

**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:

Monday, 27 July 2009

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Cotton Tree News
Saturday, 25 July 2009

Sierra Leoneans and Liberians should follow Charles Taylor Trial.

Written by Mariama Kai Fornah



The head of the Special Court's Outreach Section, Patrick Fatoma said Sierra Leoneans should see Charles Taylor's ongoing testimony in his case, as a historic event.

He told CTN that Mr. Taylor's trial was historic because it was the first time a former African head of state is standing trial. Mr. Fatoma encouraged Sierra Leoneans and Liberians to endeavor to follow the proceedings at the Special Court for Sierra Leone sitting at The Hague. He said if the people were informed, about the trial it would make them appreciate the outcome. He said the Outreach Section would ensure that every corner of Sierra

Leone and Liberia is informed about the Special Courts activities.

Mr. Fatoma urged the government of Sierra Leone to uphold its commitment to the court.

The Torchlight
Monday, 27 July 2009

Charles Taylor's Trial in The Hague

July 22, 2009

The relationship between RUF Leader, Foday Sankoh and NPFL Leader, Charles Taylor must have carried with it mutual benefits. The photograph of a huge donation from the RUF to the NPFL has been displayed in court. But the Former Liberian President disclaimed any responsibility for Operation Stop Elections in Sierra Leone. The Former NPFL Leader rejected the command structure of his rebel organization earlier presented by the Prosecution. The BBC World Service Trust John Kollie has this report...

Mr Taylor told the court last Wednesday that he received a donation from the RUF between 1991 and 1992, but he emphasized it's not diamonds. He told the Judges Foday Sankoh donated to the NPFL a 155 millimeter Houwitza gun captured from enemy forces in Sierra Leone.

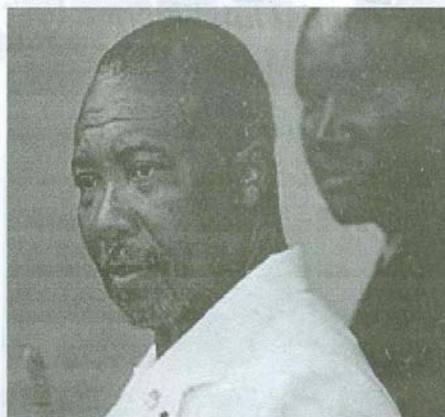
The accused former Liberian President said gifts exchanged between him and Foday Sankoh were solely intended to contain a common enemy, the Liberian Rebel Group, ULIMO.

The Prosecution alleged in its evidence that Charles Taylor ordered the RUF to stop Sierra Leone Presidential and general elections in 1996.

The Prosecution indicated to the court attempts to stop the general and presidential elections of 1996 was code named Operation Stop Elections. Mr Taylor disassociated himself from the RUF Operation.

Mr Taylor in a very harsh tone declared as total foolishness the command structure of the NPFL presented to the court earlier by the Prosecution.

The Prosecution chart which depicted the command structure of the NPFL indicated that Foday Sankoh was a Military Advisor to the NPFL leader, Charles Taylor. Mr Taylor resented Foday Sankoh's position.



The Prosecution NPFL command structure carried the name SBU Ghangay Tiger. But Mr Taylor dismissed ever having a group called SBU Ghangay Tiger.

A new command structure prepared by Mr Taylor in court named current Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf as the International Coordinator of the NPFL from 1986 to 1994.

The testimony of the former Liberian president continues.

July 23, 2009

Mr Taylor has challenged those whom he said constructed his indictment to prove that

Foday Sankoh was his subordinate and that he (Taylor) directed everything the RUF did.

The accused former Liberian Leader called on his accusers to make available to the court any information about his RUF link beyond 1992.

He described those who prepared the indictment as military people well versed in gathering information of intelligence nature.

Liberians who fought in the Sierra Leone civil war were hired by the government of Sierra Leone, Taylor's Defence Team told the court on last Thursday.

Many Prosecution Sierra Leone Witnesses testified that fighters who invaded their villages and towns were Liberian English-speaking men.

The defence team presented into evidence former President Tejan Kabbah's report to the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Mr Kabbah told the TRC that remnants of the Liberian rebel group, ULIMO, were recruited into the Sierra Leone Army without his knowledge. But, Mr Taylor said Tejan Kabbah and his successors were aware of the existence of Liberians in the Sierra Leone Army.

Charles Taylor continued to disassociate himself from the Sierra Leone rebels, RUF. He said his last contact with the RUF was in May 1992.

Lead defence lawyer, Courtenay Griffiths presented into evidence a letter former RUF leader Foday Sankoh wrote to the Libyan Government. Sankoh's letter to the Libyans requested 1.5 million dollars to purchase materials.

Mr Taylor denied any knowledge of the Foday Sankoh's letter to the Libyan Government.

Charles Taylor is the first former African Head of State to be put on trial for war crimes and crimes against humanity. The testimonies of Mr Taylor continue today.

Torchlight

Monday, July 27, 2009

The Problems to access Justice and the Culture of impunity in Sierra Leone (Part 1)

By Sallieu Sesay

The people themselves know best when they need justice most. There is a recurring pattern of situations in which people have needs or grievances that are translated into justifiable claims invoking substantive rights. There is still a wide gap between legal principle and the every day reality of those who come into contact with the law and need its protection. The criminal justice system is sometimes misused to detain and prosecute social or political activists and human rights defenders. People are detained on the basis of obviously flawed evidence sometimes well beyond the legal limits allowed for pretrial detention.

Others are denied access to adequate legal advice and representation at precisely the point when they are most at risk of torture or other ill-treatment to extract confessions. Report of torture are routinely dismissed or ignored by judges, reinforcing impunity for these human rights violations. All too often it is the poorest and most vulnerable who are likely to be the victims of the abuse.

The following are some of the obstacles to accessing justice. One of the foremost barriers preventing access to Sierra Leone's justice system, both formal and informal, is cost. The cost of accessing justice in Sierra Leone come in a variety of forms including costs of services, fines, time and transportation.

In Sierra Leone formal court where an adequate legal aid structure is yet to come into existence makes contesting parties responsible for court fees, legal representation and other services. Costs are prohibitively high for all, yet even in local courts which are designed to be closer to the people unnecessary costs are often too high. Both the formal and the informal legal systems are thought to be encouraging long delays in the resolution of cases especially in rural areas.

Transportation presents a formidable obstacle to accessing the formal courts, particularly for citizens in remote areas. The limited number of functioning magistrate courts are based in district headquarters, which are distant from

many villages. With nominal access to adequate roads or vehicles, many inhabitants of rural communities find it physically and financially impossible to access the formal courts, especially for cases that can take several visits to provincial capitals to resolve.

The structures of the formal and non formal courts; language, views of justice and the current state of the court including the skills of officials also present a barrier to access the formal court system in Sierra Leone.

Lack of information, unlike the customary courts the formal courts maintain procedural rules that are known to court insiders such as judges and lawyers, but remain a mystery to many individuals outside the legal system. Sierra Leoneans are not aware of what the laws either formal or customary are. While customary law is traditionally bound in customary practice, many chiefs pass laws without any form of control. Citizens are less likely to know the content of formal laws and recent legislation or court rulings are reportedly difficult for legal professional to access.

Concord Times
Monday, 27 July 2009

Sierra Leone's Long Search for Justice

Guest Writer

By *Knox Chitiyo, guardian.co.uk*

The trial of Charles Taylor for atrocities committed in Sierra Leone's civil war is a milestone for the rule of law in Africa

"They give me a choice," says my Liberian friend David. "They say, 'Which hand you won?' I think quick - left hand. They cut off my right arm. They laugh; one guy says, 'Tomorrow, I take the left one - make sure your arms ain't lonely.'"

The trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor, for war crimes allegedly committed during Sierra Leone's civil war of 1991-2004, is a transformative moment for Africa. He is the first African leader to stand in the dock. The proceedings also have wider significance; in a year when the Taylor trial overlaps with the ICC indictment of President Omar al-Bashir of Sudan, and the forthcoming trial of former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic, this may be a historic moment for African and global justice.

In Africa, as elsewhere in the world, it is a cultural taboo for current or former heads of state to be indicted for war crimes. It is almost unheard of to press charges against a leader. It is thus groundbreaking that witnesses are directly presenting evidence against Taylor. As a commander, Taylor was revered by his soldiers, and feared as a wizard. A public trial, in which the victims of war literally face their demon, will be cathartic in breaking his spell.

Yet, there is no guarantee that Taylor will be found guilty. The onus is on the prosecution to prove a direct, causal connection between Taylor and the violence.

Critics argue that having the trial in The Hague instead of in Sierra Leone delegitimises the whole process and makes it a "show trial". This is nonsense; it is the special court for Sierra Leone, not the UN, which requested the trial be moved to The Hague, for security reasons. Taylor still has a following in West Africa, and there was a real risk of violence between Taylor's supporters and his opponents.

Another criticism is that Taylor is a victim of "white man's justice". Wrong. This trial is not about race. Taylor is being tried in Europe; but it is his fellow Africans who are bringing him to justice, and that is what matters.

Another criticism is that the trial and western media coverage promote a stereotypical "heart of darkness" image of Sierra Leone and Liberia, at a time when both countries have

Sierra Leone search for

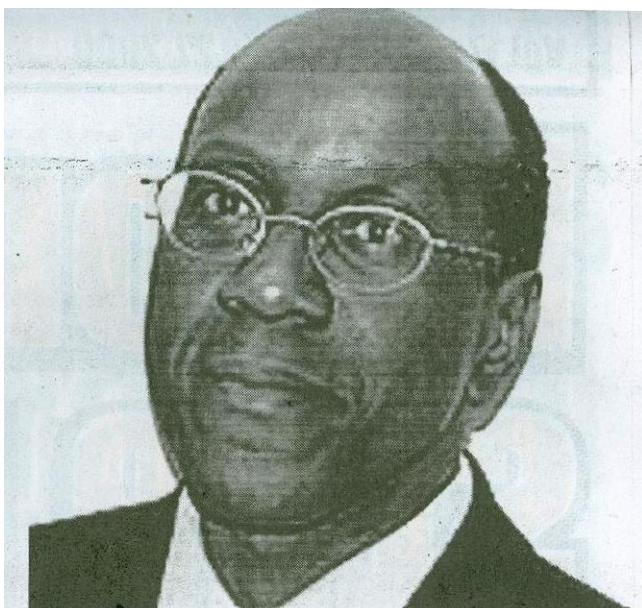
moved on from conflict. This is true; viewers will be bombarded with incessant images of shattered limbs and lives, and may embrace the comfortable orthodoxy of "murderous Africa".

So be it; we should not deny that terrible things happen in Africa, as elsewhere in the world, and it is important that those who suffered be seen and heard. No one can dispute that poverty and conflict are major problems in Africa, but not all Africans face a daily struggle for existence.

We, as Africans, need to free ourselves from blaming colonialism and the west for our problems. The violence in Liberia and Sierra Leone was black-on-black violence. We can argue about whether or not the west paid for the bullets, but these were African hands on the trigger. For Africa to move on and assert its rightful place in global affairs, we need to have an honest conversation with ourselves about governance and violence. The Taylor case is a



Charles Taylor is on trial in The Hague facing 11 charges including murder



The Author

milestone in this dialogue.

Accordingly, we should celebrate the real achievement of this trial: namely, that it highlights Sierra Leone's remarkable journey from no rule of law to a nascent world-class justice system. Taylor's acolytes in Sierra Leone have been tried and sentenced, and he is getting world-class legal representation. Nor is this limited to Sierra Leone; problems remain, but Africa is building its justice architecture.

The real risk is that Taylor's trial in The Hague could deprive Liberians of their opportunity to make him accountable for his Liberian atrocities. His trial overlaps with Liberia's recent Truth and Reconciliation Commission [TRC] Report. This report has recommended that Liberia's former warlords should be tried for war crimes. Those named insist, however, that they will not allow the creation of an Extraordinary Tribunal for War Crimes in Liberia. Taylor, in turn, cannot be tried for his Liberian crimes. Thus, justice delivered for Sierra Leone, could become justice denied for Liberia.

The trial's wider implications also show the west that post-conflict reconstruction aid does work; but the obsession with security sector reform has to be balanced with investment in Africa's justice system. Africa needs good lawyers, not bad soldiers.

The crimes committed by forces loyal to Charles Taylor during the Liberian and Sierra Leone civil wars remain seared in Africa's consciousness. But this trial is about justice, not vengeance. Taylor and his victims deserve a fair hearing. Due process, whether in an African or international court of law, and whether delivered according to Muslim, traditional or western statutes, must be one of the benchmarks for the African century. This trial does not mean the end of authoritarianism and brutality; but it does mark Africa's emergence as an engine, rather than a cog, in the global justice architecture.

Africa laying down the law to the rest of the world? Now that's a change I can live with. As David reminded me, "We put Taylor an' his people on trial; we come a long way; we got the prize. You tell them that."

NOTE: Knox Chitiyo is head of the Africa programme at the Royal United Services Institute, London, and a former co-director of the Centre for Defence Studies at the University of Zimbabwe.

Salone's peace efforts commended

Chairperson of the Sierra Leone configuration peace-building commission (PBC) at the United Nations has commended Sierra Leone for



Ambassador John McNee

making great progress in the consolidation of peace in the country. His Excellency John McNee, who doubles as Canada's Permanent Representative to the international body, thanked Sierra Leone's delegation, headed by Foreign Affairs minister Zainab Hawa Bangura, for its considerable preparations and contributions in the special UN session held on June 10 this year. According to Ambassador McNee, the success of the special session was a welcome indication of the peace-building commission's commitment to

Cont page 4

Salone's peace efforts commended

From page 1

development in Sierra Leone, noting that the presentation of the Agenda for Change, United Nations Joint Vision, and the Multi-Donor Trust Fund not only highlighted the importance of peace-building efforts, but also established a new foundation for the commissioner's engagement.

The envoy disclosed that the country-specific configuration for Sierra Leone looks forward to working in close corporation with the country's authorities in addressing the challenges outlined in the outcome document, and build political momentum ahead of the consultative group meeting to be held in November 2009.

He lauded the country for including in its delegation members of the opposition

and civil society, which he said was "a strong signal of Sierra Leone's dedication to democracy and a model for others to follow".

The UN diplomat concluded that Sierra Leone has made great progress from the discussion on June 10 this year, reiterating that the peace-building commission stands ready to support the country on its path towards permanent peace and prosperity.

Meanwhile, the foreign affairs and international cooperation minister has received several congratulatory messages from colleague ministers and governments around the world for the successes of both the special session on Sierra Leone and for the work of the United Nations integrated peace building office (UNIPSIL).

In a US state depart-

ment press release, the United States Ambassador to the UN, Susan Rice applauded the efforts of Sierra Leone in building a durable peace in the once war-torn West African nation. She commended president Ernest Bai Koroma and his government for confronting corruption, enhancing respect for human rights and strengthening the rule of law.

The 10 June 2009 special session on Sierra Leone was attended by the secretary-general of the United Nations, Ban Ki Moon while president Koroma addressed the session via video conference.

The main opposition Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) was represented by the minority leader in parliament, Hon. Emmanuel Tommy.

By Abdulai Bayraytay

BBC World Service Trust

Thursday, 23 July 2009

Report from TheHague

Indicted former Liberian President Charles Taylor has defied Intelligence-gathering Agencies of the world to prove that he had contacts with the Sierra Leone rebel group, RUF beyond 1992. Taylor's Defence team said NPFL combatants did not fight in Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor described allegations that he had knowledge of a letter written by RUF Leader Foday Sankoh to the Libyan Government as a hypothesis. Adolphus Williams reports from The Hague.

WILLIAMS: Mr. Taylor has challenged those whom he said constructed his indictment to prove that Foday Sankoh was his subordinate and that he, Taylor, directed everything the RUF did. The accused, Mr. Taylor, called on his accusers to make available to the court any information about his RUF link beyond 1992.

TAYLOR: Lieutenant-Colonel David Crane, retired army personnel of the United States Army; Dr. Alan White, a 20-year veteran of Defense Intelligence of the Pentagon in the United States; our learned counsel, a retired Air Force colonel – they had professional military people in the area. It's their business to intercept communications and to listen to telephones. Let them bring to this court any evidence of any intercepts or transcript. It's a fabrication, and I challenge them...My life is on the line here. If these major governments, they have brought me here. I don't want to hear about classified intelligence. De-classify any information you have about Charles Taylor ...aerial photography of trucks going across" – nonsense. Where is it? I challenge them to bring the intercepts.

WILLIAMS: He described those who prepared his indictment as military people with knowledge in gathering information of intelligence nature.

Liberians who fought in the Sierra Leone civil war were hired by the government of Sierra Leone, Taylor's Defence team told the court on Thursday.

Many Prosecution Sierra Leone Witnesses testified that fighters who invaded their villages and towns were Liberian English-speaking men.

The Defence team presented into evidence Former President Tejan Kabbah's report to the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission, TRC.

In the letter, Mr. Kabbah told the TRC that remnants of the Liberian rebel group, United Liberation Movement of Liberians for Democracy, ULIMO, were recruited into the Sierra Leone Army without his knowledge.

But, Mr. Taylor said, Tejan Kabbah and his successors were aware of the existence of Liberians in the Sierra Leone Army.

TAYLOR: They know who these Liberians are and in the indictment when they talk about Liberian fighters they know who they are. They know that they are not my people when they refer to Liberian fighters in the indictment. They know that these are the people that they have hired as mercenaries over the years are there, they are part of the Sierra Leonean army, they are paid, they are fed and they are maintained...And these very people that they are talking about later on we'll get to know remain in Sierra

Leone until today. When the British came they used them to fight the West Side Boys. Some of these Liberians right now are officers in the present Sierra Leonean armed forces. They know all of this.
WILLIAMS: Mr. Taylor continues to disassociate himself from the RUF. He said his last contact with the RUF was in May 1992.

Taylor's lawyer, Courtenay Griffiths, presented into evidence a letter former RUF Leader Foday Sankoh wrote to the Libyan Government. In the letter, Sankoh requested for \$1.5 million dollars to purchase some materials

Mr. Taylor denied any knowledge of such letter.

TAYLOR: I think there is ample evidence here to demonstrate to anyone that Mr Sankoh is operating on his own and is doing that for a long time...this whole thing about being a subordinate...it's evident here that this man as of 1992 has had it, he doesn't want to be bothered with me, he wants to carry on his revolution by himself, he is doing it on his own without my knowledge, without my consent, without my participation.

The testimonies of Mr. Taylor continue on Monday.
AW, BBCWST, The Hague

The Analyst (Liberia)

Friday, 24 June 2009

Liberia: 'Sierra Leone Army Recruited Liberian Fighters'

Liberian nationals who fought in Sierra Leone during the civil conflict were recruited by the Sierra Leone army, Charles Taylor told judges at the Special Court for Sierra Leone July 23.

Mr. Taylor, testifying in his own defense told the court that during the war in Liberia, many Liberians traveled to Sierra Leone as refugees.

These Liberians, Taylor said, later became members of the rebel group United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO) and were armed by the Sierra Leone army to attack Taylor's forces in Liberia.

According to Taylor's evidence, many of these armed Liberians later stayed in Sierra Leone and became known as the Special Task Force (STF). Taylor's defense presented evidence that these STF forces were armed by the Government of Sierra Leone and fought alongside the Sierra Leone army.

Taylor's defense counsel Courtenay Griffiths read from the statement presented to the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission by former President Tejan Kabbah in which he said that the STF were remnants of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) and the Liberian Police who traveled to Sierra Leone and became members of ULIMO.

President Kabbah's statement further read that these fighters were received and armed by the then government of Joseph Momoh in Sierra Leone to go and attack Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). President Kabbah's statement read that those who stayed in Sierra Leone were later renamed the STF and were almost incorporated into the Sierra Leone Army.

When the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) coup took place in Sierra Leone, the STF joined them and were part of the fighters who attacked Freetown in January 1999. President Kabbah, however, said that he only knew about the STF when the AFRC coup took place in May 1997.

Responding to the contents of President Kabbah's statement, Taylor said that "it is very clear who they are - remnants of ULIMO who had been engaged as mercenaries in Sierra Leone. They are not my people."

Prosecution has alleged in evidence that Mr. Taylor sent Liberian fighters to join the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone and that these Liberian fighters were part of the group that attacked Freetown in January 1999. Many witnesses have also testified that rebels who attacked their villages in Sierra Leone spoke with Liberian accents, and they believe these Liberians were sent to Sierra Leone by Charles Taylor.

Mr. Taylor told the court that he "heard that there were Liberians fighting in Sierra Leone but only became aware of the name STF after the 1997 elections in Liberia."

Mr. Taylor denied that he had given arms and ammunition to rebel forces in Sierra Leone during the country's civil conflict. He accused ULIMO soldiers of traveling to Sierra Leone with their arms and ammunition, which he said could have found their way into rebel hands. "We were receiving reports that ULIMO fighters were going back and joining their friends in Sierra Leone with their arms and ammunition," Taylor said.

Mr. Taylor also told the court that his election as president of Liberia in 1997 was free and fair. He said that when he became president of Liberia in 1997, the country was at "rock bottom" and so much work needed to be done to improve the country's infrastructure and economy. Taylor said that he set up a broad based government of national unity in which members of all the former armed groups were represented.

Asked by his defense counsel what was on his mind when he became president, Mr. Taylor said "Liberia, Liberia, Liberia. That's what is on my mind, to get this country started. How do we get this country forward? I am occupied with Liberia, Liberia and Liberia. That's my preoccupation."

The Liberian Times

Monday, 27 July 2009

THE HAGUE: Taylor says his men trained to avoid atrocities

By Global News Network

Former Liberian President Charles Taylor has told a war crimes court his band of rebel fighters were trained in Libya to avoid atrocities as they swept into the country in a 1989 revolution.

Taylor is on the witness stand for the third day at his trial for allegedly commanding rebels during Sierra Leone's civil war.

He has pleaded not guilty to 11 war crimes and crimes against humanity charges.

Taylor told the Special Court for Sierra Leone on Thursday that for his 168-strong force to seize power in Liberia it would have needed the support of the local population.

Prosecutors say rebels backed by Taylor in Sierra Leone used terror tactics including systematic amputations to force the population's support.

Radio Netherlands Worldwide

Thursday, 23 July 2009

ICTY judges urge prosecutors to speed up Karadzic trial

By Lula Ahrens



The Hague, Netherlands

Prosecutors in the Radovan Karadzic case have to present the court with a written document showing how his trial can be settled more quickly, judges at the Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) said on Thursday.

The prosecutors are to indicate which witnesses are superfluous and which indictments can be dropped.

This is not the first time the judges have urged the prosecution to reduce the charge sheet. Chief Prosecutor Serge Brammertz, however, has to date been unwilling to meet their demand.

Brammertz wants to prosecute the ex-president of the Republika Srpska on eleven counts of the indictment committed in 27 municipalities in Bosnia, including Srebrenica and Sarajevo.

And he wants to use the testimony of five hundred witnesses to help make his case.

In a written statement the judges said that if Brammertz does not narrow the charge sheet down himself, they will probably do it for him.

The U.N. court was initially meant to finish all trials by 2008 and appeals by 2010. But it has recently suggested that its will only conclude its final Karadzic trial early 2012, while appeals may run into 2013.

Iain Bonomy, judge in the Karadzic trial, also served as judge during the trial against the ex-president of Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milosevic. Milosevic died in the fifth year of his trial, before the tribunal had reached its verdict. One of the reasons why the legal proceedings took so long was the elaborate indictment against him. Many experts regard the Milosovic as an example of how not to administer international criminal justice.

Prosecutors charge Karadzic with masterminding the mass murder at Srebrenica, that left around 8,000 people dead, and the 44-month siege of Sarajevo that cost the lives of 10,000 people. Bonomy suggested earlier that the court may not be able to “do” both Sarajevo and Srebrenica.

Also on Thursday, Karadzic said during a preliminary hearing that he wants DNA tests to prove that the death toll of the Srebrenica massacre in July 1995 has been exaggerated. A “correct list of victims”, he said, would be “thousands” below the official figure of around 8,000.

Karadzic stands trail on charges of genocide, complicity in genocide, extermination, murder, wilful killing, persecutions, deportations, inhumane acts and other crimes during Bosnia’s 1992-1995 war that left an estimated 100,000 people dead.

Voice of America

Monday, 27 July 2009

Kibaki Adds Experience, Credibility to Kenya Truth Commission

By Howard Lesser

Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki has named a chairman of Kenya's Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Commission. After delays and much wrangling between parliament and the chief executive, last Wednesday's selection of veteran diplomat Bethuel Kiplagat and nine other commissioners will enable the panel to start investigating unlawful killings, human rights violations, corruption, and ethnic clashes that have occurred over a 40-year period.

In 2003, law Professor Makau Mutua chaired the task force that designed the panel's operations. From Buffalo, New York, where he serves as dean of the State University Law School, Professor Mutua outlined the body's objectives. He explained its mandate has its limits.

"The commission does not have any power to prosecute anyone. The commission is charged with the responsibility of collecting evidence, investigating injustices that are taking place since 1963. This includes various massacres, various political killings, and such atrocities. It will compile its report based upon these investigations. So the commission does not really prosecute anyone, and will not take place in connection with the trials which will take place at the Hague," he emphasized.

Although long sought, the commission, explains Mutua, gained a special urgency for being implemented after last year's presidential election violence.

"There is a lot of pressure in the country to hold those people accountable. I think the commission wants to be seen to be effective. I think Ambassador Bethuel Kiplagat, who is the chair of the commission, has an opportunity to lead an effective commission. He's assisted by the vice chair of the commission, Miss Betty Murungi, who is a very well known and a very credible human rights activist," he said.

Early in life, Ambassador Kiplagat worked for the Christian Council of Kenya. He went on to become one of the country's most prized foreign diplomats and served as Ambassador to France and High Commissioner in the United Kingdom. Later, he became Kenya's Permanent Secretary and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and also was appointed to mediate the conflict in Somalia. Although Kiplagat also worked loyally under former Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi whose regime was widely regarded as repressive, Mutua says Bethuel Kiplagat has the credentials for his new post, and is perceived by many Kenyans as "a good man."

Three of the newly named commissioners are from outside Kenya: Gertrude Chawatama from Zambia, Berhanu Dinka of Ethiopia, and Ronald Siye from the United States.



Homes in the western Kenyan town of Kericho go up in flames during ethnic clashes with Kikuyu rivals. The presidential post-election violence of 03 Feb 2008 will be investigated by a newly formed Truth, Reconciliation, and Justice Commission.



In another incident to be probed by the TRJC panel, angry members of the Luo tribe carry another Luo after he was attacked by a Kikuyu crowd during ethnic clashes in the central Kenyan town of Nakuru, 25 Jan 2008

“I think the idea of having international commissioners is to try to break up what might develop in the commission in a direction of think contested ethnic loyalties among Kenyans. So there, the idea, I think, is to make sure the commission cannot be dominated or will not veer towards tribalization by any particular sector of Kenyan society,” he noted.

The University of Buffalo law professor adds that the bringing of international persons onto the commission provides the perspectives of other cultures, especially other African countries and the United States, and adds credibility to the commission.

He also acknowledges that commission chairman Kiplagat’s diplomatic experience and connections could prove influential with Kenya’s key economic and foreign policy partners, Britain, France, and the United States, and may have been a large factor in his securing President Kibaki’s appointment.



Jane (L) and Edward (R), Kenyan residents of the western Rift Valley district of Kiamba walk on through the burned out remains of a neighbors house. 19 Apr 2008