

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



Breakdown on the Makeni-Freetown highway

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:

Thursday, 26 July 2007

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Sierra News
Thursday, 26 July 2007

New Registrar, Deputy Registrar for the Special Court

The Secretary-General of the United Nations has appointed Herman Von Hebel as Registrar of the Special Court. Mr. Von Hebel has served as Deputy Registrar of the Court since July 2006. He was named Acting Registrar in March 2007 following the departure of former Registrar Lovemore Munlo, SC.

Mr. Von Hebel has wide experience in international law. From 1991 to 2000 he was a member of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, working within the Department of the Legal Adviser and the Directorate of Legal Affairs.

Between 1995 and 2000 he represented the Government of the Netherlands on the Preparatory Committee to set up the International Criminal Court. In 1998 he chaired the Working Group on the Definition of War Crimes at the Rome Conference, and from 1999 to 2000 he chaired the Working Group on the Elements of Crimes.

He joined the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia (ICTY) in 2001 as Senior Legal Officer.

Mr. Von Hebel has also named Binta Mansaray to succeed him as Deputy Registrar. Mrs. Mansaray, who has served since 2003 as the Special Court's Outreach Coordinator, is the first Sierra Leonean to hold this post.

"Together we will steer the Court in the coming years, focusing on implementing the completion strategy and leaving behind a legacy for Sierra



Mrs. Mansaray

Leone", Mr. Von Hebel said announcing the appointment.

Mrs. Mansaray has long experience in advocating for human rights in Sierra Leone. Immediately prior to joining the Special Court, she worked as Country Representative with the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, where she advocated for the rights of women and children affected by conflict.

Her contributions to human rights have been recognized in Sierra Leone and internationally. In 2005, she was named a Global Rights Honoree for her work on behalf of war-affected women in Sierra Leone. In 2006 she was named a Civitan Good Will Ambassador.

The Outreach Section works to educate the people of Sierra Leone and the region about the work of the Special Court, and to develop a two-way dialogue between the Court and the people. Under Mrs. Mansaray's leadership, Outreach Section has become recognized as a model for other international courts in the administration of justice.

COJA

Tuesday, 24 July 2007



COALITION FOR JUSTICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

(COJA)

A Network of Human Rights Organisations working for Judicial accountability within Sierra Leone.
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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

24th July 2007

COJA welcomes the Registrar's appointment of Mrs Binta Mansaray as Deputy Registrar of the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL)

COJA joins all human Rights and Civil Society Organisations to congratulate Mr Herman von Hebel, the new Special Court Registrar, for fulfilling the aspirations of Sierra Leoneans at home and abroad. This resolution is in response to the SCSL press release of 20th July 2007 which states that:

"The Secretary General of the United Nations has appointed Mr Herman von Hebel as the new Registrar of the SCSL" and that "the new Registrar has named Mrs. Binta Mansaray to succeed him as Deputy Registrar"

According to one Gender Activist, Ms Juliet Anderson, and Coordinator of Bambara Town Women's Organisation:

"Mrs Mansaray's appointment is not only a victory for all Sierra Leoneans but a clear indication that Sierra Leonean women are capable to take on challenges as their male folks"

Mrs Mansaray has served as the first Outreach Coordinator of SCSL appointed since 2003 by the first Registrar, Mr Robin Vincent. During her tenure unto her appointment, Mrs Mansaray has been able to withstand daunting challenges facing the Court predating its establishment. These challenges seem growing on a daily basis as verdicts in the three cases (AFRC, CDF and RUF) will be completed latest early 2008 while Charles Taylor's case is expected to commence in earnest in a matter of weeks from now. This has put tremendous pressure on the court to present its phasing out plan thus recommending the type of legacy it is expected to leave behind after completing its mandate. According to the above mentioned press release Mr. Herman von Hebel stated that:

"Together we will steer the court in the coming years, focussing on implementing the completion strategy and legacy for Sierra Leone"

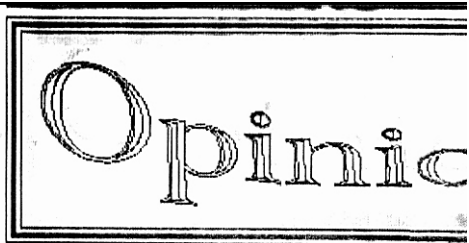
COJA welcomes this statement and urges Mr. Herman von Hebel to translate it into commitment together with his Deputy

The End

Concord Times

Thursday, 26 July 2007

The Special Court and the Taylor's Trial – Of What Significance?



By Umaru S Jah

The trial of former Liberian President, Charles Taylor, which started July 4, has seen the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone indictee refusing to appear in court twice though he made an astonishing shadow appearance in what many view as "a bid to divert public attention" on July 3. His decision to boycott the first two hearings was as a result of the controversy surrounding who should represent him. Mr. Taylor's action has left eyebrows raised and lips quivering. Millions of Sierra Leoneans and Liberians who want to see justice take its course have also been left in a state of uncertainty - not only because they do not have access to the trial but also because of the drama surrounding the process.

A court monitoring group in Freetown in a press release issued on July 3 reaffirmed that so far, the people of Sierra Leone (or should we say the Mano River Basin?) have had limited access to the proceedings itself. The group questioned the whole process... "Lack of access to the Taylor trial does not only hinder the healing process of the Sierra Leonean people but also undermines the anticipated impact of the trial on our legal system since the lack of access to justice was one of the underlying causes of the war."

The local media in Sierra Leone have also not been covering the trial much; leaving the population, for whom justice is being sought, in almost total blackout. The question raised by many observers now is - what impact then is this trial going to make here?

Amidst all these contradictions, he (Taylor) remains as recalcitrant as ever, although many may argue that his hay days were over and that he is no longer a force to reckon with. This is however not the motive of this piece.

The United Nations and the SLPP-led government jointly set up the Special Court for Sierra Leone, to bring to justice those who "bear the greatest responsibilities" in Sierra Leone's decade long conflict that saw the destruction of numerous lives and properties. Currently, nine people are in custody for allegedly seriously violating international humanitarian law and committing crimes against humanity. Already, three among the nine indictees (members of the former Armed Forces of the Revolutionary Council - AFRC) Santigie Kanu aka S.S., Tamba Alex Brima (Gullit) and Ibrahim Bazy Kamara- have been found guilty of the charges against them and have each been sentenced with terms that are not less than 40 years in prison.

On its part, the Truth and

Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was set up by the government not to act as a court of law but to establish an historic document of the war in Sierra Leone and put forward recommendations to prevent a recurrence of the past.

These two institutions - Special Court and TRC - are parallel in pursuance of transitional justice in the history of our beloved country, Sierra Leone. Though, the recommendations of TRC are yet to be fully implemented after the completion of its mandate in 2004, the people of Sierra Leone at least, now have an idea of what the war was all about and have since accepted to be reconcilable with actors that played a pivotal role during the 11-year conflict. The process gave birth to networks like the Truth and Reconciliation Working Group (TRWG) which later produced follow-up projects like a secondary school version of the voluminous TRC Report - targeting senior secondary school pupils to enable them comprehend the content of that significant report. Forty thousand books were distributed to senior schools across the country. Many Sierra Leoneans considered TRWG's initiative timely and vital for post-war recovery.

Now, the Special Court is presiding over cases against alleged perpetrators of the 11-year war in Sierra Leone who will end up being jailed for certain period if found guilty. This is a giant step in curbing impunity and a firm precedent for troublemakers who may want to ignite another round of chaos. Splendid idea indeed! But the multi-million-dollar question is: Should the

Special Court find all perpetrators guilty, charge and imprison them, would that be enough to heal the wounds of those who endured the wrath of the war and bury their resentment? Or is it going to benefit the people of Sierra Leone after turbulent years of massive killings and devastation allegedly orchestrated by the very stubborn Taylor who is now shy to surface at his trial only after a 'din don' battle? Though one might find these questions rhetorical at this point in time but the interest of those affected should be of utmost concern for the purposes of reconciliation and building transitional justice system. The people of Sierra Leone deserve adequate attention to address their felt needs rather than a man, who according to the Special Court Prosecutor, Steven Rapp, "involved in a common plan to destabilize the country." And now he is calling for more money to enable him line up a strong defence team with the best legal capacity to represent him regardless of the defence counsel assigned to him at the expense of the suffering masses.

I do agree with the fact that the government and other organisations have over the years embarked on re-integration and reparation programmes which include the disarmament and demobilization of ex-combatants in various districts and regions. While some of them were dispatched with skills and equipments that will enable them become self-reliant and start a new life after the war, thousands of them were left unattended to; with nothing to prick, poke and forget about. Even those who happened to be

beneficiaries of the much trumpeted re-integration programmes are still wallowing in limbos, complaining of not having sufficient tools and support to display their expertise.

The war-wounded blamed the government for neglecting them regardless of several promises made to better their lives after their arms and feet have been amputated by the rebels. So in one context, the resources are still unlimited (courtesy of Taylor) to enhance the well-being of war victims across the country. The entire population in Sierra Leone is desperately in need of economic revolution and better working conditions including basic necessities like good roads, electricity and the likes. But very little has been done as compared to what the Special Court has accumulated since its inception to try perpetrators of the war in Sierra Leone. Millions of dollars have been, and is still being, spent on the operations of the court which in my view cannot be compared to the amount of money spent even for major developmental programmes in Sierra Leone.

Nobody wants the perpetrators to go scot-free without being held responsible for their wicked acts. And the need for the prevalence of justice is very much in place if the necessary structures have been sufficiently put in place to remedy the plight of those who bore the brunt of the war itself. Finally, there is still a need for more assistance programmes for war victims and the people of Sierra Leone before thinking of what should be done to those who made them suffer!

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Splendid idea indeed! But the multi million-dollar question is: Should the Special Court find all perpetrators guilty, charge and imprison them, would that be enough to heal the wounds of those who endured the wrath of the war and bury their resentment? Or is it going to benefit the people of Sierra Leone after turbulent years of massive killings and devastation allegedly orchestrated by the very stubborn Taylor who is now shy to surface at his trial only after a 'din don' battle?

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Two held over Rwandan massacres

Two Rwandan men wanted for their alleged role in the 1994 genocide have been arrested in France, police there have said. **W e n c e s l a s** Munyeshyaka, a Catholic priest, and Laurent Bucyibaruta, an ex-civil servant, were held on warrants issued in Tanzania last month.

The arrests have been welcomed by the Rwandan government, which has accused France of failing to cooperate fully.

More than 800,000 people died in 1994 massacre of Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

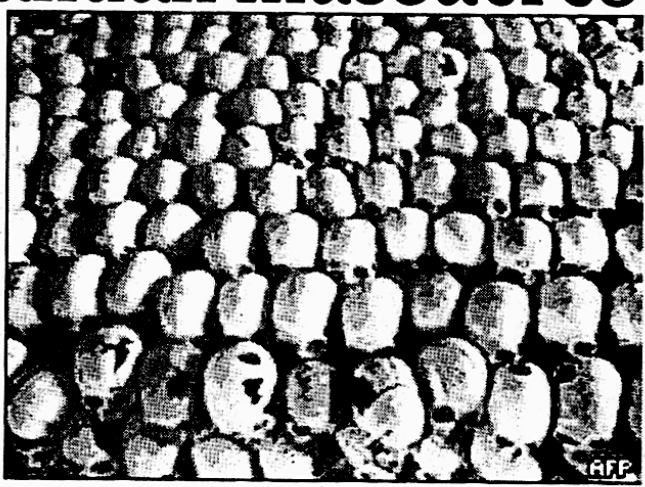
Warrants for the arrests had been issued by the United Nations-backed International Criminal

(ICTR), based in Tanzania.

'Murder and rape'

The two suspects will now face possible extradition to Tanzania. Father Munyeshyaka was arrested at Gisors, to the west of Paris, and Mr Bucyibaruta near Troyes, east of the capital. Father

Munyeshyaka, 49, is accused of murdering three young Tutsis in his Holy Family parish in the capital Kigali, news agency AFP reported. He is also accused of raping four young Tutsi women between April and June 1994 and calling for the extremist Hutu Interahamwe militia to commit rape. Mr Bucyibaruta has been accused of "direct and



More than 800,000 people died in the 1994 massacre

public incitement to commit genocide" by the ICTR.

Rwanda broke off diplomatic ties with Paris last year in a row over a French inquiry related to the 1994 genocide.

The investigating judge said Rwandan President Paul Kagame was complicit in the assassination of former President Juvenal

Habyarimana in 1994, which sparked off the killings.

Mr Kagame has always accused Hutu extremists of killing Habyarimana, a moderate Hutu, in order to provide a pretext for the genocide.

The killings ended 100 days later when the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front took power.

Awoko

Thursday, 26 July 2007

Before Chief Norman died...

Margai says PMDC merged with CDF

During his recent political tour of Kailahun district, PMDC's Charles Margai swanked of a merger between his party and the Civil Defense Forces (CDF) before the death of the latter's ex-national coordinator Sam Hinga Norman.

Mr Margai disclosed to party faithful at the

PMDC's Kailahun office that, "there is an agreement to the effect to justify my statement".

He maintained that the agreement was signed between late Chief Hinga Norman and himself to unseat the SLPP through the ballot box come August 11.

He said with such a merger he was confident of a formidable security for

himself and his supporters.

The PMDC leader alleged that Chief Sam Hinga Norman was identified by the Special Court for Sierra Leone because of his objection to Solomon Berewa becoming the SLPP leader.

Mr Margai climaxed his speech with accolades for the National Electoral Commission (NEC) and the police for doing well.

Awoko

Thursday, 26 July 2007

Yenga settlement in sight

The long-drawn tussle between Guinea and Sierra Leone over the right ownership of the disputed portion of Yenga would soon be laid to rest albeit due to the tireless effort of President Tejan Kabbah.

This assurance came after a visit to the site by President Tejan Kabbah accompanied by Liberian President Madame Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and the Guinean Prime Minister Lansana Kouyateh.

It was the first visit to be made by the Guinean Prime Minister and the Liberian President to the area, and it provided an opportunity for both to make an on the spot assessment of the actual situation, and get a first hand knowledge of the situation on the ground.

The two Heads of State and the Prime Minister

crossed the Moa/Makona River from Nongoa in Guinea to Yenga in Sierra Leone by canoe, and it came at the end of a one-day Summit of the Makona River Union held in Gueckedou, Guinea.

An expert on Yenga Madame Uzeba Kanu led the Guinean Prime Minister and the Liberian Leader on an inspection tour of the area and briefed them on the actual location of the Yenga boundary prior its occupation by the Guinean troops during the war, and which was outlined in the 1912 protocol. (which states that the Makona River and its Islands belong to Guinea, while the Village of Yenga and the adjacent land belong to Sierra Leone).

Prime Minister Lansana Kouyateh recalled that the issue of Yenga was discussed

at the recently held Summit of Heads of States of the Mano River Union held in Conakry, and that the visit was for him to see for himself what obtains on the ground.

He said now that he has seen the situation he would report back to President Lansana Conteh, and that the final decision on the matter would be taken by the Heads of State.

The Guinean Prime Minister called for patience while the matter was being discussed for a final solution, which would sustain and foster the brotherly relationship between the two countries.

President Tejan Kabbah was confident that with the visit of Prime Minister Kouyateh and President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, the issue of Yenga would now be seen in a clearer perspective and hoped the matter would soon be laid to rest.

Liberian Observer

Wednesday, 25 July 2007

Does Liberia Need a Sierra Leone Style Court?

Competing Approaches to Move Beyond the Pains and Scar of War

One hundred and sixty years ago on July 26 a new nation state, self-governed rather than ruled by another was brought forth. This country has gone through its own political metamorphosis: a pseudo democracy for a century marked by desultory governance by its founding fathers, a decade of “Saddam Hussein style” rule, a decade of scrambling for the country's natural resources by warlords and bloodbath, a success story of electing the first female president in Africa and now a blanket urge for reconciliation by its citizens.

This Independence Day should be a time to reflect on Liberia's “topsy-turvy” history to build on the monumental election of 2005, to nurture our new found direction and purpose where all Liberians can find solace and true freedom.

George Kun

UNMIL Public Information Office **Press Clips 25 July 2007**

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

International Clips on Liberia

President Sirleaf Honors Former Generals And Officers

Source: All Africa Global Media Date: July 25, 2007

Monrovia, Jul 24, 2007 (Liberia Government/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) --Programs marking the 160th Independence Anniversary of Liberia continued on Tuesday with several events in Monrovia commemorating the occasion.

Earlier on Tuesday, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf dedicated the Rafiki Children's village in Marshall Territory. The Village which will run a pre-school program for children will later host a secondary program with an anticipated enrollment of 324 students. The President thanked all those who contributed towards the establishment of the Village in Liberia, describing their efforts as a celebration of Partnership, patriotism, capacity and family hood.

The President later presented a certificate to the founder and President of Rafiki, granting the group the right to operate in Liberia.

Meanwhile, the Liberian President has presented certificates and medals to retired Generals and officers of the Armed Forces of Liberia. At a ceremony at the Antoinette Tubman Stadium, the President thanked the retired officers for their sacrificial services to the country over the years. The Commander-in-Chief also lauded the retired officers for their contribution towards the peace the country now enjoys. 'You have enabled our country to move forward by your voluntary retirement,' the President told the Officers.

99-personnel of a total of more than five thousand men and women of the AFL were awarded certificates and medals by the Commander-in-Chief.

Meanwhile, the President has directed the finance Ministry to pay two months salary arrears owed the soldiers by government. The soldiers will also received two months as balance payment for pension. The President said the payments were in fulfillment of a promise to pay the soldiers their benefits upon retirement and in keeping with the spirit of July '26.

The President said government is facing challenges in settling all arrears it has inherited, but assured the soldiers that the government would continue to exert all efforts in settling the country's obligations including arrears owed the retired soldiers.

Among those honored was Retired General Sandee Ware, in whose honor the VOA military barracks has been renamed. Others honored were General Kpenkpah Y. Konah, LTG, Henry Dubar; LTG Hezekiah Bowen, Major-general Philip Kemah, Col. Arthur Bedell, among others.

Independence celebrations in Sheffield

Source: THE STAR (SHEFFIELD) Date: July 25, 2007

SHEFFIELD will be the UK focal point of worldwide celebrations to mark Independence Day for the African country Liberia.

The Liberian Organisation has teamed up with the Union of Liberian Organisations to stage four days of events in the city, ending with a church service where Muslims and Christians will worship under the same roof.

At the official launch on Thursday, attended by Liberian ambassador Wesley Johnson, children will take to the stage recounting the country's history in traditional costume.

There will be a football tournament and other games followed by an Independence Day ball at Duke Street Community Centre.

There are more than 100 Liberians living in Sheffield and the celebrations are partly sponsored by the City Council.

The launch is at Sharrow Community Hall, Bramall Lane, followed by a dinner in honour of the Liberian ambassador at the Globeline Hotel on Friday.

What do you think? Post your comments below.

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International Clips on West Africa

07/25/2007 10:55:01

Softs - Cocoa drops as supply fears ease amid lack of unrest in Ivory Coast

Source: AFX International Focus Date: July 25, 2007

LONDON (Thomson Financial) - Cocoa prices fell as supply fears eased amid a lack of political unrest in top producer the Ivory Coast, and as traders took the view yesterday's rally was overdone.

Cocoa gained yesterday on news the Ivory Coast army had been put on full alert ahead of the president's first visit to the rebel held North, where last month's attack on the prime minister occurred.

That attack helped propel cocoa prices to a four-year high of 1,146 stg a tonne, but analysts at Hightower Research said price support from political fears needs to be sustained in order to lift cocoa further.

'With the (Ivory Coast) government speculating insurgents are planning to stage an attack on the President's motorcade, political anxiety has certainly been stirred up,' said analysts at Hightower Research.

'However, unless some politically motivated incident actually occurs, price support from political fears could quickly fade.'

At 3.26 pm on the Euronext Liffe, cocoa for September delivery was down at 1,085 stg a tonne against 1,093 stg at the close yesterday.

Analysts said the fact that cocoa displayed a 'buy the dips' price action yesterday shows traders remain upbeat on the bean's price prospects, despite reports of improved growing conditions in the Ivory Coast.

The reports have been so consistent that some in the market are starting to expect the 2007/08 main harvest will start ahead of schedule, with beans arriving at ports in early September.

'If a rebound in Ivory Coast production is seen the market will eventually be faced with higher supplies, but the trade still appears to be focused on the current situation since cocoa bean supplies have become scarce,' said analysts at Hightower Research.

In other softs traded on Liffe, Robusta coffee for September delivery was up at 1,844 usd a tonne against 1,838 usd, while No 5 white sugar for October delivery dipped to 310.50 usd a tonne against 312.00 usd.

07/25/2007 09:36:57

Ivory Coast troops on red alert after rumours of fresh attack

Source: Agence France-Presse English Wire Date: July 25, 2007

ABIDJAN, July 25, 2007 (AFP) - Ivory Coast's government forces are on maximum alert following rumours of a possible attack days ahead of President Laurent Gbagbo's first visit to the rebel-held north since a 2002 uprising, a military source said Wednesday.

"We have information about a possible attack on the state's security to destabilise the republican institutions," a military official told AFP on condition of anonymity in Abidjan.

"All our units in the government zone (in the south) have been on maximum alert since Monday," the source said.

Gbagbo will Monday visit the second city of Bouake, the headquarters of the former rebel New Forces (FN), for the first time since a September 2002 rebellion aimed at toppling him sliced the country in half.

Gbagbo's new prime minister Guillaume Soro, a former FN rebel leader, was the target of an attempted assassination on June 29 when rockets were fired at his plane in Bouake.

Soro, who joined a unity government following a peace deal brokered by neighbouring Burkina Faso, escaped unharmed but four of his aides died.

Gbagbo will on Monday preside over a highly symbolic disarmament ceremony at the rebel headquarters in Bouake, which will also be attended by Burkina Faso President Blaise Compaore, Ghanaian leader John Kufuor and South Africa's Thabo Mbeki.

The three African presidents have tried to broker peace in Ivory Coast to end the low-level civil war which has battered the economy of the world's top cocoa producer and France's former star colony on the continent.

In 2003, the United Nations deployed peacekeepers to Ivory Coast to oversee a ceasefire between the rebels and government troops. Both sides have breached the truce several times.

The UN has around 8,000 peacekeepers stationed in country, once a beacon of stability and economic prosperity in West Africa. They are backed by more than 3,000 French troops monitoring the buffer zone between the two sides.

Asia Times

Thursday, 26 July 2007

A question of genocide in Cambodia

By Marwaan Macan-Markar

BANGKOK - For nearly 30 years, the Khmer Rouge regime that unleashed a reign of terror during its rule of Cambodia from 1975-79 has been accused of committing genocide. But employing a strict legal definition, was that the case?

That and other troubling questions are slated for scrutiny as Cambodia's highly anticipated war-crimes tribunal is now finally under way. Last week marked a milestone in the long-delayed United Nations-sponsored tribunal when prosecutors submitted the names of five former Khmer Rouge leaders to stand trial.

Although widely reported as genocide, some legal experts say it's not an open and closed case against the Khmer Rouge.

"Describing the acts committed in Cambodia as genocide has always been controversial," Rupert Skilbeck, head of the Defense Support Section of the tribunal, said in a telephone interview from Phnom Penh. "It is not easily accepted by the legal community. The court will have to consider this question."

The globally accepted definition of genocide is an act of violence aimed to "destroy an ethnic group because of their nationality, race, religion", said Skilbeck, who also served as the adviser for the defense during the special war-crimes tribunal for Sierra Leone. "Killing a people for their political views, as happened in Cambodia, is different," he contended.

There are other hard questions that the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), as this tribunal is officially called, is expected to answer. Foremost among them is how many people the Khmer Rouge actually killed between April 17, 1975, and January 6, 1979, the precise period of their rule and the period that the tribunal is examining.

"The number of people who died in Rwanda was not challenged, but the number of deaths in Cambodia has not been confirmed; it could be challenged," Skilbeck said this month when he met with journalists in Bangkok. In Rwanda, by comparison, an estimated 800,000 people from the ethnic Tutsi group were slaughtered by Hutu extremists during that country's civil war in 1994. Legal experts agree that was a definite act of genocide.

The Khmer Rouge has been accused of killing as many as 1.7 million Cambodians, or a quarter of the Southeast Asian nation's population at the time. The victims were either executed or died as a result of forced labor or starvation from famine, as the Maoist group depopulated the cities and attempted to turn the country into an agrarian utopia.

The tribunal's proceedings on these mass deaths could also prove embarrassing to major powers involved before and after Cambodia was dragged into the US war in Vietnam, which raged through the 1960s and early 1970s. Washington's secret bombing raids over Cambodia in the early 1970s are now well documented, as too is the major role Beijing played in propping up the Khmer Rouge as they systematically killed their perceived enemies.

"America's illegal bombing raids will come up in figuring out how many died in Cambodia," said Skilbeck. "There will be lots of issues that will come up during the trial that will be embarrassing to many countries."

The quest for justice began 10 years ago, when talks about establishing the tribunal commenced between the UN and Phnom Penh. Since then, the process has been strewn with hurdles, including several placed by Prime Minister Hun Sen's government, which independently brokered a compromise with several high-level Khmer Rouge leaders, including some who serve in his government.

Hun Sen has backtracked on his initial financial commitments to the tribunal and has also heaped scorn on human-rights groups that have challenged Phnom Penh's choice of local judges for the trial. The ECCC, unlike other tribunals, such as the one that investigated crimes against humanity committed in the former Yugoslavia, is not completely international in nature, but rather combines local and foreign jurists.

The ECCC is also expected to question the credentials of some of the appointed Cambodian lawyers and judges, based on concerns leveled by rights groups and others about the local jurists' grasp and application of international law, the basis of the tribunal's proceedings.

Cambodia's legal community, as with other educated professionals and intellectuals, were singled out as enemies of the state and systematically brutalized by the Khmer Rouge. By some estimates, only nine lawyers and judges survived the Khmer Rouge's reign of terror.

For the Cambodians who survived the brutality and are among the millions who lost relatives to the radical Maoist regime, there are several other questions they hope the ECCC will help to answer.

"Many people want to know why the Khmer Rouge killed their own people and how they were killed," said Im Sophea, a ranking member of the Center for Social Development, a Phnom Penh-based non-governmental body. "We expect the court to reveal answers for this. Public expectation is very high."

The war-crimes trial of course will not hear from Pol Pot, the notorious leader of the Khmer Rouge, who died in his jungle redoubt in 1998. Nor will Ta Mok, widely known in Cambodia as "The Butcher", for the alleged atrocities he oversaw during the brutal regime's rule, take the stand; he died in June last year.

The five names submitted last week to stand trial at the ECCC were major figures in the Maoist group. According to reports in the Cambodian press, those on the prosecution's list include Nuon Chea, Pol Pot's deputy; Khieu Samphan, former Khmer Rouge head of state; Ieng Sary, the regime's former foreign minister; and Kang Kech Eav, also known as Duch, who was the head of the infamous Tuol Sleng Prison in Phnom Penh.

(Inter Press Service with additional reporting by Asia Times Online)

Voice of America

Thursday, 26 July 2007

Uganda's LRA Rebels Want Peace Talks Postponed

By Peter Clotey
Washington, D.C.

Uganda's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels say they will ask for a postponement of the current peace talks in the Southern Sudanese capital of Juba if they do not raise the necessary funds to prepare for the next round of talks. The LRA says it needs to raise about two million dollars from donors to organize a visit by 500 people to meet with rebel leaders, as well as travel to some African countries to help them build a strong case for justice and reconciliation. Meanwhile, both the rebels and the Kampala government have agreed to postpone to the end of August the resumption of the peace talks.

Ruhakana Rugunda is the leader of the government's negotiating team. From the capital, Kampala he tells reporter Peter Clotey that the two million dollars the rebels are asking for is too abstract.

"We do not think it's necessary to raise two million dollars in order to carry out consultations for the peace process. We think the consultations can be effectively carried out with a much less figure than two million dollars," Rugunda pointed out.

He said he does not envisage the peace process to be negatively impacted by the action of the rebels.

"We do not expect that that would affect the peace process. We nevertheless have discussed with the Lord's Resistance Army, and agreed with them that both sides require more time for consultations. And so both sides have agreed that a new date should be fixed later on to ensure that the consultations are effectively carried out. So we do expect the talks to resume in August," he said.

Rugunda said the Kampala government has assured the rebels of their safety if they come to Uganda for consultations with some of the major donors.

"We think the primary stakeholders are in Uganda, and the government of Uganda has time and again said the government will guarantee security of LRA leaders. They can come and carry out consultations much more cheaply with primary stakeholders in Uganda instead of hindering the peace process on raising two million dollars," Rugunda noted.

He reiterated that although the government supports the LRA in its attempt to be prepared before the next round of peace talks, the money the rebels are asking for is not feasible.

"We fully support that consultations by both ourselves and Lord's Resistance Army should take place. But we do not agree that you will require two million dollars to be able to carry out the consultations. We believe that effective consultation can be done much more cheaply than what is being raised, two million dollars. We think that they should be able to consult much more cheaply," he said.

Rugunda said he expects the controversy surrounding the rebels' request for the two million dollars to be resolved.

"This matter would be resolved between the Lord's Resistance Army and the mediation team. And the government of Uganda fully supports the consultations by both government and the LRA, but we would like the Lord's Resistance Army to make their budget much more manageable than putting that figure of two million dollars, which from our own standard is a lot of money," Rugunda said.