

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



PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

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Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
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VIEW POINT

By Pastor Mohamed Sesay

President Kabbahs' Legacy [Part 4] January 6 Invasion: the Mistakes that led to it

"Father, they have finished me..." this was the sorrowful cry of a female victim of the January 6th 1999 invasion of Freetown. She had just been raped by seven of the renegade soldiers that invaded the city. Instead of her dad consoling her he shouted at her, in fear, to shut up not to attract the attention of other rebels to their hiding place.

What happened that led to this poor lady's suffering? If she was asked who was to blame what would be her answer? The rapists or President Kabbahs' Government that did not offer citizens enough protections?

After the National Provisional ruling Council (NPRC) relinquished power to a civilian administration the soldiers were left dug-in in their trenches because of the war that was still raging. There at the war front they behaved as if the country was still under military rule. Extrajudicial killings of innocent civilians alleged by the soldiers to be rebels went on unabated. Molestation of civilians continued. All this was done in the name of the war. They so enjoyed the anarchy that they began to think that if they get back to State House it will just be like them saying to President Kabbah 'will you kindly excuse us for a moment so that we can take your seat for just another four years? Please.'

They began to fantasize that the whole world and all the citizens want them back. They thought their heavy-handed approach during their four years in power was acceptable. Resting on their misguided thoughts they pounded again on May 27th 1997. But they were in for a rude awakening. The world and almost one hundred percent of the citizens rejected them. They wanted out but the RUF rebels, whom they themselves invited to join them in their rebellion, were behind their tails every step of the way to prevent that. They forgot that the RUF rebels were scum-bags who lived and slept rebellion and had it written all over their faces.

As there was no chance of the rebels going quietly a decision was taken for their forceful removal. The plan to remove was fine but there was no formula as to how to get them back on the negotiating table. President Kabbah's plan of using foreign troops did not carry with it exceptions. What it carried with it was collective responsibility. The 'out' formula did not take into consideration the 'way in' again.

Indeed the rebels could easily be removed but where were they going to go? They could easily be pushed but what would be their reaction when they get themselves boxed in. even though there were moderates among the rebels no avenue was created for dialogue.

When the interventionists came the rebels at first stood their ground and fought but when they realized that they were out-gunned they fled going with all their weapons intact.

Sierra Leone is a small country so they did not have far to go. Some went to Binkolo which is just 122 miles from the city.

Others spread all over the country making bases at Kabala, Kono and Kailahun.

Some had their families with them in the forests perishing. Others did not know what might have happened to theirs they left behind. All they were hearing from back home in the city was bad news. They were all now out of jobs. It goes without saying then that they quickly got themselves boxed in. they stayed-put for sometime waiting for assurances that they would be safe if they returned home. None came. Instead the message they got was one of total surrender with no condition.

On the part of the government the plan was to finish of the work started by the interventionist, that is, to beat the rebels to submission. But this had no chance of working since they were spread over a wide area all over the country.

After months of waiting for dialogue and not forthcoming they decided to make their point by attacking their former colleagues in the army wherever they could find them. In one day they killed 18 commissioned officers including the youngest officer at the time, Lt. Bah, who were found at Kabala. Their next move was to mount attacks on the interventionists themselves. At this point it became apparent that the Kabbah government had run out of ideas as to how to curb the situation. Troops were put on the defensive instead of otherwise. The renegades took this to their advantage by launching attacks in large numbers killing many interventionists and capturing their weapons. Still no talks.

Despite assurances that the renegades will never be given the chance to take the city, they never-the-less, under the cover of the forests, slowly marched their way in. on the 6th January 1999, just eleven months after they went to the forests, they finally arrived in the city and with vengeance they vented their anger on those who rejected them killing over eleven thousand, raping over four thousand and burning down over four thousand of their houses.

"Father," cried the raped lady, 'I want to die. I have been violated. There is no use living. "Tejan Kabbah, Oh, Tejan Kabbah". Where are you? You said we should stay indoors when the rebels come. We listened and now my womb has been tom to shreds. Tejan Kabbah, Oh, Tejan Kabbah." Her voice faded into the darkness as tears streamed down her father's cheek.

Sierra Leone is a small country so they did not have far to go. Some went to Binkolo which is just 122 miles from the city. Others spread all over the country making bases at Kabala, Kono and Kailahun.

Women And International Law In Sierra Leone

WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

Report From The Truth and Reconciliation Commission

A victim whose father had tended to injured members of the CDF Kamajors testified to the Commission:

"...The same year 1998, when they attacked Segbwema town, all my family were scattered. I was caught by the SLA / RUF rebels. They told me that they would kill me because my father gave medical treatment to the CDF Kamajors when they were wounded in the conflict. I was stripped naked, all my belongings taken away and almost killed except when a Jet plane came around to kill them, then they ran away."

The Commission finds that all of the armed perpetrator groupings pursued a strategy of deliberately targeting those whom they believed to be relatives and supporters of the opposing forces with the intention of detaining them and violating them because members of their families belonged to the other side or because they had some dealings with the opposing forces.

FORCED DISPLACEMENT

Internal displacement

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of, or in order to avoid the effects of, armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights, or natural or human made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised State border. Issues raised by internal displacement are the duty of the state to protect those displaced. Armed groups also have the legal and moral responsibility not to assault civilians or subject them to human rights abuses and to protect the rights of displaced persons living in areas under their control.

A major consequence of the war in Sierra Leone was the forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of civilians from their "homes and villages. The Commission recorded 8,397 violations of this nature, with women accounting for 3,128 (or 37, 3%) of the victims. One female victim recounted her story of forced displacement to the Commission:

"When the RUF rebels from Liberia attacked and occupied Jojoima town in 1991, we were harassed to the point that I could no longer bear. Every day they asked us for food such as rice, meat and other items. Whosoever could not produce what they requested for would be beaten. I decided to escape. On our way, I and others came across government soldiers at Madina. They told us to wait for them at Gbogeima village while they went in search of other displaced people. A soldier came back in the evening; he came with

people from the bush. The people were so many that he alone could not protect all of us. In the early morning two senior imams were in the mosque, Alhaji Fei-Kamo Kanneh and Alhaji Maldieu Kanneh.

They saw the rebels passing clandestinely and they returned and told us... we were all assembled in the centre of Gbogeima village... the rebels told the crowd that as from that moment nobody will live any longer. They opened fire on the crowd. A lot of people died. I lay on the ground flat with my children who had been shot. The firing on the crowd continued until there was a voice from the bush shouting about the arrival of the soldiers. When they heard that, the rebels ran into the bush. I then took my children with other relatives to Nyeyama."

One strategy that the RUF employed was the indiscriminate burning of houses and villages. Many victims were burnt to death in their homes, while others were forced to flee from their residences, thereby forcibly displacing them.

Many villagers abandoned their homes when they heard of an impending attack and fled to the bushes or into the mountains. Some fled to other villages and in some cases "Bondo houses" for fear of what the armed forces would do.

The war in Sierra Leone was particularly devastating for those in the rural areas, as people became part of a moving population always on the run from the various armed forces. People were forced to leave the safety of their homes, the fruit of their crops and their possessions. In most instances, they left in a hurry to avoid the impending attacks and were forced to live and forage in the bush.

The Commission finds that all of the armed perpetrator groupings and in particular the RUF violated the rights of civilians in that they were forced to flee from their homes, leaving everything that they possessed behind, causing them not only economic loss but also the loss of security and "enormous trauma. The Commission also finds that each of the armed groups failed to protect the displaced persons in the areas under its control, thus sanctioning the violations of their rights.

Refugees

In international law as applied by the Commission, a refugee is described as a "person who, as a result of a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his or her nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear is unwilling, to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country."

Women and young girls constituted a large number of the refugees that fled to neighbouring countries during the conflict. A victim who was forced to flee to Liberia after the death of her two sons recounted her experience to the Commission:

"I was in my village in 1991 when one morning a group of armed men dressed in rags attacked the village. They were shooting at random. These men told us that they have not come to kill us neither destroy us. But this was the op-

posite of it because they started killing and unfortunately for me my two sons Bockarie and Saffa Koroma were shot one morning and killed. The whole village could not withstand this so we finally went into hiding as far as in Liberia. After going through a lot of constraints for over four years we came back to settle in our village in 1996.”

There is a growing recognition of the vast numbers of people who are internally displaced and who are forced to become refugees. In 1992, the Secretary-General appointed a Special Representative on Internally Displaced Persons to develop a framework to protect their rights. Dr. Francis Deng, the expert, developed guiding principles on internal displacement. A positive development for women has been the fact that the Guiding Principles call for the specific recognition of the needs of women. They acknowledge the situation of female heads of households; emphasize women's physical and psychological needs; reaffirm their need for access to basic services; and call for their participation in education and training programmes. The Commission has made several recommendations in respect of improving the plight of internally displaced persons and refugees. These measures can be found under the relevant heading in the recommendations chapter.

Violence against women in camps

The Commission found that many Sierra Leonean women had their rights violated in the refugee camps. It is regrettable that those meant to protect the vulnerable were often responsible for further victimizing them. In April 2002, the UNHCR and Save the Children-UK issued a report on Sierra Leonean Refugees in Guinea detailing the violations which women and girls amongst others suffered while refugees in Guinea. Young girls and women were forced to have sex in return for food and assistance. Many of them were forced to become prostitutes in brothels established in the camps. More than 1,500 people were interviewed and told similar stories. Men complained of how they were not given access to food because they had no wife or daughter to barter for food or supplies.

Women and girls told of how their names would be taken off lists for food and aid if they refused to have sex with peacekeepers and humanitarian workers. The Commission finds it absolutely reprehensible that those who are meant to assist and render humanitarian aid to the most vulnerable women and girls used the very fact of their vulnerability to exploit them and violate their rights.

In this regard, the Commission finds that those responsible should be prosecuted. Also in this regard, the Commission intends to make recommendations in order to prevent this kind of abuse taking place in the future.

ICC marks 5th anniversary of Rome Statute

By Abdul Karim Koroma

A press release from the International Criminal Court (ICC) stated that 1 July 2007 marked the fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the Rome Statute, the founding treaty of the ICC.

"The treaty entered into force following the 60th ratification of the statute on 11 April 2002. Currently, 104 countries have acceded to or ratified the statute and 139 states have signed it. The Court is currently investigating grave crimes in four countries: Northern Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Sudan (Darfur) and most recently, the Central African Republic," the release stated, adding that this year the Court is expected to begin its first trial in the DRC child soldiers case against Thomas Lubanga Dyilo.

The statement disclosed that it was only five years ago when the Rome Statute officially entered into force and the international community took a step forward on ending impunity.

According to the release, the entry into force of the Rome Statute marks the first time that a truly international and permanent court, reflecting major legal systems and all geographic regions of the world, would hold individuals accountable for massive crimes.

"The ICC is the first permanent and independent international judicial institution capable of trying individuals accused of the most serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, including the crimes of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity," the statement concluded.

SLPP aspirant in constituency 111, Victor Lewis who went through the nomination successfully told Concord Times that the process is open and transparent, adding that it is done in a professional manner.

"I am confident of emerging victorious in the election," he said, adding that he is now waiting for the campaign to commence.

Abdul Fattah Rahman of constituency 105, who also went through the nomination, said that the process is free, fair and transparent, noting that there is nothing to worry about because the nomination is open.

He advised his colleague aspirants of the SLPP not to violate the nomination process and urged them to abide by all rules and regulations of the process.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT AN ABUSE OR A NECESSITY?

By Leonard F. Vibbi - Kenema

The school is an institution considered to be the second home of every child. It is primarily task with the responsibility of educating children. Though education involves some amount of discipline, discipline should not have adverse effects on the child. When this is done, it is a violation of our rights as children. Discipline through corporal

punishment has become the order of the day in schools especially in government owned or public schools. Teachers in government schools seem to have no other choice of punishing children when they do wrong expect by inflicting corporal punishment on them. It is not a bad thing to punish a child when he or she does wrong but this can be done in a subtle and civilized manner. There have been

cases wherein children get injured and as a result drop out of school. This is one major effect of corporal punishment in schools. One cannot advocate for education for all when some teachers serve as a cause for children to stay out of school. Sometimes, the child is blamed and nothing is done to the teacher. The notorious use of cane in schools to punish children is cruel and inhuman. In Bo, Kenema

and Kono, there seem to be no other means of punishing a child other than using the cane. This is one of the reasons why school enrolment is not as high compared to that of the western area.

Though poverty is considered to be a reason for children dropping out of school, corporal punishment in schools has made the situation even worse. 8 years old Nyakeh in Kenema District is always reluctant to go to school. "I am afraid of my teacher; he beats me everyday in school. I want to stop going to school" lamented Nyakeh.

There are so many children in Nyakeh's shoes. For children to find joy in going to school, the school must be child friendly. Teachers are key players in creating a child friendly atmosphere in schools. A child friendly atmosphere does not only mean the provision of recreational facilities; it goes beyond that. A child-to-teacher relationship matters the most. Children should be able to learn in utmost ease.

We the children strongly advocates for corporal punishment to be abolished. There are other alternatives. For instance, if a child goes to school late, he or she can be punished by spending extra hours in school after normal school hours. Children most times do not like to spend extra hours in school alone. Also, children who fail to do their assignments should be compelled to face the class and give reasons for failing to. Children hate being embarrassed. In cases wherein a particular child

Continue.pg 8

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT AN ABUSE OR A NECESSITY?

From .pg 1

gives trouble always, the child should be counseled in order to get the true picture of that child's situation.

Most times children who are notorious trouble causers are faced with challenges they cannot handle. As such, they are always stressed

and do not act normal.

I am strongly of the opinion that no matter what the situation is, an alternative which does not harm the child can always be there.

The best resources ever on earth are we the children. Whatever is not good for us should be abolished

in order for us to grow up in loving and caring environment.

Despite the few alternatives listed above, much cannot be gained unless the act is seen as a crime punishable by law.

This should cut across in schools as well as in the homes. If children

should have a better life, our teachers, parents and those in authority should make it happen.

No one is allowed to punish children in a cruel or harmful way.

Children who break the law should not be treated cruelly.

BBC Online

Tuesday, 3 July 2007

Liberia's Taylor appears in court

Liberia's former President Charles Taylor has appeared at his war crimes trial in The Hague for the first time.

Wearing a blue suit and a yellow tie, Mr Taylor, 59, turned up after the judge had explained why his trial would again be delayed - until 20 August.

The delay is to appoint a defence team after Mr Taylor sacked his lawyer. He has boycotted previous hearings.

He denies charges of backing rebels in Sierra Leone in an 11-year campaign that killed thousand of civilians.

This is the first war crimes trial against a former African head of state.

Mr Taylor has said the trial, which began last month, would not be fair.

'Disorganisation'

He turned up 20 minutes after the hearing started, reportedly due to problems with transport from the prison where he is being held.

He was asked to enter a plea to a reworded charge of sexual slavery and rape.

"I plead not guilty, your honour," Mr Taylor replied.

BBC World Affairs correspondent Mark Doyle says his unexpected appearance may indicate that his complaints have been addressed.

Before his arrival, presiding judge Julia Sebutinde had told the court that unless the defence team was given adequate time to prepare, it "would be a violation of Mr Taylor's fair trial rights in so far as counsel would not be able to effectively cross examine witnesses or challenge witnesses".

The prosecution has accused Mr Taylor of manipulating the court, but one of the judges conceded in public that mistakes had been made, including the placing of a surveillance camera in the room where Mr Taylor spoke to his lawyers.

The judge also admitted there had been "some kind of disorganisation" among court officials.

One of the main problems has been money.

Mr Taylor says he has none, so the court is paying for his defence.

But - through his lawyers - the former Liberian leader has argued that he should have a legal team appointed for him that is equal to the powerful international group of advocates working for the prosecution.

'Blood diamonds'



Charles Taylor has said the trial would not be fair

CHARLES TAYLOR CHARGES

- Acts of terrorism (WC)
- Murder (CAH)
- Violence to life, in particular murder (WC)
- Rape (CAH)
- Sexual slavery and violence (CAH)
- Outrages upon personal dignity (WC)
- Violence to life, in particular cruel treatment (WC)
- Other inhumane acts (CAH)
- Use of child soldiers (VHL)
- Enslavement (CAH)
- Pillage (WC)

CAH: Crime against humanity

WC: War crime

VHL: Violation of international humanitarian law

Mr Taylor has been indicted on 11 charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity and violations of international humanitarian law over his alleged role in the brutal civil war in Sierra Leone.

The charges include terrorising the civilian population, murder, sexual violence, physical violence, using child soldiers, enslavement and looting.

Mr Taylor pleaded not guilty to all the charges when he appeared in court in Freetown, Sierra Leone, in March 2006.

The trial was moved to The Hague because of fears it could lead to renewed tensions within Sierra Leone and Liberia.

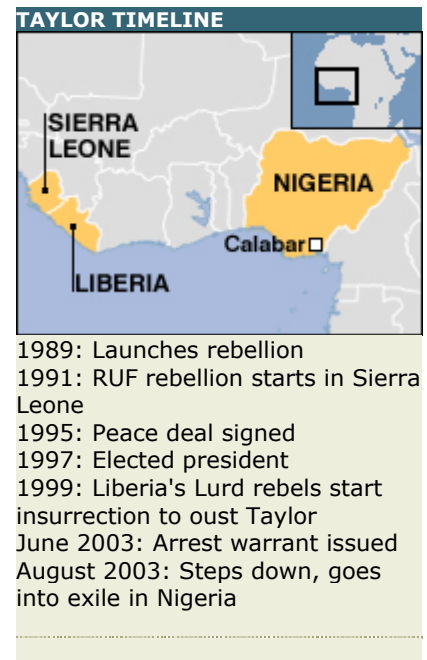
The Special Court for Sierra Leone has been approved by both the UN and the government of Sierra Leone.

Mr Taylor is accused of backing the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels in Sierra Leone - giving them guns, training and money in exchange for diamonds from the areas they controlled.

The RUF became notorious for hacking off the hands and legs of civilians during their decade-long war.

Mr Taylor lost power in 2003 after rival militias rose up and forced him into exile in Nigeria.

He was deported by Nigeria last year in controversial circumstances and flown to The Hague to await his trial.



Reuters

Tuesday, 3 July 2007

Liberia's Taylor appears in court after boycott

By Alexandra Hudson

THE HAGUE, July 3 (Reuters) - Former Liberian President Charles Taylor made a surprise appearance at the U.N. Special Court on Tuesday after having so far boycotted his trial on charges of orchestrating atrocities in Sierra Leone.

Taylor, who is charged with instigating murder, mutilation, and the recruitment of child soldiers in a quest for the country's diamonds, had argued he had inadequate funds to mount a proper defence and had on two occasions refused to show up to court, delaying proceedings.

However, after judges ordered that Taylor be assigned a new defence team and postponed the trial until Aug. 20 to allow them time to prepare, Taylor walked in late to the procedural hearing in which judges outlined their ruling.

He looked calm wearing a smart dark suit and pale tie. A representative said security measures by the traffic police had caused his delay.

He spoke only to re-enter a not guilty plea to the count of sexual slavery, which had been slightly reworded in an amended indictment.

"I think he has got the message that he cannot gain anything by absenting himself and that he gains from being present," said Prosecutor Stephen Rapp by telephone from Sierra Leone.

Taylor had earlier pleaded not guilty to 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, related to the 1991-2002 civil war, which killed an estimated 50,000 people.

Taylor sacked his lawyer as his trial opened, initially saying he wanted to defend himself, although he has since changed his mind and is demanding a top calibre lawyer.

Prosecutors hope the trial will send a signal that international justice can operate efficiently and fairly as well as target the world's most powerful individuals. But some observers fear Taylor is intent on upstaging proceedings.

The trial proper will continue in August with witness testimony.

The Special Court was set up jointly by the country's government and the United Nations in 2002 to try those deemed most responsible for human rights violations.

Taylor's trial is being held in The Hague because of fears it could spur instability if held in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

Associated Press

Tuesday, 3 July 2007

Charles Taylor attends hearing in war crimes trial

THE HAGUE, Netherlands: Former Liberian president Charles Taylor appeared in court Tuesday for the first time since the start of his trial for atrocities committed during Sierra Leone's bloody 10-year civil war.

Taylor did not explain his decision to attend the procedural hearing after earlier boycotting the trial. He was 20 minutes late Tuesday, and the only time he spoke was to plead not guilty to a slightly amended charge of sexual slavery, a crime against humanity, covering the abduction, rape and use as sex slaves of an unknown number of women and girls.

Taylor has pleaded not guilty to 11 charges linked to accusation he controlled and armed rebels who murdered, raped, mutilated and enslaved civilians during Sierra Leone's civil war, which ended in 2002.

The trial started with a one-day hearing June 4 and sat for a second day later that month. Taylor boycotted both sittings after firing his court-funded attorney and complaining he was not getting a fair trial.

Presiding Judge Julia Sebutinde of Uganda adjourned the case after Taylor entered his plea Tuesday and Taylor returned to his cell in a special wing of a Hague jail.

Today in Europe

The first prosecution witnesses had been due to be heard Tuesday, but prosecutors and a court official responsible for ensuring Taylor gets a fair trial filed a motion last week asking for the witness testimony to be delayed until August to give Taylor's new defense team — which has not yet been appointed — time to prepare.

Explaining the decision to grant the postponement, Sebutinde on Tuesday blamed officials in the court's registry for not appointing new defense attorneys in time for the trial to start and said Taylor "should not be penalized for the laxity of the registry."

She said that ordering an interim lawyer to defend Taylor for a week of hearings that had been scheduled to begin Tuesday "would indeed amount to a violation of Mr. Taylor's fair trial rights."

Taylor announced he had fired his attorney in a letter to the three-judge panel on the first day of hearings and demanded a more senior trial attorney, arguing that prosecutors had far more lawyers on their team.

Prosecutor Stephen Rapp dismissed Taylor's concerns as administrative issues "blown out of proportion in order to create a reason for what we view as obstructive conduct in this case."

Rapp added that Taylor was getting more money for his defense — up to US\$2 million (€1.5 million) for the trial — than any other suspect charged by the court.

Prosecutors say they will call dozens of witnesses who will directly link Taylor to Sierra Leone rebels.

They claim the Liberian leader shipped rebels arms, ammunition and supplies such as alcohol and drugs used to desensitize children forced to fight. In return he got diamonds, often mined by slave laborers.

Although Taylor also is suspected of similar atrocities in his native Liberia, that country has not set up a war crimes court, opting instead for a truth and reconciliation commission.

Taylor is being tried by a U.N.-backed Sierra Leonean court. His trial is being staged in The Hague for fear it could trigger fresh unrest in Sierra Leone's capital, Freetown, where the Sierra Leone court is based.

July 3, 2007

Taylor Appears in Court, Trial Formally Postponed Until August 20

The Hague

“I’ve Been Informed the Accused is Here”

Following a joint filing by the Principal Defender’s Office and the Prosecution last week to delay the trial, the Court held a short hearing today to explain its reasons for postponing the proceedings until August 20, 2007 and to address various procedural and scheduling matters. In a surprise development, Taylor’s Duty Counsel Charles Jalloh opened the hearing by noting that Taylor would be attending but was delayed, and some 20 minutes later Judge Presiding Judge Sebutinde paused the proceedings to note “I’ve been informed the accused is here.” Taylor entered the courtroom in a dark blue suit with bright yellow tie, nodded to the judges and sat, flanked by two uniformed guards. After being informed that the delay was due to the fact that the route from Taylor’s detention facilities had to be adjusted for security reasons, Judge Sebutinde stated that “the reason is noted but it is not satisfactory.”

Trial Postponed Until August 20

Initially, the Court reiterated its order to the Registry to assemble a defense team by July 31 to include one lead counsel, two co-counsel, and one senior investigator.

The Court then provided several reasons for its postponement of the trial. First, it concluded that, “after careful reflection,” good cause had been shown by both the Principal Defender’s Office and the Prosecution to justify a delay. To compel Duty Counsel to represent Taylor at trial for one week (July 3 - July 11 under its June 25 order) would in the Court’s words amount to a violation of Taylor’s fair trial rights as Jalloh would be unable to conduct effective cross examination or challenge the Prosecution’s evidence. Judge Sebutinde again noted the Registry’s failure to address issues related to representation that were raised as early as March 2007 and stated that Taylor “should not be penalized for the laxity of the Registry.” While the Court “generally frowns on delay,” it was mindful of its overriding obligation to conduct a fair trial and therefore granted the joint motion to postpone the presentation of the Prosecution’s case.

Other Issues Addressed by the Court

The Court also addressed the Principal Defender’s application for suspension of time limits for its pleadings and pending motions in light of the reconstitution of the trial team. Finding this request reasonable, the Court agreed to extend (rather than to suspend) time limits for each pleading and motion until the issues surrounding representation are resolved. In addition, the Court provided a revised schedule of times that it would sit and indicated when filings would be permitted in light of ICC and Special Court holidays.

Amended Indictment

Taylor’s delayed entrance caused a break in the proceedings for 20 minutes while he consulted with Jalloh to discuss his plea to the amended indictment. There were two amendments at issue. Amendments to Count 11 involved only minor changes to the particulars, and the Court determined this would not affect Taylor’s plea as it did not contain a new charge. Count 5 “sexual slavery and any other form of sexual violence,” a crime against humanity, was amended to remove the reference to “any other form of sexual violence” (which the Prosecution previously had indicated in a May pre-trial conference would be done to avoid issues of duplicity) and therefore required a new plea from Taylor. He rose and stated in a low tone: “I plead not guilty your honor.”

The Court then adjourned proceedings until Monday, August 20.

Liberian Times

Monday, 2 July 2007

Liberia: Taylor's former Generals express fear of witch-hunting

by Michael Kpayili / Staff Writer

As the trial of former President Charles Taylor gears up, more evident is needed a sufficient grounds to prosecute the former Liberian Leader but ex-fighters and former Generals of Mr. Taylor army have expressed fears over what is considered as witch-hunting. Former President Taylor is indicted by the United Nations backed special court for Sierra Leone for allegedly supporting crime against humanity and the peace loving people of Sierra Leone.

Some former generals like Isaac Samba, Moses Dokey, Darry Dossen, Mathew Gonpu who served as liaison officers, body guards and major actors assigned to Sam Bockarie alias 'Mosquito' by Mr. Taylor are afraid to return home and testify before the court authority on grounds that they are going to be chased and slaughter by Taylor's blind loyalists. The safety of these generals has to be guaranteed by the special court if these guys (ex-fighters) were given signals to testify today.

Speaking to a local news agency via phone, Mr. Darry Dossen, a former general of Taylor currently based in the UK said that he wants to return and testify before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to apologize to the Liberian people for crime he committed on orders from Mr. Taylor against Humanity but fears the witch hunting of his (Taylor) surrogates who roam the ghettos in Monrovia.

Today, as the trial proceeds, a group of gangsters masquerading as armed robbers and thieves, under the nomenclatures "ISSAKABA" are seeking to eliminate all those who were closely associated with Mr. Taylor in committing the crime and who are willing to testify against him. This act has been seen by local residents as an attempt to distort and prevent the plain truth from coming out against Mr. Taylor thereby prolonging the trial which could presumably lead to his acquittal.

Meanwhile, the special court in its attempt to administer justice is seeking information useful to the prosecution of perpetrators in the sub-region. Some of the information will come directly through testimonies of those who were major participants and playing pivotal role during the uprising. It is the responsibility of the court to provide security for these guys or else we may not get to know the actual account of the entire saga.



The Inquirer (Monrovia)

Monday, 2 July 2007

Taylor's Defense Writes African Leaders

The Association for the Legal Defense of former Liberian President, Charles Taylor, has written African Heads of State at their Ninth Ordinary Session of Assembly of the African Union currently convening in Accra, Ghana.

The Taylor's Defense Team said their letter is intended to bring to African Leaders' attention the plight of their former colleague, President Charles Ghankay Taylor who is currently facing court trial in The Hague for his alleged involvement in the Sierra Leonean crisis.

Their letter signed by Mr. John T. Richardson, Executive Director of the Association for the Legal Defense of former President Taylor said, " your Excellencies; I have the honor once again to bring to your attention the plight of your friend, brother and former colleague President Charles Ghankay Taylor, former President of Africa's oldest independent Republic, Liberia."

The Letter noted that former President Taylor, at the very least, should be accorded the minimum guarantee of international law and the right to defend himself before an open and transparent tribunal against the charges levied against him.

"Yet, former President Taylor, on the basis of secret allegations, has been charged, transferred to the Hague, held in near isolation from his family, and is now banned from talking to anyone but his immediate family, " the letter said.

The Taylor defense group further stated that the backers of the tribunal trying the former Liberian Leader have designed the 'Taylor's Trial' as one to "Teach A Lesson To Other African Leaders."

"That such lessons are thought required, is in itself troublesome, but should not the tribunal then be held to a standard which is unimpeachable, and represents the highest standards of international law?" the letter questioned.

"Sadly, your excellencies, as we have all witnessed, the Special Court has fallen extremely short by any yardstick. The start of this trial has fallen far short of minimal standards of any form of justice and even as we communicate this issue, President Taylor continues to languish under conditions of detention, unique in that they are harsher and inferior to any and all acceptable international standards, even those of other indictees of the Special Court of Sierra Leone and for that matter detainees of the International Criminal Court facilities at the Hague.

The group said even administrative officers of the court have expressed their dismay at the treatment being meted out to former President Taylor.

The letter further said, "we join the Taylor's family to strongly appeal to you our leaders, to whom this example is being set that failure to act or comment against such injustice is in fact to acquiesce and condone it and further lend credence to the Western perception that Africans and their leaders do not know justice, hence must be taught".

" We call desperately upon the leadership of Africa now collectively assembled in Ghana, the historic country of the great Pan-Africanist Dr. Kwame Nkrumah to urgently address the issue of the legal rights of former President Taylor," the group maintained.

"We wish to strongly advocate for the allocation of resources such as has been mobilized for his persecution and the appointment of an observer mission by the African Union to begin addressing the negative imbalance and opinion of us as a people," the letter noted.

"Your Excellencies, it is our strong conviction that the role of the African Union in the establishment of a robust defense of a colleague will go a long way in setting an example that we too in Africa adhere to and comprehend the principles of free and fair Justice for all," the letter concluded.

The Taylor Defense Team's letter to African Leaders comes at a time that African Leaders are busy discussing the unification of the African Continent in the Ghanaian Capital, Accra. According to reports, the African Leaders' discussion expects to be centered on the formation of the United States of Africa and other issues relative to one common African Passport.

Former President Charles Taylor as part of the deal to bring peace to Liberia in 2003 went into exile in Nigeria but was later handled over to the United Nations (UN) backed Special Court for Sierra Leone following a request by the Government of Liberia to do so.

He was later taken to The Hague for his trial on suspicion that such a trial would have created a security problem in the sub-region.

The former Liberian President was indicted for crimes against humanity in 2003 while attending the Liberian Peace talks in Accra, Ghana.

Save The Children

Tuesday, 3 July 2007

<http://www.politics.co.uk/press-releases/zopinion-former-index/equality/save-children-statement->

Save the Children statement on trial of Charles Taylor

On the day the trial of Charles Taylor is to resume, Jeffrey Mecaskey, Save the Children, said:

"The people of Sierra Leone and Liberia might feel that they've got some of the justice they deserve tomorrow. However, the legacy of Charles Taylor is still being felt, both in terms of the after effects of the war on civilians and in the state of their governments still today.

Research we released just yesterday on the improvement of child mortality shows that there are actually more children dying today in Liberia than when the Millennium Development Goals were set in 2000. Sierra Leone has the most children dying for every 1000 born of any country in the world. These figures cannot be separated from the conflicts that these countries went through.

The African Union finish their meeting today. They, and rich countries, must start enforcing systems to improve the health and education sectors in Africa and stop so many children dying unnecessarily."

DARFUR EMERGENCY APPEAL: Children in Darfur and Chad have been forced to flee their homes and are now facing some of the harshest conditions in the world, without access to basic shelter, food and water. The impending rains will make the situation even worse. Please help by donating at www.savethechildren.org.uk/darfur or calling 020 7012 6400.

Associated Press

Monday, 2 July 2007

Taylor's war crimes trial postponed again

THE HAGUE, The Netherlands -- The war crimes trial of Charles Taylor has been postponed again with judges now ordering the resumption of the case against the former Liberian president August 20, the court said Monday.

"A decision was taken last Thursday [June 28] and the reason will be explained in a hearing tomorrow [Tuesday]," spokesman Solomon Moriba of the Special Court for Sierra Leone said.

A week ago the resumption of the prosecution case was put off until Tuesday this week because of Taylor's ongoing problems in assembling a defense team.

According to Moriba, the prosecution and defense filed a joint motion for another postponement last week and the judges granted it.

The delay of almost two months is also due to the Sierra Leone tribunal having to take into account its own summer recess and the holiday period for the International Criminal Court in The Hague whose facilities it is using.

Taylor, 59, faces 11 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the 1991-2001 civil war in Sierra Leone. The first African head of state to stand trial for war crimes, he boycotted the opening of his trial before the UN-backed tribunal three weeks ago, and sacked his lawyer, arguing that he had no chance of receiving a fair hearing.

He was absent again when the trial resumed last week. The judges then ordered that a new defense team be put together and ordered the court's registry to make more money available for Taylor's defense.

The former president's main complaint was that he does not have enough money to attract the kind of senior lawyers needed to try such a long and complicated case.

Up to 200,000 people were killed in the Sierra Leone conflict, with rebels mutilating thousands more, cutting off arms, legs, ears, or noses.

Taylor allegedly armed, trained, and controlled the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), responsible for many of the mutilations, in exchange for still-unknown amounts of diamonds used to fund warfare.

Taylor, who was president of Liberia from August 1997 to August 2003, has denied all the charges.

Reuters

Monday, 2 July 2007

Charles Taylor war crimes trial delayed until August

AMSTERDAM (Reuters) - Judges at the U.N. Special Court for Sierra Leone have delayed the war crimes trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor until August 20 so a new defence team has time to prepare, a court spokesman said on Monday.

Taylor, who is charged with directing atrocities in Sierra Leone and instigating murder, rape and mutilation in a quest for the country's diamonds, has boycotted his trial since it began in June, saying he has inadequate funds to mount a proper defence.

Last week Judge Julia Sebutinde ordered the court to ensure Taylor had another four people on his defence team including a lead counsel by July 31, in the interests of securing a fair trial.

Taylor, who has failed to appear in court since June, sacked his lawyer as his trial opened, initially saying he wanted to defend himself, although he has since changed his mind and is demanding a top calibre lawyer.

Witness testimony had been due to start this week after Judge Sebutinde last week ordered an interim defence counsel to represent Taylor, but in a joint motion both the prosecutor and the defence team urged the trial to be postponed.

Judges will explain their ruling when the court meets on Tuesday.

Taylor has pleaded not guilty to 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, related to the 1991-2002 civil war, which killed an estimated 50,000 people.

Prosecutors hope the trial will send a signal that international justice can operate efficiently and fairly as well as target the world's most powerful individuals. But some observers fear Taylor is intent on disrupting proceedings.

BBC Network Africa

Tuesday, 3 July 2007

LEAD-IN: Some breaking news: the former Liberian President Charles Taylor, who's facing charges of war crimes, has appeared in person for the first time at his trial in The Hague. Let's speak to John Kollie, a Liberian journalist who is covering the trial. John, good morning.

KOLLIE: Good morning there.

Can you describe what has happened?

KOLLIE: Well we came to court this morning without any idea as to whether Mr. Taylor would come to court. And as we came here, news began to filter that Mr. Taylor will come today to hear at least what was being put against him. And a few minutes later it was announced in court that he was at the door waiting to come in, and there came the man who failed twice to come and he came in well-dressed in a dark blue coat suit looking really healthy, if you will. And Mr. Taylor finally sat, took his seat, and the Judge asked a question about why he was late, he was actually 25 minutes late because the court had started at 9:00. And the reason was given, the security people, the Dutch security here, said because they had to divert traffic for security reasons in bringing this former president who's accused of war crimes I think in Sierra Leone and they had to bring him in court and so they had to put in place security mechanisms. That's why he was late. But he...

What was his composure?

KOLLIE: Very composed, he looks very calm. He appeared pretty submissive, if you will, for the first time, very long time I've known Mr. Taylor working as a journalist in Liberia. He appeared very submissive. He came into court as though he's a man who's known court proceedings for quite a long time. Very calm indeed.

A subdued Mr. Taylor. What's happening right now?

KOLLIE: What happened was his duty counsel who's representing him in the absence of his defence counsel requested for at least 20 minutes to go into private session to talk because the Judge had [ended up announcing that they'd be] reading the counts against him since this was the first time appearing here in The Hague. And then his man defending him here, Charles Jalloh, asked for time to talk to Mr. Taylor in private and that they would return. And they are now sitting in court as I speak to you because the 20 minutes is over, so they've returned to court and that was what happened.

And briefly can you remind us of what Mr. Taylor is accused of?

KOLLIE: Mr. Taylor is accused of human rights abuses in Sierra Leone, accused of child soldier recruitment, rape against women, pillaging and looting of resources of Sierra Leone, all like that. It's crimes against humanity indeed. And so he's denied all this. He's pleading not guilty here.

John, thank you very much and we'll follow up this story on Focus on Africa at 1500 GMT.
John Kollie in The Hague.

[Transcribed by the Office of Press and Public Affairs]

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 2 July 2007

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

International Clips on Liberia

Taylor's war crimes trial postponed again

THE HAGUE, July 2, 2007 (AFP) - The war crimes trial of Charles Taylor has been postponed again with judges now ordering the resumption of the case against the former Liberian president on August 20, the court said Monday. "A decision was taken last Thursday and the reason will be explained in a hearing tomorrow (Tuesday)," spokesman Solomon Moriba of the Special Court for Sierra Leone told AFP.

Don't overlook reconstruction, UN refugee chief urges

By Emmanuel Goujon

ACCRA, July 2, 2007 (AFP) - The international community must focus more on the reconstruction of war-torn nations if it is to stem the tide of refugees heading to pastures new, according to the UN high commissioner for refugees. In an interview with AFP on the sidelines of the ongoing African Union summit in Accra, Ghana, Antonio Guterres said recent experience had shown that refugees on the continent want to return home when peace takes hold.

International Clips on West Africa

VOA 01 July 2007

African Union Summit to Focus on Unity, Darfur

Leaders of the African Union have begun a three-day summit during which they are expected to address the situation in Darfur and the issue of African unity. Police monitored the streets of Accra, Ghana, as more than 30 heads of state gathered for the summit. The agenda includes discussion of the idea of a United States of Africa. Proponents of the plan argue a federation of African nations could exercise more influence and better address problems facing the world's poorest continent. But regional powers like South Africa favor a more gradual consolidation of regional economic groups.

BBC 07/02/2007 04:07:17

West African UN force commanders meet in Abidjan

The 13th session of the meeting of the force commanders of UN missions in West Africa ended late this afternoon with a news conference which focused on the latest events in Bouake. Answering a question to know who is in charge of the security of the airport in Bouake, this is the answer given by General Fernand Amoussou, commander of the blue helmets of ONUCI [UN Operation in Cote d'Ivoire].

Local Media – Newspaper

President Sirleaf Admits High Unemployment

(The New and The Informer)

- At a weekend retreat during which Cabinet members assessed the Government's performance, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf admitted that there was high

unemployment in the country, but said the Government was working on resuscitating the economy and creating significant job prospects. In its article, *The Informer* said the President reiterated her call to Cabinet Ministers to use the media to inform the public on programmes being undertaken to address their concerns in their areas of responsibility.

African Union Summit Opens in Accra

(The Analyst, Public Agenda, The Inquirer, The News, Heritage and The Informer)

- African leaders are meeting in Accra, Ghana to decide the fate of the Continent under the banner of African Union.
- President Sirleaf would articulate Liberia's position on the issue of a single African Government, an issue which appears to be dominating this year's African Union Summit. The idea of a single Pan-African Government was first promoted by Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah in the 1960's prior to the formation of the Organization of African Unity.

Taylor's Associates Complain to African Union

(The Inquirer, Heritage and The Informer)

- The Association for the Legal Defense of former Liberian President Charles Taylor has written, on behalf of Mr. Taylor, to African Heads of State currently meeting in Ghana. The group alleged that Taylor's war crimes trial had fallen short of minimal standards of any form of justice and urged the African leaders to act against such perceived injustice.

UNHCR Says More than 80,000 Liberians yet to Return

(The Informer)

- [sic:] As the United Nations High Commission for Refugee assisted repatriation of Liberia refugees closed last Saturday, there are more that 80,000 Liberians in West Africa alone yet to be repatriated, the UN Refugee Agency says. More than 23,000 remain in Ghana, 22,000 in Cote d'Ivoire, 13,000 in Sierra Leone, 14,000 in Guinea, some 5,000 in Nigeria and the rest are scattered in other countries of the region, the Spokesperson of the UNHCR in Geneva said.

Liberians Fear Alleged Rebel Recruitment in Guinea

(Liberian Express)

- The Liberian Express in an article said it has received reports that "unidentified individuals, mainly ex-combatants, are still being recruited to destabilize Guinea". According to the paper, several Liberians have been arrested by Guinean immigration officers and have been placed behind bars. The article further states that the Guinean Government has deployed "heavily armed troops at the Liberian-Guinean border which has instilled fear among residents in the area".

Local Media – Radio Veritas *(News monitored today at 9:45 am)*

President Johnson Sirleaf Attends African Union Summit in Accra

Former Commerce Minister Held for Allegedly Stabbing a Man

- Sources said that former Commerce Minister Samuel Wlue was over the weekend arrested and detained by Police for allegedly stabbing one Ricks Gbarzakizzia, during a fight with one Bashue Turay who clarified that Mr. Wlue only intervened in the fight between him and Ricks and did not stab anybody

Blind Leader Criticizes Government's Poverty Reduction Plan

- During an interview yesterday, the Head of the Christian Association of the Blind (CAB), Mr. Beyan Kota condemned the Government's poverty reduction policy because the plan was not working.