

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



PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

as at:

Tuesday, 29 January 2013

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

Tuesday, 29 January 2013

In Special Court Contempt case... Taylor guilty on five counts

By Betty Milton

Prince Taylor accused of contempt at the Special Court for Sierra Leone has been convicted on four out of nine counts.

According to the Prosecution, Taylor was charged for attempting to interfere with prosecution witnesses that who had earlier testified in the Charles Taylor trial in The Hague.

He was convicted on 4 counts of "otherwise interfering" with prosecution witnesses who had given testimony in the Taylor trial at The Hague, and convicted on 1 count of interference with Eric Koi Senessie, who was then a potential prosecution witness.

He was however acquitted on 4 counts of offering bribes to witnesses, who had testified for the prosecution in The Hague.

Prince Taylor, a former Special Court investigator working for Charles Taylor, was charged on October 4 last year on an Indictment with 9 counts of contempt. The first eight counts relate to four Prosecution witnesses

who testified against Charles Taylor, and the ninth relates to Eric Koi Senessie, who was convicted of contempt on 21 June.

Giving her ruling, presiding Judge, Teresa Doherty gave a background to the trial while the accused pleaded not guilty to all the nine counts.

The judge gave a summary on the witness evidence with the prosecution presenting Eric Koi Senessie who had testified about the money he received from the accused and how he [accused] persuaded him to get the witnesses recant the evidence they had earlier given in the Taylor trial in the Hague.

The defence in their submission stated that the prosecution has the responsibility to prove beyond reasonable doubt, that the accused is guilty of the charges.

The defence also submitted that the court must aware of the witness Eric Senessie who is a proven liar as it has been shown in the trial.

However the Justice Teresa Doherty convicted the accused on five out of the nine counts.

The Democrat (Liberia)

Monday, 28 January 2013

Taylor Thanks Court

Imprisoned former Liberian president Charles Taylor Wednesday thanked judges of the UN-backed Special Court at The Hague, saying he was appreciative of the way they handled his appeal case against his conviction.

His remarks came after prosecutors told the court at the end of the hearings into his appeal that Sierra Leone rebels depended on Taylor's logistics to kill, rape and mutilate thousands during the West African nation's savage civil war.



Mr. Taylor

The Revolutionary United Front “relied on Taylor’s logistical assistance”, Nicholas Koumjian told the west African nation’s UN-backed special court, where the former warlord is appealing a 50-year prison sentence.

“Without this support, thousands would not have been killed, would not have been amputated, would not have been taken as sex slaves,” he told the second and final day of the appeals hearing at the court’s headquarters in Leidschendam just outside The Hague.

Dressed in a grey suit, white shirt and dark tie, with rimless round glasses perched on his nose, Taylor frowned often as he listened intently to the prosecution’s arguments.

The former strongman who was given an opportunity to address judges at the end of the hearing and told the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) that he was “very appreciative of the handling of the proceedings so far”.

“I have the belief that the right thing will be done with the grace of Almighty God,” said Taylor, who once famously compared himself to Jesus.

The SCSL in April last year convicted Taylor, 64, of aiding and abetting the RUF and its allies who waged a terror campaign during a civil war that claimed 120,000 lives between 1991 and 2001.

His sentence in May for “some of the most heinous crimes in human history” was widely welcomed around the world and was the first handed down by an international court against a former head of state since the Nazi trials at Nuremberg in 1946.

As neighboring Liberia’s president from 1997 to 2003, Taylor gave rebels guns and ammunition in their fight against Freetown during the conflict, know for its mutilations, drugged child soldiers and sex slaves, trial judges found.

In return, Taylor was paid in “blood diamonds” mined by slave labor in areas kept under the control of ruthless Sierra Leonean rebels.

Taylor’s defense again argued on Wednesday that there was no evidence linking him to crimes committed by Sierra Leone’s brutal rebel forces, nor did he provide logistics, guns and ammunition.

“There was no support from Charles Taylor,” said one of his lawyers, Christopher Gosnell.

The defense has argued that trial judges made legal mistakes in their findings against Taylor and are asking appeals judges to reverse the conviction and quash the sentence.

Prosecutors argued Taylor’s sentence was too light and asked, on appeal, for 80 years, with Koumjian telling judges: “Charles Taylor knew about these crimes.”

“He knew what was happening and how the RUF operated.”

Taylor’s trial, which ended in March 2011, saw a number of high-profile witnesses testify including British supermodel Naomi Campbell, who told the court she received a gift of “dirty diamonds”, said to be from the flamboyant Taylor.

Appeals judges are expected to have a decision by September at the earliest, with the Liberian ex-president remaining behind bars at the UN’s detention unit in The Hague until appeals proceedings are finalized.

If his appeal fails, Taylor will serve his sentence in a British jail.

Al Arabia

Sunday, 27 January 2013

Controversial appointment in Lebanon's Special Tribunal, raises questions

By Justin Salhani



Herman von Habel, the registrar of the STL arrives in Beirut Monday to tackle necessary judicial procedures to protect witnesses leaked by the Lebanese media. (Picture courtesy of www.stl-tsl.org/en/)

Herman von Habel, the registrar of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon arrived in Beirut on Monday 28. Jan, 2013 and is set to meet a number of Lebanese officials.

The Lebanese newspaper An Nahar said the meeting will discuss the trials set to start on March 25, 2013.

He will also be looking into the witnesses' leaks published by the Lebanese media and alongside Lebanese officials will tackle the necessary judicial procedures, in order to protect these witnesses as well as the secrecy of the investigations until the public trials begins.

Controversial appointment

A decision taken by the president of the STL last month found Al Akhbar journalist Dr. Omar Nashabe fit to serve as counsel to the STL's defense.

Nashabe took a leave of absence from Al Akhbar to avoid a conflict of interest, he said at a Beirut-based conference last week. Despite President David Baragwanath's decision, Nashabe's appointment remains controversial.

Lebanese journalist May Chidiac, who was the target of an assassination attempt in 2005, said that Nashabe's appointment was "the biggest mistake the Tribunal can commit."

"With all my respect to his person, I consider that his mission was to discredit the STL from the beginning," she said.



Omar Nashabe

According to the official STL website, "Its primary mandate is to hold trials for the people accused of carrying out the attack of 14 February 2005 which killed 23 people, including the former prime minister of Lebanon, Rafiq Hariri, and injured many others."

Chidiac's case is not currently being investigated by the STL unless a link can be found between the attempt on her and Hariri's assassination.

Nashabe is the director of Al Akhbar's research unit and up until his leave regularly published a commentary piece for the newspaper. His commentary has often blasted the STL for succumbing to international bias against the defense.

One example appears in a commentary piece from last September called "STL and Hezbollah: A Pre-Packaged Guilty Verdict", Nashabe writes that the United States' labeling of defendant Mustafa Badreddine as a terrorist "sealed the fate...before announcing its verdict."

Other critics

Nashabe is not alone in his criticism of the Tribunal. Al Akhbar's editorial stance in general has been opposed to the STL, a position entrenched by the recent publishing of a list of suspected witnesses. At a Beirut based conference last Friday, the act was cited by STL Spokesperson Marten Youssef as lacking journalistic ethics.

The sentiment was shared by Member of the Lebanese Parliament Marwan Hamade, the target of a failed assassination attempt himself in 2004. At the same conference, Hamade voiced concern that Al Akhbar was endangering the lives of the witnesses.

"The freedom of the press may sometimes amount to murder," he said.

Chidiac echoed this after she said revealing the witnesses' names "jeopardizes the work of the STL and endangers the life of witnesses."

Al Akhbar's Chief Editor, Ibrahim al Amin fired back at both Youssef and Hamade in commentaries written last week. In one commentary entitled, "A Reply to Marwan Hamadeh: Publish Your Testimony", Amin continued to call the STL illegitimate, describing it as "a scandal".

In another op-ed entitled "Al-Akhbar and the STL: We Will Not Be Silenced", Amin attacks the STL for what he says is a lack of transparency and value for money spent.

Amin also writes, "Other objections are related to a campaign being waged by the STL prosecution team and its political counterpart - its allies in Lebanon - against the defense team appointed by the Tribunal."

A team Nashabe is eligible to be a part of as of 21. Dec, 2012
The new job!

President Baragwanath's decision states that Nashabe may assist the defense by providing information, suggesting potential witnesses as well as a few other actions, so long as he isn't privileged to confidential information.

The decision taken added, "Dr. Nashabe shall be treated as a member of the public for the purposes of access to the premises of the Tribunal and information thereof, and pending any contrary decision of a Judge or Chamber, provision of confidential information shall not be granted to him unless ordered by a Judge or Chamber."

When contacted on Friday, Nashabe said that while he had not officially signed on to the defense at the time of speaking, he had no comment on his appointment.

He said all that could be said was in Baragwanath's decision.

(Justin Salhani is a journalist based in Lebanon who has written for various websites and publications. He can be found on Twitter at @JustinSalhani)