IANS in an interview on his return from a two-nation trip to Africa that also took him to Ghana. "They went even beyond that. They asked us, 'Can you train the entire Liberian police force?'" Tharoor said while sharing details about his three-day visit to Liberia last week, the first by an Indian minister in nearly four decades.

#### **Liberia can be self-sufficient in food production**

MONROVIA, Sept. 22 (Xinhua) -- Liberia can be self-sufficient in food production with vast land, plenty of rainfall, sun shine and labor force, Chinese Ambassador to the African country Zhou Yuxiao has said. In a recent interview with Xinhua, Ambassador Zhou said China is in the process of constructing an agriculture technological demonstration center at Liberia's Central Agriculture Research Institute (CARI) that would be used to train Liberians locally in large number to gain quick results in boosting agriculture and make the post-war nation self-sufficient in food production. Liberia heavily depends on imported food and its staple diet rice is bought mainly from Asia. The ambassador said if China, a nation with a population of 1.3 billion can be self-sufficient in food production, Liberia, a nation with just 3.5million, can do the same and can do even better. He said in addition to this, the Chinese government has sent two groups of Chinese instructors to one of Liberia's higher institutions of learning to teach agriculture.

#### **West African produce finds a home in West Oakland**

Last week, Roosevelt Tarlesson and his daughter, Cynomih, drove more than two hours from the agricultural Capay Valley to the Mandela Foods Cooperative in West Oakland to deliver the organic bounty of their first-ever harvest: African eggplant, okra, squash, corn and cherry tomatoes. On Friday, the Liberian immigrants will return to the co-op to participate in a health fair and further cement a bond forged through healthy food and a common purpose of helping their communities become self-sufficient. "We really want to develop a relationship with the market because they are doing something that is what I'm about: to try and bring products and health and make those things accessible to the disadvantaged and the poor, and make it reasonable and affordable," said Roosevelt Tarlesson, who founded the Tarlesson Farm in Guinda, which is located north of Vacaville. "I'm a big advocate for all these things. We dedicate 2 percent of our sales toward helping the poor, because my family received help "... since we arrived, and we want to share our blessing."

### **International Clips on West Africa**

#### **Sierra Leone**

#### **Sierra Leone switches on long-delayed hydro plant**

**FREETOWN, (Reuters)** - Sierra Leone has finally switched on the long-delayed Bumbuna hydroelectric dam in a final test phase that will see it power the energy-starved country's main hospital, prison and government agencies. President Ernest Bai Koroma released energy from the dam into the national grid at a launch ceremony this month where he voiced hope it would help Sierra Leone recover from a 1991-2002 civil war that killed tens of thousands and wrecked the economy. "As a nation, we cannot turn the economy around and improve the standard of living of our fellow citizens without an adequate supply of energy," Koroma said of the dam, which has taken over 30 years to build. Supported by donors including the World Bank and Japan, the dam currently provides about 20MW of power and will expand to 50MW next month. There are plans for it to further extend its coverage with 300MW over time if further investment is secured.

## **Statement at the Conclusion of an IMF Staff Mission to Sierra Leone**

**FREETOWN, Sierra Leone**, September 23, 2009/African Press Organization (APO)/  
— Press Release No. 09/318

An International Monetary Fund (IMF) mission led by Mr. Jan Mikkelsen visited the Republic of Sierra Leone during September 9-22, 2009 to conduct the fifth review under the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) arrangement. The mission met with the Hon. Minister of Finance and National Planning, Dr. Samura Kamara; Governor of the Bank of Sierra Leone, Sheku Sesay; other senior government officials; representatives of the business community; civil society organizations; and development partners. At the end of the mission, Mr. Jan Mikkelsen, Mission Chief for Sierra-Leone, issued the following statement in Freetown today:

## **Ivory Coast**

### **Trafigura finalises Ivory Coast toxic waste payout**

**LONDON, Sept 23 (Reuters)** - Commodities trading firm Trafigura finalised a pre-trial settlement on Wednesday, putting an end to a class-action suit in which the company was accused of dumping toxic waste in Ivory Coast, causing illness. Trafigura, one of the world's leading oil and metals traders, and lawyers for 31,000 residents of the Ivory Coast listed in the claim, agreed the settlement on Sunday and it was finalised in Britain's High Court on Wednesday. A trial scheduled for Oct. 1 will not now go ahead. Details of the settlement were not disclosed in court, with both parties bound by a confidentiality agreement.

## **Local Media – Newspaper**

### **President Sirleaf Addresses U.S. President Luncheon with African Leaders**

(The Analyst)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf yesterday addressed a luncheon hosted by U.S. President Barack Obama on youth and jobs.
- President Sirleaf told the luncheon that Liberia's post-war recovery was hinged upon providing training and jobs, especially for the youths most of who were affected by the Liberian civil war in a number of ways.
- She said bringing the young people into the fold of the labour market was a daunting challenge for most African nations as they are confronted with very large youth populations.

### **PPCC Overturns Forest Contract Award to ICC**

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

- The Public Procurement and Concession Commission (PPCC) have overturned the decision of the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) and the Inter-Ministerial Concession Committee to award Forest Management Contract to the International Consultative Capital.
- The ruling by the PPCC followed a complaint by logging companies which participated in the recent vetting process for forest management contracts.

- The companies had protested the awarding of Forest management contracts to the ICC and Euro-Logging by the Inter- Ministerial Concession Committee (IMCC) contrary to the findings of the Bid Evaluation Panel.
- The companies said although the Panel reported that Euro-Logging did not meet the minimum financial requirement and claims of ICC's financial capability were uncertain, the Ministerial Concession Committee still awarded forest management contracts to the two companies.
- Meanwhile, four civil society groups yesterday staged a protest over the passage of the contracts on grounds that the companies are not financially potent.

### **1,500 Motorbike Riders to Benefit from Training in Road Safety**

(The Analyst, Heritage, The Informer)

- The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with funding from the United Nations Peace Building Fund is supporting a new initiative aim at creating awareness and promoting road safety standards for motorbike riders throughout the country.
- The Motorbike Capacity Building Project was launched recently by Transport Minister Alphonso Gaye in Monrovia and will be implemented in 6 counties by the Monrovia YMCA.
- The project will provide training for over 1,000 motorbike riders between the ages of 18 and 35 on road safety, governance, peace consolidation and psychosocial training.

### **House Passes Resolution to Amend Liberian Constitution**

(The Inquirer, The News)

- The House of Representatives has approved a joint resolution to amend several provisions of the Liberian Constitution.
- The House amended Article 52 with a proviso that any presidential or Vice Presidential candidate shall be domiciled in Liberia for 10 years.
- Under the amendments, the House provides for the elections of mayors who shall be removed for cause by a Council and not the President and a change in the date of election from October to November.
- If approved by the Senate, the amendments would pave the way for a national referendum in at least a year's time by two thirds of the voters.

### **NEC Begins Civic, Voters Education Tomorrow Minister**

(The Analyst)

- The National Elections Commission (NEC) in keeping with the timetable for the conduct of the pending Senatorial Bye-elections for Montserrado County will tomorrow begin civic and voters' education throughout the county.
- Addressing journalists yesterday in Monrovia, NEC authorities said the commission has not qualified any candidates for the pending bye-election and warned aspirants against making pre-campaign statements ahead of the official date.

### **Liberia Supports India for UN Security Council Seat**

(The Inquirer, The Analyst)

- Liberia has agreed to support India's candidacy for the non permanent seat of the United Nations Security Council by 2010.
- A Foreign Ministry release said Liberia sees the need for a comprehensive reform within the United Nations including the expansion of the Security Council.
- The declaration was made during the visit of India's Minister of State for External Affairs Dr. Shashi Tharoor to Liberia last week where a communiqué between the two countries was signed.
- In a joint statement issued by the two countries, the Indian Government committed itself to giving Liberia US\$2Million dollars grant for the education and health sectors and would work closely with Liberia in bringing what it calls tele-education and tele-medicine to the people of Liberia.

## **House Cites Public Works As Chinese Built-Roads Deteriorate Rapidly**

(The Informer, Liberian Express, Heritage)

- The House of Representatives has summoned Public Works Minister, Samuel Kofi Woods to provide explanation on the deterioration of several Chinese-built roads in and around Monrovia.
- The Chinese Company, CHICO that rebuilt the roads has of late been criticized by Lawmakers and members of the public for using sub-standard materials on the roads.
- The SKD Boulevard Road in Congo Town, dedicated by President Sirleaf early this year and Jamaica Road on Bushrod Island Road are among roads rebuilt by the company that are fast eroding leaving potholes and damaged drainages.

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

## **House Passes Resolution to Amend Liberian Constitution**

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

## **Liberia Supports India for UN Security Council Seat**

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

## **Protests Mar Forestry Contract Hearings**

- The first public hearing into four forestry contracts before the National Legislature has been marred by protests and controversies.
- Four civil society groups staged the protests over the passage of the contracts on grounds that the companies are not financially potent.
- The protesting groups include Sustainable Development Institute (SDI), Liberia Democratic Institute (LDI), Child Development Promoters (CDP) and Foundation Community Initiative (FCI).
- The civil society groups said the Legislature must investigate how the companies Euro-Liberia Logging, International Consultant Capital, Atlantic Resources and Geblo Logging won the bids because they did not meet the requirements.
- During the hearing, lawmakers Abel Massaley and George Mulbah staged a walkout in protest to the improper conduct of the proceedings.

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

## **Armed Robbers Terrorize Liberia Agriculture Company**

- A Representative of Grand Bassa County, Byron Brown says the wave of armed robberies within the Liberia Agriculture Company (LAC) is getting unbearable for residents and wants government's swift intervention to control the situation.
- In an interview, Representative Brown said the armed robbers used cutlasses, power-saws chains and guns to carry out their operation.

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

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## The Guardian

Thursday, 24 September 2009

### ICC lauds success of Day of Peace

By Francis Obinor

NEARLY 500 people visited the International Criminal Court (ICC) when it opened its doors as part of the celebrations to mark this year's International Day of Peace.

Sonia Robla, the court's spokeswoman informed The Guardian that visitors attended briefings provided in different languages on the court's principles and its current work, followed by question and answer sessions.

Participants, she added, also had the opportunity to interact with ICC officials during guided tours that included a view of courtroom I from the public gallery and the court's media centre.

"The successful Open Day was prepared as part of the programme of activities organised by the Municipality of The Hague to celebrate the international Day of Peace, intended to draw to the attention of the public the efforts of those who work hard to end conflict and promote peace worldwide," she said.

Robla affirmed that visitors to the ICC consisted of men, women and children of different ages and nationalities, including Dutch nationals and members of the international community based in The Hague from Europe, Africa, Asia, North and Latin America, and the Caribbean.

Speaking, Silvana Arbia, the ICC Registrar, explained that: "The court has subscribed to the initiative of the Municipality of The Hague because it attaches great importance to enhancing public understanding of its mandate and work. Engaging Dutch and international communities is a way to increase awareness of and respect for the rule of law. The successful outcome of this event shows the importance of bringing the court closer to the people".

Other international organisations taking part in the days' event, according to Robla, included the Peace Palace, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), and the European Patent Office (EPO) who also opened their doors. More than 15 Hague-based international organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), such as Europol, Eurojust, the Hague Academic Coalition (HAC), the Organisation of the North Atlantic Treaty (NATO), C3 Agency (NC3A), the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, and the Special Court for Sierra Leone also gave information during an 'information market' at the Spui Theatre. An additional 10 NGOs based in The Hague also informed visitors about their work.

The international Day of Peace was established by a United Nations resolution in 1982. It is an annual day when individuals, communities, nations and governments worldwide highlight the efforts of those who have worked hard to end conflict and promote peace.

Meanwhile, ICC would on October 1, hold a ceremony to welcome the Czech Republic as a new State Party to the Rome Statute.

The Czech Republic would bring the total number of States Parties of the Court to 110.

In a symbolic act, the President of the Court, Judge Sang-Hyun Song, Robla said, would present a special edition of the Rome Statute to the Ambassador of the Czech Republic , H.E. Mr Petr Mare.

The ceremony, she added, would be held in the presence of the Vice-President of the Assembly of States Parties, the Ambassador of Mexico, H.E. Mr Jorge Lom—naco.

"The ICC First Vice-President, Judge Fatoumata Dembele Diarra, Second Vice-President, Hans-Peter Kaul, the Prosecutor, Mr. Luis Moreno Ocampo and the Deputy-Registrar, Mr. Didier Preira will also attend the ceremony," she said.

The government of the Czech Republic on July 21, this year deposited its instrument of ratification to the Rome Statute.

The Statute will enter into force for the Czech Republic on October 1, 2009, the first day of the month after the 60th day following the date of the deposit of the instrument of ratification (Article 126-2 of the Rome Statute).

## The First Post

Wednesday, 23 September 2009

### Comrade Duch, or Kang Kek Iew, could be the last of the Khmer Rouge to face justice for the genocide of the late 1970s

BY SEAN THOMAS



The large auditorium looks pleasant enough: almost sterile, like a modernist concert hall in a small Nordic country. You half expect a jazz trio to come onstage and take a bow before the 500 spectators.

But the bullet-proof glass, which shields the stage, gives the lie to that. This is no ordinary auditorium. All eyes in the audience are focused on one elderly Cambodian man, as he murmurs into his microphone.

"I am particularly sorry for the many children we smashed against trees, and so forth."

The man speaking these searing words is Comrade Duch, otherwise known as Kang Kek Iew. This former teacher was a senior apparatchik in the Khmer Rouge regime, from 1975-1979, when they slaughtered maybe 1.7m Cambodians, through execution, beating, torture and starvation, in their insane pursuit of an agrarian communist paradise.

Today's hearings have been a long time coming. Following the collapse of the Khmer Rouge regime to a Vietnamese invasion, Duch fled like many Khmer Rouge cadres to rural Cambodia. For 20 years he criss-crossed the country, adopting a bogus identity. He was finally tracked down in 1999 by British photographer Nic Dunlop, who recognised the gaunt figure teaching maths in Samlaut as the notorious Duch, who once ran the Khmer Rouge torture garden at Tuol Sleng, and the killing fields of Cheong Ek.

Even then Duch nearly evaded justice. For 10 years Cambodian politicians, foreign governments and UN agencies have haggled over the precise terms of this tribunal. Some thought it would never happen. And yet here we are, in the Extraordinary Chambers of the Court of Cambodia, in a packed and specially modified courtroom on the far outskirts of Phnom Penh.

Unlike the other four Khmer Rouge leaders who are still awaiting arraignment, Duch has cooperated with the courts. He has pleaded guilty to the principal charge, that he organised the torment and murder of 15,000 people. He merely denies he did any of the killing himself.

Why has he confessed? Some say it is yet another ruse by the wily old communist, aimed at lessening an inevitably heavy sentence; others believe his remorse is genuine: Duch became a fervent Christian years ago.

Certainly he looks sorrowful and drawn on this hot sunny morning in Phnom Penh. And he is not alone. I can hear stifled sobs across the auditorium. No doubt there are parents here, parents of those children who were "smashed to death against trees" by Duch's underlings.

Today's hearings are the last of the trial: a final chance for Duch to explain himself - if such a thing is possible. It is also a final chance for Cambodians to witness the Khmer Rouge being brought to justice: the other four members of the regime, still facing trial, are so old they might die before they reach court. The summing-up in Duch's case is expected to take place in late November with sentencing early next year.

In the meantime, the defending lawyer asks Duch if he has anything to say. Duch quietly apologises to his victims. Then he claims that he had little choice in doing what he did. If he had refused to work at Tuol Sleng he would have been killed himself. The Khmer Rouge would not have allowed him to walk away. He leans and whispers into the microphone. "The only exit was survival."

A few minutes later the court rises, and the prisoner is escorted below. As he steps down from the dock, I realise, with a shock, just how small he is. Duch is just a little old man, with a haggard face, who embodies the agony, grief and despair of an entire nation. ■