

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



Security Section Certification ceremony. Photo by Mohamed Fadika, CITS

**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:**

Tuesday, 25 August 2009

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

Tuesday, 25 August 2009

## Charles Taylor blames US for delay in Salone's conflict

At the end of the fifth week of his testimonies former Liberian President Charles Taylor has blamed the United States for the delay in the resolution of the Sierra Leone conflict.

He also testified to his opposition to the British and the Americans training the Sierra Leone Army in the midst of the unresolved conflict in 2000.

Mr. Taylor alleged that the United States in 2000 opposed an ECOWAS proposal for the deployment of African Peacekeepers in RUF held territories. The Former Liberian Leader said the RUF leadership agreed to the deployment of the peacekeepers but the United States obstructed the plan. Mr. Taylor also accused the United States and Great Britain of interfering with the Lome Peace Accord carved by the ECOWAS in 1999. He told the court the two Western Countries instigated the removal of the ECOMOG Force Commander, Timothy Shelpidi in Sierra Leone. The Accused Former Liberian President said he was against the training of a new Sierra Leone Army in the midst of the war. Training a new Sierra Leone Army in the absence of disarmament he went on would have further inflamed the civil war.

This week it is expected that the Special Court for Sierra Leone will be in session for its final three days in Freetown: the appeal of the five-year long RUF (Revolutionary United Front) case. The special court is one of a generation of tribunals prosecuting crimes against humanity and war crimes in the name of the international community.

As the last of the special court's cases to take place in Freetown, the closing of proceedings in the RUF case should be a key event for Sierra Leone and indeed, the world.

The special court is the only international court to have considered child soldiers. The RUF trial also covered, among other things, sexual violence, extermination and enslavement.

More generally, the success of international intervention in Sierra Leone is, perhaps, even more interesting from a UK perspective, given the activities of the crusading Tony Blair.

But if the existence of war crime tribunals captures the imagination, the individual trials tend to engender apathy in equal measure.

The Spark  
Tuesday, 25 August 2009

# "I Have no Influence Over RUF Leadership"

## ...Charles Taylor



Charles Taylor today said he had no more personal influence over Sierra Leone's rebel forces than any other West African leader during Sierra Leone's brutal 11-year war, and deflected attention away from his relationship with the rebel group by pointing to the close military and financial ties between the rebel leaders and Nigerian peacekeepers.

Continuing along the similar themes as yesterday's testimony, Mr. Taylor reinforced to the Special Court for Sierra Leone judges that he was only able to convince the leadership of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels to yield to the demands of peace in Sierra Leone because he had "built the confidence and trust which is necessary in any mediation ef-

forts."

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

The prosecution has alleged that Mr. Taylor had control over the RUF rebels who fought in Sierra Leone's civil war. Pros-

*Continued page 5*

## Foreign Minister In Nigeria For ECOWAS Security Talks



# I Have no Influence Over RUF Leadership

*From front page*

ecution witnesses have testified that the Mr. Taylor supplied arms and ammunition to the RUF rebels and that the leadership of the rebel group was answerable to him. Witnesses have testified that Mr. Taylor was able to secure the release of United Nations peacekeepers held hostage by RUF rebels

because he had influence over the rebel group's leadership. Mr. Taylor has denied these allegations.

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

## Foreign Minister In Nigeria For ECOWAS Security Talks

*From front page*

Security Council.

She arrived Monday and joined her other Foreign Ministers counterparts from Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, Togo, Liberia, Gambia, Guinea Bissau some of whom arrived on Saturday.

According to ECOWAS Director of Political Affairs (Director des Affaires Politiques), Garba Djibo, the one day meeting is scheduled to take place at the ECOWAS conference center in Abuja Nigeria under the chairmanship of Nigeria's Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Ojo Maduekwe, who is also the Chairman of the ECOWAS mediation and security Council.

According to the President of ECOWAS Commission Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambers, the 27th meeting of the

mediation and security Council was scheduled for August 24th following consultations with the current chairman of the mediation and Security Council, to examine the current situation in Niger and other matters in the region.

Madam Zainab arrived in Lagos Sunday night and was received by Sierra Leone's High Commissioner designate to Federal Republic of Nigeria, Central African Countries and the Permanent Representative to ECOWAS, His Excellency Henry O Macauley.

On Monday, 24 August 2009 the Foreign Minister was received at Abuja International Airport by ECOWAS Protocol assigned officer Judith Okonkwo the Deputy High Commissioner Major General Rtd Edwin Sam Mbomah, Head of Chancery James T. Sawi, first secretary Rakie Macarthy.

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

Mr. Taylor told the judges when Issa Sesay became interim leader of the RUF in 2000 after the incarceration of the rebel group's leader Foday Sankoh, all West African leaders involved in Sierra Leone's peace process were in regular contact with Mr. Sesay. "I was in contact with him [Issa Sesay] and all other heads of states were in direct contact with him," he said.

Mr. Taylor admitted that during this period, he maintained a guest house for use by the RUF in Liberia. He said that the RUF spokesman Gibril Massaquoi was based at the RUF guest house in Liberia for about six months.

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

Mr. Taylor said that Nigerian military commander, Maxwell Kobe (who was

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

Mr. Taylor further told the court that in his efforts to consolidate peace in his troubled neighboring country after peace accords were signed in 1999, he tried to intervene when the Sierra Leone government started training the new Sierra Leone Army. Mr. Taylor said he cautioned his neighboring government that all such trainings should cease until after the completion of the disarmament process. He said that he gave this caution because the training of military personnel while rebel groups were being disarmed could undermine the entire peace process.

"I saw that as a very disturbing factor because you will only discourage people from disarming. What is even troubling about it, you are doing this while disarmament is not over," Mr. Taylor said.

The Spectator  
 Tuesday, 25 August 2009

# “ECOWAS Leaders Changed Rebel Leadership In Sierra Leone” — *says Taylor*

Charles Taylor this week told Special Court for Sierra Leone judges that he had the approval of the international community to grant political asylum to Sam Bockarie after the rebel commander left Sierra Leone in December 1999. Mr. Taylor also told the judges that West African leaders unanimously

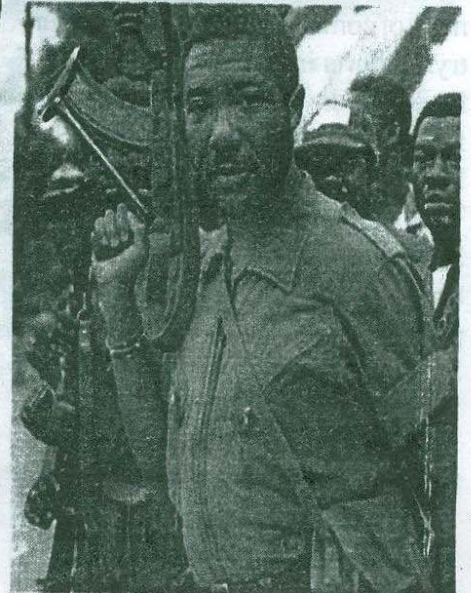
agreed to change the leadership of Sierra Leone's rebel group when the group's leader Foday Sankoh was arrested in 2000.

On Monday, Mr. Taylor told the judges that Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) lead-

ers realized that Sam Bockarie's continued presence in Sierra Leone was a hindrance to the peace process in the country and a unanimous decision was taken that he should leave the country

and obtain political asylum in Liberia.

"Bockarie did not voluntarily leave Sierra Leone. ECOWAS extracted Bockarie from Sierra Leone. That's how he left. He did not leave Sierra Leone voluntarily. He came to Liberia in December of 1999. People did not know the inside story. But this is what



happened. It was an ECOWAS extraction, they took him out of Sierra Leone, he had no choice," Mr. Taylor said.

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

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

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

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

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

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

needed to be released without any conditions.

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

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

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

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

pha Umar Konare, traveled together to Sierra Leone and met with Mr. Sankoh in his prison cell. They obtained a letter from him which approved Mr. Sesay as the RUF's interim leader.

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

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

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

who himself has been convicted in the United States for crimes of torture committed in Liberia.

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

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

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

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

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

the UN.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Exclusive  
Tuesday, 25 August 2009

# Taylor Blasts USA

AT the end of the fifth week of his testimonies, Accused Former Liberian President, Charles Taylor blamed the United States for the delay in the resolution of the Sierra Leone conflict. Mr. Taylor also testified to his opposition to the British and the Americans training the Sierra Leone Army in the midst of the unresolved conflict in 2000.

Last Thursday, Mr. Taylor told the court the United States was an obstacle to the resolution of Sierra

Leone decade long civil war. Mr. Taylor alleged that the United States in 2000 opposed an ECOWAS Proposal for the deployment of African Peacekeepers in RUF held territories.

The Former Liberian Leader said the RUF leadership agreed to the deployment of the peacekeepers but the United States obstructed the plan. Mr. Taylor also accused the United States and Great Britain of interfering with the Lome Peace Accord carved by the Economic Community of West Afri-

can States, ECOWAS in 1999.

He told the court the two Western Countries instigated the removal of the ECOMOG Force Commander, Timothy Shelpidi in Sierra Leone.

The Accused Former Liberian President said he was against the training of a new Sierra Leone Army in the midst of the war. Mr. Taylor said training a new Sierra Leone Army in the absence of disarmament would have further inflamed the civil war in that country.



A PROJECT OF THE OPEN SOCIETY JUSTICE INITIATIVE

THE TRIAL OF  
**CHARLES TAYLOR**  
*defendant*



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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The Independent Observer  
 Tuesday, 25 August 2009

# Special Court prosecutor meets the press in Monrovia

Statement by Stephen Rapp, Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone  
 Press Briefing, Monrovia, Liberia  
 18 August 2009

I am very pleased to be with you today. As you know, the Defense phase in the case against Charles Taylor began last month on 13 July. The following day the Accused took the stand in his own defense and has now been testifying for five weeks.

At this very important stage in the trial it is essential that Liberians and Sierra Leoneans continue to be fully informed of the proceedings in court. People must know that the trial continues in a fair, transparent and efficient manner. For this reason, I am very happy to be in Monrovia to take your questions about the trial.

The Prosecution is pleased that the trial process is going well. Charles Taylor is entitled to present his own account and respond to the charges against him. I must note that I am not able to comment on the specifics of his testimony, as the evaluation of his testimony is a matter for the judges.

Of course, the Accused is presenting a story that is very different from the evidence offered by the Prosecution. We called over 90 witnesses to appear in person before the Court. More than fifty of these witnesses told the judges, and the world, about the grave crimes committed against tens of thousands of innocent victims in Sierra Leone. More than thirty witnesses provided the linkage evidence showing Taylor's responsibility for the commission of these atrocities.

We have been waiting patiently while the Accused gives his own contrary version of events, and denies all the charges against him. We are looking forward to questioning him on cross-examination in the coming weeks. When our turn comes to ask the questions, we will confront Charles Taylor with the full weight of our case.

Let me talk for a moment about my own participa-

tion in this process. It has been my greatest honor to serve as the Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone for nearly three years.

During my tenure I have overseen the other trials before the Special Court where we secured convictions of the leaders of the rebel groups and the civil defense forces for atrocities committed during the Sierra Leone civil war. I am particularly proud to have been part of judicial proceedings that resulted in the first convictions in history for the recruitment and use of child soldiers as a war crime, the first convictions for attacks on peace-keepers as a violation of international humanitarian law, and the first convictions for sexual slavery and forced marriage as crimes against humanity. I am also pleased to have seen through the presentation of the Prosecution's case against Charles Taylor, the start of defense evidence, and our preparations to meet the defense case.

In July, I was nominated by President Barack Obama to be United States Ambassador at Large for War Crimes Issues. The nomination has now been confirmed by the US Senate, and I have given notice to the UN Secretary General that I will resign as Special Court Prosecutor on September 7. I will then immediately take up the new post, which is based in the US State Department in Washington in the office of Secretary Hillary Clinton.

For almost a decade, I have been working to bring justice to the victims of the most serious crimes committed by humankind, first at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and then at the Special Court for Sierra Leone. In this new position, I will continue that work on behalf of the US Government to assist countries in achieving accountability after the widespread commission of violations of international humanitarian law, and by doing so help prevent the recurrence of these atrocities.

As I leave the representation of the prosecution in the Charles Taylor trial in the capable hands of my



colleagues, I would like to express my gratitude to the people of the region. In my many visits to Liberia, I have always found people of great caring and compassion, who were deeply interested in work of the Special Court in finding the truth and achieving justice.

The Special Court's jurisdiction is limited to Sierra Leone, to the period from November 1996 to January 2002, and to persons bearing the greatest responsibility for serious violations of humanitarian law. Despite these limitations, it is my parting wish as its Prosecutor that it has increased the respect for the rule of law by all individuals, no matter how powerful, and thus contributed to lasting peace and security. Thankyou.

Awareness Times  
 Tuesday, 25 August 2009

## Former Child Soldier Doles Out \$ 22,000 in Scholarship

*By: Aminata Fofanah*

Ishmel Beah a former boy Soldier in Sierra Leone's decade long war now resident in New York in the United States of America (USA) has, as part of his ambition to assist children and other venerable young people who many have gone through worse experiences and are therefore economically restricted, doled out a scholarship package worth twenty-two thousand (US \$22,000) to benefit poor students across the Country.

The Ishmael Beah Foundation works in close collaboration with the Community Advocacy and

Development Network (CADEM) as a local implementing partner. In a press conference held at the newly opened CADEM secretariat on Johnson Street Aberdeen in Freetown, the Executive Director of the Organization Leslie Mboka informed journalists that modalities are well in place for the selection of the target beneficiaries.

Mr. Leslie Mboka explained that the scholarship will be given to beneficiaries in primary and Secondary Schools respectively and a total of ten (10) to various Universities, Technical and

Vocational Institutions. Mr. Mboka called on would-be beneficiaries to apply for the scholarship. He assured that the possible beneficiaries stand the chance of getting renewed scholarship on a yearly basis, but stressed that performance will be considered as a contribution for re-selection. He referred to Ishmael Beah as a young Sierra Leonean who was badly affected by the war and had to relocate to the United States of America who has written a book to his credit called 'Memoirs of a Boy Soldier'.

## CharlesTaylorTrial.org (The Hague)

### **Liberia: Taylor Says UN Report on Diamonds and Guns was Biased Against Him; CIA helped his Rebel Group**

Alpha Sesay

Charles Taylor today said that a 2001 United Nations expert report, which accused him of providing military and financial support to Sierra Leonean rebels in exchange for diamonds, contained an expert who was unfairly biased against Mr. Taylor. He also claimed that his rebel group which launched a civil war in Liberia in 1989 got support and equipment from the CIA.

In describing the 2001 United Nations Panel of Experts Report on Gun Running and Diamond Smuggling in Sierra Leone, Mr. Taylor said that he raised alarms when he found out who was appointed as the reporting experts. When Ian Smillie—who in a prior report had accused Mr. Taylor of involvement in diamond-for-arms trade in Sierra Leone—was named an expert, Mr. Taylor wrote a letter to the UN Secretary General questioning Mr. Smillie's appointment. These concerns, Mr. Taylor said, were ignored by the UN and Mr. Smillie remained on the panel.

Mr. Smillie has already testified as an Expert Witness for the Special Court for Sierra Leone's prosecution against Mr. Taylor. "I had concerns about people who had made allegations against Liberia being on the panel. You have already prejudiced the report by doing that," Mr. Taylor said.

Mr. Taylor accused Great Britain and the United States of manipulating the findings of the by putting pressure on Mr. Smillie, who was their own nominee on the panel.

"Britain and America are bringing the pressure. We know that the pressure is coming on Smillie because of the interest," Mr. Taylor said. "I am confronted with these people who have already made those allegations even before the panel report is out."

It was no surprise therefore, Mr. Taylor said, that when the Panel of Expert Report came out, he was accused of active involvement in the provision of financial and military support to the rebels in return for diamonds. Mr. Taylor said that while these allegations were made against him, Britain and the United States failed to provide any "tangible evidence" of his involvement in Sierra Leone.

The prosecution has alleged that Mr. Taylor was involved in trading diamonds for arms with Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels in Sierra Leone. Several prosecution witnesses have testified that RUF rebel commanders took diamonds to Mr. Taylor and in return, he supplied arms and ammunition for use by the RUF rebels. He presently stands accused of bearing responsibility for crimes committed by RUF rebels in Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor has denied all the allegations against him.

Mr. Taylor's defense counsel, Courtenay Griffiths, also today read portions of the book "Intervention in Africa" written by former United States Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Herman Cohen. In this book, a whole chapter is dedicated to the conflict in Liberia from the late 1980s to the 1990s. Mr. Cohen states in the book that the United States government, through its Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), provided support to Mr. Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) rebel group. In his response, Mr. Taylor confirmed that his NPFL indeed received assistance from the United States.

"We were given some very high power technical radios by the embassy [United States], by the CIA at the time, that we used for rapid communications, that we could call almost any where in the world and get to anybody that we wanted to get to on the ground," Mr. Taylor said.

He explained that the assistance from the United States government was given to the NPFL as a deal to protect United States facilities in Liberia. Mr. Taylor also accused the United States of providing similar support to other rebel groups in Liberia.

Mr. Taylor's testimony continues tomorrow.

## The Analyst (Liberia)

Friday, 21 August 2009

### Charles Taylor: I Did Not Act Alone

By Alpha Sesay

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

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

In May 2000, Revolutionary United Front (RUF) leader Foday Sankoh was arrested and detained by the government of Sierra Leone after the rebel group abducted over 500 United Nations peacekeepers and held them as hostages.

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

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

Mr. Taylor said that at a July 26, 2000 meeting in Liberia, six Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) leaders asked Mr. Sesay to take over the leadership of the RUF since Mr. Sankoh was no longer in a position to run the rebel movement.

Mr. Sesay, according to Mr. Taylor, told the West African leaders that he needed to get the approval of Mr. Sankoh, who was imprisoned in Sierra Leone. He said that Nigerian president, Olusegun Obasanjo, and Malian president, Alpha Oumar Konare, traveled together to Sierra Leone and met with Mr. Sankoh in his prison cell. They obtained a letter from him which approved Mr. Sesay as the RUF's interim leader.

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

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

Mr. Taylor said that the "circumstances surrounding Issa Sesay's appointment was public knowledge." Mr. Taylor said that ECOWAS leaders, including Sierra Leonean president Ahmed Tejan Kabbah saw Mr. Sesay as the most ideal person to work with in order to bring peace to Sierra Leone. "We saw him to be a very good fellow," Mr. Taylor said.

"Some credit is due to him for getting on with the process of Lome [The peace agreement between the government of Sierra Leone and the RUF was signed in the Togolese capital Lome in June 1999]."

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

**Ligali**

Sunday, 23 August 2009

**Recommendations to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia**

Nubiart Diary - Liberian TRC (Pt 1)

Dear all,

In relation to my PhD research, I have just completed a comprehensive field research in Liberia, with focus on contemporary American imperialism and neo-colonialism.

Liberia is an outstanding case for such a study since it is the oldest neo-colonial system in Africa, and has been exposed to US covert operations in the past thirty years.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Liberia asked me to write some recommendations, based on my research, which I would like to share with you.

My research, supports finding number 20 [19] in the preliminary report of the TRC, which states that:

"External State Actors in Africa, North America and Europe, participated, supported aided, abetted, conspired and instigated violence, war and regime change against constituted authorities in Liberia and against the people of Liberia for political, economic and foreign policy advantages or gains."

My main recommendation is to establish a "Special Commission for the Investigation of the Role of External State Actors in the Liberian Conflict from 1979 to till 2003",

The mandate of the Commission shall be to investigate the role of external state actors in the Liberian conflict and to look into the possibility of taking those state actors that bear the greatest responsibility for the Liberian conflict to an appropriate international court.

The aim shall be to prevent these state actors from committing future war crimes against the Liberian people and against other people in the West African region.

Since the United States of America has refused to submit to the International Criminal Court (ICC), the Commission shall investigate the possibility of using the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for a potential case against the United States of America.

Furthermore, it is recommended not to establish a national war crimes court, because much indicates that such a court will destabilise the Liberian state, rather than it will reconcile and unify the people. A national war crimes court may be used by external powers to pursue political and economic interests in Liberia, under the guise of human rights and justice.

I have attached the full paper to this mail. It is a public document, which was submitted to the TRC in mid July, and you are welcome to disseminate it further.

Best wishes,

Niels Hahn

- Recommendations to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia

Monrovia / Accra / Copenhagen, June 2009

Based on comprehensive field research in Liberia, I hereby submit to the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) my recommendations, with the aim of contributing to a lasting peace, justice and development for all the people of Liberia.

I have lived and worked in Liberia during some periods of the war and subsequently followed the political and economic development of the country. Currently, I am about to complete my PhD, which focuses on the political economy of American imperialism and neocolonialism in Africa.

I am using Liberia as a case study with specific focus on the post-conflict reconstruction process and development strategies in historical perspectives because, as noted by a number of scholars such as Hinzen and Kappel (1980), John Stanfield (2000),

Martin Lowenkopf (1976) and Walter Rodney (1973), Liberia constitutes the earliest example of a neo-colonial system in Africa. This makes Liberia a significant case from where the modalities of American neocolonialism in Africa can be analysed over a long historical period of more than one hundred and fifty years.

During my research, I have interviewed more than 130 people. My informants include people such as Liberian scholars, former child soldiers, ex-combatants, former commanding generals, military advisors and political leaders from most factions of the wars. Furthermore, I interviewed a number of former ministers and former heads of states, as well as current ministers and the head of state.

My research, supports finding number 20 [19] in the preliminary report of the TRC, which states that:

External State Actors in Africa, North America and Europe, participated, supported aided, abetted, conspired and instigated violence, war and regime change against constituted authorities in Liberia and against the people of Liberia for political, economic and foreign policy advantages or gains.

My research also confirms, in line with a number of the testimonies at the TRC, that the United States of America has played a most significant and decisive role in the destabilisation and destruction of Liberia and the Liberian people.

The peace in Liberia is still very fragile and I believe that the people of Liberia must reconcile and unite as one nation against foreign destabilising forces, in order to secure a long-lasting peace. Here as in other areas, speaking the truth is central for reconciliation and unification.

From my research it has appeared that some people in Liberia are reticent to speak in public about the role of the United States in the Liberian conflict. Some people are embarrassed because they have been associated with the CIA. Other people fear that they will be penalised by the US, in the form of denial of visa to the United States, travel ban, exclusion from consultancy contracts with international organisations, etc.

I believe that psychological barriers such as fear and embarrassment must be broken down in order to get the truth out. Otherwise it will not be possible to fully understand the root causes of the conflicts in Liberia. If we do not understand the external root causes, and only look at the local conflict dynamic, then it will be difficult, if not impossible, to formulate and implement the right policies for a future peaceful development.

Scott Ritter (2007), the US Marine Corps officer and former UN weapon inspector in Iraq, notes that one of the main problems for securing the peace is that most people in public forums refuse to speak about the most central issue.

Metaphorically Scott Ritter described the general scenario as a group of people sitting in a room around a table, discussing important issues in respect to war and peace. While the discussion is going on, there is a 1600 pound gorilla jumping around in the room, turning the tables upside down and misses up everything. But because this gorilla is the United States of America, most people tend to look the other way and pretend that the gorilla just doesn't exist.

As Ritter points out, ignoring the gorilla will not solve any problems. If we continue to ignore the real issues because we feel uncomfortable with the reality, then we will continue to make distorted analysis, wrong judgements, inappropriate policies, and continue to live in a world where stronger states can continue to commit war crimes against weaker states with impunity. In this relation it can be argued the people ignoring the 1600 pound gorilla and refuses to speak out, becomes a part of the crimes committed by the United States of America.

As Professor Noam Chomsky (2002) and the award winning journalist John Pilger (2002) note, the United States of America is the most aggressive state in human history. In the past fifty years the United States has militarily attacked more than seventy sovereign states. The overt attacks on Iraq and Afghanistan, and the frequent bombardments of Somalia are just a few contemporary examples of American aggression. In other countries American aggression is often channeled through local forces without an overt large-scale American military presence.

Liberia is a victim of American destabilisation and covert operations, and my recommendation to the Liberian people is to establish a: Special Commission for the Investigation of the Role of External State Actors in the Liberian Conflict from 1979 to till 2003.

The mandate of the Commission shall be to investigate the role of external state actors in the Liberian conflict and to look into the possibility of taking those state actors that bear the greatest responsibility for the Liberian conflict to an appropriate international court.

The aim shall be to prevent these state actors from committing future war crimes against the Liberian people and against other people in the West African region.



Since the United States of America has refused to submit to the International Criminal Court (ICC), the Commission shall investigate the possibility of using the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for a potential case against the United States of America.

Experience can be drawn from the case of Nicaragua against the United States in the mid 1980s, where the United States was convicted for state terrorism in the form of unlawful use of force against Nicaragua (ICJ, 1986). Although the case did not stop the United States from continuing to destabilise Nicaragua, it became more difficult because, internally, the people of Nicaragua became more aware of the external manipulation of civil society groups and American propaganda, and externally, the world public opinion turned against the US foreign policy in Nicaragua.

I will not recommend the establishing of a Liberian ‘national’ war crimes court in style with the UN backed Special Court in Sierra Leone. This court is funded, staffed and managed by the UK and the US, and must therefore be considered as a de facto British / American court in Sierra Leone. The perception that justice has been done is an important element in reconciliation, but such a ‘national’ court would necessarily reflect victor’s justices rather than real justice for all.

A national war crimes court in Liberia would most likely divide more than it would unite the people of Liberia, and it could become a powerful neocolonial instrument of the United States.

As the TRC is about to conclude its mandate, it can be expected that local civil society groups will be funded and mobilised by western donors in order to sway public opinion in favour of such a court. These civil society groups will internally appeal to people’s moral valuations, intellectual convictions, and emotional preferences, while western state-donors will pressure the government through the mechanism of foreign aid.

While it must be expected that the pressure for the establishment of a national war crime court will increase significantly in the coming year, the fundamental question must be:

Will the establishment of a national war crime court facilitate reconciliation and unity among the Liberian people, or will it divide the nation along religious, ethnic and political lines in favour of the neo-colonial powers?

#### The Mechanisms of Neo-Colonialism

Having outlined my main recommendation to the TRC, I would like to underpin these recommendations with theory and historical experiences in order to emphasise why it is important to establish a Special Commission for the Investigation of the Role of External State Actors in the Liberian Conflict from 1979 to 2003, and why the establishing of a national criminal court must be avoided.

My recommendations are based on the study of neo-colonialism, which is a complicated study because it deals with a comprehensive system of indirect rule, the dominance by one or more strong states over weaker states, and covert operations. Latin America has like Liberia experienced the exploitative nature of American neo-colonialism for almost two centuries. This has generated a lot of literature that examines the processes and mechanisms of neo-colonialism, which in Latin America is better known as *dependencismo* (Sklar, 1986).

It was African state-leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Ahmed Sékou Touré of Guinea, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and Gamal Abdul Nasser of Egypt who paid significant attention to the issue of neo-colonialism in Africa. In 1961 the third All-African Peoples Conference held in Cairo adopted the “Resolution of Neo-colonialism” (AAPC, 1961) as a key document for the formation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which subsequently should lead to a rapid unification of Africa as a bastion against neo-colonialism (Nkrumah, 1963).

In this resolution neo-colonialism is defined as “the survival of the colonial system in spite of formal recognition of political independence in emerging countries which become the victims of an indirect and subtle form of domination”. It is exerted by: “imposing unequal economic, military and technical conventions; by creating puppet governments following false elections”. When these mechanisms “appear insufficient to hamper the combativity and determination of popular liberation movements” other approaches may be applied such as “military interventions guided by the United Nations, balkanisation or systematic division of the political forces”.

As we know today, Africa did not unite, but was further divided into the Casablanca Group and the Monrovia Group. This created the environment for neo-colonialism to grow stronger across the African continent.

In 1964, Ghana’s first president Kwame Nkrumah published his book ‘Neo-colonialism – The Last Stage of Imperialism’, which was the first comprehensive analysis of the neo-colonial system in Africa. In this book Nkrumah notes that Imperialism has grown more sophisticated and more dangerous. It has become more sophisticated because the neo-colonial powers have developed a comprehensive propaganda machinery, which moulds the minds of the people in the neo-colonies. It is more dangerous because it is difficult to hold the powerful states that exercise neo-colonialism responsible for their criminal actions.

According to Nkrumah the essence of neo-colonialism is that the State which is subject to neo-colonialism “has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty”. But in reality “its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside”.

The aim of the neo-colonial powers is to ensure that the government in the neo-colonial state complies and conforms to the wishes of the neo-colonial power. The main interests of the neo-colonial power is to secure access to markets, cheap labour and natural resources, and to use the government in the neo-colonial state to advance the interests of the neo-colonial power in neighbouring states, as well as to vote in favour of the neo-colonial power in international forums, such as the ECOWAS, AU and the UN.

Classical Realism in International Relation theory defines power as “the control over people’s minds and actions” and anything that can be used to establish such control will be applied (Morgenthau, 2006). In this relation control of the media and the curriculum of primary education is central in order to mould the minds of the people (Carr, 2003).

When the government in the neo-colonial state seeks to change the status quo of the neo-colonial relationship and move the nation towards political and economic independence, the neo-colonial power will use any means to put pressure on the government to maintain the neo-colonial relationship. Since many governments in Africa seek to release their country from the neo-colonial grip, the neo-colonial power seeks to maintain the status quo through a combination of a number of mechanisms. Some of these mechanisms are the following:

1) Aid Dependency: which makes the neo-colonial state dependent on financial support from the neo-colonial master, in order to make the state system to function at a minimum and to secure foreign investments. Fiscal austerity and a small budget for salaries, ensures that underpaid staff is forced to charge ‘indirect fees’ in order to sustain their own livelihood. This creates a culture of corruption and makes the public sector ineffective. When the government of the neo-colonial state does not comply and conform to the wishes of the neo-colonial power, the foreign aid will be reduced, which will weaken the state further. Instead, so-called “humanitarian aid” will be giving to regions where opposition to the government is strong.

2) Military Protection: in order to make the neo-colonised state dependent on the neo-colonial power. This includes the presence of foreign military bases or the right of the neo-colonial power to use national infrastructure for military purposes. Liberia, Ivory Coast and Gabon are prime examples of such arrangements.

3) Privatisation of Public Assets: which transfer public owned enterprises into the hands of private families. Globally these families control the major means of production. As David Harvey notes, privatisation is a form of accumulation by dispossession, which has taken its most aggressive form under the neo-liberal regime, better known in Africa as Structural Adjustments Programmes (SAP) and Poverty Reduction Strategies Papers (PRSP). Therefore most major enterprises in Africa are now owned and controlled by foreign companies in the same way as under the system of direct colonisation.

4) Liberalisation of the Markets: in order to ensure that foreign produced goods can be sold at the local markets in neo-colonial state. Most imported agricultural products sold on the African markets are subsidised by the neo-colonial powers. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, for local producers to compete with foreign imported agriculture products. As a result the people in the neo-colonial states have become depended on imported food. Food dependence gives the neo-colonial power an enormous control of the populations in the neo-colonial state. Therefore any government in a neo-colonial state that seeks a high degree of food self-sufficiency must expect that the neo-colonial power will destabilise the government. An outstanding example is the removal of Tolbert and his government in 1980.

5) Deregulation and a Flexible Labour Market: in order to ensure an optimal business environment for foreign capital. This includes low taxation, access to cheap labour and natural resources.

6) Decentralisation: in order to weaken the central state through the mechanism of “balkanisation”. This is a powerful instrument because it receives popular support from the people in the regions, because they believe that it will foster regional development and promote people’s participation and democracy. However, a decentralised neo-colonial state is easier to control indirectly than a centralised state structure that seeks independence from the neo-colonial powers. Kwame Nkrumah pointed to Nigeria as an example where Britain decentralised the government structures before independence, in order to divide and rule after the official independence. Machiavelli (1515) warned about decentralised state structures in his famous work ‘The Prince’. A decentralised state system is similar to a kingdom that is divided into regions ruled by barons. This state-structure is dangerous because an external power can “easily enter there by gaining over some baron of the kingdom, for one always finds malcontents and such as desire a change. Such men, for the reasons given, can open the way into the state” (ibid: 17).

7) Promotion of Civil and Political Rights and Liberal Democracy: seeks to establish the basis for which the neo-colonial power can ensure an environment where political parties can flourish. Because people in the neo-colonial state are deprived of their socio-economic rights, such as free education and access to the highest obtainable health care, which they are entitled to

accordance to the International Covenant of Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR, article 12 and 13), large population groups in Africa are illiterate and struggle for daily survival. Therefore it is fairly easy for the neo-colonial power to manipulate elections through the control of the media and financial means. Votes can be bought cheaply, but the reality is that the general population remains as a modern reserve army of labour, whom Marx (1887) notes, are “kept in misery in order to be always at the disposal of capital” and ready to migrate to wherever their labour power may be requested.

8) International Non-Government Organisations (INGOs): that are Non-Governmental by name only, while in reality prolonged arms of the neo-colonial governments that are funding them. Since the exploitative nature of neo-colonialism leaves the majority population in a state of calamity, some basic social services must be delivered to mitigate the social condition. However, instead of financing basic services by taxing the foreign corporations operating within the neo-colonial states and the local wealthy elite, basic services are delivered not by the state, but by foreign ‘N’GOs. Since the state is not delivering the basic services to its people, many people in Africa becomes more attached to the foreign ‘N’GOs and their logos, than to the national government and the national symbols. This further weakens the power of the state, based on the principle of Machiavelli (1515) that people will be devoted to those that brings good. “Well ordered states...have taken every care...to keep the people satisfied and contented, for this is one of the most important objects a [state] can have” (ibid: 90). Therefore a state that is not delivering basic services to the people will be a weak state, because the citizens will not be faithful to the state, but to the ‘N’GOs. If the national ruling elite does not comply and conform to the wishes of the neo-colonial power, the country can be destabilised by setting free, what Frantz Fanon describes in his work ‘The Wretched of the Earth’, the revolutionary capital embedded in the people. This can be done by reducing the funding to the ‘N’GOs operating in pro-government regions while increasing flow of resources to the regions where the opposition to the government is strong. In this way the neo-colonial powers can exert a high of control of the people’s minds and actions through International ‘N’GO’s and local Civil Society Organisations. Workshops conducted by foreign expatriates in combination with funding can mobilise civil society to formulate and get laws passed by the legislative power, demonstrate against the government and put public pressure for a regime change.

9) If the government in the neo-colonial state cannot be removed through popular pressure and the electoral mechanisms, the neo-colonial power will seek to remove the government by force. This can take place in form of military coups, assassination, covert operations, and ultimately war by proxy through a third neighbouring country, followed up by an external military intervention under the guidance of the UN or regional auxiliary forces, funded by the neo-colonial powers.

From the hearing at the TRC it has become clear that Liberia is well familiar with all these mechanism of neo-colonialism. However, since neo-colonialism is well disguised by positive rhetoric of liberty, human rights and democracy it can be difficult to understand the mechanisms applied to facilitate the political and economic interests of the neo-colonial power.

When it comes to covert military operations it becomes even more difficult to understand the processes and mechanisms, since the public has limited access to the written documentation on such operations.

However, outspoken key people and declassified documents do give us an opportunity to look into some of the modalities of covert operations that have destabilised the African continent for more than half a century.

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