

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



PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

as at:

Thursday, 27 August 2009

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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New Age
Thursday, 27 August 2009

...Rwanda imprisonment Special Court violates rights of Prisoners!

Our investigation has revealed that passport forms collected on behalf of sentence AFRC prisoners were endorsed without the due consent of the prisoners in whose names the would be passports would have been issued.

Sources say that passport forms applied for on behalf of three AFRC prisoners came to light after officials of the Special Court confronted the affected prisoners at their detention facility to cause them append their signatures on passport application forms filled without their consent.

It was disclosed that the three sentenced prisoners refused to sign the passport forms and have took hold of the documents on grounds of what they say was "An act of criminality by a court referred to as an international court." It was further revealed that information such as names of next of kin, date of birth, marital status, place of residence, height, colour, date of application etc of the three AFRC prisoners were authoritatively endorsed by management of Special Court without the consent of those whose passports the court has applied for.

It could be recalled that an order confirming the transfer of convicted persons to Rwanda where they are to serve their sentences was issued by the President of Special Court, Hon. Justice Renate Win-

ter, to all the AFRC sentenced prisoners.

Content in letter, our finding revealed, reads as follows: Ibrahim Bazy Kamara, Alex Tamba Brima and Santigie Borbor Kanu 'shall serve their sentences in the Republic of Rwanda.'

Sources say that copy of order of sentence served to all three convicted persons indicate clear that, "on 9th June 2008, President Koroma communicated to the Registrar of Special Court that the Government of Sierra Leone is not in position and is not willing to take custody of persons convicted by the Special Court in the fulfilment of the court's mandate, and further communicated on 24th April 2009 that his Government's commitment to the sustenance of peace both in Sierra Leone and in the sub-region as well as weakness in institutional arrangement in Sierra Leone ruled out the enforcement of sentences imposed by the Special Court in Sierra Leone."

It could be recalled that article 22 of the statute of the Special Court makes straight the fact that imprisonment shall be served in Sierra Leone. And that if circumstances so require, imprisonment may also be served in any of the states which have concluded with the International Criminal tribunal for Rwanda etc. The words 'shall' and 'may' as stated in article 22 of the statute of the SCSL could be interpreted as saying that 'imprisonment can only be served outside Sierra Leone in a situation where options have been

Awoko

Thursday, 27 August 2009

Charles Taylor denies appointing envoy at RUF diamond sites

A UN Panel of Experts report in 2000 alleged that an illegal diamonds trade involving Former Liberian President Charles Taylor and the RUF Rebels fuelled the decade long civil war in Sierra Leone.

The UN Panel damning report has taken center stage at Mr. Taylor's war crimes trial in The Hague, The Netherlands.

He has also denied any government officials involvement in the trade and wondered why America cannot stop the drug trade at its border with Mexico

The UN Panel alleged that Mr. Taylor had a Liberian representative in Kono to supervise diamond mining operations there.

The UN Panel report named Dennis Superman Mingo, a Liberian as Mr. Taylor's representative to the diamond rich town of Kono.

Mr. Taylor told the court that diamond transactions did not take place between him and any member of the RUF.

The Panel reported that it was not possible for such huge diamond trade to have taken place between Sierra Leone and Liberia without the permission of Liberian officials.

The Former Liberian President denied any government involvement in the illicit trade. The Panel further declared that some government officials took advantage of the weak administration of Mr. Taylor to engage in the diamond trade with the RUF. Mr. Taylor disagreed, and described the Panel's suggestion as foolish. He said the dense forest of Liberia makes it difficult for any government to detect smuggling across the border. Mr. Taylor told the court that the UN Panel of Experts visited Liberia during his administration, but he was not given the opportunity to respond to the allegation of gun running and illicit diamond trade.

Premier News
Thursday, 27 August 2009

A PROJECT OF THE OPEN SOCIETY JUSTICE INITIATIVE

THE TRIAL OF
CHARLES TAYLOR
defendant



Charles Taylor Dismisses United Nations Report On Sierra Leone as “Disgraceful”

A 2001 United Nations Expert Panel Report, which accused Mr. Taylor of fueling the conflict in Sierra Leone through diamond and arms trade with Sierra Leonean rebel forces, took center stage today in Mr. Taylor's testimony. Mr. Taylor dismissed the report as “disgraceful” and full of “disinformation,” as he refuted all its allegations against him.

The report, which Mr Taylor dismissed as biased against him in yesterday's testimony, alleged that Mr. Taylor received diamonds from two key rebel commanders in Sierra Leone: Ibrahim Ba, a Senegalese rebel commander who worked with Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels, and Johnny Paul Koroma, leader of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), a group of soldiers who overthrew the government of President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah in May 1997. The AFRC joined forces with the RUF rebels but they were forcefully removed from power by West African peacekeepers in February 1998. Mr. Taylor denied receiving diamonds from any of these individuals.

“I never had a business relationship with Ibrahim Ba. I have never collaborated with Ba for any sale of diamonds. There has never been a business relationship with Ba. None whatsoever. There are no documents to prove this. I don't recall any evidence that mentioned diamonds taken from Johnny Paul Koroma,” Mr. Taylor said.

The UN report further named several individuals with whom Mr. Taylor is said to have had diamond transactions including Lt. Colonels Kennedy, Abdul Razak and Victor, each of whom were commanders of an RUF “mining unit” in Kono diamond fields in Sierra Leone. Responding to this, Mr. Taylor said that “I have had no contact with any of them.”

The report also accused Mr. Taylor of having representatives in Kono and Tongo Fields in Sierra Leone, where the RUF rebels mined diamonds. Mr. Taylor denied having any representative in any of these places.

“I don't know who they are talking about but I never had any representative anywhere,” Mr. Taylor told the judges.

Mr. Taylor also responded to allegations in the UN report that the RUF guesthouse in Liberia was used by RUF commanders for diamond transactions. Mr. Taylor denied knowledge of any such transactions taking place. “If I had found out, it would have been shut down. I had no idea it was used for such business activities,” he said.

Mr. Taylor told the judges that while he did “not dispute the fact that diamonds were smuggled to Liberia,” his government had no involvement in such diamond deals. He denied receiving any diamonds from RUF commander Sam Bockarie.

The prosecution has alleged that while RUF leader Foday Sankoh was imprisoned in Nigeria, RUF commanders took diamonds to Mr. Taylor for safe keeping pending the release of their leader. Mr. Taylor has denied this allegation.

“I had no knowledge of the fact that Sam Bockarie brought diamonds to Liberia. I did not hold diamonds for safe keeping, I did not hold diamonds pending anybody's release,” Mr. Taylor told the judges.

According to the UN Expert Report, “this trade [diamond trade with the RUF] cannot be conducted without high level government involvement.” Denying his government's involvement in the diamond trade with RUF rebels, Mr. Taylor told the court that “the nature of the diamond trade then and now did not require any government involvement. This is the case not only in Liberia. Tourists buy diamonds,” he said.

Mr. Taylor referenced that even though the United States has a fence separating its border with Mexico, that has not stopped drug cartels from transporting drugs into the United States. “Why do they expect Liberia to detect little stones coming to the country? It is insulting,” he said.

The UN Expert Report also stated that Mr. Taylor maintained training facilities for RUF rebels at various locations in Liberia including Batala. Mr. Taylor denied that any such training facilities existed. “None whatsoever, no training facilities for RUF in Liberia,” he said.

He also told the judges that no prosecution witness has mentioned any training facility for the RUF at Batala. The only training facility that has been mentioned by prosecution witnesses is the one at Camp Name, Mr. Taylor said. According to the UN Expert Report, there is sufficient oral and documentary evidence to show that trainings were taking place at Batala. In response, Mr. Taylor explained that Sierra Leonean rebels who had followed Sam Bockarie when he relocated to Liberia in December 1999 were trained at Batala as part of the Anti Terrorist Unit (ATU) but they underwent such training only after they had been granted Liberian citizenship. They were therefore not RUF rebels anymore, he said.

Mr. Taylor went on to dismiss the legitimacy of the report altogether. “This is the UN Panel writing this report and it is disgraceful. They should have done their home work. This is disinformation,” he said.

Mr. Taylor is responding to allegations that he provided support for RUF rebels in Sierra Leone through the supply of arms and ammunition in return for diamonds. The prosecution also alleges that Mr. Taylor gave direct orders to RUF commanders and that through his acts or omissions, he bears responsibility for the crimes committed by RUF rebels in Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor has denied all these allegations. He is presently testifying as a witness in his own defense at the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

The Exclusive

Thursday, 27 August 2009

Taylor Had A Rep. In Kono

The United Nations Panel of Experts report in 2000 alleged that an illegal diamonds trade involving Former Liberian President Charles Taylor and the RUF Rebels fuelled the decade long civil war in Sierra Leone. The UN Panel damning report has taken center stage at Mr. Taylor's war crimes trial in The Hague. Mr. Taylor denied any government officials involvement in the trade and wondered why America cannot stop the drug trade at its border with Mexico..

The UN Panel alleged that Mr. Taylor had a Liberian representative in the Sierra Leonean town of Kono to supervise diamonds mining operations there. The UN Panel report named Dennis Superman Mingo, a Liberian as Mr. Taylor's representative to the diamond rich town of Kono.

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Panel reported that it was not possible for such huge diamond trade to have taken place between Sierra Leone and Liberia without the permission of Liberian officials.

The Former Liberian President denied any government involvement in the illicit trade.

The Panel further declared that some government officials took advantage of the weak administration of Mr. Taylor to engage in the diamond trade with the RUF.

Mr. Taylor disagreed, and described the Panel's suggestion as foolish. He said the dense forest of Liberia makes it difficult for any government to detect smuggling across the border.

Mr. Taylor told the court America has similar problem at its border with Mexico. Mr. Taylor told the court the UN Panel of Experts visited Liberia during his administration, but he was not given the opportunity to respond to the allegation of gun running and illicit diamond trade.

The Exclusive
Thursday, 27 August 2009

NaCSA Plans Big For War Victims

The Commissioner for the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA), Saidu Conton-Sesay and officials of the Commission, past Tuesday presented a proposal on the Reparation Programme for war victims.

In his presentation the Commissioner told the President that the programme will target over 27,000 victims including the amputees, the war wounded and widows, among others.

Already, as part of the reparation programme, bullets in the bodies of four victims have been removed. According to the Commissioner, plans are also underway

to establish a War Victim's Fund. A date in October this year, he said, has been slated for the commencement of the reparation programme.

In his response, the President thanked the Commissioner and his team for a job well done and assured them of his government's support.

The President further assured the team that government Ministers and other functionaries would contribute to the War Victim's Fund. The reparation programme, the President said, is a recommendation in the TRC re-

port which he said his government is committed to. The proposal, the President told the team, was important as a lot of innocent lives were victims of the decade long war.

The President was particularly impressed over the educational support for some 149 children in the programme and expressed hope that the programme will be sustainable.

"We would look at the proposal," the President told the team.

Charlestaylortrial.org
Wednesday, 26 August 2009

United Nations Panel Is At The Heart Of Case Against Taylor, He Says

By Alpha Sesay

Charles Taylor said that a 2000 United Nations report charging him with gun running and diamond smuggling made recommendations that that not only hurt him, but punished Liberia. This, Mr. Taylor told Special Court for Sierra Leone judges today, was a “travesty of justice.”

For the past three days, Mr. Taylor has been responding to allegations made against him in a 2000 United Nations Expert Panel Report that he was involved in fueling the conflict in Sierra Leone through diamond and arms trade with Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels. The UN report reinforces prosecution allegations against Mr. Taylor that he supported RUF rebels through the supply of arms and ammunition in return for diamonds. Mr. Taylor has denied these allegations.

“This report actually is at the heart of this case and because of the way this report is written, together with the level of disinformation in it, it puts us in a bad position because it talks about diamonds, arms and training bases in Liberia. This is the basis of the case that has not been subject to legal scrutiny,” Mr. Taylor said.

Mr. Taylor accused the UN of writing an intelligence report rather than an investigative report against him, telling the judges that “Ian Smillie was not an academic but an intelligence analyst. This was not a report about going out to an investigation. These are words that you use in an intelligence report. The inclusion of Ian Smillie on the panel contaminated the panel from the onset.”

Mr. Taylor accused the UN of ignoring the good work he did to facilitate a peaceful end to the conflict in Sierra Leone. He said that any fair report would have pointed out that he made significant contributions to take the RUF rebels to the negotiating table. The report, Mr. Taylor said “does not present the whole truth. There is not one mention of my contribution towards peace in Sierra Leone. This report is not fair, it is fickle and should not stand.”

Mr. Taylor told the court that when the report was published in 2000, his government in Liberia sent an immediate response to the UN Secretary General in which they tried to put the record straight. “We were furious and we did not hesitate to respond immediately. The government put a team together and we responded,” he said.

Mr. Taylor told the judges that the Panel of Experts exceeded their mandate by recommending punitive actions against Liberia. “It was like we are accusers and we are now the judge and jury,” Mr. Taylor said about the Panel of Experts.

Among other things, the report recommended that a moratorium be put on all export of diamonds and timber from Liberia. In response to this, Mr. Taylor said that this recommendation was not even necessary as 80-90% of diamonds from Liberia were exported without his government’s knowledge. Mr. Taylor said that there were many conflict diamonds that entered the market from countries like Angola and Congo but were certified as coming from Liberia.

Mr. Taylor also denied allegations in the report that he had a training base at Batala in Liberia where RUF rebels were trained. “My government denies that anyone other than Liberian personnel were trained at Batala,” he said.

Mr. Taylor dismissed the entire report as a step by Western countries to smear his image and get him out of power. Pointing fingers at the United States, Mr. Taylor said that at some point, US Senator Judd Gregg even asked for his assassination during his presidency.

“I told you I was an accident waiting to happen as part of a regime change policy. This is a travesty of justice. This is all made up, there is no truth in it,” Mr. Taylor said.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 26 August 2009

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

International Clips on Liberia

New Liberia Diplomat Focused on Flights, Trade

<http://www.globalatlanta.com/article/17535/>

Atlanta - 08.26.09 The West African nation of Liberia has appointed a new honorary consul general to serve the state of Georgia. Cynthia B. Nash, CEO of Atlanta-based trade and non-profit consultancy Global Strategies for Good LLC, will officially assume her new post at a commissioning ceremony at the World Trade Center Atlanta on Monday, Aug. 31. Ms. Nash replaces Walter Young, who had represented Liberia in the state since 1985. He is the brother of former United Nations Ambassador and Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young, Ms. Nash's official jurisdiction will be the state of Georgia, but she will also handle consular services including visas for Liberian citizens throughout the Southeast. In addition, she will have the authority to grant visas necessary for Americans to travel to Liberia. Visas will be a growing need as Liberia's economy improves, especially if Delta Air Lines Inc. begins its proposed flight to the country, she said. "The hope is that with the debt relief that Liberia has received and also with the direct flight coming from Delta Air Lines, we need more boots on the ground in this country," she said. "We need to help build the capacity to handle the number of visas that are required and requested."

Liberia / Alleged Serious Misconduct by an UNMIL Staff Member

MONROVIA, Liberia, August 26, 2009/African Press Organization (APO)/ — The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) has learned of the untimely death of one of its international civilian staff members, an American citizen, who died on 24 August at his home in Monrovia. The circumstances of his death are being investigated. The staff member was the subject of an investigation into allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse of minors. As a UN civilian staff and American citizen working in Liberia, the initial investigations were carried out by the Government of Liberia in collaboration with UNMIL and the US Embassy in Monrovia. During the course of these investigations, his movement was restricted to his residence because of a pre-existing medical condition. UNMIL and the US Government, through its Embassy in Monrovia, are cooperating fully with the Liberian Government's investigation into the allegations. In accordance with the UN policy concerning allegations of staff member misconduct, the UN also conducts an independent investigation. In this regard, two investigators have arrived in Liberia from the UN's Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) regional office in Nairobi to carry out a full investigation.

International Clips on West Africa

Sierra Leone

U.S. Envoy Damns Corruption in Country

Freetown, Aug 25, 2009 (Concord Times/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- United States Ambassador to Sierra Leone on Monday said corruption at every level in the country is completely intolerable. June Carter Perry spoke while welcoming the Captain and crew of the United States coast guard cutter (USCGC), Legare.

"While many officials work hard to ensure that Sierra Leonean resources benefit Sierra Leone, there are a powerful few who put their own interests ahead of the national interest," Ambassador Perry said. She stressed that Sierra Leoneans should benefit from the nation's valuable marine and other resources, but noted it was up to the nation's leaders to make that happen. According to Ms. Perry, the United States will seek to provide the support and assistance Sierra Leone requires eradicating corruption, ensuring national security and to put the nation's natural resources to work for the people. She said the effective implementation of the law was essential to the country's economic growth as was the elimination of corruption at all level.

Charles Taylor Dismisses United Nations Report On Sierra Leone as 'Disgraceful'

Aug 26, 2009 (CharlesTaylorTrial.org/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- A 2001 United Nations Expert Panel Report, which accused Mr. Taylor of fueling the conflict in Sierra Leone through diamond and arms trade with Sierra Leonean rebel forces, took center stage today in Mr. Taylor's testimony. Mr. Taylor dismissed the report as "disgraceful" and full of "disinformation," as he refuted all its allegations against him. The report, which Mr Taylor dismissed as biased against him in yesterday's testimony, alleged that Mr. Taylor received diamonds from two key rebel commanders in Sierra Leone: Ibrahim Ba, a Senegalese rebel commander who worked with Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels, and Johnny Paul Koroma, leader of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), a group of soldiers who overthrew the government of President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah in May 1997. The AFRC joined forces with the RUF rebels but they were forcefully removed from power by West African peacekeepers in February 1998. Mr. Taylor denied receiving diamonds from any of these individuals. "I never had a business relationship with Ibrahim Ba. I have never collaborated with Ba for any sale of diamonds. There has never been a business relationship with Ba. None whatsoever. There are no documents to prove this. I don't recall any evidence that mentioned diamonds taken from Johnny Paul Koroma," Mr. Taylor said.

Ivory Coast

Ivory Coast eyes \$2.9 bln debt restructure-London Club

LONDON, Aug 26 (Reuters) - The **Ivory Coast** is seeking to restructure around 2 billion euros (\$2.86 billion) of debt with commercial creditors and may launch its new bonds as early as this year, the chair of the restructuring committee said. The move would be the latest in a series of African steps to restructure debt, which has enabled the world's poorest continent to tap international capital markets again. "We are in the middle of negotiations with the Ivorians," Thierry Desjardins, chair of the London Club committee of private creditors for the Ivory Coast said in a phone interview. "We have had several meetings this year, the last one being in June. It is not excluded at all that we would be able to reach an agreement before year-end." The Ivory Coast, the world's biggest cocoa exporter, has suffered as an investment destination because of political instability following a 2002-3 war.

Local Media – Newspaper

Zakhem Contract Forwarded to Justice Ministry...Report of Bribery Surfaces

(The Independent, Liberia Journal, New Democrat, Heritage, The Parrot, The News)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf says she's aware of reports that the investigation into the Zakhem International Contract was tampered with.
- Media reports say President Sirleaf ordered the Justice Ministry to investigate news that one of the members of the committee requested money from the Managing Director of the Liberia Petroleum Refining Company (LPRC), Harry Greaves.
- According to the reports, Aloysius Jappah requested US\$300,000 from Mr. Greaves to ensure the Zakhem contract did not experience hitches.
- President Sirleaf set up the committee to review the Zakhem Contract after the Legislature questioned its legality.
- The contract between LPRC and Zakhem was ordered halted pending investigation for alleged failure to follow legal procedures.
- Despite the reported tampering, President Sirleaf said the committee headed by Cllr. Henry Reed Cooper has submitted its report to her.
- President Sirleaf told journalists the report has been forwarded to the Justice Ministry for review and legal advice.

Police Investigates Woman Linked to Alleged Sex Scandal Involving Dead UNMIL-American Employee

(The News, New Democrat, National Chronicle, Liberia Journal, The Independent, New Vision, The Parrot, Daily Observer)

- Reports say police in Monrovia are investigating a woman believed to have been the one who recruited minors in the alleged sex scandal involving the dead UNMIL-American personnel, Dale Allen Fosnight.
- Reports say Mr. Fosnight allegedly committed suicide on Monday while being investigated for the sexual abuse of minors.
- He was reportedly placed under House arrest the Liberia National Police in connection with the case.
- But a Justice Ministry statement said he was restricted to his home due to his medical condition.
- Deputy Justice Minister for Administration & Public Safety, Cllr. Eva Morgan, says they have been working with UNMIL and the United States Embassy in Monrovia since the case came to light.
- She dismissed claims that there existed a tussle between the American Embassy, UNMIL and the Government of Liberia over the rights of the accused.
- In a statement issued today in Monrovia, UNMIL reiterated that it is the UN's policy and practice to promptly investigate every single allegation of misconduct by its staff and to take appropriate action if a staff member is found guilty.

Education Minister Consults School Authorities On Tuition Hikes, Faces House Thursday

(The Informer, Liberian Express, Heritage, Liberia Journal)

- The House of Representatives has granted an excuse requested by Education Minister Dr. Joseph Korto.
- Dr. Korto was to appear before the House Tuesday to give reasons for the abrupt hike in tuition and other fees in learning institutions across Liberia.
- However, the Education Minister requested the House to reschedule his appearance for Thursday to allow for dialogue with school authorities regarding the increase in tuition and fees.
- On Monday, the Minister said they did not have the statutory mandate to regulate the fees and tuition of private schools in the country

AFL Cadet Shot Dead in Training

(Liberia Journal, National Chronicle)

- There are reports that an Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) recruit has been killed in training at the Camp Sandi Ware military barracks in Careysburg.
- According to sources, Cadet Welleh Ambrose Swen was shot by a colleague while in an ambush training.
- It is not yet known whether the cadets were ordered to use live bullets as blank or dummy bullets are usually used during such training exercises.
- Defense sources are still tight-lipped on the issue.
- Reports however say investigation is ongoing to determine how the incident occurred.
- In another development, five personnel of the Armed Forces of Liberia for China to undergo training at various Chinese Army Institutions.

TRC Final Report Out

(Daily Observer)

- [SIC]The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) has released its final report modifying the vexing clause seeking to ban certain people including President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf from public office for their alleged role in the Liberian war for 30 years.
- Sources said the report submitted to the Legislature late yesterday recommended that those holding elected positions and are affected by the ban be made to complete their tenures after which the ban will take effect.
- The source did not mention whether the TRC's original report recommending the prosecution of former warlords was reflected in the final draft. The Legislature is currently studying the report.

More U.S. Peace Corps Volunteers Sworn In

(The News)

- The fifth batch of US Peace Corps Response Volunteers has been sworn in bringing to twenty the number of volunteers in the country.
- The Charge d'Affaires at the US Embassy near Monrovia, Brooks Robinson who performed the swearing in ceremony challenged the volunteers to represent the true picture of the United States and give as much as they can in their areas of assignment.
- Also speaking, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf said the return of the Peace Corps Volunteers represents the US commitment to Liberia's peace and security.
- She then called on the Education Ministry to also begin the recruitment of national volunteers for the country's education sector.

President Sirleaf Warns Against Kickbacks in Awarding of Contracts

(The Informer, New Democrat, The Inquirer, The News)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has warned investors against giving her officials inducement for the awarding of contracts.
- Speaking at the dedication of the Presbyterian Todee Mission School project, President Sirleaf said that partnership should not be for individual gains but the benefit of the community.
- The Presbyterian Todee Mission School was re-opened after nearly two decades of closure.
- The school facilities were partially renovated by BHP Billiton, a private mining company as part of an MOU signed with government for three projects.
- The company's Vice President, Jeffery Zweig named the other two projects as the renovation of the Bassa High School Library and the provision of reference books to junior and senior high schools across the country.

Local Media – Star Radio (*culled from website today at 09:00 am*)

AFL Cadet Shot Dead in Training

(*Also reported on Radio Veritas, Sky F.M., Truth F.M. and ELBC*)

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(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Sky F.M., Truth F.M. and ELBC)

More U.S. Peace Corps Volunteers Sworn in

Renowned Presbyterian Boarding School Re-Opens after Two Decades

- The Presbyterian Todee Mission School has re-opened after nearly two decades of closure.
- The school facilities were partially renovated by BHP Billiton, a private mining company as part of an MOU signed with government for three projects.
- The company's Vice President, Jeffery Zweig named the other two projects as the renovation of the Bassa High School Library and the provision of reference books to junior and senior high schools across the country.
- Speaking at the dedication of the school project, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf thanked BHP Billiton and called for more public-private sector partnership.
- President Sirleaf warned that the partnership should not be for individual gains but the benefit of the community.

(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Sky F.M., Truth F.M. and ELBC)

President Sirleaf submits ECOWAS Protocol for Ratification

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has submitted to the Legislature the ECOWAS Energy Protocol for ratification.
- The ECOWAS Protocol establishes a legal framework in the West African region to promote long-term cooperation in the energy field.
- According to the President, the ECOWAS Energy Protocol is intended to achieve increased investment in the energy sector among ECOWAS countries.
- President Sirleaf said the ratification of the Protocol is an important requirement for Liberia's continued participation in the ongoing energy project of West Africa.
- She said the project of the West African Power Pool would include eighteen communities in the South-eastern Counties of Grand Gedeh, Maryland and also in Nimba County.
- Meanwhile, both Houses of the Legislature have mandated their respective Committees on Energy, Judiciary and Foreign Affairs to review the Protocol.

Radio Veritas *(News monitored today at 09:45 am)*

Police Investigates Woman Linked to Alleged Sex Scandal Involving Dead UNMIL-American Employee

Radio Netherlands Worldwide

Wednesday, 26 August 2009

Witness retracts claims on murder of ex-Rwanda president

By Thijs Bouwknecht



Paris, France

A key witness whose testimony backs up French charges that Tutsi guerrillas killed Rwanda's ex-president Juvenal Habyarimana, triggering the 1994 genocide, has retracted his claims in an interview.

Richard Mugenzi was a Rwandan army radio operator when Habyarimana's plane was downed on 6 April 1994. The event is widely seen as sparking the genocide in which Hutu extremists slaughtered some 800,000 people, most of them Tutsis.

Interception

In 2001, Mugenzi told French investigators he "personally intercepted" and transcribed a message from the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) Tutsi guerrilla movement congratulating one of its squads for carrying out the attack.

His testimony is central to the case of a French anti-terrorist judge who issued warrants in 2006 for nine aides to President Paul Kagame, the former RPF leader, accusing them of being behind Habyarimana's assassination.

Propaganda

But in an interview with *Le Monde* newspaper, Mugenzi said the radio message was in fact dictated to him by his Hutu bosses as anti-Tutsi propaganda.

Mugenzi told the newspaper that he was convinced "the attack on the plane had nothing to do with the RPF."

Quoted in *Le Monde*, french journalist Dupaquier acknowledged the possibility however that Mugenzi, who recently returned to live in Rwanda, had been pressured by Kigali into changing his statement.

Diplomatic tensions

Rwanda broke off diplomatic relations with France in the wake of the warrants against Kagame's aides. Kigali accuses Paris of having actively supported the Hutu perpetrators of the genocide.

But since France's President Nicolas Sarkozy's election in 2007 Paris has sought to mend ties with the central African nation.

Last November one of the nine suspects targeted by the French inquiry, Kagame's chief of protocol Rose Kabuye, was arrested in Frankfurt and extradited to France, where she was charged.

Kagame said at the time that her arrest and trial could help break the deadlock between the two countries. Following Kabuye's arrest, her defence team was given access to evidence against her, including Mugenzi's testimony.

A few days later, another central witness in the French case, former RPF soldier Josue Ruzibiza, retracted testimony that had incriminated Tutsi guerrillas in the ex-president's murder.

(Source: AFP)

Hirondelle News Agency (Lausanne)

Tuesday, 25 August 2009

Lawyer Convicted for Contempt of UN Court Appeals

A Rwandan lawyer convicted last month for contempt of court before the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) has appealed his judgement, reports Hirondelle Agency.

On 2 July, Leonidas Nshogoza of the Bar of Kigali, was found guilty of knowingly and deliberately defied the authority of the Tribunal while meeting "on several occasions", between March 2004 and May 2005, witnesses for the prosecutor who were the subject of protection measures.

Sentenced to 10 months in prison, he was immediately released because he had just spent more than a year at the ICTR detention centre. According to Tribunal website, the convict filed a notice of appeal on 22 July.

According to the judgement, Nshogoza was found guilty of contempt of the Tribunal as he worked as an investigator within the defence team of the former Minister for Higher Education Jean de Dieu Kamuhanda, convicted of genocide.

At the ICTR, a party which wishes to meet "protected witnesses" from the opposing side must initially request the permission from the Chamber.

IPS News

Wednesday, 26 August 2009

CAMBODIA: Khmer Rouge Tribunal Keeps the Country Informed

By Robert Carmichael

The ongoing Khmer Rouge tribunal here of Kaing Guek Eav, known as Comrade Duch, has heard some highly charged testimony in recent weeks, as civil parties have told the court of how the murders of their loved ones ruined their lives.

On Aug. 17 it was the turn of French national Martine Lefevre, who was married to Cambodian diplomat Ouk Keth, to testify.

At the invitation of the Khmer Rouge government, Ouk Keth returned to Phnom Penh in 1977 to help rebuild the nation, but was immediately arrested, tortured for six months and then killed at the infamous Tuol Sleng, otherwise known as S-21, prison that Duch (pronounced Doik) ran.

Duch is the first senior Khmer Rouge cadre to be tried in the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, commonly known as the Cambodia Tribunal, which is backed by the United Nations (UN). He faces a life sentence on charges of crimes against humanity and war crimes, as well as homicide and torture.

Her husband's fate unknown to her, Lefevre told the court how she searched for several years for news of her missing husband. In 1980 a family friend in a refugee camp on the Thai-Cambodian border told her he had seen Ouk Keth's name on a list of people murdered at S-21, a former high school that the Khmer Rouge converted into a prison in 1975. Ouk Keth was one of more than 15,000 thought to have been tortured and executed in the Tuol Sleng (which means 'Hill of the Poisonous Tree') facility under Duch's command.

Lefevre returned to France and her two young children.

"I had to tell my children that they must grow up without their daddy," she said breaking down. "My son, who was seven, and my daughter, who was four and a half, asked me every day: 'Have you seen Daddy? Will we see Daddy again?' I had to tell them, no, they will never see their daddy again."

Much of the testimony from the tribunal is harrowing, and the experiences of many Cambodians explain why many do not talk about what happened under the Khmer Rouge regime that ruled the country between 1975 and 1979. Around two million people are thought to have died under one of the most brutal regimes in recent history.

But telling Cambodians about those terrible years is a key part of the remit of the joint U.N.-Cambodian tribunal, said Reach Sambath, the head of the tribunal's public affairs office.

That is a challenge here, where around 85 percent of people live in rural areas, and illiteracy is widespread.

For that reason, the court endorses a number of methods of informing the public, Reach Sambath said. One method that his office runs, for example, is to bus in people from across the country to watch proceedings in the 500-seat auditorium. By mid-August more than 17,000 Cambodians from across the country had attended the trial, he said.

The public affairs office, which operates with limited resources, also produces material that is distributed online and by hand at the court itself. But measured in sheer numbers, the most successful way of letting Cambodians know about the proceedings and workings of the tribunal is through the use of television

and radio.

The tribunal's daily proceedings are broadcast live on national television every day. But many people do not have the time to spend four days a week following events, which is where a surprisingly successful television show has come in.

The weekly half-hour TV show, which is mainly funded by the British Embassy, is entirely independent of the tribunal's public affairs office. It is broadcast by national broadcaster Cambodia Television Network in its prime lunchtime slot on Mondays and repeated the following day.

The show's producer, Matthew Robinson of independent production company Khmer Mekong Films, said between two and three million people watch it each week – a sizeable proportion of the South-east Asian country's 15 million population.

The format is straightforward enough. Robinson, an experienced British producer and director who lives in Phnom Penh, says that two presenters and a guest examine the events of the previous week.

Co-presenter Neth Pheaktra said the purpose of the show is to provide a concise summary of Duch's trial, which began on February 17.

"During the 24 minutes of the programme we have the summary, the diary of the Duch trial, and the key points that the witness, the defendant and the judges reveal in the court," Neth Pheaktra said.

According to Robinson a key challenge when devising the format was to create a show that was relatively simple to make but that would appeal to the target audience of mainly rural and often poorly educated Cambodians.

"Then (we mould) them all together in a fairly fast-moving way in language that our audience could understand and be interested in," he explained, "so that over a short period, you have seen the most important things in the proceedings that week."

Ung Chan Sophea, the other presenter, said the show's writers ensure that the scripted wording is as simple as possible, even when trying to convey the complicated legal jargon that characterises legal proceedings.

That is something the live feed, understandably, cannot do.

At a small coffee shop in Phnom Penh, Mao Sophea said he loves the analysis the show provides of the week's proceedings.

"For me this is a good show, and the presenters are excellent too," he said. "But to tell you the truth, I haven't heard too many people talking about it – most of the people I know prefer to watch the all-day broadcasts."

And not everyone is a convert. Lah Yum, seated at another table, hardly watches it "because I am normally asleep during lunchtime when this show is broadcast."

But some of Lah Yum's friends do watch it, and as the trial of Duch heads towards its conclusion, they are interested in more than just the proceedings. They want to see what the process and the verdict will mean to those who lost loved ones under the Khmer Rouge regime:

"What they are waiting to see is how the trial will manage to deliver justice for the families of the victims," he said.

Radio Netherlands Worldwide

Wednesday, 26 August 2009

Forensic experts unearth 60 Bosnian war victims

By Thijs Bouwknecht



Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnian forensic experts found the remains of at least 60 Muslims and Croats in a ravine where around 200 people were killed by Bosnian Serb forces early in the 1992-95 war.

The exhumations at Mount Vlasic in central Bosnia, where prisoners were massacred on 21 August 1992, were carried out on the orders of the war crimes court in Sarajevo.

"Some of the bodies were burned and we also believe that some bodies were moved in order to hide the traces of the crime," Amor Masovic, a senior official of Bosnia's Institute for Missing Persons, said.

He said the final number of the exhumed victims would be known after a forensic analysis.

The war crimes court is currently trying nine Bosnian Serb policemen suspected of committing the atrocity. Two have confessed and pledged to assist in further investigations.

In July, the war crimes court sentenced a former Serb policeman to 14 years in jail for crimes against humanity for the massacre at Mount Vlasic.

In 2004, the Hague-based International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) jailed another Serb policeman, Darko Mrdja, for 17 years for the same crimes.

More than 3,500 Muslims and Croats were killed in the Bosnian Serb ethnic cleansing campaign in the Prijedor area in 1992.

Institute for War and Peace Reporting

Wednesday, 26 August 2009

Congo-Kinshasa: Bemba Free, But Where to Go?

Eugène Bakama Bope

Accused war criminal Jean-Pierre Bemba Gombo, the former vice-president of the Democratic Republic of Congo, DRC, has been granted conditional release pending his trial but a country has first to be found to accommodate him.

The prosecution at the International Criminal Court, ICC, has appealed against the decision made on August 14 - though in principle Bemba is now free to await trial outside of detention.

Legally speaking, the court probably had no choice.

If we are to believe in a fair and unprejudiced justice system, then a detainee must be granted bail, so long as he has given adequate assurances that he will appear at his trial, and will not pose any obstacle to its proceedings.

Freedom should always be the principle and detention the exception.

Bemba is head of the largest political party in the DRC - the Movement for the Liberation of Congo, MLC - and his conditional release comes at a fortuitous time.

The party, which had been flailing in the political wings, now has an excellent opportunity to regroup ahead of the country's national elections, due to be held in 2011.

The MLC fought against the Congolese government during the country's civil war between 1998 and 2003. Following the end of the hostilities, the MLC participated in the transitional government, with Bemba as one of the vice-presidents.

In the 2006 presidential elections, Bemba won the second highest number of votes in the country, marking him as a formidable opponent capable of unseating President Joseph Kabila.

The ICC issued an arrest warrant for Bemba on May 24, 2008, for his alleged involvement in atrocities committed in the Central African Republic, CAR, in 2002-2003 when MLC soldiers were drafted in to help oppose a coup attempt.

Bemba's conditional release in no way pre-determines the outcome of the trial, which is still ongoing.

But, in appealing against the decision, Luis Moreno-Ocampo, prosecutor of the court, expressed concern that Bemba could flee, and moreover could harm or intimidate witnesses crucial to his trial.

The prosecution team has so far had noticeably little success in finding anyone upon whom the atrocities in CAR can be pinned. Following lengthy investigations, Bemba was the only one to be charged.

From the very beginning, there was widespread speculation in the DRC that Bemba's detention was no more than a cynical move by Kabila to get rid of a dangerous political adversary.

News of his release is likely to reinforce this view at home, and provide the MLC with fresh ammunition against Kabila.

It has also given a tremendous morale boost to party members, who now have a central leader around whom they can once again rally.

The ultimate hope within the party is to have Bemba tried and acquitted ahead of the 2011 elections.

Having him eventually back on home soil, where he continues to enjoy considerable support, could help raise the MLC's performance at the polls significantly.

However, given the tight timetable, even if he is acquitted he may not make it back to the country in time.

For all the excitement surrounding his release, Bemba's direct influence over the party apparatus will be limited.

Inevitably, the ICC will impose tight conditions that will not allow him to reassert control over the party or interfere in the DRC's domestic politics.

Moreover, he will be barred from returning to the DRC, and so all communication with party members would have to be from abroad.

Bemba could enjoy greater influence over Congolese politics if he were to be released to a nation where there is a large expatriate community from his home country.

However, this now looks unlikely.

Bemba has suggested six countries as possible hosts: Belgium, France, Portugal, Germany, Italy and South Africa and the ICC will hold hearings with these countries in September to see what they say.

Three of them - Belgium, France and South Africa - have large Congolese populations. Bemba also maintains strong family ties in Belgium.

But none appears particularly willing to offer Bemba temporary residence.

Belgium and France have openly said that they are not in a position to accommodate the former rebel leader, fearing that accepting Bemba could create internal frictions. South Africa has remained non-committal, and stressed that it has not yet made any offer to play host.

It is therefore probable that, once he is released, Bemba will have to opt for somewhere that is more detached from his home country's affairs.

This will no doubt curtail his political involvement, even if it does not diminish the excitement with which news of his imminent release has been met by party members.

The views expressed in this article are not necessarily the views of IWPR.

Agence France Presses

Wednesday, 26 August 2009

ICC prosecutors urge against freeing DR Congo ex-VP

Democratic Republic of Congo ex-vice president Jean-Pierre Bemba is a flight risk and may harm witnesses in his war crimes trial, prosecutors said Tuesday in appealing against his ordered release.

"The accused is now closer to trial and, if convicted, subject to a potentially lengthy sentence," the office of chief International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo said in a statement.

Furthermore, the court's confirmation in June of charges of murder, rape and pillaging against Bemba, "increases the incentive to flee and to obstruct the prosecution."

"It also increases the capacity to harm witnesses since the accused knows the identity of the witnesses," said the statement.

The court granted Bemba a conditional release earlier this month pending trial. But he is to stay in his holding cell in The Hague while a country is sought that is willing to host him.

The prosecution is appealing the release order.

Bemba, 46, stands accused of three charges of war crimes and two of crimes against humanity allegedly committed from October 2002 to March 2003.

He will stand trial for acts of murder, rape and pillaging allegedly committed by members of his Congolese Liberation Movement (MLC) while helping troops of then Central African Republic president Ange-Felix Patasse fight off a coup bid.

No trial date has been set.

The ICC has invited Belgium, Portugal, France, Germany, Italy and South Africa, states to which Bemba had asked to be released, to make "observations" at hearings scheduled for September 7-14.

Most of the countries have raised objections to Bemba being released into their care.

The prosecution said the court had erred in ordering Bemba's release without specifying a state willing and able to take him.

Bemba, a business tycoon who left the Congo in 2007 after losing presidential elections held during a political transition in the wake of a 1998-2003 civil war, was arrested on an ICC warrant in Brussels in May 2008.

"Jean-Pierre Bemba should remain in custody to the end of his trial," said the prosecutor's office.

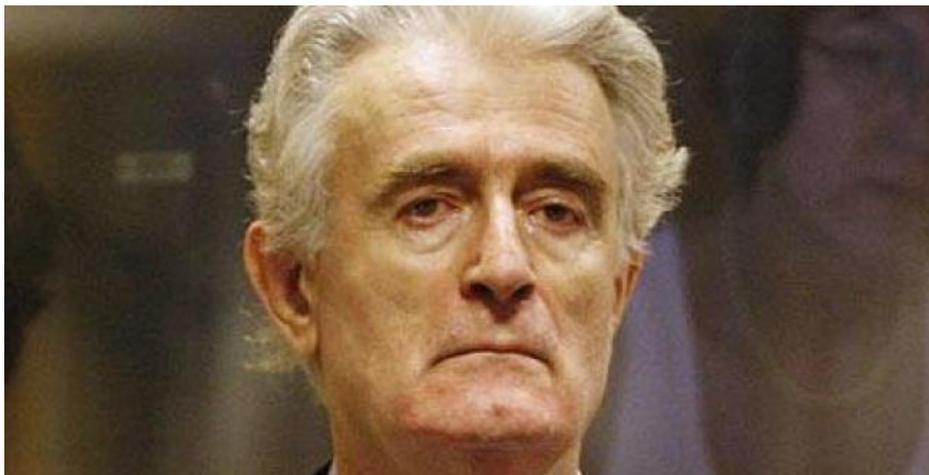
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Agence France Presses

Wednesday, 26 August 2009

'Great powers' orchestrated Bosnian war, says Karadzic

By Saskia van Huijgevoort



The world's "great powers" orchestrated the Bosnian war for their own geopolitical ends, Bosnian Serb wartime leader Radovan Karadzic, awaiting trial for war crimes, told AFP on Wednesday.

"The world can see from what was done in Bosnia the pattern

of how some countries used and abused a small nation for their own ends, such as to enforce their own military alliances and to achieve imperial goals," said Karadzic in a written reply to questions submitted to him in detention in The Hague.

"The breakup of Yugoslavia and the war in Bosnia was envisaged by the great powers well before I came into political life," he added.

"They then set those events in motion through the use of their intelligence services and military."

Karadzic (64) is facing trial before the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) on 11 charges of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity stemming from the 1992-95 war in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Notably, he is charged over the 44-month siege of Bosnia's capital Sarajevo that left 10,000 people dead; and the July 1995 massacre of around 8,000 Muslim men and boys in Srebrenica.

Karadzic said he hoped his trial, which a judge has said is ready to start, would expose the "truth" of what happened in Bosnia at the time of the breakup of Yugoslavia.

His innocence would be proven if prosecution witnesses told the truth, he added.

"The world deserves to know the truth and what was done by the international community on its behalf," he said.

Karadzic did not name the countries he claimed were behind the Bosnia war. But he has applied through the tribunal for documents from several nations including France, Germany and the United States, which he says would help prove his innocence.

"I express my sympathy to the victims of the war in Bosnia -- Serbs, Croats and Muslims -- for their suffering," he wrote to AFP. "I hope that my trial will show who is truly responsible for that."

"Some of those people will find out that those responsible were that part of their own leadership who rejected all of the opportunities that existed to avoid the war, and some of their foreign friends who used them for their own purposes."

He said he was working "full time, seven days a week" preparing for trial and would continue representing himself, with the backing of a team of lawyers.

"I know the facts better than any lawyer. So I think it is better for me to have legal expert assistance on legal issues and deal with the facts of the case myself.

"If I represent myself, I can have the floor every day. This will allow me to force the witnesses to present a true picture of what happened in Bosnia and who is responsible for it."

His preparations, Karadzic added, involved reading over a million pages of material and reviewing about 350 days of audio and video material.

"The truth is out there," he said.

Source: AFP

The New Vision (Uganda)

Wednesday, 26 August 2009

Mamdani raps Bashir indictment

By Francis Kagolo and Susan Akidi

THE indictment of Sudan President Omar el-Bashir, and LRA chief Joseph Kony by the International Criminal Court (ICC) will exacerbate, rather than calm violence on the continent, Prof. Mahmood Mamdani has said.

“The way to address violence is not by criminalising perpetrators,” he said.

“We need to analyse why people are fighting. Find out the issues behind the endless civil wars and address them.”

Mamdani said the ICC was dancing on the ‘tunes’ of Western states.

“The government of Sudan committed lesser atrocities in Darfur compared to what US President George Bush committed in Iraq. Why didn’t the ICC issue arrest warrants against Bush?” Mamdani asked.

He was speaking at a dialogue on lessons to learn from the Darfur conflict at Makerere University on Tuesday.

Mamdani, who is a professor of political science at the US Columbia University, said revenging is done by victims but not the elite and institutions like the ICC.

“The future of our children is more important than the criminalisation of individuals,” he added.

Although he acknowledged that both Bashir and Kony had committed atrocities, Mamdani said international NGOs had blown the Darfur conflict out of proportion.

“The rule of law cannot be introduced from outside. We are not yet back into colonialism. These NGOs must be accountable to African governments,” he stressed.

Bashir and Kony are wanted by the ICC for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The conflict in Darfur began in February 2003, and the UN says more than 400,000 people have died.

But Mamdani said the figure was exaggerated, mainly by the UN and the ICC, to criminalise Bashir.

Radio Netherlands Worldwide

Wednesday, 26 August 2009

Rights group seeks UN tribunal for East Timor abuses

By Thijs Bouwknecht



Jakarta, Indonesia

The United Nations Security Council should set up an international criminal tribunal to investigate abuses in East

Timor both under Indonesian rule and in the vote for independence, a rights group said on Thursday.

On 30 August 1999, the Timorese people voted overwhelmingly in favour of independence. At least 1,200 people died in the lead-up to the polls and its aftermath, which were marred by crimes against humanity and other serious human rights violations.

The country was the theatre of killings, enforced disappearances, rapes and arbitrary arrests at the hands of pro-Indonesian militias backed by the Indonesian military.

Culture of impunity

But East Timor, which was invaded by Indonesia in 1975, will not be able to shake off a culture of impunity unless those guilty of human rights abuses are punished, watchdog Amnesty International said in a report.

The human rights watchdog has called on the UN to set up an international criminal tribunal to deal with the gravest atrocities surrounding the country's independence referendum and in the previous 24 years of Indonesian occupation.

"In 1999, anti-independence militias, supported by the Indonesian military, killed more than a thousand Timorese in front of the world, but there has not been proper accountability for these atrocities," said Donna Guest, Amnesty International's Asia-Pacific deputy director, in a statement.

Truth and Justice

Tiny East Timor has opted for a conciliatory rather than a confrontational approach towards its much larger neighbour since independence.

The Timorese and Indonesian governments set up a truth commission, the Truth and Friendship Commission, in 2005. But this joint commission did not provide for prosecutions of perpetrators.

Among the justice initiatives put in place since 1999 are the ad hoc Human Rights Court established by Indonesia and the UN Special Panels in Timor-Leste. However, prosecutions did not lead convictions.

But all 18 defendants originally tried by the ad hoc Human Rights Court have been acquitted in proceedings criticized as being fundamentally flawed.

In East Timor, only one person convicted by the UN Special Panels is still serving a prison sentence.

In addition, Indonesia's former armed forces chief, Wiranto, was indicted by the UN Serious Crimes Unit for crimes against humanity committed by troops under his command in East Timor. But he never faced court, and has been free to pursue a political career, running as a vice presidential candidate in Indonesia's recent elections.

East Timor's president, Jose Ramos-Horta, has stressed the need to forge better relations with Indonesia, calling on his people to forgive the perpetrators of abuses, and pardoning militia members convicted of crimes. He has said he does not want a UN investigation.

(Photo: Amnesty International)