

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



Rough seas at Kent

**PRESS CLIPPINGS**

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

**as at:**

Monday, 28 May 2007

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.  
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Independent Observer  
Monday, 28 May 2007

# Special Court to extend activity to Guinea, Liberia

By Isatu Gbla

Outreach activity of the Special Court for Sierra Leone is to be extended to Guinea and Liberia, acting Registrar of the Court, Mr. Herman Von Hebel said last week during the launching of the Court's Public Perception Survey hosted at the British Council Hall, Tower

Hill in Freetown.

The purpose, he says, is to facilitate the presence of civil society representatives at the trial of Charles Taylor. Four civil society representatives will travel to the Hague for one week every month to witness the trial. The trial commences on 4th June this year and ends in 2009.

However launching the survey, Assistant Inspector-General of Police, Mrs. Kadi Fakondo noted that the Sierra Leone Police has been working together with the Special Court, adding that the police faces a big challenge in the coming elections.

Herman Von Hebel later explained that the Special Court was created to bring

to justice those who bear the greatest responsibility for crimes committed in the territory of Sierra Leone during the war. The Special Court outreach section, he went on, was established to link the people of Sierra Leone with the Special Court to promote understanding of the Court and respect for human rights and the rule of law in Sierra

Leone and he was very happy with the report.

After the launching of the report, a press conference was also held about the accessibility of Charles Taylor trial. Von Hebel said the Special Court is conducting extensive outreach activities in order to ensure that the Taylor trial in the Hague is accessible to the people

of Sierra Leone and the West Africa region. Facilitating local media coverage of the Charles Taylor trial, the Special Court is coordinating with the **BBC World Service Trust** and **Search for Common Ground** to facilitate the presence of Sierra Leone and Liberian journalists in the Hague to report on the trial.

Awoko

Monday, 28 May 2007

# US \$ 89 million for Special Court

**T**he Special Court for Sierra Leone has been approved of an US\$ 89 million for the Court's three-year budget.

This amount was approved and reaffirmed by the Court's Management Committee on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2007 as its commitment to working with the Court to

raise its profile and to seek more financial contributions from members of the United Nations.

The Court submitted to the Committee on 5 April 2007 their budget proposal as requested for \$36 million for 2007, \$33 million for 2008 and \$20 million for 2009 as they are reaching its

completion by the end of 2009.

And the Trial against Charles Taylor in The Hague requires a substantial budget until the end of 2008, where after downsizing will also take place.

Downsizing of staff and activities will start in Freetown in the course of this year.

Concords Times  
Monday, 28 May 2007

### The Oddity of the Death Penalty

The most important innate privilege that every human being is born with is the right to life. One of the Ten Commandments makes it clear that thou shall not kill his fellow man.

However, man has been able to put this into practice through the United Nations conventions, covenant and protocols and that of other stakeholders such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, the European Convention on Human Rights, the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, Convention On the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) etc.

In 2006 at least 1,591 people were executed in 25 countries and 3,861 people sentenced to death in 55 countries. In Sierra Leone 14 prisoners are awaiting death at the Pademba Road Prisons. According to head of Lawyers Center for Legal Assistance (LAWCLA), Melron Nicol-Wilson the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) took issue with the continued existence of the death penalty in the Sierra Leone's Constitution and recommended that it should be abolished.

And the government owes it as a moral obligation to the TRC report to abolish the death penalty. Some school of thought argue that in-fact retaining it is tantamount to violating certain human rights. It also noted that Special Court indictees who are accused of mass killing should be sentenced to life imprisonment

whereas the law books of this country hold that a person could be sentenced to death for killing just one person.

The controversy lies on the fact that the government was able to succumb to the Special Court's penalty for war crimes yet it maintains the death penalty. How can two people commit the same crime in the same country but with different punishments? The million dollar question is what will be the punishment for state parties that violate the rights of individuals by killing them in the name of death penalty? Although they are prisoners they are also entitled to their right to life.

However, most states that have maintained this law are signatories to the different conventions and protocols that stress on the right to life as in the case of Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In around 1966-67 one Joseph Arati was arrested, sentenced to death and was executed in England for killing a person. However, immediately after Arati's execution the exact killer came out and confessed that in-fact he committed the crime; he did the killing.

The house of Lords, the highest court in England, after the said howler sort of, immediately ruled out the death penalty upon realizing that the judiciary is not always right in its judgment. Young but celebrated human rights lawyer, Melron Nicol-Wilson once stated that one of the 24 soldiers executed in 1998 by a government controlled court martial might be innocent like

Arati. Thus, according to him there is no need maintaining the death penalty.

Some people also believe that the death penalty is used for politically motivated killings and for suppressing opposition parties. As of January this year 128 countries have abolished the death penalty, including neighboring Liberia in 2005, a country that witnessed one of the worst civil wars in West Africa. However, 69 countries continue to retain it, among them is Sierra Leone.

I believe that life is sacred and very important too. It is therefore wrong for that life to be taken away easily. If we could go back to the history of many countries, past governments have used the death penalty to suppress their opponents or those they consider enemies.

The case against Kai Kai, Minah and others by the then APC government and that of Bambah Kamara and others by the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) are typical instances that put my argument into context. Quite recently the execution of the 24 soldiers by the SLPP government may have seriously contributed to the atrocities committed in January 6 by rebel-soldiers who attacked Freetown in what was seemingly a violent vengeance.

According to the Coordinator of National Forum of Human Rights (NFHR), Alfred Carew,

Sierra Leone is the only country in recorded history that has executed a woman i.e. late Major Kula Samba who was among the 24 that were executed by the SLPP in 1998. The question many human rights activists now ask is 'what will be the legacy of the Special Court with particular reference to the death penalty?

Many of us claim to be religious but we still maintain the death penalty which is against most conventional religious doctrines. Nicol-Wilson also articulated that the Vice President and flag bearer of the SLPP, Solomon Berewa was seriously against the death penalty when he was a lecturer but has failed to work assiduously towards its abolishment in our Constitution when he assumed political office.

It is even worrisome for poor African nations that consider countries like the United States as a mentor. The US still practice the said killing and support the acts in some countries such as

Iraq where the former president, Saddam Hussein was recently publicly executed. The act was actually said to have been pioneered by the US government.

The death penalty reduces the value of the individual to nothing. Sentencing someone to death is like a person who has been tested positive for HIV/AIDS. What the two have in common is the psychological torture. The persons sentenced to death and he/she who's been tested positive die many times before their final death.

Reminiscing such a grotesque atmosphere, a man who has been sentenced to death is taken to the gallows wearing a condemned gown marked C (condemned); he is being taken to be killed. For some people death comes through illness; some through war but as for the condemned prisoner it is the worst experience: no sleep, no rest, keeps wondering until he meets his death. This is psychological violence committed against the individual.

*The controversy lies on the fact that the government was able to succumb to the Special Court's penalty for war crimes yet it maintains the death penalty.*

*How can two people commit the same crime in the same country but with different punishments?*

*The million dollar question is what will be the punishment for state parties that violate the rights of individuals by killing them in the name of death penalty?*

*Although they are prisoners they are also entitled to their right to life*

## Voice of America

Friday, 25 May 2007

### Former Chief Prosecutor to Attend Charles Taylor Trial

By Joe De Capua  
Washington

Former Liberian leader Charles Taylor is scheduled to go on trial June 4<sup>th</sup>, following his indictment in 2003 on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity. The charges stem from Sierra Leone's long civil war. Taylor will be tried at The Hague under the auspices of the Special Court for Sierra Leone.



**David Crane,  
former chief  
prosecutor for  
Sierra Leone  
Special Court**

Professor David Crane is the former chief prosecutor for the Special Court and will be present during the opening day of the trial. From the town of Siracusa, Sicily, he spoke to VOA English to Africa Service reporter Joe De Capua about why he'll be at The Hague.

"I've been given the honor to come and to observe the trial as the chief prosecutor, who in fact signed the indictment against Charles Taylor. They wanted me to be present and gave me the honor to be present during the opening statement," he says.

Asked what type of evidence would be presented against Taylor, Crane says, "I can't get into very specifics. That's no longer my case. It's up to the chief prosecutor, Stephen Rapp. But certainly when I signed the indictment of Charles Taylor on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March 2003, in a very moving signing ceremony, at Seaview in Freetown...I made sure...that we could prove these cases beyond a reasonable doubt.

"Even though the law is fair, my intent as the chief prosecutor was to ensure that these individuals, to include Charles Taylor, never saw the light of a free day again."

Crane expects the trial at The Hague to last about one year, and he expects it to send a clear message to Africa.

"No one is above the law. The law is fair and...the rule of law is more powerful than the rule of the gun. This will certainly send a signal and has already sent a signal to the people of Africa that their lives matter. And that no leader, regardless of who he is, has the right to take the lives of his own citizens."

FinalCall.Com

Friday, 25 May 2007

[http://www.finalcall.com/artman/publish/article\\_3522.shtml](http://www.finalcall.com/artman/publish/article_3522.shtml)

## UN-backed court to start trial of Charles Taylor in June

By Saeed Shabazz  
Writer

Staff

UNITED NATIONS (FinalCall.com) - The war crimes trial against the deposed former president of Liberia, Charles Taylor, will begin on June 4 with opening arguments, according to a UN News Service, dated May 8. The United Nations-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone announced the starting date during a recent pre-trial conference in The Hague. "That Charles Taylor will now face justice is the very embodiment of the maxim that no one is above the law," stated Special Court prosecutor, Stephen Rapp, according to press release from the court. "Taylor's indictment, apprehension and arrest are a credit to the persistence of the world community, the governments of the region and, above all, the courageous people of Sierra Leone," Mr. Rapp added.



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Mr. Taylor is charged with 11 counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other violations of international law, including mass murder, mutilations, rape, sexual slavery and the use of child soldiers. If convicted, the former president faces life in a British jail.

The trial was moved from Sierra Leone under a UN Security Council resolution (1688), which provided the legal basis for the government of the Netherlands to provide accommodations for the trial. The resolution called Mr. Taylor's presence in the region "an impediment to stability and a threat to the peace." The International Criminal Court (ICC) will not conduct the trial, and because of the absence of a criminal court tribunal for Liberia, Mr. Taylor has not been indicted for any alleged crimes in his home nation.

The long-anticipated trial was due to begin on Apr. 2, but was changed to June 4 after his defense team, led by Karim Khan, said they would not be prepared for the April date due to the 30,000 pages of evidence presented by the prosecution. The defense team has also stated that they are concerned that defense witnesses would have a difficult time travelling to The Hague.

The prosecution has noted that the trial could last from 12 to 18 months and also stated that it would call up to 139 witnesses. All the charges are related to the civil war in Sierra Leone and for Mr. Taylor's alleged support for the rebels representing the Revolutionary United Front.

*BBC News* reported that the former president listened to the reading of the charges while portraying "little emotion." However, the BBC said he became animated when asked how he pleaded to the charges.

"There is an issue with this court regarding its right to exercise jurisdiction over me as president of Liberia," he said, according to the BBC story. "There are issues of how I got here. It is not a matter of me entering a



plea as I do not recognize the jurisdiction of this court,” Mr. Taylor insisted. Finally, he stated that he was innocent of all charges.

“Most definitely, your honor, I could not have committed these acts against the sister republic of Sierra Leone, so most definitely I am not guilty,” he said.

The Special Court was established on January 16, 2002 by an agreement between the government of Sierra Leone and the UN, and is mandated to “try those who bear the greatest responsibility” for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in the nation after November 30, 1996. So far, according to the UN News Service, 11 people have been indicted.


**United Nations**      **Nations Unies**

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

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## UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 25 May 2007

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

### **International Clips on Liberia**

*There were no relevant stories on Liberia in the international media today.*

### **International Clips on West Africa**

#### **An INTERVIEW - Ivorian peace is advancing, but beware delays - U.N.**

DAKAR, May 25 (Reuters) - Ivory Coast President Laurent Gbagbo and his former rebel foes are "speaking the same language", but peace efforts could be hurt by delays in disarmament and national identity schemes, a U.N. official said on Friday. A timetable set by a March 4 peace accord to reunify the West African nation and hold elections in January 2008 had already slipped behind schedule, Abou Moussa, the acting U.N. mission chief in Ivory Coast, told Reuters.

#### **Ivory Coast completes disarming of pro-government militias: official**

ABIDJAN, May 24, 2007 (AFP) - Ivory Coast has completed the disarmament of western pro-government militias following a peace deal between the president and rebels, a government official said Thursday. "We have finished with the disarmament and dismantling of those self-defence groups in the west," said Bertin Kadet, adviser to President Laurent Gbagbo on military affairs.

### **Local Media – Newspaper**

#### **Labour to Penalize Irregular Aliens**

*(Heritage)*

- In an interview, the Director of Aliens Registration at the Ministry of Labour Philip Williams called on aliens who are working in Liberia without permits to regularize their status or face deportation.

#### **UNMIL Not Responsible for Disappearance of Ship**

*(The Forum, The Informer, The Inquirer, The News, Heritage, New Democrat and Public Agenda)*

- The United Nations Mission in Liberia said that it was not responsible for circumstances leading to the alleged disappearance of MV Ai Mi, a vessel chartered by the Liberia Electricity Corporation to ship scrap metals from its hydro plant at Mount Coffee, outside Monrovia.
- According to a statement issued in Monrovia yesterday, the Mission said that it was aware that the ship had been authorized by the LEC to ship the scraps but was not responsible to give the green-light for the vessel to leave the port.

#### **Outgoing Nigerian President Visits Liberia Tomorrow, Saturday**

*(The Forum, The Informer, The Inquirer, The Liberian Diaspora, Daily Observer, Heritage and, Public Agenda)*

- Speaking to reporters yesterday, Assistant Information Minister for Information Services stated that outgoing Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo will tomorrow, Saturday, visit Liberia where he would be honored for Nigeria's contribution to the Liberian peace process.

### **Local Media – Radio Veritas** *(News monitored today at 9:45 am)*

#### **Outgoing Nigeria President Obasanjo Arrives in Monrovia Tomorrow**

*(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)*

#### **UNMIL Rebuff Claims of being Responsible for Missing Ship at Freeport**

*(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)*

### **Liberian Women Endorse Resolution to Enhance Greater Participation**

- Liberian women have approved a seven count resolution they say will enable them to take part in national elections and decision- making in the country.
- At the end of a two-day workshop on enhancing women's participation in the electoral process, the women called for a critical review of the constitutional reform process that will increase women's participation and representation in decision making and the right to contest for public office in the 2011 elections. The women urged stakeholders to ensure that government functionaries and political parties develop a frame work to transform negative political culture.

### **Police Denies Attack on Police Inspector General Sieh Resident**

- Police in Monrovia have denied that the home of the Inspector General, Beatrice Munnah Sieh was attacked by armed robbers. In an interview, Deputy Inspector, Gayflor Tarpeh said at no time was the home of Inspector Sieh attacked and described the report as unfair saying this could discourage investors.

**ELBC** *(News culled from website today at 8:30 am)*

### **Irish Contingent in UNMIL Donates to MCSS**

- The Irish contingent serving in the United Nations Mission in Liberia has donated educational materials including two containers of books and thirteen sets of computers to the Monrovia Consolidated School System (MCSS).
- Presenting the items, the Chaplin General of the contingent, Father Robert McCabe, said the donation is in fulfillment of a recent promise and hope the donation will help equip the schools.
- Receiving the materials, the Director of Primary Education at the MCSS, Cecelia Cassell, thanked the contingent for the gesture and assured them that the books and computers will be used for the intended purpose.

*Complete versions of the UNMIL International Press Clips, UNMIL Daily Liberian Radio Summary and UNMIL Liberian Newspapers Summary are posted each day on the UNMIL Bulletin Board. If you are unable to access the UNMIL Bulletin Board or would like further information on the content of the summaries, please contact Mr. Weah Karpeh at [karpeh@un.org](mailto:karpeh@un.org).*

## This day

Monday, 28 May 2007

[www.thisday.co.tz](http://www.thisday.co.tz)

### **Caribbean judge takes his vows at ICTR today**

VALENTINE MARC NKWAME

Arusha

JUDGE Dennis Byron who hails from Saint Kitts and Nevis, a small Caribbean state, and who was elected to become the President of the Arusha-based, International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), which is backed by the UN is to take his vow today.

The strong Judge Byron who is reputed for his 'independence,' will be taking up his functions officially when he gets sworn-in on Tuesday, May 29. He succeeds the Norwegian Judge Eric Mose who has been the UN-ICTR President since May 2003.

Sir. Byron who is a subject of the English crown, will also be the last President of the Tribunal, which the UN Security Council has directed to close its cases of first instance by next year (2008) and the other cases on appeal two years later.

Executing his work extremely rigorously and meticulously, the strongly built Judge Byron carries his 64 years cheerfully. Being very jovial, he has also gained a certain popularity within the ranks of the ICTR. According to a lawyer who visited the prison last Tuesday even the prisoners themselves greeted his arrival.

Before becoming the head of the Tribunal, Judge Byron, who acted as President of a Trial Chamber, was responsible for at least two judicial decisions which surprised observers and sometimes even irritated or offended certain people in charge within the Tribunal.

In May 2006, a Chamber which he presided became renowned for the rejection of the first demand for the transfer of an accused of the ICTR to a national jurisdiction.

In this case, the Office of the Prosecutor asked for the authorization of the judges to have the former director of the tea production network in Rwanda, Michel Bagaragaza, as key witness against other accused facing Norwegian justice.

The demand was rejected entirely, because the Scandinavian Kingdom does not curb explicitly the crime of genocide, one of the crimes brought against the former economic official.

The decision surprised everyone at the Court, even more so because it was a joint request of the Prosecutor and the accused.

Although the latter appealed to this decision, the appeal was rejected.

Last September, another panel of judges presided by Byron made an unpublished decision in the judgement of the ex-minister for primary and secondary education, Andre Rwamakuba.

In its acquittal verdict, the Chamber pronounced a sort of condemnation against the Registrar for leaving the ex-minister without a lawyer during his first months in custody.

The judgement underlines that Rwamakuba is free to plead before the same Chamber for reparation for this violation of his rights.

After the request, the Chamber ordered the administration of the Tribunal last January, to pay 2,000 dollars to Rwamakuba. Dreading the consequences of such a precedent, the Registrar has asked the Appeals Chamber which has not yet rendered a decision.

Before joining the ICTR in July 2004, Judge Byron was President of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court. In 2002 he received the award of Knight Bachelor by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

UNHCHR

Friday, 25 May 2007

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights ends visit to Rwanda

*The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour, issued the following statement today:*

**Kigali, 25 May 2007:** I end today my visit to Rwanda, a country taking decisive steps on the road to democracy and reconstruction. I would like to thank President Kagame, the Ministers of Justice and Foreign Affairs and the Director of the National Service of Gacaca Courts for the time they set aside for me during the last two days in Kigali. I would also like to express my gratitude to the members of the National Human Rights Commission and the representatives of the different civil society organizations I met during this visit.

Rwanda's dynamism is a tribute to a people determined to lift itself up and even flourish despite the genocide that decimated its people hardly more than a decade ago. In coming to terms with that horrendous crime, the Rwandan people has shown courage and imagination, as evidenced by innovations like the Gacaca courts, an adaptation of traditional jurisdictions established to cope with the enormous number of people who took part in the genocide. The Gacaca process aims to deliver a measure of justice to victims and promote reconciliation.

In the same way, I welcome the initiative to abolish the death penalty. As I understand from discussions with the authorities, work is well underway for the adoption of legislation to outlaw capital punishment. Abolition in Rwanda, a country still recovering from its recent tragic past, will constitute a powerful endorsement of the need to pursue justice while repudiating violence in all its forms.

My interlocutors in Kigali also informed me of Rwanda's intention to ratify the Convention against Torture. I salute this commitment and encourage the authorities to also ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention and thereby allow independent international and national bodies to visit places where people are deprived of their liberty in Rwanda in order to prevent torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

In our talks, Rwandan authorities demonstrated great lucidity regarding the challenges the country still faces. One of these is related to the Gacaca process. Designed to respond to a critical and unprecedented situation, the system is producing consequences that are contrary to the objectives it sought to achieve. Indeed, the intention to try some 750,000 defendants within a year or so implies worrisome haste that might jeopardize the integrity of the process. Moreover, a large number of these defendants could face sentences of up to 30 years in prison, generating a number of prisoners that the country cannot possibly sustain. Gacaca court judges possess little legal training, yet they can hand down such long sentences. The trials must therefore strive to conform to all guarantees of due process, in accordance with national and international standards. In this respect I welcome the willingness of the Government to work with all partners, including civil society actors, to find appropriate responses to these challenges.

In Kigali I was also informed of legislative initiatives related to the media. This may be an important step in addressing the concerns expressed about the space available to the media to carry out its work and, more generally, about the scope of freedom of expression in Rwanda. Inclusiveness, free flow of information and broader participation of civil society and political parties in public debate are essential to democratic reconstruction and development.

As I leave Rwanda, I reiterate the commitment of my Office to assist in any way we can the remarkable effort underway in Rwanda towards the reconstruction of a just, inclusive and peaceful society and a prosperous country for the greater wellbeing of its entire population.