

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



PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

Friday, 30 January 2009

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Independent observer
Friday, 30 January 2009

Prosecution witness tells about massacre by Sierra Leonean government militia

For the first time in the year-old war crimes trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor, a Liberian lawyer has joined the Defense team. Counsellor Lavala Supuwood has travelled to The Hague to help the Defence prepare its case. Meanwhile, a Prosecution witness has been telling the Court of a massacre committed by the government-supported Civil Defense Forces of Sierra Leone. Joseph Cheeseman reports

CHEESEMAN: After a week of closed session, the Special Court for Sierra Leone has heard the testimony of the Prosecution's 92nd witness, in a partially open session.

The witness, only identified by a number, testified behind a screen. He spoke in Krio with the aid an interpreter. He was asked by Defence lawyer Courtenay Griffiths to recall a massacre which took place in Tongo Field in Kenema District, when several soldiers and their wives were killed. Mr Griffiths said the killings were committed by the CDF or Kamajors.

GRIFFITHS: But when the CDF came, you remember they lined up 20 men and 4 women where were Limba, Temne and Lokos, and killed them in cold blood, didn't they?

WITNESS: The four women that I am sure of, it was not because they were Loko or Limba. They were killed because they were wives of soldiers. The 20 soldiers whom I saw, it was because they were SLA soldiers.

GRIFFITHS: They were hacked to death in cold blood by the CDF, weren't they?

WITNESS: Exactly. They were hacked with machetes. I did not see them fire a gun. I saw machetes.

CHEESEMAN: The Prosecution 93 witness, identified as TF1-174, later took the stand and testified to massive looting and raping in the Sierra Leonean town Makeni during what he called 17-day period by the rebels.

He testified that the rebels went on a looting spree after the West African peacekeeping force, ECOMOG, dropped a bomb in Makeni. For the personal security of the witness, he is testifying from behind a screen and his voice is distorted.

COUNSEL: Now you've mentioned looting during this period. Can you tell us in some detail what was looted?

WITNESS: All houses were looted, everywhere. The mission was looted. The seminary was looted. The schools in Makeni, primary, secondary and even the college were all looted. There was rampant looting, the Bishop's vehicles in the mission were looted.

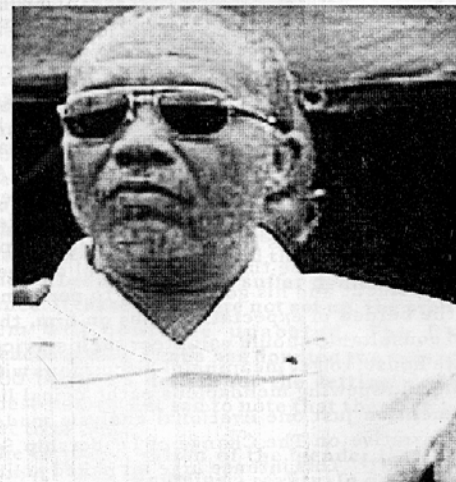
COUNSEL: Now sir, were you aware of any sexual violence during this 17-day period?

WITNESS: It was very, very rampant, and all over, when night comes, from all the houses people were shouting, "Don't rape me! I have been raped!" Most girls.

CHEESEMAN: The witness said he took care of over 100 child soldiers captured by the joint RUF/AFRC Forces at the Teko military barracks in Makeni. The testimony of the prosecution 93 witness is expected to continue on Wednesday.

Meanwhile a Liberian lawyer has joined the Defense team of Charles Taylor in The Hague.

The appearance in Court of the first Liberian lawyer for the Defence is a sign that the Prosecution case is almost complete. Counsellor Lavala Supuwood was dressed in



the black and white gown used by lawyers of the International Criminal Court. He sat close to lead Defense counsel, Courtenay Griffiths, as he carried out his cross-examination.

Counsellor Supuwood is the first Liberian lawyer to work at the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Written by Joseph Cheeseman in the Hague

Sierra Leone Court Monitoring Program November 2008

Monthly Synopsis of the Trial of Charles Taylor–November 2008

By Joseph A K Sesay

The Charles Taylor trial adjourned on 11th December 2008 for the Christmas break after having heard 84 Prosecution witnesses. In the month of November 2008, Prosecution called witness, TFI-579, 045 and 358. Witness TFI-579, an insider witness, gave his direct evidence on the 5th and 6th November 2008. The witness in his testimony recalled that he was a member of the NPFL and a body guard to Oliver Vanny when he first met Foday Sankoh at Bomi Hills in Liberia where Sankoh was planning to launch an attack in Sierra Leone with the support of Charles Taylor. He stated that Taylor ordered the execution of Vanny, a NPFL fighter. The defence objected noting that it was outside the Court's temporal jurisdiction. The prosecution responded that the evidence is to show the accused's conduct of killing his fighter. The Presiding Judge allowed the evidence and noted that its value would have to be determined by the Chamber.

TFI-579 also testified that he served as guard at Taylor's mansion and recalled that Sankoh was given a house close to the mansion. He further stated that ammunitions were transported to Sam Bockarie from Liberia. He recalled that Taylor used to settle dispute among RUF commanders, noting that Taylor attempted to settle a dispute between Bockarie and Issa Sesay, and when negotiations broke down, Bockarie left for Liberia under the instructions of Taylor and his RUF fighters were recruited into the Anti Terrorist Unit (ATU). He testified that Bockarie informed him that diamonds were given to Taylor to purchase ammunitions.

The witness also testified on event relating to Bockarie's relocation at Yekepa following fighting with Phillip Doe in Ivory Coast. He noted that at Yekepa, Taylor ordered Benjamin Yeaten to kill Bockarie and his men. At the conclusion of his direct evidence, the defence applied for an adjournment to prepare to cross-examine the witness as there was



Former President Charles Taylor in Courtroom at The Hague

not enough notice given for the witness. The Chamber granted the application and ruled that the witness be called for cross examination on the 24th November 2008.

On Wednesday, 12 November 2008, Prosecution called witness TFI-045, Augustine Sama Mallah. He noted in his testimony that he was captured in 1991 by rebels with Liberian accent who trained him and made him a "junior commando". He testified that Sankoh brought ammunitions and medicines from Liberia for RUF fighters. He further stated that Sankoh ordered the RUF to attack Sierra Rutile and capture the foreign workers in order to raise concerns in the international community. In 1996, he stated that Taylor instructed Sankoh to cut off the hands of civilians to prevent them from voting in the general elections. In 1996 also, following the departure of Taylor for the peace talks in Ivory Coast, RUF headquarters was destroyed and some of them moved to Liberia where Mike Lamin held a meeting with Taylor who provided them with Liberian pass to allow them to travel to Ivory Coast.

TFI-045 testified that after the AFRC coup in May 1997, they traveled to Sierra Leone where RUF fighters were engaged in diamond mining and civilians were used as forced labour. He testified

that Bockarie informed him that jungle used to come for diamonds for Taylor. He noted that when the ECOMOG invaded AFRC junta, Bockarie informed them to engage in "operation pay yourself". He also noted that Bockarie usually traveled to Monrovia where he would take diamonds and collect materials from Taylor. He stated further that on one occasion, after a meeting with Taylor, Bockarie informed them about embarking on "operations spare no soul". In 2000, he testified that Issa Sesay was given the responsibility of transporting diamonds to Liberia on his return he brought arms and ammunitions and some money which he said was for election purposes since the RUF was to become a political party. During cross-examination, Morris Anyah sought to establish inconsistencies between the witness' earlier statements given to OTP investigators and his oral testimony. The witness also admitted that he killed civilians and was engaged in the raping of young girls. Counsel also attempted to show Taylor's positive role in trying to restore peace in Sierra Leone. He concluded by asking about payments made to the witness by the OTP and WVS, noting that the witness received a total of about Le 7,800,000.

The Prosecution also called TF1-358, a protected witness who testified with voice and facial distortion, as an expert witness in human anatomy. His testimony covers the nature of injuries suffered during the conflict in Sierra Leone. He testified that in 1997, several patients who had suffered

amputation were taken to his surgery in Freetown. He identified a number of photographs shown to him by the Prosecution, as individuals he treated in his surgery. During cross-examination, Terry Munyard attempted to establish inconsistencies between the witness' prior statements made to OTP investigators and testimony given in Court. Counsel noted that the witness had not stated in his interviews that his patients informed him that they were attacked by Liberian accent rebels, but had stated that in his testimony in Court. The witness maintained that the focus of the interviews were in relation to the patients and not the rebels.

During the last week of November, Munyard concluded cross-examination of witness TF1-358 and the Court recalls prosecution witness TF1-579 for cross-examination. Lead defence Counsel Courtenay Griffiths cross-examined the witness, noting that the witness voluntarily joined the NPFL in 1990, trained and became bodyguard to senior members of the NPFL. Counsel indicated that the Prosecution was portraying Taylor as a man who killed his fighters without any proper trial. Counsel asked the witness questions relating to the execution of some NPFL fighters. Counsel also noted that the witness was never close to Taylor and might not had been his body guard because he did not possess the requisite requirement for becoming Taylor's body guard. Counsel concluded by identifying inconsistencies between prior statements and oral testimony.

Standard Times Online

Thursday, 29 January 2009

<http://standardtimespress.net>

Sierra Leone Court Monitoring Programme Urges Government To Issue Public Apology to War Victims



Sierra Leone to offer a public apology before launching the long awaited victims' reparations programme.

On 30 January 2009, the Government of Sierra Leone through the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA), the implementing agency for the reparations programme, will launch the Reparations Programme for victims of the 11 years civil conflict. Guided by the Lomé Peace Agreement of 1999 and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Act, 2000, the TRC recommended the creation of a programme to address and respond to the specific needs of victims. Although it is coming seven years after the war ended, the SLCMP nonetheless welcomes the decision and congratulates the Government and NaCSA.

The conflict in Sierra Leone was characterised by serious violations of human rights at almost all levels. According to the TRC Report Vol. 2 p. 237, "most [victims] have been reduced to living in poverty, some having to endure the loss of limbs and others shunned because of their personal experiences such as rape and sexual slavery". Many war victims still live in condition that is not conducive to living with dignity. Therefore, domestic and international law guarantee the right for victims to seek redress for violations and the state is obliged to provide appropriate remedies for such violations. To that end, reparations are given as an acknowledgment of liability for wrongdoing, and as part of an attempt to repair the damage resulting from the wrongdoing. They provide redress and accord a measure of social justice and restoration of dignity of the victims of gross human rights violations. The TRC recommended measures to deal with the needs of victims in areas such as health, pensions, education and skills training, micro credit initiatives,

community reparations and symbolic reparations. Both the Lomé Peace Accord and the TRC Act place a legal obligation on the Government to implement its recommendations. Yet, these recommendations are only being actualised now, about five years since the TRC issued its final report.

Now, as it prepares to launch the programme, SLCMP wishes to remind the Government about the importance of issuing a public apology to the victims of the conflict during the launch of the programme.

“Launching the reparations programme is an important first step as it is in itself an acknowledgment by government of what happened and its responsibility to deliver reparations to victims as recommended by the TRC” says Brima Karl Samura, Media and Communication Officer of SLCMP. *“An apology is an important and much needed explicit recognition of victims’ suffering that has reparative value in itself.”*

“There are crucial issues which all meaningful reparations programme must address” added Mohamed Suma, Programme Director of SLCMP. *“They include measures of satisfaction (including recognition and apology), restitution, compensation, rehabilitation and guarantee of non-repetition (such as institutional reform).”*

The SLCMP is convinced that, a genuine public apology from the Government will be of great importance to the overall impact and success of the programme. Such an act signifies remorse, responsibility and regret, acknowledging the real suffering of victims of the conflict which is an essential element for fostering healing and reconciliation.

However, SLCMP also stress that this public apology must be reinforced by concrete efforts to successfully implement the reparations programme. Reparations must go beyond the emotional and symbolic and practically assist victims, most of whom still carry the physical, emotional and social scars of the war.

The Lomé Peace Accord and the TRC Act place a legal obligation on the Government to implement the TRC recommendations. During President Koroma’s maiden address to Parliament on 1 October 2007, he made a commitment to “...establish a TRC Follow-Up Committee to superintend the implementation of the TRC recommendations.”

According to the TRC Reports (Vol. 2 p. 205), the Government is required to establish a Follow-up Committee “to monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission and to facilitate their implementation.” The Government is yet to do so. SLCMP submits that President Koroma can manifest his commitment to the implementation of the TRC recommendations by also announcing the establishment of the Follow-up Committee at the launch of the Reparations Programme.

SLCMP wishes to stress that the faithful implementation of the TRC recommendations is not only essential to raise awareness about the lessons learnt from the armed conflict, but will most importantly enhance the effort to guarantee human rights protection, strengthen the rule of law, promote good governance, ensure civilian oversight of the security forces, improve youth capacity building and employment, increase the legal status of women and girls, improve the development of social infrastructure, and foster the spirit of genuine reconciliation.

For further information on President Ernest Bai Koroma’s manifesto commitments to the TRC recommendations, please see the SLCMP article *‘Elections 2007: A Comparison of Party Manifestos Against the Core Recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’* (July 2007) at www.slcmp.org

BBC World Service Trust

Thursday, 29 January 2009

Report from The Hague

A female witness of the Prosecution has testified to being raped at a very young age by a rebel general during the Sierra Leone civil war. According to her, a second rebel with the rank of a sergeant later forced her into marriage. The witness said the pain she suffered at the hands of her rebel husbands was unbearable. Joseph Cheeseman reports.

CHEESEMAN: Witness Finda Gbamanja told Prosecution lawyer Brenda Hollis that she bled profusely and became terribly weak after she was raped.

When asked about her age at the time of the rape, Finda said she was too young to remember her age at the time she was captured and raped.

Finda recalled that a group of rebels led by one General Pepper of the RUF entered Gbaima her village and forced them out of their houses.

She said General Pepper killed her father, and then forced her to travel with him to Koidu Town.

Finda testified that General Pepper raped her during their first night in Koidu Town.

Finda gave her testimony in Krio so she's being interpreted.

HOLLIS: When Pepper raped you that night, had your menses begun?

WITNESS: No.

HOLLIS: What was your physical condition after this rape?

WITNESS: I couldn't stand up. He said the condition which I was, he couldn't keep me with him, so he was going to take me to his sister.

HOLLIS: What condition was he talking about?

WITNESS: The way in which I was bleeding, he got afraid.

CHEESEMAN: The witness said a second rebel, identified as Sergeant Foday, later seized her from General Pepper and forced her into marriage.

Sexual slavery is one of the counts against former Liberian President, Charles Taylor.

Finda also recalled an order from Sam Bockarie, alias Mosquito, to Sergeant Foday and other fighters to brutally deal with the civilian population.

She said it was Sergeant Foday who told her about the order from Sam Bockarie to mistreat the civilians.

WITNESS: He said Mosquito had said they should stop killing, they should be amputating hands.

HOLLIS: When you said they should be amputating hands, was it only hands?

WITNESS: He said they were to amputate hands, and they should put padlock on people's mouths and amputate ears. The people should be sent to Pa Kabbah.

HOLLIS: And did he say why they should be sent to Pa Kabbah?

WITNESS: Yes.

HOLLIS: What did he say?

WITNESS: He said, because he was the government man. He had his hands in politics.

HOLLIS: Did you learn whether this order was carried out?

WITNESS: Sergeant Foday said yes, they did it.

CHEESEMAN: Finda's cross-examination started immediately after the Prosecution lawyer Brenda Hollis ended her direct examination.

Defense lawyer Morris Anyah pointed out some inconsistencies in Finda's previous interviews with the Prosecution and her testimonies in court.

One of the inconsistencies related to the death of Finda's father.

ANYAH: This morning in court you told us it was your mother who was hit by a rebel with a gun. Yes?

WITNESS: Yes.

ANYAH: The record of interview from the Prosecution says it was your father. This is the interview from the 19th of July 2007.

WITNESS: I said my mother. I did not say my father. My mother.

ANYAH: So clearly, what I have just read to you is inaccurate, yes?

WITNESS: No, it was not my father.

CHEESEMAN: Finda ended her testimony late Thursday afternoon, and the Prosecution's last witness in Charles Taylor's case took the stand shortly before the court adjourned.

The last prosecution witness is Mr. Alusine Konteh. Mr. Konteh is a double amputee from Sierra Leone. Mr. Konteh's testimony is likely to end tomorrow, Friday.

Meanwhile the Prosecution has proposed a status conference to be scheduled by the Judges at the end of Mr. Konteh's testimony.

It is not yet known what will be discussed at the proposed status conference.

Cocorioko

Friday, 30 January 2009

Taylor Trial: Woman tells of unbearable pain at hands of rapist rebel 'husbands'

Written by Joseph Cheeseman reports from The Hague

A female witness of the Prosecution has testified to being raped at a very young age by a rebel general during the Sierra Leone civil war. According to her, a second rebel with the rank of a sergeant later forced her into marriage. The witness said the pain she suffered at the hands of her rebel husbands was unbearable. Joseph Cheeseman reports.

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Relief Web

Thursday, 29 January 2009

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf>

Australia supports peace and justice in Sierra Leone

Source: Government of Australia

Today, during the African Union summit in Addis Ababa, I met with Foreign Minister Bangura of Sierra Leone.

Australia has long-standing friendly relations with Sierra Leone, including cooperation in multilateral forums such as the United Nations and the Commonwealth.

I was pleased to advise her that Australia will contribute a further \$200,000 to the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

This brings Australia's total contribution to \$1 million since the Court's inception in 2002.

Australia has been a firm supporter of efforts to bring to justice those responsible for war crimes, and crimes against humanity in Sierra Leone.

The Special Court has contributed to Sierra Leone's progress in national reconciliation and economic recovery since the end of the civil war in 2001, this progress includes holding of democratic elections in 2007 that led to a successful transition between governments of opposing political parties.

The Court is well-regarded and has played a significant role in promoting peace and justice in the region.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

**UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries
29 January 2009**

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

Newspaper Summary

US\$1.2 Million Needed to Fight Plague of Army Worms – FAO Says

- The Resident Representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization, Dr. Winfred Hammond says his organization has brought in two experts to assist the Liberian government contain a vast plague of voracious armyworm caterpillars in parts of Bong, Lofa and Gbarpolu Counties. Speaking at UNMIL regular press briefing on Wednesday, Dr. Hammond said an emergency request of an initial US\$1.2 million has been made by the FAO to combat the pests.
- The money will be used to deal with the situation through the purchase of chemicals for distribution to affected and non affected communities to fight and prevent the insects from spreading.
- Some 106 villages in northern and central Liberia were now affected and that six communities in neighbouring Guinea had also been struck, according to FAO's Permanent Representative in Liberia, Winfred Hammond.
- Liberia has already declared a state of emergency over a plague of caterpillars that has destroyed plants and crops and contaminated water supplies, threatening an already fragile food situation. In some cases the army worms overran homes and buildings, sending inhabitants fleeing in panic.

Radio Summary

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

Anti-Human Trafficking Training Gets Underway in Monrovia

- A two-day anti-human trafficking training for 20 Liberian police and immigration commanders and other civil society organizations has begun in Monrovia.
- Labour Ministry authorities say the training is intended to strengthen the capacity of the commanders in dealing with human trafficking.
- The training is sponsored by the ECOWAS Commission and implemented by National Anti-Human Trafficking Taskforce of the Labour Ministry.

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

Locals Galvanize Efforts to Raise LD\$1M for “Army Worm” Victims

- A citizens-support drive committee to raise LD\$1 million for victims of the current “army worms” infestation has been established in Monrovia.
- Speaking at a news conference, the General Coordinator of the Group, Gus Major said their action was in response to the national emergency declared against the pests invasion and said they were targeting the end of February to raise the money.
- He said already they have raised nearly one hundred and fifteen thousand as initial funds for the thousands of people affected by the caterpillar invasion.

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

Normal Operations at Major Bank Disrupted Following Fire Outbreak

- Normal banking activities were on Wednesday disrupted at the International Bank-Liberia Limited (IB) in the city centre following the outbreak of fire on the second floor of the bank.
- Officials of the bank confirmed the incident and thought is started from electrical fault.
- The General Manager of the Bank, Henry Saamoi said investigators have begun an investigation to determine the exact cause of the fire.
- The fire was later contained by fire fighters of the Liberia National Fire Service and other fire units from the National Port Authority and the Liberia Petroleum Refinery Company (LPRC).

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

Truth F.M. *(News monitored today at 10:00 am)*

UNDP, Japan Sign US\$1.6M Grant

- The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Liberia and the Government of Japan on Wednesday signed a grant of US\$1.6 million to support the Arms for Development Programme and the community cohesion of UNDP.
- Speaking at the signing ceremony, Japanese Ambassador to Liberia Keiichi Katakami said the grant was intended to fund the Armed Violence Control Programme in two areas, namely the capacity building to reduce armed violence in urban centres and the nation-wide expansion of arms for development.
- For his part, the UNDP Country Representative, Mr. Dominic Sam, lauded the Japanese Government and promised to work along with them in preventing the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons.

FAO Requests US\$1.2 Million To Fight Army Worms

Christian Science Monitor

Friday, 30 January 2009

Global court starts with a fumble. Warlord grins.

The Hague - The script was set for the first trial of the world's first permanent war crimes court this week:

Chief prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo went after warlord Thomas Lubanga, charged with recruiting 30,000 child soldiers in the Democratic Republic of Congo, saying Mr. Lubanga's acts would "haunt a generation."

But 48 hours later, the prosecution's first witness, a child soldier, caused the entire court to gasp.

At first, the young soldier said he was snatched by Lubanga's militia on his way home from fifth-grade classes. The witness, now a teen, then threw the landmark case briefly into limbo when he recanted his testimony, denying that he'd ever been a child soldier taken to a military training camp, and that his testimony was prompted by an unnamed nongovernmental organization.

In the court, Lubanga, sitting behind the defense team in dark suit and tie, and in clear view of his alleged former child recruit, smiled.

Prosecutors suggested to Chief Judge Adrian Fulford, of Britain, that the star witness, who was to give two days of testimony, felt unprotected and feared for his safety. A probe is now under way.

The washout of the International Criminal Court's (ICC) first witness is another blow for a court whose own judges nearly threw out the Lubanga case last June over a dispute about evidence sharing.

Justice experts, including Jon Silverman of the University of Bedfordshire, in Britain, note that "you have to take a long view," describing years of delay and a rocky start in the trial of Sierra Leone strongman Charles Taylor. That trial, convened under the auspices of the Special Court for Sierra Leone and also held here at The Hague, is now moving quickly.

The Lubanga case is the first for the ICC since it was formed in 2002. The idea for the court emerged after the relative success of war crimes tribunals in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, with experts hoping that stronger concepts of justice would serve as a soft-power deterrent against heinous acts and genocide.

The court has since moved in fits and starts. Prosecutor Moreno-Ocampo made a splash last summer by indicting Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, but most of the ICC's focus so far is on Congo, where little-noticed wars have claimed some 5.5 million lives. Four Congolese alleged warlords are now at The Hague; a joint trial of Germain Katanga and Mathieu Ngudjolo is expected in several months.

Legal experts say the ICC's strategy is to deter young Congolese warlords, whose fearsome private militias promote their own careers as they fight over gold, land, and other natural resources.

"Young rebels – warlords – find they get rewards in the Congo by taking up arms, killing civilians, and then making deals to find a place in the sun, either in the military or in Kinshasa," says Geraldine Mattioli, of Human Rights Watch in Brussels, who has closely followed Congo and the ICC. "This impunity feeds cycles of violence that need to be deterred."

Yet the legal body's performance in the court of world opinion remains an issue. The ICC has a staff of 745 people that has worked six years – only to find its first case nearly thrown out in June.

ICC path to justice tested in Congo

Lubanga's defense team claims his arrest was arbitrary and political and that other suspects have committed worse crimes. Human rights groups say the child-soldier charges, while important, ignored clear evidence of rape and thousands of killings.

Legal experts say the difficulty of creating a new world court can't be underestimated, and that protocols for conducting a safe and fair trial at a time when violent warlords and their deputies remain in the Congo is daunting.

Part of the shuffling of the opening trial was on display Wednesday, as prosecutor Fatou Bensouda, of Gambia, prepared to commence two days of the child-soldier testimony.

Chief Judge Fulford started with an admonition on "Rule 74," which requires that the witness be fully informed that his evidence could possibly incriminate him in Congo. The court retired to allow a fuller explanation to the unnamed witness.

Malfunctioning microphones meant that the young witness, flown in from Congo to the small, brightly lit courtroom, was required to take his oath three times. In the visitors' area, Congolese diplomats were surprised to find that everyone in the court, including Lubanga, could see the witness, who identified himself.

The defense, credited by legal experts for developing an intelligent strategy, pointed out that testimony in Swahili had been improperly translated. Moreover, when the child soldier then recanted, Ms. Bensouda, who replaced another prosecutor only six weeks ago, could not seek counsel from Moreno-Ocampo, who had decamped to the celebrity economic forum at Davos, Switzerland, according to a court spokeswoman.

ICC-watchers say the child-soldier witness clearly did not feel safe in the same room as Lubanga – and may also have been frightened by the warnings that he could be held accountable for killings or rapes done at the behest of a warlord.

Lorraine Smith, of the International Bar Association office at The Hague, points out that ICC judges a year ago adopted a rule disallowing the defense from "proofing" its witnesses – advocating instead a "witness familiarization" approach that is carried out by another court agency.

She questions whether former child soldiers warned on the day of the trial about possible culpability will testify accurately.

Paul Williams, an international legal expert at American University in Washington, expressed surprise that the child soldier and Lubanga could see and identify each other.

"In the Yugoslav and Rwanda tribunals, combatants could testify as 'Witness X' from a separate room, using a voice modulator. The right for the defendant to confront his or her accuser does not require that they be face to face, but means that they can hear clearly what the witness says.

"A rule that allows a child soldier, who is already in a tenuous situation, to be further traumatized," says Mr. Williams, "seems an unrealistic conception of the notion of justice."

The Patriotic Vanguard

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Sierra Leone Prisons Ends Counselling Training for Staff

The Sierra Leone Prisons Service and the Ministry of Health and Sanitation, with support from the Justice Sector Development Programme (JSDP), are hosting an event to mark the close of the training programme in Counselling, Mental Health Awareness and Behavioural Change, at the Prisons Training School, Waterloo, on Friday 30th January 2009.

The training programme, which started from Monday 19th to Thursday 29th January 2009, was conducted for 30 health personnel selected from prisons around the country, in order to support the establishment of prisoner rehabilitation

programmes within all prisons. Selected personnel were trained in various methodologies including, counselling techniques, identification of signs and symptoms of psychiatric disorder; and problem solving and relapse-prevention strategies.

Through the training, prison staff were equipped to assist in counselling prisoners to address mental health, drugs, alcohol, anger, or violence. This would reduce recidivism, which is the incidence of prisoners being released, re-offending and returning to prison. In addition, the training would enhance inmate skills and promote community reintegration.

In Sierra Leone, trauma, as result of the eleven year conflict, coupled with a lack of employment opportunities, has affected many in the communities, creating behavioural problems. Increasing numbers of young people are coming in conflict with the law and ultimately being incarcerated. They generally come from low socio-economic background and are the most vulnerable. Furthermore, they have received little attention in this post conflict period, having little access to education, or rehabilitation programmes to correct their behaviour, prior to release to their families and communities.

Recognising the importance of overall effective prison management, JSDP, in its Inception Phase (March 2005 to June 2007), supported prisons with the provision of infrastructure, a Prisoner Classification System, a trial Prison Literacy Programme, support for the development of prison farms and training for one member of staff in Counselling. While the Department is currently in the process of introducing new management systems to provide a structured, coordinated approach to rehabilitation, further support is planned over the next two years.



Hon. Dr. Soccoh Kabia

“With support from the JSDP, the prisons organisational structure, management processes and systems, are in the changing from incarceration and punishment regimes, to that of corrections, so as to facilitate prison rehabilitation”, remarked the Acting Director of the Sierra Leone Prisons Service, Mr. Moses Showers.

Prisoner rehabilitation is aligned with Target 1 of the Sierra Leone’s Justice Sector Reform Strategy and Investment Plan (JSRSIP) 2008 to 2010, which aims to reduce crime and fear of crime, by ensuring safe custody and reduction in recidivism.

Photo: Health minister Soccoh Kabia.