

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE OUTREACH AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE



Court staff at the SCSL booth during The Hague international day, on Sunday 19th September.

PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

as at:

Tuesday, 28 September 2010

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTOR

PRESS RELEASE

Freetown, 28 September 2010

Joseph F. Kamara Steps Down as Deputy Prosecutor of Special Court

Prosecutor Brenda Hollis today hailed outgoing Deputy Prosecutor Joseph F. Kamara as a man of “the highest standards and integrity” who has provided exemplary service to the people of Sierra Leone during his tenure at the Special Court.

Mr. Kamara leaves the Court to take up his new post as head of Sierra Leone’s Anti-Corruption Commission. His nomination was announced in July by H.E. President Ernest Bai Koroma, and was approved by Parliament earlier this month.

“Since his arrival at the Office of the Prosecutor, he has served the people of Sierra Leone in the Court’s quest to bring justice for the horrific crimes committed against innocent men, women and children,” Ms. Hollis said. “He is leaving the Office of the Prosecutor to continue to serve the people of Sierra Leone in his new capacity.”

Prosecutor Hollis said Mr. Kamara would be missed.

“The Office of the Prosecutor’s loss is the people of Sierra Leone’s gain,” she said. “Throughout his tenure in the Office of the Prosecutor he has demonstrated the highest standards of professionalism and integrity, traits that will ensure his success as Commissioner of the Anti-Corruption Commission.”

“Mr. Kamara’s selection for this position is but one example of the Special Court’s legacy of returning talented experts to the service of their country,” she added.

Mr. Kamara joined the Court in January of 2004 and was appointed Deputy Prosecutor in August 2008, the first Sierra Leonean to occupy the post. He also served as Acting Prosecutor

#END

Produced by the
Office of the Prosecutor
Special Court for Sierra Leone
Email: scsl-otp@un.org

Visit the Special Court’s website at www.sc-sl.org

The Exclusive

Tuesday, 28 September 2010

Big Setback For Special Court

The United Nation's established Special Court for Sierra Leone is in an eleven million dollar (eight-million-euro) funding gap as it wraps up the trial of Liberia's ex-president Charles Taylor, its annual report released Friday reveals. The Special Court for Sierra Leone, seated at the International Criminal Court in The Hague, is set to close its doors soon after Taylor's trial is completed, which is expected around mid-2011. "As of 30 April 2010, the Court has received pledges of almost 15 million

US dollars from a diverse group of regular and occasional donors," excerpt of the report states. However, despite these greatly appreciated contributions, the Court faces a funding gap of 11.1 million US dollars to close the Court.

Taylor's trial on 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity for his alleged role in the 1991-2001 Sierra Leone civil war that claimed some 120,000 lives, is the last to be heard by the court.

The special tribunal was set up to try those who bore the "greatest responsi-

bility" for atrocities during Sierra Leone's war in which citizens were terrorized with rape and having their limbs hacked off. The court is the first of its kind to rely entirely on funding from governments, and has received contributions from more than 40 countries.

According to the June 2009-May 2010 report, for the eighth year of the court's operations, the present completion budget was 26.1 million dollars.

"The requirement for 2010 is 20.5 mil-

lion US dollars... These figures cover Freetown, The Hague and New York offices." During this period, the court achieved several of its milestones, handing down its final verdict in Freetown in October 2009 in which eight former rebels were convicted, allowing it to downsize staff by 40 percent.

However, the report said "in spite of significant budgetary reductions ...the Court continues to experience serious difficulties in securing adequate funding to complete its mandate."

New Vision

Tuesday, 28 September 2010

Celebrities and the Taylor trial: Justice and false consciousness

View Point:

By Niels Hahn, London, UK.

Many people in the Western hemisphere are only familiar with the conflicts in Sierra Leone and Liberia through popular Hollywood films such as 'Blood Diamonds' and 'Lords of War' starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Nicolas Cage respectively.

But with the prosecution of the Special Court in Sierra Leone calling in the supermodel Naomi Campbell (photo) and Hollywood actress Mia Farrow as witnesses in the trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor, there has been a renewed focus on the conflicts in West Africa.

According to the Chief prosecutor Brenda Hollis, the Hollywood actor and the supermodel possess 'important information for the trial chamber in relation to Mr Taylor's possession of rough diamonds at a particular point in time ... [which] supports the prosecution's allegations that Mr Taylor received rough diamonds from the rebels in Sierra Leone, and used those rough diamonds for his personal enrichment as well as to procure arms and ammunition for the rebels in Sierra Leone'. The main objective of the prosecutor was to find out if Campbell had received diamonds from Charles Taylor after a dinner hosted by Nelson Mandela in South Africa in September 1997.

However, it remains unclear how a few diamonds given to the supermodel can link Charles Taylor with 'blood diamonds', his support of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone and with crimes against humanity, which is fundamental for the court case.

Calling in Campbell and Farrow as witnesses reflects an enhanced form of US-led psychological operations (PSYOP), where celebrities are used as a powerful instrument to create a false consciousness of international justice. The overall aim of this propaganda seeks to gain public support and legitimise Western-led military interventions into resource-rich African countries, by using the positive notions of democracy, human rights and international justice.

A CONTROVERSIAL COURT IN A CRISIS OF LEGITIMACY

In the light of comprehensive research on the war in Liberia carried out over the past seven years, it appears that the indictment, arrest and trial of Charles Taylor are extremely controversial.

In the West the dominant media and academics present the trial of Taylor as an example of international justice being applied in Africa. In contrast, many African politicians, scholars and commentators from across the political spectrum see the case of Taylor as marking an expansion of neocolonial jurisdiction in Africa, which selectively indicts African politicians who do not comply with the wishes of London, Paris and Washington.

The trial of Taylor marks the first example where an elected president in office has been indicted by a quasi-internal court for war crimes and crimes against humanity. The Special Court was established by Britain and the US through UN Security Council resolution 1315, which requested that the UN secretary-general 'negotiate an agreement with the Government of Sierra Leone to create an independent, special court'.

On 16 January 2002, the UN signed an agreement with the government of Sierra Leone which established the Special Court for Sierra Leone with the mandate 'to prosecute persons who bear the greatest responsibility for serious violations of international humanitarian law and Sierra Leonean law committed in the territory of Sierra Leone since 30 November 1996'.

At that time, the Sierra Leonean government, under the leadership of

President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, was backed by British and American political, economic and military power. For example, in May 1997, when the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), a breakaway group from the Sierra Leonean army, in cooperation with the RUF, succeeded in removing President Kabbah and installed Major-General Johnny Paul Koromah as head of state, Britain suspended Sierra Leone from the British Commonwealth in July, and on 8 October 1997, the UN Security Council imposed sanctions on Sierra Leone.

Dena Montague, from the Arms Trade Research Center, World Policy Institute, notes that a number of foreign mining companies, such as American Mineral Fields, directed by Jean-Raymond Boule, wished to see the return of Kabbah's administration. They expressed interest in financing Kabbah's reinstatement in exchange for diamond concessions, but they did not have the military means. Therefore, as Thomas K. Adams from the US Army War College points out, the private military corporation (PMC) Sandline International (directed by Tim Spicer, a former lieutenant colonel in the British Army) informed the press in March 1998 that Sandline 'was asked by the British High Commissioner in Sierra Leone to help train and equip a local force capable of removing the generals'. Ten months later, President Kabbah was successfully reinstalled.

The people in Sierra Leone were already familiar with foreign PMCs, for in 1995, Executive Outcomes, founded in South Africa in 1989 and registered in the UK in 1993, drove the opposition forces to Kabbah out of Freetown, and chased them out of the diamonds fields. Adams notes that this operation was financed by the company Branch Energy in return for 'the concession to operate the Koidu diamond field'. Reputedly, Branch Energy was owned by 'Sierra Leone Resource Groups, a British company based in the Bahamas, that in turn owned Executive Outcomes'. This, however, is disputed by Michael Grunberg from Sandline International, who in 2002 informed that 'Sierra Leone's ability to pay Executive Outcomes and its other service providers depended upon the continued support of international funding agencies, in particular the IMF [International Monetary Fund]. The payments to Executive Outcome were being underpinned by the IMF'.

When the Kabbah administration faced new problems in 2000, after the RUF had taken several hundred UN military personnel as hostages in the diamond-rich Eastern province, Britain deployed around 1,000 soldiers who were directly involved in counterinsurgency activities, and the capture of RUF leader Foday Sankoh. This intervention took place shortly after Tony Blair had introduced his 'Doctrine of the International Community' in relation to the bombardment of Kosovo in 1999, which seeks to justify military intervention in the name of human rights, democracy and free trade.

As in the case of Kosovo, the intervention in Sierra Leone was described as a 'humanitarian intervention' and the notion of 'blood diamonds' became a powerful instrument to denounce the atrocities committed by the opposition to Kabbah's administration.

It is in this context that the Special Court of Sierra Leone was established, which explains why the court from the very beginning has faced a crisis of legitimacy in West Africa. The court is being criticised for being a de facto US/UK court, based on the fact that it is predominantly funded



by Britain and the US and all the chief prosecutors have been of American or British nationality, starting with David Crane, who was a former employee of the US Army. The prosecution is accused of selectively indicting individuals in line with the foreign policy agenda of the UK and US, which seeks to maintain British and American neocolonial dominance in the region, in order to safeguard UK/US-based private corporate access to natural resources, such as diamonds, gold, oil and uranium. This criticism is rooted in the long history of pan-African resistance against colonialism and neocolonialism.

THE INDICTMENT OF TAYLOR IN 2003

The way in which Taylor was indicted by the Special Court on 4 June 2003 has further added to the criticism of the Special Court in Sierra Leone.

Just as the peace conference between the government of Liberia and the two rebel groups, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), was about to begin in Ghana, the Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court David Crane sent out through Interpol the indictment accusing Taylor on 17 counts. [This included 'being in the heart of a joint criminal enterprise' to commit war crimes, crimes against humanity, and serious violations of international humanitarian law within the territory of Sierra Leone.

This blocked the hopes for a peaceful solution to the war in Liberia. With the support from a number of heads of African states who participated in the peace negotiations, such as Laurent Gbagbo of Ivory Coast, John Kufuor of Ghana, Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and Toumani Touré of Mali, the arrest order was ignored and Taylor was flown back to Liberia in the Ghanaian presidential plane, because rumours stated that American and British intelligence services had planned to hijack Taylor's official plane.

Two days after, LURD and MODEL launched a number of military attacks on strategic cities in Liberia. This resulted in a humanitarian disaster, and as the military pressure increased on Monrovia, President Bush stated that 'President Taylor needs to step down so that his country can be spared further bloodshed.'

Bush further noted that Colin Powell was 'working with Kofi Annan', who was 'working with others on the continent to facilitate that type of move' that would 'make Taylor ... leave Liberia'.

On 13 August 2003, Taylor went into exile in Nigeria. In his farewell speech he accused Britain and the US of having denied the government of Liberia the ability to defend itself, by imposing an arms embargo and other sanctions on the country. He further emphasised that the war in Liberia 'is an American war. LURD is a surrogate force ... [the US] caused this war'.

Subsequently, the US facilitated a comprehensive military intervention in Liberia, which became one of the largest UN military missions in the world and de facto established Liberia as a neotrusteeship under the UN, with the US as the lead agent. When Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf became president of Liberia in 2006, she considered the Taylor issue as belonging to the past. But after a visit to Washington, she asked Nigeria to extradite Taylor to Liberia, and handed him over to the Special Court in Sierra Leone.

DOUBLE STANDARDS IN THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

The critics of the Special Court further note that the indictment of Taylor, and the UN sanctions against Liberia which since 2000 were maintained by the accusations that the Liberian government supported the RUF in Sierra Leone, presents an example of double standards in relation to international justice and law.

They point to the fact that while the international community accused Liberia of supporting the RUF in Sierra Leone, they turned a blind eye to Guinea's support of LURD in Liberia, which was backed by Britain and the US. Although this has been noted in a number of international reports, there has been very little international focus on the financial and logistical support of LURD's insurgency in Liberia.

On 20 September 2002, Liberia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Monie Captan addressed this issue at the UN General Assembly, and stated that there is a 'conspiracy of silence surrounding the prevailing war in Liberia waged by externally supported armed non-State actors'. At that time the

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RUF had been dissolved, which made Captain ask the assembly how it is 'conceivable that Liberia can ... continue to be punished by the Security Council on allegations of supporting a non-existent RUF in a non-existent war in Sierra Leone', and point out that the arms embargo imposed on Liberia was 'a flagrant violation of Liberia's inherent right under Article 51 of the Charter to defend itself against armed attacks'.

The critique of double standards in relation to international justice in Africa is not limited to the Special Court in Sierra Leone. The International Criminal Court (ICC) is also being accused for being a neocolonial instrument. This notion gained momentum when the Chief Prosecutor of the ICC Luis Moreno-Ocampo in June 2009 stated that there is a need for the ICC to cooperate with the US military to enforce ICC arrest warrants in Africa.

Many African politicians and commentators have raised the question of why the ICC is targeting Africans, and not people such as Tony Blair, George W. Bush and former prime minister of Denmark and now secretary general of NATO, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, for war crimes in Iraq. The ICC indictment of President Omar al-Bashir of Sudan has made many African countries work against the ICC. For example, in June 2010 the African Union (AU) was close to adopting a resolution stating that AU member states would not cooperate with the ICC in the arrest and surrender of President Bashir.

USING GENOCIDE, BLOOD DIAMONDS AND CELEBRITIES TO SHAPE PUBLIC OPINION

The critique of the Special Court in Sierra Leone and the ICC echoes classical realist theory in international relations, which considers international law as rules made by the most powerful states to safeguard their interests. In reality, strong states do what they want; weak states do what they can. But since there are very few enforcement mechanisms in international law, the system relies heavily on the world public opinion.

In this relation, it must be noted that powerful states are not the slave of public opinion, but shape public opinion through propaganda or psychological warfare, by appealing to people's intellectual convictions, moral valuations, emotional preferences, fear and guilt. Former advisor to President Clinton Joseph P. ... describes this as 'soft power', which is about shaping the 'preferences of others to want what you want'.

The use of celebrities in international politics has increasingly become a powerful instrument to shape public opinion and frame the debate. For example, when the US wanted a military intervention in Darfur, celebrities, perhaps unwittingly, helped shaping the world public opinion in favour of such intervention. Mia Farrow and George Clooney publicly expressed their outrage against the atrocities in Darfur, and promoted the notion of genocide. This was further aided by the unification of more than 500 civil society groups from across the political spectrum in favour of a Western-led military intervention into Darfur.

Steven Spielberg, for his part, said that he would boycott the Olympics in China because of China's strong bilateral relations with the government of Sudan. At the end of the day, China did not use its veto power in the UN Security Council to block for the establishment of the UN military mission in Darfur.

Most scholars and commentators refrained from asking critical and fundamental questions such as: Why

does Washington add the label 'genocide' to the conflict in Darfur? How is this connected to China's oil concessions in Darfur and South Sudan, and most importantly, who funds the rebels?

From a realist perspective, such questions will immediately lead the attention to the role of Britain, France, the US and their allies, in relation to great power rivalry over access to the oil resources, where proxy wars and psychological warfare plays a central role. As in the case of Iraq – where former US Chairman of the Federal Reserve Alan Greenspan notes that 'it is politically inconvenient to acknowledge ... [that] the Iraq war is largely about oil' – most journalists, scholars and celebrities have refrained from linking the issue of oil in Darfur with the armed conflict.

Besides the oil resources within Darfur, the region represents a geopolitical strategic area because of pipelines. If the oil-rich South Sudan becomes an 'independent' state, where US AFRICOM (Africa Command) will provide the security, it is most likely that the Chinese oil companies gradually will be replaced by US-based oil companies. But the US will still need to get the oil out of South Sudan, and it is unlikely that the US will rely on the pipeline going from South Sudan to Port Sudan in the North. Instead the Chad-Cameroon oil pipeline can be extended to South Sudan through Darfur, which means that the oil from South Sudan can be pumped directly to the terminal in Cameroon. This will make the shipping route to the US cheaper and faster, but it demands US control over parts of Darfur.

Iraq and Sudan are not the only examples where the oil factor is neglected and deafened by the rhetoric of humanitarianism and Hollywood actors. 'Operation Restore Hope' in Somalia in 1992 was presented as a 'humanitarian military intervention'; Hollywood produced, in cooperation with the US Department of Defense, the popular film Black Hawk Down, released in 2001. [Most commentators have ignored the link between US willingness to intervene militarily in Somalia and oil resources. At the time of the intervention, nearly two-thirds of Somalia was allocated to US-based oil companies, most notably Conoco, Amoco, Chevron and Phillips. Conoco's compound in Mogadishu was transformed into a de facto American embassy and military headquarters. [32] According to a declassified cable from the US embassy in Mogadishu to State Department headquarters, Conoco was 'investing in oil exploration in Somalia on a scale unmatched by its rivals, building roads and airstrips ... [and had] recruited a well armed force ... to provide security'. But without a more stable situation Conoco would not be able to operate properly. [33]

Ignoring the role of oil is no different to the case of Liberia. Although the first oil exploration began in Liberia more than 50 years ago, [34] and oil resources have been publicly mapped since 1982, [35] most journalists and scholars have marginalised, ignored or completely rejected the idea that there were links between the Liberian armed conflicts and the oil resources. While the mainstream public focus was concentrated on celebrities and 'blood diamonds', Chevron announced, in September 2010, their 'entry into ... the large prospective offshore areas' in Liberia, allowing Chevron to advance their growth strategy in the region. [36]

The naming of genocide in Darfur, the promotion of a 'humanitarian' military

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Educational Centre for the Blind on Braille Embosser Training

BY SAHR DUMBAR MATTURI

On the 27th September 2010 the opening ceremony of the training programme on Braille was held at 92 Circular Road in Freetown. The four day technical training programme on Braille embosser will end on the 30th September 2010.

The Chairman for the ceremony, the Headmaster of the Milton Margai School for the blind Mr. Albert J Sandy, in his

opening remarks praised the Ministry of Education and the Force foundation in training their personnel on.

Mr Thomas Alie, the Director of the Educational Centre for the Blind maintained that the occasion was to train Educational Centre for the Blind personnel to acquire knowledge on how to repair embosser. The Force Foundation sent an expert from Ghana by the name of Glenn August Adotey to conduct the training in a bid to become independent.

A representative from the Ministry of Education on the overview for the special need for education in Sierra Leone, Mr. Steven Korosa gave a brief statement on behalf of the Ministry maintaining that all is not lost for people with disability; stating that the embossers can work for over thirty years as they are made of rubbers and metals.

The vote of thanks was given by Maseray Brima, whilst the closing prayer was done by Amelia S .Kamara.

Note: Thomas Alieu was a staff at Outreach & Public Affairs.

Agence France Presse

Monday, 27 September 2010

S.Leone war court short of 11 million dollars: report

DAKAR — Sierra Leone's war crimes tribunal faces an 11- million-dollar (eight-million-euro) funding gap as it wraps up the trial of Liberia's ex-president Charles Taylor, its annual report released Friday showed.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone, seated at the International Criminal Court in The Hague, is set to close its doors soon after Taylor's trial is completed, which is expected around mid-2011.

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AllAfrica.com

Thursday, 23 September 2010

West Africa: Celebrities And the Taylor Trial - Justice And False Consciousness

Niels Hahn

Analysis

Many people in the Western hemisphere are only familiar with the conflicts in Sierra Leone and Liberia through popular Hollywood films such as 'Blood Diamonds' and 'Lords of War' starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Nicolas Cage respectively.

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A CONTROVERSIAL COURT IN A CRISIS OF LEGITIMACY

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In the West the dominant media and academics present the trial of Taylor as an example of international justice being applied in Africa. In contrast, many African politicians, scholars and commentators from across the political spectrum see the case of Taylor as marking an expansion of neocolonial jurisdiction in Africa, which selectively indicts African politicians who do not comply with the wishes of London, Paris and Washington.

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At that time, the Sierra Leonean government, under the leadership of President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, was backed by British and American political, economic and military power. For example, in May 1997, when the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), a breakaway group from the Sierra Leonean army, in cooperation with the RUF, succeeded in removing President Kabbah and installed Major-General Johnny Paul Koromah as head of state, Britain suspended Sierra Leone from the British Commonwealth in July, and on 8 October 1997, the UN Security Council imposed sanctions on Sierra Leone.^[6]

Dena Montague, from the Arms Trade Research Center, World Policy Institute, notes that a number of foreign mining companies, such as American Mineral Fields, directed by Jean-Raymond Boulle, wished to see the return of Kabbah's administration. They expressed interest in financing Kabbah's reinstatement in exchange for diamond concessions, but they did not have the military means.^[7] Therefore, as Thomas K. Adams from the US Army War College points out, the private military corporation (PMC) Sandline International (directed by Tim Spicer, a former lieutenant colonel in the British Army) informed the press in March 1998 that Sandline 'was asked by the British High Commissioner in Sierra Leone to help train and equip a local force capable of removing the generals'. Ten month later, President Kabbah was successfully reinstalled.^[8]

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When the Kabbah administration faced new problems in 2000, after the RUF had taken several hundred UN military personnel as hostages in the diamond-rich Eastern province, Britain deployed around 1,000 soldiers who were directly involved in counterinsurgency activities, and the capture of RUF leader Foday Sankoh.^[11] This intervention took place shortly after Tony Blair had introduced his 'Doctrine of the International Community' in relation to the bombardment of Kosovo in 1999, which seeks to justify military intervention in the name of human rights, democracy and free trade.^[12]

As in the case of Kosovo, the intervention in Sierra Leone was described as a 'humanitarian intervention', and the notion of 'blood diamonds' became a powerful instrument to denounce the atrocities committed by the opposition to Kabbah's administration.

It is in this context that the Special Court of Sierra Leone was established, which explains why the court from the very beginning has faced a crisis of legitimacy in West Africa. The court is being criticised for being a de facto US/UK court, based on the fact that it is predominantly funded by Britain and the US and all the chief prosecutors have been of American or British nationality, starting with David Crane, who was a former employee of the US Army.^[13] The prosecution is accused of selectively indicting individuals in line with the foreign policy agenda of the UK and US, which seeks to maintain British and American neocolonial dominance in the region, in order to safeguard UK/US-based private corporate access to

natural resources, such as diamonds, gold, oil and uranium. This criticism is rooted in the long history of pan-African resistance against colonialism and neocolonialism.

THE INDICTMENT OF TAYLOR IN 2003

The way in which Taylor was indicted by the Special Court on 4 June 2003 has further added to the criticism of the Special Court in Sierra Leone.

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DOUBLE STANDARDS IN THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

The critics of the Special Court further note that the indictment of Taylor, and the UN sanctions against Liberia which since 2000 were maintained by the accusations that the Liberian government supported the RUF in Sierra Leone, presents an example of double standards in relation to international justice and law.

They point to the fact that while the international community accused Liberia of supporting the RUF in Sierra Leone, they turned a blind eye to Guinea's support of LURD in Liberia, which was backed by Britain and the US. Although this has been noted in a number of international reports, there has been very little international focus on the financial and logistical support of LURD's insurgency in Liberia.[20]

On 20 September 2002, Liberia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Monie Captan addressed this issue at the UN General Assembly, and stated that there is a 'conspiracy of silence surrounding the prevailing war in

Liberia waged by externally supported armed non-State actors'. At that time the RUF had been dissolved, which made Captan ask the assembly how it is 'conceivable that Liberia can ... continue to be punished by the Security Council on allegations of supporting a non-existent RUF in a non-existent war in Sierra Leone', and point out that the arms embargo imposed on Liberia was 'a flagrant violation of Liberia's inherent right under Article 51 of the Charter to defend itself against armed attacks'.[21]

The critique of double standards in relation to international justice in Africa is not limited to the Special Court in Sierra Leone. The International Criminal Court (ICC) is also being accused for being a neocolonial instrument. This notion gained momentum when the Chief Prosecutor of the ICC Luis Moreno-Ocampo in June 2009 stated that there is a need for the ICC to cooperate with the US military to enforce ICC arrest warrants in Africa.[22]

Many African politicians and commentators have raised the question of why the ICC is targeting Africans, and not people such as Tony Blair, George W. Bush and former prime minister of Denmark and now secretary general of NATO, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, for war crimes in Iraq. The ICC indictment of President Omar al-Bashir of Sudan has made many African countries work against the ICC. For example, in June 2010 the African Union (AU) was close to adopting a resolution stating that AU member states would not cooperate with the ICC in the arrest and surrender of President Bashir.[23]

USING GENOCIDE, BLOOD DIAMONDS AND CELEBRITIES TO SHAPE PUBLIC OPINION

The critique of the Special Court in Sierra Leone and the ICC echoes classical realist theory in international relations, which considers international law as rules made by the most powerful states to safeguard their interests. In reality, strong states do what they want; weak states do what they can. But since there are very few enforcement mechanisms in international law, the system relies heavily on the world public opinion.[24]

In this relation, it must be noted that powerful states are not the slave of public opinion, but shape public opinion through propaganda or psychological warfare, by appealing to people's intellectual convictions, moral valuations, emotional preferences, fear and guilt. Former advisor to President Clinton Josephs Nye describes this as 'soft power', which is about shaping the 'preferences of others to want what you want'.[25]

The use of celebrities in international politics has increasingly become a powerful instrument to shape public opinion and frame the debate. For example, when the US wanted a military intervention in Darfur, celebrities, perhaps unwittingly, helped shaping the world public opinion in favour of such intervention. Mia Farrow and George Clooney publicly expressed their outrage against the atrocities in Darfur, and promoted the notion of genocide.[26] This was further aided by the unification of more than 500 civil society groups from across the political spectrum in favour of a Western-led military intervention into Darfur.[27]

Steven Spielberg, for his part, said that he would boycott the Olympics in China because of China's strong bilateral relations with the government of Sudan.[28] At the end of the day, China did not use its veto power in the UN Security Council to block for the establishment of the UN military mission in Darfur.

Most scholars and commentators refrained from asking critical and fundamental questions such as: Why does Washington add the label 'genocide' to the conflict in Darfur? How is this connected to China's oil concessions in Darfur and South Sudan, and most importantly, who funds the rebels?

From a realist perspective, such questions will immediately lead the attention to the role of Britain, France, the US and their allies, in relation to great power rivalry over access to the oil resources, where proxy wars and psychological warfare plays a central role. As in the case of Iraq - where former US Chairman of the Federal Reserve Alan Greenspan notes that 'it is politically inconvenient to acknowledge

... [that] the Iraq war is largely about oil' - most journalists, scholars and celebrities have refrained from linking the issue of oil in Darfur with the armed conflict.[29]

Besides the oil resources within Darfur, the region represents a geopolitical strategic area because of pipelines. If the oil-rich South Sudan becomes an 'independent' state, where US AFRICOM (Africa Command) will provide the security, it is most likely that the Chinese oil companies gradually will be replaced by US-based oil companies. But the US will still need to get the oil out of South Sudan, and it is unlikely that the US will rely on the pipeline going from South Sudan to Port Sudan in the North. Instead the Chad-Cameroon oil pipeline can be extended to South Sudan through Darfur, which means that the oil from South Sudan can be pumped directly to the terminal in Cameroon. This will make the shipping route to the US cheaper and faster, but it demands US control over parts of Darfur.[30]

Iraq and Sudan are not the only examples where the oil factor is neglected and deafened by the rhetoric of humanitarianism and Hollywood actors. 'Operation Restore Hope' in Somalia in 1992 was presented as a 'humanitarian military intervention'; Hollywood produced, in cooperation with the US Department of Defense, the popular film *Black Hawk Down*, released in 2001.[31] Most commentators have ignored the link between US willingness to intervene militarily in Somalia and oil resources. At the time of the intervention, nearly two-thirds of Somalia was allocated to US-based oil companies, most notably Conoco, Amoco, Chevron and Phillips. Conoco's compound in Mogadishu was transformed into a de facto American embassy and military headquarters.[32] According to a declassified cable from the US embassy in Mogadishu to State Department headquarters, Conoco was 'investing in oil exploration in Somalia on a scale unmatched by its rivals, building roads and airstrips ... [and had] recruited a well armed force ... to provide security'. But without a more stable situation Conoco would not be able to operate properly.[33]

Ignoring the role of oil is no different to the case of Liberia. Although the first oil exploration began in Liberia more than 50 years ago,[34] and oil resources have been publicly mapped since 1982,[35] most journalists and scholars have marginalised, ignored or completely rejected the idea that there were links between the Liberian armed conflicts and the oil resources. While the mainstream public focus was concentrated on celebrities and 'blood diamonds', Chevron announced, in September 2010, their 'entry into ... the large prospective offshore areas' in Liberia, allowing Chevron to advance their growth strategy in the region.[36]

The naming of genocide in Darfur, the promotion of a 'humanitarian' military intervention in Somalia and the notion of 'blood diamonds' in Liberia and Sierra Leone can from a realist perspective be seen as examples of sophisticated psychological warfare and propaganda. They are all powerful concepts that seek to divert public attention away from the real underlying political and economic interests, while at the same time promoting public support for military interventions.

The popular overarching concept and slogan to support such interventions is the 'responsibility to protect' (R2P). This concept was developed by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, established by the Canadian government. The basic principle of the R2P is that 'where a population is suffering serious harm, as a result of internal war, insurgency, repression or state failure, and the state in question is unwilling or unable to halt or avert it, the principle of non-intervention yields to the international responsibility to protect'.[37]

It is difficult not to agree with these noble words and good intentions, in a similar way that it is difficult not to agree with the idea of human rights, democracy and international justice. But it is important to note that one of the main promoters of the R2P is Australia's former Minister of Foreign Affairs Gareth Evans, who himself has been indirectly connected to crimes against humanities in East Timor, during the process of securing oil concessions to Australian-based companies.[38] Evans also served as the president of the International Crisis Group, which is connected to the Enough campaign, the Save Darfur Coalition and to

the Centre for American Progress, which is associated with a number of influential political actors such as former US Assistant Secretary of Defense Lawrence Korb.[39]

When taking these important factors into consideration, the notion of the responsibility to protect can be seen as a modern version of Kipling's 'White Man's Burden', where celebrities are used as powerful instruments of propaganda in the promotion of Western-led military interventions, and where the real political and economic interests are disguised by a positive humanitarian rhetoric.

THE FLAWS OF THE KIMBERLEY PROCESS

Blood diamonds are associated with slave labour, murder, rape, the amputation of body parts and terrorism. An example of the latter is well captured in an article in the Washington Post, shortly after 9/11, when staff writer Douglas Farah published an extensive article that connected Charles Taylor and blood diamonds to al Qaeda. According to Farah, the Washington Post had obtained a copy of a military intelligence summary, which offered 'the clearest picture yet of al Qaeda's secretive business operations in West Africa'. According to the Washington Post, 'preparations for al Qaeda's diamond operation began in September 1998, six weeks after the bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania', and after the 9/11 attack two senior al Qaeda operatives were 'hiding in an elite military camp in Liberia'.[40]

It can be assumed that linking West African diamonds to crimes against humanity and terrorism should affect consumer confidence in the market. But in 2000, the UN Security Council encouraged the International Diamond Manufacturers Association, the World Federation of Diamond Bourses, the Diamond High Council and 'all other representatives of the diamond industry to work with the Government of Sierra Leone' to develop methods that could distinguish between blood/conflict diamonds and non-blood/conflict diamonds, with the aim of implementing a 'Certificate of Origin regime'.[41]

These institutions and companies established the World Diamond Council (WDC) with the 'ultimate mandate' to facilitate 'the development, implementation and oversight of a tracking system for the export and import of rough diamonds to prevent the exploitation of diamonds for illicit purposes such as war and inhumane acts'.[42] This resulted in the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS), which subsequently was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 6 February 2002.[43]

But the problem with the Kimberley Process is, as was pointed out in a UN Report of the Panel of Experts to UN Security Council, that the 'experiences of Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire show how difficult it actually is to separate out conflict diamonds from other alluvials'.[44]

This view corresponds with a number of former and current Liberian government officials, who note that diamonds from Liberia can easily be transported and sold in Conakry and obtain a certificate of Guinean origin. In reality the Kimberley Process has very little impact on the diamonds trade in the region, and many people in the Taylor administration saw the notion of 'blood diamonds' as British and American instigated war propaganda, disseminated through funding of NGOs such as Global Witness and the International Crisis Group. The notion of blood diamonds became central in the mainstream denunciation of the Liberian government under the leadership of Charles Taylor, while the promotion of the Kimberley Process ensured consumer confidence in the international diamond market. But in reality it is not possible to distinguish between 'good' and 'bad' diamonds.[45]

GETTING PUBLIC ATTENTION ON THE TRIAL OF TAYLOR

The Kimberley Certificate provides no guarantee, and if Mia Farrow owns a diamond, she cannot be sure of its origin, just as the diamonds that Campbell received from Taylor cannot per se be classified as 'blood diamonds', as is often presented in the dominant media. It is very easy to buy raw diamonds in the streets of Monrovia, but impossible to find out where the diamonds come from.

It is not that significant that a president from a country with a lot of diamonds is using diamonds in public representation to buy sympathy from other states or individuals. The fact that Taylor gave some raw diamonds to a supermodel has little to do with the actual court case, and it is very difficult to see how it can establish the connection between Taylor and the RUF in Sierra Leone, which is the foundation for the case.

Involving celebrities in the trial of Taylor attracts and shapes world public opinion in support of a positive notion of international justice, at a time where international courts increasingly are being associated with Western neocolonial jurisdiction in Africa. But this is a false notion of international justice, and the propaganda diverts focus away from the reality, which is being replaced by surreal Hollywood shows, with supermodels and popular actors.

A genuine interest in promoting international justice in Africa must include critical analyses of the root causes of the conflicts, in order to identify, indict and bring to court all key actors suspected of war crimes and crimes against humanity. This will, in particular, include external state powers such as France, the UK and the US, as well as the private business corporations involved in the conflicts.

The final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia (TRC) finding number 19 states that:

'External State Actors in Africa, North America and Europe, participated, supported aided, abetted, conspired and instigated violence, war and regime change against constituted authorities in Liberia and against the people of Liberia for political, economic and foreign policy advantages or gains.'[46]

When researching the role of the United States in West African conflicts, and in particular in Liberia, it becomes clear that the US is one of the main key actors. Therefore, in order to ensure real international justice for the crimes committed in Liberia, scholars, journalists, governments, and civil society groups, should take the TRC's finding number 19 seriously, and demand the establishment of an 'Independent International Special Commission for the Investigation of the Role of External State Actors in the Liberian Conflict from 1979 till 2003', with the mandate to look into the possibility of taking those state actors that bear the greatest responsibility for the wars in the West African region, to be tried by the International Court of Justice (ICJ).[47]

Experience can be drawn from the case of Nicaragua against the United States in the mid-1980s, where the United States was convicted for state terrorism in the form of the unlawful use of force against Nicaragua.[48] Although the case did not stop the United States from continuing to destabilise Nicaragua, it became more difficult because people became more aware of the external manipulation of civil society groups and American propaganda.

In a similar way, a social movement demanding an independent investigation into the West African conflicts will bring attention to the role played by powerful external actors. This will increase the general public consciousness about the real root causes of the conflicts, which can further help academics, journalists, and celebrities to promote real international justice across the world.

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CNN

Monday, 27 September, 2010

Karadzic defends himself at Srebrenica war crimes trial

By Melissa Gray, CNN



Radovan Karadzic in the Hague courtroom on April 13, 2010.

(CNN) -- Former Serbian leader Radovan Karadzic appeared in court Monday to defend himself on charges of war crimes and genocide, resuming a trial which he has fought for years to delay.

He spoke firmly and fluently as he defended himself, occasionally looking

irritated or dismissive, but not appearing to obstruct the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

The trial was most recently suspended earlier this month to give the defense time to review documents. Karadzic, who is representing himself, faces 11 counts of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. He has denied the charges.

The last session of the trial took place Sept. 15. At the time, the defense requested time to study a large set of documents that the prosecution had submitted.

The charges against Karadzic stem partly from the killing of more than 7,000 Muslim men and boys in the Bosnian town of Srebrenica in 1995. Karadzic, the Bosnian Serb president at the time, is accused of being responsible for the massacre.

Srebrenica became an emblem for the dissolution of Yugoslavia -- once a multi-ethnic state of Serbs, Croats, Muslims and others -- into six countries during a bloody and brutal conflict in the early 1990s.

The New Times (Kigali)

Tuesday, 28 September 2010

Rwanda: Second Suspect Charged in Holland for Genocide

Edmund Kagire

Kigali — A woman suspected of involvement in the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, yesterday appeared before judges in The Hague, Netherlands.

Yvonne Ntacyobatabara, 63, who is said to have led a group of militias in mass massacres of Tutsis in Gikondo, Nyenyeri area, in Kigali, in 1994, denied all the charges.

A former member of the extremist party the Coalition for the Defence of the Republic (CDR), Ntacyobatabara moved to the Netherlands in 1998 and obtained Dutch citizenship in 2004.

She was later sentenced in absentia to life imprisonment by a local Gacaca court in Gikondo. The session is only the formal start of the case; preliminary investigations by the public prosecutor continue.

The judges will decide whether Ntacyobatabara, who was arrested in June by the Netherlands National Police, will be released on bail or not.

Before her arrest, the suspect lived in the village of Reuver in the southern province of Limburg.

According to reports from Holland, Dutch police investigating the case have already questioned witnesses in Gikondo area, where she lived at the time of the Genocide.

Investigations into her case have been going on for more than a year now.

She is the second person to be charged in The Netherlands. In March 2009, a court in The Hague sentenced Joseph Mpambara to twenty years in jail for the torture of a German doctor and his wife during the Genocide.

Reacting to the news, the Minister of Justice, Tharcisse Karugarama said that the move was a positive one and a sign of cooperation the country is receiving from European countries in apprehending criminals.

"Countries such as the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland and Germany have really cooperated with us in apprehending and trying criminals who have cases to answer. It's a positive development and we commend that," Karugarama said.

He added that the Netherlands and Rwanda have developed good relations in the area of justice among others.

Ntacyobatabara's husband, Augustin Basebya, is also being investigated for crimes committed during the Genocide.

Basebya, a former Member of Parliament, worked with former Mayor Juvenal Kajelijeli, who was convicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and sentenced to life imprisonment..

As the new case takes shape, the Dutch parliament is considering extending war crimes legislation to include Genocide crimes committed up to 40 years ago and war crimes in a non-armed conflict.

At present, the Netherlands has sufficient jurisdiction to prosecute aliens suspected of international crimes, including genocide. But that law applies only to crimes committed after 1 October 2003. For older cases, the Dutch Genocide Convention Implementation Act applies, but jurisdiction is limited.

The arrest and trial of Ntacyobatabara comes at a time when Netherlands and Rwanda have concluded talks for a possible extradition treaty to extradite war crimes and genocide suspects to Rwanda.

The Dutch Justice Minister, Ernst Hirsch Balling, was in the country in June on an official visit during which he agreed on closer cooperation with his Rwandan counterpart, Tharcisse Karugarama.

IOL News (South Africa)

Tuesday, 28 September 2010

Goldstone slams 'unfair' comments on ICC

By Kenichi Serino



AP

Judge Richard Goldstone

Johannesburg - The criticism that the International Criminal Court (ICC) is against African countries is unfair, Judge Richard Goldstone said on Monday.

“It is unfair to say the court is being used against African countries,” Goldstone said at a lecture at the University of

Johannesburg.

He acknowledged that this was a perception because of Africans appearing before the court.

The ICC has opened up five investigations into the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, Uganda, Kenya and Darfur in Sudan.

Goldstone said, however, this would change in the near future as individuals in Latin America were coming under investigation.

He added that the ICC only began its activities after officials in those countries declined to open their own investigations.

In the case of Kenya, the country's parliament refused to begin an investigation into post-election violence in 2007.

“It's a court of last resort, not a court of first resort,” said Goldstone.

He also commented on Kenya's hosting of Sudanese president Omar Al-Bashir at a ceremony celebrating its new constitution.

Al-Bashir has been indicted by the ICC for crimes in Darfur.

As a signatory to the ICC treaty, Kenya was obligated to arrest but refused to do so.

This is in contrast, said Goldstone, to South Africa where Al-Bashir was warned not to enter the country for President Jacob Zuma's inauguration or risk arrest.

Goldstone said that while no action could be taken against country's such as Kenya, they did risk becoming “pariah states”.

“There is no action against countries that do not fulfill their obligations under the treaty except to become pariah states,” he said. - Sapa

Voice of America

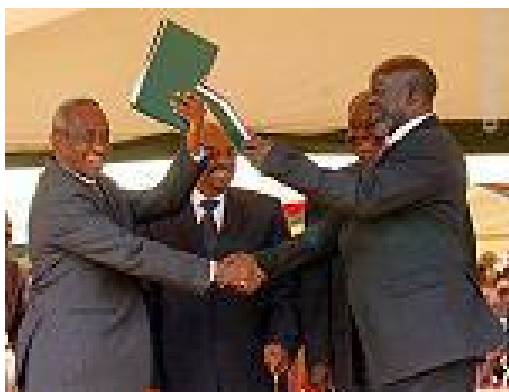
Tuesday, 28 September 2010

Sudanese Vice President Urges U.N. to Reject Arrest Warrants

But Sudanese-born Omer Ismail of the Enough Project says the U.N. should not fall for what he calls Khartoum's blackmail

James Butty

Sudanese Vice President Ali Osman Taha has called on the United Nations to reject the International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest warrant against President Omar al-Bashir for allegedly masterminding a campaign of genocide in Sudan's Darfur region.



Sudan Vice President Taha (left)

Addressing the ongoing General Assembly session in New York Monday, Mr. Taha said the involvement of the ICC is a threat to the peaceful settlement of the Darfur conflict.

Sudanese-born Omer Ismail, senior policy advisor for the Enough Project, an advocacy organization set up to highlight Darfur crisis, told VOA the international community should not fall for what he called Khartoum's blackmail.

"The indictment by the International Criminal Court came as a result of the behavior of the government of Sudan and its president, (Mr.) Bashir. So, he's coming now to blackmail the world basically and saying that the government will either get their way in delaying justice. Otherwise, they are not going to invest a penny in Darfur," he said.

Ismail dismissed Taha's claims that the involvement of the ICC would threaten the peaceful settlement of the Darfur conflict.

He said Khartoum has consistently reneged on every agreement to bring about a peaceful settlement of the Sudan crisis.



"There is no peaceful settlement to the conflict in Sudan. The world tried and they signed the CPA (Comprehensive Peace Agreement) to transform the country and everybody failed because this government was not trying to do the right thing by pursuing peace in Sudan," Ismail said.

Sudan's Darfur refugees

AFP Photo

The Sudanese vice president also told the General Assembly Khartoum is ready to put almost \$2 billion into Darfur as part of the government's effort to re-establish security, increase development and bring about reconciliation in the western region.

Ismail said Taha made the announcement for political reason and with no intention to bring about reconciliation in Darfur.

He said there can be no reconciliation without justice.

"There are over half a million people killed and seven million people living in warehouses. This government is doing this for political reasons. It has nothing to do with reconciliation. Over 20 years, if you look at the track record of the government of Sudan, they reneged on every single promise they've made so far. What should make the world to believe that they will honor what they say," Ismail said.

The Sudanese vice president, in his speech to the General Assembly, expressed hope next referendum would be voluntary in accordance with the wishes of the people of South Sudan, and without outside interference.

But, Ismail said Khartoum will rig the referendum and start another war in the south because it is not interested in peace.