

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE



Naeem Ahmed and Neneh Barrie from the Special Court's Witness and Victims Support section make a presentation at the Outreach-sponsored Gender Seminar on Wednesday, 26 April 2006.

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, 28 April 2006

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion please contact
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Concord Times
Friday, 28 April 2006

Local News

Pre-defence conference discusses

AFRC trial at Special Court

Story: Tann Jalloh

Presiding Judge at Special Court's Trial Chamber II, Richard Lussick in a pre-defence conference, Wednesday read to defence counsels for the three indicted Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) members,

the formal order of the said trial according to the Rules of Procedure.

The three indictees are Alex Tamba Brima, Brima Bazzy Kamara and Santigie Borbor Kanu represented by Kojo Graham, Glenna

Thompson, Andrew Daniels, Mohamed Pamomoh Fofanah and Ajibola Manley Spain.

According to Justice Lussick, the defence case, as would be presented early May in another Status

Conference, should include the order of witnesses, date of birth, language that would be used in their testimonies, summary of the facts and points in the indictment on which they

would be testifying, estimated length of period for their testimony, and an indication as to whether witnesses are common in conformity with Rule 85 of the Statutes of the Tribunal. Precisely about a month

ago, a Status Conference was held to establish the order of disclosure in Wednesday's pre-defence conference unlike the ICC where such disclosure could be made prior to the conference.

Exclusive

Friday, 28 April 2006

*** "Prepare for Legal Battle..."**

Judge Orders Defence Team

By Joseph Turay

Following the pre defence conference held yesterday at the Trial Chamber two at the Special Court, between the three AFRC indictees Alex

Tamba Brima, Bazy Kamara, Santigue Kanu and the prosecution of the Special Court, the presiding judge Justice Richard Lussick has ordered the

Contd. page 4

Judge Orders Defence Team

From front page

defence team to file in the following materials to the court: a list of the defence witnesses, the name of its witnesses, their nick names, dates of birth and languages spoken.

The chamber further ordered that the defence

should also file in to the court, a list of the common and expert witnesses and a list of the exhibits intended to be tendered as evidence before the court.

Amongst other requirements are, a list of indications as to whether each witness intends to testify in the

trial on account of this motion, all due to be tendered on or before the 10th of May 2006.

According to the learned Judge, the chamber's order came as a result of a motion filed in by the defence team on the 6th April, 2006.

Salone Times

Friday, 28 April 2006

AWARD FOR VETERAN JOURNALIST

Veteran journalist, Clarence Roy- Macauley was among Sierra Leoneans from various walks of life who received national awards on Independence Day yesterday. Roy- Macauley was awarded the Order of the Rokel, one of the country's highest national honours, for his significant contributions to the development of the media in Sierra Leone. Currently the Associated Press' correspondent in this country, he served for years in various senior capacities in the Government Information Service, the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL).

Note: Clarence Roy-Macaulay, as stringer for the Associated Press, has covered the Special Court since its inception.

Standard Times
Friday, 28 April 2006

The Hague is best for Charlie Boy

In the minds of many that there is enough security in this country for the prosecution of the most wanted warlord in relation to the decade-long war in this country, listening to the radio talk shows on the issue.

Since the ex-president of Liberia, Charles Taylor, was brought here to answer to charges of human rights abuses and crimes against humanity there has been an ongoing debate as to whether the country and the region as a whole is ready to undertake such a project, which is seen to be fraught with security risks and threats for the country and the West African sub-region.

The debate has generally centered on whether he should be sent to The Hague in The Netherlands to be tried at the International Criminal Court in the name of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, or whether he should be tried here, where he stands most accused.

The Hague group are of the view that the trial has a destabilizing effect on the country and the neighbouring Liberia that could easily get out of hand and reverse the peace and security gains we have made up to now.

They also add that with the trial in The Hague, the country would have been spared any security problems that may arise out of the trial if it is conducted here. Charles Taylor would also be held in a more secure environment, where he would have no chance of him escaping, like he is known to have done in similar situations before.

On the other hand, those who insist that Charles Taylor must be tried here at the Special Court for Sierra Leone in Freetown maintain that there is not only enough security for Charles Taylor and all of his fellow indictees of the Court, which is secured by an international force of well-armed and combat ready troops of the United Nations, but that the country too is well secured by the army, which has been restructured and remodeled to cope with all security matters relating to the territorial integrity of the country by a team of international military trainers from the United Kingdom.

Both sides of the argument are right to a point. However, the reality and experience of the people of this country regarding security matters is very disappointing, with the memory of

January 6, 1999 still very fresh, not forgetting also the ignominious escape of the current president in 1996 after giving everybody the confidence that the security of the country was under control.

Shouting at the top of their voices, government official after government official sought to convince the public of the strength and preparedness of the country's security forces, just like they are doing again with the issue of Charles Taylor's incarceration in Freetown.

The reality for the people is

ing the people not to worry as there is enough security for us all, will be the first vacate the scene, either by official evacuation with the help of their foreign friends or by other means depending on the amount of cash one can call on at such a time.

That is why when the appeals for people to be calm and not to panic because of Charlie Boy's trial here because of the security arrangements now in place sound very hollow to many Sierra Leoneans who were unfortunate to go through that nightmare of a day that the

The initial request for the transfer of Charles Taylor to The Hague was made by the Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone who may have made that request based on the basis of his observations and analysis of the situation in both the country and the region.

that no matter what they say or put in place to secure the people, dissidents have always breached the security when they wanted to, at the cost of many innocent lives that may have been saved by the timely intervention of a sane mind.

When things get bad, those who are now shouting and telling the people not to worry as there is enough security for us all, will be the first to vacate the scene, either by official evacuation with the help of their foreign friends or by other means depending on the amount of cash one can call on at such a time.

There are no physical security arrangements now in place sound very hollow to many Sierra Leoneans who were unfortunate to go through that nightmare of a day that the

Congo Cross Bridge, where they camped for a few days before retreating back into the bushes, leaving behind thousands dead, amputated or maimed and property worth millions in dollars destroyed.

That singular experience will take a long time to go away from the minds of those who lived through it, and it is not easy for them to be easily convinced of the validity of statements about the security of the country.

For those people, Sierra Leoneans are forced to live in a situation in which they have

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no control, and can only hope that nothing bad happens as a result of the trial of the most wanted warlord in the West African sub-region, for if it does, then they will certainly be abandoned again by those who should be there to support them.

With Charles Taylor in The Hague, the country would defi-

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nitely have been spared the risk of a reversal of its gains in security and peace, but with the insistence of certain government ministers and operatives that the trial should be held here, to prove that the country is truly secure to face any security problems and thereby attract investors who may be wary of the fragile nature of the country's security.

Wherever Taylor is tried, it will have a positive impact on the country and investors would certainly be attracted following the successful conclusion of such a trial, but trying him in The Hague would definitely free the region, if not Sierra Leone, of any further trouble arising from Charles Taylor.

In The Hague, he will be in the hands of the white people, who are even more adamant that he must be tried for his crimes against humanity, and have the money to carry it through.

The initial request for the transfer of Charles Taylor to The Hague was made by the Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, who may have made that request on the basis of his observations and analysis of the security situation in both the country and the sub-region.

He may also have considered the amount of money required to complete the trial and incarcerate the suspects when eventually found guilty. In The Hague, the problem would be at the door of the international community, but here it will be for us to manage, and we know very well that we have only been managing with the help of the international community.

It is indeed safer to have him tried in The Hague, but for some as yet undeclared reason, some sections of the society feel otherwise.

There are no physical gains for us with his trial here except the satisfaction that he is finally paying for his crimes, a feeling we can still get with him in The Hague.

Taylor Trial: A Third Country Must Step Forward

Thursday, 27 April 2006

Source: Human Rights Watch

(Brussels, April 27, 2006) – The transfer of former Liberian President Charles Taylor to face trial in The Hague remains stalled unless a third country steps up to take Taylor if he is convicted, Human Rights Watch said today. On March 29, Taylor was surrendered to the Special Court for Sierra Leone, where he is indicted on war crimes and crimes against humanity. The following day, the Special Court requested a change in the location of the trial to The Hague, citing concerns about stability in West Africa if the trial is held in Freetown.

The Netherlands has agreed to host Taylor during his trial, but on the condition that he be transferred out of the country after final judgment. The relocation of Taylor's trial to The Hague would mean that trial judges and staff from the Special Court would conduct the proceedings according to the court's statute and rules. The International Criminal Court has agreed to lend its facilities for the trial.

"Liberia's new president took a real risk by requesting Taylor's surrender, and security concerns prompted the Special Court to request relocating the trial to The Hague," said Richard Dicker, International Justice director at Human Rights Watch. "How can other countries now sit back and do nothing?"

So far, Sweden and Austria have reportedly declined to accept Taylor if he is convicted. Denmark also appears to have declined, but Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen has yet to give an official answer. Sweden, Austria and Denmark have provided detention facilities for individuals convicted either by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda or by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. However, in declining on Taylor, they have cited lack of resources or the fact that they have shown a commitment to international justice in other ways.

"A third country needs to offer a jail cell for Charles Taylor if he's convicted," said Dicker.

"Countries should be lining up to take Taylor, not backing away."

A number of countries currently have agreements with one or both of the international criminal tribunals for Rwanda

and the former Yugoslavia to allow convicted persons to serve sentences there. The European countries include Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Spain and Sweden; the African countries include Benin, Mali and Swaziland. These countries are well-placed to promptly reach an agreement to take Taylor if he's convicted, Human Rights Watch said. Regardless, any country that makes such an offer must have facilities that meet international standards of detention.

Moving Taylor's trial outside Sierra Leone would create serious challenges that the Special Court and its donors would have to address, Human Rights Watch noted. The most significant drawback is that trying Taylor in The Hague could limit the accessibility of the trial to people in West Africa. Nonetheless, legitimate concerns over security may make the move necessary.

If the relocation of Taylor's trial moves forward, Human Rights Watch will issue a briefing paper to the Special Court and its donors on the crucial importance of maintaining the accessibility of The Hague trial for the people of West Africa. The briefing paper will include a number of specific recommendations on how this can be achieved.

Background

The Special Court for Sierra Leone was set up in 2002 to try those "bearing the greatest responsibility" for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during Sierra Leone's

armed conflict. The crimes include killings, mutilations, rape and other forms of sexual violence, sexual slavery, the recruitment and use of child soldiers, abduction, and the use of forced labor by armed groups.

The Special Court has charged Taylor with war crimes (murder, pillage, outrages upon personal dignity, cruel

treatment, terrorizing civilians), crimes against humanity (murder, mutilation, rape, enslavement, sexual slavery), and other serious violations of international humanitarian law (use of child soldiers) in the course of Sierra Leone's armed conflict. The indictment alleges that Taylor, as president of Liberia, provided training and financing to the main rebel group in Sierra Leone, the Revolutionary United Front.
HRW news

ON LINE opinion

Wednesday, 26 April 2006

Lessons from the Milosevic trial

By Gwynn Mac Carrick

The long-running trial of Slobodan Milosevic in The Hague, complete with courtroom drama, demonstrated the many pitfalls entailed in trying deposed leaders in a court of law. In the wake of the which ended with his death before judgment prosecution of the Serbian leader, it is timely to decide what lessons, if any, can be drawn from this trial, which might have application for the proceedings against former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein, in Baghdad, and other high profile defendants in the future.

Inevitably, former world leaders indicted for international crimes will not go quietly. These chief defendants drag out their cases, disparage witnesses, interject, follow nuisances of exchange, mock the court, evade and prevaricate.

It is of primary importance then, that the prosecution has a coherent prosecutorial strategy. What Milosevic's trial has taught us is that the simpler the strategy the better. That is, by reducing the complexity of the indictment and limiting the objectives of the trial to achievable goals, the Office of the Prosecutor enhances the prospect of a final judicial outcome in the lifetime of the defendant.

Second, if the court and the international community at large are to separate facts from theatrics and prevent the court from being used as a venue for staging extrinsic and irrelevant political issues, there is a need to put in place a strategy for reducing the melodramatics of the courtroom proceedings.

Milosevic, 64, was charged with 66 counts of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity spanning the 1991-1995 war in Croatia, the 1992-95 war in Bosnia and the 1998-99 Serb crackdown in Kosovo. He denied the charges and died in custody before a verdict was delivered. Notwithstanding the voluminous amount of evidence presented, compiled in hundreds of thousands of documents and exhibits in his case, and the adducing of countless hours of witness testimony over the course of a four-year period, the net result was nil.

This was avoidable, given that the trial chamber judges, who became frustrated with the pace of the proceedings, urged the prosecutors to trim the indictment list to a manageable number of the strongest claims. However the prosecutors refused, on the basis that shortening the indictments would result in disrespecting the victims and ignore realities. Instead the prosecution offered an extensive amount of exhibits and an archive of eyewitness accounts, photographs and videos relating to the slaughter of an estimated 8,000 Muslim men and boys in July 1995 in the Bosnian town of Srebrenica and the relentless shelling of Sarajevo.

The Milosevic trial dragged on for over four years, with testimony from hundreds of witnesses and thousands of documents admitted into evidence, in an effort to present a comprehensive account of the historical events, rather than simply focusing on the elements of the crime.

This is where the international criminal prosecutions of major defendants are getting it wrong. Trials have become an attempt to reconstruct history rather that a strictly legal process. Prosecutions are approached from the viewpoint that the testimony of witnesses is a cathartic

exercise, which marks the vindication of victims and the start of national healing. This is too ambitious. The court should be reserved for testing the strictly legal and factual issues.

In reality Milosevic's trial dealt with a mega-case, which involved atrocities committed over a decade in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo. The court proceedings concluded at Milosevic's death, with no judgment. The former Yugoslav president had eluded the criminal process.

The length and complexity of the Milosevic trial helped convince Iraqi prosecutors that they needed to concentrate on a few key events rather than attempt to cover the full range of alleged atrocities during Hussein's 24-year rule. To avoid this evidentiary overload, the Iraqi tribunal decided to conduct a dozen mini-trials, the first case focusing on Saddam's 1982 retaliatory attack on the town of Dujail and the torture and murder of 143 of its inhabitants.

Michael Schraf an eminent international lawyer who helped train the five judges for the Saddam trial suggests, "One of the lessons of the Milosevic trial is that war crimes need to be streamlined and efficient". He states, "The old adage 'justice delayed is justice denied' proved to be accurate in the case of Milosevic".

"The Dujail case is serving as a test cast, a judicial laboratory, for the judges to get used to the novel rules and procedures," says Scharf. "Most importantly, they have learned how to balance the rights of the defendants and at the same time maintain control of the courtroom in the face of defence attempts to disrupt the proceedings."

The Milosevic case was used as both an example and an illustration of what not to do during the Iraqi judges' preparation. A major departure from the Milosevic trial is that Saddam is being tried on individual and specific charges rather than a broad case of crimes against humanity. This is a big lesson to draw. Schraf explains that in the Iraqi court each case stands on its own, at the end of which, there will be a judgment. The judgments of these mini- trials constitute "snapshots of evil".

According to the daily Le Monde, the high court in Baghdad announced on April 4 that after the initial trial, a more significant trial would be held in which Saddam Hussein and six other defendants would be tried for crimes committed during the 1987 and 1988 anti-Kurd campaign in Al-Anfal, resulting in 100,000 to 200,000 victims. In this case, Saddam is indicted along with Ali Hassan Al-Majid, (known as "Chemical Ali"), on charges of genocide and crimes against humanity, for the destruction of thousands of villages, the displacement of their residents and the gassing of the village of Halabja in March 1988, which resulted in 8,000 victims.

The hearing of these "snapshot of evil" indictments could last for years as new charges, including genocide are laid. The Iraqi authorities are keen for closure following former Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic's death before he faced a verdict on war crimes and also conscious not to "bite off more than they can chew".

Attempting to try the ousted leader for genocide against Kurds will almost certainly mean that these criminal matters will take years to resolve. However, by drafting a series of disciplined indictments that focus on specific events the trials are self-contained.

Some observers have cautioned against haste. The former chief of the Iraqi Crimes against Humanity Unit, Tom Parker, says that in the context of Iraq it is more important for due process to be seen to be done than it is for a speedy trial. Parker favours procedural fairness over timeliness, on the basis that Saddam's trial should constitute "an important building block in the

construction of a credible Iraqi judicial system". He added that, "a rushed trial could signal nothing had changed and justice in Iraq was still biddable to political expediency".

Also speaking of the Iraqi court, Theodor Meron said it would have to guarantee the rights of its famous defendant to appear credible to the public, stating, "Any court dealing with atrocities has to pay particular respect to due process. There can be no cutting corners."

It is a universal principle that any criminal jurisdiction, be it national or international, must extend to an accused person a system of justice that is both regular and fair. While not for a moment suggesting that there should be any diminution of the rights afforded the accused in major trials of this nature, it is important that the prosecutors do not hoist themselves on their own petard.

A trial of an individual cannot at the same time attempt to satisfy other external agenda, for instance, attempting to be a national catharsis, a medium for national healing, a comprehensive history lesson and a panacea for a failed justice system.

Unnecessarily broadening the trial objectives beyond the displacement of the burden of proof by the satisfaction of requisite elements sets the bar for the prosecution at an impossibly high level, thereby playing into the hands of former dictators, who are masters at manipulation and astutely aware of the theatrical effect of behaving badly.

If the prosecution stakes out the righteous high ground, then the defence will inevitably seek to show that the prosecutor represents an interested party rather than a mere officer of the court. The contest is then about personalities, as opposed to the merits of the matter. If the trial simply deals with the merits in a value neutral manner, then it will avoid the trial becoming a showdown between morality versus hypocrisy.

Some commentators have suggested that one of the greatest obstacles for prosecutors in the trials of former dictators is the sheer force of their personality on trial. Milosevic, for instance, acted in his own defence, with a staff of Serbian lawyers and researchers collecting material and conducting investigations on his behalf. He also had two court-appointed attorneys who intervened in procedural matters. This permitted him to have counsel, but also be disruptive himself.

Many critics and courtroom observers say Milosevic was the main reason his trial lasted so long. Early in the trial Milosevic was known for courtroom speeches and temperamental outbursts, following every nuance of exchange and frequently interjecting complaints or questions, even correcting courtroom interpreters. Milosevic disparaged the tribunal in court, threatened and insulted witnesses and tried to make the trial about the US and British military action against Serbia.

He logged a succession of sick days on doctors' recommendation, resulting in the court sessions being reduced to three days a week to reduce his stress and hypertension.

The lessons of Milosevic's prolonged trial were uppermost in the minds of those establishing the criminal tribunal for Iraq, now underway in Baghdad. Methods for keeping the trial short, fair and under control were the primary concerns.

Keeping order in these politically charged cases have proved a big issue. In an effort to circumvent this problem of self-representation, last August the Iraqi National Assembly enacted revised rules for the tribunal. Under the rules, Saddam had to be represented by legal counsel, in

order to prevent him from using the court as a political forum to attack the US and the new Iraqi Government.

In keeping with Iraqi legal tradition, however, the judges have allowed Saddam to question witnesses. This has given Saddam a platform to disparage and prevaricate. So far, according to observers, the trial of Saddam Hussein has been characterised by chaos, with the bench often struggling to maintain order. The defence lawyers walked out, prompting their dismissal and an order by the court to continue the trial with court-appointed public defenders. In protest, Saddam and his co-defendants have refused to return to court, thereby requiring the court to make a case to the public, clearly explaining the ruling.

From the initial proceedings it is evident that the Iraqi tribunal will have teething issues, but whether any lessons have been learned from The Hague experience remains to be seen.

Undoubtedly, the trials of leaders such as Slobodan Milosevic and Saddam Hussein will be followed shortly by the trial of other similarly situated deposed leaders. This week the UN Security Council may ask the Netherlands to host the special court for Sierra Leone, established four years ago in Freetown, so that it can try its most important defendant, former Liberian president Charles Taylor, who was incarcerated on March 29. In this case it would appear that the relocation of Taylor to The Hague is a prosecutorial strategy aimed at security and to avoid the pitfalls of in situ prosecution.

Similarly, the lessons learned from the trial of Milosevic have application elsewhere. For instance, if the international community is to avoid the same outcome in Cambodia as the Milosevic trial, it will need to ensure the prompt establishment of a trial chamber to begin hearing matters as a matter of priority. Presently the Cambodian Government is delaying setting up the extraordinary chambers to try ex-Khmer Rouge leaders, adopting a strategy that increases the likelihood of these leaders dying before they come to trial.

It is imperative that we learn the lessons. Trying former world leaders is always going to test any criminal system, but the Milosevic precedent tells us that the prosecution can get smarter and more efficient about how they conduct proceedings, primarily by simplifying their prosecutorial strategy. Ambitious drafting is counter-productive and zealous posturing with respect to what these trials will achieve on a grand scale, will be met predictably by distain and counterclaim from the defence.

If we have learned anything from Milosevic's trial it is "keep it simple" and "keep it free from posturing" by both parties to the proceedings. This way the international criminal process can ensure the pronouncement of timely and disinterested judgment from legal institutions which are, to the extent possible, freed from their political context.

Gwynn MacCarrick is a Human Rights lawyer based in Hobart. She has appeared as Defence counsel before the UN Special Panel for Serious Crimes in East Timor, has worked with the Office of the Prosecutor at the UN Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, and in between her domestic criminal practice has taken up various postings with the UN High Commission for Refugees. Gwynn is undertaking a doctorate in international criminal law at the University of Tasmania Law School.

AFP

Thursday, 27 April 2006

Countries should be 'queuing to jail Taylor'

Dakar - Countries should be lining up with bids to jail former Liberian president Charles Taylor, an international rights watchdog said Thursday after three European nations rejected requests to imprison him if convicted of war crimes.

None of the three countries Austria, Denmark and Sweden - approached by the UN so far have accepted to take in Charles Taylor.

"Countries should be lining up to take Taylor, not backing away," said Richard Dicker, international director for justice at Human Rights Watch (HRW), in a statement received in Dakar.

Taylor's successor Ellen Johnson Sirleaf "took a real risk" by requesting Nigeria to surrender the ex-warlord to face justice at the UN-backed Special Court in Sierra Leone because of the dangers his transit through Liberia posed.

"There are numerous countries which are better equipped to address the potential security threats of Taylor's presence and they should come forward and respond," west Africa's HRW specialist, Corinne Dufka told AFP in Dakar.

The Special Court has requested the trial be relocated to the Hague, but the Netherlands will host it only on the condition a third country will provide a jail cell for Africa's most feared warmonger should he be convicted.

"How can other countries now sit back and do nothing?" asked Dicker.

"A third country needs to offer a jail cell for Charles Taylor, not back away," he said.

HRW said there are at least 12 countries - nine of them in Europe and three in Africa - that have agreements with the international criminal courts for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia such that convicted persons can serve their sentences there.

"These countries are well placed to promptly reach an agreement to take Taylor if he is convicted," said HRW. HRW named the countries as Australia, Benin, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Mali, Norway, Spain, Swaziland and Sweden.

Taylor, 58, was indicted by the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone on charges of crimes against humanity, war crimes and violations of international human rights.

He is accused of sponsoring and aiding rebel groups who perpetrated murder, sexual slavery, mutilation and conscription of child soldiers in Sierra Leone's brutal civil war in exchange for a share in the lucrative diamond trade.

On April 3 Taylor pleaded not guilty. He remains in UN custody in Sierra Leone awaiting a formal decision by the UN Security Council to move the trial to The Hague.

Taylor fled Liberia in 2003 and went into exile in Nigeria. He was finally transferred to Liberia on March 29 after an abortive attempt to flee from Nigeria.

He risks a long jail term, but not the death penalty.

The Post-Standard

Thursday, 27 April 2006

Case shows 'law more powerful than gun'

Liberian dictator's indictment important to Africa, world, prosecutor tells SU forum.

By BoNhia Lee

The special international court that indicted former Liberian dictator Charles Taylor accomplished most of its goals three years after it was created, according to David Crane, the prosecutor who wrote the indictment.

Taylor was one of 13 people indicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone for war crimes against humanity including murder, rape, extermination, acts of terror, enslavement and recruiting children into armed forces. Two have since died.

The court's focused mandate of prosecuting "those who bear the greatest responsibility for violations of international humanitarian laws" helped narrow the search for suspects from hundreds to 13, said Crane, a distinguished visiting professor at Syracuse University's law school.

"You just can't prosecute everyone," Crane said Wednesday during a forum sponsored by SU's Africa Initiative program.

The court was created in 2002 by the United Nations and the government of Sierra Leone to prosecute people charged with war crimes against humanity. Its work will end next year.

"It's for and about the people you are representing," said Crane, a 1980 graduate of SU's law school. "I said we're going to get here, get out and let them move on with the rest of their lives."

About 50 people heard Crane talk about his experience with the court and lessons learned and challenges of international criminal law in Africa.

Crane played a key role in forcing Taylor from power in 2003 when he wrote and unveiled an indictment against Taylor, charging him with fueling a civil war in neighboring Sierra Leone and with ordering rebels to rape, maim and kill thousands of civilians to gain power.

Taylor was granted political asylum in Nigeria, but he fled last month after Nigerian authorities announced they would turn him over to the international court. Taylor was arrested March 29 and sent to Sierra Leone to face trial.

Creating the court in Sierra Leone sent "a tremendously important message to people of Africa that they matter," he said.

There were some challenges for the court, such as culture and getting the global community to care about the 1.2 million people killed in Sierra Leone, he said.

Taylor's indictment sends a message that criminals will be held accountable for their actions, he said.

"It tells people of the world that the law is fair, no one is above the law and the rule of law is more powerful than the gun," Crane said.

Olatunji Ojo, associate professor of history at SU, is a native of Nigeria. During Taylor's stay in Nigeria, Ojo said he was hoping that Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo would hand Taylor over to an international court.

Ojo said he agrees with Crane's strategy to target the people who "bear the greatest responsibility."

"To get a few people and make them scapegoats, to serve as an example, that's a good idea to me," Ojo said.

BBC

Monday, 24 April 2006

Dutch trial seeks ex-Liberia head

Lawyers for a Dutch timber trader accused of arms trafficking are calling for Liberia's former leader Charles Taylor to give evidence at his trial.

Guus Kouwenhoven, 63, faces war crimes charges in The Hague for allegedly trading wood for weapons with Mr Taylor, breaking a UN arms embargo.

Mr Taylor faces war crimes charges himself and is in the custody of the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

He was barred from buying weapons before his fall in 2003.

'Key witness'

Judges at the new domestic war crimes chamber at The Hague district court said discussions were under way on whether Charles Taylor would testify.

Mr Kouwenhoven's lawyer described him as a key witness.

The defendant denies the charges against him and told the Dutch ANP news agency he was the "victim of political posturing".

The BBC's Geraldine Coughlan, in The Hague, says the arrest of Mr Kouwenhoven in Rotterdam last year brought into focus the worldwide trafficking of so-called "blood timber".

Like "blood diamonds", wood has allegedly fuelled recent conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

The prosecution claims that Mr Kouwenhoven was part of Mr Taylor's inner circle and headed timber companies in Liberia during the 1990s.

The Special Court in Sierra Leone has asked the Netherlands to host the trial of Mr Taylor at the International Criminal Court.


United Nations **Nations Unies**
 United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 27 April 2006

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

International Clips on Liberia

BBC 27 April 2006

Liberian president blames "anti-peace elements" for recent violence

The government has put in place measures to prevent the recurrence of Tuesday's [25 April] rampage action by former soldiers of the Armed Forces of Liberia. President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf also placed a ban planned demonstration by civil servants in demand of their salary arrears. President Sirleaf also announced on Tuesday [25 April] that a ban has been placed on the sale of petroleum products in bottles in the streets. She said the violence was calculated and orchestrated by anti-peace elements. The president said the government will no longer condone lawlessness.

04/27/2006 11:28:10

Eleven ex-Liberian soldiers charged with national security threat

Monrovia (dpa) _ Eleven former members of the Armed Forces of Liberia were Thursday charged with posing a threat to national security for their part in violent protests two days earlier.

Countries should be lining up to jail Taylor: rights watchdog

DAKAR, April 27, 2006 (AFP) - Countries should be lining up with bids to jail former Liberian president Charles Taylor, an international rights watchdog said Thursday after three European nations rejected requests to imprison him if convicted of war crimes. None of the three countries -- Austria, Denmark and Sweden -- approached by the UN so far have accepted to take in Charles Taylor.

Court told of timber-for-weapons deals in Liberia

THE HAGUE, April 27, 2006 (AFP) - A former member of ex-Liberian president Charles Taylor's inner circle testified in court Thursday that a Dutch timber trader on trial for war crimes provided weapons for his regime. The trader, Gus Kouwenhoven, is on trial in The Hague for war crimes and breaking the UN arms embargo against Liberia for allegedly trafficking "blood timber" that helped fuel conflicts in that country and Sierra Leone. Cindor Reeves, related by marriage to Taylor and one of his key associates, said Kouwenhoven's Oriental Timber Cooperation (OTC) company took delivery of weapons and brought them to the Liberian capital Monrovia.

International Clips on West Africa

Ivory Coast leader backs Annan peacekeeper plea

By Irwin Arief

UNITED NATIONS, April 27 (Reuters) - The peace process in Ivory Coast is back on track but more U.N. peacekeepers are needed to cement the gains and ensure further progress, the restive West African nation's new head of government said on Thursday

Local Media – Newspapers

President Placates Civil Servants

(Daily Observer, The Inquirer, The Analyst, Liberian Express and The Informer)

- President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf yesterday placated civil servants, who had gathered to demand outstanding salaries by pledging to pay the arrears and offering them US\$1,000 as lunch money. She said that the National Legislature had already approved US\$3.5 million to settle the arrears.

UN Envoy Meets with Foreign Diplomats

(Daily Observer and Liberian Express)

- Special Representative of the Secretary-General Alan Doss along with senior UNMIL officials met recently with the ambassador-designate of Russia, Roman Voloshchenko, and the new Vatican Ambassador, Archbishop George Antonysamy. The meeting centered on UNMIL's role, the challenges faced by the Liberian government and ways for better cooperation and partnership between UNMIL and the envoys.

Rioting Former Soldiers Charged with Terrorists Threats

(Daily Observer)

- Liberia National Police Press and Public Affairs Director Asatu Bah Kenneth told *Daily Observer* yesterday that 11 former soldiers had been charged with terrorist threats following Tuesday's street rioting by demobilized soldiers demanding severance pay. She said that 18 civilians were also arrested and charged with rioting.

UNMIL Supports President's Decision to Prosecute Rioters

(The News)

- Speaking at the UNMIL regular press briefing yesterday UNMIL Acting Spokesman Paul Egunsola said that the recent measures taken by President Johnson-Sirleaf to prevent rioting--including prosecuting Tuesday's rioters and the ban on the civil servants' protest march—were not only timely but in the interest of peace and security.

UNMIL Warns Troublemakers

(Daily Observer and Liberian Express)

- Addressing journalists in Monrovia yesterday, UNMIL Force Commander Lt.-Gen. Chikadibia Obiakor warned former Liberian army personnel to desist from violence and seek peaceful means to address their grievances.

Strange Men Set Up Roadblocks in Bong County

(Daily Observer)

- Residents of the Far-East Community of Gbarnga, Bong County reported recently that an unknown band of gangsters wearing masks and black T-shirts had set up roadblocks in the community at night in attempts to harass passers-by. The residents said that the gangsters instilled fear as they prevented people from reaching their destinations.

UNMIL Explains Shooting at Liberia-Guinea Border

(The News)

- UNMIL Force Commander Lt.-Gen. Obiakor told journalists in Monrovia yesterday that the shooting at the Liberia-Guinea border on Tuesday was carried out by an insane man who had stolen the gun of a Guinean security officer who left it at his duty post to visit the St. John River probably to fish or take a bath. He said that other Guinean soldiers ran over the border to Liberia for safety and were immediately disarmed by Liberian immigration officers.

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

Ringleaders of Former Soldiers' Violent Protest Surrender

- According to reports, the alleged ringleader of Tuesday's violent street protest and four other former soldiers of the Armed Forces of Liberia yesterday surrendered to government through the Liberia Council of Churches (LCC) which guaranteed their safety and human rights. However, the alleged ringleaders, Capt. Jerry Kollie, Saydee Tailey, Rebecca Smith, Orpheus Pandon and Willie Toeyah, denied their involvement in the violence.

Health Ministry to Close Sub-Standard Child Welfare Centers

- Briefing the House Standing Committee on Health and Social Welfare yesterday, Deputy Health and Social Welfare Minister Vivian Cherue said that her department will soon close down over 69 orphanages and child welfare institutions for providing sub-standard services. Thirty-five other orphanages had been shut down for similar reasons will also be closed down.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio)

Lawmakers Query Maritime Registry Entity

- The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Maritime Affairs Chairman Eugene Kpaka said that the House has urged the government to review its agreement with the Liberia Shipping and Corporate Registry (LISCR) to manage Liberia's maritime program.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio)

Petroleum Dealers Form Task Force to Check Street Selling of Products

- In a press release issued in Monrovia yesterday, the Petroleum Retailers Association said that it has constituted a task force to ensure that filling stations do not unlawfully give petrol to vendors to sell at street corners. The Association said that the decision would support government's ban on the sale of petroleum products in jerry cans and other containers on the streets of Monrovia.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio)

Deputy Police Chief Resumes Duty after Suspension

- According to a Radio Veritas correspondent, Deputy Police Inspector for Administration Alfred Karley has resumed work after he had been suspended for his role in the release of the Russians who allegedly gang-raped some Liberian girls and later fled Liberia.

Canadian Clergy Warns Liberians against Returning to Violence

- Addressing a news conference in Monrovia yesterday, a visiting Canadian social worker James Davis warned that Liberia could return to violence if Liberians cannot work together to rebuild the country.

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UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 26 April 2006

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

International Clips on Liberia

Liberian president orders new security measures

MONROVIA, April 26, 2006 (AFP) - Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has announced a security crackdown following violent demonstrations by ex-soldiers and banned a labour strike planned for Wednesday. In an address on radio late Tuesday Sirleaf ordered the prosecution of the leaders of hundreds of former government troops who rioted in the capital Tuesday over pension payouts, injuring several people including two UN peacekeepers. The ex-soldiers erected barricades, burnt tyres and pelted stones at the ministry of defense complex in downtown Monrovia. "To deal with the violent behavior ... I am announcing and authorize the relevant agencies to arrest and prosecute all those who instigated and led the attack on the ministry of Defence, UNMIL soldiers and Liberian citizens," Sirleaf said. She also outlawed street protests planned by government workers Wednesday over pay arrears and new reforms to downsize the civil service, fearing they could be hijacked to stir up more unrest in this fragile west African country.

International Clips on West Africa

Ivory Coast becomes seventh African country with bird flu

PARIS, April 26, 2006 (AFP) - Two outbreaks of bird flu have occurred in Ivory Coast, making it the seventh country in Africa to report the disease, the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) announced here Wednesday. The viral strains have been confirmed by European labs as the highly pathogenic type of H5N1 avian influenza, it said. The outbreaks, affecting seven backyard chickens, nine ducks and a sparrow hawk, were detected in Abidjan, it said.

Local Media – Newspapers

Former Soldiers' Protests Cause Pandemonium

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

- Pandemonium broke out in central Monrovia yesterday when UNMIL troops fired gunshots in the air to disperse hundreds of disbanded Liberian army personnel who had engaged in violent street protests in the vicinity of the Defense Ministry to demand severance benefits. The soldiers had set roadblocks, burnt tyres and threw missiles leading to the destruction of private and public property.
- In a nationwide broadcast last evening, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf ordered the arrest and prosecution of the rioters and a ban on the planned demonstration by civil servants.

Denmark Rejects Request to Imprison Taylor

(New Democrat and The Informer)

- Denmark has rejected UN request to host former President Charles Taylor as prisoner if he is convicted of war crimes. Denmark is the third country after Sweden and Austria to refuse such a request.
- Denmark Foreign Minister Per Stig Moeller told reporters, the country was skeptical so the UN should try elsewhere. He said that Denmark had received the request on Sunday and Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen had spoken about it with UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan on Monday.

Senate and Three Media Executives Hold Dialogue

(Daily Observer and The Analyst)

- The publishers of *Daily Observer*, *New Democrat* and *The Analyst* yesterday appeared before the Senate Committee on Information and Broadcasting to clarify their reporting on the issue of the imprisonment of two Cabinet Ministers by the Senate.
- The committee's Co-Chairman Senator Joyce Freeman Sumo said that the proceeding was a conference and fact-finding exercise to afford the lawmakers the opportunity to interact with the three media executives on their reportage of the manner.

UN Envoy Escorts Night Patrol Team

(The Informer)

- Special Representative of the Secretary-General Alan Doss along with IPS Commissioner Mohammed Al Hassan over the weekend joined the joint Night Patrol Units to observe the police at work and to express his full support for their efforts to combat crimes. The night patrols with Mr. Doss took place mainly in the Paynesville neighborhood and Duport Road, which are notorious for their high crime rates, an UNMIL press release said. Addressing the Joint Task Force prior to the patrol, Mr. Doss praised the team for their commitment and efforts to make Monrovia a safer.

Former Special Court Prosecutor Advocates War Crimes Court for Liberia

(National Chronicle)

- In a recent interview with FrontPageAfrica online, former Special Court for Sierra Leone Chief Prosecutor David Crane stressed that the international community along with the Republic of Liberia needed to consider the setting up of a hybrid international tribunal in Monrovia to try those who bear the greatest responsibilities for the destruction of the lives of over 600,000 Liberians.

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

President Halts Payment of Soldiers Severance Benefits

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Police Arrest Several Individuals in Connection with Violent Protests

- Addressing a news conference in Monrovia yesterday, Defense Minister Browne Samukai said that several persons have been arrested in connection with the violent protest yesterday of former Armed Forces of Liberia soldiers. Among those apprehended include the group's rank leaders Col. Anthony Jailo and Capt. Jerry Kollie. Minister Samukai said that the perpetrators stoned the Defense Ministry building and injured his Secretary, two personnel of UNMIL, damaged UNMIL vehicles and that of Deputy Defense Minister Dynicious Sebwe.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

UNMIL Forces Fire Shots to Disperse Protesting Former Soldiers

- Soldiers of the United Nations Mission in Liberia yesterday fired gun shots to disperse protesting former soldiers of the Armed Forces of Liberia. The soldiers embarked on the violent protest to press the Ministry of Defense to settle their severance benefits.
(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Lawmaker Defers with Government on Retrenchment Exercise

- Speaking to journalists yesterday, Sinoe County Senator Mobutu Nyenpan described as cruel government's program to downsize the national workforce without seeking investors that could absorb those to be affected by the exercise.
(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Malaria Control Coordinator wants Tax Removed on Malaria Drugs Imports

- Speaking at programs to mark the 6th anniversary of African Malaria Day in Monrovia yesterday, National Malaria Control Coordinator Joel Jones called on government to remove the tax imposed on the importation of anti-Malaria drugs. Dr. Jones urged the government to increase awareness activities in the fight against malaria.
(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Governance Reform Commission Sights Inconsistency in Local Government Administration

- Addressing the House of Representatives yesterday, Governance Reform Commission Chairman Dr. Amos Sawyer said that there were inconsistencies on the part of the government in relations to structuring its local administrators. He said that while the government was appointing superintendents and commissioners it was rather seeking to open elections for the positions of mayors and chiefs.
(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

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.