

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



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PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

as at:

Monday, 25 June 2012

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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The Exclusive
Monday, 25 June 2012

In Taylor Trial...

Special Court Convicts Ex-Rebel

A Sierra Leonean has been convicted of trying to bribe and influence witnesses in the trial of former Liberian President Charles Gangay Taylor.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone found Eric Koi Senessie guilty on eight of nine contempt of court charges in a verdict handed down late Thursday. Justice Theresa Doherty ruled that

Senessie tried to induce prosecution witnesses to recant their testimony.

In court documents filed last year, prosecutors argued that Senessie intimidated at least three witnesses by repeatedly contacting them at their homes and offering them monetary rewards.

Senessie is a former member of the

Revolutionary United Front (RUF), the rebel group during Sierra Leone's civil war that was armed and supported by Taylor in exchange for raw diamonds.

He faces a maximum sentence of seven years in prison and a fine equaling \$4,600.

Last month, the court convicted Taylor of war crimes and crimes against humanity, and sentenced him to 50 years in prison. Taylor is planning to appeal that sentence.

Senessie had pleaded not guilty to all charges, and testified on his own behalf during a trial that opened in Sierra Leone's capital of Freetown on June 11.

Awoko Online
Monday, 25 June 2012

Accused found guilty on 8 counts & Sandi Halimuddin



Eric Senessie residing in Kailahun was yesterday convicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone on eight out of nine counts for contempt of court in the case of the Prosecutor versus Charles Taylor.

The accused was charged on four counts of the indictment for, “knowingly and willfully interfering with the special court administration of justice by offering a bribe to a witness who has given evidence in proceedings before a chamber, in violations of rule 77 of the court.”

The accused was also indicted on the other five counts of the indictment for again “knowingly and willfully interfering with the Special Court’s administration of justice otherwise interfering with a witness who has given evidence in proceedings before a Chamber.”

In her judgment, Justice Teresa Dorothy cited some of the evidence of witnesses that the accused spoke to for them to recount the evidence they made at the Court in Hague in the trial of the Prosecutor Versus Charles Taylor.

Some of the witnesses the judge disclosed were under protective measures like TF1- 585, 516, Mohamed Kabba, Dauda Aruna Fornie, and Aruna Gbonda as they are witnesses that have testified for the prosecutor in the case against Charles Taylor.

However the court did not find Eric Senessie guilty on count 5 which is knowingly and willfully interfering with a witness Eric Gbonda as the witness was not able to convince the court of the level of interference that took place between them.

The accused who is represented by lawyer Ansu Lansana, has been held in custody pending sentencing.

By Betty Milton

The Satellite

Monday, 25 June 2012

ICC PROMISES TO INVESTIGATE LIBYA STAFF IF RELEASED

The International Criminal Court (ICC) has promised to investigate allegations of wrongdoing by its staff in Libya. In a statement, the ICC said the probe would take place "following the return of the four staff members". The four went to Zintan earlier this month to meet Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, the son of the late Libyan leader. One of them, Australian lawyer Melinda Taylor, was accused of trying to pass him documents from a former ally and was then detained. "The ICC deeply regrets any events that may have given rise to concerns on the part of the Libyan authorities," the statement said. "In carrying out its functions, the Court has no intention of doing anything that would undermine the national security of Libya," it added. If found responsible for any misconduct, the ICC would ensure that staff "will be subject to appropriate sanctions," it went on. The ICC statement came after a high-level Libyan delegation visited the Court at its headquarters in The Hague on Friday to explain the detentions. The delegation, headed by Libya's Attorney-General Abdelaziz Al-Hassadi, had provided the ICC with "information regarding the visit of the four staff members to Zintan", but it did not specify what the information was. Australian lawyer Melinda Taylor was detained after accusations she clandestinely passed Mr Gaddafi a coded letter from a fugitive former aide, Mohammed Ismail. Her Lebanese translator Helene Assaf is accused of being her accomplice.

Voice of America

Friday, 22 June 2012

In Taylor Trial, Tampering Conviction for Ex-Rebel

A Sierra Leone man has been convicted of trying to bribe and influence witnesses in the trial of former Liberian president Charles Taylor.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone found Eric Koi Senessie guilty on eight of nine contempt of court charges in a verdict handed down late Thursday. Justice Theresa Doherty ruled that Senessie tried to induce prosecution witnesses to recant their testimony.

In court documents filed last year, prosecutors argued that Senessie intimidated at least three witnesses by repeatedly contacting them at their homes and offering them monetary rewards.

Senessie is a former member of the Revolutionary United Front, the rebel group during Sierra Leone's civil war that was armed and supported by Taylor in exchange for raw diamonds.

Senessie faces a maximum sentence of seven years in prison and a fine equalling \$4,600.

Last month, the court convicted Taylor of war crimes and crimes against humanity, and sentenced him to 50 years in prison. Taylor is planning to appeal that sentence.

Senessie had pleaded not guilty to all charges, and testified on his own behalf during a trial that opened in Sierra Leone's capital of Freetown on June 11.

Appeal Chamber Could Rescue Taylor

By *Othello B. Garblah*

Ex-president Charles Taylor is said to be hopeful that judges at the Appeal Chamber of the UN backed special court for Sierra Leone would see sufficient reason in his appeal to overturn the verdict which saw him being sentenced for 50 years.

Two weeks after he was found guilty of "aiding and abetting" the Sierra Leone brutal civil conflict on 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, Taylor was sentenced to 50 years imprisonment. Prosecutors had earlier sought for a sentence of 80 years, a precedent; they said was aimed at deterring future war crimes.

But speaking to this paper Tuesday via mobile phone from The Hague, Taylor's new lead Defense Counsel for Appeal, Morris Anyah said his client is optimistic that the Appeal Chamber could overturn the verdict of Trial Chamber II in his favor.

"He (Taylor) is resolute that if we continue to push this appeal, something could come from out of it," Anyah quoted Taylor as saying. "Taylor is optimistic" he said.

Anyah said Taylor has continued to play an active role in his trial though he (Taylor) like the entire defense team was "obviously disappointed with the ruling," but that he is well and is looking forward to the appeal hearing.

He further told this paper that the

defense team has begun the Appeal process.

The court's ground rule requires that an appeal be filed within 14-days of judgment. But he said his team has filed a petition before the Appeal Chamber, requesting that the defense be given additional time- at least five weeks to file its appeal, which should be on the 19 of July, 2012.

Though the Trial Chamber is yet to rule on the defense's request, Anyah said the Prosecution has responded to the defense request before the Appeal Chamber, but (prosecution) countered that instead of five weeks, they (prosecution) agreed for three weeks.

Meanwhile, Anyah said the Special Court has scheduled a status conference, which is a pretrial conference for June 18 to be presided over by its newly appointed President Justice Shireen Avis Fisher.

According to Anyah, neither the Defense nor Prosecution will be able to file an appellant brief on time. Therefore, both sides will be requesting for additional time. He said the request for additional time is the reflection of how massive the judgment is.

The process of filing of briefs and replies could take about two months before oral arguments can be entertained, while the entire appeal process could take between six to nine months, Anyah added.

Taylor, 64, is the first head of state convicted by an international

court since the Nuremberg trial in 1946.

The accused has been found responsible for aiding and abetting some of the most heinous crimes in human history," Judge Richard Lussick said.

Announcing Taylor's prison term on May 30, Justice Lussick said the Trial II Chambers found that Taylor abuse of position as President of Liberia to aid and abet the commission of crimes in Sierra Leone and abused his position as a member of ECOWAS Committee of five (later six), which "was" part of the process relied on by the international community to bring peace to Sierra Leone was aggravating factor of great weight.

Judges cited the extra-territoriality of Taylor's act and his exploitation of the Sierra Leone conflict for financial gains as aggravating factor considered in the sentencing, Justice Lussick said.

He said the Trial Chamber II also took into account the report of Taylor's good conduct in detention, but otherwise rejected a number of mitigating factors proposed by the defense.

But the defense argument is that the 50-year sentence is a life sentence for someone age 64. The defense had hoped that judges would take into account the fact that Taylor has a family: he is a father of 14 children and an educated man.



The Taylor Verdict – A Fair Result But A Highly Flawed Process

A Contribution By Dr. Philippa Atkinson

The right verdict

The recent verdict and sentencing in the long-running trial for war crimes of former president and notorious warlord Charles Taylor by the UN Special Court for Sierra Leone has sparked a flurry of news reports, comment and internet chatter, but rather less informed analysis. This article aims to assess the verdict and offer a measured appraisal of the issues of concern in an attempt to balance the overly emotional opinions on offer from both Taylor's supporters and detractors.

My own considered view as a longtime observer of the country and student of its history is that notwithstanding the many serious flaws of the process by which Taylor has been judged, the verdict delivered by the court is the right one, reflecting the true extent of his role in the conflict in Sierra Leone and of his relationship with the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels and Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC). As the judges found, Taylor did aid and abet these two groups in their efforts to gain and retain power and associated commission of atrocities against the civilian populations, providing 'sustained and significant' support by supplying them with arms and ammunition in exchange for diamonds and helping to plan specific attacks including the horrific assault on Freetown in January 1999. He also served as a mentor figure to their leaders, particularly Sam Bokarie aka Mosquito, with whom he maintained close radio contact and hosted in Monrovia.[1]

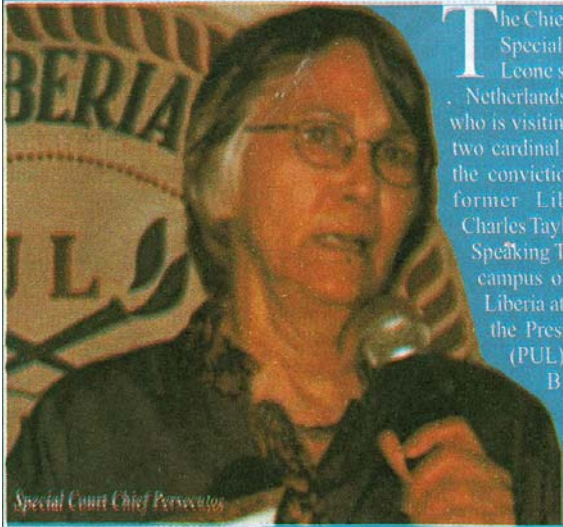
However, and crucially, the judges also concluded that while Taylor's support was important to the rebel forces, it was not ultimately an instrumental factor in the conflict, as Taylor did not command or direct its course, nor was he involved in the initial conceptualizing of the incursion in Libya in the late 1980s. As pointed out by commentators on the Sierra Leone conflict as well as by Taylor's defense barrister Courtenay Griffiths, the excessive focus on Taylor's role has helped to obscure analysis of the internal historical dynamics which have of course been the major determining factors shaping the country's conflict, a process that is captured effectively by the local expression 'moving the body next door and hoping not to smell it'. It is important to restore these internal factors to their rightful central place in understanding the Sierra Leone conflict, including in particular the political economy of diamond extraction as well as the legacy of the country's colonial and post-colonial history.

The sentence Taylor received from the court of 50 years may be seen as somewhat excessive in relation to this more limited judgment of his culpability as compared to the allegations of the prosecution of a joint criminal enterprise with the RUF, and it may end up being reduced on appeal.

Misleading and unhelpful reporting

But while the ruling that Taylor did aid and abet but not command and control the neighboring rebel groups does appear to reflect fairly well the fundamental realities of the conflict, much of the nuance of the judges' findings has been lost in the hyperbole and half-truths that have dominated international reporting and commentary on the case, and which have served to hinder rather than enlighten understanding. The prosecutor herself has contributed to the confusion through her continued references to Taylor's 'proxy' forces, a clearly untenable description given the court's conclusion and one which does nothing to facilitate better understanding of the internal dynamics of the Sierra Leone conflict. Such inaccuracies are compounded by the incendiary language of many media reports, with the portrayal of Taylor as a 'caged cannibal'[2] who presided over drug-crazed, wig-wearing child soldiers strangely at odds with the lucid and smart character who made his own case so eloquently in court.

Special Court Justifies Taylor's Conviction



Special Court Chief Prosecutor

The Chief Prosecutor for the Special Court of Sierra Leone sitting in The Hague, Netherlands, Brenda Hollies, who is visiting Liberia has given two cardinal reasons that led to the conviction and sentencing of former Liberian President Charles Taylor.

Speaking Tuesday on the main campus of the University of Liberia at a special edition of the Press Union of Liberia (PUL) Edward Wilmot Blyden Forum, Madam Hollies clarified that though Mr. Taylor did not physically

partake in the rebellion but investigations conducted by the court showed some level of degree of support given to the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and its allies.

According to her, the former Liberian President was the brain behind one of the fearless operations carried out in Sierra Leone between 1998- 1999 named: "Operation No Living Thing" which led to the amputation of several innocent civilians in exchange for diamonds.

Another reason for Taylor's conviction, the Chief Prosecutor said was his critical support to the RUF in terms of arms and other military supports which she claimed were provided to commit those acts.

She said Mr. Taylor could not easily

vindicate himself due to pieces of evidence gathered by the court during the trial.

During the forum, the Chief Prosecutor also denied report of any interference of the verdict from the international community particularly America and Great Britain, noting that the guilty verdict was a unanimous decision reached by the judges which was also welcomed by one of Taylor's defense counsels, but failed to disclose the name of the individual despite being asked by one of the participants.

On May 30th this year, judges of the Special Court for Sierra Leone brought down a guilty verdict on Mr. Taylor for aiding and abetting the rebellion in that country.

He was later sentenced for 50 years.

Rwanda Express (Kigali)

Saturday, 23 June 2012

Rwanda: ICTR Sentences 'Queen Killer' to Life Imprisonment

The UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) has handed a life sentence to Ildephonse Nizeyimana, 48, who was accused of ordering the killing of the former Tutsi queen, Rosalie Gicanda.

Nizeyimana, commonly known as 'Queen Killer' was convicted on June 19, 2012, to life in prison after being found guilty of killing Rwanda's Queen Rosalie Gicanda and involving in Rwanda's 1994 genocide against the Tutsi.

Nizeyimana is an ex-military officer and was head of intelligence and military operations at an elite military training school, known as the ESO, during the genocide- which claimed lives of one million Tutsi, in a period of 100 days, between early April and June 1994.

Nizeyimana was arrested in 2009 in Uganda after being tracked by Interpol security operatives right from the time of his stay in the Democratic Republic of Congo. He had earlier on been acquitted by the Arusha based UN court.

The court, presiding over by Judge Lee Muthoga ruled that Nizeyimana ordered troops to kill several people, including the Tutsi queen- who was taken by Hutu soldiers from her home in the former Butare province (now Huye district) and shot her behind the national museum.

Gicanda was the widow of King Mutara Rudahigwa III, who died in 1959 shortly before the country became a republic.

Nizeyimana was also found guilty of killing members of the Ruhutinyanya family, Pierre Claver Karenzi at the Hotel Faucon roadblock, commanding the attack on Cyahinda Parish, and killing other friends of Rosalie Gicanda who were taken from her home.

He was also found guilty of ordering the killings of Remy Rwekaza and Beata Uwambaye at the Gikongoro and Kigali roads junction roadblock as well as the serious bodily harm caused to Witness ZAV during the genocide.

Voice of America

Monday, 25 June 2012

Editorials

Support Grows For ICC Action On Sudan War Crimes



The United States welcomes Malawi's refusal to host Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir.

Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir (left) is the subject of outstanding International Criminal Court arrest warrants.

The Southern African nation of Malawi recently took steps to support international efforts to bring to justice those responsible for war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity in Sudan's troubled Darfur region.

The United States welcomes Malawi's refusal to host Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir -- the subject of outstanding International Criminal Court arrest warrants -- and the example it sets for its neighbors and other nations. We are gravely concerned about the situation in Sudan, and the role that continuing impunity for crimes committed in Darfur has played in forestalling a just and enduring peace for the people of Sudan and the region.

Scheduled to host the annual summit meeting of the African Union (AU) this July, Malawi reportedly took steps to prevent President al-Bashir from attending the conference. The International Criminal Court has charged him with war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide related to his actions in Darfur. We understand Malawi asked the AU not to invite al-Bashir to the Summit and stated that he would be arrested if he entered the country.

The July summit will reportedly now be held in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa. Malawi's President has indicated she will not attend. Malawi's actions on this issue are consistent with a range of accomplishments achieved in President Joyce Banda's first 100 days in office, which the United States commends.

Malawi joins others, including Zambia and Botswana, in their support for the ICC's effort to hold the Sudanese president to account. The United States stands with these and other nations that refuse to welcome the individuals subject to outstanding arrest warrants related to the Darfur situation to their countries, and we commend those that have spoken out against al-Bashir's continued travels, including to next month's AU summit. It is a serious cause for concern that the individuals subject to the outstanding ICC arrest warrants remain at large. Lasting peace in Darfur requires accountability and justice.

We continue to call on the government of Sudan and all other parties to the conflict to cooperate fully with the ICC, as required by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1593.