

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



PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

Wednesday, 26 July 2006

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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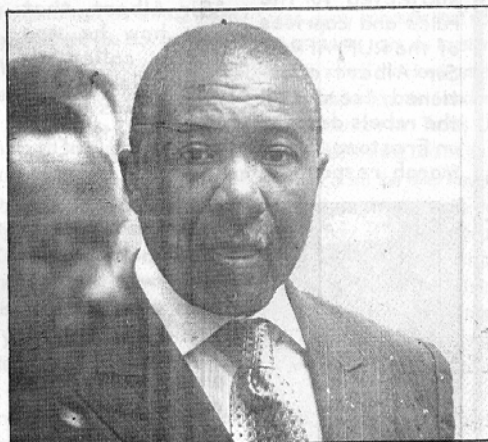
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New Citizen
Wednesday, 26 July 2006

180 WITNESSES MAY TESTIFY AGAINST TAYLOR

"The number of witnesses that the prosecution may call in the trial of Charles Taylor will depend upon agreed facts and matters of law as well as perhaps judicial notice taken by the trial," Brenda J. Hollis stated, for the prosecution at the pre-trial sitting in the Hague, Netherlands on Friday, 21st July 2006. "So, we are unable to give the exact number. In a fully litigated case, we will anticipate that there could be as many as 180 witnesses," Brenda J. Hollis informed the Presiding Judge, Justice Richard Lussick at the Special Court for Sierra Leone



Charles Taylor in the dock in The Hague

sitting at Trial Chamber 2 in The Hague, Netherlands. She added, "the way the prosecution would like to approach such a full litigated case would be to present a large amount of that evidence under Rule 92 bis in

written form, either prior testimony of these witnesses or statements of the witnesses, and the great

majority of this evidence relating to the crime base and the contextual elements of the crime. Ap-

proximately, a third would relate to evidence pertaining to the accused person's
Cont. back page

180 WITNESSES

From page 1

individual criminal responsibility.

She further stated that with regards to live witnesses, the prosecution would also like to pursue the possibility of doing that both by video link for witnesses as well as live testimony adding, "so, we think that will help to make the proceedings more efficient, even where it is the case that we have to call a large number of witnesses."

Justice Richard Lussick said the Rule 92 bis documents are matters that possibly could be the subject of negotiations between counsel at the pre-trial stage and, if necessary, he would make appropriate orders stressing, "but it may not be necessary: it could be a matter of agreement."

Karim Khan, Council for the accused, Charles Taylor did not raise any objection to the 92 bis proposal but submitted that its only practice for the parties, in fulfillment of professional responsibilities, that issues are not peripheral or that can be agreed as part of the background tapestry are agreed, and the de-

fense will be alive to its obligations, professionally regarding that.

Karim Khan also submitted, "there is great concern, however, regarding the second limb of the proposal - an anticipated willingness or eagerness by the prosecution to rely upon video link evidence. The defense for Charles Taylor will view with the greatest concern any possible attempt to conduct this trial by remote control." He further submitted that "it is very important, and there are numerous studies to that effect, as well as council who are cross-examining witnesses in-chef, to view their demeanor in person, because at the end of the day, of course, your Honors, you are tasked with the responsibility of determining where the locus of truth lies."

Karim Khan also noted that it is extremely important that witnesses appear live wherever possible.

He pointed out the issue of conditions of detention at the Special Court for Sierra Leone in Freetown and in The Hague reiterating, "these differences are multifarious. They extend to the making and receiving of

phone calls. They continue to the lock-down hours."

Karim Khan informed the court, "the amount of time that my clients made to remain locked in a room is far more draconian despite, I think, the intervention of the ICRC are far more draconian than what operates in Freetown."

He argued that Charles Taylor should be accorded the same rights, the same privileges, the same regime in accordance with the presumption of innocence and equality of treatment that are accorded to all other detained persons under the custody of the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Karim Khan also raised the issue regarding food when he stated, "this is still a rather Euro-centric detention facility".

He concluded when he informed the court that the diet served to his client is European, pointing out that the dietary facilities are very different from Freetown and urged the court to address all these matters.

The Trial Chamber was adjourned to 29th September, 2006.

New Citizen
Wednesday, 26 July 2006

SEARCHLIGHT

With Wysemann Dee
076-633-807



DOWNBELOW: SIR ALBERT CONVERSES WITH MARAH & TEACHER LAGAWO—EPISODE 8 / PART 6

Teacher Lagawo observed, "yes, Sir Albert, you are quite correct but as fate would have it, that day changed his destiny completely."

Sir Albert inquired, "but was Johnny Paul Koroma prepared to take up the mantle of state leadership?"

Marah answered, "yes for sure Sir Albert because if he had failed to positively respond to the offer made by the RUF/AFRC, the allied forces were more than prepared to force him to live up to the task."

Sir Albert asked, "why were the allied forces forcing him to accept the leadership position?"

Teacher Lagawo responded, "the moment Johnny Paul Koroma took over the reigns of government, he became subjected to the rules and caprices of the RUF/AFRC." Sir Albert questioned, "so did all the rebels descend on Freetown, S.B.?" Marah responded,

Kpakai and the other dreadful rebel top brass we used to hear of arrived in Freetown. In effect, when Johnny Paul spoke, he informed Sierra Leoneans that he had had discussions with Superman (Dennis Mingo) and other RUF/AFRC stakeholders for a cordial collaboration between the army and the soldiers."

Sir Albert observed, "now, gentlemen, I have noticed that you are referring to Johnny Paul Koroma as Johnny Paul for



Sama Banya
short."

Marah remarked, "Sir Albert, that was how he was fondly called although Johnny Paul himself was unable to correctly pronounce Sierra Leone which he pronounced as 'Sherra Lonie'."

Sir Albert asked, "what was the pattern of the RUF/AFRC government?"

Teacher Lagawo replied, "at first, the military junta created a Supreme Council of State to which some government functionaries were appointed."

Sir Albert asked, "which government functionaries?"

Teacher Lagawo responded, "for instance, the Deputy Director of Prisons was appointed Sec-



Johnny Paul

retary of State and a member of the Supreme Council while the Chief of Defence Staff and the Chief of Army Staff were all incorporated as members of the Supreme Council. In effect, the name of the Chief of Army Staff was mentioned as Secretary of State Education."

Sir Albert asked, "by the way, was it not Hassan Conteh that Tejan referred to as a very loyal soldier?"

Marah responded, "exactly so Sir Albert. Really we were all disappointed, but more disappointed were the Bo School boys who held influential positions in government such as Dr. Prince Harding, Dr. Sama Banya, Momodu Koroma and Mohamed Daramy."

Again, Sir Albert questioned, "why should they be particularly disappointed?"

Marah replied, "the Bo School boys influenced Tejan to elevate them to various prominent positions after the departure of the NPRC junta."

Again, Sir Albert inquired, "what other appointments did the AFRC make?"

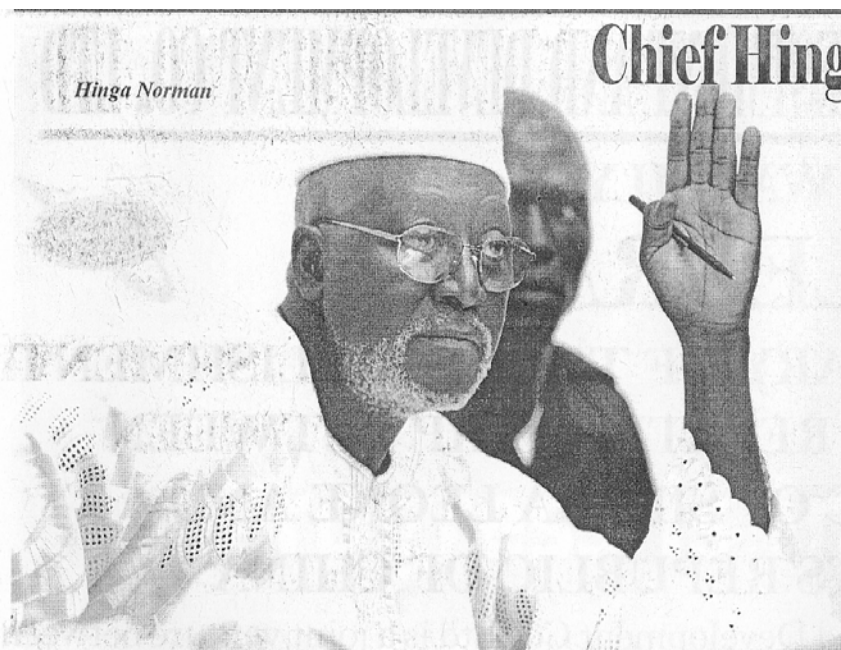
See next issue



Momodu Koroma

"yes, Sir Albert. Sam Bockarie (Maskita), Dennis Mingo (Superman), Eldred Collins (Spokesman), Gibril Massaquoi, Creole Mammy, Adama 'Cut Hand', Gururu

Standard Times
Wednesday, 26 July 2006



Hinga Norman

Chief Hinga Norman asks why me?

the perpetrators or those who were at the war-front would be allowed to get away with impunity, so Sierra Leoneans and the international community welcomed the SCSL.

However, the crimes committed were placed squarely in the camp of the RUF and rogue government soldiers, and no one thought the Kamajors will be charged for war crimes.

This was how Chief Norman came to be charged with war crimes, much to the chagrin of many Sierra Leonean who saw him as a hero that saved his country from total destruction.

Now, his defence team has compiled an exhaustive list of witnesses to support the notion that he was acting on orders from above and that the CDF is not guilty of any offence.

For example the defence team is expecting Kabbah to spend some 10 hours talking about, among other things, the "establishment, organization, logistical support and promotion of the CDF".

The defence is pinning its hopes on a letter from President Kabbah authorizing the setting up of a "committee to handle all policy matters relating to the CDF to be

chaired by VP Berewa with some other ministers as members, and how the President nominated specific persons as regional representatives."

In the case of former VP Demby, the defence would elicit from him details of how Chief Norman was sent to the Sierra Leone Liberia border to organize the Kamajors who were seen as the only option left to the SLPP to resist the junta regime of Johnny Paul Koroma that had overthrown the SLPP government in May 1997.

Demby is also expected to testify that the President flew from exile in Guinea to Lungi Airport in Sierra Leone where he met and addressed the CDF (Kamajors).

The international dimension of the war has been provided by former British High Commissioner to Sierra Leone, Peter Penfold, former US Ambassador to Freetown, John Hirsh and the former UNDP representative to Sierra Leone, Berhanu Dinka.

They will give testimony as to how the international community provided support for the CDF.

The defence will also call on ECOMOG commanders, who were in the midst of the conflict.

BY A.Y. KALLAY

Chief Sam Hinga Norman, the man accused in the ongoing trial at the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) has highlighted a formidable list of witnesses in his favour including President Kabbah who was expected to take the witness box on his behalf.

So, too was former VP, Mr. A.J. Demby.

These two outstanding politi-

cians are among a long list of almost 100 persons who have been invited as witnesses by Chief Norman who is been indicted for war crimes at the SCSL in Freetown.

Mr. Norman, a former deputy defence minister and Minister of the Interior was head of the CDF, popularly called Kamajor, who took on the rebels of the RUF at the very time of need.

When a peace deal was signed in 2002 and the combatants handed over their weapons to the UN, in conjunction with the SLPP government, the UN established the SCSL to try those with the greatest responsibility for the atrocities committed during 10 years of senselessness.

Given the mayhem that was let loose on innocent Sierra Leoneans, there was no way that

New Vision
Wednesday, 26 July 2006

Charles Taylor Praises Salone Jail

Ex-Liberian President Charles Taylor, who has been indicted by the UN-backed Special Court in Sierra Leone on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity, on Friday made his first court appearance at the Hague, Netherlands. According to Taylor's Lawyer, the ex-Liberian leader has indicated his preference of the Special Court jail in Sierra Leone where conditions were better compared to the appalling prison conditions in the Hague.

The Lawyer noted in a Radio France interview that the actual trial of Taylor will be delayed until late next year, but for now what they are doing is the pre-trial preparations.

The Lawyer expressed as unfortunate recent remarks that the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan made when he visited Freetown that all Special Court indictee are to be considered as

criminals.

Sources indicate that while in the Hague prison Taylor will have the privilege of regular visits from his family members and close associates.

The ex-Liberian President has been indicted on a 11- count charges of war crimes, rapes and crimes against humanity, that carry the life sentences.

If found guilty the ex-Liberian warlord is expected to do his jail term in the UK prisons as the Netherlands has refused to offer him jail facilities at the end of the trial.

This is the first official statement from Taylor's lawyer since his client was transferred from the Special Court compound in Freetown to the International War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague where the Yugoslav dictator Slobodan Milosevic recently died in jail.

New Vision

Wednesday, 26 July 2006

Satire

Cook, Ugently Needed

The war crime indictee Charles Taylor (alias Bush Boy) has since his transfer to The Hague, Holland hasn't had a taste of an African Meal (*Eee go feel am nar e hair*).

ICC (International Criminal Court) in a bid to address Bush Boy's complaint is inviting applications from a suitably qualified **Mano River Union Cook** with speciality in cooking *Cassava Leaves and Palm Butter Soup*

Special Requirements

- Must be an amputee
- Ability to communicate fluently in "Kongor."

Salary: Blood Diamonds

Forward all Applications to:

Gorrilla Cage

32,000 Paged Evidences Street,

ICC, Hague, Holland

NB: *Ex-combatants Shouldn't Apply*

Or

bush boy@jungle.com

Closing Date: Just Now (Oh! We're sorry!! You're Late).

Independent Observer

Wednesday, 26 July 2006

Special Feature

FREETOWN- After a decade of war 1991-2002, Sierra Leoneans asked the world for help in bringing to justice those responsible for crimes during the fighting, says a document explaining the Special Court for Sierra Leone. "The international community answered that call because they believed that only by holding people accountable will Sierra Leone truly know lasting peace."

The UN-backed Court, set up in 2002, marked the first time a war crimes tribunal was to be held in the country where the atrocities were committed. In this case such crimes included systematic murder, rape and sexual slavery, and mutilation - namely the hacking off of limbs.

Also unique was that the Court operated simultaneously with a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which wrapped up its work in 2004, handing a series of recommendations to the Sierra Leone government. Debate lingers over whether running the two institutions parallel is the best approach to post-war peace and justice.

Another key distinction was the Court's "hybrid" nature, with judges and staff from both in and outside Sierra Leone trying violations of both local and international law. Its 11 judges are appointed by both the United Nations and the Sierra Leone government. The current UN-appointed chief prosecutor is Desmond de Silva, a 67-year-old British lawyer who had been nominated by the Sierra Leone government in 2002 as deputy prosecutor.

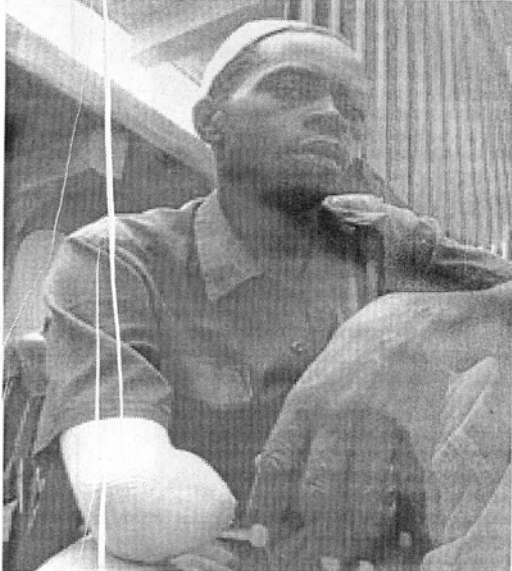
Seated in the capital Freetown in its own specially built premises, the Special Court was created in 2002 by an agreement between the UN and the Sierra Leonean government. In 2000, while the country was still in the throes of war, the Sierra Leonean government had asked the UN to establish a war crimes tribunal and the UN had passed a resolution authorising this in August 2000.

The Special Court has been at work on three trials, concerning the three parties to the conflict - the Civil Defence Forces (CDF), a militia fighting alongside the Sierra Leone army; the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels; and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) rebels.

Taylor is blamed for fomenting war in the region

Taylor is only foreigner among 13 indictees

But the courthouse built in the New England area of Freetown came under the international media spotlight in recent days with the arrest and detention of its most prominent indictee - former Liberian President Charles Taylor, who in his first appearance before the court on 3 April pleaded not guilty to 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity. He will be the first former African leader to face trial before an in-



A war amputee in Freetown

The Special Court - one of many tools for a lasting peace

The Special Court has been at work on three trials, concerning the three parties to the conflict - the Civil Defence Forces (CDF), a militia fighting alongside the Sierra Leone army; the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels; and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) rebels

international tribunal for crimes allegedly perpetrated while in office.

The Court was mandated to try not all those who carried out war crimes, but "those bearing the greatest responsibility". Sierra Leone's war pitted RUF rebels against the government of President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah. AFRC rebels seized power in 1997 but were later put down by regional forces and subsequently aligned with the RUF.

The Court can prosecute for war crimes and crimes against humanity under the Geneva Convention, international humanitarian law, and Sierra Leonean law; including murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, imprisonment, torture, rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy and any other form of sexual violence, persecution on political, racial, ethnic or religious grounds, and other inhumane acts.

A war amputee in Freetown

It has jurisdiction over acts committed only after 30 November 1996, when an initial comprehensive peace agreement was signed between the government and the RUF, only to be followed by more war.

Those convicted are to receive jail sentences; the Court does not sentence to death.

The Court has indicted 13 people from all sides in Sierra Leone's civil war, most notably Taylor - the only non-Sierra Leonean to be indicted (though Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi is mentioned in the indictment). Indictees included: From RUF - Foday Sankoh, Issa Sesay, Augustine Gbao, Maurice Kallon, Sam Bockarie From AFRC - Johnny Paul Koroma, Santigle Borbor Kanu, Alex Tamba Brima, Ibrahim Bassy Kamara From CDF - Samuel Hinga Norman, Moinina Fofanah, Alieu Kondewa Two of the indictees - Foday Sankoh and Sam Bockarie - have since died. With Taylor's arrest on 29 March all but one of the indictees are in custody; Johnny Paul Koroma is still at large, believed by some to have died. Prosecution has rested in the CDF and AFRC trials, which are now at the defence stage. In the CDF case, 75 prosecution witnesses have testified, 41 in the AFRC trial. One of the most prominent and controversial figures to be indicted is Samuel Hinga Norman, head of the CDF. Many Sierra Leoneans see him as a hero who defended the government and resent that he is being brought up on war crimes. Both Fofanah and Hinga Norman of the CDF have argued that President Kabbah should be called to testify; their motion is pending in the Court.

Reaching out to victims

The document explaining the court, "Wetin Na Di Speshal Kot?" - 'what is the Special Court' in Sierra Leone's Krio language, was produced by the Court's outreach section, which human rights advocates say is crucial to the Court's mission.

"One of the most important aspects of the Court has been its robust outreach effort," Elise Keppler of the Human Rights Watch international justice programme told IRIN from New York. "The Court has really gone out of its way to be accessible and relevant to the community affected by the crimes." Outreach has included town hall meetings, video showings of hearings and the distribution of booklets and films explaining the Court in simple terms.

Keppler says the Taylor trial points to the need for robust funding for the Court, which now depends on voluntary contributions from the international community - particularly for continued effective outreach should

his trial be transferred to a courtroom in The Hague as the Court has requested. The Court - which has been expected to close in mid 2007 - is already facing a funding crisis. But with the arrest of Taylor, donors are expected to put up the cash necessary to carry out his trial, which could also require an extension of the Court's term.

The Court says perpetrators of war crimes must be held accountable for the country to "truly know lasting peace." But observers and members of civil society in Sierra Leone say a number of other factors are as important for peace to take hold - reducing the country's crippling poverty, bolstering human rights protections, tackling mass youth unemployment and beating corruption.

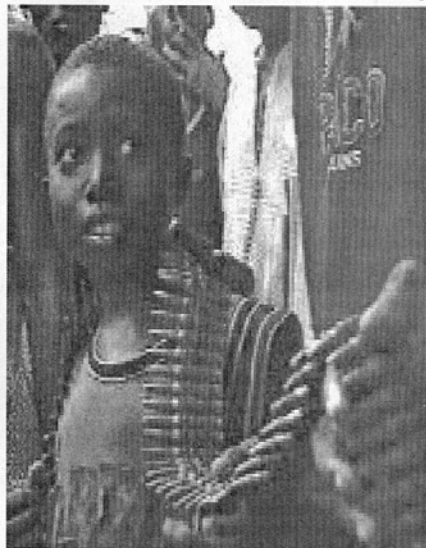
Human rights groups say one of the most important roles for the court is to revitalise citizens' belief in the rule of law. "The Court has the potential for generating an attitudinal shift - puncturing the notion of politically powerful figures as being untouchable or above the law," says Corinne Dufka of Human Rights Watch West Africa office.

The hope, human rights groups say, is that the Court's outcome will go beyond international law and be an instrument for reinforcing national judicial systems.

The outreach booklet designed for Sierra Leonean citizens says, "One day the Court will finish its job. By then, if people are found guilty of the crimes alleged they will be punished. The Court hopes that in the future, leaders will be afraid to order people to commit serious crimes. This will help to create respect for human rights and respect for the rule of law."

[ENDS]

Published - 3 Apr 2006 (IRIN) [This report does not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations]



Recruitment of child soldiers one of many crimes under the Special Court's jurisdiction

Awareness Times

Tuesday, 25 July 2006

Sierra Leone Police tightens security at Lungi International Airport

Police personnel deployed at the Lungi International Airport under the command of Chief Superintendent, Alfred Karrow Kamara have taken certain measures aimed at tightening security in and around the Airport.

These water-tight security measures are aimed at creating a safety net for passengers travelling in and out of Sierra Leone as well as safeguarding the image of the country.

When Awareness Times visited the Airport on Friday 21st July 2006, the Local Unit Commander, CSP Alfred Karrow Kamara outlined the strategies they have adopted, which include protection of passengers' luggage, forestalling smuggling and building on the existing cordial relationship between the police and the community.

According to CSP Kamara, there have been lot of complaints about missing luggage at the airport which he maintains is due to certain lapses in the security set up at the airport but that as a corrective measure they are deploying a police officer and one airport security guard at the runway.

"This is to ensure arriving luggage are protected from the point of disembarkation to where the owners would claim them," he told Awareness Times, adding that those luggage which would be found to have been tampered with, would be photographed and brought to the notice of their owners and the airport authorities.

According to CSP Kamara, "this is to ascertain whether the problem occurred at the Airport of departure or at the point of arrival at the Lungi Airport."

On the issue of forestalling smuggling, Mr. Kamara said using the airport as a gateway for the smuggling of precious minerals and other dangerous items such as drugs, is giving the country bad name.

"We have noticed that criminals, locals as well as foreigners are using our airport as gateway or transit to perpetuate their criminal acts, which should be stopped now," he assured.

It could be recalled that since CSP Kamara was posted to the Lungi Airport he has made lots of arrests.

Mr. Kamara who is a crime detective, further informed that the police henceforth will be providing a 24 hour security at the Airport.

With regards the relationship between the police, the Airport Authority and the local community, the Police Chief in charge of the Airport described it as cordial.

"The recent visit of our Inspector General of Police to Lungi is a clear manifestation that we are working in partnership with the community," he said, adding that the meeting called by the IG at Lungi saw people from all works of life attending.

"The community were able to discuss pertinent issues with the IG regarding security," he said.

The Bramsmill-UK trained Chief Superintendent of police, further informed Awareness Times that they have been providing adequate security for very important occasions. He made specific reference to the former Liberia President and now Special Court indictee, Mr. Charles Taylor. "We ensured that the transition of Mr. Taylor went on peacefully" he said.

BBC Online

Wednesday, 26 July 2006

Taylor 'not priority' for Liberia

Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf says prosecuting her predecessor Charles Taylor is "secondary" to her agenda.

Her comments came after more than 300 Liberian and international rights bodies wrote to her, calling for Mr Taylor to be tried in Sierra Leone.

Mr Taylor is accused of backing the notorious RUF rebels in Sierra Leone's 1990s civil war.

Mr Taylor is in exile in Nigeria after leaving power in 2003.

Addressing her first news conference since taking office on 16 January, President Johnson-Sirleaf said her post-war government does not want "the Mr Taylor issue to be the issue that constraints us or the issue that causes us not to be able to do what we have to do here for the Liberian people.

"So we want to see it as a secondary issue, even though it may be of utmost concern to the international community," she said.

'Rule of law'

On Thursday, the Campaign Against Impunity - a coalition of about 300 African and international civil society groups - said in an open letter to Mrs Johnson-Sirleaf that the new president should take prompt action to ensure that Mr Taylor faces trial in Sierra Leone.

"President Johnson-Sirleaf said her presidency will stand for accountability and the rule of law," said Ezekial Pajibo, executive director of Liberia's Centre for Democratic Empowerment, in a statement circulated by US-based Human Rights Watch.

"Now she has a major opportunity to do just that. We hope she will seize this chance by requesting Nigeria to surrender Charles Taylor to the [UN-backed] Special Court for Sierra Leone."



President Johnson-Sirleaf has said her priorities are creating jobs and fighting corruption



Taylor trial 'out of Africa'

Mrs Johnson-Sirleaf said she had discussed Mr Taylor with Nigeria's President Olusegun Obasanjo but declined to reveal any details of their conversation.

Mr Obasanjo has rejected previous calls to send Mr Taylor to Sierra Leone but has said he would be willing to hand Mr Taylor over to an elected Liberian government.

Mr Taylor stood down as rebels threatened to seize the capital, Monrovia. His departure into exile was part of a deal backed by African and Western powers, which ultimately led to last year's elections, won by Mrs Johnson-Sirleaf.

SABC News

Tuesday, 25 July 2006

Taylor unhappy with jail conditions in Hague



Charles Taylor is not happy about conditions in the Hague jail he was moved to last month

Charles Taylor, the former Liberian president, is not happy about conditions in the Hague jail he was moved to last month, his lawyer said today as the former Liberian president appeared in court for the first time since he left Sierra Leone. Karim Khan, the defence lawyer, told the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone, which will try Taylor for war crimes, that his client could not make phone calls as freely as he could in Freetown, lockdown hours were more draconian and he was unhappy about the food in the "rather Eurocentric" facility.

"Mr Taylor should be afforded the same rights and the same regime that are afforded to all other detained persons (in Sierra Leone)," said Khan said. Taylor, wearing a grey suit to the procedural hearing, also asked the court through his lawyer to speed visas for his family to visit him in The Hague. Taylor's wife is six months pregnant.

The Sierra Leone special court moved Taylor to The Hague because of fears a trial in Freetown could spur unrest in Sierra Leone or Liberia. Proceedings are being held in the premises of the International Criminal Court (ICC). Judge Richard Lussick said he did not want people to have the impression Freetown was "the Riviera of detention" but said he hoped the court's registrar would address Taylor's concerns.

Herman von Hebel, the Sierra Leone court's deputy registrar, told journalists he had come to the Hague to talk to the ICC about logistics related to the trial and said he thought Taylor's concerns were mostly easily solved "start-up" issues.

Trial to start in 2007

Taylor already appeared in court in Freetown for an initial hearing in April, when he pleaded innocent to 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity for backing rebels who raped and mutilated civilians during a brutal 1991-2002 civil war in Sierra Leone, Liberia's neighbour.

Prosecutor Brenda Hollis said she hoped the trial could begin in February, but Khan said that was untenable and the earliest the defence could imagine starting would be in July.

Taylor's rise to power in 1989 led to a 14-year, on-and-off civil war in Liberia that spilled across regional borders. He fled into exile in Nigeria in 2003 but was returned to Liberia and transferred to the court in Sierra Leone on March 29.

Voice of America

Tuesday, 25 July 2006

Uganda's President Says No Power Sharing With Rebels

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni says peace talks with the rebel Lord's Resistance Army are not for the purpose of sharing power.

In a statement, Mr. Museveni says the talks in southern Sudan are intended to give the rebels what the Ugandan president calls a "soft landing".



Yoweri Museveni (file photo)

Mr. Museveni is said to have made the comments Monday during a meeting with the British ambassador (High Commissioner) to Uganda, Francois Gordon.

Earlier this month, the Ugandan president offered amnesty to rebel leader Joseph Kony with the condition that the peace talks go well.

Kony remains wanted on war crimes charges by the International Criminal Court. The LRA is accused of killing, kidnapping, and mutilating thousands of civilians during a 20-year war against the Ugandan government.

Mr. Museveni told the ambassador that the peace talks will allow the rebels to reconcile with their victims. He also said some rebels could be integrated into Uganda's army.

The talks in Juba have adjourned for the week so the negotiators can consult with their leaders. On Monday, the chief mediator said the sides had achieved "substantial progress."

A group of Kony's relatives are scheduled to meet him at his hiding place in the Democratic Republic of Congo later this week, in what is considered a confidence-building measure for the talks.

The Analyst (Monrovia)

Monday, 24 July 2006

UNMIL Rapists Go Unpunished

By George Borteh

In Liberia, it is no doubt that rape has become a rocketing public nuisance with women, both young and old being victimized almost a on daily basis.

Liberians and non-Liberians, especially peacekeepers of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) are in the vanguard of the rather insalubrious acts.

Dozens of Liberians accused of rape and consequently prosecuted in keeping with the law of the land are presently serving whatever sentences prescribed for them. But what seems upsetting, according to observers is the inactiveness of UNMIL authorities to take appropriate actions against their soldiers when they are caught in the act.

It is alleged that several rape cases involving soldiers and "contractors" of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) are yet to be accounted for in keeping with Liberian law.

One instance of UNMIL inactiveness to taking action against its officers is the case of the five Russians who were accused of rape and subsequently absconded the country under dubious circumstances. Both UNMIL and Liberian government officials pledged to brining the m justice but little or nothing has been heard or seen in that regard.

It may be recalled that UNMIL, some time ago, informed the Liberians and the rest of the world that there were plans to have the five Russians suspects brought back to Liberia to face justice.

Since then, nothing has been heard or done to the five alleged Russian rapists brought back to the country.

The Liberian leader once commented on said issue, saying that all have been done or arranged to have the five alleged Russian rapists but the statement by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is yet to produce the needed justice to the raped victims and other raped victims yet to be identified.

Their disappearance from the country was said to have been masterminded with officers of the Liberia National Police (LNP), a member of the Liberian Senate, Joseph Nagbe and Montserrado County Attorney Samuel Jacobs being at the center of accusation. The dubious circumstances surrounding their disappearance also led to the suspension of Police Director for Administration Col. Alfred Karley, although he since resumed duties.

The men are now relaxing at the various abodes in Europe, enjoying the pleasantries accrued from Liberia as contractors of the UN mission while their victims are still coping with the aftermath of their actions.

Apart from that, Liberians who were accused, arrested and prosecuted are serving long term jail sentences, something which observers termed "a travesty" of UN principles, especially the one that has do with "Zero Tolerance" on rape and sexual exploitation.

During his recent to Liberia, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said the world body was against rape and sexual exploitation and that tougher actions would be melted at violators of the UN standards, but it seems that is a mere vibration.

Apparently the inactiveness on UNMIL authorities may have given perkiness to other peacekeepers who are indulged in the act now a day.

Soldiers of the Nigerian Contingent serving with UNMIL are said to be taking advantage of the done-care attitude being employed by their bosses and are engaged in what is said to be "an opened room" raping of little girls in their assigned areas.

Some time ago, a Nigerian soldier assigned around the Monrovia City hall Community allegedly raped two girls about three to nine years old.

The accused was reportedly being investigated by the senior officer of the soldier but up to present, there have been no reports from said self-investigation while the head of the peacekeepers has reportedly downplayed the survival of the victims.

Another rape episode involving another Nigerian peacekeeper recently occurred around the VAMOMA House area with no action taken by the UNMIL and the Liberian government. According to reports, the soldier involved was investigated and found guilty.

Rape became a daily event at the time a bill was passed by then legislature in 2005.

But the justice system in accordance with the rape bill, only Liberian alleged rapists are serving the provided punishment from the passed rape bill.

United Nations

Tuesday, 25 July 2006

Statement attributable to the Spokesman for the Secretary-General on Côte d'Ivoire

The Secretary-General is deeply concerned about the recent inflammatory statements by the leadership of the Front Populaire Ivoirien, which have incited the Young Patriots to resort to acts of violence aimed at disrupting the ongoing identification process in Côte d'Ivoire. The violence resulted in the loss of human lives and an attack by Young Patriots on the vehicle of the High Representative for Elections, Mr. Gérard Stoudmann.

The Secretary-General strongly condemns these acts, which are in breach of the agreements reached among Ivorian parties, including during the high-level meeting he convened in Yamoussoukro on 5 July. He urges all Ivorian parties to extend their full cooperation to the Prime Minister as the Government presses ahead with the simultaneous implementation of the identification and disarmament processes.

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 25 July 2006

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

International Clips on Liberia

Independence Day: Liberia Readies to Light Up In 16 Years

By Zoom Dosso

MONROVIA, July 25, 2006 (AFP) - Liberia, Africa's oldest republic, marks its 159th independence anniversary on Wednesday with the reconnection of electricity, the first time the country sees hydro-electric power in 16 years. Hydro-electrical supplies were knocked out in 1990 shortly after the 14-year civil war broke out and only a few who can afford it have been managing on diesel and petrol powered generators. Parts of Monrovia's street lights are to be turned on for the first time in a decade-and-a-half Wednesday morning as part of the official celebrations to be attended by a host of African presidents including John Kufuor of Ghana.

International Clips on West Africa

Ivory Coast rebels accuse PM of lacking courage

BOUAKE, Ivory Coast, July 25, 2006 (AFP) - Ivory Coast rebels on Tuesday accused Prime Minister Charles Konan Banny of lacking the courage to push through election preparations that have sparked violent clashes in recent days. Banny, head of a UN-backed transitional government, "has his method, but at some point, he will have to be more courageous," Sindou Cisse, assistant to rebel New Forces (FN) leader Guillaume Soro said, adding that the premier "is afraid of (President Laurent) Gbagbo."

Local Media – Newspapers

Brumskine Critiques Draft National Budget

(The News, The Inquirer, The Analyst, Daily Observer, New Democrat, Heritage, National Chronicle, The Forum, The Informer, The Monitor and Public Agenda)

- Addressing a news conference in Monrovia on Monday, Liberty Party's former Presidential candidate, Counselor Charles Walker Brumskine, said that the preparation of the draft national budget was not participatory and that there is no indication how priorities were determined. He urged President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf to resubmit an integrated budget, which would include revenues from all sources.

Camp Schefflin Military Barracks Renamed

(The Inquirer, The Analyst, New Democrat, Heritage and The Informer)

- President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf on Monday renamed the home of the 23rd Infantry Brigade of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), Camp Schefflin Military Barracks, in honor of the late Defense Minister Edward Beyan Kesselly. The barracks is now called Camp Edward Beyan Kesselly Military Barracks.

Muslim Council Condemns Police Chief for Issuing 'Dangerous' Statement *(The News, National Chronicle and Liberian Express)*

- The National Muslim Council of Liberia has condemned a recent statement by the Director of Police, Munnah Sieh, which warned that the police will not tolerate women from the Islamic faith wearing veils, especially at a time when terrorism across the world is so high.
- According to a statement issued on Monday by Sheikh Akibu Sheriff, Secretary General of the Council, Muslim women in Monrovia are being molested and assaulted indiscriminately by the police as a result of the Director's statement. The Council considers Director Sieh's statement as dangerous, unfortunate and a violation of the norms of the country, Mr. Sheriff said.

6 Killed in Trial by Ordeal in River Gee County

(Heritage and Public Agenda)

- A human rights group, the Foundation for International Dignity, has reported the death of six persons who were recently killed after they were made to go on trial by ordeal, otherwise known as 'sasswood,' in Gbeapo District, River Gee County.
- The deceased were accused of being supposedly linked to the death of a man identified as Stephen Swen.

Local Media – Radio Veritas *(News monitored yesterday at 6:45 pm)*

Former Presidential Candidate Denounces Fiscal Budget

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Visiting Kuwaiti Delegation Calls on President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf

- An Executive Mansion press release issued in Monrovia yesterday said that a Kuwaiti government delegation yesterday held talks with President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf with the delegation's head, Mohammed Abdullai El-Abdul Hassan, informing the Liberian leader that the Kuwaiti government was ready to resume bilateral relations with Liberia.
- Mr. Hassan, Political Advisor to the Emirate of Kuwait, said that Kuwait would assist in the financial sector of Liberia by reintroducing the Kuwaiti Fund for Development under which Liberia's development needs would be considered.
- President Johnson-Sirleaf lauded Kuwait for the pledge to assist Liberia and stressed the need for a functional private sector to sustain the economy.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Government Gathers Evidence to Prosecute former Officials

- Justice Minister Frances Johnson-Morris said that the government has gathered preliminary documentary evidence to prosecute former National Transitional Government of Liberia Chairman Charles Gyude Bryant and other former officials.
- Addressing a news conference in Monrovia yesterday, Minister Johnson-Morris said that the government was hiring accountants to interpret the documents to determine whether they were genuine enough to go to court. She added that before going to court, the government needed to be sure it could prosecute the former Liberian officials.
- President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf had said that key documents regarding financial operations of the former government were destroyed.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

African Heads of State to Grace Liberia's Independence Celebration

- Speaking to journalists at the Executive Mansion yesterday, Presidential Press Secretary Cyrus Badio said that three African Heads of State including Ghanaian President John Kufuor, Sierra Leonean President Ahmed Tejan Kaba and Burkinabe President Blaise Compaoré will arrive in Liberia tomorrow to participate in celebrations of the 159th independence anniversary of Liberia. The visiting African leaders will accompany President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf to officially turn on electric lights just restored to some parts of Monrovia.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Lawmaker Unhappy About Pressure to Endorse National Budget

- The Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives Tokpah Mulbah said that members of the National Legislature were being pressurized to pass the fiscal budget for 2006/2007.
- Mr. Mulbah said that the National Legislature needed time to carefully study the allocations in the budget and if required, transfer or reduce figures in some of the allocations. He added that the Lawmakers were contemplating on increasing funds allocated for education and health.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)