

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE OUTREACH AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE



Chief of Administration Maria Cruickshank, who is leaving Sierra Leone on December 4 after more than four years at the Special Court, was recognised at Thursday's staff party.

PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

as at:

Monday, 30 November 2009

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Exclusive
30 November 2009

Taylor Admits He Sent His Chief Of Protocol To Accompany A Sierra Leonean Rebel Commander To Burkina Faso

Charles Taylor today admitted that he sent his Chief of Protocol to accompany a Sierra Leonean rebel commander
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Taylor Admits

From front page

to Burkina Faso in 1998 but denied that he helped him transport arms and ammunition through Liberia for use by rebel forces in Sierra Leone.

Mr. Nicholas Koumjian, stepping in for the indisposed lead prosecutor, Ms. Brenda Hollis, who fell ill yesterday and could not recover in time to attend court today, asked Mr. Taylor about Revolutionary United Front (RUF) commander Sam Bockarie's 1998 visit to

Burkina Faso, during which it is alleged that the rebel commander transported arms and ammunition through Liberia for use by rebel forces in Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor admitted that he sent his Chief of Protocol Musa Sesay to act as an interpreter for Mr. Bockarie on his visit to President Blaise Compaore in Burkina Faso. Mr. Taylor agreed with Mr. Koumjian that Mr. Bockarie was under a UN travel ban at the time of the visit but that

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MONDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2009

Taylor Admits He Sent His Chief Of Protocol To Accompany A Sierra Leonean Rebel Commander To Burkina Faso

From page 2

he approved the rebel commander's passage through Liberia.

"You sent him on this trip?" Mr. Koumjian asked Mr. Taylor, referring to the former president's Chief of Protocol Mr. Sesay.

"Surely I did," Mr. Taylor responded.

"Isn't there a better use for a Chief of Protocol than to act as an interpreter on a trip?" Mr. Koumjian inquired further.

"That's a very, very good use from my calculation. Other protocol officers in other countries did the same thing. Whether you are talking about Togo, I remember the Protocol Officer in Togo interpreting between Eyadema and myself, sometimes Musa did. So when you say better, that's a qualification, that was for me, a reasonable task," Mr. Taylor responded.

Mr. Taylor agreed with Mr. Koumjian that Burkina Faso probably had their own interpreters but said he was requested to have his Chief of Protocol travel with Mr. Bockarie and he did. Mr. Koumjian suggested to Mr. Taylor that it is the task of the

host government to provide interpreters for their visitors.

"Sir, isn't it the protocol that when you are visiting the president of a country in that country, it's the host government that provides the interpreter?" Mr. Koumjian asked Mr. Taylor again.

In response, Mr. Taylor said, "that is a protocol, I will agree, but that is not what you will call the only protocol, there had been times when presidents had come to visit me and I will provide the interpreters and some of them will provide their own."

Asked whether the presence of his protocol officer in such a meeting will mean him knowing what was discussed in the meeting, Mr. Taylor said that "I was not spying on my friend."

The prosecution has led evidence pointing to the alleged relationship that existed between Mr. Taylor and RUF commander Mr. Bockarie. Witnesses have testified that the RUF commander used to take orders from Mr. Taylor. It has also been alleged that Mr. Bockarie used to transport Sierra Leone's blood diamonds to

Mr. Taylor, who in return gave the RUF commander loads of arms and ammunition. Mr. Taylor has denied these allegations.

Prosecutors have alleged that during Mr. Bockarie's 1998 trip to Burkina Faso, the RUF commander returned with arms and ammunition through Liberia's Roberts International Airport (RIA). During cross-examination today, Mr. Koumjian pointed out that it would not be possible for a plane full of arms and ammunition to arrive in Liberia for use by RUF rebels in Sierra Leone without the president knowing. Mr. Taylor responded that it was possible to bribe corrupt officials, pointing out how he had also bribed officials in other countries to bring arms and ammunition to Liberia in violation of a UN arms embargo.

"It would not be impossible," Mr. Taylor responded.

"It is very, very simple. It depends on the quality of corrupt officials involved, it would never get to my attention. I, during tough times transferred arms and ammunitions through countries that did not even know. So that happens all the time.

It depends on how much you are willing to pay and who you dealing with," he added.

Mr. Koumjian accused Mr. Taylor of using his position as an Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) negotiator to support the RUF in pursuit of their war in Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor dismissed the allegation as wrong.

Mr. Taylor is responding to charges that he was involved in a joint criminal enterprise with RUF rebels in Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor has denied allegations that he supplied arms and ammunition to the rebels in return for Sierra Leone's blood diamonds and that he helped them plan certain operations during which atrocities such as rape, murder, and amputation of civilian arms were committed. He has dismissed the charges as a scheme by western countries, specifically Britain and the United States to bring him down. From July 14 to November 10, 2009, Mr. Taylor testified in direct-examination as a witness in his own defense. He is currently being cross-examined by the prosecution.

Also read this story on www.exclusivepress.net

Daily Observer (Monrovia)
Wednesday, 25 November 2009

Taylor Admits to Sending “Hot Pursuit Missions” into Guinea

By Alpha Sesay



The trial of former Liberian president, Charles Taylor, took an early adjournment on November 23, 2009, when immediately after the mid-morning break, one of the judges reportedly fell ill.

Prior to the court’s adjournment, the accused former warlord had denied allegations that he sent his rebel fighters to attack neighboring Guinea, clarifying that he gave approval to “hot pursuit missions,” which entered into the neighboring country.

When the trial resumed after the court’s mid-morning break, presiding judge, Justice Richard Lussick, informed all parties that the court would take an early adjournment because one of the three judges, Justice Julia Sebutinde had fallen ill.

Since it is important that Justice Sebutinde hears all the evidence in the trial, the other two judges would not proceed in her absence, Lussick said. With that, the court adjourned for the day.

Brenda Hollis, had accused Taylor of sending rebel fighters to Guinea in 2001 with an aim of destabilizing the country.

The attack on Guinea, Hollis said, was code named “Operation Take No Sides,” and was led by National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) commander, Mark Guan.

Taylor, however, denied the prosecution’s assertion.

“I know Mark Guan, but I do not know of any operation of that name,” he said.

Taylor admitted that he had approved “hot pursuit missions” into Guinea but denied sending fighters to attack the country.

“There were operations that crossed into Guinea but they were hot pursuit operations, and I personally ordered those operations,” Taylor told the court.

He has consistently accused late Guinean president, Lansana Conte, of supporting another rebel faction, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), which he said was threatening to unseat his government in Liberia. Prosecution witnesses have testified, however, that Taylor used this as justification to send rebel forces, including Sierra Leone’s Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels to attack Guinea. Taylor has denied giving any orders to rebels to attack Guinea.

In response to allegations by Hollis that based on Taylor's orders, RUF rebels joined NPFL rebels in 2001 to attack Guinea, the former Liberian President said "not to my knowledge."

"I am aware of hot pursuit missions in Guinea. These were standing orders approved by me. There are no operations planned but only of hot pursuit," he added.

Taylor also denied allegations that his subordinates in Liberia killed civilians during the country's conflict and continued even after he became president of the country. In November 1994, NPFL rebels killed more than 100 civilians in Bong County, Hollis said. The prosecution further alleged that after the United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy (ULIMO) attack on the NPFL headquarters in Gbarnga, NPFL rebels killed civilians, whom they accused of being ULIMO supporters.

Taylor again denied the allegations, insisting that if he had known of any NPFL rebels killing civilians, they would have been prosecuted.

"Not to my knowledge. I can't say it did not happen; but if someone did, he would have been prosecuted by the NPFL courts. The NPFL was the only organization in Africa and Liberia that had courts," the former warlord said.

The prosecution also pointed to allegations that NPFL commander, Mark Guan, killed nine civilians in 1998; that in March 2001, 14 civilians were killed by Momoh Jibba; that in July 2000, 170 people were killed in Tubmanburg on orders of the director of Taylor's Special Security Service (SSS), Benjamin Yeaten; and that in July 2003, more than 70 wounded combatants were massacred on Yeaten's orders. Taylor dismissed all of the allegations as "totally incorrect."

Hollis also suggested to Taylor that his "subordinates" in Sierra Leone, who understood how Taylor conducted himself in Liberia, saw no reason not to commit the same atrocities in Sierra Leone.

"Sierra Leonean perpetrators understood that was the way you conducted yourself in Liberia," she said to Taylor.

"I disagree with that interpretation," he responded. "No NPFL of mine went to Sierra Leone. Liberians went there but not anyone did I send there except in 1991-92."

Taylor is alleged to have had control over NPFL rebels in Liberia as well as RUF rebels in Sierra Leone. Prosecutors allege that Taylor was in a superior position over RUF rebels and that he knew or had reason to know that they were committing atrocities in Sierra Leone but failed to prevent the commission of those atrocities or failed to punish them when he knew that such atrocities had been committed. He is accused of bearing the greatest responsibility for the crimes committed by the RUF rebels in Sierra Leone.

Prosecutors put it to the former Liberian President that because the RUF saw how his NPFL rebels conducted themselves in Liberia, crimes committed in Sierra Leone "were a continuation of business as usual."

"The whole of Liberia will tell you that Mr. Taylor did not tolerate crimes. That's nonsense," Taylor said.

"Prosecutions were just a cover," Hollis told the accused former president, who insisted that he ensured that all perpetrators in the NPFL were prosecuted and punished.

"You cannot have it both ways," Taylor responded. "On the one hand, Taylor encouraged impunity by not punishing for crimes; and when he did, it was a cover-up. You can't have it both ways."

Cross examination continues.



United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 26 November 2009

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

International Clips on Liberia

Liberia sued by 'vulture funds' over 1978 debt

BBC Thursday, 26 November 2009

Two Caribbean-registered investment funds have launched a legal case in London against Liberia over a debt that dates back to 1978. The firms, described as "vulture funds" by critics, are suing for more than \$20m (£12m) - some 5% of the Liberian government's total budget this year. Liberia says it has no money to pay the debt back and has accused the firms of profiting from poverty. The country is recovering from a 14-year civil war which ended in 2003. The details of the case are still unclear, but it is thought that Liberia borrowed \$6.5m from the US-based Chemical Bank in 1978 and that debt may have been resold a number of times. The two funds are requesting that London's High Court grant a summary judgment in the case - making Liberia liable for the debt without the need for a full hearing.

President Johnson Sirleaf Takes Executive Mansion 'On the Road'

Nov 26, 2009 (Liberia Government/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has virtually taken the Executive Mansion "on the road," as the implementation of development projects becomes more compelling, with the arrival of the dry season. The President was, a little over a week ago, in Falie, Grand Cape Mount County, discussing with her direct representatives-the Superintendents-in the political sub-divisions of the country, their programs and challenges. A number of issues emerged at the forum which not surprisingly, included the administration of the County Development Funds (CDF). The exercise has, understandably, come under serious criticism, owing to what critics see as a lack of transparency in its administration. The President acknowledged that some of the accusations may not be true. "Some may be rumors; some may be misunderstanding, but in several cases, funds have been misused or misallocated. Your responsibility is to take charge of the CDF in such a way that the mandates given by our Constitution to the three branches of Government are fully respected.

Taylor Admits He Sent His Chief Of Protocol To Accompany A Sierra Leonean Rebel Commander To Burkina Faso

Nov 26, 2009 (CharlesTaylorTrial.org/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- Charles Taylor today admitted that he sent his Chief of Protocol to accompany a Sierra Leonean rebel commander to Burkina Faso in 1998 but denied that he helped him transport arms and ammunition through Liberia for use by rebel forces in Sierra Leone.

Mr. Nicholas Koumjian, stepping in for the indisposed lead prosecutor, Ms. Brenda Hollis, who fell ill yesterday and could not recover in time to attend court today, asked Mr. Taylor about Revolutionary United Front (RUF) commander Sam Bockarie's 1998 visit to Burkina Faso, during which it is alleged that the rebel commander transported arms and ammunition through Liberia for use by rebel forces in Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor admitted that he sent his Chief of Protocol Musa Sesay to act as an interpreter for Mr. Bockarie on his to visit President Blaise Campaore in Burkina Faso. Mr. Taylor

agreed with Mr. Koumjian that Mr. Bockarie was under a UN travel ban at the time of the visit but that he approved the rebel commander's passage through Liberia.

International Clips on West Africa

Guinea

UN group arrives in Guinea to investigate killings

Source: AP Online Regional - Africa Date: November 26, 2009

CONAKRY, Guinea_A United Nations human rights official says a three-member U.N. commission has arrived in this West African nation to investigate the September massacre in which troops fatally shot pro-democracy demonstrators and raped women in broad daylight. Sonia Muller-Rappard said the all-African commission arrived in Conakry on Wednesday. The group was appointed by U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon last month to determine who was responsible for the massacre. A peaceful pro-democracy rally in the West African country on Sept. 28 took a violent turn when presidential guard troops opened fire on tens of thousands of demonstrators. A Guinean human rights group says 157 people were killed. The government put the death toll at 57.

At least 100 women raped in Guinea crackdown -group

CONAKRY, Nov 26 (Reuters) - Guinean soldiers raped at least 100 women during a crackdown on protesters in September, a human rights group said on Thursday. The findings were released as United Nations experts began to investigate the repression, in which about 160 people were killed. The crackdown has drawn widespread condemnation and brought sanctions against the ruling military junta. "We have recorded 100 cases of rape against women committed Sept. 28 and the two days that followed," said Thierno Maadjou Sow, president of the Guinean Organisation of Human Rights, which is working with the U.N. investigators. "Most were schoolchildren, students, businesswomen, teachers, even journalists." The organisation had found evidence that 20 victims were taken from a medical clinic to secret locations where they were drugged and raped repeatedly.

Sierra Leone

SLeone elephants 'wiped out' by poachers: official

Poachers "wiped out" the entire elephant herd in Sierra Leone's only wildlife park, wildlife managers said Thursday after police said they had arrested a gang of 10 poachers. "It is likely that the elephant population is wiped out," Ibrahim Bangura, senior superintendent of the agriculture ministry's Conservation and Wildlife Management Unit. The six elephants were shot and "crudely butchered, their bodies slashed with sword marks and their tusks virtually wrenched from their skins," said Bangura. Police said 10 poachers were arrested after the discovery of the elephant carcasses and those of four buffaloes in Outamba Kilimni national park, near the border with Guinea. The men, from Sierra Leone and Guinea, are being held in the northern town of Koinadugu. "We believe the killing was done between September and October and this is a great blow to all of us," said Bangura.

Cote d'Ivoire

Cote d'Ivoire president, UN mission chief discuss electoral process

ABIDJAN, Nov. 26 (Xinhua) -- Cote d'Ivoire President Laurent Gbagbo held discussions on Wednesday with the special representative of the United Nations secretary general to the country, Choi Jung-jin, on the electoral process in the run-up to the long-awaited polls.

The talks were notable three days after the start of the voter list check to make sure no problems remain before the presidential elections, which have been repeatedly delayed.

"We have had very good discussions," Choi declared after the meeting, coming to the conclusion that "there is a very solid basis to believe that the electoral list is balanced and solid." The provisional electoral list published since Sunday has 5.3 million voters and slightly more than one million people whose status needs verification.

Local Media – Newspaper

NEC Releases Preliminary Results, CDC Takes Early Lead

(The Monitor, The News, The Analyst, Daily Observer, Heritage, The Inquirer)

- The National Elections Commission (NEC) has released preliminary results from Tuesday's Montserrado County Senatorial run-off by-election putting the Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) candidate in the lead.
- In the latest results CDC's Geraldine Doe-Sheriff accumulated 28, 846 votes amounting to 55.4 percent while Clemenceau Urey of the ruling Unity Party got 23, 187 votes totalling 44.6 percent.
- The NEC said the results are from 442 polling places out of a total of 968 centres.

Civil Society Election Observers Hail NEC

(Daily Observer, The Analyst, The Monitor)

- The Liberian Civil Society Election Observers coalition has hailed the National Elections Commission for the conduct of the Montserrado County Senatorial by-election run-off.
- The group congratulated NEC for the efficient administration of the run-off saying the process was reasonably free, fair and transparent.
- The rave review follows an overwhelming approbation of NEC in the media yesterday.
- It can be recalled that after the conduct of the first round of the by-election, the National Elections Commission received massive criticism about the "disorganization" of the polls.
- At the time, observers expressed fear that the present commission was incapable of handling the 2011 elections.
- What is not known now is, whether the latest performance of NEC will help in redeeming its image.

Ministry of Education, Others Sign MOU on Payroll Issue

(The Inquirer)

- In an effort to regularize the Ministry of Education payroll, four Government Ministries and Agencies yesterday signed a Memorandum of Understanding for major support to the ongoing payroll enumeration and verification process of the Ministry.
- The signing ceremony took place at the Ministry of Education with Minister Joseph Korto representing the Ministry while the Finance Ministry was represented by Minister Augustine Ngafuan, the Civil Service Agency by its Director General, Dr. William Allen and the General Auditing Commission by Auditor General, John Morlu. The Deputy Mission Director of USAID/Liberia, Carolyn Brayan represented her entity.

Commerce Ministry, UNIDO Celebrates Africa Industrialization Day

(Heritage, The Informer)

- The Commerce Ministry and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) today Thursday celebrated this year's Africa Industrialization Day.
- According to a Commerce Ministry release, the Day was aimed at creating awareness in the industrial sector of the African economy.

EPA Reviews Report on East Nimba Reserve

(The News, The Monitor, Daily Observer)

- The Environmental Protection Agency of Liberia (EPA) has begun a two-day stakeholder validation forum on a report prepared on the East Nimba Nature Reserve and the Lake Piso Basin.
- According to an EPA release, the gathering aims to discuss and finalize information and data on the integrity of the Protected Areas including the socio-economic situation of surrounding settlements.
- The release said the forum is also intended to ensure mutual co-existence and integrated protected Area Management into the Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Solicitor General Criticizes “Corrupt” Jurors

(The Informer)

- Solicitor General, Counselor Wilkins Wright has criticized jurors for engaging in “graft” thereby casting a cloud of corruption over the judiciary.
- Despite continuous reform by Government and international partners including the UN Mission in Liberia and the United States among others, public confidence in the judiciary is remains unconvincing.
- It can be recalled that President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf recently called for improvement in the judicial system urging Chief Justice Johnnie Lewis to deal harshly with corrupt jurors who bring the country’s judicial system into disrepute.

Women Coalition Launches Activism Campaign

(The Informer)

- A local advocacy group, Women Won’t Wait(WWW) in partnership with Action Aid Liberia has begun 16 days of activism to highlight women’s gains in the country and globally.
- The campaign is also aimed at honoring the commitment of women rights activist who have worked diligently in shaping opinion on issues of violence against women.

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

NEC Releases Preliminary Results, CDC Takes Early Lead

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

Advocacy Group Alarms Human Rights Violations Against The Vulnerable

- An advocacy group, Alliance of NGOs Working with Vulnerable Population and Advocating for Rights of People Living with HIV/AIDS has alarmed over series of human rights violations allegedly being meted-out against vulnerable people in Liberia.
- The group’s Secretary Daniel Wehyee claimed people living with HIV/AIDs are being stigmatized and discriminated against while disabled people mainly the blind have resulted to begging for their livelihood.

BWI Teachers Announce Strike Action Over Unpaid Salaries

- Over 100 instructors at the BWI Accelerated Vocational Training Programme say they have resolved to lay down chalks.
- A spokesman for the striking teachers, Augustus Doe said they have decided to take this action because the Education Ministry allegedly failed to pay them for five months.
- But Education Minister Joseph Korto said the instructors’ names were mistakenly deleted from the ministry’s payroll. He said all is being done to put the names back on the payroll.

VP Boakai Assures Protection For Lebanese Investments

- Vice President Joseph Boakai has assured the Lebanese Community in Liberia of Government’s continued protection for their investments.
- Vice President Boakai said government remains committed to the protection all of its partners who are interested in the recovery process of Liberia.
- Lebanese Ambassador to Liberia, Mansour Abdallah assured of his country’s continued commitment to the reconstruction process of Liberia.

EPA Reviews Report On East Nimba Reserve

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

ILO Seminar Opens In Kakata

- The International Labor Organization (ILO) has started a 10-day intensive development seminar for youth coordinators across Liberia in Kakata, Margibi County.
- Thirty young people from the Youth and Sports Ministry and the Federation of Liberian Youth (FLY) are attending the seminar which is a joint employment programme of the ILO, United Nations and the Mano River Union.
- ILO Technical Officer at the Youth and Sports Ministry, Victor Kaydor said the young people are being trained in three specific areas including the art of generating business ideas and how to start and improve their own business.
- Meanwhile, FLY's President Joseph Sankatuah called on the organizers to help empower young people in the country in order to make them self-reliant in the society.

Radio Veritas *(News monitored today at 09:45 am)*

US Embassy Dedicates Six-bed Room Clinic In Jah Tondo Town

- The US Embassy in Liberia has dedicated a six-bed room clinic in Jah Tondo Town in Brewerville.
- The clinic is part of the US Ambassador's Special Self-Help Project which addresses the urgent development needs of local communities.
- Speaking at the dedicatory ceremony yesterday, US Deputy Chief of Mission, Brooke Robinson said the self-help project is part of the United States Government's continued support to Liberia's recovery process and its poverty reduction programme.

Truth FM *(News monitored today at 10:00 am)*

Commerce Ministry, UNIDO Celebrates Africa Industrialization Day

Reuters

Tuesday, 24 November 2009

Hague prosecutor accuses Congo warlords

By International Justice Desk



*The Hague,
Netherlands*

Two Congolese militiamen were the top commanders of forces that raped, killed and looted civilians in a brutal attack that left 200 dead, a

war crimes prosecutor said on Tuesday.

Germain Katanga and Mathieu Ngudjolo Chui went on trial at the International Criminal Court (ICC) on charges of directing a February 2003 attack on a village in the Ituri region of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as rival groups fought for control of the region's gold, diamonds and oil.

"Some were shot dead in their sleep, some cut up by machetes to save bullets. Others were burned alive after their houses were set on fire by the attackers," Chief Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo said, adding others were shot as they fled.

Katanga, 31, an ethnic Ngiti, is said to have commanded the Patriotic Resistance Force (FRPI). Ngudjolo, 39, a Lendu, is accused of being the former leader of the National Integrationist Front (FNI).

Both men are charged with seven counts of war crimes and three of crimes against humanity, including murder, sexual slavery, rape, using child soldiers and pillaging.

Both men pleaded not guilty to all charges.

"I have said since I arrived here that I am not guilty. I still continue to plead not guilty," Katanga said, speaking through an interpreter.

The two defence teams will give their opening statements later on Tuesday.

"Easy prey"

Moreno-Ocampo said both the FRPI and FNI were in conflict with the Union of Congolese Patriots (UPC), mostly of Hema ethnicity, and attacked the village of Bogoro to open up a road link and prevent UPC attacks against Ngiti and Lendu targets.

He said hundreds of women, men and children attacked the village in the morning with automatic weapons, machetes and spears and did not distinguish between soldiers and civilians.

Villagers were "easy prey" as they sought refuge at a UPC camp in the village, he added.

Prosecutors say forces commanded by Katanga and Ngudjolo had encircled the village from the north and south, having jointly planned to have their forces meet in the centre of the village.

"Victims lost everything," said Fidel Nsita Luvengika, one of two legal representatives defending the interests of 345 court-recognised victims, having said on Monday that "some do not even know where their children were buried."

Victim participation

He said the trial will help them to overcome their trauma and mourning, to establish truth and "to finish impunity".

Victims may participate in the trial by expressing their views and concerns if it is done in a way consistent with the principle of a fair trial. They can also seek compensation.

Tuesday's trial is the ICC's second trial and the first involving charges of murder after the court's debut case focused on charges alleged Congolese warlord Thomas Lubanga enlisted and conscripted child soldiers to the military wing of his UPC.

Prosecutors will call 26 witnesses, 21 of whom are protected witnesses. The trial is expected to take several months.

Source: Reuters

Agence France Presse
Wednesday, 25 November 2009

Rwandan genocide militia has global support network

By International Justice Desk



Kinshasa, Congo
(Kinshasa)

Military operations have failed to contain Rwandan-Hutu rebels in the Democratic Republic of Congo(DRC) and international

action is needed to restrict their financing, said a new report by UN experts.

In a major report for the United Nations Security Council, unpublished but seen by AFP, researchers said Congolese, Rwandan and UN forces have tried to disarm the Democratic Liberation Forces of Rwanda (FDLR) rebels, who still pose a potent threat to regional stability, but have failed to impose order in a region still wracked by faction fighting.

"This report concludes that military operations against the FDLR have failed to dismantle the organisation's political and military structures on the ground in eastern DRC," the detailed 93-page document begins.

The report also alleges that the FDLR is managing to recruit fighters using profits from a corrupt international trade in minerals.

The militia sprang up in camps in the east of the DRC housing mainly ethnic Hutu refugees who fled Rwanda after their leaders launched the 1994 genocide, which left some 800,000 people dead.

International funding

The campaign has been undermined by corruption and brutality within the official Congolese armed forces and by the FDLR's ability to fund its campaigns through the international mineral trade, it says.

Companies are buying minerals from jungle mines controlled and operated by FDLR cadres, while middlemen are smuggling millions of dollars in gold to Dubai every year.

The document was researched on the ground in Congo and the region over six months by a five-strong team of experts hired by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in order to prepare a report for Security Council members.

It calls on international governments to step up measures to stifle the FDLR support network, which includes members of the Rwandan diaspora based in Europe and North America and foreign sympathisers in Catholic charities.

The experts also warn that since March an offensive against the militia by Congolese forces, some of whose officers have supplied weapons to the rebels, has made life even worse for the beleaguered civilian population.

Civilians targeted

"Scores of villages have been raided and pillaged, thousands of houses have been burnt and several hundred thousand people have been displaced in order to escape from the violence generated by these military operations," it says.

Official Congolese records show only a few kilos of gold exported legally every year, but the country's own senate estimates that in reality 40 tonnes a year -- worth 1.24 billion dollars -- gets out.

The UN report details how both the anti-Rwandan government FDLR and their enemies in pro-Kigali militias use the same ethnic Indian middlemen to smuggle gold to souks in the United Arab Emirates.

It also says the FDLR profits from the export of cassiterite.

In September, the British group AMC said it would stop buying Congolese cassiterite, insisting the trade was legal but complaining of "negative campaigning from advocacy groups and adverse coverage."

Funding network

The UN experts also "collected information on individuals affiliated with the Catholic Church and other religious and charitable organisations [...] who provide financial and material support to the FDLR."

This is said to include "regular financial, logistical and political support from individuals" linked to two Spanish organisations, including the Fundacio S'Olivar, which is funded by the government of the Balearic Islands.

The islands' regional parliament issued a statement defending the Fundacio, denying that it supports armed groups and insisting that it works "in defence of peace, justice and solidarity, always applying pacifist principles."

Meanwhile, FDLR leaders command their troops from the safety of Europe.

"Some of these supporters and leaders are suspected participants in the 1994 Rwandan genocide," the report says, going on to detail telephone traffic and cash transfers between exiled Rwandan politicians and militia warlords.

The experts tracked down 240 calls between German-based FDLR leader Ignance Murwanashyaka and militia commanders in Congo, while these commanders were in turn in touch with contacts in 25 countries in Europe and America.

The report was addressed to the chairman of the UN Security Council committee on 9 September. It is not known when it will be published.

The Independent

Wednesday, 25 November 2009

Congolese 'warlords' deny slaughtering entire villages

By Daniel Howden, Africa Correspondent



Second trial at permanent court hears militia leaders raped and killed scores

Germain Katanga is accused of leading the Bogoro massacre

The attack came at first light. The village of Bogoro was turned into a slaughterhouse where "some were shot dead in their sleep, some cut up by machetes to save bullets", the International Criminal Court (ICC) was told yesterday. "Others were burned alive after their houses were set on fire by the attackers," the prosecutor, Luis Moreno-Ocampo, recounted.

Scores of women were raped, children were killed and young girls marched away to become sex slaves. When it was all over, one of the two suspects, Germain Katanga, was allegedly heard to boast: "Nothing was spared. Absolutely nothing. Chickens, goats, everything... was

wiped out."

Mr Katanga and Mathieu Ngudjolo Chui were in the dock yesterday in The Hague – in only the second trial to get under way at the permanent ICC (as distinct from the temporary courts judging war crimes in the Balkans and Liberia) – as prosecutors described the horrors of civil war in the north-east of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The two men, alleged to be warlords, were charged with seven counts of war crimes and three of crimes against humanity, including murder, sexual slavery, rape, using child soldiers and pillaging. They pleaded not guilty. Mr Katanga, 31, is accused of leading the Patriotic Resistance Force (FRPI), an ethnic Ngiti militia, while 39-year-old Mr Ngudjolo allegedly led the allied National Integrationist Front (FNI).

The two militias combined forces in February 2003 to attack a village hosting a camp belonging to a rival force, the Union of Congolese Patriots (UPC), mostly from the Hema people. The groups were engaged in a struggle for control of the region's gold, diamonds and oil.

Rather than a military operation, however, Mr Moreno-Ocampo described how two mobs of child soldiers and veteran fighters with automatic weapons set out "to wipe out Bogoro" – "to destroy not only the UPC camp but the whole village," he claimed.

The trial comes as the ICC is being accused by some in Congo of staging show trials of relatively small players in a broader conflict. The war in Ituri was part of Congo's Second War, referred to by many as "Africa's World War" which pulled in soldiers, money and arms from all over the region.

Traces of the fighting persist in Ituri where attempts to screen the hearings of the first ICC trial, against UPC leader Thomas Lubanga, had to be stopped for security reasons in February. The ICC also faces criticism for focusing almost entirely on African cases and it is accused by some of being a "neo-colonial project".

"There's a growing disconnection between how the ICC is seen in the West and how it's perceived in Africa," said Richard Gowan, an Africa expert at the European Council on Foreign Relations.

The Rome Treaty signed in 1998 – the same year that General Augusto Pinochet was arrested and held in the UK for several months – brought 122 countries together in a landmark moment for international justice. With rights campaigners touting the so-called "Pinochet effect", despots and war criminals were to be made unsafe everywhere.

More than a decade on, only 110 of the 122 nations have ratified the treaty that created the ICC, and crucially the absentees include Russia, China and the US. The building of the court's institutions has moved at a painfully slow pace, and it launched its first prosecution at its permanent base in The Hague as recently as January.

The court has argued that arresting and prosecuting those responsible for crimes against humanity in ongoing conflicts will act as a deterrent to those still fighting.

In the dock: Army commanders

Germain Katanga

Born in Mambasa, in the north-east of the DRC, he is known to his fighters as Simba, or Lion. He is accused of leading the Bogoro massacre, killing at least 200 and sexually enslaving women and girls, and an even worse attack in 2002 on a hospital in which 1,200 civilians died. In 2004 he was appointed general in the DRC army during the peace process but was arrested and extradited to The Hague in 2007.

Mathieu Ngudjolo Chui

Born in 1970 in Bunia, also in north-east DRC, this "poor farmer's son" became an army corporal but joined rebel groups in 1998 when civil war came to his region. He is accused of ordering his forces to "wipe out" Bogoro. He was made a colonel in the DRC army in 2006 but was arrested in 2008 and sent to the ICC.

Reuters

Wednesday, 25 November 2009

Suspended war crimes trial to resume

By International Justice Desk



*The Hague,
Netherlands*

The war crimes trial of Serbian nationalist Vojislav Seselj will resume in January, nearly a year after it was suspended due to concerns

about the reliability of some witnesses, the tribunal ruled on Wednesday.

Seselj's trial for murder, torture and persecution of non-Serbs in the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s was suspended in February after prosecutors said the case was compromised by threats against a witness.

Seselj, who has pleaded not guilty, faces life in prison for inciting violence against Bosnians and Croats as head of the Serbian Radical Party. He faces 15 counts for crimes committed between 1991 and 1993, including torture, murder and forced deportation of non-Serbs by his party's militia.

Seselj was convicted in July of contempt of court for revealing the identity of three protected witnesses in a book he admitted authoring.

After six prosecution witnesses said they wanted to testify on behalf of the defence instead of the prosecution, the court decided that the witnesses would be called to testify by the judges rather than either side.

In its decision to resume the trial, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia also decided that it could not keep Seselj, who has been detained since 2003, in custody any longer without infringing his rights.

"In light of the new facts in the possession of the Chamber ... (and) the length of time which has gone by since the decision was rendered, the Chamber considers it appropriate to put an end to the adjournment of the hearing of the remaining witnesses and orders a resumption of the hearings," said the presiding judge, Jean-Claude Antonetti, who had dissented in the original decision to suspend the trial.

The trial will resume in The Hague, on January 12, 2010.

The court mentioned it was taking other steps to "ensure an efficient protection of the security of the victims and witnesses" but did not disclose details in order to protect them.

Radio Netherlands Worldwide
Wednesday, 25 November 2009

ECCC: final arguments in “Duch” case

By Karl Dowling



*Phnom Penh,
Cambodia*

The Khmer Rouge prison chief accused of crimes against humanity, war crimes, torture and premeditated murder will make his final statements

to the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) this week.

By Karl Dowling

In attendance at the trial are survivors of the Khmer Rouge regime which killed up to 2 million people between 1975 and 1979.

The trial of former prison chief Kaing Guek Eav - better known as Duch - began in February and a verdict is expected early next year.

The final week of the trial will see civil parties, prosecutors, defence counsel and Duch himself present final arguments, rebuttals and closing statements.

The accused has admitted that he oversaw the murders of approximately 15,000 men, women and children while in charge of the notorious Tuol Sleng prison and has asked for forgiveness from his victims and their families.

However, Duch has consistently denied any direct involvement in the torture and murder of prisoners.

The 67-year-old former school teacher has appeared remorseful throughout the trial and has apologized repeatedly for his actions under the Khmer Rouge. He claims that his job at the prison was performed under duress since he feared for his life from more senior Khmer Rouge officials if he did not carry out his duties.

BBC

Monday, 30 November 2009

John Demjanjuk war crimes trial starts in Munich

John Demjanjuk, accused of helping to murder more than 27,000 Jews at a Nazi death camp, has gone on trial in the German city of Munich.

Mr Demjanjuk, who is 89 and was deported from the US in May, entered the courtroom in a wheelchair. His eyes were closed but he was conscious.

He denies being a camp guard at Sobibor, in Nazi-occupied Poland.

The trial is expected to last until May and, if found guilty, Mr Demjanjuk could be sentenced to 15 years in jail.

Breaking new ground

The trial's first session was delayed, AFP news agency said, as large numbers of people tried to gain access.

Witnesses have been arriving for the court session, but organisers were overwhelmed by the crowds of people trying to get in, including journalists and relatives of Holocaust survivors.

Thomas Blatt, a Sobibor survivor, told journalists on his way into court that he was not looking for revenge.

"I'm here to tell the way it was years ago, I don't know Demjanjuk in person," he said.

John Demjanjuk is a retired US car worker, but he stands accused of having helped the Nazi death factory to function.

Prosecutors say that, as a camp guard at Sobibor, he pushed thousands of Jewish men, women and children to their death in the gas chambers.

Mr Demjanjuk was born in Ukraine and captured by the Nazis while fighting in the Soviet army. He denies even being at Sobibor.

Over 60 years later, this may be Germany's last big war crimes trial.

But the BBC's Oana Lungescu in Munich says that, as the first to focus on a low-ranking foreigner rather than a senior Nazi commander, it breaks new legal ground.

As Mr Demjanjuk is 89 and in poor health, doctors have asked that hearings should be limited to two 90-minute sessions per day.

DEMJANJUK - PROSECUTION CHALLENGES

89 years old, health failing

Described by prosecution as low-ranking guard

No death camp survivors to testify against him personally

Prosecutors relying heavily on about 30 joint plaintiffs and circumstantial evidence

There are no living witnesses in this case, but over 30 people listed as joint plaintiffs are expected to

testify about what happened at Sobibor, described by investigators as hell on earth.

Two are camp survivors, others lost relatives or their entire families among the 250,000 people murdered there.

This is the second time John Demjanjuk is appearing in court.

Two decades ago, he was sentenced to death in Israel, convicted of being Ivan the Terrible, a notoriously sadistic guard at the Treblinka death camp.

But that ruling was overturned after new evidence showed that another Ukrainian was probably responsible.

DEMJANJUK CASE TIMELINE



1952: Gains entry into the US, claiming he spent most of the war as a German prisoner

1977: First charged with war crimes, accused of being "Ivan the Terrible"

1981: Stripped of US citizenship

1986: Extradited to Israel

1993: Israeli Supreme Court overturns conviction, ruling that he is not Ivan the Terrible

2002: Loses US citizenship after a judge said there was proof he worked at Nazi camps

2005: A judge rules in favour of deportation to his native Ukraine

2009: Germany issues an arrest warrant for him; deported by US; formally charged with 27,900 counts of accessory to murder