

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



Melie River bridge, near Kameindor linking Sierra Leone and Guinea

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, 3 February 2009

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
Martin Royston-Wright
Ext 7217

International News

Who Killed Sam Bockarie? / <i>New Vision (Liberia)</i>	Pages 3-4
Moses Gbla Participated in Sam Bockarie's Killing / <i>Heritage (Liberia)</i>	Pages 5-6
Moses Blah Linked to Sam Bockarie's Death / <i>Public Agenda (Liberia)</i>	Page 7
Evidence Against Taylor Ends / <i>The Liberian Express (Liberia)</i>	Page 8
Prosecution's Lasts Witness Ends Testimony / <i>The Monitor</i>	Page 9
Liberia: Prosecutor Presents Final Witness At UN-Backed Trial of Taylor / <i>UN News</i>	Page 10
Final Witness Appears in UN-backed Trial of Liberia's Taylor / <i>Chinaview</i>	Page 11
Chief Prosecutor for Special Court in Sierra Leone talks War Crimes / <i>Talk Radio News Service</i>	Page 12
Senegal Threatens to Hand Chad Dictator to AU / <i>Agence France Presses</i>	Pages 13-14
Teacher in US Accused of Genocide / <i>BBC Online</i>	Page 15
AU Summit Hails New Somali Leader; Calls on ICC to Suspend Bashir Warrants / <i>VOA</i>	Pages 16-17

Who Killed Sam Bockarie?

...Eyewitness Accounts Link Top NPFL Ex-Generals

With account emerging from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Thematic and Institutional hearings, the NEW VISION have unraveling accounts of unfolding developments characterizing the despotic regime of former President Charles Taylor especially those pointing to the circumstances surrounding the Brutal Murder of Sam Bockarie, a notorious Sierra Leonean.

In recent times, there have been claims and counter claims over the true story of Sam Bockarie's death. However, latest information from the TRC hearings linked former

NPFL Inspector General, and Ex Vice President Moses Z. Blah to the gruesome murder of M. Bockarie.

Former Vice President Moses Blah took part in the murder of RUF commander Sam Bockarie, a witness told commissioners of Liberia's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

Mohammed Sheriff, a senior commander of the defunct Anti-Terrorist Unit (ATU) of exiled President Charles Taylor said Blah conspired and participated in the killing of Bockarie in the town of

Tiaplay in Nimba County.

Sheriff said the late Sierra Leonean rebel commander was murdered upon the orders of then President Taylor who was informed that Bockarie was conspiring against him.

He said an order was passed to General Benjamin Yeaten to recall Bockarie who was fighting alongside dissident forces fighting the Government of La Cote D'ivoire.

"Bockarie and his men came across the border into Liberia based on the order and when he

reached the Town of Tiaplay, Yeaten invited him to have meal with him and Moses Blah, the former vice president," he explained.

Mr. Sheriff was testifying recently at the ongoing public hearings of the TRC at the Centennial Memorial Pavilion in Monrovia.

"After an order came to Ivory Coast by the President Charles Taylor through General Yeaten, everybody was surprised at the order to retreat. We all were taken to Tiaplay in a town called Bloh

Cont'd on page 6



The late Sam Bockarie: Who killed him?

Taylor Witnesses Afraid To Testify

The chief defense lawyer of former Liberian President, Charles Taylor says fear harboured by many potential witnesses is the greatest challenge facing Taylor as he stands trial for war crimes and crimes against humanity in The Hague, Holland.

Courtenay Griffiths told journalists that lot of people are reluctant to come forward to testify for Taylor. Griffiths said many people are afraid of being added to travel ban or the assets freeze list of the United Nations.

He also attributed the fear of potential witnesses to what he called the adverse media reports against the former Liberian leader. Griffiths said lot of people didn't want to be seen associating with Taylor because of the negative publicity against him.

He also said the second challenge the defense is likely to face is that it has not got enough time to prepare its case. Griffith said the prosecution started the preparation of its case in 2003, but according to him, the defense

has less than a year to adequately plan its side of the case. In an interview on Wednesday he spoke of inadequate resources as another challenge facing the defense.

Griffiths said his team did not have money to pay witnesses as the prosecution reportedly did to convince witnesses to come forth and testify against the former president.

He added that as a matter of principle, he was opposed to paying people to testify no matter how

important the evidence may be.

"I don't think the truth is enhanced by payment. People should be willing to come to court and give evidence because they are convinced of the need to tell the truth because that's what justice requires" he noted. He accused prosecution witnesses of testifying to protect themselves or that they were being paid to testify.

Griffiths also described the prosecution's case as flimsy because

Cont'd on page 6



Ex-Prxy Moses Z. Blah: Yeaten Killed Bockarie

US\$2.6 Billion Contract Questioned

...Global Witness Urges Lawmakers to Scrutinize Agreement

Liberian legislature must be given time to review US\$2.6 billion Chinese contract; Government should disclose contract and usage of

to genuine legislative scrutiny, say Publish What You Pay Liberia (1) Green Advocates (2) and Global Witness (3). The Mineral Del-

ment in Liberia and the rehabilitation of the Bong iron ore mine. However, very little information has been publicly disclosed about,

given adequate time to review the agreement, and request amendments, prior to ratification, if required.

Who Killed

together with Sam Bockarie and his families. An order was given for us to be tied and Sam Bockarie was called upon to go and eat together with the Vice President Moses Blah, Gen. Yeaten and Joe Tuah."

After eating, Sheriff explained, Yeaten told Bockarie to escort them to an unknown destination somewhere in the forest, where he was swept down by group of Yeaten and Blah bodyguards and beaten to death. He said the Sierra Leonean rebel commander was later shot to prove that he was killed in an exchange of gunfire.

He said following the death of Bockarie, Yeaten ordered his (Bockarie's) senior bodyguard, Gen. Salami "to sex his wife" to death. He said Yeaten's bodyguards then killed the RUF commander's mother and children.

"He was beaten to death and fired; Gen. Salami sexed his wife (Mama Hawa) to death; killed his mother (Mama Fatu) and his son, Corporal."

Sheriff said they were then released and Bockarie's body was transported to Monrovia "in order to create a camouflage that he was ambushed."

"They then left men down to Tiaplay to execute men loyal to the late Gen. Sam Bockarie. They were even over 700 men that were killed on that day," he said.

He explained also that in Monrovia, wounded fighters loyal to Bockarie who were hospitalized were loaded into three trucks and executed somewhere along the Bomi Highway to conceal evidence after the agitation for remuneration to return to Sierra Leone.

Sheriff said the government also hunted and eliminated other Sierra Leonean fighters that were residing in other parts of Monrovia as part of its campaign to "destroy evidence."

During his appearance before the TRC last year, Mr. Blah said that he only knew about Bockarie's death when Gen. Yeaten stopped over in his town while enroute to Monrovia and showed him his corpse.

Blah: "Yeaten was passing through the town one day when he came and told me they had just come from an operation. Yeaten told me chief we just came from an operation so come and see. When I looked in the pickup I saw the body of Bockarie lying down in a pool of blood."

Meanwhile, Public hearing of Liberia's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) continues Monday with the appearance of a se-

nior commander of Charles Taylor former government militia, Joseph D. Mazzah.

Mazzah, alias "Zigzag Mazzah" a once feared militia commander who testified against Mr. Taylor at his ongoing war crimes trial before the United Nations backed Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague is among several witnesses to testify at the commission's ongoing public hearings at the Centennial Memorial Pavilion in Monrovia.

Also to appear Monday are former government commanders William Barday and Eric Wongbay who will also testify about their roles in the Liberian conflict. Their appearance is part of the ongoing "Contemporary History of the Conflict (1979-2003)" Institutional and Thematic Inquiry Public Hearings of the Commission.

Under the theme: "Understanding the Conflict Through its Principal Events and Actors," the ongoing hearings are addressing the root causes of the conflict, including its military and political dimensions. The hearings are focused on events between 1979 and 2003 and the national and external actors that helped to shape those events.

Liberia is recovering from years of conflict that was characterized by horrific human rights violations, including arbitrary killings, use of child combatants, rape and sexual violence, separation of families, and looting and destruction of properties. Out of a population of 3 million, an estimated 300,000 Liberians were killed, with as many as 1.5 million displaced.

Under the theme: "Understanding the Conflict Through its Principal Events and Actors," the ongoing hearings are addressing the root causes of the conflict, including its military and political dimensions.

The hearings are focused on events between 1979 and 2003 and the national and external actors that helped to shape those events.

The TRC was agreed upon in the August 2003 peace agreement and created by the TRC Act of 2005.

The TRC was established to "promote national peace, security, unity and reconciliation," and at the same time make it possible to hold perpetrators accountable for gross human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law that occurred in Liberia between January 1979 and October 2003.

Taylor Witnesses

cause a number of important witnesses that the prosecution listed have not been called upon to testify.

"We believe that the credibility of the vast majority of their linkage witnesses have been called into serious question," he stated.

He cited Liberian Journalist Hassan Bility as one whose accounts during all the testimonies are contradictory internally. He noted that Bility gave different accounts at all the trials he had appeared in and that

there were blatant inconsistency and downright lies in all of his testimony."

Griffiths said many of these witnesses were giving the prosecution what they wanted.

He said the defense case will revolve around the testimony of Taylor since he is the one on trial.

Meanwhile another prosecution insider witness has taken the stand against Taylor. For fear of his or her personal security, the witness is testifying in closed session.

Heritage (Liberia)
Monday, 2 February 2009

Moses Blah Participated In Sam Bockarie's Killing

...Ex- ATU commander testifies at TRC

FORMER VICE PRESIDENT Moses Blah took part in the murder of RUF commander Sam Bockarie, a witness told commissioners of Liberia's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

Mohammed Sheriff, a senior commander of the defunct Anti-Terrorist Unit (ATU) of exiled President Charles Taylor said Blah conspired and participated in the killing of Bockarie in the town of Tiaplay in Nimba County.

Sheriff said the late Sierra Leonean rebel commander was murdered upon the orders of then President Taylor

who was informed that Bockarie was conspiring against him.

He said an order was passed to General Benjamin Yeaten to recall Bockarie who was fighting alongside dissident forces fighting the Government of La Cote D' Ivoire.

"Bockarie and his men came across the border into Liberia based on the order and when he

reached the Town of Tiaplay, Yeaten invited him to have meal with him and Moses Blah, the former vice president," he explained.

Mr. Sheriff was testifying recently at the ongoing public hearings of the TRC at the Centennial Memorial Pavilion in Monrovia.

"After an order came to Ivory Coast by the President Charles Taylor through General Yeaten, everybody was surprised at the order to retreat. We all were taken to Tiaplay in a town called Bloh together

with Sam Bockarie and his families. An order was given for us to be tied and Sam Bockarie was called upon to go and eat together with the Vice President Moses Blah, Gen. Yeaten and Joe Tuah."

After eating, Sheriff explained, Yeaten told Bockarie to escort them to an unknown destination somewhere in the forest, where he was swept down by group of Yeaten and Blah bodyguards and beaten to death. He said the Sierra Leonean rebel

See Page 6

Moses Blah

From *Front Page*

commander was later shot to prove that he was killed in an exchange of gunfire.

He said following the death of Bockarie, Yeaten ordered his (Bockarie's) senior bodyguard, Gen. Salami "to sex his wife" to death. He said Yeaten's bodyguards then killed the RUF commander's mother and children.

"He was beaten to death and fired; Gen. Salami sexed his wife (Mama Hawa) to death; killed his mother (Mama Fatu) and his son, Corporal."

Sheriff said they were then released and Bockarie's body was transported to Monrovia "in order to create a camouflage that he was ambushed."

"They then left men down to Tiaplay to execute men loyal to the late Gen. Sam Bockarie. They were even over 700 men that were killed on that day," he said.

He explained also that in Monrovia, wounded fighters loyal to Bockarie who were hospitalized were loaded into three trucks and executed somewhere along the Bomi Highway to conceal evidence after the agitation for remuneration to return to Sierra Leone.

Sheriff said the

parts of Monrovia as part of its campaign to "destroy evidence."

During his appearance before the TRC last year, Mr. Blah said that he only knew about Bockarie's death when Gen. Yeaten stopped over in his town while enroute to Monrovia and showed him his corpse.

Blah: "Yeaten was passing through the town one day when he came and told me they had just come from an operation. Yeaten told me chief we just came from an operation so come and see. When I looked in the pickup I saw the body of Bockarie lying down in a pool of blood."

Liberia is recovering from years of conflict that was characterized by horrific human rights violations, including arbitrary killings, use of child combatants, rape and sexual violence, separation of families; and looting and destruction of properties. Out of a population of 3 million, an estimated 300,000 Liberians were killed, with as many as 1.5 million displaced.

Under the theme: "Understanding the Conflict Through its Principal Events and Actors," the ongoing hearings are addressing the root causes of the

The hearings are focused on events between 1979 and 2003 and the national and external actors that helped to shape those events.

The TRC was agreed upon in the August 2003 peace agreement and created by the TRC Act of 2005. The TRC was established to "promote national peace, security, unity and reconciliation," and at the same time make it possible to hold perpetrators accountable for gross human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law that occurred in Liberia between January 1979 and October 2003.

Moses Blah Linked To Sam Bockarie's Death

-As Taylor Sanctions Killing



Former Vice President Moses Blah took part in the murder of RUF Commander Sam Bockarie, a witness told commissioners of Liberia's Truth and

Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Mohammed Sheriff, a Senior Commander of the defunct Anti-Terrorist Unit (ATU) of exiled President Charles Taylor

said Blah conspired and participated in the killing of Bockarie in the Town of Tiaplay in Nimba County. Sheriff said the late Sierra Leonean

rebel commander was murdered upon the orders of then President Taylor who was informed that Bockarie was conspiring against him. He said an order was passed to

General Benjamin Yeaten to recall Bockarie who was fighting alongside dissident forces that were battling the Government of La Cote D' Ivoire. "Bockarie and his men came across the border into Liberia based on the order and when
Cont'd on page 6

African Social Forum Unsure of Brazil

Africa's representatives at a meeting between the International Council of the World Social Forum and the President of Brazil, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, have come out feeling unconvinced about Brazilian support for African interests on world trade issues. The African group had hoped that on the merit of South-South solidarity Brazil could argue Africa's case against the Economic Partnership

Agreements with the European Union and agriculture protection measures in World Trade Organization talks. The encounter left Wahu Kara of the Kenya Debt Relief Network "concerned about the future of Africa". This member of the Council of the African Social Forum said "[Africa] lacks men and women of vision and courage to assert the vision of Africans at the Global

agenda". President Lula told the African members of the International Council of the World Social Forum that his country was taking forward wider south matters at the level of the G5 and the G20. However some of them had expected Brazil that has a huge population of African ancestry, to display a stronger commitment to

he reached the Town of Tiaplay. Yeaten invited him to have meal with him and Moses Blah, the former Vice President," he explained. Mr. Sheriff was testifying recently at the ongoing public hearings of the TRC at the Centennial Memorial Pavilion in Monrovia. "After an order came to Ivory Coast from former President Charles Taylor through General Yeaten, everybody was surprised at the order to retreat. We all were taken to Tiaplay in a Town called Doh together with Sam Bockarie and his families. An order was given for us to be tied and Sam Bockarie was called upon to go and eat together with the Vice President Moses Blah, Gen. Yeaten and Joe Tash." After eating, Sheriff explained, Yeaten told Bockarie to escort them to an unknown destination somewhere in the forest, where he was swept down by group of Yeaten and Blah's bodyguards and beaten to death. He said the Sierra Leonean rebel commander was later shot to prove that he was killed in an exchange of gunfire. He said following the death of Bockarie, Yeaten ordered his (Bockarie's) Senior Bodyguard, Gen. Salami "to sex his wife" to death. He said Yeaten's bodyguards then killed the RUF commander's mother and children. "He was beaten to death and freed, Gen. Salami seduced his wife (Mama Hawa) to death, killed his mother (Mama Fata) and his son, Corporal."

He said following the death of Bockarie, Yeaten ordered his (Bockarie's) Senior Bodyguard, Gen. Salami "to sex his wife" to death. He said Yeaten's bodyguards then killed the RUF commander's mother and children. "He was beaten to death and freed, Gen. Salami seduced his wife (Mama Hawa) to death, killed his mother (Mama Fata) and his son, Corporal." Sheriff said they were then released and Bockarie's body was transported to Monrovia "in order to create a carnage that he was ambushed." "They then left men down to Tiaplay to execute men loyal to the late Gen. Sam Bockarie. They were even over 700 men that were killed on that day," he said. He explained also that in Monrovia, wounded fighters loyal to Bockarie who were hospitalized were loaded into three trucks and executed somewhere along the Boni Highway to conceal evidence after they agitated for remuneration to return to Sierra Leone. Sheriff said the government also hunted and eliminated other Sierra Leonean fighters who were residing in other parts of Monrovia as part of its campaign to "destroy evidence."

Yeaten stopped over in his town while on route to Monrovia and showed him his corpse. Blah: "Yeaten was passing through the town one day when he came and told me they had just come from an operation. Yeaten told me chief we just came from an operation so come and see. When I looked in the pickup I saw the body of Bockarie lying down in a pool of blood." Liberia is recovering from years of conflict that was characterized by horrific human rights violations, including arbitrary killings, use of child combatants, rape and sexual violence, separation of families, and looting and destruction of properties. Out of a population of 3 million, an estimated 500,000 Liberians were killed, with as many as 1.5 million displaced. Under the theme: "Understanding the Conflict Through its Principal Events and Actors," the ongoing hearings are addressing the root causes of the conflict, including its military and political dimensions. The hearings are focused on events between 1979 and 2003 and the national and external actors that helped to shape these events.

The TRC was agreed upon in the August 2003 peace agreement and created by the TRC Act of 2006. The TRC was established to "promote national peace, security, unity and reconciliation," and at the same time make it possible to hold perpetrators accountable for gross human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law that occurred in Liberia between January 1979 and October 2003. Meanwhile, as the public hearing continues today, another Senior Commander of Charles Taylor former government militia, Joseph D. Mazzah, is slated to appear before the TRC. Mazzah, alias "Zigzag Mazzah" a once feared militia commander who testified against Mr. Taylor at his ongoing war crimes trial before the United Nations backed Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague is among several witnesses to testify at the commission's ongoing public hearings at the Centennial Memorial Pavilion in Monrovia. Also expected to appear today are former government commanders William Barclay

EVIDENCE AGAINST TAYLOR ENDS

After 91 Witnesses, Court Resumes Feb. 9

The prosecution in the war crimes court sitting in The Hague has ended the production of evidence against the former Liberian leader Charles Taylor.

The last and final prosecution witness TF1-278, who commenced testimony Friday, concluded his evidence against Taylor January 30.

Although Taylor was absent in court but he was said to have con-

sented to the continuation of proceedings while away.

Prosecution counsel Nicholas Koumjian continued asking questions about the witness's experience during the January 1999 rebel invasion of Freetown.

Counsel asked the witness about an individual he mentioned as having seen at Shell Gas Station when rebels entered Freetown in January

1999.

The man's name according to the witness was "High Way". He explained that the man had been imprisoned at Pademba Road Prison for murder and he was released by the rebels when they released all the prisoners upon entering the capital.

Asked how he knew that the man's name was High Way, the



Former Liberian leader Charles Taylor

witness said that everybody in Freetown knew about High Way as he had murdered a former Bank Governor as well as a medical doctor.

He said that High Way was very notorious. He also informed the court that High Way was armed when he saw him.

Explaining further about his experiences, the witness said that at Falcon Street, the rebels asked all residents to move outside and dance for peace with white cloth.

He said that the rebels harassed civilians after some time. Some of

EVIDENCE AGAINST

the rebels were armed, while some were not, the witness explained.

He further said that at some point, the rebels asked the civilians to move to the center of town at PZ and dance for peace.

He said he refused to go but based on what he heard, the ECOMOG Alpha Jet dropped a bomb thus killing 17 civilians who went to PZ. He said that at some point, a group of rebels went and stayed at Falcon Street, where he resided.

At some point, the witness said a group of rebels, led by one Tommy went to his house, entered his room where he had kept a suitcase. Among the rebels, he said were adults and children, both males and females. While some of them wore military fatigues, he said some had civilian clothes on. He said some of the rebels called themselves the Junta and some spoke with Liberian accent. The witness also said that he interacted with a small boy in the group called Kelich. When he realized that the boy was his Lanko tribesman, he asked the boy why he had joined the group and the boy, he said, told him that he was captured eight years ago.

When

When ECOMOG jets started dropping bombs, the witness said the gang left his house but another group went there and searched the entire house. He said when they went upstairs, they found a police uniform wrapped in a bag. He said the rebels thought he was a police officer but he explained to them and showed them his work ID that he was not a police officer. He said the rebels searched him and took away the Lc. 50,000 he had with him. Two days later, the witness said he saw the Kassy Mental Home on fire. He said some other rebels entered his house, took the rice his wife had cooked, took some alcohol that he had and set the house on fire. According to the witness, he was hiding in the bathroom outside the house. When the rebels left, he said he came out and put out the fire but the rebels came back and set fire to the house again. He said that other houses and structures close to his house were set on fire and so together with his family and other neighbors, they hid themselves in a banana plantation.

Court went into brief private session to allow the witness to mention the name of a person who was sexually assaulted. While hiding in the banana plantation, the witness said two girls between the ages of 16-18 were taken away by the rebels and they were only seen after the disarmament in Sierra Leone. He also said that while in hiding, a young baby cried and that brought the rebels' attention to where they were hiding. Because of this, he said they all escaped and moved into different directions. On their way, he said he saw a man who was shot and killed by the rebels. He said when the rebels hunted them, some people escaped but he stayed to protect his family. One Mr. Barry, he said, confronted the rebels and his hands were chopped off by the rebels using an axe. Mr. Barry, he said, left his children and went away. The rebels told him to go to Tujan Kabbah.

The witness said he was the next person to be called by the rebels. He said they chopped off his left hand and when his son cried about it, they threatened to cut off the son's hand as well but the witness said he told the rebels that they had rather chop off his other hand than do same to his son. As a result, he said the rebels chopped off his right hand as well. Both hands, he said were now hanging off when he told his family to move along with the civilians while he went to look for a clinic. When he got to the

clinic, he said it was closed and so he decided to move ahead. While moving, he said he fell into a gutter and started screaming. ECOMOG soldiers later took him to the Cannanought Hospital where his chopped hands were amputated. He said he spent six months in the hospital, after which he was moved to the Amputee Camp at Aberdeen, in the western part of Freetown.

Counsel had the court view a short video of the witness and his son explaining their plight at the amputee camp at Aberdeen. The witness said he spent over five years at the camp and that there were over 280,000 of them there.

When asked whether this experience has had any impact on him, the witness explained that because of his amputation, he can no longer work and now lives as a beggar. He said it is now

Defense counsel Courtenay Grillo QC cross-examined the witness. Counsel's cross-examination was very short as he just asked the witness about the various stages of the conflict. Counsel asked the witness where he was when the war started in Sierra Leone. The witness responded that he was based in Freetown at that time. He said he heard people say that the war had started around Kallahun and Pajehun. He said he was not following the trend of the war so much on radio at this time.

When asked about the NPRC coup that toppled Joseph Moses in 1992, the witness said he was in Freetown at that time. He said he was also in Freetown when the AFRC overthrew Tejan Kabbah in 1997. According to the witness, he knew that the RUF joined the AFRC in 1997. He said he was in Freetown when ECOMOG drove the AFRC out of power in 1998. He further reiterated his experiences during the January 1999 invasion of Freetown.

Presiding Judge Richard Lister thanked all parties for their cooperation during this phase of the trial. Court was adjourned to February 9, 2009 when the Chamber will hold a Status Conference and determine how to proceed with the defense case.

Prosecution's last witness ends testimony

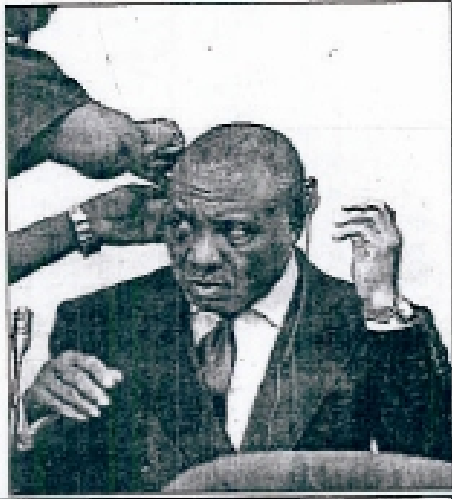
Court adjourns

The Prosecution in the ongoing war crimes trial of former Liberian leader has ended its evidence with testimony of the last witness against Charles Taylor.

On Friday, January 30, the prosecution concluded its evidence with 91 witnesses in total who testified against Mr. Taylor and the court adjourned and will resume with a "Status Conference" on February

9. The last prosecution witness TF1-278, who commenced his testimony on Thursday, 29 concluded his evidence against Charles Taylor though he was absent in court but he consented to the continuation of proceedings in his absence.

Prosecution counsel Mr. Nicholas Koumjian continued the cross-examination of the
See Story on Page 6



UN News

Tuesday, 2 February 2009

Liberia: Prosecutor Presents Final Witness At UN-Backed Trial of Taylor

The prosecution has presented its 91st and final witness in the United Nations-backed trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor on charges of war crimes committed in the civil war in Sierra Leone, completing a graphic litany of alleged atrocities ranging from thousands of murders to mutilation, rape and sexual slavery.

The Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), Stephen Rapp, who built his case with 31 insider witnesses testifying to Mr. Taylor's links to the crimes, and more than 50 others, including amputees, rape victims and former child soldiers, cited the harrowing case of witness 91 - a father who had his hands chopped off to save his four-year-old son.

"I am in awe of their courage and grateful for their willingness to travel thousands of miles to bear witness," he told a news conference in New York. "The contrast between these victims and the accused could not be more stark and this was brought home in particular by the last witness, a man whose left hand was amputated by the rebels who are alleged to have been controlled or aided by Taylor.

"When his four-year-old son protested the injury to his Pappa, and the rebels then threatened the boy with amputation, the witness then offered his own right hand to save his son, which the rebels then proceeded to chop off. Here we saw a man who sacrificed his own hands for the future of his son bearing witness against a man alleged to have sacrificed the lives, the hands and the futures of thousands of human beings in pursuit of his own wealth and power."

Mr. Taylor has pleaded not guilty to the 11 counts of counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity and other violations of international humanitarian law, which also include pillage, slavery for forced marriage purposes, collective punishment and recruitment and use of children under the age of 15 in active hostilities. He is expected to testify in his own defence, according to his lawyers.

None of the charges relate to atrocities Mr. Taylor is alleged to have committed in Liberia, but to his aid to two Sierra Leonean rebel groups, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) during the civil war from 1996 to 2002.

Mr. Rapp said he expected the defence to start after Easter in April, after possible procedural defence motions to dismiss the case, and to last four to six months, with all evidence and arguments concluding this year. If Mr. Taylor is convicted, sentencing should follow three to four weeks after that. An appeal could then take up to six months and the whole process should be concluded by the end of 2010.

The SCSL, established in January 2002 by an agreement between Sierra Leone's Government and the UN, cannot impose a life sentence, but it has already sentenced two defendants in another case to 50 years in jail. Britain has said it would be willing to imprison Mr. Taylor if he is found guilty. In 2006, the UN Security Council authorized Mr. Taylor's trial to be held in The Hague, Netherlands, instead of its usual venue in Sierra Leone's capital, Freetown, citing security reasons.

Of the 91 prosecution witnesses, only four testified entirely in closed session, though some were protected by partial face or voice distortion.

"It's been demonstrated that it's possible to prosecute a former chief of State in a trial that is fair and efficient even when the indictment covers wide-ranging crimes," Mr. Rapp said. "We've seen international justice operating in accordance with the highest standards."

Chinaview.com

Tuesday, 3 February 2009

www.chinaview.cn

Final witness appears in UN-backed trial of Liberia's Taylor

UNITED NATIONS, Feb. 2 (Xinhua) -- The prosecution has presented its 91st and final witness in the United Nations-backed trial of former Liberian president Charles Taylor on 11 criminal counts related to the civil war in Sierra Leone, according to a UN press release Monday.

"I am in awe of their courage and grateful for their willingness to travel thousands of miles to bear witness," the chief prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), Stephen Rapp, told a news conference in New York.

Rapp said the harrowing case of the 91st witness, a father who had his hands chopped off by rebels linked to Taylor in order to save his four-year-old son, has fully demonstrated the stark contrast between the victims and the accused.

Taylor has pleaded not guilty to the 11 counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity and other violations of international humanitarian law. He is expected to testify in his own defense, according to his lawyers.

None of the charges relate to atrocities Taylor is alleged to have committed in Liberia, but to his aid to two Sierra Leonean rebel groups during the civil war from 1996 to 2002.

Rapp said he expected the defense to start after Easter in April, after possible procedural defense motions to dismiss the case, and to last four to six months. All evidence and arguments would be concluded this year, he said.

If Taylor is found guilty, sentencing should follow three to four weeks after that. An appeal could then take up to six months and the whole process should be concluded by the end of 2010.

The SCSL, established in January 2002 by an agreement between Sierra Leone's government and the UN, cannot impose a life sentence, but it has already sentenced two defendants in another case to 50 years in jail.

In 2006, the UN Security Council authorized Taylor's trial to be held in The Hague, Netherlands, instead of its usual venue in Sierra Leone's capital, Freetown, citing security reasons.

Talk Radio News Service

Monday, 2 February 2009

<http://talkradionews.com>

Chief Prosecutor for Special Court in Sierra Leone talks war crimes

Tala Dowlatshahi

Stephen Rapp, Chief Prosecutor for the Special Court for Sierra Leone, on the war crimes trial of former Liberian president Charles Taylor briefed reporters this morning on the high level case.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone was set up jointly by the Government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations. It is mandated to try those who bear the greatest responsibility for serious violations of international humanitarian law and Sierra Leonean law committed in the territory of Sierra Leone since 30 November 1996.

Currently, two cases have been completed, including appeals. Testimony in the RUF case is complete, and a Trial Judgement is expected later this year.

The trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor is in the Prosecution phase at The Hague.

Agence France Presses

Tuesday, 3 February 2009

Senegal threatens to hand Chad dictator to AU

ADDIS ABABA (AFP) — Senegal's President Abdoulaye Wade said Tuesday his government may hand former Chad dictator Hissene Habre over to the African Union because he is so angry with the lack of international support to bring Habre to trial.

"Finally the story of Hissene Habre is going to turn against Senegal. Some accuse us of not wanting to bring him to trial, but they understand that we have not been given the means to judge him," Wade told AFP on the sidelines of an African Union summit.

Habre was toppled from power in 1990 and fled to Senegal after an eight-year reign marked by widespread allegations of rights abuses.

An official truth commission report in 1992 accused Habre's regime of committing some 40,000 political murders.

The African Union asked Senegal to prosecute Habre on war crimes and crimes against humanity charges, but no progress has been made.

Wade said that if resources are not provided for his country to stage the trial, then he could send Habre either back to Chad or hand him over to the head of the African Union.

"There is a precedent," Wade said, noting that former Liberian leader Charles Taylor was sent to Nigeria when its former president Olusegun Obasanjo was leading the continental bloc.

Taylor is now awaiting a judgement before the global war crimes court in The Hague.

Wade strongly denied that he was trying to bury the case.

"I agreed to do this firstly because I know that no other country would agree... and because I am against impunity," he said.

"Secondly I do not want an African head of state judge outside the continent. It's better that he be judged here in Africa," Wade said.

Human rights groups reject this theory.

"Senegal has an obligation to put Habre on trial or to extradite him. That's not based on the AU mandate, but on its ratification of the convention against torture," said Reed Brody, a campaigner with Human Rights Watch.

"Senegal cannot extradite Habre to the AU, which is not a state and does not have the ability to try him. But we are not opposed to an extradition to a country where he would be judged, like Belgium, which has sought him," Brody added.

"Habre used millions stolen from Chad's Treasury to bring a protective veil around him in Senegal," he said.

But Wade insisted that his country struggled to find the financing needed for a trial.

"I have said from the start that Senegal will not pay the costs of this trial," Wade said.

"Everyone makes promises, including the European Union and Human Rights Watch," he said.

"President (Nicolas) Sarkozy announced that France would participate, but we have not seen this participation," he said, adding that Sarkozy had recently written to him urging Senegal not to abandon the case.

France's foreign ministry on Monday confirmed the letter, saying that France places "great importance" on the trial.

"It's important that this trial enters an operational phase, including the creation of a timetable and a credible budget, as well as the start of judicial investigations," ministry spokesman Frederic Desagneaux said.

"Senegal has done a draft and revised it with the partners who should finance the project. But after all that, if it takes too long, I said that I refuse for Senegal to manage the trial budget," Wade said.

"As soon as we have all the money and the people to manage it, the trial will take place, there is no doubt," he said.

"Now this money needs to be actually and totally available before Senegal begins this trial, because we could very well begin and after we are left with the case, and that would be a catastrophe," he added.

BBC Online

Tuesday, 3 February 2009

Teacher in US accused of genocide

A college near the US city of Baltimore has suspended a Rwandan professor over accusations he participated in the African country's genocide.

Leopold Munyakazi had been working at Goucher College near Baltimore under a programme for academics whose lives are threatened at home.

He has denied any involvement in Rwanda's genocide.

Some 800,000 minority Tutsis and moderate Hutus were slaughtered by Hutu militias in just 100 days in 1994.

Mr Munyakazi, a Hutu, told the Associated Press news agency that he had been persecuted by Rwanda's government.

He said he had been held without trial in Rwanda from 1994 to 1999 on accusations of genocide.

"I'm not hiding; I was never involved in genocide," he said.

Sanford Ungar, president of Goucher College, said in a letter to students and faculty that he became aware of charges against Mr Munyakazi when a journalist and a Rwandan prosecutor came to the college in December.

They told him of witnesses testimonies that Mr Munyakazi, 59, had "participated directly" in the genocide.

Charges had been prepared in 2006 after Mr Munyakazi had given a "controversial talk" in the US questioning the Rwandan government's version of the genocide, Mr Ungar said.

"Dr Munyakazi vehemently denies any involvement in committing genocide, and in fact has presented evidence that he assisted numerous Tutsis in fleeing Hutu killers," the letter said.

Mr Ungar said the Rwandan, who started teaching French at the college in September, would be suspended from his job pending further investigation.

An official at Rwanda's embassy in Washington said Rwanda had asked for Mr Munyakazi and five others to be returned to the country.



Leopold Munyakazi had been teaching near Baltimore since last year

Voice of America

Tuesday, 2 February 2009

AU Summit Hails New Somali Leader; Calls on ICC to Suspend Bashir Warrants

Somalia's newly-elected President Sheik Sharif Sheik Ahmed has been hailed at the opening ceremonies of a summit of African leaders in Addis Ababa. The session was dominated by Libya's leader Moammar Gadhafi, who vowed to push ahead with his idea of a continental government, a day after it was declared effectively dead.

A Continent Ravaged By War

The summit's business meeting opened Monday with AU Commission Chairman Jean Ping painting a harsh picture of a continent split by wars, military coups, and on the brink of a disastrous recession.

Speaking in French, the continent's top diplomat warned Africans they are about to feel what he called the 'sweeping blow' of a 'systemic global economic crisis'. And with Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir in the audience, he said the continental body is working to delay the pending International Criminal Court warrants charging Mr. Bashir with genocide.

He said efforts are underway to persuade the ICC to place a 12-month moratorium on any move to hand down indictments against Mr. Bashir. The Sudanese leader sat quietly at the front of the hall.

Chairman Ping also deplored Africa's apparent return to the bad old days of military coups, as evidenced by Guinea and Mauritania, the unsuccessful coup in Guinea Bissau, and the current unrest in Madagascar.

Progress Made

On the bright side, he pointed to the recent arrest of renegade Congolese General Laurent Nkunda, efforts to achieve peace in places from Burundi and the Comoros, the Central African Republic and countries of the West Africa zone.

Ping also hailed the election three days earlier of Somalia's President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, and asked Africa's newest head of state to stand, as the packed hall erupted in applause.

He said shades of hope are appearing in Somalia with the United Nations Security Council expressing its intention to take over the AU Somalia peacekeeping force, as well as the peace accords signed in Djibouti that led to election of Sheikh Sharif.

The Somali president's presence in the Ethiopian capital was ironic, coming two years after Ethiopian troops poured into Somalia to force him and his Islamic Courts Union from power.



Somalia's newly elected president Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed arrives at the UN compound in Addis Ababa for consultations, 01 Feb 2009

Questions Surround Libya's-AU Role

The summit session was marked by contradictions. Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi was sworn in as AU Chairman for the coming year by the outgoing chairman, Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete. A day earlier, Mr. Kikwete had pronounced the Libyan leader's concept of a union government a "non-starter."

But in his acceptance speech, delivered in Arabic through an interpreter, the golden-robed Mr. Gaddafi appeared to reject the death sentence imposed on his unity government idea. He said he would consider the idea accepted unless a majority of the heads of states speak out against it. Gadhafi speaks thru an interpreter.

"We want it to be ratified, either rejected or accepted, at the next summit. If we don't have a quorum for rejection, then this means we have accepted it," he said.

Human rights groups said Mr. Gadhafi's election raised questions about the African Union's commitment to democratic principles. Reed Brody of the group Human Rights Watch said this breaks a string of three consecutive democratically-elected leaders at the helm of the continental body.

"The question is whether he sets a good example in terms of human rights and democracy. For the African continent. Let's remember that despite Libya's re-engagement with the international community, it's still a country that doesn't have political freedoms," he said.

Outgoing chairman Kikwete interrupted summit business Monday to pay tribute to the new U.S. President Barack Obama. As his last act in the chair, Mr. Kikwete said the African Union attaches great importance to what most people here feel will be a new chapter for U.S. Africa relations during the Obama administration.



Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi (L), escorted by bodyguard (R), arrives at the AU meeting in Addis Ababa, 01 Feb 2009