

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



PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

as at:

Tuesday, 19 January 2010

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Awoko

Thursday, 28 January 2010

Charles Taylor accused of using 6 yr old children as soldiers

The prosecution in the trial of the former Liberian President Charles Taylor has accused him of using child soldiers as young as six and seven to fight for his cause. The court was told that his NPFL rebels took children from their homes gave them drugs and guns and forced them to kill. Mr. Taylor described the claims as lies and said he had set up an orphanage to support the needy children of his country.

One of the key charges against Charles Taylor involves the recruitment of child soldiers. Prosecuting counsel, Brenda Hollis, alleges that

Taylor's forces had used 10 year old children to guard checkpoints and that from the time the NPFL invaded Liberia in December 1989 they used children as young as six and seven to fight for them. She suggested that the Sierra Leonean rebel groups the AFRC and RUF also recruited child soldiers as a reflection of what the NPFL had done in Liberia.

Mr. Taylor vehemently denied the allegation calling it yet another fabrication to disgrace him. He said the fact that he had set up an orphanage for

the needy and destitute showed that he had love for children. The prosecution also questioned Mr. Taylor about alleged killings committed by his Special Security Forces and Anti Terrorist Unit in Liberia.

The prosecution also alleged that in Bomi County, over 150 people including babies and pregnant women were killed. Taylor again also denied this saying, this never happened.

Much of the evidence introduced by the prosecution during the session was ruled inadmissible by the judges on the grounds that it was too late in the trial to put forward entirely new material.

Concord Times
Thursday, 28 January 2010

Prosecutors scold Taylor for use of child soldiers

By Alpha Sesay

Charles Taylor recruited and used children for military purposes in Liberia and it was therefore no surprise to him to learn that Sierra Leonean rebel forces were also using child soldiers during Sierra Leone's 11-year conflict, prosecutors said yesterday during the former Liberian president's cross-examination.

Lead prosecutor Brenda Hollis who is conducting Charles Taylor's cross-examination went through evidence that his National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) rebel group used child soldiers during the Liberian conflict. Mr. Taylor denied the assertions.

Ms. Hollis further suggested that because of Taylor's actions in using child soldiers in Liberia, it came as no surprise to him to know that child soldiers were being used by Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), an illegal junta regime that overthrew the elected government of Sierra Leone in 1997. Taylor said he had no idea of what the RUF and AFRC did in Sierra Leone.

"You yourself had armed children, some as young as eight years old," Ms. Hollis accused Mr. Taylor.

"That is total nonsense.



Every child that I held I put in an orphanage," the accused responded.

He denied that his forces had child soldiers who patrolled the Liberian border with Ivory Coast in the early 1990s, stating that it was not to his knowledge that children were acting as bodyguards to his NPFL commanders.

In response to prosecution allegation that he "used children as young as 10 to man check-points," Taylor said "I did not use any children as young as 10 to man check-points. There were soldiers and some of them had their relatives around them but I did not use any children to man check-points."

As Ms. Hollis asserted that use of child soldiers by the RUF and AFRC

was no surprise to him, Taylor responded that he had no knowledge of what the AFRC and RUF did in Sierra Leone.

In pointing out the activities of his NPFL in Liberia, Ms. Hollis has been trying to convince the judges that Taylor knew of similar activities by Sierra Leonean rebel forces but could do nothing to stop them because he was doing the same things in Liberia. Referencing what the RUF rebels did in Sierra Leone, Taylor responded that "what they did in those areas was not in consistent pattern with me. That is not correct."

"No surprise to you of what they (RUF) did in Sierra Leone because it is the same that you did in Liberia," Ms. Hollis persisted.

The Exclusive
Thursday, 28 January 2010

Taylor Using Child Soldiers to Fight for his cause

The prosecution in the trial of the former Liberian President Charles Taylor has accused him of using child soldiers as young as six and seven to fight for his cause. The court was told that his NPFL rebels took children from their homes gave them drugs and guns and forced them to kill. Mr Taylor described the claims as lies and said he had set up an orphanage to support the needy children of his country. John Kollie transcribes reports for the BBC World Service Trust from The Hague...

One of the key charges against Charles Taylor involves the recruitment of child soldiers. Prosecuting

counsel, Brenda Hollis, alleges that Taylor's forces had used ten year old children to guard checkpoints and that, from the time the NPFL invaded Liberia in December 1989, they used children as young as six and seven to fight for them.

She suggested that the Sierra Leonean rebel groups, the AFRC and RUF, also recruited child soldiers as a reflection of what the NPFL had done in Liberia.

Mr Taylor vehemently denied the allegation. Calling it yet another fabrication to disgrace him. "That is incorrect and cannot be the truth of it", Mr. Taylor said.

He said the fact that he had set up an or-

phanage for the needy and destitute showed that he had a love for children. The prosecution also questioned Mr. Taylor about alleged killings committed by his Special Security Forces and Anti Terrorist Unit in Liberia.

Bomi County, over 150 people had been killed, including babies and pregnant women. Taylor again also denied this saying, this never happened. Much of the evidence introduced by the prosecution during the session was ruled inadmissible by the judges on the grounds that it was too late in the trial to put forward entirely new material.

Also read this story on www.exclusivepress.net

Premier News

Thursday, 28 January 2010

new relationship after four decades of silence with the NUT-UK and TUC before his death in 2008", he stated. He also revealed that the late man was not only a great trade unionist but a philanthropist who spent all his life connecting people for the development of trade unionism, humanity and democracy. He explained that records show that relationship with the NUT-UK slowed down and gradually faded in the

educational standards. He also admonished participants to focus on the formulation and launch of the teachers' Code of Conduct last October and reminded them that they should involve the code during their discussions. He implored participants to look at the collective agreement, relationship with their employers, status of the schools, the devolution of schools to

girl child education should be supported to achieve safer schools for the children in the country. She outlined the developmental projects they have implemented with SLTU like the Information Communication and Technology (ICT) project which she revealed was designed to help teachers in communication and networking.

Liberian border with Ivory Coast in the early 1990s. He also said that it was not to his knowledge that children were acting as bodyguards to his NPFL commanders.

In response to prosecution allegation that he "used children as young as 10 to man check-points," Mr. Taylor said that "I did not use any children as young as 10 to man check-points. There were soldiers and some of them had their relatives around them but I did not use any children to man check-points."

As Ms. Hollis asserted that "use of child soldiers by the RUF and AFRC was no surprise to you," Mr. Taylor responded that "I have no knowledge of what the AFRC and RUF did in Sierra Leone."

In pointing out the activities of Mr. Taylor's NPFL in Liberia, Ms. Hollis has been trying to convince the judges that Mr. Taylor knew of similar activities by Sierra Leonean rebel forces but could do nothing to stop

them because he was doing the same things in Liberia. Referencing what the RUF rebels did in Sierra Leone, Mr. Taylor responded that "what they did in those areas was not in consistent pattern with me. That is not correct." "No surprise to you of what they (RUF) did in Sierra Leone because it is the same that you did in Liberia," Ms. Hollis persisted. "You were not truthful when you said that crimes committed in Sierra Leone were of surprise to you because they did not happen in Liberia," she added. In his response, Mr. Taylor said that "I had no knowledge of the inner workings of the RUF and AFRC." He added that crimes such as amputations were not committed in Liberia and cases of rape were severely dealt with. "Your forces committed amputations," Ms. Hollis said. "You know that is not true because there are no records of amputations in Liberia," Ms. Taylor responded. On the crime of rape, Mr. Taylor said that "I was

surprised at rape because people in the NPFL who committed rape in Liberia were executed." Ms. Hollis also told Mr. Taylor that "the crimes in Sierra Leone were a reflection of the crimes your troops committed in Liberia." "That is totally erroneous and incorrect," Mr. Taylor responded. Mr. Taylor also today denied prosecution allegations that his forces massacred civilians in Liberia and that he failed to take action against them. Ms. Hollis pointed that NPFL commanders such as Mark Guan, Melvin Sogbandi, Momoh Gibba and Mr. Taylor's son Chuckie Taylor, all at one point or the other led forces to kill civilians in various towns and villages including Bomi County, Lofa County and Gbatalla. f justice or that it will not affect the fair trial rights of the accused, they could not be used in the cross-examination of Mr. Taylor.

Prosecutors Accuse Taylor Of Using Child Soldiers

Charles Taylor recruited and used children for military purposes in Liberia and it was therefore no surprise to him to learn that Sierra Leonean rebel forces were also using child soldiers during the West African country's 11-year conflict, prosecutors said yesterday during the former Liberian president's cross-examination.

Lead prosecutor Brenda Hollis who is conducting Mr. Taylor's cross-examination went through evidence that Mr. Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) rebel group used child soldiers during the Liberian conflict. Mr. Taylor denied Ms. Hollis assertions. Ms. Hollis further

suggested that because of Mr. Taylor's actions in using child soldiers in Liberia, it came as no surprise to him to know that child soldiers were being used by Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), an illegal junta

regime, that overthrew the elected government of Sierra Leone in 1997. Mr. Taylor said that he had no idea of what the RUF and AFRC did in Sierra Leone.

"You yourself had armed children, some as young as eight years old," Ms. Hollis accused Mr. Taylor.

"That is total nonsense. Every child that I held I put in an orphanage," Mr. Taylor responded. Mr. Taylor denied that his forces had child soldiers who patrolled the

The Spectator

Thursday, 28 January 2010

Charles Taylor Trial Update

Charles Taylor recruited and used children for military purposes in Liberia and it was therefore no surprise to him to learn that Sierra Leonean rebel forces were also using child soldiers during the West African country's 11-year conflict, prosecutors said today during the former Liberian president's cross-examination.

Lead prosecutor Brenda Hollis who is conducting Mr. Taylor's cross-examination went through evidence that Mr. Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) rebel group used child soldiers during the Liberian conflict. Mr. Taylor denied Ms. Hollis assertions. Ms. Hollis further suggested that because of Mr. Taylor's actions in using child soldiers in Liberia, it came as no surprise to him to know that child soldiers were being used by Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), an illegal junta regime that overthrew the elected government of Sierra Leone in 1997. Mr. Taylor said that he had no idea of what the RUF and AFRC did in Sierra Leone. "You yourself had armed children, some as young as eight years old," Ms. Hollis accused Mr. Taylor today.

"That is total nonsense. Every child that I held I put in an orphanage." Mr. Taylor responded. Mr. Taylor denied that his forces had child soldiers who patrolled the Liberian border with Ivory Coast in the early 1990s. He also said that it was not to his knowledge that children were acting as bodyguards to his NPFL commanders.

In response to prosecution allegation that he "used children as young as 10 to man check-points," Mr. Taylor said that "I did not use any children as young as 10 to man check-points. There were soldiers and some of them had their relatives around them but I did not use any children to man check-points." As Ms. Hollis asserted that "use of child soldiers by the RUF and AFRC was no surprise to you," Mr. Taylor responded that "I have no knowledge of what the AFRC and RUF did in Sierra Leone."

In pointing out the activities of Mr. Taylor's NPFL in Liberia, Ms. Hollis has been trying to convince the judges that Mr. Taylor knew of similar activities by Sierra Leonean rebel forces but could do nothing to stop them because

he was doing the same things in Liberia. Referencing what the RUF rebels did in Sierra Leone, Mr. Taylor responded that "what they did in those areas was not in consistent pattern with me. That is not correct." "No surprise to you of what they (RUF) did in Sierra Leone because it is the same that you did in Liberia," Ms. Hollis persisted. "You were not truthful when you said that crimes committed in Sierra Leone were of surprise to you because they did not happen in Liberia," she added.

In his response, Mr. Taylor said that "I had no knowledge of the inner workings of the RUF and AFRC." He added that crimes such as amputations were not committed in Liberia and cases of rape were severely dealt with.

"Your forces committed amputations," Ms. Hollis said. "You know that is not true because there are no records of amputations in Liberia," Ms. Taylor responded. On the crime of rape, Mr. Taylor said that "I was surprised at rape because people in the NPFL who committed rape in Liberia were executed." Ms. Hollis also told Mr. Taylor that "the crimes in Sierra Leone were a reflection of the crimes

your troops committed in Liberia. Using children in combat was a reflection of what your forces did in Liberia." "That is totally erroneous and incorrect," Mr. Taylor responded.

Mr. Taylor also today denied prosecution allegations that his forces massacred civilians in Liberia and that he failed to take action against them. Ms. Hollis pointed that NPFL commanders such as Mark Guan, Melvin Sogbandi, Momoh Gibba and Mr. Taylor's son Chuckie Taylor, all at one point or the other led forces to kill civilians in various towns and villages including Bomi County, Lofa County and Gbatalla. He said that he never received reports that any of these commanders had killed civilians. As Ms. Hollis tried to present documents in support of her assertion, such as the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report, the judges ruled that such evidence was probative to the guilt of the accused, and since the prosecution had not proved that the use of such new documents will be in the interest of justice or that it will not affect the fair trial rights of the accused, they could not be used in the cross-examination of Mr. Taylor.

Charlestaylortrial.org

Thursday, 28 January 2010

As Charles Taylor Turns Up Late In Court, Prosecutors Question Him About Transfer Of Money Into Foreign Bank Accounts

By Alpha Sesay

Former Liberian president Charles Taylor was grilled by prosecutors about bank transfers which they say allowed Mr. Taylor to secretly buy weapons while his country was under a United Nations arms embargo. Mr. Taylor said he could not remember specifically what the money was used for.

The questioning followed a surprising start to the day with Mr. Taylor failing to appear in court. Defense counsel for the former president said Mr. Taylor had reported a security breach in his jail cell and refused to appear at the Special Court for Sierra Leone in time for the trial to start. His counsel, Morris Anyah, told the court that security officers at the detention center had tampered with Mr. Taylor's confidential documents during their routine inspection of his cell. As the documents were in excess of a million pages, Mr. Taylor thought he needed about a week to cross-check all his materials. The judges refused and ordered Mr. Taylor to appear.

When Mr. Taylor arrived, prosecutor Nicholas Koumjian sought to expose how Mr. Taylor's Liberian government purchased arms and ammunition in violation of a United Nations arms embargo on Liberia. Mr. Koumjian went through portions of a United Nations Expert report which accused Mr. Taylor and his government of busting UN sanctions, as well as involvement in Sierra Leone's conflict.

Mr. Koumjian, reading from the UN report told Mr. Taylor that in October 2000, the Bureau of Maritime Affairs transferred 150,000 USD into a bank in Dubai and the said money was used for "sanction busting."

"Did you know about this?" Mr. Koumjian asked Mr. Taylor.

"Not specifically," Mr. Taylor responded.

Mr. Koumjian also told Mr. Taylor that during his administration as president of Liberia, a letter originating from the Liberian Ministry of Finance instructed Mr. John Teng, the General Manager of Oriental Timber Company (OTC) in Liberia, to transfer 500,000 USD into a bank in Switzerland. The money, Mr. Koumjian said, was OTC's tax payment to the Liberian government.

"Were you familiar with this instruction to transfer this tax amount not to the Central Bank of Liberia or the Ministry of Finance but to a Swiss Bank?" Mr. Koumjian asked Mr. Taylor.

In his response, the former president said that "I wouldn't say specifically but generally, yes."

Asked what he meant by that response, Mr. Taylor explained that "a letter from the Ministry of Finance to Mr. Teng would have gone through some clearing from the presidency."

When asked what the money was meant for, Mr. Taylor said that "I do not know. I cannot recollect specifically. All I can say is that an amount like that will need some presidential clearance."

According to the UN report, Mr. Taylor's government provided money to Mr. Sanjivan Ruprah, the former Deputy Commissioner of the Bureau of Maritime Affairs in Liberia. As Mr. Koumjian pointed out today, Mr. Ruprah was described by the UN Sanctions Committee on Liberia as "Businessman, Arms dealer in contravention of UNSC resolution 1343. Supported former president Taylor's regime in effort to destabilize Sierra Leone and gain illicit access to diamonds."

Mr. Taylor admitted knowing Mr. Ruprah, saying that Mr. Ruprah was an "ambassador at large for Liberia and worked for the Maritime Bureau." He said that he approved Mr. Ruprah's diplomatic status.

Mr. Taylor, however, added that he does not know every detail of Mr. Ruprah's life. Asked if he has been honest about his knowledge of Mr. Ruprah, the former president said that "yes, what I have said is what I know. I do not know every detail of Mr. Ruprah's life."

Mr. Koumjian pointed out that according to the January 7 2008 testimony of the prosecution's expert witness Ian Smilie who was also a member of the UN Panel of Experts, when Mr. Taylor was asked by the UN Panel whether he knew Mr. Ruprah, the former president had said that he does not know him.

"You know that Smilie and I disagree. I disagree with Smilie's account. I would know of him but I would not know him personally," Mr. Taylor responded.

"I don't know Mr. Ruprah, I don't know him personally. If you bring him now as big as this building, I would not know him," he added.

The former president also denied Mr. Koumjian's assertion that in 1999-2000, he authorized the disbursement of 1 million USD to Mr. Ruprah for the purchase of arms and ammunition.

"I did not authorize money to him to buy arms. I would have authorized money to him but the details of it, I do not know. I do not recall the details of why these amounts were paid. All I can say is that I authorized them," Mr. Taylor said.

"Are you saying you do not know how a million dollars of your country's money was spent?" Mr. Koumjian enquired further.

The former president maintained that he could not recall what the money was meant for.

Prosecutors have been seeking to discredit Mr. Taylor's credibility as a witness, trying to convince the judges that his testimony cannot be relied upon because the former president has not been truthful in his accounts. From July to November 2009, Mr. Taylor testified as a witness in his own defense during which he denied providing support for Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels in Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor denied providing arms and ammunition to RUF rebels, arguing that his government did not have money to purchase arms for his country and so could not have provided any to RUF rebels. The former president also denied sending monies to various banks in foreign countries. Prosecutors now seek to prove that the former president has not been telling the truth.

Also referenced in the UN report today was an interview with former Ivorian leader, the late General Robert Guei, who himself took power by a military coup in Ivory Coast. According to the report, Gen. Guei told that Panel that shortly after the 1999 coup which brought him to power in Ivory Coast, he had requested and received arms and ammunition from Mr. Taylor in Liberia. Mr. Taylor admitted that he had indeed sent arms and ammunition to Gen. Guei in Ivory Coast.

"We sent some of the Ivorians in Liberia and they carried the light arms and ammunition to Ivory Coast," Mr. Taylor said.

Prosecutors have alleged that as president of Liberia, Mr. Taylor sent arms and ammunition to RUF rebels in Sierra Leone which were used to commit heinous crimes against the people of Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor has maintained that while he was president, he did not have arms for his own country and so could not have provided any to foreign forces. Prosecutors now seek to prove that he provided said arms to forces outside Liberia, such as those given to Ivorian forces.

John Kollie

NEWS ITEM

The Wednesday morning hearing at the Charles Taylor trial in The Hague was abandoned because Mr. Taylor and his lead defence counsel Courtenay Griffiths were not in court. The court was told that Mr. Taylor did not appear because some officers in his detention facility tampered with his confidential materials unknowingly to him. But the judges said that was not a valid reason for his absence. The BBC World Service trust's John Kollie has this transcription from the Hague....

This was a frustrating moment for all concerned in the Charles Taylor trial. The three regular judges and the prosecuting team were all present in court. But the accused Charles Taylor and his lead defence counsel Courtenay Griffiths were absent.

Defence counsel Morris Anyah suggested that Mr. Griffiths' absence might be due to illness.

On Taylor's absence, Anyah told the court that the defendant did not appear because the security officers in his detention facility tampered with his confidential materials unknowingly to him during their regular inspection.

According to Mr Anyah Mr. Taylor will need about a week to cross check his materials.

But the Judges insisted on Mr. Taylor's appearance and called for a temporary adjournment. Three hours later he arrived for the afternoon session.

The prosecuting counsel Nicholas Koumjian accused Mr. Taylor of authorizing his ministry of finance to transfer \$500,000 from the Liberian Government account to a Swiss account in the name of Sanjivan Ruprah.

Mr. Taylor agreed but said he it was a government decision.

Mr. Taylor told the court that he did not know Sanjivan Ruprah.

He said his government gave him a diplomatic Liberian passport based on some recommendations made about him.

By John Kollie

NEWS ITEM

The prosecution in the trial of the former Liberian President Charles Taylor has accused him of using child soldiers as young as six and seven to fight for his cause. The court was told that his NPFL rebels took children from their homes, gave them drugs and guns and forced them to kill. Mr Taylor described the claims as lies and said he had set up an orphanage to support the needy children of his country. John Kollie transcribes reports for the BBC World Service Trust from The Hague...

One of the key charges against Charles Taylor involves the recruitment of child soldiers. Prosecuting counsel, Brenda Hollis, alleges that Taylor's forces had used ten year old children to guard checkpoints and that, from the time the NPFL invaded Liberia in December 1989, they used children as young as six and seven to fight for them.

She suggested that the Sierra Leonean rebel groups, the AFRC and RUF, also recruited child soldiers as a reflection of what the NPFL had done in Liberia.

Mr Taylor vehemently denied the allegation. Calling it yet another fabrication to disgrace him. "That is incorrect and cannot be the truth of it", Mr. Taylor said.

He said the fact that he had set up an orphanage for the needy and destitute showed that he had a love for children. The prosecution also questioned Mr. Taylor about alleged killings committed by his Special Security Forces and Anti Terrorist Unit in Liberia.

Bomi County, over 150 people had been killed, including babies and pregnant women. Taylor again also denied this saying, this never happened.

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United Nations  **Nations Unies**

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 27 January 2010

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

International Clips on Liberia

Prosecutors Accuse Charles Taylor Of Using Child Soldiers In Liberia

Source: charlestaylortrial.org, 27 January 2010

Charles Taylor recruited and used children for military purposes in Liberia and it was therefore no surprise to him to learn that Sierra Leonean rebel forces were also using child soldiers during the West African country's 11-year conflict, prosecutors said today during the former Liberian president's cross-examination. Lead prosecutor Brenda Hollis who is conducting Mr. Taylor's cross-examination went through evidence that Mr. Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) rebel group used child soldiers during the Liberian conflict. Mr. Taylor denied Ms. Hollis assertions. Ms. Hollis further suggested that because of Mr. Taylor's actions in using child soldiers in Liberia, it came as no surprise to him to know that child soldiers were being used by Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), an illegal junta regime that overthrew the elected government of Sierra Leone in 1997. Mr. Taylor said that he had no idea of what the RUF and AFRC did in Sierra Leone. "You yourself had armed children, some as young as eight years old," Ms. Hollis accused Mr. Taylor today. "That is total nonsense. Every child that I held I put in an orphanage," Mr. Taylor responded.

New TGS 3D Project in Liberia

Oil Voice, 26 January 2010

TGS has commenced acquisition of the next phase of 3D projects offshore Liberia. This newest project covers Liberia blocks 8 and 9 and totals 5,000 kms². The MV Polarcus Nadia will acquire the project and TGS will apply advanced pre-stack time and pre-stack depth imaging techniques to create the final subsurface image. The TGS African data library includes a series of 2D and 3D seismic projects covering the Africa Transform Margin. Recent petroleum discoveries in the Gulf of Guinea and offshore Sierra Leone have attracted significant exploration interest in this region. Upon completion of this latest project, TGS will have more than 30,000 kms of 2D and 18,000 kms² 3D seismic covering this emerging exploration play in West Africa.

International Clips on West Africa **Guinea**

Amid Worry, Guinea Begins Transition To Democracy

CONAKRY, Guinea (AP) 27 January 2010— One of the fiercest critics of Guinea's military junta became prime minister Tuesday, a crucial step toward democracy that comes amid worries the country's wounded coup leader is trying to influence the political process from exile. Jean Marie Dore takes over the premiership 13 months after the military seized power and dissolved the constitution. He vowed to steer the nation toward elections and said the military needs to be restructured for stability to take hold. "I am committed to leading Guinea toward free, credible and transparent

elections, which is a necessary passage for the country," Dore said in a speech. The appointment caps a sequence of events set in motion Dec. 3 when Capt. Moussa "Dadis" Camara, who took power in late 2008, was shot in the head by one of his aides and had to leave the country for emergency surgery. Earlier this month, Camara agreed under intense pressure to stay in nearby Burkina Faso and not to return. He agreed to allow his No. 2 to appoint a civilian prime minister to prepare elections within six months in which no member of the military will be allowed to run.

Cote D'Ivoire

Saudi Fund for Development Provides Loan to Ivory Coast

Source: Saudi Press Agency 27 January 2010

Abidjan -- The Saudi Fund for Development and the Republic of Ivory Coast signed here on Tuesday an agreement for providing a loan amounting to SR 30 million for a road project, scheduled for completion in 20 years with an attached grace period of 5 years. The agreement was signed by Ivory Coast's Minister of Economy and Finance Debbie Kofi Charlie and SFD Director-General of Technical Department Eng. Hassan bin Mohammed Al-Attas, in the presence of Saudi Ambassador to Ivory Coast Jamal Bakr Balkheyour. The project aims to develop a 85.7 km long road between Abidjan, the commercial hub; and Iamosco, the administrative capital.

Local Media – Newspaper

Defendant Hans Williams Takes Stand in Ongoing Angel Togbah Murder Case... Describes Autopsy Report As Trash

(New Dawn, Daily Observer, The Inquirer, The News, Public Agenda, The Informer and Public Agenda)

- One of the principal suspects in the Angel Togba murder trial, Mr. Hans Williams has testified denying claims against them and said they were concocted by former Justice Minister Philip Banks.
- Mr. Williams also dismissed as trash the autopsy report the Cuban pathologist, Dr. Josefa Hernandez left behind and accused the women group, Women in Peace Building Network (WIPNET) of being a part of the plot against him and his wife, Mardea Williams.
- Mr. Williams called on the state to send the results of the three autopsies abroad for further scrutiny.
- He said by doing so, the state will be proving its case beyond all reasonable doubt.
- Meanwhile, the Executive Director of the Liberia Democratic Institute (LDI), Mr. Dan Saryee has expressed concern over what he called conflicting testimonies given by Dr. Anthony Quaye who conducted the first state-sponsored autopsy.

Government Activates Coast Guard

(Daily Observer)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has announced that the Government of Liberia will activate the Liberian Coast Guard Unit on Armed Forces Day due to celebrated next month.
- The President made the disclosure in her annual message to the Fifth Session of the 52nd National Legislature on Monday at the Capitol Building.
- The Coast Guard Unit, Sirleaf said, has an initial strength of 40 persons, who have already been trained in the United States in various security techniques to control smuggling and illegal fishing in Liberian territorial waters.
- The President said the Coast Guard will have a mandate to improve the security of Liberia's coastline and control smuggling and illegal fishing.

Another Batch Of Deportees Arrives Today

(New Democrat)

- Another batch of 24 Liberians deportees from the United States will arrive today at the Roberts International Airport, according to the Bureau of Immigration.
- According to the charge sheet from the U.S. government, the deportees were sent home for various crimes ranging from cocaine possession, attempted assault on government officials, impersonation, and burglary to other criminal offences.

Well-Known Social Activist Endorses President Sirleaf's Second-Term Bid

(Public Agenda, The Inquirer, Daily Observer, FrontPage)

- One day after President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf announced her decision to seek a second term in the forthcoming 2011 Elections, a long time Social activist, Mr. Samuel Jackson has endorsed her decision saying she is the best candidate.

Indians Observe 61st Anniversary

(The Inquirer)

- Hundreds of Indians residing in Liberia yesterday observed the 61st. Republic Day of their country.
- In commemoration of the day, Indian Female Police serving with the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) Tuesday offered free medical services to over 400 residents of King Gray town in Montserrado County.
- Indian Consul General to Liberia, Mr. Upjit Jetty said the offering of free medical services to Liberians is in commemoration of the great day of the people of India.
- The Commander of the Indian female police, Annie Abraham said it was through the initiative of Mr. Jetty that the FPU Medical Team offered the free medical service.
- She said it was her contingent's own way of identifying with the people of Liberia adding that the team will extend its activities in other areas in the future.

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

President Sirleaf Proposes Retirement Pension Act

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf says she would submit to the Legislature an Act to amend the Act providing Retirement Pension for government officials.
- They include President, Vice President, members of the Legislature, the Chief Justice and Associate Justices.
- According to President Sirleaf, subordinate Judges, Cabinet Ministers, Autonomous Commissioners, Ambassadors, Superintendents among others would also benefit from the scheme.
- The amendment according to the President is intended to adequately meet the needs of government officials when they are retired.

Defendant Hans Williams Takes Stand in Ongoing Angel Togbah Murder Case... Describes Autopsy Report As Trash

(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Truth FM, Sky FM, and ELBC)

Sinoe, Rivercess Tense Over Contested Parcel Of Land

- Confusion has reportedly erupted between Rivercess and Sinoe Counties over a large parcel of land being claimed by both Counties.
- The confusion followed a letter written by Sinoe Superintendent Milton Teahjay asking Police in Nyannie district, Rivercess County to leave the area.
- Rivercess Superintendent Wellington Geevon-Smith said the letter by Mr. Teahjay has created serious tensions in the area warning that unless government urgently intervenes, the situation could explode into what he called a serious dispute between Rivercess and Sinoe Counties.
- Meanwhile, Acting Internal Affairs Minister Peter Karmie has called on the conflicting parties to remain in their respective positions pending a review of the situation.

“No Constitutional Breach In President Sirleaf’s Declaration”, Says Senator Nyenabo

- Former Senate Pro-tempore Isaac Nyenabo says there was no constitutional breach by President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf during her annual address to the Legislature.
- Senator Nyenabo said claims that it was illegal and premature for the President to declare her 2011 Presidential bid in the Legislature were unjustified.
- Opposition politician Alhaji Kromah of the All Liberian Coalition Party has noted that President Sirleaf did not violate any law by declaring her intention during the annual message.
- Mr. Kromah said there was no clear illegality about the statement and said the argument about the venue is insignificant.

Twelve Students to Benefit from Exchange Programme in the US

- The Education Ministry has announced the selection of twelve students to benefit from a student exchange programme in the United States.
- Assistant Minister for Secondary Education Felicia Doe-Sumah said the students were selected from dozens of applicants after a thorough screening process.
- Minister Doe-Sumah said the students represent schools including St. Teresa Convent, Elizabeth Blunt, Muslim Congress, B.W. Harris and New Jerusalem.
- She said of the ten students, only six will depart the country July this year while the remaining six will be on standby.
- She said the students are expected to engage in several projects including youth leadership skills, and community development projects.

Inter Press Services

Wednesday, 27 January 2010

POLITICS: U.N. Faulted for Toothless Sanctions in Civil Wars

By Thalif Deen

UNITED NATIONS, Jan 27, 2010 (IPS) - The United Nations estimates that at least 40 percent of civil wars during the last 60 years have been fought either over natural resources - including diamonds, gold, timber, oil, gas, and cocoa - or sustained by revenues from rich minerals and commodities.

Still, says a London-based investigative and human rights group, the United Nations and its member states are "weak" and "ineffective" in enforcing sanctions or implementing resolutions against countries and rebel groups involved in these perennial conflicts over natural resources.

According to Global Witness, which continues to expose the corrupt exploitation of mineral resources and the international trading system that nurtures these shady deals, civilians have been dying on a daily basis in war-ravaged eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) where the ongoing conflict has been triggered by a lucrative global trade in minerals.

But when the Security Council, the most powerful body at the United Nations, passes resolutions concerning DRC, including targeted sanctions, members of the Council and other governments have declined to implement them.

These failings, says a 49-page study released Wednesday by Global Witness, reflect the lack of a coherent and committed international approach to tackling these conflicts.

Asked if member states fail to act because they seek to protect their own interests in these politically-troubled countries, Mike Davis of Global Witness concurred with that reasoning.

"Yes, when U.N. member states, including those in the Security Council, decline to implement their own resolutions on targeted sanctions, for example on DRC, this is often due to vested political and economic interests," he told IPS.

Countries such as Britain are reluctant to penalise their own companies or displease allies in the region - such as Rwanda - which, in its capacity as a conduit for conflict minerals, benefits handsomely from the illicit trade, Davis pointed out.

Another reason, he said, is the sheer lack of commitment by these Security Council members and their assumption that if they fail to live up to their responsibilities, no one will call them on it.

"Holding to account international companies that are fuelling this vicious conflict requires a relatively small amount of effort from the big powers, but because it is DRC, they are not prepared even to undertake this modest step," he added.

The conflict in DRC, described as Africa's 'World War', is not the first in which natural resources have played a central role, says the study, "Nor is it likely to be the last."

In the 1990s, the Security Council imposed sanctions on the timber trade controlled by the Khmer Rouge government in Cambodia and the diamond trade dominated by the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA).

Since the turn of the century, the Security Council has also sought to contend with wars fuelled by natural resources in countries such as Sierra Leone, Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire.

And "in the past 20 years, just under one in three U.N. peacekeeping operations worldwide, and just over half of those in Africa, have concerned conflicts sustained by revenues from primary commodities such as oil, diamonds, minerals and timber," according to the United Nations.

The study by Global Witness, titled 'Lessons Unlearned', says the international peace and security system is "poorly equipped" to deal with the challenges posed by most of these "self-financing wars" in countries such as DRC, Angola, Cambodia, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire.

When considered together, the four key entry points for international action - sanctions, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding - should offer the basis for effective action.

"However, despite progress in some areas, the overall picture is one of ad hoc decision making and yawning gaps in institutional capacity and coordination," the study says.

The 15-member Security Council has also remained paralysed over several conflicts - in Burma (Myanmar), Zimbabwe and Palestine - primarily because of vested political, economic and military interests by the five veto-wielding permanent members: the United States, Britain, France, China and Russia.

In January 2007, both Russia and China exercised a double veto against a Western-inspired resolution against the repressive military regime in Burma, a country rich in mineral resources.

In July 2008, the two big powers also vetoed a resolution calling for punitive measures, including an arms embargo, against Zimbabwe, and financial travel restrictions on President Robert Mugabe.

Meanwhile, the three Western powers, the United States, Britain and France, have continued to throw a protective arm around Israel and warded off all attempts to castigate successive governments in Tel Aviv for human rights violations and war crimes.

Asked if sanctions have been effective, at least in some instances, Davis of Global Witness said there have been cases in which sanctions to tackle the trade in conflict resources have been "very effective".

The imposition of diamonds sanctions on Angola and Sierra Leone, at a time when the diamond trade in both countries was substantially controlled by rebel groups, was successful.

The use of timber sanctions on Liberia to dry up funding for former Liberian president Charles Taylor's campaign of regional destabilisation was another success story.

With respect to DRC, Davis said, "We remain cautiously optimistic that, with enough international pressure", the five permanent members of the Security Council, and other member states, will feel compelled to implement the targeted sanctions regime against companies whose activities are fuelling the violence.

This, he noted, can weaken the operational capacity of the abusive armed groups in the east of the country.

Meanwhile, the study has called on the United Nations to establish a high-level panel to draw up a comprehensive strategy for tackling self-financing wars.

The study has also made a series of recommendations on how to improve the operational effectiveness of U.N. bodies and member states with respect to sanctions, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace building.

(END)

The Hague Justice Portal

Monday, 25 January 2010

The International Criminal Court and the experience of other International and Hybrid Criminal Courts

International Criminal Law Services has completed a study on how the International Criminal Court can learn from the experiences of other hybrid and international criminal courts.

International Criminal Law Services (ICLS) has published its recent study, "Suggestions for Future Lessons-Learned Studies: The Experience of Other International and Hybrid Criminal Courts of Relevance to the International Criminal Court."

This report is especially timely, given the upcoming ICC Review Conference of the Rome Statute in May/June, 2010. The report asks whether there are lessons yet to be learned in relation to other international and hybrid criminal courts that could help the ICC meet its key challenges more proficiently and efficiently. It is based on a combination of a review of over 200 articles, books, reports and court documents, and interviews with senior officials from the ICC and other international courts, ASP representatives, and experts on the ICC from civil society.

It concludes that, although the ICC has realised some remarkable achievements to date, there may be lessons from other tribunals that it has yet to learn.

According to the report, areas in which the ECCC, ICTR, ICTY, SCSL and STL may still hold lessons for the ICC include: governance of the court and ASP and the proper relationship between these bodies; case selection by the prosecution; defence issues and self-representation; victim and witness issues; field offices and investigations; and support and cooperation, implementing legislation, complementarity and related issues.

ICLS hopes that the report will spur closer scrutiny of lessons the ICC has yet to learn, as well as comprehensive studies learning lessons from other international and hybrid criminal courts in areas found to be of potential relevance to the ICC.

Agence France Presse
Wednesday, 27 January 2010

Hamas clears itself of UN Gaza war crimes charges



Gaza City, Palestinian Territory

The Islamist Hamas movement said Wednesday it has investigated allegations in a UN report into last winter's Gaza war and absolved Palestinian armed groups of any atrocities.

The UN Human Rights Council report authored by the respected former international prosecutor Richard Goldstone accused both Israel and Palestinian groups of war crimes during the devastating 22 day conflict.

Some 1,400 Palestinians and 13 Israelis were killed during the Israeli offensive aimed at halting rocket attacks from the territory ruled by the Islamist militant group, which is sworn to the destruction of the Jewish state.

But Hamas, which along with other armed groups has launched thousands of makeshift rockets into southern Israel in recent years, said a committee it appointed to follow up on the report found no intention to harm civilians.

"The committee worked around the clock to uncover the facts, despite the certainty that there were no violations of international humanitarian law or international human rights law that amount to war crimes," said the committee head, Hamas justice minister Mohammed Faraj al-Ghul.

"The Palestinian government has on more than one occasion called on armed Palestinian groups to avoid targeting civilians," said the report by Hamas, which has claimed scores of deadly suicide bombings against Israeli civilians.

"[The armed groups] struck military targets and avoided civilian targets, and any accusations related to this concern errant fire."

The Goldstone report said the firing of the hard-to-aim rockets at southern Israel deliberately targeted civilians and could constitute a crime against humanity.

The Goldstone report recommended its findings be referred to the International Criminal Court in The Hague if Israel and Hamas failed to carry out credible, independent investigations.

Israel has rejected the report as "anti-Semitic" despite the fact Goldstone is Jewish, because the report accuses Israeli troops of deliberately targeting civilians and destroying vital infrastructure.

Source: AFP