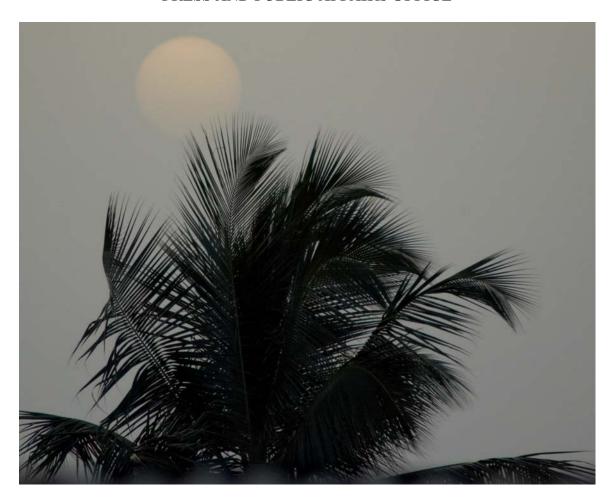
SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE



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:

Tuesday, 29 August 2006

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.

Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact

Martin Royston-Wright

Ext 7217

Local News	
Hinga Norman Wants Berewa Out / Standard Times	Page 3
Golley's Case Referred to Human Rights Commission / Concord Times	Page 4
International News	
Hinga Norman to Break Silence Soon / Patriotic Vanguard website	Page 5
Smoke and Mirrors: The Geneva Conventions / Jurist Legal News and Research	Pages 6-7
UK Lawyers Act Against Sierra Leone Government / Legalbrief Today	Page 8
UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary / UNMIL	Pages 9-11
Report of the ICC for 2005-2006 (Summary) / United Nations	Page 12
Child Soldier Charges in the First International Criminal Court Case / ICC	Pages 13-14
War Crime Charge for Congo Rebel / BBC	Pages 15-16

Standard Times Tuesday, 29 August 2006

In the interest of the party... Hinga Norman Wants Berewa out.

BY AUGUSTINE BEECHER

ontrary to widespread speculations that the in carcerated former deputy defence minister, Chief Sam Hinga Norman is out to bring the ruling party (SLPP, of which he is a member) down, the former deputy minister of the present government

and also former coordinator of the now defunct civil defence force has confirmed in a public statement that he has no case with the Party.

He made this declaration in an "Exhortation to Kamajors" dated 26th August 2006, which was initially read out by Dr. Bubuakei Jabbie, a leading member of the Chief's legal team, on the same day at the Bo Town Council Hall to a mammoth crowd.

In that statement, the chief stated among other things that he has been a member of the SLPP and has no intention of defecting to another in the foreseeable future.

He reiterated some of the highlights of his struggles for the party and his contribution to the restoration of peace and democracy in the country, as well as the establishment of the Special Court for Sierra Leone that is now trying them.

He maintained that despite their present predicament "neither the Party nor you as members are responsible...The Party has not done anything to hurt me. And so I will never take any action against the Party or anyone..."

The Chief nevertheless insisted that the Kamajors should not join CONTINUED PAGE 11



Berewa

Hinga Norman wants Berewa out!

FROM PAGE 1

any other political party (new or old) but wait for the decision to the matter he took to the Supreme Court against the eligibility of Vice President Solomon Berewa for the leadership of the ruling SLPP is still dangling in the court.

According to Dr. Jabbie, the matter by Chief Norman is "saying that it is unconstitutional for a vice President (Solomon Berewa in this case) to also at the same time as vice President to be the Leader of a political party."

He said the provisions of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone and sub section 4 of section 35, sub section 1H of section 76, and sub section 1 of section 14 of the political Parties Act.

In short, the incarcerated chief wants the Supreme Court to declare that the SLPP leadership election of 2005 in Makeni is unconstitutional and null and void, thereby effectively eliminating Mr. Berewa as party leader and presidential flag bearer of the ruling SLPP.

Asked what the chief plans to do if the matter is decided against him, the learned legal official said it is better not to speculate on what could happen in such a scenario, but expressed the hope that the decision of the court will finally lay the matter to rest.

He said there is no love lost between Mr. Berewa and Chief Norman, but insisted that the chief is constrained to take the matter to court because of his concern for the party and its future.

Concord Times Monday, 28 August 2006

Golley's case referred to Human Rights Commission

British lawyers representing Omrie Golley who is facing a charge of treason in Freetown have officially complained that the government of Sierra Leone has violated the rights of their client under the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights. London solicitors Oury Clark have sent a petition to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in Banjul in The Gambia under Article 55 of the Charter, which deals with communication with the Commis-Cont. page 5

Golley's case referred to Human Rights Commission

From page 1

sion.

The petition states: "Mr Golley has been denied an effective domestic legal remedy. There has been a complete failure to observe his basic human rights throughout being incarcerated in Pademba Road Prison in Freetown, Sierra Leone since his arrest and his subsequent trial for treason. He is consequently not receiving a procedurally fair hearing in Freetown and faces a mandatory death penalty."

Golley, 48, was arrested in January this year, when he arrived in Freetown to register his political party, and charged with plotting to overthrow the government of President Tejan Kabbah. He has been refused bail despite medical reports that say his

health is deteriorating fast. After a medical examination on July 4, it was confirmed that Golley was suffering from high blood pressure, malaria and kidney problems.

The medical report said that he had lost 60 per cent of his body weight since his incarceration. The petition to the African Commission argues: "The stress of facing the death penalty set against the backdrop of a lack of due process and access to medical attention equates with cruel, unusual and degrading treatment under Article 5 of the Charter." Action has been taken against the Sierra Leonean government because, according to James Oury of Oury Clark, Golley's legal team has exhausted all domestic remedies.

Bail hearings have been adjourned on two occasions. The petition calls on the government of Sierra Leone "not to take any action (such as denying bail) that will cause irreparable damage to the victim (in terms of his health) until the case has been heard by the Commission".

"We have decided to submit the petition not to embarrass the government of Sierra Leone but because time is off the essence for our client," says Oury. "Given the serious nature of the medical condition of our client, failure to grant him bail so that he could receive proper medical treatment would cause irreparable damage to his well being. We don't think that the government of Sierra Leone would like to see that happen."

Patriotic Vanguard website

Monday, 28 August 2006 http://www.thepatrioticvanguard.com/article.php3?id article=751

Hinga Norman to Break Silence Soon

Press Release

Former Regent Chief, Sam Hinga Norman (photo), is expected to make a major public statement regarding his position with respect to the SLPP and in particular the nomination or appointment of Vice President, Solomon Berewa, as Leader of the SLPP very shortly.

While awaiting the full text of the statement, we are reliably informed that Mr. Norman remains adamant about his opposition to the election of Berewa as Party Leader as a violation the Sierra Leone Constitution (Sections 35.4, 76.1.h) as well as the Political Parties Act (Section 14.1).

Chief Norman's statement will come as a result of several meetings that have been held between the ruling SLPP and Norman's supporters recently in Freetown and just this past Saturday in Bo. The statement is currently being released to leaders of the Kamjor Movement, traditional chiefs, media outlets and supporters at home and abroad. We hope to have a public release available within the next few days. Meanwhile, the public is advised that information currently published by the Democrat newspaper regarding the meeting in Bo does not necessarily reflect the views of the Campaign to Elect Hinga Norman.

We are also reliably informed that the preliminary ruling on Mr. Norman's petition before the Supreme Court of Sierra Leone on the constitutionality of the election of Mr. Berewa as Party Leader is due early September. The justices are expected to meet in closed session very shortly to consider the ruling. While the Supreme Court deliberates on the issue, we have reason to believe that Plan B for Mr. Berewa is to resign from the office of Vice President shortly before the election in order to circumvent the national constitution or a negative ruling of the court without the SLPP convening of a party convention to properly elect a leader of the party. We must remind the party that this is a dangerous option that is bound to leave the party and the country open to political chaos due to internal dissension and external challenges from rival political parties as well as civil and community action groups around the country.

Alfred M. SamForay

Campaign to Elect Norman.

Jurist Legal News and Research

Monday, 28 August 2006

http://jurist.law.pitt.edu/forumy/2006/08/smoke-and-mirrors-geneva-conventions.php

Smoke and Mirrors: The Geneva Conventions in the 21st Century



JURIST Contributing Editor David Crane of Syracuse University College of Law says that as we celebrate the universality of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, we must recognize that the murder, rape, maiming, mutilation, and pillaging of non-combatants worldwide goes on unabated while the United States, once a champion of the Conventions, has stumbled and committed multiple breaches of their provisions in its single-minded conduct of the war on terror...

Last week the International Committee of the Red Cross announced that the island nation of Nauru and the Balkan nation of Montenegro have become the most recent states to sign the Geneva Conventions of 1949. All the nations of the world have now signed this treaty that ensures humane treatment in conflict, embodying centuries of law, custom, and the practice of placing warfare under the rule of law.

The Geneva Conventions were promulgated in the middle of mankind's bloodiest century. The beast of impunity fed well and often around the periphery of civilization consuming over 200 million lives many at the hand of their own governments. The 21st century does not bode well in this regard.

In the year where we solemnly remember the 60th anniversary of the judgments at Nuremberg, and next year the 100th anniversary of the Hague Rules that laid out guidance for armies as to how they target and use their weapons humanely, under the concepts of military necessity, proportionality, and unnecessary suffering, it is both right and proper that we pause on this occasion and ask this question: Are the Geneva Conventions being used and abused by nations as a shield to cover their own inequities in human rights or to put it simply are these important legal principles only smoke and mirrors as we plunge in to a new century where it appears that the beast of impunity still lurks unchecked?

The answer to this rhetorical question is illusive and imprecise. In many ways the international community has made significant strides in facing down impunity. Since the Geneva Conventions nations have entered into numerous agreements limiting or outlawing such things as torture, genocide, the use of bacteriological and chemical weapons to name a few. Key human rights instruments have also been established, such as the Universal Declaration of Human rights. The creation of important institutions like the United Nations, the International Court of Justice, the International Criminal Court, the various international criminal tribunals, as well as the rise of nongovernmental institutions and civil society allow for mechanisms to be created to seek justice and monitor impunity. So the answer to the extant question can be a positive one in that the Geneva Conventions are not being abused, that they are taken seriously and used to counter evil.

Yet, despite all of this, the murder, rape, maiming, mutilation, pillaging, destruction of non-combatants worldwide goes on unabated. In such places as Darfur, Iraq, the Congo, Uganda, and Columbia human suffering continues. The sole super power, the United States, once the champion of the Geneva Conventions, has stumbled and committed breaches of their provisions in Iraq, Afghanistan, Guantanamo, and Eastern Europe in its single-minded conduct of the war on terror. Naïve statements by senior policy makers and lawyers within the Bush administration that the Geneva Conventions are obsolete and quaint, as well as to modify existing domestic law to remove them from liability are public confessions to their complicity in these violations. Their ignorance of the Geneva

Conventions has led them to do harm to the prestige of the United States around the world that once was a nation of laws. In some sense the United States has lost the moral high ground by ignoring the important principles laid out in the Geneva Conventions. There is an abuse here to be sure.

The Supreme Court of the United States in their recent decision in Hamdan v. Rumsfeld certainly refocused US policy on conducting the fight against international terror under the rule of law. This ruling clearly recognized the relevance and importance of the Geneva Conventions. The Bush administration "smoke and mirrors policy" related to international humanitarian law has set the tone for how we will take on terrorists and other national threats in the 21st century. The Hamden decision certainly has given them pause. The administration talks the talk about freedom, democracy, and the rule of law, yet they don't walk the walk. Using torture as a weapon, killing noncombatants, and actively seeking to destroy the 21st century's legal cornerstone in accounting for atrocity, the International Criminal Court, are but a few clear and sad examples.

The Geneva Conventions are as relevant today as they were in 1949. They are the moral thread that now binds all nations into a common legal purpose to regulate conflict, to treat humanely all persons caught up in the conflict, and to punish those who breach their principles. The rules have not changed, only the threat. The Geneva Conventions are mankind's one true hope in ensuring that the beast of impunity is faced down wherever it rears it ugly head in this new century. Let us rejoice in their universality. 194 nations joined together is a powerful statement in accountability.

David M. Crane is a professor at Syracuse University College of Law, and former founding Chief Prosecutor for the international war crimes tribunal in West Africa, called the Special Court for Sierra Leone, 2002-2005. He is a former paratrooper and judge advocate who helped develop and teach the US Department of Defense Law of War Program for almost 20 years.

Legalbrief Today

Monday, 28 August 2006

UK lawyers act against Sierra Leone Government

Published in: Legalbrief Today Date: Mon 28 August 2006 Category: Human Rights

Issue No: 1651

British lawyers representing a UK citizen charged with treason in Freetown have officially complained that the Government of Sierra Leone has violated the rights of their client, Omrie Golley (48) under the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights.

London solicitors Oury Clark have sent a petition to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in Banjul in The Gambia under Article 55 of the Charter, which deals with communication with the Commission. The petition states: 'Mr Golley has been denied an effective domestic legal remedy. There has been a complete failure to observe his basic human rights throughout being incarcerated in Pademba Road Prison in Freetown, Sierra Leone, since his arrest and his subsequent trial for treason. He is consequently not receiving a procedurally fair hearing in Freetown and faces a mandatory death penalty.' Buckinghamshire-born Omrie Golley, who holds dual British and Sierra Leonean nationality, was arrested in January this year, when he arrived in Freetown to register his political party, and charged with plotting to overthrow the government of President Tejan Kabbah. He has been refused bail despite medical reports that say his health is deteriorating fast.

Full report on the Legalbrief Today site

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 28 August 2006

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

International Clips on Liberia

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

International Clips on West Africa

There were no stories on West Africa in the major international media today.

<u>Local Media – Newspaper</u>

UNMIL Dedicates Market and Bridge Linking Grand Bassa with Rivercess (The Analyst, The Informer and Heritage)

- Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Alan Doss, on Thursday declared open a newly-renovated Central Market in the coastal city of Buchanan, in eastern Grand Bassa County. The construction was financed by the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), through its Quick Impact Project.
- While in Buchanan, Mr. Doss also officially opened a critical bridge connecting Grand Bassa and Rivercess Counties that was reconstructed by UNMIL Pakistani Engineers after it was washed away by heavy rains earlier this month.
- According to Mr. Doss, the bridge which is named in honour of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan "will restore road links between Grand Bassa, Rivercess, Grand Gedeh and Sinoe Counties which are vital for security and commerce."

Police Arrest SSS Officer for "Threatening" to Kill Taxi Driver (The Analyst and Public Agenda)

- The Liberian National Police on Friday arrested a female officer of the Special Security Service (SSS), Aliju Maureen Williams, for threatening to shoot and kill a commercial driver in Monrovia. Ms. Maureen pointed a pistol at a taxi driver, Prince Gueh, and threatened to shoot him dead for scraping her vehicle while they were in the traffic.
- According to The Analyst, the police also confiscated 14 weapons from the lady during
 a search carried out in her private vehicle, a white Nissan without license plate.
 However, Ms. Williams told the police that a driver of the SSS issued her the arms.

US Government Praises Training Process of New Liberian Army (The Analyst and The Inquirer)

- The United States Government, through its Ambassador to Liberia, Donald Booth, has expressed satisfaction over the ongoing training process of the new Armed Forces of Liberia.
- Following a "closed door" meeting with defense authorities in Monrovia recently, Mr.
 Booth acknowledged that the first phase on the preparation for the first batch of the
 new army beginning with recruitment; vetting and the ongoing training process have
 proven that the Ministry of Defense was fully up to the challenge of building a
 professional army that would serve the country.

Government Files Motion to Review Social Security Case

(Liberian Express, New Democrat, Heritage and Public Agenda)

- Montserrado County Attorney, Samuel Jacobs, has announced that the Government has filed a motion seeking a review of the just ended trial in which the Criminal "C" acquitted 11 former officials of the National Social Security and Welfare Corporation (NASSCORP) of Economic Sabotage.
- County Attorney Jacobs said that the motion followed an investigation conducted in which he claimed that the "not guilty' verdict passed in favor of the former officials was fraudulent. Meanwhile, NASSCORP's former Director General and one of the men acquitted, Orishall Gould, has claimed that some unidentified State security officers allegedly acting on the order of the Ministry of Justice are tailing him and that his life is in danger.

Isakaba Setting up Crime Network in Monrovia

(Liberian Express)

• [sic:] There are reports that the notorious "Isakaba" is transforming itself into a wellorganized criminal network in Monrovia. The much-talked about armed bandits are gradually spreading by establishing cells around Monrovia.

UNMIL Boss Says Liberia's Security is Still Fragile

(Liberian Express)

- Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Alan Doss, has said that peace and stability in Liberia still remains fragile despite progress being made by UNMIL in fulfilling its peace mandate over the years.
- Mr. Doss spoke at the Roberts International Airport recently when he presented medals to several Ukrainian peacekeepers serving within UNMIL.

Gunmen Attack Local NGO Offices in Lofa County (The News)

 Two gunmen, armed with AK-47 on Saturday attacked the offices of a local NGO, Community Habitat Fund, in Lofa County. The gunmen held six staff members of the organization at gunpoint and made away with US\$6,000, three computers, cell phones and other valuables from the offices. However, the armed men fled the scene leaving the employees unharmed.

Government Still Withholding Executive Mansion Fire Report (The News)

- [sic:] There are reports that the Liberian Government is withholding findings of the July 26 fire disaster at the Executive Mansion.
- The Government had promised that it would have released findings of the report in ten days but the time has expired. However, Presidential Secretary Cyrus Badio denied that the Government has received the reports but did not mention when the report would be out.

Local Media – Radio Veritas (News monitored yesterday at 6:45 pm)

Government Files Motion to Review Acquittal Verdict in Economic Saboteur Case (Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

UNMIL Deputy Force Commander Predicts Booming Economy for Liberia

• Speaking at an occasion to celebrate Pakistan's 59th Independence Anniversary, the Deputy Force Commander of the United Nations Mission in Liberia Maj. /Gen. Mohammed Thair, a Pakistani, said that Liberia was capable of contributing to the boom of the African economy provided the country uses its resources well. He challenged Liberians to refrain from attitudes that resulted to the civil war.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

 A Nigerian Government delegation headed by Acting Foreign Minister Alhaji Abubakar Tanko over the weekend arrived in Liberia for a 3-day visit during which it would meet President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, senior Liberian Government officials and the team of Nigerian medical doctors who are volunteering their services in Liberia.
 (Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Lawmakers Want Oil Refinery Manager to Clarify Bribery Allegation

- According to a press statement issued in Monrovia over the weekend, the House of Senate has summoned Liberia Petroleum Refining Company (LPRC) Managing Director Harry Greaves to clarify to its finance and budget committee the allegation that the Senate had requested him to give them US\$50,000 as a bribe to exempt LPRC from contributing revenue to the national budget.
- Mr. Greaves had declined to name the particular Senator who asked him for the money on behalf of the House of Senate. The Senators warned that Mr. Greaves' failure to appear would amount to a "gross affront" to the Liberian Senate.
- The Executive Branch's exclusion of LPRC from contributing revenue to the 2006/2007 fiscal budget on grounds that it was incapable of generating revenue, sparked heated debate at the National Legislature at the end of which the Lawmakers settled that the Company should contribute US\$500,000.

Participants at Public Debate Prefer TRC to War Crimes Court

- Participants at a debate on whether to establish a war crimes court for Liberia or Truth and Reconciliation Commission unanimously agreed that the latter would ensure justice, peace, love and reconciliation among Liberians.
- The participants' position followed respective presentations from the leader of the group calling for the establishment of such a court, Mr. Mulbah Morlu and Catholic Justice and Peace Commission National Director Atty. Augustine Toe, at a lecture organized in Monrovia over the weekend by the Youth Desk of the Liberia Council of Churches (LCC).
- The Council's Youth Desk Coordinator Adama Tumakai said that young people of the country were interested in the TRC which could be followed by a war crimes court in the future.

Prison Watch Group Lauds Improved Prison Conditions

 Mr. Jarwlee Gbarwee, Executive Director of the Prison Assistance Program (PAP) over the weekend applauded the work done to improve the condition of prisons throughout but called on Government to put more money into further improving the health, shelter and feeding conditions of prisoners, adding that UNMIL's effort needed to be enhanced by the Government who has the sole responsibility to improve prison conditions.

United Nations Monday, 28 August 2006

Report of the International Criminal Court for 2005-2006

Summary

The present report, covering the period from 1 August 2005 to 1 August 2006, is the second annual report of the International Criminal Court (hereafter "the Court") submitted to the United Nations. It covers the main developments in the Court's activities and other developments of relevance to the relationship between the Court and the United Nations.

The Court unsealed its first arrest warrants in October 2005. The first person arrested pursuant to a warrant issued by the Court was surrendered to the Court's custody in March 2006. Pre-trial and appeals proceedings were held, in anticipation of trials beginning in late 2006 or early 2007.

The Court continued its investigations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda and Darfur, the Sudan. Through outreach and public information activities, the Court engaged in dialogue with local populations and the public about its role, proceedings and investigations.

In all phases of its activities, the Court relied on cooperation from States, the United Nations, other international organizations and civil society. The Court does not have its own police force to carry out its decisions or orders. It needs the assistance of others in, inter alia, gathering evidence, providing logistical support to operations in the field, relocating witnesses, arresting and surrendering persons and enforcing the sentences of the convicted.

The Court and the United Nations continued to build on the Relationship Agreement, developing substantially the mutual cooperation between the two independent institutions. The Court also engaged with States, other international organizations, including regional organizations, and civil society to facilitate necessary cooperation. Nonetheless, substantial challenges to obtaining sufficient support remain. Over one year has passed since the Court issued its first warrants of arrest and the five subjects of the warrants remain at large. If trials are to be held, States and international organizations must assist the Court by arresting and surrendering those persons and others for whom warrants are issued in the future.

The Court today is becoming the centrepiece of an emerging system of international criminal justice, involving national, international and hybrid tribunals, as well as such international organizations as the United Nations. The interrelationships between those different institutions has continued to develop, as evidenced by the Court's assistance to the Special Court for Sierra Leone and other efforts directed towards international justice.

International Criminal Court

Monday, 28 August 2006 Press Release

Child soldier charges in the first International Criminal Court case

The Hague, 28 August 2006 ICC-OTP-20060828-157-En

Thomas Lubanga Dyilo, a former leader of a militia group at war in the North Eastern Ituri district of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), has been formally charged by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court with enlisting and conscripting children under the age of 15 and using them to participate actively in hostilities. A confirmation hearing has been set for 28 September. If the charges are confirmed at this hearing, Lubanga's case will be the first trial before the International Criminal Court and the first time that an individual has been brought before an international court solely on the basis of these crimes.

Thomas Lubanga Dyilo is the President of the Union des Patriotes Congolais (UPC) and was the Commander-in-Chief of its former military wing, the Forces Patriotiques pour la Libération du Congo (FPLC) at the times when the crimes were committed. From 1 July 2002, when the Court's jurisdiction began, and throughout 2003, FPLC commanders enlisted and forcibly recruited children and used them to participate actively in hostilities in the Ituri district. FPLC forces systematically abducted both boys and girls, and forcibly incorporated them into the ranks of the FPLC.

In his leadership positions, Thomas Lubanga Dyilo played an overall coordinating role in the UPC/FPLC's policy to recruit and enlist child soldiers and he provided the organisational, infrastructural and logistical framework for its implementation. The information collected shows that Thomas Lubanga Dyilo's activities were supported by foreign nationals, however the evidence is currently not enough to present a case against them. Thomas Lubanga Dyilo is considered by the Office of the Prosecutor to be among those who bear the greatest responsibility for these crimes. At the confirmation hearing, Thomas Lubango Dyilo and his counsel M. Jean Flamme will have the opportunity to challenge and contest the charges brought against him.

At the close of the hearing, if the Pre-Trial Chamber determines that there is sufficient evidence to support the charges, the case of Thomas Lubanga Dyilo will proceed to trial. The maximum sentence that an accused person can face before the ICC is life imprisonment.

Chief Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo said:

"This is just the first step in the case. As Prosecutors we have the responsibility to prove the case, we believe our evidence is strong. However, until his guilt is established, Thomas Lubanga Dyilo is presumed innocent."

"Regardless of the outcome of the proceedings, this case represents a huge step in the struggle against these serious crimes against children. Child conscription destroys the lives and futures of thousands of children around the world. This case will contribute to exposing the problem and in stopping these criminal practices."

In his latest report on this issue, the United Nations Secretary General has reported that from January 2004 to May 2006, more than 18,000 children were released from forces and armed groups in the DRC. Thousands more have escaped on their own. Yet children remain vulnerable to new threats,

including re-recruitment, and girls especially have found it extremely difficult to reintegrate into civilian life.

The case against Thomas Lubanga Dyilo represents almost two years of intense, on-the-ground investigation by the Office of the Prosecutor. Scores of missions to the DRC produced multiple statements. At the confirmation hearing, the Office of the Prosecutor will unveil for the first time evidence showing that Thomas Lubanga Dyilo's organization enlisted and forcibly recruited children into the ranks of their armed militia, and that Thomas Lubanga Dyilo was instrumental in orchestrating these activities. The Court has 60 days from the last day of the hearing to decide whether there is sufficient evidence to warrant a trial.

BBC

Monday, 28 August 2006

War crime charge for Congo rebel

The leader of a Democratic Republic of Congo militia has become the first war crimes suspect to be charged at the International Criminal Court.

Thomas Lubanga, who led the Union of Congolese Patriots (UPC) militia group based in eastern DR Congo, is accused of recruiting child soldiers.

International human rights groups argue that charges of murder, torture and rape should be brought against him.



Thomas Lubanga's UPC has been battling for control of Ituri's gold

The ICC was set up in 2002 to deal with war crimes and genocide worldwide.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) and other international watchdog bodies welcomed the charges, but said they did not go far enough.

"Enlisting, conscripting and using children as soldiers in armed conflict are serious crimes that should be condemned and appropriately punished. However, much more is needed," HRW said in a statement addressed to the International Criminal Court last month.

"We believe that you, as the prosecutor, must send a clear signal to the victims in Ituri and the people of the DRC that those who perpetrate crimes such as rape, torture and summary executions will be held to account," the statement said.

More charges?

ICC deputy prosecutor Fatou Bensouda said the court had begun with the charges related to child soldiers because evidence was available.

"This doens't mean the door is shut to other crimes," she told the BBC's Focus on Africa programme.

"The office of the prosecutor is in no way saying other offences were not committed. But the quality of the evidence we have is also important."



Enlisting children under the age of 15 into armed groups Conscripting children under the age of 15 into armed groups Using children under the age of 15 to participate actively in hostilities

The Ituri region of eastern Congo saw 66,000 deaths in six years of fighting between the UPC, based among the Hema ethnic group, and rivals from the Lendu ethnic group, partly for control of Ituri's large deposits of gold.

Mr Lubanga was arrested in 2005 after nine Bangladeshi UN peacekeepers were killed in the volatile Ituri area.

He emerged as one of the most notorious warlords in the civil war of the late 1990s.

Soldiers under his command are accused not just of murder, torture and rape, but also of mutilating their victims.

In one massacre, human rights groups say, Mr Lubanga's militiamen killed civilians using a sledgehammer.

At different times, the UPC was backed by both Uganda and Rwanda - DR Congo's neighbours, which were closely involved in its conflict.

The ICC has also issued its first arrest warrants for the leaders of Uganda's rebel Lord's Resistance Army, who are currently in talks with the Ugandan government, which has offered them amnesty.

It is also investigating alleged war crimes in Sudan's Darfur region.

The existence of the court is strongly opposed by the United States, which fears its troops could face political prosecutions.