

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



Deputy Prosecutor Joseph Kamara speaking at the
National Police Prosecutors Training - Western Area Sector

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:

Monday, 3 August 2009

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

Taylor Accuses UN of Linking Him to Liberians Fighting in Sierra Leone / <i>Awoko</i>	Page 3
Taylor Denies Meeting RUF Leader / <i>The Torchlight</i>	Page 4
Taylor Accuses UN of Linking Him to Liberians Fighting in Sierra Leone / <i>Total News</i>	Page 5

International News

Former Liberian President Denies War Crimes Charges / <i>Voice of America</i>	Page 6
Taylor Says International Community Consented to His Contacts With RUF / <i>Charlestaylortrial.org</i>	Pages 7-8
Liberia's Taylor Lifts Veil on Life as Strongman / <i>Associated Press</i>	Pages 9-10
UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary / <i>UNMIL</i>	Pages 11-14
Kenya Shuns Special Poll Tribunal / <i>BBC Online</i>	Page 15
Kenya Shuns ICC Violence Tribunal / <i>Radio Netherlands Worldwide</i>	Page 16
Kenya Waits for Next Move from the Hague / <i>Voice of America</i>	Page 17
KRouge Inmates Given 'Rabbit Pellet Medicine' / <i>Radio Netherlands Worldwide</i>	Page 18
Reaffirm Support for International Criminal Court / <i>Human Rights Watch</i>	Page 19
Karadzic Defends Dutchbat From his Prison Cell / <i>Radio Netherlands Worldwide</i>	Pages 20-21
'The Reckoning' Tackles Issues of International Law and Justice / <i>The Block Island Times</i>	Pages 22-23

Awoko

Monday, 3 August 2009

Taylor accuses UN of linking him to Liberians fighting in Sierra Leone

Charles Taylor has accused the United Nations of making him responsible for the presence of Liberian fighters among rebel forces in Sierra Leone during its 11-year conflict and this misconception had landed him in jail today.

Mr. Taylor's defence counsel Courtenay Griffiths read from a United Nations (UN) Security Council report which stated that over 100 Liberian fighters were identified among rebel forces killed by Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) soldiers after the military intervention that forced the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) and Revolutionary United Front (RUF) junta from power in 1998. The report further read that about 65 Liberian fighters had been arrested and detained at Sierra Leone's maximum security prisons. The information is said to have been provided by Mr. Francis Okello, the then Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in Sierra Leone.

Mr. Taylor denied these allegations and informed the judges that the government of Sierra Leone was aware that the Liberians fighting in Sierra Leone were not sent by him, but were former members of the Liberian army who had escaped to Sierra Leone. He also stated that the Liberians had become part of the Special Task Force then hired to fight alongside the Sierra Leone army.

"We are shocked by this because we knew, the government of Sierra Leone and ECOWAS knew who the Liberians were," Mr. Taylor said.

Mr. Taylor said that this was the first time that such an allegation had been made against him and it only happened when he asked the UN Security Council to lift the arms embargo that had been imposed on Liberia. "It is a complete shock to me and my government," Mr. Taylor said. "If Okello had taken his time to investigate the matter, he would have known that they were not my people. If he had done his homework, he would have known the fact. He did not do his homework he added."

The Torchlight

Monday, 3 August 2009

Charles Taylor Denies Meeting RUF Leader

A United Nations report read in court last Thursday stated that Liberian casualties found among dead combatants in 1998 clearly pointed to Liberia's involvement in the Sierra Leone war. But Mr Taylor shifted the blame to Sierra Leone government officials and ECOMOG. The former Liberian leader swore that he did not meet RUF Leader, Sam Bockarie, in Gbarnga. John Kollie transcribes for the BBC World



Service, reports from the trial of former Liberian president in The Hague... The UN report as presented in the prosecution's case against the former Liberian leader

indicated that 150 Liberian combatants were identified among those killed when ECOMOG overthrew the military Junta in Sierra Leone. In the report the UN Secretary General S p e c i a l

the Billing Evaluation Department (BDD) of the Freetown City Council. Meanwhile, the mayor of the Freetown City Council Herbert

embark on the demarcation of 17 streets in the central business district. This exercise is designed to ensure that cars are properly parked within the

vacant. The Freetown City Council is determined to plan the city in order to meet the international standards.

Representative to Sierra Leone in 1998 further informed the Security Council that 65 Liberians were captured by ECOMOG forces. In response to the UN allegation, Mr Taylor claimed that former Sierra Leone President Tejan Kabbah and his deputy Defence Minister Hinga Norman were aware of Liberians fighting in Sierra Leone on their side of the war.

Mr Taylor denied that his government sent fighters to Sierra Leone, adding that the allegation arose when he requested the UN Security Council to lift the arms embargo imposed on Liberia. The accused former Liberian leader said he sensed at the time that certain members of the International Community did not favour his presidency. Some

prosecution witnesses testified last year that RUF Leaders including Sam Bockarie paid frequent visits to Mr Taylor in the central Liberian town of Gbarnga from 1991. But Mr Taylor said he did not meet Sam Bockarie until September 1998 when he was invited to Liberia by the E C O W A S Committee of five. Mr Taylor is expected to continue is testimony for several weeks.

Total News

Monday, 3 August 2009

Taylor Accuses the UN of Linking Him to Liberians Fighting In Sierra Leone

By Alpha Sesay

CHARLES Taylor today accused the United Nations of making him responsible for the presence of Liberian fighters among rebel forces in Sierra Leone during its 11-year conflict. This misconception, he said, had landed him in jail today. Mr. Taylor's defence counsel Courtenay Griffiths read from a 1998 United Nations (UN) Security Council report which stated that over 100 Liberian fighters were identified among rebel forces killed by Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) soldiers after the military intervention that forced the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) and Revolutionary United Front (RUF) junta from power in 1998. The report further read that about 65 Liberian fighters had been arrested and detained at Sierra Leone's maximum security prisons. The information is said to have been provided by Mr. Francis Okello, the then Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in Sierra Leone.

Mr. Taylor denied these allegations and informed the judges that the government of Sierra Leone was aware that the Liberians fighting in Sierra Leone were not sent by him, but were former members of the Liberian army who had escaped to Sierra Leone and had become part of the Special Task Force (STF) a group of Liberian fighters who reports indicate fought alongside the Sierra Leone military, supported the AFRC coup of 1997 and became part of the AFRC/RUF junta. Mr. Taylor has denied any associations with the STF.

"We are shocked by this because we knew, the government of Sierra Leone and ECOWAS knew who the Liberians were," Mr. Taylor said.

Mr. Taylor said that this was the first time that such an allegation had been made against him and it only happened when he asked the UN Security Council to lift the arms embargo that had been imposed on Liberia. "For the first time, this is raised. It is a complete shock to me and my government," Mr. Taylor said. "If Okello had taken his time to investigate the matter, he would have known that they were not my people. If he had done his homework, he would have known the fact. He did not do his homework."

Mr. Taylor told judges that his failure to clarify the presence of Liberians in Sierra Leone is what has brought him to his present state. "We never succeeded in putting the fact that there were Liberians in Sierra Leone but not sent by Taylor. This is what got me to jail today," he said.

The AFRC/RUF junta regime was established when soldiers of the Sierra Leone army overthrew the government of President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah in May 1997. The junta forces were eventually forced out of power through a military intervention by ECOMOG forces in February 1998.

The prosecution alleges that Charles Taylor supported the junta regime and provided them with arms and ammunition. The prosecution further alleges that Liberian forces under Mr. Taylor's control were sent by him to fight alongside the rebel forces in Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor has denied the allegations and has said in his testimony that he was in concert with other West African leaders to remove the junta from power and restore peace in Sierra Leone.

Mr. Taylor told the judges that some members of the international community did not like him being president of Liberia. "Maybe some people saw me as a problem, looking back at the coup, war, a situation where he was trained in Libya, and so they tried to stop me from being elected as president, the Liberian people did not buy the argument, I think the word came out then that we must stop Taylor," he said.

Voice of America

Friday, 31 July 2009

Former Liberian President Denies War Crimes Charges

By Kate Thomas
Dakar



Former Liberian President Charles Taylor is seen at the U.N.-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague, Netherlands, 13 Jul 2009

Former Liberian President Charles Taylor has testified at his war crimes trial in the The Hague that he never sent weapons to Sierra Leone. The trial has now finished its third week.

Prosecutors in The Hague have accused former Liberian President Charles Taylor of 11 counts of war crimes allegedly committed during the civil war in Sierra Leone. Among the allegations, prosecutors say he provided weapons to the Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone in exchange for access to so-called 'blood diamonds.'

But, on Thursday, the 61-year-old Taylor rejected the allegations of a prosecution witness who said Taylor had transported arms to Sierra Leone by road.

"I say it bluntly, it's a lie. Bluntly, that's as blunt as I can get," Taylor said.

He said there was not even a road from Liberia to that part of Sierra Leone.

"There is no such thing then, there is no such thing today in the Republic of Liberia," Taylor said. "That anyone in his sound mind and body can say that you can get in a truck and drive from Monrovia through Tubmanburg, Gborpolu, all the way through Fassama and come up to Salaye and Zorlewu. It's not possible. If you really want to make it up, fine, but it was not possible then, it is not possible now."

The former president also denied allegations that rebels under his command in Liberia engaged in cannibalism. Some witnesses have alleged that National Patriotic Front fighters in Liberia ate the organs of those they had killed.

He alleged that the U.N. wrongly linked him to Liberians fighting in Sierra Leone. He said that misconception had landed him in jail.

The former Liberian president first took the stand in his defense on July 14. He has dismissed the war crimes charges against him as "lies" and said he had nothing to gain from destabilizing Sierra Leone.

He is the first African leader to be tried at a U.N.-backed court.

Charlestaylortrial.org (The Hague)

Saturday, 1 August 2009

Taylor Says International Community Consented to His Contacts With RUF; and the UN Wrongly Linked Him With Liberian Fighters in Sierra Leone

Alpha Sesay

The international community knew and approved of Charles Taylor's contacts with rebels forces in Sierra Leone during its 11-year conflict because it was seen as a way to help bring peace to the war-torn country, Mr. Taylor told a court in The Hague this week. He also said that he was wrongly accused by the international community of having links with, and control over, Liberian fighters in Sierra Leone during the war.

Mr. Taylor has been accused by the Special Court for Sierra Leone - a court set up by the United Nations and Sierra Leonean government - of supporting members of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and their Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) junta counterparts during Sierra Leone's war, by supplying them with arms and ammunition in return for diamonds. He has also been accused of sending Liberian fighters to fight alongside rebel forces in Sierra Leone and that by his actions or inactions, he is responsible for the crimes committed by these rebel forces against the people of Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor has denied all these allegations.

On Monday July 27, 2009, Mr. Taylor told the judges that upon his appointment as head of the Committee of Five - a group set up by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to bring peace to Sierra Leone - he regularly communicated and held meetings with members of the RUF, but all these contacts were done with the consent and participation of ECOWAS and the United Nations.

"Subsequent to my appointment on the Committee of Five, I spoke with the RUF many times. I held meetings with them with the knowledge, consent and acquiescence of ECOWAS. The United Nations knew because for most of my discussions with the RUF, I spoke with Kofi Annan directly or through his Special Representative in Liberia. Everything I did in Sierra Leone was done with knowledge and consent of ECOWAS and I have documentary evidence to prove that," Mr. Taylor said.

Mr. Taylor also denied allegations that he supported the AFRC junta which overthrew the government of President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah in May 1997. He told the judges that, like other West African leaders, he was part of the decision that foreign governments should not recognize the junta government of the AFRC. For this reason, he said that Liberia did not recognize the AFRC junta regime in Sierra Leone. "There was a decision that the junta should not be recognized. My government did not recognize the junta," Mr. Taylor said.

Mr. Taylor denied allegations that he supplied arms and ammunition to the AFRC and RUF while he was president of Liberia. Taylor told judges that all fighting forces in Liberia had been disarmed and the Liberian military was non-existent at this time. "Here is a country just coming out of war with no economy, no army, what am I doing with another country? I did not even have arms for my own security. My protection was in the hands of ECOMOG," Taylor said.

Mr. Taylor also told the judges on Wednesday that as a member of the ECOWAS Committee of Five, he had no option but to support the decision to oust the AFRC junta from power and restore the democratic government of Ahmed Tejan Kabbah.

"Liberia pledged its support for the ECOWAS decision to restore the government of President Kabbah to power," Mr. Taylor told the judges. He said that if Liberia had the military man power, he would have

contributed troops to remove the junta from power by force. Mr. Taylor said he, however, wanted any use of such force to be authorized by the United Nations Security Council.

On Thursday July 31, 2009, Mr. Taylor accused the United Nations of making him responsible for the presence of Liberian fighters among rebel forces in Sierra Leone during its 11-year conflict. This misconception, he said, had landed him in jail today.

Mr. Taylor's defence counsel, Courtenay Griffiths, read from a 1998 United Nations Security Council report which stated that over 100 Liberian fighters were identified among rebel forces killed by Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) soldiers after the military intervention that forced the AFRC and RUF junta from power in 1998. The report further read that about 65 Liberian fighters had been arrested and detained at Sierra Leone's maximum security prisons. The information is said to have been provided by Mr. Francis Okello, the then Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in Sierra Leone.

Mr. Taylor denied these allegations and informed the judges that the government of Sierra Leone was aware that the Liberians fighting in Sierra Leone were not sent by him, but were former members of the Liberian army who had escaped to Sierra Leone and had become part of the Special Task Force (STF)— a group of Liberian fighters who reports indicate fought alongside the Sierra Leone military, supported the AFRC coup of 1997 and became part of the AFRC/RUF junta. Mr. Taylor has denied any associations with the STF.

"We are shocked by this because we knew, the government of Sierra Leone and ECOWAS knew who the Liberians were," Mr. Taylor said.

Mr. Taylor said that this was the first time that such an allegation had been made against him and it only happened when he asked the UN Security Council to lift the arms embargo that had been imposed on Liberia. "For the first time, this is raised. It is a complete shock to me and my government," Mr. Taylor said. "If Okello had taken his time to investigate the matter, he would have known that they were not my people. If he had done his homework, he would have known the fact. He did not do his homework."

Mr. Taylor told judges that his failure to clarify the presence of Liberians in Sierra Leone is what has brought him to his present state. "We never succeeded in putting the fact that there were Liberians in Sierra Leone but not sent by Taylor. This is what got me to jail today," he said.

Mr. Taylor also dismissed prosecution witness "Zig Zag" Marzah's testimony that Mr. Taylor dined on human intestines as nonsense and blamed the witness' illiteracy for coming up with such an allegation. In his 2008 testimony, prosecution witness and former commander of Mr. Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), Zig Zag Marzah told the court that he sat with Mr. Taylor and together, they dined on intestines of human beings who had been killed on Mr. Taylor's orders. "I felt like throwing up when I heard that nonsense from him, and I think even the prosecution were shocked at listening to that foolishness," Mr. Taylor said.

Mr. Taylor denied all allegations that he was a terrorist, saying that it was a phrase developed by former United States President George Bush, but its use has now been stopped by President Obama. He said western countries were opposed to him because he wanted an African solution to an African problem.

"I resent being labeled a terrorist. Africa has to be free, Africa has to determine its own destiny," he said.

Mr. Taylor has been charged with 11 counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity and other serious violations of international humanitarian law for his alleged role in the Sierra Leonean conflict after 1996. His testimony will continue Monday.

Associated Press
Saturday, 1 August 2009

Liberia's Taylor lifts veil on life as strongman

By ARTHUR MAX

AMSTERDAM — In three weeks on the witness stand, Charles Taylor has painted a portrait of an African strongman — navigating rebellions and palace intrigue, and ultimately failing in a struggle to survive as Liberia's president.

By turns vitriolic and professorial, Taylor is lifting a veil during his war crimes trial on the life of a guerrilla commander who fought enemies across borders and at home to seize his country's presidential mansion, and had aspirations to become a pan-African leader.

He has sought to counter claims he was a cannibalistic tyrant trading human lives for diamonds in neighboring Sierra Leone by describing himself as a democrat and statesman surrounded by enemies consumed with the notion to "get Taylor."

The detailed narrative is fascinating, if selective.

"He's a great communicator," says David Crane, the prosecutor who drew up Taylor's indictment six years ago. "He's just not telling the whole story,"

As president, Taylor felt under siege, rarely trusting those around him.

When he traveled, he rode in a convoy with two presidential limousines so that potential attackers would never know which car he was in.

He says he created a broad government, bringing in former enemies in an attempt at national reconciliation. But he acknowledged keeping them under constant surveillance.

"Everybody is watching his movements, his attitude," Taylor said of Varmuyan Sherif, a former bodyguard who testified against him.

"This was a man who just tried to kill me" when he was a general in an opposing militia. Taylor said that Sherif, who described himself as close to the president, was never allowed to carry a weapon in his presence.

Taylor is the first defense witness at the Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague. His testimony is likely to continue several weeks more, and the defense has lined up another 200 potential witnesses.

He is accused of 11 counts of murder, rape, sexual slavery, cruelty, forced labor and recruiting child soldiers as he supported rebels in neighboring Sierra Leone. He has denied all allegations.

His British lawyer, Courtenay Griffiths, is leading him through a month-by-month account of his rise to power, from the invasion of his rebel force in 1989 to overthrow the tyrannical regime of Samuel K. Doe to his 1997 election and his own ouster in 2003, when his government was accused of surpassing Doe's in brutality.

Along the way Taylor describes encounters with former allies and opponents, as well as his sometimes tumultuous personal affairs with a succession of wives and girlfriends. He casually name-drops acquaintances like Jimmy Carter and Jesse Jackson.

Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, the current Liberian leader and Africa's first woman president, was a former supporter and fundraiser with whom Taylor said his relations "had gotten rocky." Former U.S. President Bill Clinton, Taylor said, was friendly and encouraging of Liberia's "democratic reforms" during a telephone conversation, even though the country was then under a U.N. embargo.

He is usually sedate but has moments of jocularity and sudden flashes of venom — using calculated moments of outrage to deny allegations against him and denounce witnesses as liars or madmen.

That atrocities happened in Sierra Leone is undeniable. For more than a year prosecutors brought a parade of victims displaying the stumps of limbs hacked off by rebels and women who told of being dragged off into slavery.

The defense strategy must be to dissuade the three judges that Taylor was responsible for the rebel actions and to undermine the prosecution's allegations that he had a command-and-control function over the militias to gain access to Sierra Leone's mineral wealth.

Crane, who is now a Syracuse University law professor, said Taylor was trying to portray himself as Liberia's savior and as a victim of circumstances. "He steps very quickly over the 1.2 million human beings that he destroyed in 10 years."

Alpha Sesay, a Sierra Leone lawyer who writes a daily summary of the trial for an Internet site, says Taylor has been trying at every turn to distance himself from the rebels of the Revolutionary United Front, or RUF.

"Many of us used to think that Taylor was reckless. But now, listening, you can see that as president he tried to cover every trace of his association with the RUF," said Sesay, whose own family repeatedly were chased from their homes by rebels.

In that regard, Taylor's performance so far has been "brilliant," he said. "I've always known he is a smooth talker. He can be very very convincing."

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 31 July 2009

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

International Clips on Liberia

Taylor Accuses The United Nations of Linking Him to Liberians Fighting In Sierra

Jul 31, 2009 (CharlesTaylorTrial.org/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- Charles Taylor today accused the United Nations of making him responsible for the presence of Liberian fighters among rebel forces in Sierra Leone during its 11-year conflict. This misconception, he said, had landed him in jail today. Mr. Taylor's defence counsel Courtenay Griffiths read from a United Nations (UN) Security Council report which stated that over 100 Liberian fighters were identified among rebel forces killed by Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) soldiers after the military intervention that forced the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) and Revolutionary United Front (RUF) junta from power in 1998. The report further read that about 65 Liberian fighters had been arrested and detained at Sierra Leone's maximum security prisons. The information is said to have been provided by Mr. Francis Okello, the then Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor denied these allegations and informed the judges that the government of Sierra Leone was aware that the Liberians fighting in Sierra Leone were not sent by him, but were former members of the Liberian army who had escaped to Sierra Leone, had become part of the Special Task Force and then hired to fight alongside the Sierra Leone army.

Liberia's Taylor lifts veil on life as strongman

Source: English Politics News Date: July 31, 2009 --AMSTERDAM_ In three weeks on the witness stand, Charles Taylor has painted a portrait of an African strongman _ navigating rebellions and palace intrigue, and ultimately failing in a struggle to survive as Liberia's president. By turns vitriolic and professorial, Taylor is lifting a veil during his war crimes trial on the life of a guerrilla commander who fought enemies across borders and at home to seize his country's presidential mansion, and had aspirations to become a pan-African leader. He has sought to counter claims he was a cannibalistic tyrant trading human lives for diamonds in neighboring Sierra Leone by describing himself as a democrat and statesman surrounded by enemies consumed with the notion to "get Taylor." The detailed narrative is fascinating, if selective. "He's a great communicator," says David Crane, the prosecutor who drew up Taylor's indictment six years ago. "He's just not telling the whole story," As president, Taylor felt under siege, rarely trusting those around him.

International Clips on West Africa

HIV Laws Do More Harm Than Good

Cape Town, Jul 31, 2009 (Inter Press Service/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- In Sierra Leone, a mother who transmits HIV to her child can be fined, jailed for up to seven years, or both. Human Rights Watch reports that in 2008, several men were arrested in Egypt simply for being HIV positive. New legislation is currently being discussed in Angola that could lead to a three to ten year jail sentence for those who knowingly pass on HIV. The legislation is inspired by a September 2004 workshop organised by the influential reproductive health organisation Family Health International developed an "African Model Law" intended to protect those who are infected and exposed to HIV.

But various civil society organisations fear that these legislative measures will hurt more than help the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Local Media – Newspaper

Liberia-Namibia Sign Communiqué

(Heritage, New Vision, The Parrot)

- Liberia and Namibia have signed a joined communiqué aimed at improving relations between the two countries.
- The Presidents of Liberia and Namibia signed the communiqué Thursday at the Roberts International Airport outside Monrovia.
- Presidents Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Hifikepunye Pohamba hoped the communiqué will help resolve problems on the African continent.
- The two presidents agreed on the gradual approach to achieving the United States of Africa and commitment to maintaining the relative peace in the Ivory Coast.
- Earlier, two agreements on fishery and tourism were signed between the two countries.

U.S. Embassy Donates US\$230,000 worth of Equipment to Help Clean Monrovia

(The Informer)

- The United States Government through the United States African Development Funds (USADF) has donated two garbage trucks, a dump truck, and one 966-machine to Libra Sanitation to be used for garbage removing in Monrovia and its environ.
- The equipment valued at US\$230, 000 was presented to the company Wednesday at its Perry Street offices in Monrovia.
- Speaking during the presentation, the Economic Officer at the United States Embassy near Monrovia, Sarah Gonzales said the donation is a goodwill gesture of the people of America in identifying with the Liberian-owned company to promote its effort for garbage collection in the country.
- For his part, Mr. George Howe, General Manager and CEO of Libra Sanitation Inc said they shall continue to partner with everyone to ensure that garbage is contained.

Norway Spends US\$2m On LNP Women and Children Unit

(The Inquirer)

- Speaking at a handover ceremony of a male dormitory at the police academy outside Monrovia, the Norwegian Ambassador to Cote d' Ivoire, Merete Lunderno said her Country has spent a little over US\$2million on the Liberia National Police (LNP) Women and Children Protection Unit.
- Ambassador Lunderno said Norway remains committed to assisting Liberia's development agenda.
- Also speaking at the ceremony, Police Inspector General, Marc Amblard thanked the Government of Norway for the level of support given the police and cautioned officers to take care of the new facilities.
- UNDP Programme Manager, Napoleon Abdulai appealed to the Norwegian government to help fund the fencing of the academy as well as help in the construction of the drainage at the facility.
- The project was sponsored by the Government of Norway through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

New Labor Minister Vows to Create More Jobs for Liberians

(Daily Observer, National Chronicle)

- Labor Minister Tiawon Gongloe has vowed to protect the interest of all employers and employees in the country.
- Speaking yesterday when he took over as Labour Minister, Counselor Gongloe promised to create more jobs for Liberian youths and also promote a peaceful working environment throughout the country.
- The former Solicitor General said he believed the country would be more peaceful if more young people were given opportunities to enjoy the dignity of labor.

FDA Acknowledges “Global Witness” Warning

The Inquirer)

- The Forestry Development Authority (FDA) says it takes seriously report by an international group Global Witness warning it against awarding logging concession to some companies.
- Global Witness in its report urged the FDA not to award contracts to Atlantic Resources, the Southeast Resources, and the Alpha Logging companies.
- According to Global Witness, the companies do not have good financial standing and human rights record.
- FDA Acting Managing Director Kedrick Johnson said his entity appreciates the report and would review it and take action.
- Mr. Johnson assured the names of qualified bidders for logging concessions would forwarded to the Forest Management Committee for approval.

Lutheran Church Launches Memorial Fund for Massacre Survivors

(Daily Observer)

- The Lutheran Church in Liberia has launched a memorial fund drive for several survivors of the July 29, 1990 massacre at St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Sinkor.
- Speaking at the launch, Lutheran Church Bishop Rev. Dr Sumoward Harris said the fund drive was intended to help survivors of the massacre.
- He said the massacre which led to the death of over 600 Liberians had caused a setback to the livelihood of survivors.

Former Interim President Calls for Reconciliation Conference

(The Inquirer)

- Former Interim President, Dr. Amos Sawyer has called for a national conference on reconciliation.
- Dr Sawyer said as a way of moving the nation forward, he proposed what he called “a well prepared and well planned” national conference that will put in place strategies on peace building and review equity in the distribution system.
- Dr. Sawyer made the assertions on Thursday during a programme in memory of the late Pan Africanist, Tajudeen Abdul-Raheem, a native of Nigeria.

Local Media – Star Radio (*culled from website today at 09:00 am*)

Angry Youths Barricade Highway

- Reports say angry youths armed with cutlasses, knives and spears yesterday attacked an UNMIL truck with stones in Mount Barclay, Montserrado County.
- According to the report the angry youths also threw stones at a truck belonging to the Chinese Construction Company, CHICO.
- The attack followed a fist fight between residents of Cooper Farm and Duazon Communities in Mount Barclay over allegations of the illegal land sale in the area.
- The Director of Action against Climate Change, Yorfee Shakadee the fight disrupted the normal flow of traffic. As the stone-throwing youths barricaded the Monrovia-Kakata Highway and turned vehicles back. Police and other security forces later move in brought the situation under control.

(Also reported on Sky F.M., Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Liberia-Namibia Sign Communiqué

(Also reported on Sky F.M., Truth F.M. and ELBC)

USAID Donates Fifteen Vehicles to Government

- The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has handed over fifteen new vehicles to the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare.
- The vehicles worth US\$900.00 include five equipped ambulances for emergency cases, especially women with pregnancy complications.
- USAID-Liberia Mission Director, Pamela White said the donation was in support of the Ministry's commitment to decentralize health activities.

- The vehicles will be distributed to six counties including Bong, Grand Cape Mount, Lofa, Montserrado, Nimba and Rivergee.
- The vehicles were provided through "Rebuilding Basic Health Services", the largest US Government-supported health project in Liberia.

(Also reported on Sky F.M., Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Bangladeshi Contingent Behabilitates Major Highway in Nimba

- The 11th Bangladeshi Engineering Battalion of UNMIL has begun the rehabilitation of the road between Sanniquellie and Loguatu in Nimba County.
- The commander of Banbatt 17, Lt. Col. Mutlub Ahmed said his men decided to rehabilitate the road due to its deplorable state.
- Lt. Col. Ahmed said if nothing is done to improve the road movement of goods and services would be difficult by September.
- He disclosed that local workers have been contracted to help build drainages as part of the rehabilitation work.

House of Representatives Issues Ultimatum to Line Ministries

- The House of Representatives has given a two-week ultimatum to all line ministries which have not submitted their performance reports to do.
- The House gave the ultimatum Thursday following a letter by Montserrado County Representative Koukou Dorbor.
- In the letter, Representative Dorbor informed the House that some line ministries of government have refused to submit their 2008 performance reports to the body saying their failure continues to impede the process of checks and balances by the House.

(Also reported on Sky F.M., Truth F.M. and ELBC)

FDA Acknowledges "Global Witness" Warning

BBC Online

Thursday, 30 July 2009

Kenya shuns special poll tribunal

By Will Ross
BBC News, Nairobi

Kenya's cabinet has announced that it will not set up a special tribunal over last year's post-election violence, and will use local courts instead. The prime minister said the judiciary, which is viewed by many as corrupt, will first be reformed.

Senior politicians are accused of playing a role in the violence and many fear they can influence the courts.

So the idea of referring the investigation to the International Criminal Court is a popular one.



The prime minister and president said the judiciary would be reformed

After the cabinet stated that it was still determined to pursue the perpetrators of last year's post election violence, Kenyan Prime Minister Raila Odinga said the public had no confidence in the judiciary, so there would first need to be judicial reform.

He made it clear that - contrary to the recommendations of an inquiry into the violence - the Kenyan cabinet had decided against setting up a special local tribunal.

"The final goal is to try people through the Kenyan laws... through the normal courts, once the judiciary has been reformed," he told the BBC.

Minister thwarted

Asked whether such a reform would not take years, he replied that it could be undertaken "quickly".

But few Kenyans will believe that the words "judicial reform" and "quickly" belong in the same sentence.

The country has a history of impunity.

It will be of great concern to Kenyans and the international community that the cabinet has ruled out setting up a special tribunal that would have featured some international judges.

On the eve of the cabinet meeting Kenya's justice minister, Mutula Kilonzo, had told the BBC he was determined to put in place such a tribunal.

But his goal was clearly thwarted by cabinet colleagues, several of whom he said were running away from justice.

A number of Kenyan politicians have been accused of perpetrating last year's violence.

It is clear that some of them have been reluctant to pass a law that might result in their own prosecution.

There is still an option for the International Criminal Court to open investigations against key perpetrators.

But the cabinet's decision will do nothing to change the minds of those who believe Kenya's politicians are more concerned with covering their own backs than finding justice for the violence that brought the country to the brink of civil war.

Radio Netherlands Worldwide

Friday, 31 July 2009

Kenya shuns ICC violence tribunal

By Lula Ahrens



Nairobi, Kenya

Kenya will not set up a special tribunal to deal with last year's post-election violence. The matter will be dealt with by local courts instead, the cabinet announced on Friday.

Prime Minister Raila Odinga said the judiciary, which is widely seen as corrupt, will first be reformed. He told the BBC that his "final goal is to try people through the Kenyan laws".

Many fear that senior politicians, who are accused of playing a role in the violence, will influence the courts. Some of them have been unwilling to pass a law that might lead to their own prosecution.

Pursuing justice through the International Criminal Court (ICC) is therefore a popular option among the Kenyan public. The ICC can in principle still launch investigations against key perpetrators if Kenya's coalition government fails to set up a credible local court to try those accused of provoking the violence.

In December last year, current President Mwai Kibaki was elected by a tight margin, with then opposition leader and current Prime Minister Odinga claiming fraud. The dispute resulted in months of chaos and violence that killed at least 1,300 people and forced more than 300,00 people to flee.

Kibaki and Odinga recently formed a wobbly coalition. Both Kibaki and Odinga prefer a local court, but according to media reports most Kenyans want the ICC to deliver justice.

Kenya has a long history of impunity. Some say justice over the 2008 violence is crucial to future stability in Kenya, Africa's largest economy. Others warn that any judicial process could destabilise the country by stirring up old hatreds.

Voice of America

Friday, 31 July 2009

Kenya Waits for Next Move from the Hague

By Alan Boswell

Nairobi



A Kikuyu man is attacked by rioters in the Mathare slum, Nairobi, Kenya, 20 Feb 2008

In Kenya, the divided government has abandoned efforts to form a special tribunal to try high level suspects implicated in the country's post-election violence, and many Kenyans are waiting to see how the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court in The Hague will respond.

Kenyan leaders decided this week to refer the cases of suspected instigators of last year's violence to a Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Committee, that was established to promote national healing. The government has offered vague promises that it will reform the committee's powers to fit its newly expanded role.

The International Criminal Court has said it would try the suspects, if Kenyan leaders failed to establish their own tribunal. Former United Nations chief Kofi Annan, who helped negotiate an end to the violence, recently turned over a list of key suspects to the International Criminal Court.

Kamodho Waiganjo, a law lecturer at Nairobi University, says that, in his view, the government's decision not to pursue a special court in Kenya was in effect a tacit message to The Hague that the International Criminal Court will have to handle the high level prosecutions.

"The proposals that the government presented to the ICC prosecutor was whether or not to have a local tribunal in the form of that [agreed upon] tribunal," he said. "So, the failure to agree to that was basically a surrender of the process to the ICC, without directly saying so."



International Criminal Court chief prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo gives a press conference in The Hague, Netherlands, 04 Mar 2009

ICC Prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo has the legal power to begin independent cases against Kenya suspects at any moment.

Analyst Waiganjo says he thinks that the chief prosecutor will allow Kenya's leaders to buy some time as he waits to see what the new truth and justice committee will look like. However, the law professor says that, at this point, eventual ICC intervention appears inevitable.

"He already has enough problems with perception with problems in Sudan, so he doesn't want to be seen to be railroading African countries, especially where they feel they have a local solution," said Waiganjo. "So he's probably going to allow for time. But I don't think it's going to be a very long time, because he had already given timelines for September."

With the trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor currently under way and with an arrest warrant outstanding for Sudan's sitting president, Ocampo has been criticized as unfairly targeting the continent.

The government decision not to establish a special court to try to try suspects in the election violence came after the third straight Cabinet meeting ended in deadlock over the proposed tribunal.

Radio Netherlands Worldwide

Monday, 3 August 2009

KRouge inmates given 'rabbit pellet medicine'

By International Justice Desk



Phnom Penh, Cambodia

A former child medic at the Khmer Rouge's notorious main prison told Cambodia's war crimes court Monday that he tried to keep torture victims alive with pills known as "rabbit pellet medicine".

Sek Dorn, now 48, was testifying at the trial of Duch, who is accused of overseeing the torture and execution of about 15,000 people in the late

1970s at Tuol Sleng prison, also known as S-21.

The witness, who said he was assigned to care for prisoners when he was still a child, told the UN-backed court that he mostly gave the wounded and sick inmates pills they called "rabbit pellet medicine".

The so-called medicine, nicknamed for its grainy resemblance to rabbit faeces, was a homemade mixture of various ingredients used to treat a wide range of illnesses during the Khmer Rouge regime.

"The pellet medicine would be given to them to keep them alive for the period they would be interrogated," Sek Dorn said.

"When I was hungry, I also ate the medicine and some of it had a sweet taste and some had a bitter taste," he said, adding that the pellets had no effect on him.

The witness told the court that he sometimes cleaned prisoners' wounds, but the primary method of care was providing the pills, even though he did not know their properties.

Sek Dorn said that despite receiving the pills, hundreds of prisoners died from their wounds and sores after being tortured.

"Most of the prisoners had diarrhoea or fever or headaches, and the majority of them had wounds on their backs. Some of them had their fingernails or toenails missing," Sek Dorn said, adding that some had their ears torn.

The 66-year-old Duch, whose real name is Kaing Guek Eav, has previously accepted responsibility for his role governing the jail and begged forgiveness for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

But he has consistently rejected claims by prosecutors that he held a central leadership role in the Khmer Rouge, and says he never personally killed anyone.

Led by Pol Pot, who died in 1998, the Khmer Rouge emptied Cambodia's cities in a bid to forge a communist utopia. Up to two million people died of starvation, overwork and torture or were executed during the 1975-1979 regime.

Human Rights Watch

Thursday, 30 July 2009

Africa: Reaffirm Support for International Criminal Court

For Immediate Release

African Union Decision Threatens Justice for Atrocities

More than 130 civil society and human rights groups from across Africa issued a statement today calling upon African states that are parties to the International Criminal Court (ICC) to reaffirm their commitment and their obligation to cooperate with the court.

The statement follows a decision by the African Union (AU) at its summit meeting on July 1-3, 2009 that its member states “shall not cooperate” with the ICC in the arrest of President Omar al-Bashir of Sudan. The ICC issued an arrest warrant for al-Bashir on March 4 for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Darfur.

“The AU’s decision that states should not cooperate with the ICC threatens to block justice for victims of the worst crimes committed on the continent,” said James Gondi of the Eastern Africa International Criminal Justice Initiative in Nairobi.

“We urge our governments to reaffirm their commitment to fighting impunity by supporting and cooperating with the ICC,” said Oby Nwankwo of Nigeria’s Civil Resource Development and Documentation Centre.

The AU decision is contrary to its own constitutive act, which rejects impunity, the group statement said. It also noted that the AU decision was inconsistent with the obligations under the ICC statute that all states parties cooperate with the ICC, including in the arrest and surrender of criminal suspects.

“The ICC remains a crucial court of last resort for Africa when national courts are unable or unwilling to bring justice for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes,” said Anton du Plessis of South Africa’s Institute for Security Studies.

African governments were among the first states to ratify the Rome Statute, the agreement that led to creation of the ICC in 2002. Thirty African countries are now parties to the Rome Statute, representing a majority of AU member states.

“African states were central to the establishment of the ICC and are essential to ensuring its success,” said Georges Kapiamba of the Association Africaine de Défense des Droits de l’Homme (ASADHO) in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Civil society organizations from 30 African countries – with representation from each of Africa’s sub-regions – endorsed the statement urging governments to express their support and willingness to cooperate with the ICC.

“Civil society across Africa has united in its determination not to allow our leaders to forfeit Africa’s commitment to justice for victims of atrocities,” said Comfort Ero of the International Center for Transitional Justice in South Africa.

To read the joint statement by more than 130 civil society and human rights groups, and the full list of signatories, please visit:<http://www.hrw.org/node/84759>

Radio Netherlands Worldwide

Thursday, 30 July 2009

Karadzic defends Dutchbat from his prison cell

By Lula Ahrens

*The Hague,
Netherlands*



UN Dutchbat soldiers “did the best they could” in Srebrenica in 1995, Radovan Karadzic told a Dutch press agency on Wednesday. According to political scientist Dick Leurdijk,

Karadzic’ comments can hardly be seen as a strategic move aimed at his defence.

In an interview with Dutch press agency ANP from inside his prison cell in The Hague, former president of the Republika Srpska said that Dutchbat has been unfairly criticised over the events in Srebrenica.

All suspected and detained war criminals are free to give interviews according to a ICTY spokesperson.

“Taking into account the small size of the military force that was sent to Srebrenica, the mission was doomed to fail. When the Dutch were sent to Srebrenica, it was widely known within the UN that the enclave was not a neutral, safe haven but rather a stronghold of the Bosnian Muslim army with a reckless criminal in charge, personified by Naser Oric.”

Bosnian-Serb forces under Karadzic’ supreme command overran Srebrenica on 11 July 1995 and are alleged to have subsequently killed some 8,000 Bosnian Muslims.

Karadzic said that at the time it was “necessary” for the Bosnian-Serbian army to react to continuous attacks by Bosnian Muslims from the Srebrenica enclave on surrounding Serbian villages. “They killed hundreds of civilians and then withdrew to the safety of the ‘safe zone” he said. According to Karadzic, it has been well-documented that Oric and his men received weapons from outside the enclave. “The Bosnian Muslims were the darlings of the Americans, who encouraged weapon deliveries together with the Iranians, in defiance of the UN weapon embargo.”

Karadzic said Dutchbat had “neither the manpower nor the political mandate” to solve these problems. “I hope that through my trial, the Dutch public will discover the truth behind these events and that they will understand that their boys did their best in difficult circumstances.”

Dick Leurdijk is a political scientist at Dutch think-tank Clingendael. He finds Karadzic’ comments “enigmatic” and “peculiar”. “It seems he wants to create sympathy among the Dutch public. But why? It’s

useless. He has to answer to the judge. Comments that are made outside the court don't have any influence on the judicial process. So from a judicial point of view, he has nothing to gain from what he said about Dutchbat."

"As for his other comments, all he said was that it was a piece of cake for the Bosnian Serbs to overrun Srebrenica."

Karadzic faces 11 charges, including genocide over the Srebrenica massacre, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia was originally due to have finished all trials by 2008 and appeals by 2010. The court now estimates that the Karadzic trial may not conclude until early 2012, with some appeals running into 2013. It is still unclear when Karadzic will start his defence.

The Block Island Times

Monday, 3 August 2009

<http://www.blockislandtimes.com>

'The Reckoning' tackles issues of international law and justice

By Peter Voskamp



Peter Kinoy

"My responsibility is to look," says filmmaker and longtime Corn Neck Road resident Peter Kinoy. "The least I can do is bear witness."

Kinoy and his films have been bearing witness now for more than 30 years, putting the spotlight on human rights and justice issues around the world.

His latest film, "The Reckoning — the battle for the International Criminal Court," will

have its Block Island debut on August 6 at 7 p.m. at St. Andrew's Parish on Spring Street.

Kinoy's film, made with collaborators Pamela Yates and Paco de Onis, details the steps taken to create a permanent International Criminal Court in The Hague. It discusses the many obstacles surmounted to establish the court, and the ongoing travails involved in keeping the institution viable in the face of fierce opposition from powerful non-signatories (such as the United States; though the Obama Administration is currently weighing whether to join). While 108 countries are members, the U.S. joins Russia, China and India in not recognizing the court's legitimacy.

But perhaps the most powerful aspect of "The Reckoning" is its in-country chronicling of the deeds that led to war crime indictments. The film crew traveled to Uganda and Congo to interview many who witnessed or were victims of horrific acts.

Viewers should be forewarned that some of the stories and images are unsettling. But, as uncomfortable as they may be, bringing the painful reality to the world is central to Kinoy's mission.

ICC's struggle from the start

The International Criminal Court is separate from United Nations tribunals that were convened to try individuals such as Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia, Charles Taylor of Sierra Leone, and perpetrators of genocide in Rwanda. The U.N. tribunals' mandates are comparatively limited.

As Kinoy explains it, a kind of "tribunal fatigue" set in, especially because the trials are very expensive endeavors. This situation served as an impetus for creating a permanent criminal court with a wider jurisdiction.

The ICC was officially created in 1998 via the Rome Statute. Leading the charge to establish the court were surviving prosecutors from the Nuremberg Trials, including Ben Ferencz (who makes an appearance in the film) and the late Henry King of Block Island.

The court concentrates primarily on charges of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

While the court is funded by its members, it remains independent and is “not a political court in any way,” says Kinoy.

It is also a court of last resort, meaning that the ICC only takes a case from a member country when that country is unable or unwilling to pursue the matter on its own.

Kinoy says that no matter how heinous the crimes, “everyone has a justification.” Whether it’s Milosevic in Serbia or Thomas Lubanga in the Congo, the indicted war criminals usually claim they were merely protecting their own particular ethnic group.

But the ICC’s position is this: killing of civilians is never justified.

In the film we see John Bolton, former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations in the George W. Bush administration, unapologetically describe his efforts to undermine the court. Bolton’s opposition was due primarily to issues of sovereignty.

“People want to tell their story,” says Kinoy. “Bolton was very proud of the position he took.”

“The Reckoning,” which was selected in this year’s Sundance Film Festival, took three years to produce, filming in four continents in six different languages. We travel from The Hague to Uganda, to the Congo as well as to Colombia in South America.

Kinoy considers the creation of the film as only the start of a six-year process: the next three years will be about audience engagement. The film is currently playing on PBS outlets around the country, and there are education modules included on a website, with extended interviews and other material: www.pbs.org/pov/reckoning/

Looking forward

Despite the horrors he has chronicled, Kinoy remains optimistic about mankind’s moral and political trajectory. He sees an opportunity to “reinvigorate Democracy through the Internet,” because new technology enables citizens to record abuses and disseminate the images in short order. Also, like-minded people can be brought together quickly.

Kinoy and his family have come to Block Island since the 1950s. They first stayed at the Ocean View Hotel, and then bought their Corn Neck Road home in 1963.

Arthur Kinoy, Peter’s father, was a renowned Constitutional lawyer who filed appeals for the Rosenbergs and defended the Chicago Seven. The elder Kinoy also wrote “The Real Mystery of Block Island,” which the island’s Historical Society continues to publish.

“If I didn’t have a place like Block Island to rejuvenate, I’d be more of a pessimist,” says filmmaker Kinoy.

But, even after three decades of “witnessing” the worst that mankind can visit up mankind, Kinoy says he remains heartened by the “courage people have time and time again.”

In his worldview there are those who sit on the poles of evil and sainthood, while the rest of us are “general sinners in the middle.”

“We need the law; it helps us live right and safely. That’s why I want this court to succeed.”

You can learn more about the ICC by logging on to www.ijcentral.org.