

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



Historic postcard: A traditional chief in his regalia.

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:

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Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
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Premier News
Wednesday, 28 April 2010

Fayia Musa Denies It All For Taylor

Charles Taylor invited Sierra Leonean rebels to visit his rebel headquarters in Liberia in 1995, but not to give them military advice, Mr. Taylor's defense witness told Special Court for Sierra Leone judges in The Hague.

Fayia Musa said that in 1995, Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels received an invitation from Mr. Taylor to visit his National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) headquarters at Gbarngba in Liberia. Mr. Musa, a former RUF rebel himself, said that the group's leader Foday Sankoh initially turned down the invitation, but at the behest of several senior RUF commanders, Mr. Sankoh allowed the RUF to visit the former Liberian president. Many RUF commanders, including the witness himself, were enthusiastic about the visit, Mr. Musa said. He said that prior to the visit, the RUF did not know why Mr. Taylor had invited the RUF delegation to Liberia. This raised a question from the Presiding Judge of the Trial Chamber, Justice Julia Sebutinde, about why the rebel forces were enthusiastic about visiting Mr. Taylor. "You didn't even know the reason why Taylor had invited you. Why were you bending over backwards to go against

the will of your leader to visit someone that hadn't stated the purpose?" Justice Sebutinde asked the witness.

"Well, we knew that he would not invite us into security problem at all. We also knew that he was his friend," Mr. Musa responded.

Prosecution counsel, Nicholas Koumjian, sought to know what the RUF hoped to achieve from the visit.

"What did you hope to gain out of going to Gbarngba?" Mr. Koumjian asked.

"We did not know what we were going to get. First of all, we never knew Charles Taylor before. So one of the reasons why I wanted to go there was to see him, for the first time in my life," the witness said.

"Secondly, I wanted to see what actually he called us for, come what may," he added.

Asked by Mr. Koumjian whether they were "hoping for military support" from Mr. Taylor, the witness said "No, we were not hoping for military support at all."

"In fact, if I knew that it was for military support, I

would not go," Mr. Musa said.

Mr. Musa explained that when they visited Liberia, Mr. Taylor took the RUF delegation to the Ghanaian capital, Accra, for sight-seeing.

This account by Mr. Musa sits in tension with other accounts given by Mr. Taylor and defense witnesses that after the fall-out between the RUF and Mr. Taylor's own rebel group, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) in 1992, Mr. Taylor no longer had any contacts with the RUF. It will be left with the judges to determine the weight to attach to any account given by specific witnesses.

Also in his cross-examination today, Mr. Musa told the court that reports that the RUF held civilians as hostages are false. He said that all civilians who stayed in RUF-controlled territory did so willingly because of reports that suspected rebels or RUF associates were being killed in Freetown and Guinea.

"The civilians decided to stay, they were not held hostage by the RUF. They were held hostage by the fear of being killed either in Guinea or in Freetown," Mr. Musa said.

Credit

Charlestaylortrial.org.

The Exclusive
Wednesday, 28 April 2010

Taylor Implicates Naomi Campbell

THE curious tale of the diamond that arrived in the night has returned to haunt supermodel Naomi Campbell, who is entangled in a web of allegations against Charles Taylor, the former Liberian president on trial at The Hague for crimes against humanity.

Despite denials from Taylor and Campbell that any diamond changed hands between them, the US ABC television network broadcast an interview with Mia Farrow, the American actress turned political activist, who contradicted the supermodel's recollection of events.

The two celebrities were visiting South Africa as guests of Nelson Mandela in 1997. Prosecutors at the Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague have claimed that Taylor was also in South Africa to buy weapons with so-called "blood diamonds" looted from Sierra Leone mines.

Farrow has told prosecutors of an unusual conversation she had with Campbell at breakfast in Cape Town. "She said during the night some men had knocked on her door and she, half asleep, had opened the door and it was representatives of President Charles Taylor and they had given her a huge diamond," Farrow said.

Taylor has dismissed accounts of the incident as "totally incorrect" and described as nonsense allegations he kept a pile of rough diamonds in a mayonnaise jar.

When the ABC attempted to question the British model during a visit to New York, Campbell replied: "I



didn't receive a diamond and I'm not going to speak about that."

Yet Farrow insists her account is accurate.

"You don't forget when a girlfriend tells you she was given a huge diamond in the middle of the night," she said. Farrow has become a defender of Africans caught up in regional conflicts and believes Campbell should testify about her experience to help prosecutors link Taylor to the illegal diamond trade.

The actress recalled that Campbell told her she was going to give the diamond to Mandela's children's charities.

According to ABC, the charity received large cash sums from Campbell in



successive years, but it has no record of a donated diamond.

The Punch
Monday, 26 April 2010

Sierra Leone Diamonds: Before and After Independence

Although Sierra Leone's diamonds made headlines only recently when the United Nations Security Council placed an embargo on exports of the gems, the country has had a long and troubled history with its diamond mines. Sierra Leone has been a major diamond producer for 70 years, but it has one of the lowest Gross National Products in the world and is last on the United Nations' Human Development Index, which rates the level of human development in 174 countries. Unlike other African countries, such as Botswana where the diamond industry has had a positive effect, diamonds and the corrupt politics they fostered have torn Sierra Leone apart.

At first, the mining of Sierra Leone's diamond resources was a legal, economic endeavor. In 1935, De Beers' Sierra Leone Selection Trust gained complete prospecting and mining rights for 99 years. However, Lebanese traders within Sierra Leone quickly discovered smuggling diamonds brought easy profits, and illicit mining and trading grew throughout the country.

By the time a diamond rush began in the 1950s, the government gave up policing the diamond districts. Foreign investors provided their own security. To crack down on the growing illicit diamond trade, however, the government tightened security between Kono, a large diamond district, and Freetown, the country's major exporting site. This increase in security caused smugglers to move illicit goods through Liberia, creating the illegal diamond pipeline between Liberia and Sierra Leone.



RUF fighters celebrating after capturing a diamond mining town



Diamond Mining was at the centre of the RUF War

In 1956, the government introduced the Alluvial Mining Scheme, which allowed many indigenous miners to receive mining and trading licenses. The scheme also resulted in increased illegal mining, as 75,000 illicit miners populated the Kono district.

After Sierra Leone gained independence from Great Britain in 1961, diamond smuggling became a political problem, as well as an economic problem. Sierra Leone has not had a stable government since independence; it fluctuates between multi-party democracy and one-party rule. In 1968, populist Siaka Stevens became prime minister, bringing the country to one-party rule. Stevens was the first to officially connect the diamond mines to political power and profit, and he encouraged illicit mining to gain political power. He nationalized the diamond mines and De Beers' SLST by creating the National Diamond Mining Co. Through NDMC, Stevens gave himself and his key advisor, Lebanese businessman Jamil Mohammed, control of the diamond mines. Under Stevens' authority, legitimate diamond trading dropped from more than two million carats in 1970 to 595,000 carats in 1980 and 48,000 carats in 1988.

Civil War Begins

At the end of Stevens' 17-year rule, De Beers removed itself from deeply corrupt Sierra Leone. In 1984, De Beers' SLST sold its remaining shares to the Precious Metals Mining Co., controlled by Mohammed. A year

later, Stevens retired and his successor, Joseph Momoh, having little political or leadership skills, placed even more responsibility in Mohammed's hands, and illicit diamond mining within Sierra Leone flourished. In 1991, with a weak leader, a corrupt government and openly illicit diamond trading, Sierra Leone was a vulnerable and attractive site for armed rebellion. On March 23, a civil war began when the Revolutionary United Front, a group of 100 fighters from Sierra Leone and Liberia, invaded east Sierra Leone.

Foday Sankoh, an ex-army sergeant and professional photographer in his 50s, led the RUF. Sankoh said he represented the urban dispossessed and promised impoverished peasants a greater share in the mineral wealth misused by the corrupt government. However, Sankoh used brutal tactics, such as mutilation and amputation, against these same peasants to allegedly expose the government's inability to protect its citizens. Throughout the civil war, fighting concentrated in and around the diamond districts. RUF leaders were keenly aware that whoever controlled the diamond mines controlled Sierra Leone, and profits from smuggled diamonds funded its attack. During the civil war, Sierra Leone suffered complete desolation. It became wholly dependent on outside support from Great Britain, Nigeria and South Africa's security forces. Sierra Leone's own army became corrupt; its soldiers were nicknamed "Sobels," rebels by day, soldiers by night.

Finally, in July 1999, Sankoh and Sierra Leone's president, Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, signed the Lome Peace Accord under pressure from the U.N. and the U.S. government. RUF agreed to surrender its forces for a share in Sierra Leone's government. As a concession to RUF, Sankoh was released from the death sentence he earned for his war crimes and made Chairman of the Strategic Mineral Resources Commission, a position that controlled most of Sierra Leone's diamond exports.

Although the accord was long in coming, it brought a short peace. On Jan. 6, 2000, just seven months after it was signed, RUF revived its attacks on Freetown and Sierra Leone's government. Despite its promises to surrender its forces, RUF never did. Control over the diamond mines was always at the center of the conflict. However, with the U.N. ban on Sierra Leone's diamond exports and De Beers' promise to help the country learn to peacefully profit from its resources, the government gained a chance to regain power over legitimate mining and the country.

The Punch
Monday, 26 April 2010

Civil War After Independence

On 23rd March 1991 a small group of about one hundred guerilla fighters entered the village of Bomaru, eastern Sierra Leone, from neighbouring Liberia. The larger part of the group was made up of Sierra Leoneans, called vanguards. These vanguards comprised two groups: Sierra Leoneans who had received guerrilla training in Libya in 1987/88 and those who were recruited in Liberia just before the incursion. Some had fighting experience from the war in Liberia, which started on 24th December 1989. The guerrilla forces named themselves the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), and their leader announced his name as Corporal Foday Saybannah Sankoh. The proclaimed aim of the RUF was to overthrow the government of Major-General Joseph Saidu Momoh, who had replaced Siaka Stevens in November 1985. Siaka Stevens had declared a one-party state in 1978. Many people at the time believed that this situation of war had long been coming. The Government of Joseph Saidu Momoh had virtually collapsed, and no one knew who actually was in control.

It is a historical fact that unlike many emergent African states, Sierra Leone entered independence with a well-established two-party system, centred on the ruling Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) and the opposition All Peoples Congress (APC). The two-party system drew upon the liberal ideas of



parliamentary institutions, and the concept of the rule of law and civil liberties from the country's previous experience as a British colony.

It has also been documented that "During the first decade after independence, Sierra Leone's economy grew by nearly four per cent. The fiscal and foreign exchange was healthy. Inflation was low in spite of the first half of the 1970s."

It was therefore hoped that Sierra Leone would be the model post-colonial Sub-Saharan state. But this has not been the case. Sierra Leone's political record started to change after the death of the first Prime Minister Sir Milton Margai. The situation became more chaotic when the country was transformed into a one-party state in 1978 under the leadership of Siaka Stevens, who ruled Sierra Leone for 17 years.

Stevens ruled Sierra Leone from 1968 to 1987 when he handed over power to Brigadier Joseph Saidu Momoh. When rebels of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) led by Corporal Foday Saybannah Sankoh entered Sierra Leone from Liberia to overthrow the APC Government, they accused President Momoh of bad governance and mismanagement of the nation's resources.

But what is the evidence that indeed the rebel war which finally destroyed Sierra Leone and rendered it a failed state was the culmination of several years of political instability, which led to armed insurgency? In other words, did political instability lead to civil war?

Charlestaylortrial.org

Tuesday, 27 April 2010

RUF Fighters Were Not Recruited From NPFL Cells in Liberia, Witness Says

By Alpha Sesay

Stories of Sierra Leone's rebel leader recruiting his fighters from jail cells under the control of Mr. Taylor's rebel forces in Liberia are false, a defense witness told the Special Court for Sierra Leone today.

Martin Flomo George, a Liberian national and former Brigade Commander for Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebel forces, today questioned accounts that RUF leader, Foday Sankoh, recruited most of his fighters from National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) jails during Liberia's civil conflict in 1990. Several witnesses have given different accounts about how Mr. Sankoh recruited fighters for the RUF in Liberia. Some have testified that RUF fighters were recruited at NPFL check points, while some were recruited from prisons in NPFL-controlled territory.

According to Mr. George, these accounts are wrong. While some of the witnesses were captured in neighboring Ivory Coast, Mr. George said that no RUF member ever told him that he was captured from an NPFL jail.

"I know how some of these people came to the base, like for Issa Sesay, he was in Abidjan, Yusuf Sillah was in Abidjan, Kaifa Wai was in Abidjan," Mr George said. "He brought them from Abidjan to join us at the base."

"But I don't know about anybody else who was in jail and who was freed by Foday Sankoh to come and join us," the witness said.

Mr. George's account, however, conflicts with the account given by another defense witness, John Vincent. Mr. Vincent's testimony corroborated accounts of previous prosecution witnesses, who spoke of Mr. Sankoh's recruitment of RUF fighters in Liberia. According to Mr. Vincent, who himself was recruited by the RUF in Liberia, some of the RUF fighters were recruited from NPFL check points and from a jail cell in the Herbel area — a place under the control of Mr. Taylor's NPFL rebels.

Also in his testimony today, Mr. George refuted prosecution allegations that Mr. Sankoh ordered his rebel forces to amputate the arms of Sierra Leonean civilians in order to stop them from voting in the country's 1996 general elections. According to several prosecution witnesses, when Sierra Leoneans were preparing to vote in the 1996 presidential and parliamentary elections, Mr. Sankoh was enraged. In order to disrupt the elections, witnesses said, he ordered his troops to cut off the hands of civilians. The slogan for the 1996 election was "the future is in your hands" — according to prosecution witnesses, cutting off those hands was meant to incapacitate civilians from voting. Mr. Taylor knew about this operation and gave it his blessing by providing more support to RUF rebels, prosecutors have alleged. Today, Mr. George dismissed these claims as false, saying that Mr. Sankoh never gave such an order.

"He [Sankoh] never gave that instruction to Morris Kallon or to Boston Flomo. Never," Mr. George said.

"How would you cut people's hands, and who would vote for you in future? He never gave that instruction," he added.

The witness claimed that he was at the meeting where Mr. Taylor gave instructions to his commanders to stop the elections but not to cut people's hands.

“I was at that meeting, I was not far off from the meeting. I was right in the meeting. He never gave that instruction,” the witness said.

Prosecutors have alleged that Mr. Taylor supported and gave his approval to operations undertaken by RUF rebels in Sierra Leone. During those operations, the RUF committed heinous crimes including murder, rape and the infliction of terror on the civilian population of Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor bears responsibility for these crimes, prosecutors have alleged. Mr. Taylor has denied the allegations against him.

The cross-examination of Mr. George continues tomorrow.

CharlesTaylorTrial.org (The Hague)

Monday, 26 April 2010

Liberian Members of the RUF Did Not Communicate With Charles Taylor, Witness Says

Alpha Sesay

Liberians who formed part of Sierra Leone's rebel forces that wreaked havoc in the war-torn West African country were not members of Charles Taylor's own rebel group and had no communications with the former Liberian president, a defense witness said today.

Martin Flomo George, a Liberian national and former Brigade Commander for the Sierra Leonean Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebel group, today told the Special Court for Sierra Leone that he and other Liberian RUF members were not sent to Sierra Leone by Mr. Taylor, and had no contact with him while they were part of the fighting force in their neighboring country.

"No. We never had communication with Charles Taylor," Mr. George told the court.

Prosecutors have alleged that members of Mr. Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) rebel group fought alongside RUF rebels in Sierra Leone. These Liberian rebels, prosecutors have alleged, were sent to Sierra Leone by Mr. Taylor as part of his involvement in a joint criminal enterprise with RUF rebel forces. Prosecution witnesses, including RUF radio operators, have testified before Special Court to Sierra Leone judges that the RUF commanders such as Isaac Mongor used to communicate with Mr. Taylor and his troops in Liberia. Mr. Taylor has denied these allegations, saying that he never sent Liberian nationals to fight in Sierra Leone, that those Liberian nationals who went to Sierra Leone did not go there on his command, and that they did not have any communications with him.

Mr. George, a Liberian national himself and former member of the RUF today corroborated Mr. Taylor's account. Responding to a question from Mr. Taylor's defense counsel, Morris Anyah, as to whether Liberian nationals, especially Mr. Mongor, a former prosecution witness, Liberian national and senior commander in the RUF, communicated with Mr. Taylor, Mr. George told the court:

"While we were in the jungle, I never saw Isaac talking to Charles Taylor on the radio or even giving him message about any situation concerning the RUF war, never, no."

Prosecutors have alleged that RUF commanders used to communicate regularly with Mr. Taylor's Director of Special Security Services (SSS), Benjamin Yeaten. Today, Mr. Anyah sought to know whether such communication did take place with any other commanders in Liberia apart from Mr. Taylor. The witness today said this was never the case.

"Besides Charles Taylor, did he [Isaac Mongor] talk to someone else in Charles Taylor's administration? Benjamin Yeaten, for example, or anyone else associated with Charles Taylor's government in Liberia?" Mr. Anyah asked.

"At the time we were in the northern jungle, I never saw him [Isaac Mongor] communicating with Charles Taylor or any other Charles Taylor's commanders for that matter," Mr. George said.

Mr. Mongor, in his April 2008 testimony as a prosecution witness, said that he was first a member of Mr. Taylor's NPFL. In the NPFL, he said he served as a bodyguard before he was asked by Mr. Taylor to join RUF leader, Foday Sankoh, and help train RUF fighters for the invasion of Sierra Leone. Mr. Mongor, who later became a senior RUF commander, said the RUF leadership used to communicate with Mr. Taylor. Mr. Taylor, in his own testimony, denied these accounts. As one of the Liberians who fought as a member of the RUF, Mr. George is now corroborating Mr. Taylor's account.

Prosecutors will cross-examine Mr. George tomorrow

By John Kollie

NEWS ITEM

Different accounts of how Former RUF Leader, Foday Sankoh recruited about 500 men and women in Liberia to launch a civil war in his native Sierra Leone continue to be brought to the Special Court in The Hague. Some witnesses had testified that some of the RUF Fighters were recruited from prisons in NPFL controlled areas in 1991. The current Defence Witness, Martin George has given his own account of recruitment within the RUF. Mr. George also denied that RUF Operation Stop Elections in Sierra Leone targeted civilians. John Kollie transcribes reports from The Hague for the BBC World Service Trust on the trial of former Liberian president Charles Taylor...

Continuing his cross-examination, Defence Witness, Martin George said he was not aware of Foday Sankoh recruiting RUF Fighters from prisons in Liberia. Another Defence Witness, John Vincent told the Judges last month that Foday Sankoh recruited some RUF fighters from NPFL check points.

Mr. Vincent also said Mr. Sankoh recruited some fighters who were in jail in the Harbel, Firestone area then controlled by Charles Taylor's NPFL. But the current Defence Witness, Martin George said no RUF fighters told him about their recruitment from a jail or prison.

The soft spoken Prosecution Lawyer, Mohammed Bangura also cross-examined the Defence Witness on the RUF Operation Stop Elections allegedly ordered by Foday Sankoh in 1996.

The Prosecution had given evidence that Mr. Sankoh was opposed to elections before peace in Sierra Leone, and was determined to stop the 1996 elections at all cost.

A Prosecution witness had told the court that Mr. Sankoh's opposition to the elections led him to ordering the amputations of voters' thumbs. But Defence witness George denied the prosecution evidence that Sankoh ordered RUF Commanders to amputate voters.

The RUF is accused of terrorizing the civilian population of Sierra Leone during the bloody civil war of that West African Country.

The RUF alleged acts of terrorism have been attributed to the reported support of Former Liberian President, Charles Taylor who is facing trial for war crimes and crimes against humanity in The Hague.

Running Africa

Wednesday, 28 April 2010

<http://runningafrica.com/news>

George Weah not oppose to Taylor's return if acquitted

By Emmanuel Abalo

Opposition politician and Liberian soccer legend Mr. George Opong Weah says the creation of a proposed Special Tribunal in Liberia to try those responsible for the commission of war atrocities and violation of human rights and international law will "provide safety and show that those who do not respect human rights will be taken to court."

In an interview with Radio Netherlands monitored on Philadelphia on Tuesday, Mr. Weah said "for such a country like Liberia, the setting up of a Special Court to adjudicate war crime allegations is good for the people; its beneficial to us." .

This statement by Mr. Weah of the opposition Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) political party comes in the wake of the surprise disclosure by Liberia's Justice Minister Christina Tah earlier in the week that Liberia is considering trying perpetrators of the worst crimes committed during its 1989-2003 civil war, in which child soldiers were recruited, women raped and thousands killed.

Justice Minister Christiana Tah told Reuters a committee had been set up to review a report by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) detailing evidence of atrocities and that it would advise on whether prosecutions should go ahead. According to the Liberian Attorney General, no final decision has been made.

Liberia's TRC concluded its work in June, 2009 and in its final and edited report recommended the prosecution of war actors and supporters and a sanction of some politicians for their role in the Liberian civil conflict which is estimated to have killed over 200,000 people and dislocated nearly a million others in the West African sub-region.

Asked what his position would be if former rebel leader turned former President Charles Taylor were acquitted at his current war crimes trial in the Hague, the Netherlands, Mr. Weah who indicated he didn't understand the context of the question however volunteered that if Mr. Taylor were acquitted it means he is set free.

In continuation of his response, Mr. Weah said, "Liberia did not send Charles Taylor to the Hague neither accused Charles Taylor of any crime. So if Sierra Leone accused Mr. Taylor of a crime and he is in the Hague and is acquitted and Liberia also has nothing against Mr. Taylor, he is a free citizen and I think he must go back to his country."

He asked that Liberians then should welcome Mr. Taylor as a citizen of the country.

In a follow up question, asked should Mr. Taylor be acquitted at his trial in the Hague if he should face the Liberian Special Court on charges for war crimes as well, the young Liberian opposition politician argued that "if he (Taylor) did something and they(Liberia) want to take him to court, I think its a good thing."

Asked if the return of an acquitted Charles Taylor would pose a "risk" to Liberia, Mr. Weah demurred and said " I don't know Charles Taylor's heart; I don't know if he comes to Liberian whether it will be peaceful or not."

According to Mr. Weah, this is a critical question but it was his view that if Mr. Taylor were set free he didn't think Mr. Taylor's intention would be to return to make trouble but rather make peace with everybody that think Mr. Taylor may have done something to.

Earlier in the interview, Mr. Weah noted the prospect of contesting the next General and Presidential elections as a Presidential candidate for "my people" who, according to him petitioned him in the last election to contest the Liberian Presidency. Mr., Weah was one of 22 Presidential candidates in the 2005 elections but lost the run-off round to the long time political heavyweight and current President Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

He, however, refused to emphatically state that he will be a candidate and explained the process of the party convention and selection of a candidate as is done in party politics. " I know that I have to go to Convention to convince my people that I am the person to represent them," he further said.

The Liberian soccer legend confirmed that he is studying Business Administration and Criminal Justice in Miami, Florida, the United States and termed his academic effort as "very good."

Madam Johnson Sirleaf has served notice again that she will contest the 2011 Presidential post as 'a formidable candidate." Other presidential aspirants who have formerly declared their intention include a former warlord and current senator from Nimba County Mr. Prince Y. Johnson, former Planning and Economic Affairs Minister in the Samuel K. Doe military junta and long time political activist Dr. Togba Nah Tipoteh and a former Presidential candidate and businessman Mr. Thomas Q. Harris Jr.

As the electioneering season draw closer, other Liberian Presidential candidates are expected to formally announce their decision to contest.

Radio Netherlands Worldwide

Wednesday, 28 April 2010

George Weah encourages Liberia war crimes tribunal

By Sophie van Leeuwen



Monrovia, Liberia

The Liberian soccer star George Weah supports the creation of a Special Court for Liberia. "The creation of a Tribunal is a beautiful thing," said

Weah in an interview with Radio Netherlands. The former football player hopes to become the new president of Liberia.

Liberia is considering the possibilities of creating a special court for war crimes committed between 1989 and 2003 in Liberia and Sierra Leone and killed a quarter of a million people.

Since 2006, the former Liberian President Charles Taylor is being tried by the Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague (Netherlands). He is charged only for crimes committed in Sierra Leone.

George Weah told Radio Netherlands that in case of acquittal, Charles Taylor would always be welcome in Liberia.


United Nations **Nations Unies**

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary
27 April 2010

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

UN News in Liberia

UNMIL News

UNMIL Takes Political Reporting To Journalists – Says Liberians Must Understand National Politics

[The News]

- The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) today commenced a three-day capacity building workshop on political reporting in Monrovia.
- According to UNMIL Public Information, twenty-five reporters from both the print and electronic media are expected to participate.
- The workshop is intended to equip participants with skills and knowledge on how to adequately report on political issues in preparation for the media coverage of the forth coming elections.
- The workshop seeks to enable participants generate political stories and identify political and national issues and how to report constructively on them.
- The workshop would also afford journalists the opportunity to be able to confidently and efficiently conduct interviews with political figures, maintain professional standards and editorial ethics in political reporting, and understand the mechanics of elections reporting.
- The workshop runs from April 27 to 29.

Local News on Liberian issues

GAC Left In The Cold As Executive Mansion Clears Finance Minister

[The News, Heritage, New vision, National Chronicle, Daily Observer, Front Page Africa]

- The Executive Mansion says Finance Minister Augustine Ngafuan and his predecessor can not be held liable for the misapplication of funds at the Ministry.
- Presidential Press Secretary Cyrus Badio said President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf attributed the situation to the lack of system and shortfalls at other Ministries.
- Mr. Badio said the President does not see it prudent for anyone to think that Minister Ngafuan knows all that happened down the line.
- He said the shortfalls were age-old problems at several ministries and were just being unveiled by the audit reports.
- The recent HIPC Audit report from the General Auditing Commission (GAC) points to the misappropriation of over US\$5 million at the Finance Ministry.

President Sirleaf Promises Conducive Investment Environment, Breaks Ground For Project

[The News, The Inquirer, The Analyst, Front Page Africa]

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf says her government will continue to maintain the necessary environment to attractive private investment as a tool to Liberia's transformation.
- Speaking Monday when she broke grounds for the Matrix Realty Corporation Complex in Sinkor, President Sirleaf hailed the Liberian endeavor and commended executives of Matrix for investing in their country as opposed to others who shift similar investments abroad.
- The Liberian leader said the country can develop with its citizens demonstrating confidence in its future.
- President Sirleaf indicated that the required dates and times set for the completion of the US\$3.4 million project puts Matrix Corporation above other initiatives.
- Speaking earlier, Matrix Chief Executive Officer, Ms. Mildred Reeves noted that contractors are certain about what she considers one of many projects the company has lined up to change the skylines of Monrovia.

Civil Society, Political Parties Threaten Action If ...

[The News]

- Over 20 civil society organizations and political parties have issued a statement endorsing the action of lawmakers who demanded the passage of the Threshold Bill.
- A release said the decision was taken at a joint consultative meeting between leaders of civil society, political parties and the House Committee on Elections.
- In the decision, the civil society organizations and political party leaders called for the speedy passage of the Threshold Bill.
- They called on the House of Representatives to suspend all other deliberations and concentrate only on the passage of all electoral bills before it.
- They have meanwhile vowed to carry out a sit-in action at every proceeding of the House if it fails to pass the bill starting April 26 to 30.

Finance Minister On Prudent Policies

[The Analyst, New Vision]

- Finance Minister Augustine Ngafuan said had African economies not implemented prudent policies they would have suffered serious shock from the global economic crisis.
- Minister Ngafuan said most African economies had to cut down expenditure and ensure prudent fiscal management to survive the economic crisis.
- The Liberian Finance Minister advised that the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank need to have targeted approaches to African countries.

Education Minister-designate Warns Of Growing Illiteracy

[Heritage, Front Page Africa]

- Education Minister-designate Othello Gongar has warned of catastrophic consequences unless the high rate of illiteracy in Liberia is addressed.
- Mr. Gongar told the Senate Committee on Education Monday during confirmation hearing the high rate of illiteracy has disastrous cost to the growth of the nation.
- The Education Minister-designate also revealed that the current educational system of the country was in chaos.
- According to him, the Act creating the Education Ministry distorts the duties of the ministry with some Assistant Ministers not knowing their responsibilities.
- Mr. Gongar promised to develop a new education agenda which would include the building of strong basic and primary education system and the development of a culture of reading.

Germany To Assist Judiciary With US\$1.3M

[The Inquirer, National Chronicle]

- The German Government has announced a huge investment in the Liberian judiciary system with the hope of producing a more proficient, honest and reliable judiciary within a two-year period.
- Making the disclosure Monday when turning over variety of equipment to the James A. A. Pierre Judicial Institute, Ambassador Ilse Lindemann-Macha said her government will commit 700,000 Euros each of the two years which would amount to US\$1.3 million as part of the judicial reform programme.
- Ambassador Lindemann-Macha stressed the project is intended to improve the effectiveness of the Judicial Branch of government, using newly designed and effective training courses as well as giving new legitimacy to judges and courts.
- The German Foreign Ministry reportedly assigned the implementation of the two-year long term project to the German Technical Cooperation Agency.
- Stressing the importance of the key players in the judiciary, the German diplomat said judges, lawyers and magistrates have to be credible, reliable, honest and absolutely professional in their duties.

Traditional Chief Wants Community Involvement In Fight Malaria

[The News, The Informer]

- The Chairman of the National Traditional Council of Liberia Chief Zarzar Karwor has called on community residents to get actively involved in the fight against malaria.

- Chief Karwor said without the involvement of community residents it would be difficult to combat the deadly disease.
- The Traditional Council leader said it was important that community residents serve as agents in creating awareness on the danger, prevention, control and cure of malaria.
- He urged residents to keep their environment clean and get use to sleeping under insecticide mosquito nets to protect themselves from mosquito bite.
- Chief Karwor spoke Monday when he delivered the keynote address at programmes marking the commemoration of World Malaria Day in the Borough of Kru Town, Bushrod Island.

AGENDA Seminar Kicks Off

[The Informer]

- Actions for Genuine Democratic Alternatives (AGENDA), has begun a three-day national workshop on civil society in Liberia.
- AGENDA Senior Policy Director said the discussions are centred on findings from a recent research conducted on civil society in Liberia.
- Mr. Jasper Cummeh said the findings considered five key dimensional areas including civic engagement, level of organization, practice of value, perception of impact and external environment.
- Mr. Cummeh said the nine-month research done under the Civil Society Index project is being implemented with support from two international institutions, Senegal-based Trust Africa and Humanity United in California with technical support from the South African civil society group, CIVICUS.
- Governance Commissioner Elizabeth Mulbah in her keynote address cautioned the organization to focus on sustainability, good leadership and teamwork in the civil society.
- AGENDA is a collaboration of local and international activists working together to promote citizens' participation and transparency in the administration of public trust.

Star Radio *(News monitored today at 09:00 am)*

Threshold Bill Takes Centre Stage Today

- The House of Representatives is today Tuesday discussing the passage of the 'controversial' population Threshold Bill into law.
- The discussion comes after angry protest by a group of lawmakers last Thursday demanding the passage of the Bill.
- Reports say today's discussion is expected to generate heated debate between lowly and highly populated counties.
- Since the introduction of the Threshold Bill in 2008, it has split the House with continued resistance against the passage of the Bill at a higher threshold.
- According to the reports, the House is likely to set the threshold not more than 48,000 as requested by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf who twice vetoed by Bill.
- The Senate earlier passed a reversed compromised version of the Bill with the threshold set at 54,500 and the creation of an automatic seat for each county.

Civil Society, Political Parties Threaten Action If ...

GAC Left In The Cold As Executive Mansion Clears Finance Minister

Finance Minister On Prudent Policies

Lofa Citizens Converge On Justice Ministry In Demand For Justice

- Reports say dozens of Lofa citizens have converged at the Justice Ministry in demand of justice.
- The citizens are opposed to the release of suspects of the Voinjama violence by government.
- According to the reports, the group is led by elders and several opinion leaders of the county.
- The suspects were recently released on bail through the intervention of Voinjama and Quardu Gbondi Representative Malian Jalleibah.

Education Minister-designate Warns Of Growing Illiteracy

Germany Donates To Liberia's Judicial Institute

- The German Government has officially turned over office equipment worth US\$60,000 to the James A. A. Pierre Judicial Institute as her government's support to the Judiciary through the institute.
- Ambassador Ilse Lindemann-Marcha said the Judicial Institute is crucial for the development of the Liberian Judiciary.

- Ambassador Lindemann-Marcha noted that without a strong Judiciary there will be no justice; a situation which could further ruin the confidence of Liberians.
- The German diplomat spoke Monday at the Temple of Justice in Monrovia.
- Associate Justice Francis Korkpor praised Germany for the donation and agreed with the German envoy that improving the Liberian Judiciary depends on a fully functional Judicial Institute.
- The German Government is meanwhile expected to contribute US\$360,000 for the upkeep of the institute.

(Also reported Truth FM, Sky FM, and ELBC)

AGENDA Seminar Kicks Off

(Also reported Truth FM, Sky FM, and ELBC)

Traditional Chief Wants Community Involvement In Fight Malaria

International Clips on Liberia

Diamond in the rough-and-tumble

<http://www.thestar.co.za/index.php?fArticleId=5445180>

Naomi Campbell reportedly attacked a news cameraman. The model was enraged when she was asked if she received a "blood diamond" from ex-leader of Liberia Charles Taylor. Taylor is on trial for crimes against humanity after a bloody campaign he waged in Sierra Leone (1997 to 2001), in which time he is alleged to have been involved with "blood diamonds". When confronted about the incident by a news crew from ABC, Campbell angrily said: "I didn't receive a blood diamond and I am not going to speak about that." She then stormed off, punching the camera a producer was holding.

International Clips on West Africa

Guinea

Bank workers suspend strike in Guinea

Conakry - Pana - Work resumed Monday in Guinea's commercial banks following the end of a strike called by the workers' union, the Autonomous Union Federation of Banks (FESABAG), sources close to the banks told PANA. The bank workers had been on strike since 16 April, demanding better working conditions. PANA reported that as soon as the bank gates were opened, customers stormed the banks causing a stampede. FESABAG said, however, that the strike was only suspended until Friday to enable the workers' union and bank managements to continue negotiations. It added that the strike was temporarily called off following the intervention of the Guinean Prime minister, Jean Marie Doré. FESABAG said that the bank managements had agreed to pay workers 12% increase in wages while it demanded a 66% increase. The union said it wanted its members paid the same rate of wages as is being paid in the public and civil services and the Central Bank of Guinea, adding that its demands followed the increase in oil prices in February this year. Among other demands, the union is asking for a 100% increase in medical allowances, the doubling of all other allowances and compensations, wages excluded.

Ivory Coast

Ivory Coast gold mine development "boosted by local businesses"

http://www.gold.org/news/2010/04/26/story/14601/ivory_coast_gold_mine_development_boosted_by_local_businesses/

Companies based in the Ivory Coast are making a "significant contribution" to the development of a new gold mine in the country, it has been announced. Mark Bristow, chief executive of the company behind the project Randgold Resources, said that over 20 per cent of the steel used in the building of the Tongon mine - some 800 tonnes - is being produced locally. He added that Ivorian construction contractors, transport firms and electrical and civil engineers are also playing a vital role in preparing the site for commercial production. In January, the first mill arrived at the project after a five-day journey from the port of San Pedro. The initial gold pour is expected to take place at the Tongon mine during the final three months of 2010, Mr Bristow noted. According to Randgold, there are around 1,600 personnel currently on site at the property, with local people accounting for 71.5 per cent of the workforce.

Sierra Leone

ECOWAS health ministers meet in Sierra Leone

http://www.africanews.com/site/ECOWAS_health_ministers_meet_in_SLeone/list_messages/31548

The 11th Ordinary Meeting of the Assembly of Health Ministers of ECOWAS begun in Freetown, Sierra Leone. Fifteen health ministers from member states and over 100 health experts are gathered for the two days meeting with the theme: "Promoting Traditional Medicine for Quality Health Care within ECOWAS." Delivering his keynote address, Sierra Leone's President Ernest Bai Koroma said: "I heartily welcome you all on my personal behalf to Sierra Leone. I am honoured to be part of a meeting that promotes better health for the people of West Africa." Koroma said further that they are gathered as a testimony of their commitment to provide better health for the populace of the region. The President disclosed that 50% of one hundred thousand women who give birth do not receive any medical attention. The President cited traditional medicines as an alternative to save lives, "traditional medicines are readily available and affordable" he said. Koroma also used the occasion to announce his much trumpeted free health care plan for pregnant women, lactating mothers and children under 5 which he says will be launched on April 27th his country's 49th Independent anniversary. "Enjoy the beauty of our country" Koroma ended.

Sierra Leone starts free care for mothers and children

BBC

Sierra Leone has launched a free healthcare plan for pregnant women, breast-feeding mothers and children under five years old. The country has some of the world's highest maternal and child death rates. Doctors blame this partly on health service fees and the cost of medication, and hope the healthcare plan will help save lives. But there is concern that Sierra Leone lacks the resources and infrastructure to support the new programme. Ratiszai Ndlovo, Sierra Leone's UN Population Fund representative told the BBC's Umaru Fofana that although medical equipment had been ordered and some drugs distributed around the country, everything was still not in place for the launch of the healthcare plan. "It's not perfect, it's not 100%," she said. "But I think we cannot start the programme with everything in a perfect condition." Free healthcare in Sierra Leone is expected to save the lives of more than one million mothers and children, at an initial cost of \$19m (£12m). Other countries in Africa, such as Burundi, have also introduced free care to new mothers and children under five in recent years. In Sierra Leone, the programme's main donors have been the UN and the UK, who between them have helped refurbish hospitals, supply drugs and pay health workers' wages. Pay and conditions were the main grievances in a two-week-long strike in March staged by the country's public health workers.

Radio Netherlands Worldwide

Tuesday, 27 April 2010

Alleged Rwandan genocidaire now Dutch citizen

By Koert Lindijer



(Photo: hoteldephil
(Flickr CC))

"I am the victim of a politically-motivated slander campaign by Rwanda's dictatorial government," says

Pierre-Claver Karangwa. This former Rwandan army captain is accused of participating in the 1994 genocide in his home country.

Now living in the Netherlands, and a Dutch citizen since 2004, he accuses President Paul Kagame of deliberately attacking the Rwandan opposition and therefore him too.

Relying on an extensive report by human rights organisations African Rights and [REDRESS](#), Dutch newspaper NRC Handelsblad reported on Mr Karangwa was involved in a massacre committed in the small town of Mugina in 1994, in which an estimated 20,000 people were killed.

Church massacre

The report accuses the former captain, now 54, of serious crimes committed in the region of Mugina, where he lived, and the Rwandan capital, Kigali. He is said to have set up, armed and funded Hutu militias. It is also alleged that he lured Tutsi refugees to Mugina's church with the promise of protection, whilst simultaneously organising the militiamen who would subsequently massacre them in that same church.

African Rights and REDRESS quote several witnesses in their report; both victims and perpetrators. "I regard Karangwa as the organiser of the genocide in our village. Villagers were involved in the killing of Tutsis because he enticed them," says one of the militia members.

"Not only did he behave as the head of the organisation. He also shot dead several victims," adds another. According to the report, Pierre-Claver Karangwa was also involved in the murder of the mayor of Mugina, who was doing all he could to protect the Tutsis from Hutu militia attacks.

Investigation

Dozens, perhaps hundreds of people accused in connection with Rwanda's 1994 bloodbath are believed to be currently living in Europe. "A considerable number of genocide suspects are living in the Netherlands," says Rakiya Omaar, director of African Rights. Of these people - numbering in the dozens - most are thought to have been senior figures, not mere followers.

African Rights is calling on the Netherlands to investigate these people and prosecute them. The Rwandan ministry of justice has already provided its Dutch counterpart with incriminating evidence concerning 16 Rwandans living in the Netherlands who are suspected of involvement in the genocide. The Dutch ministry has so far refused to comment on the report about Major Karangwa.

In an interview with NRC Handelsblad on Monday, Mr Karangwa said he had in fact tried to protect the victims in 1994, not harm them. He claims he filed an official complaint when the Gacacas, traditional Rwandan courts, sentenced him to death for his involvement in the massacre. "All the evidence has been fabricated," he said.

Link to Ingabire

According to Mr Karangwa, a campaign was started against him after he joined Victoire Ingabire, one of the main opposition leaders in Rwanda, who also lived in the Netherlands. Ms Ingabire recently returned to Rwanda to run in the upcoming August elections. She was briefly detained last week on charges of 'spreading ethnic division and propagating a genocide ideology'.

Mr Karangwa's wife is the vice-president of the Dutch association, CODAC (Contacts, Dialogues and Charities) founded by Ms Ingabire. "Obviously I constitute a threat to the Rwandan regime, and I must be blackened," says Mr Karangwa.

Rakiya Omaar of African Rights disagrees: "The first witness statements against the [former] major date back to 2005, 2006, long before Victoire Ingabire entered the stage as opposition leader".

The report is available at www.redress.org

*The NRC Handelsblad article was co-written by Koert Lindijer and an NRC editor.

Reuters

Tuesday, 27 April 2010

ICTY prosecutor to judge Serbia by Mladic's arrest

By International Justice Desk



Srebrenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Serbia has no alternative to arresting fugitive General Ratko Mladic to prove its cooperation with an international war crimes

tribunal, the prosecutor of the UN court said on Tuesday.

"Priority is still the arrest of two remaining fugitives, among them Mladic," Serge Brammertz said in Srebrenica, site of the 1995 massacre of around 8,000 Muslims by the Bosnian Serbs.

"I mentioned in the last report and will also mention in the next report that the arrest of the remaining two fugitives Mladic and (Goran) Hadzic is at the centre of cooperation and there can be no alternative to their arrest."

Hadzic was political leader of Serbs in Croatia during the 1991-1995 war there. Mladic commanded Bosnian Serb forces in July 1995 when they took over the eastern enclave of Srebrenica that had been put under UN protection. The slaughter that followed was Europe's worst atrocity since World War Two.

Mladic went underground about a decade ago, but casts a large shadow over Serbia because the Balkan country's future progress towards European Union membership is contingent upon Belgrade's full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, based in The Hague.

Brammertz's report to the UN Security Council in June will provide a key signal to EU states as they mull whether to proceed on Belgrade's December application for membership.

"Because of the crimes that were allegedly committed by General Mladic, the tribunal was set up," the Belgian prosecutor said at the Srebrenica memorial where he met victims' relatives.

Brammertz was visiting Srebrenica for the first time since he took the job in 2008. Accompanied by mothers who lost relatives, he walked among the rows of white Islamic tombstones at the cemetery for victims near the town.

Authorities are still finding remains of some victims in unmarked mass graves. So far, 3,749 victims have been buried, and another 2,000 bodies are awaiting full DNA identification.

In July, Suhra Sehomeric will bury her two sons along with another 800 identified victims. "I've been waiting for this for 15 years, and now I don't know if I'll be able to survive it," she said.

The tribunal has indicted Mladic and his political chief Radovan Karadzic for genocide in Srebrenica. Karadzic is on trial in The Hague while Mladic is still on the run, believed to be hiding in Serbia.

United Nations News
Wednesday, 28 April 2010

UN suggests international piracy tribunals

By International Justice Desk



The UN Security Council on Tuesday suggested to establish international tribunals to try pirates, as its members called for tougher legislation aimed at prosecuting and jailing suspects caught off the coast of Somalia.

In a resolution unanimously adopted, the 15-member body appealed to all states “to criminalize piracy under their domestic law and favourably consider the prosecution of suspected, and imprisonment of convicted, pirates apprehended off the coast of Somalia, consistent with applicable international human rights law.”

The Security Council also requested Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to present a report on possible options for prosecuting and imprisoning suspects in connection with piracy and armed robbery at sea in the Horn of Africa.

In its resolution, members noted efforts by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and other international organisations and donors, including the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS), “to enhance the capacity of the judicial and the corrections systems in Somalia, Kenya, Seychelles and other States in the region.”

They also highlighted the role of the European Union (EU), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and other partners in bringing suspects to justice, in cooperation with Somalia’s Transitional Federal Government (TFG).

Ongoing violence between the TFG, heavily backed by the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and other supporters, and rebel groups in Somalia’s capital of Mogadishu prevents piracy suspects from being tried or imprisoned there. Some of the burden has shifted to neighbouring Kenya’s justice system.

The Security Council acknowledged “difficulties that Kenya encountered, encouraging its Government to continue prosecuting suspects and imprisoning convicted persons.”

Tuesday’s resolution came just days after B. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs and chair of the Board of the Trust Fund to Support Initiatives of States Countering Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, unveiled \$2.1 million worth of projects planned to tackle the scourge.

The five projects being backed by the UN Trust Fund, which was set up in January by the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, are focused largely on efforts to prosecute piracy suspects.

(Source: UNNEWS)