

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

Monday, 3 October 2005

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.
If you are aware of omissions or have any comments or suggestions please contact
Mariama Yilla
Ext 7217

No local newspapers are available today due to a dispute between the newspapers and the Vendors Association of Sierra Leone over the announced price increase.

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THE DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL

**ADDRESS TO THE PLEDGING CONFERENCE
FOR THE SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE**

New York, 30 September 2005

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to welcome you all to this important Pledging Conference, and to thank you for attending.

I particularly want to welcome H.E. Alhaji Momodu Koroma, the Foreign Minister of Sierra Leone, and Ambassador Allan Rock, the Permanent Representative of Canada, who holds the Chair of the Court's Management Committee.

I am very glad that senior officials of the Special Court are with us today, including the Registrar, Mr. Robin Vincent, and the Prosecutor, Mr. Desmond da Silva.

It is also a pleasure to have Mr. Ian Levine from Human Rights Watch with us today, representing the non-governmental community.

We are all here because we believe in the Special Court for Sierra Leone. We are determined that the Court, after three years of important achievements, and with trials at an advanced stage, must not now fail due to lack of resources.

Why do we believe this so strongly?

First, because those who bear the greatest responsibility for the commission of crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious violations of international humanitarian law should be held accountable for their actions. Grave crimes were committed in Sierra Leone, and we believe that impunity must not stand.

Second, we believe in making good on the commitments of the international community. When the international community establishes or authorizes the establishment of an International Tribunal, its credibility, and that of international justice, is at stake. That credibility will be damaged if we fail to give the Tribunal the resources and funding it needs to complete its work.

Third, we believe in what the Special Court means for the people of Sierra Leone, and their future. An important feature of this Court is that its trials are taking place in the country where the crimes were committed. Those who were affected are able to witness justice being done first hand. The Court's work is a vital part of the effort to maintain peace and security in Sierra Leone, and to foster the process of national reconciliation.

The Special Court in Freetown consists of a small staff, both national and international. They are dedicated to what the Court stands for, and they need our support.

The Court was funded by voluntary contributions until the end of 2004. In June 2005, the General Assembly appropriated \$20 million to supplement the Court's financial resources for the first six months of this year, and authorized the Secretary-General to enter into further commitments of up to \$13 million to meet expenses for the second half of this year.

But from 1 January 2006, the Court will revert to voluntary contributions. The Registrar, who will be speaking shortly, estimates that \$25 million will be needed to finance the Court's activities next year.

I urge States to give generously to the Special Court. By doing so, they will make clear that the international community backs up its decisions; that they are determined to support Sierra Leone; and that those who commit heinous crimes against international law, wherever they may be, must be held accountable for their actions.

Before I close, I very much want to thank the Member States who sit on the Management Committee, and who oversee the Court's non-judicial, and especially financial, activities. They have not only supported the Court, but also ensured that it operates in a fiscally responsible manner and within the means available to it.

On that note, it is my pleasure to give the floor to the Foreign Minister of Sierra Leone, Alhaji Momodu Koroma.

Special Court for Sierra Leone Pledging Conference
30 September 2005

Statement by Robin Vincent, Registrar

Firstly, I would like to thank all those present for their support to the Special Court. As you know, the Special Court has been created by the Government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations as an independent organization. However, the support that the parties to the Agreement have lent to the Special Court has been unwavering, and I am very pleased that his Excellency the Foreign Minister of Sierra Leone is here today, and that the Secretary-General, who has shown time and again his sincere commitment to the Court, is represented by his Deputy and by all those colleagues who have assisted the Special Court over the past three and half years.

I am also grateful to the other members of the Management Committee, who have provided guidance and advice to the Special Court, and in particular to both Canada and the United Kingdom for their Chairmanship. I also would like to thank most sincerely every representative of those member states present. Whilst I recognize the reality that not everyone present may be in a position to pledge financial support today, the very fact that you are participating is appreciated. As Ambassador Rock has mentioned, I hope that you will leave here at the very least better informed with regards to the Special Court.

I am grateful also to the Non Governmental Organizations represented here today. Without their support and advocacy in favor of the Court, we would not have achieved so much in such a tight timeframe. Their interest in maintaining an open dialogue with the Special Court has been of great assistance.

I welcome the positive comments by those who spoke before me. In doing so, I would like to make the point that any achievements made by the Court have been down to the excellent teamwork of a comparatively small but highly effective and committed set of both Sierra Leonean and international staff. It has been a privilege to be able to work with them.

Inevitably, as in any organization, changes in personnel will always occur. In fact, with my departure, only two of the original 15 or so staff (pioneers!) that arrived in Sierra Leone in the summer of 2002 remain – one of them, Desmond de Silva, the Prosecutor, is here today. Yet the Court has moved on and will continue to do so. I am confident that the new Registrar will continue to receive the support he will need to consolidate what has been achieved and to face the challenges ahead.

Other speakers have listed the Special Court's achievements. The Special Court is a new model: an independent hybrid court located in a post-conflict country, working alongside a peacekeeping mission and a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, with a limited mandate. The Court has also been different in its funding mechanism, effectively

receiving hybrid funding - voluntary contributions from 33 states so far, and UN assessed contributions. Getting to where we are has been a learning process.

There are still many challenges ahead.

- Three trials are ongoing, of which two are expected to be completed by the first half of next year, and the third by the end of 2006; however two indictees are still at large, and we are determined to continue doing everything we can to ensure that justice is brought to the people of Sierra Leone by trying all those who were deemed by the Prosecutor to bear the greatest responsibility for the crimes committed.
- We will continue to operate in a country, and in a region, in which the security situation, although improved, remains critical.
- We will continue to need to ensure that the rights of the witnesses and of the detainees are protected. We will do so through the continued protection of, and support for, the witnesses and fair trials and humane detention conditions before and after any sentences for the detainees.
- We will also continue to make every effort, in particular at the time when decisions on the trials and on any sentences are reached, to reach out to our main constituency, the people of Sierra Leone.

In this respect, I would like to conclude by highlighting some aspects of the legacy that the Special Court will leave behind. We have held extensive consultations with civil society country-wide, to identify their expectations of the Court. The Special Court is promoting the rule of law and accountability in Sierra Leone; promoting human rights and international humanitarian law; promoting the role of civil society in the justice sector; developing the capacity of the national legal professions. We will also assist the Government of Sierra Leone in the consideration of the possible uses for the site of the Court beyond its lifespan.

It is only with the continued participation and support of the international community represented here today that the Special Court will be able to leave a lasting legacy to transitional justice and to the people of Sierra Leone. I hope that you will agree that this is too good an opportunity to be missed.

[Click here to print](#)

UN-affiliated Special Court for Sierra Leone raises \$10 million

30 September 2005 – The United Nations-affiliated Special Court for Sierra Leone received nearly \$10 million from Member States today for the next year, but the amount fell far short of the estimated \$25 million needed to continue bringing to justice those accused of having committed serious crimes during the West African country's 1990s civil war.

Wrapping up the pledging conference, Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs Nicolas Michel said the United Nations would continue to work with Member States to reach the \$25 million goal.

UN Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette told the conference: "We are determined that the Court, after three years of important achievements and with trials at an advanced stage, must not now fail due to lack of resources."

The Court allowed those who were affected by the civil war crimes to witness justice being done first-hand, which was vital to the process of national reconciliation, she said.

The Special Court was a new model, set apart from others by its limited mandate and by its hybrid funding, coming both from voluntary contributions and from the UN, Registrar Robin Vincent said.

Emphasizing its costs, he said that since the Court functioned in the very country where the abuses had occurred, the witnesses and the accused needed protection during trials. Only with broad support would the institution be able to leave a lasting legacy to Sierra Leone and the international community, he said.

Reporters at a later news conference asked about the Court's ability to prosecute former Liberian President Charles Taylor, whose exile in Nigeria allowed peace to return to his country, and missing former Armed Forces Revolutionary Council of Sierra Leone commander Johnny Paul Koroma.

Chief Prosecutor Desmond De Silva replied that the Court had received high praise from many Member States and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for the speed and efficiency of its work.

Mr. Taylor was aware that the court was trying to extradite him and diplomatic negotiations were taking place behind the scenes to convince Nigeria to turn him over to the Court for the terrible crimes he had committed against the people of Sierra Leone, he added.

Mr. Taylor could only be pursued through diplomatic means because the Court, not having been set up under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, lacked the power to compel his surrender. Meanwhile, the Nigerian Government was awaiting the results of the upcoming Liberian elections to see if the new Government would ask for Mr. Taylor to be handed over.

On the question of whether the Court would be seen as a failure if it could not prosecute Mr. Taylor or Mr. Koroma, if Mr. Koroma was still alive, Mr. De Silva said the Nuremberg Trials were not judged to be a failure just because Adolf Hitler had committed suicide.

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News and Media Division • New York

Pledging Conference for
Special Court for Sierra Leone
AM Meeting

L/3092
30 September 2005

**UN MEMBER STATES PLEDGE NEARLY \$10 MILLION FOR SPECIAL COURT
FOR SIERRA LEONE, FAR SHORT OF ESTIMATED REQUIREMENTS**

**After Three Years of Important Achievements,
Court Must Not Fail Due to Lack of Resources, Deputy Secretary-General Says**

Member States this morning pledged nearly \$10 million, to finance the activities of the Special Court for Sierra Leone through next year, far short of the \$25 million the tribunal's Registrar estimated would be needed to continue to investigate cases and bring to justice those accused of responsibility for serious crimes during the West African country's civil war during the 1990s.

[The Special Court was set up jointly in 2002 by the Government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations. It is mandated to try those who bear the "greatest responsibility" for violations of international humanitarian law and national law, including murder, rape, looting and sexual slavery committed in the West African country's territory since 30 November 1996. Currently, 11 persons associated with all three of the country's former warring factions stand indicted by the Special Court.

The Freetown-based Court was primarily financed through voluntary contributions of States through the end of 2004. In June 2005, the General Assembly appropriated \$20 million to supplement the Court's financial resources for the first six months of this year and authorized United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan to enter further commitments of up to \$13 million to meet expenses for the second half the year. But from 1 January 2006, the Court will revert to voluntary contributions.]

At the outset of the meeting, Registrar Robin Vincent said the Special Court had been a new model, set apart by its limited mandate and by its hybrid funding, both from voluntary contributions and from the United Nations. Since the Court would continue working in the country where the abuses occurred, witnesses and the accused would need protection during trials. Only with broad support would the Court be able to leave a lasting legacy to Sierra Leone and the international community, he said.

"We are determined that the Court, after three years of important achievements and with trials at an advanced stage, must not now fail due to lack of resources", added United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette, who also highlighted what the Court meant to the people of Sierra Leone, particularly since it allowed those who were affected to witness justice being done first-hand, which was vital to the process of national reconciliation.

(more)

For information media • not an official record • also available at <http://www.un.org/News>

"Sierra Leone can not have peace without justice", that country's Foreign Minister Alhaji Momodu Koroma said, stressing that the Special Court was an instrument of that peace, and that it sent a message to the international community that no one could commit grave crimes with impunity. As the Court neared the end of its mandate and went into its last year, full funding for its work would be a symbol that violence would never again be tolerated.

Allan Rock, of Canada, Chair of the Court's Management Committee, said the tribunal's communications strategy had been truly innovative, and news of its activities had reached people throughout Sierra Leone. The Court still required two major indictees to be handed over, former Liberian President Charles Taylor and Johnny Paul Koroma. Seeing justice done in their cases would require regional cooperation and the support of the international community.

Praising the Special Court as a model of innovation in the international legal arena, Ian Levin, of Human Rights Watch, said the Court, nevertheless, faced persistent challenges, including completing trials and appeals fairly and effectively and ensuring that all indictees appeared before the Court. The lack of dependable funding jeopardized the work of the court and it would be a crime if its work was compromised for lack of funds, he said.

After a video of the atrocities and the Court in operation was shown, the representative of the United Kingdom said the film demonstrated the Court reaching out to the people who had been damaged by the atrocities. Those people deserved justice and support in seeing justice carried out. He pledged £2 million or approximately \$3.5 million.

Pledging \$1.2 million for the 2006 budget, the representative of the Netherlands said his country fully supported the Court both financially and politically.

Denmark pledged Dkr 2.9 million or \$467,000, saying the Court's mandate was to bring justice for those who had been wronged. Therefore, Charles Taylor must be brought forward. The Court had already benefited the people of Sierra Leone by advancing public awareness of justice. Hopefully, elements of the Special Court would become permanent structures in Sierra Leone. Also, the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) was leaving at the end of the year. The country should not be left on its own but troops had not yet been committed to the follow-up mission.

Australia's representative pledged \$A 100,000 and noted that his country was supporting Sierra Leone in other ways as well, including by making contributions to the mission in the amount of \$6 million.

Noting that the Court was making a seminal contribution to justice in Sierra Leone, Belgium pledged €150,000 or approximately \$180,000. The Court was also making new legal precedent, Ireland's representative added as he pledged \$360,000.

Canada's representative pledged Can\$ 1.7 million, including Can\$ 1.2 million for 2006 and Can\$ 500,000 for 2007. In kind contributions included Can\$ 1 million for Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers for investigations and witness protection, legal interns and legal research. Also, Can\$ 90,000 in the form of a police trainer to train the Sierra Leone Police in witness protection and major case management.

(more)

Germany pledged €500,000 through its embassy in Freetown for the Court's activities and projects for protecting witnesses, the courageous men and women who were often the only ones enabling the Court to reach a verdict.

The European Commission's delegate recalled the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights, the European Union's financial instrument for human rights and democratization work, which had supported criminal courts in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, as well as in Sierra Leone, where a programme for victims of crimes had also been set up. Another €695,244 (\$846,807) was being set up for a follow-on project to protect victims and witnesses, contribute to judicial know-how, and engage the public in the Court's work.

Others taking part in today's event were Norway, pledging Nkr 1 million (\$115,000); Turkey, pledging \$200,000; and Finland, pledging €300,000 or \$360,000, to bring the country's total contribution to \$1 million to date.

Continuing, Austria pledged \$120,000; Greece pledged \$25,000; and Italy said it pledged an amount to be determined later, along with other types of contributions.

Wrapping up the conference, the Legal Counsel and Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, Nicolas Michel, said Sweden had also pledged SKr 4 million. Also, the United Nations would continue to work with Member States to reach the \$25 million goal for the Court.

* * * * *

Australia funds war crimes court



01-10-2005

From: AAP

AUSTRALIA has pledged a further \$100,000 to help a west African country try those responsible for serious violations of humanitarian law.

Foreign Minister Alexander Downer today said the money would go to the Special Court of Sierra Leone, which was set up by the United Nations in co-operation with the African nation.

A statement from Mr Downer's office said that since 2001 Australia had contributed \$300,000 to the Special Court, which had made "good progress" in bringing violators of international law to justice.

Australia would contribute more than \$6 million to a UN mission in Sierra Leone during 2005-06, the statement said.

International Humanitarian Law (IHL) provides a framework for protection for civilians and combatants alike during armed conflict. It's principal legal documents are the Geneva Conventions of 1949 – four treaties signed by almost every nation in the world.

Sierra leone is still emerging from a ten-year civil war in which thousands of people suffered horrendous brutality.

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30/9/2005



Press Conference

Department of Public Information • News and Media Division • New York

PRESS CONFERENCE ON SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE

The Special Court for Sierra Leone received a boost today from several Member States who pledged funds to enable it to continue prosecuting those accused of committing serious crimes in that country since the signing of the 1996 Abidjan Peace Agreement, Chief Prosecutor Desmond da Silva said at a Headquarters press conference this afternoon.

Responding to questions about the Court's status and its ability to prosecute former Liberian President Charles Taylor, Mr. da Silva said that Mr. Taylor remained in Nigeria, where he had been granted temporary asylum, and was aware that the Court was trying to convince Nigeria to turn him over for the "terrible crimes committed against the people of Sierra Leone".

Robin Vincent, Registrar of the Special Court, who accompanied Mr. da Silva, acknowledged that while the Court had received high praise from many Member States and non-governmental organizations for its speed and efficiency thus far, its performance would undoubtedly be judged by its ability to prosecute Mr. Taylor.

Mr. da Silva explained that they could pursue Mr. Taylor only through diplomatic means because the Court had not been set up under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter and thus lacked the power to compel Nigeria to surrender him. In addition, the matter was politically sensitive; the United States and European countries were careful not to offend the Nigerian Government by telling it what to do. Moreover, those countries depended heavily on Nigeria's contribution to peacekeeping operations in various hot spots.

Asked about the official Nigerian position, the Chief Prosecutor said they were awaiting the results of the upcoming Liberian elections to see if that country's new Government would request that he be turned over. Nigeria would be well disposed to handing him over if that were the case.

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Breaking news**Sierra Leone Tribunal Presses Nigeria**

Saturday October 1, 2005 2:31 AM

By EDITH M. LEDERER

Associated Press Writer

[U.S. Family Among Injured in Bali Bombings](#)
9:01 am

[DeLay Vows Return to House Leadership Role](#)
9:01 am

[Great Lakes States Battle Fish Farms](#)
9:01 am

[Box: Calif. Town Split Over Sewer Project](#)
9:01 am

[Costly Sewer System Divides Calif. Town](#)
9:01 am

[Summary: Fish Fight Erupting in Congress](#)
9:01 am

[Aide: Bush Undecided on High Court Nominee](#)
8:46 am

[Supreme Court Begins Year With Bush Visit](#)
8:46 am

[U.S.: 28 Militants Die As Iraq Fight Grows](#)
8:46 am

UNITED NATIONS (AP) - The U.N.-backed tribunal prosecuting war crimes in Sierra Leone is pressuring Nigeria to hand over former Liberian President Charles Taylor for trial and is searching for a rebel leader, the court's chief prosecutor said Friday.

The tribunal hopes to prosecute Taylor and the rebel leader Johnny Paul Koroma before wrapping up its work in about 18 months, said Desmond De Silva, the chief prosecutor. He warned that the two men will not escape prosecution even if they are found afterward.

The tribunal is trying several rebel military commanders on charges stemming from accusations of systematic killings, rapes, enslavement of child soldiers and mutilation with machetes during Sierra Leone's 1991-2002 civil war.

Koroma was reported in 2003 to have been killed by Liberian soldiers, but his body has not been transferred to authorities. De Silva told a news conference the last report the tribunal had indicated Koroma was alive in Guinea last year.

"I can't say that's hard intelligence, but it is intelligence of a kind," the prosecutor cautioned.

Washington helped arrange Taylor's flight to Nigeria as rebels besieged his capital, Monrovia, in August 2003. He was later indicted by the war-crimes tribunal for backing Sierra Leone rebels in their insurgency, but Nigeria granted him asylum. Taylor has denied the charges.

The United States now favors Taylor's extradition.

The U.N.-backed tribunal also accuses Taylor of violating his asylum agreement by meddling in the affairs of Liberia and its neighbors.

Nigeria's foreign minister has said the government would

**Iraqi Oil Minister's
Convoy Attacked**
8:46 am

From the Associated Press

consider a request from Liberia for Taylor to be returned, "but not to a third country."

De Silva said the court in the midst of negotiations with Nigeria to hand over Taylor.

"It's a balancing act, and I've got to try to find a way out of this so that a noted criminal can be brought to justice for the crimes he had committed against the people of Sierra Leone," he said.

Because the U.N. Security Council authorized the tribunal's operation under a chapter of the U.N. Charter that is not militarily enforceable, the prosecutor said he can only use diplomacy to try to get Taylor before the court.

If Taylor is handed over, De Silva said, "there will be a body of evidence ... that will demonstrate his connection with blood diamonds, and all that entails." He refused to elaborate saying further details would put those people prepared to testify against him "in great danger."

De Silva and the court's registrar, Robin Vincent, were in New York to attend a pledging conference, where they were seeking \$25 million for the tribunal's operations in 2006.

Fifteen countries pledged over \$9 million.

The United States has been the biggest supporter of the court, contributing \$22 million over four years, "and we fully expect the U.S. to again be the major contributor" though it did not announce a pledge on Friday, Vincent said.

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From Awareness Times Newspaper in Freetown

NEWS

Sep 23: Robin Vincent shares his emotions in Sierra Leone

By Abu Bakarr Munu

Sep 30, 2005, 09:46

Outgoing Special Court Registrar, Robin Vincent, past Friday shared his emotions with members of the local press on his disappointments during his tenure as Registrar of the Special Court of Sierra Leone. According to him, his saddest moment as Registrar was when the death of the RUF Leader, Corporal Foday Saybana Sankoh was announced. He said he would have loved to hear from him telling the people of Sierra Leone why he initiated the war and how he executed it.

"It would have been pleasing for me to hear him tell the true stories and to answer to certain questions which will perhaps help in addressing the question of impunity for ever in this country. His death therefore was a disappointment," Mr. Vincent said.

Mr. Vincent further said that his happiest moment after he would have left the court, will be the eventual turning over of the former President of Liberia, Charles Ghankay Taylor, to the Special Court to answer to charges of crimes against humanity levied against him before by the court, adding that he will be gratified to come back to Sierra Leone to witness the proceedings against him.

Mr. Vincent noted however that it will be a disgrace and shame to the Special Court and indeed the international community if Charles Taylor does not appear before the court. "It will be an international disgrace if they fail to bring Charles Taylor to face trial on charges of crimes against humanity and human rights abuse brought against him by the special court," he asserted.

Mr. Vincent went on to opine that the Special Court has contributed significantly to the restoration of democratic rule in Sierra Leone by bringing to justice those who he said bear the greatest responsibilities for the sufferings and mayhem perpetuated during the ten years conflict. He asserted that the Special Court's manifestation of justice has helped a lot in quieting discontent among the people who might otherwise be thinking that justice will not be done.

He assured that the Special Court will continue to explore all avenues for the bringing of Charles Taylor to Sierra Leone to stand trial before the special court. "If we have a message today saying come to Nigeria and collect Charles Taylor, we will be there in less than 24 hours," he assured. He said the Special Court will not hijack Charles Taylor or use any awkward means to bring him to Sierra Leone.

"Charles Taylor will come to the Special Court through legislative means," he maintained.

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Charles Taylor won't escape, S. Leone court warns

30 Sep 2005 19:36:55 GMT

Source: Reuters

Background

- ▶ FACTBOX: Guinea
- ▶ FACTBOX: Guinea-Bissau
- ▶ FACTBOX: Liberia
- ▶ CRISIS PROFILE: W. Africa teeters between war and peace
- ▶ CRISIS PROFILE-Is Ivory Coast heading for all-out war?

MORE →

By Irwin Arieff

UNITED NATIONS, Sept 30 (Reuters) - The U.N.-backed war crimes court in Sierra Leone warned former Liberian President Charles Taylor on Friday against trying to escape trial by remaining in exile until the court shuts down.

Taylor, who is living in exile in Nigeria, was indicted by the tribunal in March 2003 on 17 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity for stoking civil war in Sierra Leone through an illicit trade in guns for diamonds mined by rebels.

"It would be nothing short of an international disgrace if anybody was allowed to avoid prosecution on a legal indictment and with an international arrest warrant because of the end" of the Sierra Leone court, Registrar Robin Vincent said.

A mechanism would be set up to "take account of any indictee who thinks that by sitting his time out until the court finishes that he will avoid prosecution," Vincent said.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone, which opened its doors 3 1/2 years ago, expects to complete its work and shut down in about 18 months, Vincent told a news conference.

The court was set up to try suspected war criminals from a conflict that killed some 50,000 people in the impoverished nation of 5.4 million people.

The U.N. Security Council has blamed Taylor for fueling war across West Africa, including in Liberia, where he presided over 14 years of on-and-off civil war, and Sierra Leone, where rebels hacked off limbs, burned civilians to death and forced drugged children into battle.

Taylor escaped prosecution by accepting an offer of exile from Nigeria as rebel forces entered the Liberian capital.

He was granted asylum on condition he stay out of Liberian affairs. But Chief Prosecutor Desmond de Silva said the court had convincing "raw evidence" Taylor was supporting candidates in Liberia's Oct. 11 elections and planned to return there one day.

The grant of asylum was meant to be temporary in any case and the court has been pressing Nigeria to recognize "the will of the world" and turn Taylor over for trial, he said.

Vincent and de Silva were in New York to secure \$25 million in pledges from international donors to fund the court for 2006. The court has so far been funded by voluntary contributions supplemented by \$33 million from the United Nations, but will have to rely solely on voluntary donations next year, they said.

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- ▶ Bangladeshis rejoice over arrest of militant chief (*7 minutes ago*)
Source: Reuters
- ▶ Police hunt for Bali bombing masterminds (*27 minutes ago*)
Source: Reuters
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Cocorioko website

http://www.cocorioko.com/_news

NIGERIAN PRESIDENT OBASANJO CONTINUES TO DEFY WORLD ON CHARLES TAYLOR

Monday October 3, 2005

Nigeria's President Olusegun Obasanjo has maintained his repulsion of the idea to hand over Liberia's former President Charles Taylor to the Special Court for Sierra Leone which has indicted the former rebel kingpin for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Despite representations by civil groups in Nigeria who have even threatened to take the Federal Government of Nigeria to court for granting amnesty to an alleged war criminal, President Obasanjo has failed to take action.

The President's commitment that he will only hand Taylor over to a constitutionally-elected government in Liberia now seems unlikely because none of Liberia's Presidential candidates for next week's elections has made any firm commitment about demanding that Taylor face justice, if they win.

Meanwhile, some Liberians who spoke to COCORIOKO yesterday have asked that the details contained in a report on Taylor by the International Coalition For Justice be made available to the international community. This, they intimated, will enable stakeholders to see how Taylor has not only continued to dabble in the politics of Liberia in violation of his amnesty and but was running an extensive financial network in exile that poses a danger to the security of Liberia and her West African neighbours.

Since whatever Taylor does affects the security of Sierra Leone, COCORIOKO will be serializing the Coalition's report on Taylor's movement in coming days.

Cocorioko website

http://www.cocorioko.com/news_section

JOHNNY PAUL KOROMA MAY BE ALIVE --Special Court Prosecutor De Silva says

Saturday October 1, 2005

Fugitive former military junta leader , Johnny Paul Koroma, who is wanted in Freetown for alleged Treason and War Crimes, may be alive, Special Court Prosecutor Desmond De Silva intimated yesterday.

The Prosecutor said that Johnny Paul was reported to be alive last year and as a result the Special Court is searching for him. This revelation by De Silva now casts doubts on reports two years ago that Johnny Paul was assassinated by former Liberian warlord and Ex-President Charles Taylor.

However, De Silva said that to an extent this was only speculation as there was only intelligence of a kind, which he confessed he could not call hard intelligence. Koroma, he intimated, was last reported to have been in Guinea. One thing that was certain though, according to the Prosecutor , was that the Special Court was hard on the heels of Koroma and former Liberian leader Charles Taylor (Who is being provided refuge by Nigeria's President, Olusegun Obasanjo.).

The Special Court Prosecutor disclosed that the court was negotiating behind the scenes for Nigeria to see her way clear and hand over Taylor who is also wanted for alleged war crimes against the people of Sierra Leone. Mr.Silva warned that even if the Special Court wrapped up its operations in 18 months, as scheduled, the two men would still face prosecution later, if found. A war crimes charge does not have a statute of limitation, former Prosecutor, David Crane, once said.

The court, De Silva went on, had to use diplomacy because the Chapter of the UN Charter under which the Special Court 's operations were authorized , could not be enforced militarily.

Liberia: Despite Elections, Collapse of Justice Poses Risks

30 Sep 2005 20:45:20 GMT

Source: Human Rights Watch

Background

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- ▶ FACTBOX: Liberia
- ▶ CRISIS PROFILE: W. Africa teeters between war and peace
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(Dakar, September 30, 2005)-If a return to armed conflict in Liberia is to be avoided, the new government to be elected on October 11 must ensure that those responsible for past atrocities are brought to justice and that human rights abusers are kept out of the police, army and civil service, Human Rights Watch said in

a report released today. On October 11, Liberia will hold its first national elections since the signing of a peace agreement in 2003. At stake in the polls are the presidency, the 30-seat Senate and the 64-seat House of Representatives. While preparations, registration and campaigning in the October elections have been free of major irregularities, leaders in the country's incoming government will need to pay more attention to the critical issues of justice and human rights than they have on the campaign trail, Human Rights Watch said.

The 39-page report, "Liberia at a Crossroads: Human Rights Challenges for the New Government," warned that Liberia's transition from a near-failed state to a democratic country governed by rule of law cannot be considered complete until there is considerably more progress in several key areas. First, Liberia's judicial system, which remains plagued by striking deficiencies, must be rebuilt with the help of the international community. Second, the process of restructuring and reconstituting Liberia's national police and army, which have for decades preyed upon the populations they are entrusted to protect, must be completed without delay. Finally, the individuals responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during Liberia's armed conflicts must be kept out of the civil service, police and army and be held accountable for their crimes.

"After enduring more than two decades of political instability including 14 years of brutal armed conflict, Liberia stands at an unprecedented crossroads," said Peter Takirambudde, executive director of the Africa division at Human Rights Watch. "But failure to establish the rule of law and ensure justice for horrific crimes of war could undermine the hard-won stability in Liberia and the region as a whole."

From the military coup in 1980 to the overthrow of President Charles Taylor in 2003, Liberian citizens were subjected to

continual violations of civil and political rights by successive governments as well as widespread and systematic war crimes committed by all warring factions during the country's two devastating armed conflicts. The violence blighted the lives of tens of thousands of Liberians.

Candidates in the upcoming elections include at least three former leaders of armed factions, five individuals subject to United Nations sanctions for activities aimed at undermining peace in Liberia and the sub-region, and several former high-level military commanders accused of war crimes. These individuals, who have in the past shown complete disregard for the rule of law and due process, could resort to force and other extra-legal measures to circumvent and subvert Liberia's political process and the legal system if elected to office, Human Rights Watch said.

Human Rights Watch called on the incoming government, together with the international community, to develop a concrete strategy to ensure justice for serious past human rights crimes and to establish an independent commission charged with instituting a vetting process to screen out human rights abusers appointed to or under consideration for civil service positions.

For decades, the Liberian police and army have been used as a repressive arm of successive governments and their ruling parties, and been the source of considerable instability, corruption and human rights violations. However, the vetting procedure designed to screen out past human rights abusers from the new Liberian Police Service was most likely ineffective in screening out past abusers. Problems with the process included unclear criteria for the elimination of potential human rights abusers and inadequate human resources to conduct thorough and systematic background checks on applicants. The new government must ensure that DynCorp, a U.S.-based contractor charged with restructuring the new army, pays attention to and corrects some of the problems that have plagued the vetting process for the Liberian National Police.

Immediately after the elections, the new government and international community will need to begin rebuilding the severely dysfunctional Liberian judicial system, which was left in ruins by the years of civil war. Human Rights Watch noted that the absence of functioning courtrooms, prosecutors and public defenders-as well as corruption within judicial proceedings-is actually fostering impunity instead of confronting it.

Human Rights Watch welcomed the recognition by the current Liberian government, the presidential hopefuls and the international community of the key role played by endemic corruption in creating conditions for armed conflict and political instability. At the same time, however, the new Liberian government and the international community must demonstrate a parallel commitment to improving deficiencies in the Liberian judicial system and key public institutions while ensuring that those most responsible for past human rights crimes are held accountable.

"Liberia's newly elected government will need to demonstrate its

commitment to the rule of law and respect for human rights by prosecuting the key individuals who were responsible for atrocities in the country's armed conflicts," said Takirambudde.

One of the individuals believed to be most responsible for war crimes in Liberia is former president Charles Taylor, currently in exile in Nigeria. Human Rights Watch urged Liberia's incoming government to ask Nigeria to surrender Taylor for prosecution to the Special Court for Sierra Leone for his involvement in crimes committed during Sierra Leone's civil war. However, the new government must also ensure that Taylor is held accountable for war crimes he is accused of committing in Liberia.

"Surrendering Charles Taylor to the Special Court is crucial for ensuring justice for the victims of crimes in Sierra Leone," said Takirambudde. "But justice must also be done for the countless victims of war crimes Taylor allegedly committed in Liberia as both rebel leader and president."

Background

Liberia's first armed conflict began in 1989 when rebel leader Charles Taylor and his National Patriotic Front of Liberia launched a rebellion to unseat then-President Samuel K. Doe. The conflict, which lasted from 1989 to 1996, ended with an internationally brokered peace accord that included a general amnesty to all faction fighters. The transition from war to peace envisioned under the accord was never completed due to incomplete implementation of the peace accords, particularly regarding the need to restructure the security forces prior to elections. Instead, the 1997 elections, which Taylor went on to win, were conducted in an atmosphere of threats and intimidation.

As president, Taylor enrolled thousands of fighters from his former faction in the country's police and army, which resulted in continued pillage and human rights abuses and, ultimately, a return to civil war in 1999. During Liberia's second armed conflict, two rebels groups-the Guinea-backed Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy and the Ivorian-backed Movement for Democracy in Liberia-launched their own bid to unseat President Taylor. In August 2003, as the rebels threatened to take over the capital Monrovia, Taylor was granted political asylum in Nigeria on the condition that he not meddle in the political affairs of Liberia or elsewhere in West Africa. Taylor was in March 2003 indicted by the Special Court in Sierra Leone on 17 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity for his role in supporting rebel groups in Sierra Leone.

In August 2003, Liberia's warring factions signed an internationally brokered peace agreement in Accra, Ghana. The accord installed a broad-based interim government-the National Transitional Government of Liberia-which was dominated by the country's three former armed factions and tasked with guiding Liberia towards elections in October 2005. Since August 2003, several factors have contributed to a marked decrease in human rights abuses and political instability and helped establish the conditions for the elections to take place. These included the departure of Charles Taylor into exile, the establishment of the

U.N. Mission in Liberia in September 2003, and the subsequent deployment of about 15,000 peacekeepers and 1,000 civilian police to Liberia.

HRW news

Newsdesk **NGO Latest** **Reuters Pictures**

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Source: Reuters

‣ Police hunt for Bali bombing masterminds (*34 minutes ago*)

Source: Reuters

‣ Police hunt for Bali bombing masterminds (*7 hours ago*)

Source: Reuters

‣ Three dead, scores wounded in Gaza infighting (*11 hours ago*)

Source: Reuters

‣ IRAQ WRAPUP 2-US says no sign two Marines seized in Iraq (*12 hours ago*)

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UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 30 Sept 2005

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International Clips on West Africa**COTE D IVOIRE: West African leaders try to revive flagging peace efforts**

ABUJA, 30 Sep 2005 (IRIN) - West African leaders gathered for a one-day extraordinary summit on Friday aimed at reviving flagging efforts to bring peace to divided Cote d'Ivoire although the country's president refused to attend. Ivorian leader Laurent Gbagbo boycotted the talks after accusing the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) of bias towards the rebels, who seized control of the northern half of the cocoa-rich nation three years ago.

Friday's talks are to be followed by a wider African Union (AU) summit on 6 October, with the United Nations Security Council due to consider the crisis in Cote d'Ivoire a week later on 13 October.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
News Service No: 248 September 2005

Sierra Leone: International community must continue to fund the Special Court

Amnesty International urges states to attend the 30 September donor meeting in New York and pledge sufficient funds to the Special Court for Sierra Leone. This funding is essential to ensure that the Special Court operates effectively throughout 2006.

Amnesty International continues to believe that the Special Court must receive support and cooperation from the international community in order to carry out its functions professionally and impartially.

Local Media – Newspapers**Electoral Body Commits to Holding October Poll**

(The Analyst)

- Addressing the start of a two-day workshop to train domestic electoral observers in Monrovia yesterday, National Elections Commission (NEC) Co-Chairman James Fromoyan said the Elections Commission was committed to the conduct of transparent elections in October. He said NEC had resolved to allow national and international observers to participate in the electoral process to ensure transparency.
- European Commission Election Consultant Karl Donnas also acknowledged that the participation of domestic observers would generate confidence in the electoral process.