

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE



Flashback: Reporters from Radio Kolenten broadcast a Defence Outreach in Kambia.

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

Friday, 26 May 2006

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
Martin Royston -Wright
Ext 7217

Local Press

Taylor Now Becomes Sierra Leone's Business- Blair and Mbeki / <i>Awoko</i>	Page 3
John Leigh Wants Norman Freed / <i>New Vision</i>	Page 4
SLPP Denies Knowledge of Norman's Illness / <i>The News</i>	Page 5
Former UNAMSIL Peacekeeper Testifies of Abduction... / <i>The Monitor</i>	Pages 6-8

International Press

Yank, 2 Sierra Leoneans Granted Bail / <i>Cocorioko</i>	Page 9
New War Crimes Court President Pleads for Fund / <i>IRIN</i>	Pages 10-11
Sierra Leone Protests at Plans to Move Taylor Trial / <i>Irish Times</i>	Pages 12-13
Jersey Man in Africa Spy Rap / <i>New York Post</i>	Page 14
Taylor Associate Accuses, USA, Britain for Guns in Liberia / <i>The Analyst</i>	Pages 15-16
US: Investigate Taylor's Son for Torture, War Crimes / <i>Human Rights Watch</i>	Pages 17-18
UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary / <i>UNMIL</i>	Pages 19-21

Awoko

Friday, 26 May 2006

Taylor now Sierra Leone's business - Blair and Mbeki

By Winston
OjukutuMacauley Jnr.
in London

The British Prime Minister Tony Blair and the South African President Thabo Mbeki have at a joint press conference in London played down the role of their respective governments in the issue of transferring the trial of Special Court indictee former Liberian President Charles Taylor to The Hague.

Asked whether there has been any development in the request for Charles Taylor's trial to be taken to The Hague, the South African

President said "yes indeed there's been a discussion of that particular matter that you raised, (but) it's been our view that since the matter has been passed to the tribunal in Sierra Leone, in reality it's passed beyond the hands of our governments".

Mr Mbeki added "once the matter moves to the point where it's now, it's really now in the hands of the

various judicial authorities, and they may well agree on these matters to transfer Charles Taylor to Europe to have him at International criminal courts, but I think it's a matter for those judicial authorities rather than our governments."

In his remarks on the issue the British Prime Minister Tony Blair said, he agreed entirely with the South African

President.

Mr Blair added "the trial has to take place and that it takes place through the auspices of the tribunal in the normal way."

He noted further that, "there is an issue about what happens after the trials, and discussions are taking place on that, we in Britain are certainly willing to play our

Contd. Page 2

Taylor now Sierra Leone's business

From Front Page

part in trying to help resolve that issue."

Stating that he cannot say much at present the British Prime Minister maintained, "we understand that it is a major question and for our (Britain) own part if there is a way we can help in resolving that we actually will".

The South African President is in London for talks on Zimbabwe, Sudan, Ivory Coast, the Congo and the implementation of the Gleneagles Plan for Africa.

New Vision
Friday, 26 May 2006

John Leigh Wants Norman Freed

By Mohamed Kallon

Former Sierra Leonean Ambassador to the United States, John Leigh on Monday expressed disgust over the indictment of Chief Sam Hinga Norman by the UN backed Special Court for Sierra Leone. "I want to see Chief Hinga Norman out of detention because the case against him is weak," John Leigh stated while refusing to elaborate for fear of preempting the court proceedings.

Mr. Leigh made this statement

at a ceremony to endorse Vice President Solomon Berewa's candidacy for the Presidency in next year's elections, adding that supporting Chief Norman does not mean shifting support from Veep Berewa.

He further emphasized that the former Interior Minister is still his friend and that he will continue to be by his side irrespective of the case against him.

Meanwhile, Mr. John Leigh who still refused to accept the outcome of the Makeni



*Chief Sam Hinga Norman convention referring to it as
Contd Page 2*

John Leigh Wants Norman Freed

contentious, has pledged his total support for the SLPP leader, maintaining that he is the fittest of all

others wanting to be president of Sierra Leone. He is the most educated and experienced and that he is a nationalist not tribalist, he noted.

The ex-ambassador called on other Sierra Leoneans to join forces with him to support Veep Berewa for the good of Sierra Leone and the entire citizenry.

The Ambassador however ruled out any statement that he is supporting the Veep for appointment in the would-be

government. "I am not looking for appointment. I have an idea and I want to sell my idea to the people," he stressed, adding that he will be coming full time to campaign for Berewa.



The News
Friday, 26 May 2006

SLPP denies knowledge of Norman's illness



The Administrative Secretary of the Sierra Leone People's Party, Brima Koroma has said nobody has approached the party's secretariat to inform the executive about Chief Sam Hinga's illness.



According to Koroma, although there were reports of Norman's ill health in newspapers over the past one week, no relative or official of the special court of Si-

erra Leone has informed them about the situation. On the question of what will be the re-

sponse of the secretariat if officials officially informed them, Koroma said he will not elaborate on that but noted that necessary steps would be taken. Meanwhile, former Ambassador to the USA, John Ernest Leigh has told the press that he supports Chief Hinga Norman. John Leigh, who declared his support for VP Jeffrey Moinah, said he sees no need why Chief Norman continues to suffer at the special court. "Chief Norman should not have been indicted," Leigh said adding, "I have not been privileged to read the indictment, however the special court has informed the public that Chief Norman is well."

The Monitor
May Edition

Former UNAMSIL Peacekeeper Testifies of Abduction and Mistreatment by RUF Fighters

By Thomas P. K. George

On the 22nd of March, a Zambian Army Officer in Charge of Personnel and Administration in the Zambian Army Headquarters based in Lusaka,

testified as a prosecution witness against the RUF in the ongoing trials at the Special Court. A Lieutenant Colonel by rank, the Officer intimated the Court that

Sierra Leone Court Monitoring Programme (SLCMP), 43 Big Waterloo Street, Freetown Page 9
Tel: (+232) (0)76 872 431 / (+232) (0)33 445 287 Email: info@slcmp.org www.slcmp.org

he came to Sierra Leone in January 2000 on a recognizance mission prior to the deployment of the UN peacekeeping mission together with three officers. After the completion of the recognizance tour in the country, upon deployment, the peacekeepers were warned to use minimum force except where there was a threat to life. However, according to the Witness, the RUF did hold the peacekeepers hostage for reasons unclear at the time. Suffice it to say that such acts, are contained in the Indictment against the RUF (Counts 15-18). This is viewed as a state violation of Article 3 common to the Geneva Conventions and of Additional Protocol II punishable under Article 3.c of the Statute of the Special Court.

On the 22nd May, 2000 the Zambian Lieutenant Colonel according to his narration was scheduled to go to Makeni under escort from two other officers, and left Lungi through Port Loko to Lunsar where they were halted by the RUF. At that point, they were made to understand that RUF had put road blocks along the way. Upon receipt of this information, the officer intimated the Court that he dropped off the Logistical Support men and the convoy largely comprised of fighting men with a total strength of two hundred divided into two companies.

In Lunsar, the Lieutenant Colonel communicated with the Force Commander to send an Indian Battalion to link up with them in Makeni. Hardly did the convoy cover twelve kilometers after Lunsar when the Company Commander reported to his military superior to have heard unaimed gunshots and have seen a road block in view. The Lieutenant Colonel further continued that all of a sudden, the peacekeepers in entirety were surrounded by over 100 RUF soldiers after covering a further five hundred kilometers in a town called Moria and had disarmed them. This was the start of isolation from his men according to the Lieutenant Colonel as he was taken later into a bush whilst the men stayed behind. He further stated that children as young as between ten and twelve were also armed with rocket launchers, grenades, or rifles of some sort.

The Witness narrated an incidence in which he came in contact with Morris Kallon (2nd accused) who held

him at gun point demanding that he communicates with his second-in-command who had stayed behind to send along five landrovers, and three armoured vehicles. After a period of time, the Witness reported that he was later driven in a van by the RUF in the company of Morris Kallon. Upon arrival in Makeni, he found that the Zambian soldiers who had left behind had been completely stripped off their uniforms as well as arms and ammunitions. According to the Lt. Col, at that point in time, General Issa Sesay (first accused) resided in Makeni and was taken to his house where he observed a huge number of armed RUF men. Mr. Sesay thereupon instructed the witness at about 9p.m to leave Makeni in a vehicle driven by RUF fighters and heading towards Yengema. At Yengema, the Zambian soldiers were housed in a school block whilst the Lieutenant Colonel, and a Kenyan General, Moline were taken to a house where a woman named Colonel Monica resided, and therein cohabited for a twenty-three-day period.

On the question of the purpose of Issa Sesay and Morris Kallon's visits to Colonel Monica's house in Yengema, Counsel for Mr. Sesay raised an objection that it is not for the Witness to say what he (Issa Sesay) did at the house and it was not up to the Witness to speculate. Counsel repudiated the overall examination in chief as not proper and fair. Key questions according to him did trigger the Witness's response to the Prosecution. This proposition falls in line with the objection raised by Counsel that if his client did not explain his purpose of his frequent visits to Monica's house, then the Witness would be merely invited to speculate on that subject. C.O. Lansana was reported to have been the Brigade Commander for the Kono area where such acts were carried out against the peacekeepers whilst Morris Kallon (2nd accused) was said to be directly reporting to General Issa Sesay (1st accused).

Whilst in captivity, the Witness intimated the Court that the situation deteriorated as time elapsed. There were no beddings, no shoes to put on, and bathing was disallowed. Threats of being killed or incarcerated as long as Foday Sankoh, leader of the RUF was imprisoned in Freetown frequently fell in their ears.

Upon reaching a consensual methodology to remove the peacekeepers from Kono, the RUF had the Lieutenant Colonel and the Kenyan General driven in two separate vehicles to Koidu where they met the Second in Command of the Zambian soldiers. All of them later set off to an unknown destination which was later found out to be Pendembu where a Liberian military helicopter was waiting to fly them to Monrovia Airport. At the airport the soldiers received physical medical examination. The soldiers were eventually flown over to Lungi in Sierra Leone after a night in Monrovia on board a UN helicopter. In the Witness's testimony, he mentioned that he later came to find out that three soldiers went missing but one reappeared quite later and two have since been declared dead. The lieutenant Colonel, during the disarmament period confirmed to have deployed troops in Lungiroi, Mabom, and later on in Kenema where he was stationed for the entire disarmament process.

During cross examination, Counsel for Issa Sesay enquired into the first contacts the Witness had with the Prosecution which the Witness confirmed that it was through a phone call, and gave his statement using that medium. On the question posed by Counsel on why other Zambians have not been forthcoming to testify on the same experience, the Witness said he would not be in a position to determine why exactly that was so. The Bench thereupon interjected and ruled that Counsel was inviting the Witness to speculate and therefore he has now been hoisted by his own petard as he had

earlier on made an objection to such questioning techniques. Largely questions by Mr. Wayne Jordhash sought perhaps to establish that since the Witness was granted liberty to visit his troops to know their state of health, and did receive foodstuffs from the local inhabitants such as mangoes, then they were also fed. And also that since all the troops were retained back to Lungi unharmed, the RUF did have regard for peacekeepers lives.

Still under cross examination, but from Counsel for second accused, the Witness denied knowledge of any information regarding the taking of a pass before going through RUF territories. The Lieutenant Colonel said General Jettly; the Force Commander never briefed him about security risks involved in executing his mandate. Counsel suggested therefore that the RUF were basically at the time acting in preemptive self defence especially when the peacekeepers were determined to bulldoze their way through.

Counsel for the third accused adopted his colleague's submissions. In reexamination, Mr. Harrison read a portion of the witness's testimony relating to use of child soldiers, and some local inhabitants in Kono intimating the Lieutenant Colonel of sexual harassment by RUF especially in Yengema. The Witness answered in the affirmative, and confirmed the incidence to be correct.

Cocorioko website

Friday May 26, 2006

<http://www.cocorioko.com>

YANK , 2 SIERRA LEONEANS GRANTED BAIL

By Tamba Borbor from Freetown

U.S. citizen Michael Chemildline, and Sierra Leoneans Collins Kanu and Felix Rogers who were facing trial on the charges of conspiracy against the state, were Wednesday 24th May, 2006 granted a discretionary bail by Magistrate Samuel Margai of Court Number One.

The bail bond for three accused persons was twenty-five thousand Leones each which sum seventy-five thousand Leones and that the two sureties that resident in the Freetown judicial estate. Giving his verdict on the matter before granting bail for the now discharged persons, Magistrate Margai said “it is my discretion that your bail has been granted as pre.”

The three men are in hot waters for allegedly taking unauthorized pictures of the Sierra Leone Special Court. Reports are that the American is part of a conspiracy to spring former Liberian President , Charles Taylor from captivity at the court’s prison. Taylor is being held for allegedly providing support for Sierra Leone’s former rebel group, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) which sparked civil war in the country that killed over 50,000 people.

IRIN

Thursday, 25 May 2006

SIERRA LEONE: New war crimes court president pleads for extra funds

[This report does not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations]



© IRIN

Freetown

FREETOWNS, 25 May 2006 (IRIN) - Sierra Leone's UN-backed war crimes tribunal this week will be presided for the first time by a Sierra-Leonean, Justice George Gelaga King. And making sure the Special Court receives extra funding to survive will be a top priority, he told IRIN in an interview.

His appointment was "quite a big challenge, because it's a tremendous responsibility," said the 73-year-old judge. "I as a Sierra Leonean consider it quite an honour and I am proud because I am a Sierra Leonean."

But the court set up in 2002 initially for three years was far from accomplishing its mandate and needed more time and more funding, he stressed. Unlike the ICTR tribunal for Rwanda and the ICTY tribunal for Yugoslavia, financed by set contributions from the UN's 187 members, the Special Court was dependent on voluntary funds.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone "is an experiment, and is called popularly a hybrid court because it includes Sierra Leoneans and internationals, but the interesting thing is that the funding is done voluntarily by certain states and we depend on such voluntary funding very heavily".

Justice King, who takes up duty on 27 May, said "it is envisaged that the first trial will not be completed before the end of 2006, so any thought of the court ending this year or even 2007 is unrealistic in my estimation."

"If you want justice to be done you must provide the necessary funds" he added, saying funds were needed not only to run the court but for out-reach programmes, for defense counsel and for an appeals chamber to come into being once the first trial has been completed.

The court has been at work on three trials, concerning the three parties to the 1991-2002 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.

But the tribunal grabbed international attention earlier this year with the arrest of its most prominent indictee - former Liberian President Charles Taylor, who in his first court appearance 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 international tribunal for crimes allegedly perpetrated while in office.

Justice King declined direct comment on the Taylor case, but said he did not feel particularly challenged by the fact that it would make the history books. During his almost three decades as a judge, he and outgoing Chief Prosecutor Desmond de Silva notably had appeared as defence counsels in the first treason trial held in Sierra Leone, with one of the accused being current Special Court indictee Chief Sam Hinga Norman.

King, who lectured in law for 15 years and described one of the highlights of his career as the day "I delivered the very first lecture in our own indigenous Sierra Leone law school in 1990," said that the Special Court for Sierra Leone has already delivered two landmark rulings.

The first was a motion in the appeals chamber in which Taylor's lawyers "were objecting that an incumbent head of state cannot be indicted and the appeals chamber ruled ... that an incumbent head of state does not necessarily have immunity from trial with regards to alleged offences against international humanitarian law."

The second was that an appeals chamber ruling that recruiting children for the purposes of being soldiers "is impermissible and an indictable offence."

"I think we are doing a good job," he said, referring to the work of the Special Court, he said "I think we are doing a good job ... I don't think we have any cause for alarm at this instant."

Irish Times

Thursday, 25 May 2006

Sierra Leone protests at plans to move Taylor trial

Chris Stephen in Freetown, Sierra Leone

Opposition is mounting in Sierra Leone to an Anglo-American plan to shift the war crimes trial of former Liberian president Charles Taylor from Freetown to The Hague.

The arrival of Taylor in Sierra Leone's Special Court marks the first time a former African president has faced a war crimes trial.

Taylor is accused of masterminding thousands of murders, rapes and mutilations from his base in Liberia during Sierra Leone's 12 years of civil war.

But the cheers when he was arrested last month have given way to alarm after the retiring court president, Justice Raja Fernando, called for the trial to be moved, citing security concerns.

Sources in Sierra Leone say Britain and the US back the plan, worried that Taylor remains a destabilising force across West Africa, and they plan to ask the UN Security Council to consider a move to the International Criminal Court in The Hague in late June.

However, a popular backlash is now gathering momentum.

Parliamentarians have called for the trial to be held at the Special Court, jointly controlled by the government and the UN, with MPs arguing that it is important to show that Africa can run its own war crimes courts.

"The majority of people think that if he is tried here it will give the psychological satisfaction of seeing this man, who caused so much harm to us, now being brought to trial," said Dr Alusine Fufanah, chairman of the parliament's Human Rights Committee.

MPs say the expected EUR 10 million cost of moving the trial to The Hague, including big stipends for court staff, would be better spent on Sierra Leone's poor, most of whom survive on less than EUR 1 a day.

Human rights groups have echoed the MPs' concerns.

"We want him to be tried here," said James Matthews of the National Movement for Democracy and Human Rights. "If the trial is held far away the people are not involved, they do not hear, they do not see."

Many war victims feel the same way, including Ishmael Daramy (48), a farmer from northern Sierra Leone who was the victim of a particularly brutal practice by the Taylor-backed Revolutionary United Front.

In response to President Ahmad Kabbah's call to "join hands" in peace, the rebels began hacking off the hands of suspected government supporters.

Walking home to his village one day in June 1998, Mr Daramy ran into an RUF patrol.

He shows me what happened next: forced to kneel, a log was produced and put behind him. One soldier held him down while another pulled his arm back, resting his hand on the log, then severing it.

His second hand was then hacked off in the same way. "The soldiers told me 'go to Kabbah, go to the UN to get your hands back'," he said.

Mr Daramy managed to stagger for eight hours along the road, holding his arms above his head to stem the flow of blood, until he reached his village.

He too says the trial should be held in front of Sierra Leonians. "It will be a good example for anyone who wants to do the war."

In a country where 80 per cent of the population is illiterate and radio provides the only form of news for most people, moving the trial to The Hague, where few journalists will go to cover it, will mean the population is likely to remain divorced from proceedings.

The movement debate has also left the court in disarray. While the president is in favour, the court's principal defence lawyer, Vincent Nmehielle, is objecting. "The institutions are all here," he told The Irish Times. "The witnesses are all here. We want the people to heal and to confront their aggressors."

Meanwhile the Netherlands has said it does not want to host the trial unless another country agrees to house Taylor if he is convicted.

Sources in Freetown said the court president's decision is based on a secret security report showing Taylor still controls powerful forces that could spring him from custody. Yet it is hard to see how such a jailbreak could be successful as the special court sits in a virtual fortress.

Meanwhile, Taylor's arrival in Freetown has triggered bitterness among his victims. "Taylor is in jail, yes, but he has good food, he has comfort, he has medical aid," said Mr Daramy. "Meanwhile I have to beg."

New York Post

Thursday, 25 May 2006

Jersey Man in Africa Spy Rap

Rita Delfiner and Cynthia R. Fagen

A New Jersey postal worker who took pictures of a high-security compound on a visit to Sierra Leone has been charged with spying - and hatching a scheme to spring ex-Liberian President Charles Taylor who is jailed there for alleged war crimes.

Prosecutors in Freetown claim Michael Chemidlin, 58, snapped photos of the Special Court for Sierra Leone last month in a plot to free Taylor.

Taylor faces charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity for allegedly backing Sierra Leonean rebels who terrorized victims by hacking off their arms, legs, ears and lips during that nation's civil war.

In Scotch Plains where Chemidlin lives, relatives of the former U.S. soldier, a father of three sons, can't believe what's happening to him.

"I don't think my father even knows who he [Taylor] is," said son Mark, 26. "This whole thing has been blown way out of proportion."

Chemidlin was released yesterday on \$8,000 bail, but is not allowed to leave the country.

"I talked to my dad for the first time," his son said. "He's OK, but he told me he was going to the hospital. He's not feeling great. His hopes are high and he just wants to come home."

Chemidlin's family says the Vietnam vet, an Army National Guard staff sergeant who served in Iraq for 10 months last year, is very religious and the self-styled missionary went to Africa for a month to proselytize.

Next Tuesday a judge will decide if there is enough evidence to throw Chemidlin back in jail on espionage charges, for which he faces 15 years in prison.

The Analyst (Monrovia)

Wednesday, 24 May 2006

Taylor Associate Accuses USA, Britain For Guns In Liberia

By Edwood Dennis

A close associate of the detained former Liberian President Charles Taylor, Representative Saah Gborlie, has accused super powers, especially the United States of America and Great Britain of been responsible for weapons that were used in the 14-year bloody civil war that claimed many lives and left properties destroyed in Liberia and the sub-region.

Addressing students at the global action week on small arms at the Young Men Christian Association (YMCA) building Tuesday, Saah Gborlie, current Chairman of the House Committee on Security, said those weapons that were used to implement violence through the civil war came from the United States and the Great Britain even though these countries are permanent members of the UN Security Council.

According to the Margibi County Lawmaker, between 1988 and 2001 huge quantity of arms came out of the United States and Great Britain than aid to under developed countries including Liberia.

Besides, he said despite USA and Great Britain presence on the UN Security Council as permanent members, influential individuals brought arms in Liberia in exchange of major natural resources including diamonds.

He further disclosed those highly placed individuals and arms dealers in both USA and Great Britain used their weapons influence to place Liberians in the center of death and destruction through the civil war while they wheeled out Liberia's national resources for their personal games.

Rep. Gborlie said the governments of the USA and Great Britain have the power to prevent the spread of small arms in Liberia at the time but chose not to do so because of personal interests.

He said what was unthinkable was for the two nations to continuously serve as UN Security Council permanent bodies yet the can not control their citizens who are involved in the sale of weapons to spread civil war in under develop countries.

He said the sale of arms by citizens of powerful nations was posing threat to human survival in many states especially Liberia and its neighboring countries therefore the US and Great Britain government needed to develop a system that would prevent arms dealers from selling weapons to illegal organizations.

The Taylor close associate further indicated that UN Security Council along with governments of powerful nations needed to also monitor the operation of arms dealers living in their countries including the USA and Great Britain.

Rep. Gborlie then assured the students of the National Legislature's preparedness of working acts on small to ensure that proper mechanisms are put into place to create a networking system on arms monitoring and control in neighboring states to avoid the repeat of what Liberians went through in 15 years in the country.

Hon. Gborlie than warned that hidden weapons were dangerous to the development of the Liberian state therefore students, youth groups should join hands with institutions responsible for the collection of hidden weapons to make Liberia a gun free society if there should be a guarantee security to encourage investors in the country.

Human Rights Watch

Friday, 26 May 2006

For Immediate Release

U.S.: Investigate Taylor's Son for Torture, War Crimes

Son of Ex-Liberian President in U.S. Custody, To Be Arraigned on Tuesday

(New York, May 26, 2006) - The U.S. Department of Justice should investigate with a view to prosecuting Charles "Chuckie" Taylor, Jr., the son of former Liberian President Charles Taylor, for torture and war crimes, Human Rights Watch said today. The younger Taylor is implicated in committing such abuses while he served as the commander of an elite pro-government military unit in Liberia.

The former Liberian president's son is scheduled to be arraigned on Tuesday, May 30 at 10 a.m. in Miami before Judge Barry L. Garber in the New North Courtroom of the Dyer Building. He is indicted for falsely stating his father's name in a U.S. passport application. He was taken into U.S. custody on March 30 when he attempted to enter the United States at Miami International Airport.

"'Chuckie' Taylor headed a military unit that allegedly committed egregious abuses such as burning Liberian civilians alive," said Richard Dicker, International Justice director at Human Rights Watch. "Federal law allows for investigation and prosecution of such crimes. We look to the Justice Department to do just that."

According to information and research by Human Rights Watch and other international human rights organizations, "Chuckie" Taylor was involved in committing serious crimes from approximately 1997 through at least 2002, most notably while he headed the notorious Anti-Terrorist Unit (ATU), a unit of the Liberian government security forces.

Although the younger Taylor lived in Liberia, he is a U.S. citizen who was born in the United States. It is a crime under federal law for a U.S. citizen to commit torture and war crimes abroad.

"Federal laws on torture and war crimes committed abroad have been on the books for years, but we don't know of a single person who has been prosecuted for them," said Dicker. "How serious can the U.S. be about justice when these laws have never been used to hold our own citizens to account? With 'Chuckie' Taylor in custody, this is an ideal moment to wield this authority."

Recently, the U.N. Committee against Torture expressed concern that there have been no prosecutions under the U.S. criminal torture statute.

According to information and research available to Human Rights Watch, during "Chuckie" Taylor's tenure as head of the ATU, the unit committed torture, including various violent assaults, beating people to death, rape, and burning civilians alive. This information suggests that the ATU also committed war crimes during Liberia's armed conflict from 1999 to 2003 - including extrajudicial killing of civilians and prisoners,

rape and other torture, abduction, and child soldier recruitment - while "Chuckie" Taylor headed the ATU.

To underscore the need for investigation and prosecution of Taylor, Jr. on torture and war crimes under federal law (18 USC sections 2340A and 2441), Human Rights Watch submitted a memorandum to the Department of Justice on serious abuses in which "Chuckie" Taylor is

implicated. The memorandum includes Human Rights Watch's research and information from other human rights organizations, along with other open source material documenting the evidence against him to date.

Background on ATU

Shortly after his inauguration as Liberia's president in 1997, Charles Taylor created the ATU. The ATU was initially used in Liberia to protect government buildings, the Executive Mansion, the international airport, and to provide security for some foreign embassies. According to Human Rights Watch interviews with former Liberian combatants, the ATU's responsibilities were expanded in 1999 to include combat and other war-related duties, after rebels from the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy began operating in Liberian territory.

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 25 May 2006

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

International Clips on Liberia

THE IRISH TIMES Date: May 25, 2006

Sierra Leone protests at plans to move Taylor trial

Chris Stephen in Freetown, Sierra Leone

SIERRA LEONE: Opposition is mounting in Sierra Leone to an Anglo-American plan to shift the war crimes trial of former Liberian president Charles Taylor from Freetown to The Hague. The arrival of Taylor in Sierra Leone's Special Court marks the first time a former African president has faced a war crimes trial. Taylor is accused of masterminding thousands of murders, rapes and mutilations from his base in Liberia during Sierra Leone's 12 years of civil war.

05/25/2006 08:34:51

Report confirms slave labour at Liberia's rubber plantations

Monrovia_(dpa) _ A joint UN-Liberian government report confirmed that Liberian rubber plantation workers are being subjected to "appalling and hazardous" working conditions, Agriculture Minister Christopher Toe announced Thursday. Produced by a Task Force set up by Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative Alan Doss, the report said that "occupational safety and health" standards were not observed at any of Liberia's major rubber plantations, all run by international rubber manufacturer Firestone. The Task Force said none of the plantations provided protective gear such as masks, gloves or rubber boots for the workers.

International Clips on West Africa

Human Rights Watch: Trend of civilian abuse in Ivory Coast threatens elections

Source: AP Alert - Crime Date: May 25, 2006

DAKAR, Senegal Ivory Coast military have tortured civilians, and rebels have forcefully extorted bribes in a series of unchecked abuses that throw into question the country's ability to hold peaceful elections this year, an international monitoring group said Thursday. Human Rights Watch said police in Ivory Coast's government-held south have routinely extorted money from civilians at security checkpoints, at times beating or even killing citizens without facing prosecution.

Local Media - Newspapers

World Bank Offers Liberia US\$30 Million Grant

(The Inquirer)

- World Bank and Liberian Government officials led by Public Works Minister Willis Knuckles concluded in Washington D.C, recently an agreement for a US\$30 million grant for the emergency repair of roads and restoration of water supplies and electricity to Monrovia, according to a Public Works Ministry press release. Of the amount US\$22.5 is allocated for the rehabilitation of the Monrovia-Ganta and Monrovia-Buchanan highways, US\$3.5 million for the restoration of water supplies and about US\$2.5 million to provide fuel for the emergency electrical power program for Monrovia.

Liberia Loses 40,000 Acres of Forest

(Daily Observer)

- Speaking at a church convention in Gbarnga, Bong County recently, Forestry Development Authority Managing Director John Woods said that at least 40,000 acres of forest in the country had been destroyed by shifting cultivation. He said that a new measure had been put in place to enable village communities to take charge of their own forest.

University President Praises UNMIL

(The Analyst and The Informer)

- University of Liberia (U.L.) President Dr. Al Hassan Conteh has praised the UNMIL for its continuing support to the U.L. He spoke Wednesday at the U.L. main campus during an adjunct faculty acquaintance workshop which brought together 31 UNMIL and Liberian volunteer lecturers who will commence their services with U.L. at the beginning of the next trimester in July.

Local Media – Radio Veritas *(News monitored yesterday at 18:45 pm)*

President Directs UNMIL to Halt Sale of Rubber

- Receiving the report of a Presidential Rubber Task Force Tuesday, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf directed UNMIL to halt the purchase and sale of rubber from the Guthrie and Sinoe Rubber Plantations.
- President Johnson-Sirleaf said that the plantations would be placed under interim management teams pending clarification of their concession agreements.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Foreign Financial Expert Assigned to Petroleum Refining Company

- Addressing a news conference yesterday, Liberia Petroleum Refining Company (LPRC) Managing Director Harry Greaves said that under the Governance Economic Management Assistance Program (GEMAP), an international financial expert, John Limburg had been assigned as Chief Financial Officer of the Company.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

World Approves US\$30 Million Grant for Liberia

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Agriculture Minister Says Investors Will No Longer Exploit Liberia

- Agriculture Minister Christopher Toe said in Monrovia yesterday that foreign investors would not be allowed to exploit Liberia's resources as was done in the past.
- The interests of Liberians will henceforth be taken into consideration when the government enters new concessions, Dr. Toe added.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Governance Reform Commission Executive Director Calls for Shared National Vision

- Speaking during a meeting to discuss the need for a shared national vision for Liberia, Governance Reform Commission Executive Director Dr. Amos Sawyer said that without a shared national vision, reforms in other sectors of government would not succeed. He said that the process to formulate such a national vision was underway beginning with research and dialogue to solicit public opinion.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Liberian Refugees Face Eviction from Camp in Côte d'Ivoire

- Liberians at the Tabou refugee camp in Côte d'Ivoire have been asked to leave the camp by the end of May or be evicted, a Talking Drum Studio correspondent said recently.

Complete versions of the UNMIL International Press Clips, UNMIL Daily Liberian Radio Summary and UNMIL Liberian Newspapers Summary are posted each day on the UNMIL Bulletin Board. If you are unable to access the UNMIL Bulletin Board or would like further information on the content of the summaries, please contact Mr. Jeddi Armah at armahj@un.org.