

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

PRESS CLIPPINGS

Enclosed are clippings of the latest local and international press on the Special Court and related issues obtained by the Press and Public Affairs Office as of:

Monday, June 28, 2004

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.
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RUF INDICTEES PLAN TO BOYCOTT WAR CRIMES TRIALS

By Samuel Junior John from the courthouse

Friday June 25, 2004

The three Revolutionary United Front (RUF) top henchmen indicted before the Special Court for war crimes against humanity have notified their defence team of their intention to boycott the trial that is slated for commencement on July 5.

The three -Issa Hassan Sesay (pictured above) , Morris Kallon and Augustine Gbao jointly signed a letter to their Defence counsel indicating that they would not appear before the Special Court of Sierra Leone until such time that the motion on jurisdiction filed before the Supreme Court of Sierra Leone, raising a legal objection to the lawfulness of the establishment of the court is

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Africa Analysis June 25, 2004

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Africa Analysis

June 25, 2004

LENGTH: 682 words

HEADLINE: GRAPHIC WAR TALES OF HORROR RECOUNTED

BODY:

Drama, intrigue and **tales of horror** have been unfolding here, on a daily basis, since the start of the **war** crimes trials by the special court in Sierra Leone on 3 June. The court is an independent tribunal established jointly by the UN and the Sierra Leonean government, to bring to justice those who bear the greatest responsibility for atrocities committed during the country's decade long **war**.

Three groups are on trial at the court the Civil Defence Forces (CDF also known as Kamajors), the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the defunct Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, (AFRC). The tone was set at the beginning by the chief prosecutor, US-born David Crane . He promised that his team will OEmost assuredly showS through witness after witness, what the result of these unjust acts or omissions caused: the murder, mutilation and maiming of thousands, the looting and burning of entire towns, terrorising an entire nation.'

But it was his assistant, Sierra Leonean trial attorney Joseph Fitzgerald Kamara , who outlined stranger-than-fiction atrocities allegedly perpetrated by the accused: three kingpins of the civil defence forces Chief Sam Hinga Norman , Allieu Kondewa and Moinina Fofana in their capacities as national co-ordinator, high priest and national **war** director respectively of the Kamajors, a pro-government civil defence militia. Kamara then categorised the atrocities and abuses.

Following the AFRC coup in May 1997, Kamara affirmed the Kamajors were in disarray and needed leadership. Norman, then deputy defence minister, (a post he held until his arrest early 2003) was summoned from Liberia to organise the militia. The court was told of how he and his co-accused held meetings at the Bo waterside. At one of the meetings, Norman asked for a militia base and a place called Talia, in the Yawbeko chiefdom, was chosen and code named OEbase zero'. Norman used to transport ammunitions, and men he referred to as OEspecial forces', by helicopter. Kamara alleged that it was here that the OEBlack December' operation was plotted which was later used to subdue Bo and Koribondo in the south and Tongo in the east.

Thousands of Kamajors on hearing of OEbase zero' flocked there for logistic support and training, Kamara went on. It was there that OENorman and Moinina Fofana planned and co-ordinated the training of Kamajors with Kondewa performing rituals for the success of the

military ventures and conscripted young men for initiation'.

These three persons are alleged to be the OEprinciple force in establishing organising, supporting, providing logistical support and promoting the Civil Defence Force.'

Kamara further alleged that even though the CDF had a **war** council of the CDF, the trio usurped the council's powers and took decisions OEwithout reference or approval' of the council.

Norman, for example, was said to have ignored the **war** council's decision a couple of times. First, there was the case of Kemoh Hassan Sheriff who had ignored instructions to block the Bo-Taiama Highway and, instead, went to Valunya chieftdom to carry out his personal mining. Norman was said to have overturned the decision to insubordinate him and, instead, promoted Sheriff to the rank of general. In another instance, the **war** council decided to OEpeg' another insubordinate at Base Zero for the killing of a pregnant woman. Norman allegedly overturned that decision.

The trio was also held responsible for the Kamajors' ambushes on Bo-Kenema Highway around the 14 November 1997, when they attacked a bus killing nine passengers and the subsequent ambushes and killings along the Bo-Freetown highway.

On 6 January 1998, travellers reaching Freetown confirmed the death of 25 people along Bo-Freetown highway. Kamajors ambushed a commercial truck near Bo, killing six people.

The court was also told of a number of other grisly killings in the south and east of the country which were the handiwork of the Kamajors and, in most cases, there were witnesses who could testify that it was Norman who gave the orders. The trial continues.

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Special Court Judge Frowns At Prosecutor's Cross-Examination

By Mohamed Mansaray

A member of the Trial Chamber of the Special Court, Justice Bankole Thompson frowned at Prosecution lawyer Adwoa Wiafe at court room No.1, New England in Freetown recently, over objection she raised during cross-examination of the third Prosecution Witness TF2-176, by the first CDF accused Samuel Hinga Norman.

Mr. Norman asked the 53-year-old witness whether he remembered an old man of the witness' tribe, who was working with him (the accused) when he was Regent Chief of Jaiama Bongor chieftdom in the Bo district, to which the prosecution objected, citing security fears for the witness. The Judge responded swiftly saying, "I don't think this court can yield to speculative thinking on the part of the

prosecution."

The witness was ordered by the presiding Judge Benjamin Itoe to answer the question. The witness named one Mr. Bah (now deceased) as their former tribal chief, whom he said was very close to the accused.

The witness said that Mr. Bah died following an attack on Telu Bongor but could not recall when the attack took place.

Asked by the accused why he did not record the date considering he was literate in Arabic, the witness said that he is not very versed in Arabic writing. Asked further whether he knew that eleven armed groups were

SEE BACK PAGE

involved in the fighting in Sierra Leone, the witness said that he was aware about only three, namely AFRC, RUF and Kamajors.

The witness was first cross-examined on June 18 and re-examined on June 21 on the orders of the presiding judge.

Born at Koribondo in the Bo district, the witness recalled that Kamajors went to Koribondo in 1998 but would not say whether Kamajors were in the town before that time. He said following the last Kamajor attack on Koribondo on February 13, 1998, he shuttled between Bo Sembehun and Koribondo to locate his family members.

The witness who spoke in Mende through an inter-

preter recalled that a delegation from Koribondo went to see Mr Norman following Mr. Bah's death but denied that he was a member of the delegation.

At some point during the cross-examination, Mr. Norman protested against what he described as too much latitude being given to the witness. "How did the witness get here, he was brought by the prosecution. I am on trial for my life", the accused said.

Judge Itoe cautioned the witness: "Please when you hear the question answer immediately. Don't keep the court waiting, we don't want to sleep here".

The witness was testifying about Kamajor activities in Koribondo in the Bo district between 1997 and 1998. The court was adjourned to September 8

Salone Times

Monday June 28, 2004

OPINION

I have resisted the temptation to be drawn into this special court rubbish that is being bandied around the country and abroad for a long time and would have remained out of it but for the trend it is taking particularly in the local press, PEEP to be specific.

I will come to the issue of PEEP later but first, let us agree on certain facts about the just ended civil war, some say madness. It is true that the so-called civil war in Sierra Leone was the most barbaric in modern history. Perhaps it was also the most destructive materially and otherwise. Probably it was the only war in history in which the civil population was the target for the

army and the enemy, the so-called rebels some would say bandits. It is widely accepted fact that the war itself was naked banditry perpetrated against the civil population by both the rebels and the national army which was paid to protect the people. The above scenario worsened after the Johnny Paul Coup in May 1997 which saw the formation of the rebel/soldier coalition christened,

the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council AFRC, paving the way for the national army to formally merge with the Revolutionary United Front RUF rebels of Foday Sankoh of notorious memory against the people of this country. The only fighting force that chose the side of the people was the Kamajors. Consequently, the kamajors and the people became the enemies of the army and the rebels. Interestingly, among the people were those who thought they could make quick fortune by joining the rebel/

Crane's Witness... A Rebel?

By Lamin Njegula

soldier coalition as informers, the likes of David Crane's witnesses who inflicted a lot of damages and losses in terms of materials and human lives on the civil population by identifying people who were kamajors or relatives of kamajors to AFRC operatives. Such identified people were summarily executed by the AFRC rebels/soldiers coalition. And Koribondo was the scene of many such executions. This writer witnessed one such occasion when six people were executed at Koribondo round about and their bodies left there for

days.

When the AFRC rebel/soldier coalition was overthrown by ECOMOG, few loyal soldiers/SSDs and Kamajors in February 1998, the likes of David Crane's witnesses suddenly found themselves in the middle of enemy territory. Considering the gravity of the actions of Crane's witnesses during the nine months misrule by the AFRC rebel/soldier coalition which left many homes destroyed in Jaiama Bongor Chiefdom, the natural reaction of the kamajors, an army of largely uneducated ordinary people whose only aim of joining the

movement was to protect their own villages and towns, was rightly or wrongly to revenge on the likes of David Crane's witnesses who were responsible for the brutal murders in cold blood, of many villagers they had identified as kamajors or relatives of kamajors to the AFRC rebel/soldiers coalition. Like I said earlier, I really did not want to write about the special court more so the indictment of Hinga Norman, the only Minister who did not take refuge in Guinea but remained home to challenge the rebel/soldier coalition and bring back the

Contd. page 7

Crane's Witness... A Rebel?

From page 3

democratically elected government which the rebels had overthrown. The arrest and indictment of Hinga Norman would serve as a bitter lesson for all patriotic Sierra Leoneans. If there is a repeat of May 1997, I don't think any Sierra Leonean will take the kind of risk Norman took to bring back the government

in exile. True, it Norman's men had joined the rebel/soldier coalition as they were persuaded to do, that would have been the end of the Kabbah government. For a man like that to be subjected today to humiliation and betrayal is beyond my comprehension. Let nobody tell me Norman's arrest

would not have been stopped. Why were ECOMOG commanders and the Chief of Defence Staff of the Sierra Leone Army not indicted? Did the Sierra Leone Army not commit more atrocities than even the RUF? Who did the amputation in the wake of the January 6 invasion of Freetown?

To be continued

The News
Monday June 28,
2004

UN Delegation Calls for Former Liberian Leader to Face Trial

Shia Levitt

Abidjan

VOA: 25 Jun 2004, 14:08 UTC

A U.N. Security Council delegation is adding pressure to bring former Liberian President Charles Taylor to trial for his role in the Sierra Leone civil war.

During an eight-day tour of West Africa aimed at promoting stability and dialogue in the region, Britain's U.N. ambassador Emyr Jones Parry said Mr. Taylor should not be allowed to go on living in exile and avoiding impending war crimes indictments.



AP

**Former Liberian President
Charles Taylor**

Mr. Parry made the statement during a brief stop in Liberia Thursday. The delegation is now in Sierra Leone and on Monday will visit Nigeria.

Mr. Taylor has been charged with war crimes by the special United Nations-backed court in Sierra Leone, but now lives in exile in Nigeria, where he was granted asylum last August. Nigeria said it granted Mr. Taylor asylum so that the civil war in Liberia could end and has refused to hand him over for trial. It has been under pressure by some African governments, including Liberia's, not to hand over Mr. Taylor until the peace process in Liberia is further consolidated.

The International Crisis Group's West Africa director, Mike McGovern, says that while there are human rights concerns supporting bringing Mr. Taylor to justice, there are also diplomatic reasons for continuing his safe asylum, one being Nigeria's promise of impunity for Mr. Taylor.

"That's important and if you go back on a promise like that, certainly Nigeria wouldn't have much credibility to do the same kind of thing again," said Mr. McGovern. "On the other hand, you have the principle of justice. This guy is responsible for a tremendous number of deaths and suffering and should be brought to the books."

The U.N.-backed special court in Sierra Leone indicted Mr. Taylor in June of last year for bearing the greatest responsibility for the civil war in Sierra Leone and has been asking ever since for his arrest.

Its indictment accuses Mr. Taylor of arming and training rebels in exchange for diamonds.

The head prosecutor of the court, David Crane, said he hopes pressure from the international community will eventually succeed.

"There are numerous initiatives that are being done to have Charles Taylor delivered appropriately and fairly to this court so that he can face an appropriate trial against those 17 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity," Mr. Cane added.

Diplomats from the U.N. delegation say the Taylor issue will be discussed when they meet with top officials Monday in Nigeria.

06/24/2004 17:01:28

Charles Taylor cannot continue in 'impunity': UN Security Council

MONROVIA, June 24 (AFP) - A UN Security Council team on a visit to **Liberia** Thursday said former president Charles Taylor could not continue to live in "impunity," expressing confidence he would soon be brought to justice.

The delegation's brief stop in Monrovia marked a third leg of an eight-day west African tour seeking lasting solutions for the troubled region through dialogue and cooperation.

"Charles Taylor cannot go with impunity," Britain's ambassador to the United Nations Emyr Jones Parry told a press briefing after a day packed with talks with officials from the Liberian government as well as the 14,000-strong UN mission in **Liberia** (UNMIL).

"It is our hope that he will soon be brought to justice."

Taylor took exile in Nigeria last August to end the second of two civil wars in **Liberia** since 1989, evading an indictment by the UN-backed war crimes court in next-door Sierra Leone for arming and training rebels during that country's decade of war.

Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo has refused to yield to mounting international pressure to hand Taylor over.

West African diplomats have said privately that they, too, would prefer that Taylor remain in exile until Liberia has stabilized and Liberian chairman Gyude Bryant has said no action will be taken until a constitutionally-elected government is installed in January 2006.

Talks Thursday also centered around the decision this month to continue sanctions against Liberia's lucrative timber and diamond industries amid continued security concerns, Parry said.

Once the government has complete control over the entire country, sanctions will be lifted, the British diplomat said.

Government officials have recently been reassigned to the port city of Buchanan and central town of Gbarnga, which were declared safe and weapons free by UNMIL last week.

Disarmament of Liberia's estimated 50,000 combatants resumed in April in Gbarnga and continued on to Buchanan, strongholds of the two rebel factions that opposed Taylor.

An expert UN panel noted in a report released in early June that while strides had been made in demobilizing thousands of fighters, there were substantially fewer weapons being turned in than expected, evoking concerns of cross-border smuggling into restive Ivory Coast.

The delegation had arrived Thursday morning from Ivory Coast, where they met with President Laurent Gbagbo and warned him the UN would take tough action, possibly including targeted sanctions, if the peace process remained at an impasse.

The African cocoa giant, once a regional haven of economic and political stability, has been trapped in 20 months of crisis sparked by a rebellion in September 2002 that sparked a civil war.

The reconciliation process has bogged down in political bickering and flashes of violence, notably a deadly crackdown on an opposition rally in March, which a UN human rights team said was sanctioned by the government.

A legislative session Friday was interrupted by more than 100 Gbagbo partisans, suspending discussions of laws mandated under a moribund peace pact signed last January.

The UN team was to depart early Friday morning for Sierra Leone.

Their hotel, the upscale Mamba Point favored by visiting western dignitaries just steps from the US embassy in Monrovia, was ringed with Irish special forces troops that diverted all traffic.

It was at the Mamba Point that a US defense contractor was stabbed to death in May by a former soldier in Taylor's army. He has yet to be found.

Stops in Guinea and Guinea-Bissau are to follow before the tour winds up in Nigeria.

Parry said earlier Thursday that details of the Nigeria visit had yet to be finalized so the team was unsure whether the fate of Charles Taylor would be on the agenda at talks with President Obasanjo.

06/26/2004 13:24:57

UN envoys meet Nigeria's Obasanjo but Taylor's fate not on agenda

by Ola Awoniyi

ABUJA, June 26 (AFP) - UN Security Council ambassadors met Saturday with Nigeria's President Olusegun Obasanjo to discuss west Africa's many political crises, but said they did not raise the tricky issue of the fate of the exiled former Liberian leader, Charles Taylor.

Taylor has enjoyed political asylum in Nigeria since August last year, when he was driven from power by a combination of international pressure and a rebel siege in his capital, and many in the international community want him to face a UN-backed war crimes tribunal.

But the head of the high-powered delegation, Britain's ambassador to the United Nations Emyr Jones Parry, said that the issue had not come up in talks with Obasanjo and Nigeria's Foreign Minister Olu Adeniji.

"We had no discussion on that, none at all," he told reporters.

The UN party's discretion on the thorny issue will be a disappointment to rights campaigners and others who had hoped that during the team's eight-day tour of west African trouble spots more pressure might be brought to bear on Nigeria to hand Taylor over to a Sierra Leonean special war crimes court.

Taylor, a Libyan-trained guerrilla leader who fought his way to power in Liberia, faces a 17 count indictment detailing charges that during the 1990s he supported a notorious Sierra Leonean rebel movement, the Revolutionary Unity Front, in exchange for a cut in the region's illegal diamond trade.

Last August, he was invited by Obasanjo to come to Nigeria, in exchange for relinquishing power in Monrovia and allowing a new generation of Liberian leaders to restart a stalled peace process and bring his country's latest five-year-long bout of civil war to an end.

The Nigerian leader has long insisted that only the Liberian people, speaking through a duly elected government, can demand Taylor's extradition, and he has refused to honour an Interpol arrest warrant issued on behalf of international prosecutors at the UN-backed Sierra Leone tribunal.

Aside from the situation in Liberia, the envoys did discuss many other problems in west Africa and beyond, and departed in a positive mood.

"We had extremely good discussions with the foreign minister and the president," Parry said. "We covered all the issues affecting west Africa in some detail."

Aside from the fragile peace processes in Liberia and Sierra Leone, there is also great international concern about the situation in Ivory Coast, where attempts to resolve

the 20-month dispute between rebel northern forces and President Laurent Gbagbo's government have all but collapsed.

"The challenge is stopping conflicts, but more importantly building peace," Parry said. "It's tremendous to see on the ground the work that has been done."

In a statement issued following the meeting, Obasanjo said that African leaders were determined to prevent Ivory Coast slipping back into the conflict with erupted in November 2002. "We are not going to give up," he said.

"The president urged Ivorian leaders to be realistic and pragmatic, noting that there was a need to carry all parties along in peace efforts," the statement said, adding that more needed to be done to develop the war-shattered economies of Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Before arriving in Abuja, the 14 senior diplomats from all but one of the members of the UN Security Council had visited Ghana, Ivory Coast, Liberia and Sierra Leone. They are due to visit Guinea-Bissau and Guinea before arriving in Senegalese capital Dakar for their final stopover on Monday.

No Formal Position On Taylor

- UN Security Council



By Kelvin Lewis

The head of the 14 member United Nations Security Council team visiting Sierra Leone Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry has said in Freetown that "the Security Council does not have any formal position" on the issue of bringing exiled Former Liberian President Charles Taylor to Sierra Leone to face war crimes charges at the UN backed

Special Court. Nevertheless he stated "there should be no impunity for people who have been alleged to have committed the sorts of

crimes that an indictment was issued against Taylor." Ambassador Jones Parry who represents the United Kingdom on the council explained that "The timing

of bringing anybody before the court is a mix both of the indictment and of the circumstances of the case" He explained further that

Contd. Page 2

No Formal Position On Taylor

From Front Page

"when you're in a post conflict situation the first thing you do is make sure that you've stopped the conflict, that you've stopped any chance of it reoccurring and then

you've got two objectives; one is to promote reconciliation, truth and on the other hand to bring to justice those people who should be brought to justice." The UK representative added "I

think we're getting towards that third stage in the case of Liberia, the question therefore is when should Taylor be actually brought before the court; and the conditions for that have

been set out by the President of Nigeria and it's really a question of whether a request is made and how that should be dealt with." Ambassador Jones Parry said presently they were concerned with finding the funding for the court to allow it to work. On the issue of Sierra Leone the head of the mission said that they were "especially pleased about the transformation in Sierra Leone" Adding "two years after the conflict was declared ended there are visible

signs that indeed things are on the mend." Ambassador Jones Parry disclosed that they have come with a "simple message", which is that "the United Nations will stand by Sierra Leone until the job is done" The job he said "will only be done when Sierra Leone has an enduring prospect of peace, prosperity and economic development which can harness the talents of the people of Sierra Leone and the assets of this country". The Security Council

team leader explained that part of their task was "to prepare Sierra Leone for the time when she does all these things on her own to reduce the dependency, especially in the security field", hoping that "the reducing commitment of the United Nations in terms of present troops is balanced out by a greater more efficient local contribution in both the military and the police." The team which left the country Saturday, held discussions with government officials, NGO workers, civil society groups and 11 ambassadors resident in the country.

Awoko

Monday June 28, 2004

UN Security Council mission visits Sierra Leone Special Court

25 June 2004 – The 14-member Security Council mission visiting seven West African countries today went to the independent Special Court for Sierra Leone, where people accused of crimes during the country's eight-year conflict are being tried.

The mission, led by British Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry, was briefed by Registrar Robin Vincent and Prosecutor David Crane on the workings of the Court, which was established in 2002.

The trials of people accused of having committed crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious violations of international humanitarian law under the umbrella of the Civil Defence Forces (CDF) started on 3 June. Trials of people accused of similar crimes while members of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) will begin on 5 July.

The other mission members represent Algeria, Angola, Benin, Brazil, Chile, China, France, Germany, Pakistan, the Philippines, Romania, Spain and the United States. Russia did not take part.



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Testimony of Corinne Dufka, Senior Researcher and West Africa Team Leader - Africa Division, Human Rights Watch: 'Combating War Crimes in Africa', House Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on Africa

United States Congress (Washington, DC)

DOCUMENT

June 25, 2004

Posted to the web June 25, 2004

By Corinne Dufka

I want to thank Chairman Royce and ranking member Payne for inviting my organization, Human Rights Watch, to address the Africa Subcommittee about the important topic we are addressing here today: Combating War Crimes in Africa.

My name is Corinne Dufka. I am a senior researcher and the West Africa Team Leader for the Africa Division of Human Rights Watch. I was based in Freetown, Sierra Leone from 1999 through late 2003 where I researched and reported on appalling human rights abuses in the sub-region including those in Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire. In 2002-2003, I took one year off from Human Rights Watch to work as an investigator with the Office of the Prosecutor for the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

In the course of my work with Human Rights Watch, I have spoken with hundreds of victims, witnesses to, and perpetrators of unspeakable war crimes and crimes against humanity, almost exclusively committed against unarmed civilians.

I recall the heartbreaking story of a mechanical engineer in Freetown who watched while his six children and only grandchild were lined up against a wall in January 1999 and executed by a rebel soldier. I recall the look on the face of a mother as she described fighting to protect the last of her three daughters from being dragged away by retreating rebel soldiers. Of how a father was forced at gunpoint to watch as his young daughter was gang raped by rebel combatants, some of them children; and of a young man who had dreamed of becoming an accountant who described how rebels hacked off both of his hands with a rusty axe. I heard numerous testimonies including a father's account of how near Tongo Field in late 1997, members of government-backed militias lined up and executed scores of civilians, including his 15 year old son.

In Liberia, the stories were much the same. A 30 thirty-year-old man from Popalahun described how in September 2001, large numbers of civilians from the Gbandi ethnic group were found hiding in the forest by Liberian government soldiers and later burned in a house in nearby Kamatehun. Or how a young mother from Bondawalahun was forced by a Liberian government soldier to choose between dying herself or having her infant murdered in front of her.

Over the last 10 years at least eighteen countries in Africa have been consumed by war, usually internal. . At present there are several active conflicts in Africa-they are Cote d'Ivoire, the Darfur region of Sudan, Northern Uganda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Despite the body of treaties, laws and conventions aimed at protecting civilians during times of war, civilians are more and more often the targeted by both state and non-state actors. The methods they employ include mass slaughter, the use of terror, ethnic cleansing, and forced migration. Wars on the Africa continent are increasingly fought by forced recruits, often children who are ripped away from their families and turned into killers.

To combat war crimes in Africa, two key and indeed related components are urgently necessary - the first is ensuring accountability for serious human rights crimes, and the second is implementing preventive strategies to detect, stop and/or mitigate situations with the potential to develop into systematic war crimes.

Ensuring accountability for serious human rights crimes: Every civilian victim who has been brutally mutilated, raped, abducted or murdered has a name, and so too do the individuals responsible for perpetrating such atrocities. The abuses were not random incidents; they were most often the result of a deliberate policy on the part of the highest levels of leadership. And yet very few of those responsible for widespread and systematic abuses or indeed for orchestrating policies of abuse are brought to justice. Recent history has shown that these killers more often than not receive plum ministry positions as part of peace deals that grant them amnesty or fail to hold them accountable, and even reward them for their horrific acts. Often such war criminals and the impunity they receive contribute to future instability.

Human Rights Watch strongly believes that justice is not a moral luxury. Victims whose lives have been torn apart by violence in Africa have just as much a right to see justice done than victims of violence anywhere in the world. The victims of amputation who will struggle without hands everyday of the rest of their lives; the tens of thousands of people who lost those most precious to them - very often in the most brutal of ways and often in front of them - deserve to know that those who designed and implemented such atrocities are punished for the acts they ordered and/or perpetrated.

Human Rights Watch also believes that accountability for past crimes is central to combating future war crimes, particularly in Africa, where a culture of impunity has often

prevailed and is too often tolerated by Africans themselves, and by the international community.

Impunity for atrocities committed in the past sends the message that such crimes may be tolerated in the future. In post-conflict societies, accountability for war crimes is essential to laying the foundation for building respect for the rule of law and human rights. The often-heard argument that those who insist on accountability for heinous war crimes are the spoilers, the saboteurs of peace and stability, is illogical and has been proven wrong all too often.

For example, in a quick bid to end the first brutal Liberian civil war and in the face of massive crimes committed against civilians, U.N. and West African leaders agreed to a peace plan that dispensed with justice and rushed an election that installed warlord Charles Taylor as president in 1997. Not surprisingly, within a short time, the country was back at war. The six years of repressive rule by President Charles Taylor that followed and the next war were characterized by the same egregious abuses against civilians as the earlier war and further set the country back. Despite this reality, in the recent peace deal in Liberia, well known war criminals were given high-level ministry positions within the National Transitional Government of Liberia.

In another example, in Sierra Leone in 1999, the late RUF leader Foday Sankoh, allegedly responsible for some of the most brutal crimes committed against civilians, received not only an amnesty for previous violations, but was rewarded. In exchange for signing the Lomé peace accord he was given control of the ministry in charge of the nation's vast natural resources. Months later he went on to attack both the government and United Nations peacekeepers, taking hundreds hostage.

In the DRC, the recent abuses committed in Bukavu are an example of what results when past crimes committed by some of the same commanders are tolerated and go unpunished. In August 2002, Human Rights Watch reported on the massacres that took place in Kisangani in May 2002 when RCD-Goma soldiers brutally suppressed an attempted mutiny in their ranks. One of the commanding officers involved in these war crimes was Brigadier General Laurent Nkunda, who was never investigated nor charged for his role in these killings. To the contrary, he was proposed by the RCD-Goma as one of its officers to join the unified army. This sent the wrong message; that perpetrators of crimes and human rights abuses would be rewarded with government positions and could continue to commit atrocities with complete impunity, which he and his forces did in Bukavu in May and June of this year. As Nkunda's soldiers marched from Goma to Bukavu, they attacked numerous villages and civilians. In Bukavu, international and local organizations documented numerous cases of killing and rape, including the brutal rape by Nkunda's soldiers of at least six cases of children under five.

Impunity or a failure of accountability also characterizes the current situation of former Liberian president Charles Taylor, in exile in Nigeria. Despite having commanded troops who perpetrated war crimes in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire, and despite having been indicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone on 17 counts of war

crimes and crimes against humanity, Charles Taylor is being shielded from justice by the Nigerian government. In a deal brokered by the United Nations, the United States and ECOWAS, Taylor was offered asylum in exchange for leaving Liberia. The U.S. has failed to take a strong position on the need for Nigeria to hand Charles Taylor over to the Special Court. In February of this year, Secretary of State Colin Powell justified such inaction and characterized the issue as "a matter between him [Taylor] and that tribunal."

This U.S. position is not consistent with U.S. support for the Special Court for Sierra Leone and indeed the position of this committee which has been clear on the importance of Taylor being surrendered to the Special Court. In creating the Special Court, the international community and especially the United States, its biggest financial backer, made an important commitment to bring justice for the horrific crimes committed in Sierra Leone. This initiative to promote justice and respect for the rule of law will be significantly undercut if Taylor is shielded from the court. The same can be said for the U.S. commitment to combat war crimes in Africa or anywhere else.

This unsatisfactory state of affairs is unfortunately representative of other U.S. policy on war crimes in Africa more generally which has often lacked clarity and constancy. For example, the United States has pursued an aggressive and proactive policy in favor of arresting genocide suspects and bringing them to stand trial at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. The US conditioned support to the former Kabila regime on that regime demonstrating willingness to arrest genocide suspects hiding in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), on supporting U.N. resolutions calling for the surrender of Rwandans to the Rwandan tribunal, and on pressuring Great Lakes countries to do the same. However, the United States has failed to actively confront Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi - often identified as the source of support of rebel factions in the DRC. This, added to the US position against the International Criminal Court, an institution strongly supported in DRC brings into questions the US's true commitment to bring justice for war crimes in an even-handed manner.

U.S. pressure for the surrender of indicted war criminals to the ICTR also stands in sharp contrast to its position on the surrender of indicted war criminal Charles Taylor to the Special Court for Sierra Leone. This reluctance to press Nigeria to hand over Taylor fosters a double standard that betrays the people of Sierra Leone and makes light of all that they have suffered. To promote justice and combat impunity, the United States must take a stand on the matter of Taylor's surrender to the Special Court.

The need for US action is particularly urgent given the May 31 historic ruling by the Special Court rejecting Taylor's claim that he enjoyed immunity from prosecution for war crimes and crimes against humanity as a sitting head of state at the time of his indictment. This landmark ruling affirms the principle that no one should be above the law for the most serious crimes. It is exactly this principle that must be enforced in West Africa to promote greater respect for the rule of law and combat war crimes in Africa.

But Taylor's surrender is also needed for a more practical reason. Human Rights Watch has received credible information that Charles Taylor's exile in Nigeria poses a continued

risk to stability in West Africa. Sources inside Liberia report that Taylor remains in frequent contact with members of his former government and that an insurgency composed of fighters loyal to him, including combatants from the former Revolutionary United Front (RUF), Anti Terrorist Unit (ATU), and Special Security Service (SSS) as well as numerous Guinean dissidents are training in Liberia near the border with Cote d'Ivoire. We understand this insurgency is being supported by business ventures in which Taylor holds an interest that is not recorded publicly, and that the insurgency's activities may include destabilizing Guinea.

Nigeria's continued shielding of Taylor goes against international law, is an affront to his innumerable victims, and undermines the political and financial investment by the United States to combat impunity in Africa.

We assume U.S. involvement in the negotiations that led to Taylor leaving power in Liberia and obtaining asylum in Nigeria were aimed at stopping the bloodshed of innocent civilians being killed on the streets of Monrovia. We believe it is now time for the U.S. to intervene on behalf of different victims - those from Sierra Leone's war - and in so doing to take an unequivocal stand against impunity in West Africa. If the United States is serious about combating war crimes in Africa, it must take a stand now. The US must use public and private diplomacy to call on Nigerian President Obasanjo to surrender Charles Taylor to the court.

Combating systematic war crimes: 1) Control of arms flows 2) Corruption and 3) Monitoring and Control of Hate Speech Causing Incitement:

1) Control of Arms Flows:

Africa is a sad showcase of the human rights and humanitarian costs of the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Quantities of arms have flowed to the region causing the rampant misuse of such weapons by state and non-state actors alike. The easy availability of small arms, conflict and human rights abuses in West Africa are interwoven. The spread and misuse of small arms helps fuel conflict, and conflict generates a market for more weapons. These weapons, in the hands of combatants who have a history of indifference for the principle of civilian immunity, lead to grave violations against innocent people. Mercenaries and arms traffickers make a tidy profit off their trades, and the combatants can often count on outside support to finance their wars. But, it is civilians who ultimately pay the highest price.

The United States can and should take steps to address these troubling trends including restraining U.S. arms exports to conflict regions, supporting disarmament measures, and promoting legally binding norms to prevent arms from being supplied to human rights abusers.

In West Africa, the ECOWAS small arms moratorium and its implementation need to be strengthened. In our view, the moratorium should be expanded to encompass all weapons categories, developed into an information-exchange mechanism, and made binding.

These measures are particularly critical for the potentially disastrous situations in the Cote d'Ivoire, Burundi and the DRC where weapons coming in and out need to be closely monitored.

The United States also should support monitoring of arms embargoes and accountability for sanctions-busters, and do so consistently. It should insist on compliance with arms embargoes by private actors and governments, even those allied to the U.S., as is the case with Guinea and Rwanda. The work of U.N. expert panels in Africa has been valuable and their recommendations should be taken up, which the United States can help ensure in concert with other members of the U.N. Security Council.

On the issue of mercenaries, militias, and roving fighters, the U.S., through its presence in West Africa, could help bring the problem under control by collaborating with relevant bodies to monitor and publicize their activities, especially with respect to how these rogue elements are armed and financed.

The United States also can exercise leadership on the global agenda to address some of the fundamental problems that contribute to human rights catastrophes in West Africa and elsewhere. One key area is the need for global measures to control the activities of arms brokers. Another is developing, adopting, and adhering to minimum global standards for arms exports, so that weapons are not furnished to known abusers. Strict human rights standards also must be upheld when granting military assistance. U.S. legislation circumscribing such assistance on human rights grounds offers a useful model that could be promoted abroad.

2) Corruption:

The second strategy for preventing conflict has to do with issues of good governance; of corruption. Sierra Leone is a case in point. In many ways, the jury is still out on whether that country will remain a nation at peace. The guns are silent, however, the deep rooted issues that gave rise to the conflict - endemic corruption, weak rule of law, crushing poverty, and the inequitable distribution of the country's vast natural resources - remain largely unaddressed by the government and the international community.

Corruption within both the public and private sectors in Sierra Leone remains endemic and a source of serious human rights abuses. Meanwhile, the state of the countries schools, hospitals and clinics are in complete disarray and public service employees often go for weeks without pay. Scandals involving the misappropriation of public and international donor funds to key ministries including health and education are common place.

In these countries, the institutions designed to represent and protect civilians; the government, the police and the military, have instead been the source of considerable instability, corruption, and human rights violations, yet they have enjoyed near-complete immunity from prosecution. Today unemployment is over 70 percent in Sierra Leone, the vast majority of the population survives on less than a dollar a day. Although some

40,000 combatants have been disarmed, thousands are part of youth organizations that have maintained their previously held military structures and are angry and disappointed as their lives have not yet improved.

Angola, where the government has consistently mismanaged its substantial oil revenues and, despite rhetorical commitments, has yet to demonstrate a meaningful commitment to reform, provides another striking example. In recent years, literally billions of dollars in oil revenues have illegally bypassed the central bank and remain unaccounted for. Such missing revenues reflect a failure of government accountability more generally and are directly linked to the Angolan government's continuing failure to foster institutions that uphold the rule of law and human rights. The sums involved are staggering. From 1997 to 2002, unaccounted for funds amounted to some U.S. \$4.22 billion.

Conditions in Sierra Leone and Angola are similar to many countries across the continent whether coming out of conflict or teetering on the brink of it. The United States can exert tremendous leverage over the policies of the many governments in Africa grappling with this insidious problem. The US must adopt a zero tolerance policy towards corruption and take every opportunity to both privately and publicly underscore the importance of combating it. In resource rich countries the US must press governments to publish financial reports so that a full account of revenues, expenditures, and debt is made public and transparent. The US must be willing to use its influence to press forcefully for change.

3) Monitoring and Control of Hate Speech Causing Incitement:

Too often African politicians who should be working to create societies based on tolerance, equality and the rule of law, have instead openly engaged in the political exploitation of ethnicity to both eliminate political rivals and, in time of war, to claim military victory in conflict.

Rwanda is an extreme example. There, a radio station incited fear and hatred against the Tutsi, and gave specific orders on how to carry out such killings, including identifying individuals to be attacked and specifying where they could be found.

Silencing these radio broadcasts would not only have ended this particularly effective form of incitement and delivery of specific orders; it would have shown that the international community rejected the legitimacy of the genocidal message and those who were delivering it. The United States considered jamming the broadcasts from an airplane, but found the cost - about \$8,000 an hour - too high.

While mindful of balancing the importance of freedom of expression as a core value of human rights, we believe that any restriction on the content of expression must address speech that is likely to incite violence, discrimination or hostility against an individual or clearly defined group of persons in circumstances in which such violence, discrimination or hostility is imminent and alternative measures to prevent such conduct are not reasonably available.

The U.S. must pay close attention to the media in situations of potential ethnic, religious, or racial conflict and must be willing to use all leverage to pressure governments to act more responsibly. In this regard, the current situation in Cote d'Ivoire demands particular attention. In cases of impending genocide, the US must be prepared to silence broadcasts that incite or provide directions for violence.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this testimony with you today. On behalf of so many millions of Africans whose lives have been torn apart by war, I urge Congress to pressure the U.S. government to do all that it can to provide accountability for the perpetrators of egregious violations, and act with vision to adopt preventative strategies to combat future violations and senseless loss of life.

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Sanctions Prevents Abuse of Resources - Says UNSC Delegation

The Analyst (Monrovia)

NEWS

June 25, 2004

Posted to the web June 26, 2004

The International Community has endeavored over the years to salvage the civil crises in Liberia. Apart from the dispatch of peacekeeping forces by the ECOWAS and the UN, frantic efforts are being made not only to prevent conflict, but to also nip the flagrant abuse of the natural resources of the country. As Gibson W. Jerue reports, the head of the visiting United Nations Security Council commission in Monrovia has indicated that the objective of the sanctions on diamond and timber are meant to stifle the abuse of the resources of the country.

Mr. Emyr Jones Parry is the permanent representative of the United Kingdom and is heading a 14-member delegation on tour of seven West African nations, including Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Nigeria, among others.

Two helicopters of the United Nations landed the Security Council delegation at the James Spriggs Payne Airfield yesterday. They were met on arrival by the SRSg, Jacques Paul Klein, International Police Service chief Mark Kroeker and an array of other staffers of UNMIL.

No representatives of the National Transitional Government of Liberia or of the Foreign Ministry were seen at the airfield to greet the visiting delegation.

In a ten-minute press conference, the head of the commission, Mr. Parry said, "The commission is very happy to be in Liberia. We have spent a lot of time working on the subject of Liberia." Mr. Parry spoke on the United Nations mission in Liberia, sanctions on diamonds and timber, conflict, its prevention and peace building.

Speaking on the sanctions, Mr. Parry indicated: "It would do well to identify potential conflict and take step to stop it. Sanctions are there because the resources of Liberia were being abused, and taken elsewhere and not used for benefit of the Liberian people." The Security Council West Africa delegation head also asserted that "The United Nations Security Council has set up the criteria by which sanctions could be lifted." The

conditions are clear, he noted, the soonest those conditions are addressed; the better it is for the economy of Liberia.

According to Mr. Parry, what is needed to be done is to encourage and facilitate and reach out with conviction so that sanctions on diamond and timbers can end.

"When the sanctions end, it would be better for the Government of Liberia, that resources be used for Liberians. And when sanctions are lifted, no one would any abuse the resources of Liberia," Mr. Parry said.

Mr. Parry also noted the importance of the cooperation of the parties to the Liberian conflict, and indicated that though the process is still on course, it was important that the parties adhere to promises they made to obey the agreement.

"The most difficult task is peace building, that's the major exercise that UN is involved with. Keeping the peace, building the peace, and creating durable institutions are important," he said.

But the UNSC delegation head noted that it would be far better if the UN did not have to send troops to stop the fighting. "It would be better to prevent conflict," he added.

He said it is also a part of the work of the UN to increase conflict prevention, noting that the UN is being overstretched with over 50,000 troops for peacekeeping missions around the globe.

On the UN mission in Liberia, he said the world body is being "very conscious", and that what needs to be done for the UN Secretary General, the Security Council in New York is the need to bring pressure to bear on all stakeholders to live by the agreement, to live up to what they promised to do." From the James Spriggs Payne Airfield, the delegation met the Chairman and officials of the Government of Liberia at the Executive Mansion for a thorough *tete-a-tete* in consummation of their mission objectivities.

"THEY LIVE IN 'BUBBLES'" Civil Society Says of UNMIL Personnel Advances Key Recommendations

For more than a decade since 1989, the people of Liberia were locked in a civil conflict that decimated the population in all forms and shades of human endeavors. Many were killed or maimed, several more either internally displaced or locked perpetually in refugee camps in the Diaspora with no home to return to, and basic infrastructure damaged or rendered useless. In collaboration with friendly governments and regional organizations, the United Nations Security Council, last year, thought these catastrophes provide enough bases to dispatch a military mission to Liberia to restore normalcy and democracy. The mission named UNMIL has been on the ground since October 1, 2003 and there have been fine talks about its successes in managing the ceasefire signed in June last year, in providing relative security throughout Liberia, in monitoring human rights and its violations, and in disarming some 49,000 ex-coms since December 7, 2003.

But as The Analyst Staff Writer reports, a consortium of civil right advocacy group acting under the aegis of the civil society says the need for the mission to descend from its lofty heights and face the urgency of the Liberian reality needs no emphasis.

A consortium registered Liberian civil rights organizations in Liberia has indicated the need for the visiting UN Security Council Assessment Commission to cause its military mission in Liberia to return to the vigorous implementation of its mandate in Liberia.

The consortium which comprises the National Human Rights Center of Liberia (NHRCL), Foundation For International Dignity (FIND), Association of Environmental Lawyers (Green Advocates), and the Liberia Democracy Watch (LDW), made the observation June 22, 2004 in a statement titled, "A Civil Society Assessment of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) - December 2003 to June 2004".

The group said despite its elaborate superstructure UNMIL has yet to make, on the Liberian society, the impact educed by its size and scope of duty in Liberia.

According to the group, the mission has only succeeded in chiseling out of the ruin of the Liberian tragedy, a paradise for itself out of the ruins of the Liberia tragedy while largely ignoring the basic tenets of its role pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1509 (2003).

The group noted that instead of adequately supporting the implementation of the Ceasefire and CPA agreements; providing security for UN staff, facilities, key installations, and the civilian population; providing human rights and humanitarian support and assistance; supporting the full implementation of the peace process; and conducting security reforms, etc., it exists exclusive of the aspirations of the Liberian nation.

" after almost nine months of operations in Liberia, the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) remains elitist, exclusive and far removed from the civilian population its operations were intended to benefit.

Its operations are shrouded in secrecy; they live in "bubbles " the group claimed.

It said instead of helping to economically empower the civilian population through job placement, reintegration, and resettlement, UNMIL was using UN funds to "economically reinforce principal elements of the erstwhile Taylor Government by the rental of their buildings" thereby causing mass displacement.

"Rather than foster a program of reintegration and resettlement," the group revealed, "UNMIL is today displacing thousands of Liberian families by offering landlords rentals more than 200 times what the average Liberian bread winner can afford." The group said it remains unimpressed by the level at which the DDRR program was proceeding.

"While Liberia presents yet the easiest challenges for peacekeeping operations in UN history with significant potential for rendering UNMIL the most successful mission ever,

the UNMIL has failed to take advantage of the good will and openness of the Liberian people in establishing a meaningful presence in Liberia, and positively impacting the lives of the people in social, economic and security terms, beyond the massive display of vehicles and military hardware," it claimed.

According to the group, UNMIL's greatest claim to success to date is the much talked about disarmament process, which, to a significant part, is not due to the exuberance, steadfastness, commitment or integrated planning of the Mission, but rather to the weariness of war and the willingness of ex-combatants to disarm occasioned by the lack of incentives for war, internal military and organizational weaknesses of the various factions, the support and commitment of the ECOWAS, especially Liberia's neighbors in withholding their support for the various factions and the several sanctions regimes which have successfully denied factions the illegal exploitation of the forest and diamonds resources of Liberia.

The group claimed further: "UNMIL is generally viewed as an elaborate but reclusive super structure, headed by an overly zealous, loud mouthed ex-general, perceived to be acting as Governor General of Liberia and apparently have lost sight of its mandate, and is only creating jobs for expatriates to "eat up" monies intended for Liberia's post conflict rehabilitation program.

Some observers say the group is too harsh in its assessment, suggesting that instead of labeling UNMIL as "a reclusive super structure" thereby creating the impression that the mission is unapproachable, it should open dialogue.

But the group says that is exactly what it seeks to accomplish by its assessment reports: "This report, compiled by selected Civil Society Institutions in Liberia, is intended to crystallize the operations of UNMIL with the view to assisting the Mission in achieving its mandate, building the capacity of Civil Society prior to the end of the Mission's tour of duty in Liberia and remove the specter of cynicism, disparagement, distrust and scorn with which the Mission is generally viewed." It did not however show how that would be achieved, but analysts say UNMIL has no choice, but to listen and act if it must succeed in its mission.

"However absurd they may sound in their appraisal of UNMIL, the mission can't afford the luxury of antagonizing local grassroots civil society organizations that should form the basis of its activities. Its only option is to explore avenues through which they can collaborate," said one political commentator.

Describing UNMIL's overall performance to date as "dismal," the group said UNMIL fell short of the reasonable expectations of the Liberian people and other partners." "By any standards, the Mission has failed to satisfy the requirements/rigors of its mandate and adequately respond to its obligations to monitor and protect human rights; support, strengthen and building the capacity of human rights and civil society institutions in Liberia; adequately engage, solicit and establish partnership with local partners in the execution of its Mission's mandate and program activities; comprehensively deliver and

seek broader participation in the Mission's work plan for disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration of ex-combatants, returnees and the internally displaced; be transparent and accountable in all of the Mission's operations, especially as regards to access to information and public disclosure of Mission's plans, programs, opportunities and finances; and observe a code of conduct consistent with Mission's objectives, and model peacekeeping operations generally pending the execution of a status of forces," the group noted.

It then recommended, amongst several steps it believes would improve the tour of duty of UNMIL, that the Security Council should ensure that UNMIL "Investigate, monitor all ceasefire and human rights violations committed by warring factions after the seating of the NTGL, to establish liability and impose sanctions; and be more robust and responsive in reacting to threats and incidence of physical violence by ex-combatants on the civilian population.

Moreover, the group wants UNMIL to provide a basic framework for evaluating and monitoring the conduct of the Mission's personnel, indicating as an example that some UNMIL personnel are accused of running a brothel on Bushrod Island.

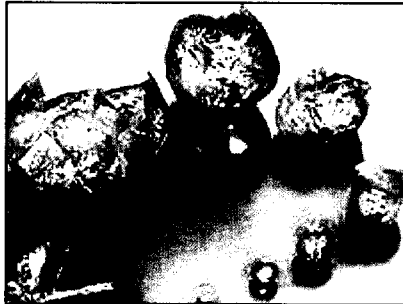
BBC

Last Updated: Wednesday, 23 June, 2004, 21:37 GMT 22:37 UK

Diamonds to get 'ethical' label

Diamonds that are "clean" will have a new label after key players in the business introduced the "5th C" stamp.

The new "ethical" label for diamonds from a conflict-free origin will come into force at the end of the year.



About 2% of diamonds are from conflict zones

An agreement was signed by Antwerp's federation of diamond dealers, Global Witness, and the association of miners and diamond-cutters (ICM).

Diamonds are already certified by four Cs for carat, colour, clarity and cut, giving an overall measure of quality.

The fifth C will guarantee the stone is not a "blood" diamond, funding war or one that has been mined using child labour.

Trafficking

"It is an important turning point but there is still a lot of work to be done in stamping out illegal trafficking in diamonds," said Alex Yearsley, a spokesman for Global Witness, a non-governmental organisation.

Sales of the stones have dropped 15% to 20% in Europe since 1994.

Professionals in the business have been concerned about its image and competition from synthetic diamonds.



Prosper Reports 'Indicators of Genocide' in Darfur

United States Department of State (Washington, DC)

DOCUMENT

June 24, 2004

Posted to the web June 25, 2004

Washington, DC

Ambassador-at-large for war crimes testifies in Congress

The United States sees "indicators of genocide" in Darfur, Sudan, but Darfur must be "opened up" to the international community before that can be confirmed, Pierre-Richard Prosper, the U.S. ambassador-at-large for war crimes, told the U.S. Congress June 23. He also called on the government of Sudan to stop creating obstacles to international organizations that are trying to provide aid to those in urgent need there.

In testimony before the House International Relations Committee's Subcommittee on Africa, Prosper said, "We are appalled by what is happening in Darfur and have indicated that there is evidence of continued Sudanese government support of militias and knowledge of the abuses" being perpetrated against innocent civilians.

Prosper was called by the subcommittee to testify on the topic "Confronting War Crimes in Africa."

On humanitarian assistance, Prosper told those in attendance that "the government of Sudan continues to create artificial obstacles" that prevent assistance from reaching the population in need in Darfur, such as customs delays on vehicles, food, medicines and radios necessary for relief workers to communicate in remote areas.

Besides Sudan, Prosper also spoke on Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.

"The Bush administration believes that we have a responsibility to help prevent and punish genocide, war crimes and other serious abuses that occur in Africa and worldwide," he told the lawmakers.

Following is the text of Ambassador Prosper's statement, as prepared for delivery:

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I thank you for this opportunity to discuss with you the critical issue of confronting war crimes in Africa. The United States is a leader in helping to end conflict and atrocities in Africa and in supporting efforts to end impunity by holding perpetrators of war crimes accountable. President Bush's Administration is directly responsible for progress in ending the wars in Sudan, Sierra Leone, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Angola and Cote d'Ivoire.

The Bush Administration believes that we have a responsibility to help prevent and punish genocide, war crimes, and other serious abuses that occur in Africa and worldwide. I commend this committee for its work and focus on promoting accountability. Ten years ago, the world stood still as genocide unfolded in Rwanda. The world failed Rwanda and humanity during those horrible months, ignoring the refrain from Nuremberg of "never again." With hotspots in Sudan and the Eastern Congo, and repression and killing in Zimbabwe, the collective engagement of the international community is needed more than ever -- and it is needed now.

Mr. Chairman, when there are outbreaks of atrocities and other abuses, neighbors, regional and international institutions, and the international community must be prepared to take steps to prevent further atrocities and to stop genocide. All countries no matter how big or small have a role to play. They must determine what tools may be deployed: contributing soldiers, providing logistical support, or helping with political and financial assistance for the preventive effort. The burden to act should not fall on one country, and no country is immune from this responsibility. At the 10th anniversary commemoration of the Rwanda Genocide in Kigali, regional heads of state and the African Union (AU) called on African states to be prepared to act to stop war crimes and genocide when it is occurring on the continent. The United States supports this view and is prepared to help develop such capacity.

But while efforts may cure an immediate problem, we must focus on lasting initiatives, especially securing the rule of law. It is our view that we must encourage and support states in pursuing accountability and credible justice. We must not tolerate abdication of this responsibility by a particular government, society, or the international community, nor should that responsibility be taken away. It is important to achieve justice that touches the grass roots of a society and that has the acceptance of the community for it to change cultures of impunity. As a result, domestic ownership is vital. But for this to work, we must create, encourage, and strengthen political will in each country to combat and punish these abuses domestically.

Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone is one such place where justice is being served. The United States is a leading supporter of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, which is achieving a strong impact. This hybrid court has current indictments against eleven of those most responsible for atrocities in Sierra Leone, nine of whom are in custody. And as we saw on June 3, trials have begun. We deem this Court to be succeeding. But justice there will not be complete until Charles Taylor finds his way to the Court. Mr. Chairman, it is U.S.

policy that Taylor must be held accountable and must appear before the Court. I personally have shared this policy with President Obasanjo and Chairman Bryant and have asked them for action on this matter. While we understand the need to maintain stability in Liberia, the goal of the United States is to work with Nigeria and Liberia to pursue a strategy that will see Taylor face justice before the Court. We want to work towards this end, rather than sitting back and saying now is not the time. Our Ambassador to Nigeria, John Campbell, is to again communicate this message today to the Nigerian president.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

While Sierra Leone is a symbol of justice moving forward, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is not. The DRC has faced atrocities on a wide scale. Reliable estimates associate over three million deaths with the conflict since 1998, with possibly 350,000 of those directly due to violence. We continue to monitor the situation in eastern Congo and remain deeply concerned about the build-up of forces and reliable reports of atrocities there. The United States continues to support the transitional government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the goal of an integrated army supporting that government. We are calling on the transitional government, and local authorities to use their power to stop abuses, to investigate atrocities in Bukavu and elsewhere, and to hold the perpetrators accountable. Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Don Yamamoto has been deployed and just met with leaders in Kinshasa and Kigali. He has called upon all parties involved in the conflict to refrain from any act that might exacerbate tension or heighten the risk of further conflict in the area. We are pleased to learn that Col. Mutebusi, a rebel officer who took over the city of Bukavu on May 26, has fled to Rwanda. It is our understanding that Rwanda disarmed Mutebusi and the roughly 300 men who accompanied him and has taken them into custody.

We are also deeply concerned by the role that the media, particularly radio, has played in inciting ethnic hatred and deepening ethnic divisions among the people of eastern Congo and in the region. And we have intervened on the matter. We believe that there are appropriate ways to interrupt and end such communications before they lead to widespread violence.

As the Bush Administration continues to work to end conflict in the DRC, we also are promoting accountability. The transitional national government (TNG) will have a nationwide, albeit very weak, judiciary, which could participate in investigating war crimes. The TNG constitution also calls for a truth and reconciliation commission (TRC). But these efforts are not enough. We will look to create increased international support for domestic-based mechanisms that specifically address war crimes accountability. I have discussed this with President Kabila, MONUC's Amb. Swing, and the EU Great Lakes Envoy Amb. Ajello.

International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda

Mr. Chairman, we have seen the benefit of accountability in the Great Lakes region of Africa. Following the Rwanda genocide, the United States led the efforts to establish the UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). This was the right thing to do. The United States supports the work of the ICTR and hopes that it will successfully conclude its mandate within the coming years. While the ICTR suffered in the past from inefficiency and mismanagement, today with its new leadership it is now having the desired impact. To date, eighteen of the leaders most responsible for the Rwandan genocide have been convicted and three individuals have been acquitted. Twenty-three others are currently on trial with another twenty-six indictees in the pre-trial phase. Under this Administration, we launched a Rewards for Justice program that has resulted in many of these top genocidaires having been brought to justice before the ICTR. The end result has been that negative forces that fueled ongoing conflict in the region have been taken off the streets and are being held accountable.

Sudan

Mr. Chairman, allow me to spend some time and talk about an issue of great importance: Sudan. We are deeply troubled by the events in Darfur and the role of the government and militias. It is a catastrophic situation that will only worsen if efforts to remedy the conditions continue to be obstructed.

Today we know that an estimated one million people are internally displaced in Darfur, and there are approximately 200,000 Sudanese refugees in neighboring Chad. There are reports of widespread sexual violence, killings, torture, rape, theft and detention of persons in addition to destruction of homes and villages as a means of warfare. These attacks are ethnically based.

The militias who are reported to be responsible are known as Jingaweit. Despite an April 8 cease-fire agreement, attacks by the Jingaweit on the innocent civilian population have continued, and we also continue to hear reports of aerial bombings by the Government of Sudan (GOS).

Credible organizations report that the following individuals are leaders of the Jingaweit and bear responsibility for actions of the Jingaweit. While we know there are more, the United States is working to determine the culpability of these individuals and the culpability of others who support them.

Jingaweit Commanders and Coordinators:

1. Musa Hilal, Jingaweit Coordinator
2. Hamid Dawai, leader in Terbeba-Arara-Bayda triangle
3. Abdullah abu Shineibat, leader in Murnei
4. Omar Babbush, leader in Habila and Forbranga

5. Omada Saef, leader in Misterei
6. Ahmed Dekheir, leader in Murnei
7. Ahmed Abu Kamasha, Kailek region

There is the question of whether this is genocide. We see indicators of genocide, and there is evidence that points in that direction. However, we are not in a position to confirm. To do so, we need Darfur to be opened up.

I have requested a visa to travel to Darfur and personally examine the situation. Despite this request having been submitted weeks ago, it is still pending. In the meantime, we have told the Sudanese that we are appalled by what is happening in Darfur and have indicated that there is evidence of continued Sudanese Government support of militias and knowledge of the abuses.

Regarding humanitarian assistance, the GOS continues to create artificial obstacles that prevent assistance from reaching the population at need in Darfur, such as customs delays on vehicles, food, medicines and radios necessary for relief workers to travel to and communicate in remote areas.

In response, the United States is actively engaged at the highest levels. Recent actions include:

- The President, Secretary of State, National Security Advisor and USAID Administrator have raised Darfur with President Bashir, Vice President Taha and Foreign Minister Ismael;
- Secretary Powell has been in regular contact with UN Secretary-General Annan, the Security Council passed a resolution on June 11 that referenced Darfur, and the United States took the lead in drafting a strong Presidential Statement that the Security Council adopted on May 25;
- At our initiative, the UN chaired a June 4 Geneva meeting on Darfur with donors to meet the urgent humanitarian needs; and
- We have pledged an additional \$188.5 million, bringing our total planned contribution to nearly \$300 million.

We have pressed the Government of Sudan to:

- Take immediate action to stop the Jingaweit and end the violence and atrocities;
- Open up Darfur to monitors and human rights organizations so that the magnitude of the abuses can be understood and addressed;

- End artificial obstacles to getting assistance to the population at need in Darfur; and
- Cooperate fully with the AU monitoring mission.

In addition, we have warned that we are considering imposing targeted sanctions against individuals and a United Nations Security Council resolution demanding an end to violence and unfettered access to Darfur.

We noted President Bashir's decision to mobilize the Sudanese armed forces to disarm the Jingaweit. However, based on Sudan's track record, assurances are not enough. We will need verification. Full access to the situation on the ground in Darfur is needed. Establishing monitors will be an important step. The Government of Sudan has stated it will set up its own investigative body to address allegations of war crimes. We will insist that Sudan credibly and fully investigate the atrocities that have occurred. In the meantime, we will discuss options the international community can consider to address the crimes that are being committed.

The key to ending impunity in Africa is to work towards having each and every state fully exercise its responsibility to ensure the rule of law is upheld. In our efforts to end cycles of violence by ensuring accountability for past crimes, we should work as closely with the affected populations and governments as possible. Only then will the foundation of democracy begin to take shape. With our collective effort we can change the environment. It will not be easy, however. But for the sake of Africa and all of humanity, it-must be done.

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Opinion

What to do with Saddam ...

Walter Cronkite , Columnist

06/27/2004

What to do with Saddam Hussein, who currently is held by the United States as a prisoner of war, has become a question of some urgency as the official end of the occupation of Iraq draws near on June 30. The Geneva Conventions, it seems, require the release of POWs when a war or occupation ends, unless criminal charges are brought against them.

In addition, the new Iraqi interim government has called for the United States to hand Saddam over to Iraqi custody for trial by an Iraqi Special Tribunal, created in December of last year. The Americans, however, are concerned about security and the Iraqis' ability to hang on to him. A compromise apparently has been worked out involving a paper transfer of the country's former leader to Iraq while physically he remains under American control.

Of course, with the issues of post-occupation custody and criminal charges come the questions of trial and venue. The United States agrees with the Iraqis that they should be able to try their tormentor. And on the surface that seems only just. However, there are serious questions about whether Saddam and his henchmen could receive a fair trial in Iraq, about whether security there would, in any reasonably near future, be good enough that trial judges would feel safe in rendering an objective verdict.

Also, there is a strong desire elsewhere in the world for an international dimension to the trial of Saddam. It is important, many feel, that Saddam's trial not only be thorough and fair, but that it also should serve to emphasize the principles of the Nuremberg Tribunal of 1945-49. It was at Nuremberg that the Allied powers conducted the war-crimes trials of Nazi war criminals. Those trials first established the principle that genocide and other crimes against humanity could and should be punished by the world at large.

Those of us who witnessed the Nuremberg trials, as well as those who organized and participated in them, were highly conscious of the fact that history was being made. Even though those were trials of the vanquished by the victors in a brutal world war, there was, nonetheless, a sense that genocide, other crimes against humanity and aggressive war itself were in the dock. A truly historic precedent



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had been set among the nations of the world. And what emerged was a set of principles that held national leaders and those who do their bidding to be accountable for crimes against humanity and to face punishment by the world community. When the many crimes of that conflict were adjudicated, however, the tribunal closed up shop.

Today, the International Criminal Court, sitting in The Hague, embraces the principles of Nuremberg and would seem a fitting venue for Saddam's trial. However, it has one very serious problem. The court has no jurisdiction over crimes committed before it was created on July 1, 2002. That would mean that Saddam's most horrific crimes, including his campaigns against the Kurds (human-rights groups say as many as 300,000 might have disappeared in the 1980s and '90s) and his invasions of Iran and Kuwait, would be immune from prosecution.

But there are other means of internationalizing the trial proposed. The United Nations has, in the past, established special tribunals for such purposes for Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Cambodia. Why not for Iraq? That alternative could defuse another potential problem for internationalizing the trial -- perceptions in the Arab world that the West is trying to deny the Iraqis the justice (or revenge) they are entitled to.

But there seems to be no reason why the United Nations, the United States and Iraq could not work out a system in which the experience and expertise of the international community might be used to assist the Iraqis in conducting a genuinely fair and thorough trial. It would seem to be not only politically doable, but the best solution possible. It would recognize the legitimate claims of Iraq, defuse any sense of "Western arrogance" and reaffirm the principles of Nuremberg, as well -- an important warning to the world's would-be despots.

Write to Walter Cronkite c/o King Features Syndicate, 888 Seventh Ave., New York, NY 10019.

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Testimony by Howard F. Jeter, Executive Vice President Goodworks International, LLC at the House Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on Africa: 'Confronting War Crimes in Africa'

United States Congress (Washington, DC)

DOCUMENT

June 25, 2004

Posted to the web June 25, 2004

By Howard F. Jeter

Mr. Chairman, Honorable Members of the Sub-Committee, I am honored to appear before you today. My name is Howard F. Jeter, and I am the immediate past American Ambassador to Nigeria. I completed that challenging assignment in July 2003. I retired from the career Foreign Service in November 2003 after 27 years with the State Department. I retired with the rank of Career Minister.

I was the incumbent American Ambassador to Nigeria during the events leading up to the offer of asylum in Nigeria to Charles Taylor of Liberia. I had several discussions with Nigerian government officials on this issue, including with President Olusegun Obasanjo. As I understand it, the reason that I was asked to appear before this Sub-Committee today was to offer my recollections and insights on how and why the decision to offer asylum to Taylor was made. My observations are partly based on diplomatic discussions that I had in Nigeria as the representative of the United States, but I understand from Sub-Committee staff that the Administration has no objection to my appearing before this Sub-Committee.

Let me begin by noting that Charles Taylor was not the first former Head of State given asylum in Nigeria. The former Heads of State of Somalia, Chad, and Niger also were given asylum there. Foday Sankoh, the now deceased founder and leader of the RUF in Sierra Leone, was forcibly detained in Nigeria for nearly a year in the hope that this would lead to a quick and conclusive end to that country's civil war. Political faction leaders from Liberia, including the NPFL's Prince Johnson and ULIMO's Roosevelt Johnson also were taken in by Nigeria to avoid further bloodshed in that unhappy country. I know first-hand that Roosevelt Johnson and three of his cohorts were specifically given asylum in Nigeria at the request of the United States. In all of these cases, Nigerian acted on humanitarian grounds. Its goal was to end conflict and save lives by removing personalities whose continued presence in their respective countries would intensify conflict and lead to greater death and destruction. Charles Taylor was no exception.

I vividly remember meeting with President Obasanjo during the height of the crisis in Monrovia, when commentators were predicting thousands and perhaps even tens of thousands of civilian casualties. The President was blaming himself for not having acted sooner. His actions, he said, could have saved lives. One could see the pain and anguish in his face as CNN predicted the impending disaster.

When I returned to Washington in August, 2003, I was stunned to learn that some members of the U.S. Senate were planning to sanction Nigeria for taking in Charles Taylor. I was incredulous. Instead of sanctioning Nigeria, I thought we should have been praising Obasanjo for his political courage. There was no political up-side for President Obasanjo for what he had done, and he knew it. He was criticized at home by his people, by the media and even by some in the military, who felt that Nigeria had expended too much blood and treasure in Liberia without even a "thank you" to show for it. They particularly remembered that Charles Taylor's NPFL had targeted and killed Nigerian soldiers and civilians during the civil war in that country. Obasanjo knew this too but he wanted to save

Liberia from further agony and a possible bloodbath in Monrovia if Taylor, now trapped, chose to stay and fight.

Obasanjo did not take the decision on Charles Taylor lightly or alone. He consulted broadly and often with all key players in and outside the region. Nigeria's decision to offer Taylor political asylum followed consultations with the Chairman of ECOWAS President Kufor of Ghana, and with other members of the Economic Community of West African States. He also consulted with the Chairman of the African Union, Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, Secretary General Kofi Annan at the United Nations, and with the ECOWAS Executive Secretary, Mohammed Chams. President Obasanjo held intense discussions with the Heads of State of Liberia's immediate neighbors, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire. Mr. Chairman, the decision to offer asylum to Charles Taylor was not a unilateral decision; it was a collective decision made by the leaders of Africa, within the West African sub-region and beyond.

Moreover, Mr. Chairman, President Obasanjo acted with our full knowledge and concurrence. From the very beginning of discussion on this issue, President Obasanjo made it clear that he would only act under two conditions: first, that he not be criticized for giving asylum to Taylor; and second, that no action would be taken to abduct Taylor from Nigeria if and when he arrived. Before he made his final decision, the President called me and the British High Commissioner to his office to inform our respective governments that he had completed his consultations and planned to offer asylum to Mr. Taylor. He said he would not move forward, however, if the American or British governments objected. He said he needed a response quickly and asked that we convey his intention to our respective governments. We did so, but Washington never responded through official channels to President Obasanjo's query. Instead what followed was a succession of phone calls from Washington telling the Embassy to urge President Obasanjo to move forward on getting Taylor out. We wanted Taylor out of Liberia and we wanted him out quickly, was the refrain I heard many times.

This message was echoed by State Department and National Security Council officials who accompanied President Bush to Abuja during his State Visit to Nigeria in mid-July. Even President Bush at that time publicly was saying that the U.S. would not consider sending military forces to Liberia as long as Charles Taylor remained in the country. The President called for his immediate departure. I can only presume that President Obasanjo felt that America was fully supportive of what he was doing and that by taking Taylor out of Liberia, he was also responding to the wishes of the United States. There could be no other conclusion.

A litany of Charles Taylor's crimes are too numerous to mention here; suffice it to say that Taylor destroyed his own country and could have destroyed the sub-region if left unchecked. Granting political asylum to Taylor was a difficult decision, not only for Nigeria but for all of Africa. However, I am not certain what other options were left. Taylor could have remained and confronted the LURD, but it is almost certain that Monrovia would have been destroyed and thousands of innocent people would have been caught in the cross-fire. Thousands more would have died from hunger and disease. Alternatively, Taylor could have returned to the bush, but the war in Liberia would still be going on.

The decision to grant political asylum to Taylor prevented a humanitarian disaster and saved thousands, perhaps tens of thousands of lives. The 14-year civil war in Liberia was ended and the dreaded spill-over into neighboring countries was prevented. Liberia now has a chance and a future, and I am certain that the issue of justice for Charles Taylor will not go away.

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WHERE IS THE TRC REPORT?

WHERE IS the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report and why has there been silence over this long overdue report which is so relevant to our painful past without no explanation to the nation? Or is that report been mortgaged to a group of Nigerian nationals with the connivance of the diplomatic community resident in Sierra Leone?

by
IBRAHIM BADAMASI

Although the central theme of this article is based on the above question one cannot help but take notice the colonization of Sierra

Leonean by Nigerians and other foreigners who have not acted as good examples compared to the great sacrifices made by those Nigerian heroes whose blood whetted our soil to free us from apocalyptic insanity.

We had a refinery before which could've saved us from our oil storage problems but two years ago, it was tendered in the international community as property of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The

Sandline arms for which Kabbah mortgaged our diamond resources to foreign mining companies were instead taken by Nigerians since Khobe had already recaptured the capital Freetown from the rebels.

This country has been enmeshed by grave scandals that has been caused by Nigerians carrying Sierra Leonean passports all over the world and the equally terrifying crimes committed within the country. Banking institutions set up by Nigerians have created financial scandals and mere conduit to launder drugs money of which Sierra Leone has already been outlawed by the international community.

Just after the end of the war, the business district of Freetown is almost totally controlled by Nigerians to prove that they too profited from Sierra Leone's misery. How we could have cherished the likes of Khobe and Adeniji to help us instead of strangulating us with criminal tendencies.

In Sierra Leone, the institutions set up by the international community to assist Sierra Leone's recovery programme have been dominated by Nigerians instead of Sierra Leonean nationals. The same behaviour like the very UN systems which always moves with its shadow, wherever it goes as in the case of Liberia. This colonial strategy hasn't helped Sierra Leone in anyway and the sce-

nario at TRC is a typical example of this ruthless colonial exploitative mentality. The TRC report is well overdue and no explanation has been given to the nation. Where is the Report?

The TRC was set up as one of the instrument for healing and part of the Lome Peace Accord. It is run as a Technical Assistance project with Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Indeed, it was the first time a Commission has been run as a project and with the overbearing presence of the OHCR, the project simply ended up with the African Desk Coordinator, Project Desk Officer and head of Information Management-all Nigerian nationals.

Infact, the latter two are reported to be brothers. Sierra Leone nationals involved in the project were much maligned, regrettably sometimes with the connivance of the diplomatic community resident in Sierra Leone.

For instance, based on wrong information fed to the office of the High Commission for Human Rights, a team headed by Martin Ejidike, Ozonia Ojielo and Andreas Branstatter of Unamsil Human Rights forcibly broke down doors at the Commission headquarters accompanied by David Carew of the auditing firm KPMG. Not even the offices of the Commissioners were spared and the Commis-

sioners files on the floor. The equipment was carried to Kanikay in truckloads and half of the equipment ended up being shipped to Nigeria.

This behaviour certainly cut out a bad picture for Sierra Leoneans associated with the Commission as they were branded thieves who had stolen all the Commission's equipment. Based on wrong information fed to OHCR by Ejidike, as of December, handed over the management, financial requisition from UNDP, hiring and payment of consultants and printing of the TRC Report to his reputed half-brother Ojielo who all of a sudden was also appointed report writing co-ordinator. They then maneuvered to get the report printed in Nigeria.

Following alarm raised by the press, the venue was switched to Ghana and there has been silence since about the TRC Report. Lots of effort and reliance was put into the Report and for some comen to fool the nation and the nation of its painful history will be unforgivable. This nation, Mama Salone, deserves answers to these burning questions shrouding the TRC Report.

Otherwise, the Report will be irrelevant to its situation. Where is the Report?

For de People

Monday June 28, 2004

Guest Writer

By Sheka Tarawalie

(Sheka Tarawalie is a Sierra Leonean journalist in London writing for 'African Review of Books')

The International Community, War, And Peace In Sierra Leone Part II

And it turned out that on the day of elections, indeed the rebels went to town and disrupted the voting in some areas, even cutting people's thumbs for exercising their franchise.

INTERNATIONAL INTERVENTION:

The initial perception about the war in Sierra Leone by the international community and even many Sierra Leoneans was that Foday Sankoh was a mere hoax being used by the rebels in pursuit of their goals - whatever they were. The feeling was that the rebel outfit was rudderless and there was no Foday Sankoh.

It was only through the efforts of the then Ivorian government of Henri Konan Bedie (whose Foreign Minister Amara Essy, encouraged by the NPRC, flew to Sankoh's jungle stronghold to convince the rebel leader to come out and state his case) and a non-governmental international organization, International Alert, working with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), braving the jungles of Kailahun district via helicopter and by road, that Sankoh was convinced to come out of the bush for the whole world to see him. He appeared bearded, disheveled, but firm in his convictions on his first public appearance since the war in Ivory Coast.

The international community's interest was then aroused, and efforts were made to strike out a peace deal between the rebels and the government culminating to the signing of the Abidjan Peace Accord in November 1996 - that is, after it had been ensured that the fruits of peace could only be harvested with the international community's support when there was a civilian government in place. It was during the military government that Sankoh was brought out of the bush, but it was at the time of the civilian government that emerged after the elections under President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah that the peace agreement was signed, with international institutions as moral guarantors. ECOWAS, the OAU, the Commonwealth and the UN were all represented during the deliberations. Basically, the agreement called for an end to the war, a disarmament programme for all combatants, and the formation of confidence-building commissions which would include the rebel group in the running of state affairs. Since then, the regional and international bodies paid greater attention to the conflict-resolution process in Sierra Leone.

THE PEACE ARRANGEMENTS AND THEIR FAILURE/SUCCESS:

The Abidjan Peace Accord was

generally hailed by both sides of the conflict, backed by jubilation from the general Sierra Leonean populace and commendations from African and world leaders as the best way out of the mess in which the country had found itself. Yet, by January 1997, hostilities resumed, the peace agreement was in tatters, and everything was back to square one.

The big question therefore is, what went wrong? Who was to blame for the breakdown of the peace process? Did the international institutions that committed themselves to the peace process play their roles well? I must hasten to mention that after the Abidjan Peace Accord, at least three other peace agreements (the Conakry Peace Plan of 1997, the Lome Peace Accord of 1999, and the Abuja Peace Commitment of 2000) were signed before it was finally declared that peace had finally returned to Sierra Leone. And each of the subsequent arrangements was hailed as a way out, but each (perhaps except the one at Abuja) woefully failed to the extent of pushing the whole nation to the precipice of an all-out war.

For the sake of this paper, I will concentrate on analyzing the roles played by the international community in resolving (or refuelling) the conflict in Sierra Leone. One question to ask is that, would peace have come earlier, say in 1996, instead of now after so many people had been killed and properties destroyed if these institutions had acted properly in accordance with their respective objectives? Were they acting in concert and coordinating with each other, or were the regional institutions and actors having their own agenda different from that of the wider international ones? Did these institutions themselves get mired in the conflict, and in a sense become participants in the hostilities? Or was their best just not good enough for the Sierra Leonean wamwongers?

One thing we must accept absolutely is that it has been through the signing of an accord that peace has eventually returned to Sierra Leone, and essentially one accord cannot be more beautiful than the other. Certainly, there must have been some terrible mistakes by either the stakeholders or the moral guarantors for more than one accord to fail. The provisions of the Lome Peace Accord were certainly not essentially different from those of the Abidjan Peace Agreement, neither from those of Conakry nor from those of Abuja - and the one connecting reality is that they were all signed under the tenure (whether at home or in exile) of President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah,

who is still the sitting President of Sierra Leone. So, was the failure of the earlier agreements a result of a hidden agenda, a miscalculation, or a self-serving ploy?

With President Kabbah having worked at the UN for over fifteen years before returning to Sierra Leone, these questions could not have been more appropriate with another persona as Head of State of Sierra Leone. The first thing that would come to mind is that, since these institutions were run by human beings, perhaps - and at this stage it is simply perhaps - mortality, being prone to err out of sentiment, could have influenced certain situations in support of a former colleague when reality and common sense could or should have dictated otherwise. Was a blind eye turned to the plight of the country to save the name and neck of a former UN official? Or was a retired UN official allowed to interpret the rules in his interest as against the provisions of the peace arrangements? Was it a question of might against right?

On the other hand, as the rebels purposely started the war to remove a government from power, were they power-hungry to the extent that no peace deal would stop them from gaining ultimate political authority? Were they merely signing to give the impression of seriousness but underneath planning to wreak more havoc until they took the seat of power? Was rebel leader Foday Sankoh ever satisfied with a compromise position that placed him in a subsidiary authority other than that of Head of State? Or were his fighters just ruthless vermin whose preoccupation was to cause mayhem and not to abide by any internationally endorsed principles?

ANALYSIS AND SUBMISSION

From the outset, I must state that I am going to give more attention to the two most controversial peace accords - Conakry and Lome - in which the international community actually showed greater attention and contributions.

The Abidjan Peace Accord of 1996 was more the outcome of haphazard bilateral cum regional efforts than anything else. The government of Ivory Coast at the time headed by President Konan Bedie influenced the RUF (which was having an office in that country) to sue for peace. Facilitated by International Alert and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Ivorian Foreign Minister Amara Essy met RUF leader Foday Sankoh in Sierra Leone, brought him out of the bush, culminating to the signing of the accord on 30th November 1996.

Among other things (as could be found

in the webpage 'www.sierra-leone.org' on that date), the agreement called for the demobilization of RUF fighters, the removal of foreign forces, including the South African mercenary force 'Executive Outcomes', for the government to establish work-training programs for former RUF fighters, and for the incorporation of some former rebels into the Sierra Leone Army. It also provided for the transformation of the RUF into a political party. However, as stated earlier, by January 1997, the peace accord was in shambles. The blame for this could be apportioned more to internal players than external factors. There seemed to be a considerable lack of trust between the two parties, and before long there were accusations and counter-accusations. The government accused the RUF of an unwillingness to disarm, while the rebels claimed that the government was disregarding the accord and attacking their positions. It was hard to believe anyone. But what became clear was that the government downplayed the breakdown of the ceasefire. For example, when reports emerged about a massacre of up to 150 people by "unknown gunmen" in an area held by the RUF in Tonkolili district, Presidential Adviser Sheka Mansaray denied that, and said: "The reports threaten to undermine the increasingly cordial relations between the RUF and the government... Several donor countries have informed the government since the signing of the accord of their willingness to contribute to the government's plea for \$1 billion to rebuild and resettle the country. These reports threaten to keep donors away." Apart from sounding overzealous for the money, one wonders if the government spokesman was saying the truth, at least about the "increasingly cordial relationship" with the rebels. Because a few weeks later the government colluded with some representatives from the RUF sent to represent the outfit in the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace (CCP) in Freetown in announcing the overthrow of rebel leader Foday Sankoh, who at the same time had been arrested in Nigeria by the government's ally, General Sanni Abacha. Later, the leader of the plotters, Philip Palmer, confessed about the plot with the government.² After that unfortunate mistake (which made the government to naively ask the plotters to go to the bush and talk to the fighters on the ground to accept the overthrow of Sankoh, which in turn led to the boys kidnapping the delegates), there was no iota of trust left between the two parties, and hostilities resumed.

To be contd

Monday June 28, 2004