

**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 October 2009

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Local News

“No Deal With Sankoh” / <i>The Exclusive</i>	Page 3
Charles Taylor Denies Receiving Weapons From Foday Sankoh / <i>Standard Times</i>	Page 4
“There is No Price For Justice” / <i>Awoko</i>	Page 5
Appeals Chamber Upholds Sentences for Convicted RUF Leaders / <i>The Senator</i>	Pages 6-7
The Special Court Finale / <i>Sierra Express Media</i>	Page 8
Why The End of Special Court Has Not Brought Us Closure / <i>PEEP!</i>	Page 9
Kenya Impunity to Be By International Criminal Court / <i>PEEP!</i>	Page 10
Special Court Trained Police in Bo / <i>Sierra Express Media</i>	Page 11

International News

New War Crimes Ambassador Stephen Rapp Exemplifies'... / <i>The Christian Science Monitor</i>	Pages 12-13
Communiqué on Guinea / <i>African Union</i>	Pages 14-15
UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary / <i>UNMIL</i>	Pages 16-19
Country to Host International Prosecutors / <i>The New Times</i>	Page 20
'Kill, rape and pillage': Rwandan gets life in jail / <i>The Toronto Star</i>	Pages 21-22
Bosnian President Angry Over War Criminal Release / <i>Associated Press</i>	Page 23
Collusion With War Criminals / <i>The Muslim News</i>	Pages 24-25
ICC Indictment Forcing Bashir to Stay at Home / <i>Voice of America</i>	Pages 26-27

The Exclusive
Friday, 30 October 2009

"No Deal With Sankoh" - Taylor says

The former Liberian president, Charles Taylor, has rejected prosecution evidence that he did a deal with the RUF commander, Foday Sankoh, in the summer of 1992 over heavy weapons. *Continued page 6*

No Deal With Sankoh

From front page

Last year, a former RUF radio operator testified that Sankoh gave Mr Taylor a heavy artillery cannon captured from ECOMOG troops in Sierra Leone. Mr Taylor said there was no deal between the two over weapons at that time.

The witness, Foday Lansana, had said that the RUF leader, Sankoh travelled from Freetown to Monrovia after May 1992 with the captured ECOMOG long-range artillery piece and handed it over in exchange for light weapons such as AK 47 guns for the RUF to use in Sierra Leone.

Mr Taylor agreed he received the cannon but denied giving Sankoh anything in return. "I did receive an artillery piece from Sankoh, but in answering yes to that question, this did not happen after May 1992" Mr Taylor asserted. In further response to a question from his lawyer, former president Taylor maintained, "No" but admitted that he had always given Sankoh what he called small amount of arms and ammunitions. "We were no doing a business to say there was some business" . Mr. taylor continued.

Mr Taylor also denied sending weapons to Foday Sankoh or his successor, Sam Bockarie, after Sankoh's arrest in Nigeria, as the

Prosecution witness had claimed.

Lansana also told the court last year that Mr Taylor gave him his first assignment, instructing him to install a radio communication system in Sankoh's house in the Sierra Leonean town of Pendembu.

According to his testimony, Charles Taylor communicated with the RUF from Monrovia via the radio. He said Sankoh was code-named "Toyota", and Mr. Taylor was referred to as "Butterfly".

Mr. Taylor described Lansana's evidence as false and a total fabrication. "This whole nonsense about radio operators for the first time just going back to Sierra after May of 1992 is all hawk wash, that's what it is; trying to piece things together." The former Liberia claimed.

In apparent burst of emotions, Mr. Taylor asked, "How can there be radio stations in Sierra, that Foday Sankoh cannot contact me, he has to return with one radio before a contact can be made? It's a lie your honours. He did properly put this lie together. Either there are radios in Sierra Leone or he takes the first one there. Mr Taylor maintained.

Mr. Taylor's lead lawyer, Courtenay Griffiths said that he would conclude Mr. Taylor's direct examination by next week.

Standard Times
Friday, 30 October 2009

Charles Taylor denies receiving weapons from Foday Sankoh

The former Liberian president, Charles Taylor, has rejected prosecution evidence that he did a deal with the RUF commander, Foday Sankoh, in the summer of 1992 over heavy weapons. Last year, a former RUF radio operator testified that Sankoh gave Mr Taylor a heavy artillery cannon captured from ECOMOG troops in Sierra Leone.

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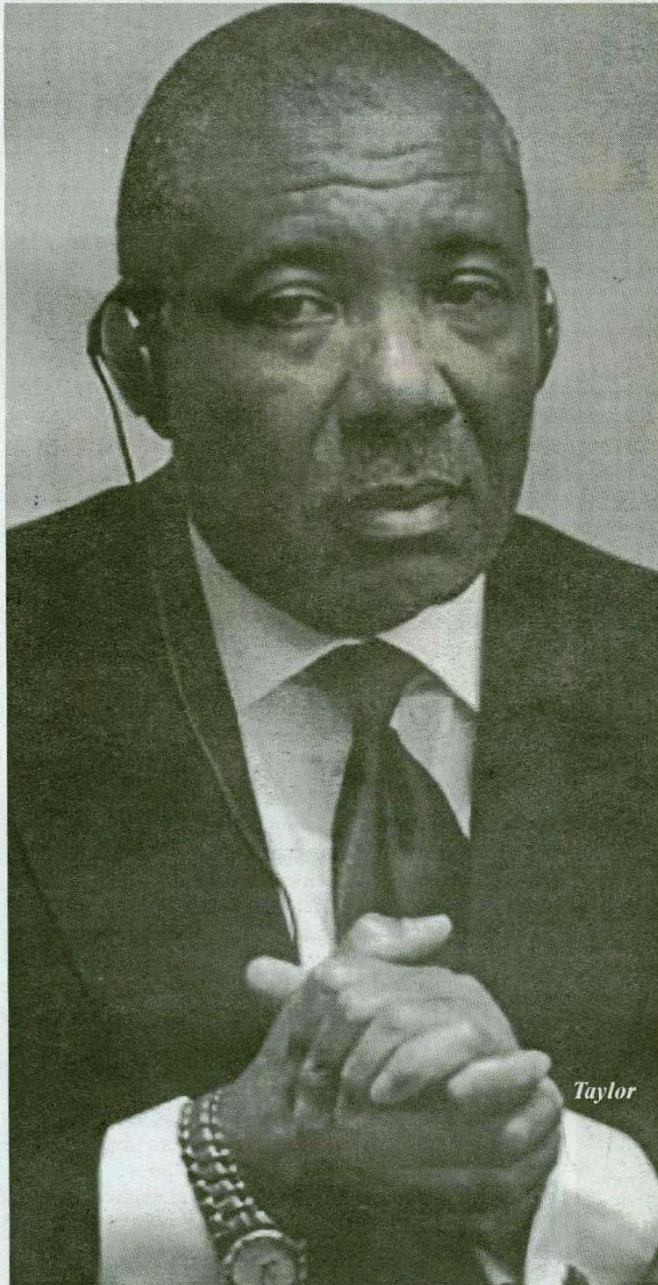
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Awoko

Friday, 30 October 2009

“There is no price for justice” - Special Court Prosecutor

By Betty Milton

As the Special Court draws to a close the question of whether the huge amounts spent on its setting up and running was money well spent is being widely discussed.

Questioned whether he thinks the Special Court is a success, Wayne Jordash, Counsel for Issa Hassan Sesay said “one is left with a big question whether this type of court so soon after a heinous and bloody war in fact can deliver fair and inexpensive justice.

He added “lets not forget this court cost 200 million dollars in the least developed country in the world to try just ten people ... at some point there has to be an assessment as to whether this really was money well spent.”

As always defence lawyers and prosecutors do not share the same view.

Special Court Prosecutor Joseph Kamara in answering the same question said “There is no price for justice ... there is no monetary equivalent for the substance of justice. Justice is not a marketable commodity ... there cannot be a price tag to it that it cost one hundred thousand dollars or two hundred thousand dollars.”

Kamara said that the court has done a lot in bringing relative peace to the country “So these are all things that could not go unnoticed and these are not things that you can put a price tag on and I think to that extent we have succeeded. We may not have succeeded to other people in terms of monetary value but I think we are not looking at things at the monetary value point we are looking at justice delivery.”

The prosecutor went on to explain that today people of this country are enjoying relative peace for which the special court should take some credit for it.

He added that post election violence is now very minimal, “people attributed it to the presence of the special court” although he was quick to clarify “I’m not saying that it is factually correct but that is what is going on. But apart from that when you talk about the rule of law the contribution we’ve made to introduce the level of rule of law to the people of Sierra Leone through our outreach activities ... we have outreach officers in each and every district reporting not only on the working of the court but what is international criminal law and also what the rule of law is all about.”

Other activities that the court has engaged in he said is the training and equipping of police prosecutor training

“we have also been capacitating the police force to enable them work efficiently, these are all things we are not mandated to do directly within the court but we thought it fit so this is where my role comes in as a Sierra Leonean.”

The Sierra Leonean prosecutor maintained that “these are the benefits the country is getting and if you look again at the court in terms of bringing focus to gender issue, and violence against women we are enjoying the new gender act, we are the first court to bring recognition for the offence of forced marriage we can take credit for that and Sierra Leone can take credit. We are the first court to gain recognition for child soldiers now we see the child rights act. So that is why I say the money was well spent.”

Dead infant founded in Samba Gutter

By William Freeman and Poindexter Sama

Residents of Brook Street and its surroundings were shocked yesterday morning when they woke up and found a dead baby lying in a running water at Samba Gutter.

From what this press gathered from onlookers, boys who go around in search of scrap metals were roaming around the Samba Gutter when one of them saw a bag containing the dead baby.

One of the boys took the bag and when he realised what it contained, he dumped it and took to his heels shouting to alert the neighbourhood.

Some members around rushed to the scene and when they opened the bag, the innocent dead baby was removed.

Nobody was in a position to determine who really owned the dead baby or where it came from.

Many stood speechless while others expressed their anger at the unknown heartless mother.

The Senator

Friday, 30 October 2009

Appeals Chamber Upholds Sentences for Convicted RUF Leaders

The Special Court Appeals Chamber, by a majority, has upheld the convictions of three former leaders of Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front (RUF). Justice Renate Winter of Austria delivered the majority judgment, dismissing a total of 96 Defence grounds of appeal.

Former RUF Interim Leader Issa Hassan Sesay (top photo) and Senior RUF Commander Morris Kallon were each convicted in February 2009 on 16 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity for atrocities committed during Sierra Leone's decade-long civil war. Former RUF Security Chief Augustine Gbao was convicted on 14 counts.

The Appeals Chamber judgment, read out (recently) in Freetown, upholds first-ever convictions by an international tribunal for forced marriage as a crime against humanity, and for attacks against United Nations peacekeepers. The Chamber also upheld convictions for the recruitment and use of child soldiers. The Appeals Chamber unanimously upheld the convictions of Sesay and Kallon on all 16 counts. The Chamber unanimously overturned Gbao's conviction on Count 2 (collective punishments) and found that he was not responsible for one of the two attacks against UN peacekeepers (Count 15) for which he was convicted by the Trial Chamber.

The Judges, by a majority, upheld Gbao's liability for crimes pursuant to his participation in the Joint Criminal Enterprise.

The Prosecution appealed on three grounds, including a challenge to the Trial Chamber finding that the Joint Criminal Enterprises ended in April 1998, the acquittal of Gbao on Count 12 (the recruitment or use of child soldiers), and the acquittal of Sesay, Kallon and Gbao for taking of UN peacekeepers as hostages (Count 18 of the indictment).

The Appeals Chamber allowed the Prosecution's Ground 3, in part,

holding that some RUF fighters other than the three Appellants did commit the crime of hostage taking, but that the Prosecution had failed to establish that Sesay, Kallon or Gbao were liable for that offence. The Chamber, by a majority, dismissed the Prosecution's Ground 1 and unanimously dismissed the Prosecution's Ground 2.

In April 2009, the Trial Chamber sentenced Sesay to 52 years imprisonment. Kallon received a term of 40 years, and Gbao a sentence of 25 years. The Appeals Chamber upheld the total terms of imprisonment for each of the three, although the sentences for some counts were revised. In addition to the majority opinion, four separate opinions were read out. Justice Winter read out a sepa-

rate concurring opinion which was joined by Justice Shireen Avis Fisher. A separate concurring opinion was also read out by Justice Emmanuel Ayoola. Justice George Gelaga King read out a dissenting opinion which was joined by Justice Jon Kamanda. Justice Fisher read out a partially dissenting and concurring opinion in which Justice Winter joined in part.

The recent appeal judgment is the last that will be delivered in Freetown, and marks a significant step forward as the Special Court for Sierra Leone works to complete its mandate. Two other trials held in Sierra Leone are complete, including appeals.

The trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor continues in The Hague.

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The Special Court finale

Finally, the curtains are being drawn, the cast is ready to make their last bow and the audience is getting ready to make the last ovation. This is the final scenario depicting the end of the Special Court For Sierra Leone.

Established along the lines of the International Court of Justice in The Hague, the Special Court for Sierra Leone has generated its own series of controversy not to talk of questions over its usefulness. With all what has been said and unsaid, the fact still remains that the Special Court has served its purpose. This purpose is not so much over the huge running cost involved, or the fact that out of the hundreds of people who committed atrocities, only a 'handful' have been arrested, indicted, tried, found guilty and subsequently sentenced. The fact that a Special Court has been created to try all those who bear the greatest responsibility for such atrocities shows that Sierra Leoneans collectively have been absolved of such a despicable act in their own country. This shows that yes, it was done in Sierra Leone, but equally, we have the will and determination to punish our brothers and (sisters?) who committed these atrocities.

It is however interesting to note that there are no female perpetrators in the Special Court. Also, all those indicted never saw the freedom light as all of them have been found guilty. With the exception of Hinga Norman who died in detention, the story it seems has ended.

Meanwhile, Charles Taylor continues to maintain his innocence and hope continues to fluctuate as to whether he will be freed or he will end his life behind bars for ever. A grim life for a man who once lived the fast lanes.

PEEP!

Friday, 30 October 2009

Why The End of Special Court Has Not Brought Us Closure

With the final verdicts on the appeals of the RUF indictees, the longest and most expensive criminal trials in Sierra Leone's history have now come to an end. But do we, as a people, feel any sense of closure to a decade of chaos and mayhem called our 'rebel war'.

None of us who witnessed the horrors of the war will ever forget those years. All of us lost something or someone during that conflict.

The perpetrators with supposed 'greatest responsibility' have been tried and sentenced. Yet we see no rejoicing on the streets or even great public interest. Why is this?

Firstly because we never had ownership of the Special Court or felt we did. Initially, the composition of the court largely excluded Sierra Leonean nationals. In later years a conscious effort was made to employ our nationals at the highest level of Court operations.

But the Court never reflected our preoccupations or our main concerns.

The only time we can recall widespread rejoicing was when Charles Taylor was flown via helicopter to Freetown. Then even skeptics amongst us accepted that the war was truly over and some measure of atonement would be realized.

On the other hand most Sierra Leoneans still find it incomprehensible why late Chief Sam Hinga Norman was put on trial. It is probably unique in the history of post conflict jurisprudence for the Resistance to stand trial, in the same dock, with the Occupiers/Murderers. But this was the so-called 'International Community' pretending to be even handed. 'Even handed' in a way they never were after their own bloody wars! Was a single member of the French

Resistance ever tried for murder/sabotage/assassinations after the German occupation of France?

Definitely not! The winners were feted as heroes and heroines - the losers sat in the dock at Nuremberg.

We cannot, for reasons of space, carry out a full review of all the reasons why the 'International Community' invested tens of millions of dollars on transitional justice in Sierra Leone. Much of it was a U.S. driven process to counter the influence and reach of the International Criminal Court (whose jurisdiction they've never accepted).

Let's accept however that our own authorities - pushed to the wall through their own short sightedness - were responsible for bringing the Special Court to Sierra Leone.

They were prepared to do anything 'for 'Peace' - including making a psychopath equivalent to 'vice president' of the Republic of Sierra Leone and allowing the RUF to serve with them in a so-called 'Coalition Government'.

Much 'sympathy' has gone out to Issa Sesay, acting RUF Commander during much of the disarmament process. In our opinion such sympathy is wasted.

The RUF only committed itself to the DDR process after they'd got a bloody nose in the attempt to destabilize Guinea. I was in Makeni in early 2000 and Augustine Gbao (who got the lightest sentence) was by no means committed to the peace process. He dismissed the \$300 DDR package as 'something I give my boys for the weekend'.

All of the RUF commanders were thugs, criminals and thieves. If we had tried them ourselves they have long been swinging on the end of a Rope. Even invited into a Coalition Government, they still

believed (with some justification) that they could snatch power and impose the Rule Of The Jungle in this blessed country. Their fatal mistake was to take several hundred U.N peacekeepers hostage.

This is the main reason why Sesay, Kallon and Gbao will spend the rest of their lives in detention? These are all men with Blood of our People on their hands...

And what's wrong with Rwanda as their place of detention. It is not only one of the more stable countries in Africa; it has one of the fastest growing economies. The fear that the Special Court detainees will be murdered in Tutsi-Hutsi pogroms is misplaced. Somebody, somewhere, wants to play partisan politics with this issue.

And this is one reason why we still fail to achieve CLOSURE despite the conclusion of the Special Court's work here.

We once had a clear consensus on what the war was about and what victory meant (the Protection/Consolidation of Democracy).

Unfortunately a lot of post de factor rationalizations and reinterpretations have been going on - dividing a People who were once firmly united. Recently a senior SLPP official claimed the 'AFRC is the APC'. This, he reasoned, was because several former AFRC personnel are now in the ranks of the present government.

As far as we can recall, it was the SLPP that signed the shameful Lome Peace Accord (which we opposed) and not only brought the 'RUF into government but made their crazy leader 'equivalent to vice president'.

Only the united will of the Sierra Leonean peace expressed in the march on Sankoh's house (March, 2000) prevented the RUF from snatching power. Because you lost an election seven years later,



does not mean the struggle against the AFRC is still going on...

In general, let's make this perfectly clear, it is precisely the backward looking politicians who keep us agitated over a war which has been long fought and won. If it's not the APC blaming the SLPP for 'supporting' the NPRC today, it's the SLPP claiming 'The AFRC is APC' tomorrow.. They do this for short term partisan gain...

Let them know that most

Sierra Leoneans consider the war as a natural disaster which has ended and, hopefully, will never be repeated.

Both the SLPP and APC were, in diverse ways, responsible for the mayhem of the war. Trying to play partisan politics with such a disastrous episode in our national life not only cheapens the reality of that conflict but diverts us from reaching a NATIONAL CONSENSUS on the way forward.

Let's return to Rwanda

where after a conflict far more vicious and bloody than ours, a nation which has learned some lessons from the conflict and is moving forward. The AFRC-RUF (and add the NPRC for good measure) never represented any political party. They had no progressive plans for this Nation. The period 1992-2002 was a lost decade in the history of our nation. Let's all accept this and move on...

cont page 4

OFF TO RWANDA

from page 3

We will only achieve Progress and Development when we learn the CORRECT lessons of that dark period of our History - The Will Of The People Is Supreme and should be expressed in periodic free and fair elections. Both parties will only receive a sympathetic hearing from our People when they openly acknowledge and accept that fact.

Another important lesson, as reflected in The Special Court verdict (and as is being played out in neighbouring Guinea) - Is that the Hunger For Power at all cost can only HARM the People and, inevitably, lead to those who seek that prize to end their days in misery and despair...

PEEP!

Friday, 30 October 2009

Kenyan impunity to be challenged by International Criminal Court?

The issue of trials of those most responsible for post-election violence in Kenya continues to divide the nation.

President Kibaki has so far been silent on the issue while Prime Minister Odinga continues to blow hot and cold.

delays

Minister of Justice Mutula Kilonzo said last month he was prepared to hand over all those charged by the ICC but the cabinet remains divided. Many members of Parliament prefer trials by a Kenya-based special tribunal or other local courts.

These continuing delays suggest that Kenya is both 'unable and unwilling' to prosecute those responsible for the post-election violence. This paves the way for the ICC as it is a court of last resort. Under Articles 17 and 18 of the Rome Statute which established it, the ICC acts only if a country is 'unable and unwilling' to pursue justice itself and if the evidence submitted to it meets the ICC's threshold under Articles 6, 7 and 8. Kenya appears to qualify on both counts.

Although press reports had suggested that the ICC would take over if a special tribunal had not been set up by 30 September, Kenyan officials and Moreno-Ocampo had in fact agreed only that the government would have to report back on the 'current status of investigations and prosecutions', on 'measures put in place to ensure the safety of victims and witnesses' and on 'the modalities for conducting national investigations and prosecutions of those responsible for the violence' over the next twelve months.

Sierra Express Media

Thursday, 29 October 2009

Special Court Trained Police in Bo

Author: Mohamed Opito Jimmy - SEM

The Prosecution Department of the Special Court of Sierra Leone on the 23rd and 24th October 2009, trained 116 police officers in Bo, the Headquarter City of the Southern Region. According to sergeant 4802 Mansaray, who was one of the participants “the two day training was entirely based on court prosecuting system in the Judiciary; geared at helping the prosecuting prowess of the police in courts in the country”.

It was revealed that they were trained on how to handle court matters various circumstances as well as to conduct investigations on matter of serious offences.

The trainers who were also Prosecutors at Special Court taught the police officers to take into account certain factors in court proceeding like checking and filing cases to court before court session as according to the SCSL prosecutors, accused person are sometimes taken to court leaving the file that is to be used to prosecute them. The officers reveal that they were trained in the conduct of interviewing witnesses as court cases basically depend on the availability of witnesses, facts and evidences.

Members of the Sierra Leone Police were also trained on the method searching for the truth on both sides of the story saying they must not favour one side against the other in their work as the entire country depends on the police and judiciary to administer justice and keep the peace.

The Christian Science Monitor

Wednesday, 28 October 2009

New war crimes ambassador Stephen Rapp exemplifies Obama's deeper engagement on international law.

By Robert Marquand | Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

Madrid - New US ambassador for war crimes Stephen Rapp knows firsthand what it takes to prosecute man's inhumanity to man. The former Iowa district attorney has already prosecuted participants in the Rwanda genocide and former Liberian strongman Charles Taylor.

The United States is much criticized abroad for its attitude toward international justice and world courts. The charge in Europe and Africa is that the US wants universal law for others but not for itself.

But in Mr. Rapp, who took up his duties Sept. 8, President Obama has found someone who international justice advocates expect will deepen US engagement in crimes against humanity cases.

For instance, Rapp favors an International Criminal Court (ICC) investigation of Kenya's 2007-08 postelection violence and wants an investigation into September's soccer stadium killings and rape in Guinea. "Mass crimes against humanity are not acceptable ... and the US will be more engaged," Rapp told a conference of jurists in Madrid earlier this month.

"[Rapp] comes to the job with experience in international criminal justice," says Stuart Alford, a London barrister and chair of the War Crimes Committee of the International Bar Association. "He understands the difficulties of putting on trial men like Charles Taylor. He knows the security issues involved, and the reconciliation issues within the region, including Liberia. To have someone from the US with that kind of background is encouraging."

From Iowa to Rwanda

Rapp is known to have "prosecutorial zeal." Four days after being tapped to take charge of the Rwanda tribunal in 2005, "I was on the plane to Kigali," he said in a Monitor interview. Rapp brought his whole family from Iowa- and says he wants to spend his life "bringing justice to places that have never had it before."

Rapp, who traveled to Africa in a small Beechcraft airplane that often packed lawyers and defendants together, has prosecuted cases centered on violence against women, child soldier recruitment, and the use of the media to create and direct genocide.

In Rwanda, he prosecuted the "media case," mainly against radio station RTLM, which infamously implored Hutus to kill the "cockroaches" or Tutsi minority in the 1994 genocide. The case took 34 months. The judges found that RTLM was not only a mass mechanism for inciting violence, but also a logistical tool for genocide – directing troops and reading the license tag numbers of Tutsi cars to machete-wielding men waiting at checkpoints.

It was Rapp's first case. Bringing order to an emotional trial based in Tanzania "was the most difficult thing I've ever done," Rapp recalls. "When I arrived there were no real exhibits – we had 273 tapes of broadcasts ... but no one knew where the tapes came from. When I got there, only 50 were translated, some in French, some in English – and this was the seventh month of the trial!" His family was a support; his wife is an African-history scholar. But it was an adjustment, moving from Iowa to prosecute "the intentional murder of 800,000 people in a hundred days."

US participation in ICC not likely 'anytime soon'

Now Rapp, as head of the US State Department Office of War Crimes Issues, will need to find his way amid the courts of public and world opinion.

The US has not participated in the ICC, worried it will be used to take revenge on Americans, rather than to bring justice. But the US has come under withering criticism for the Bush administration's use of torture and legal justifications for it. The Obama team, meanwhile, is taking hits in the justice community for seeking to quash the UN human rights report on Israel's war in Gaza.

US credibility on justice will be tested, says Mr. Alford. "There are questions about the past eight years, and the international justice community is watching ... five years down the line. [If] the US has ignored its own issues ... the pressure will grow."

Rapp admitted that US participation on the world court is not likely "anytime soon," though jurists in Madrid predicted Rapp will find creative ways to cooperate with the ICC. Rapp also points out that "there's nothing in the law that prevents the US from dealing with Charles Taylor, with [former Yugoslavian President Slobodan] Milosevic, with heinous crimes."

Rapp says the world's view of the US, regarding international justice under President Bush, isn't entirely accurate. The Bush team supported trials for Rwanda and backed East Timor's domestic tribunals and the indictment of Sudan's Omar al-Bashir.

The US shouldn't fear the ICC, Rapp says. "If the people who were worried [when the US was one of seven nations not to support the ICC] would pay attention to what the court is actually doing, they would be relieved," he says. "The ICC just indicted Joseph Kony [head of the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda]. Darfur is a case Americans feel strongly about. We want to send a signal that the US is prepared to exercise leadership."

It is in America's interest to engage in war crimes prosecutions, he argues, citing the postelection violence in Kenya: "The 2007 elections in Kenya shocked the world, and if we come to elections in 2012 and nothing is done, what message does that send? If the message is that you can get away with that kind of violence ... it could lead to a further conflagration. It is in the interest of the US to show this can't continue."

Whether Rapp can reverse the rap that the US has a double standard on international justice is the question overseas. •

African Union

Thursday, 29 October 2009

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
207TH MEETING AT THE LEVEL OF THE
HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT
29 OCTOBER 2009
ABUJA, NIGERIA

PSC/AHG/COMM.2(CCVII)

COMMUNIQUE

**COMMUNIQUE OF THE 207TH MEETING OF THE PEACE
AND SECURITY COUNCIL**

The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 207th meeting held in Abuja, Nigeria, on 29 October 2009, at the level of Heads of State and Government, adopted the following decision on the situation in the Republic of Guinea:

Council,

1. **Recalls** its previous decisions on the situation in Guinea, in particular paragraph 7 of the communiqué PSC/PR/Comm. (CCIV) adopted at its 204th meeting held on 17 September 2009;
2. **Strongly condemns**, once again, the killings and deliberate acts of violence against unarmed civilians and the rape of women by armed units under the authority of the National Council for Democracy and Development (CNDD) during the peaceful demonstration organized on 28 September 2009;
3. **Endorses** the decisions of the Extraordinary Summit of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), held in Abuja, Nigeria, on 17 October 2009. In this regard, Council **expresses its full support** to the establishment of an International Commission of Inquiry on the events of 28 September 2009. Council **reaffirms its full support** to the mediation undertaken by President Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso on behalf of ECOWAS;
4. **Requests** the Commission, in accordance with paragraph 7 of the above mentioned communiqué, and in close collaboration with ECOWAS and members of the International Contact Group on Guinea, to take all the necessary measures towards the implementation of targeted sanctions, including denial of visas, travel restrictions and freezing of assets, against the President and members of the CNDD, as well as members of the Government and any other civilian or military individual whose activities are aimed at maintaining the unconstitutional status quo in Guinea. In this regard, Council **requests** the Commission to circulate, within a week, to AU Member States, for implementation, the list of the individuals to be targeted by the sanctions;
5. **Decides** that these measures and the list mentioned above will be communicated to the United Nations Security Council and all other AU partners, including the European Union, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the International Organization of La Francophonie and the other members of the International Contact Group on Guinea, as well as to the League of Arab States, in order to give them a universal character;
6. **Decides** to remain seized of the matter.

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 29 October 2009

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

International Clips on Liberia

Liberia's president says may run in next election

Source: AP Online Regional - Africa Date: October 29, 2009

MONROVIA, Liberia_Liberia's president said Thursday she has not ruled out running for office again in 2011, despite campaign promises to only serve one term. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, a Harvard-trained economist who turned 71 Thursday, has been a darling of the international community ever since her election in 2005, when she became Africa's first democratically elected female head of state. "I want to decide what I want to do based upon my continued enthusiasm, based upon my continued good health, and based, more importantly, upon the wishes of the people," Sirleaf told The Associated Press. Liberia was ravaged by civil wars for years until 2003. The drawn-out conflict that began in 1989 left about 200,000 people dead and displaced half the country's population of 3 million. The country created to settle freed American slave in 1847 is still struggling to maintain a fragile peace with the help of U.N. peacekeepers.

“House with Two Rooms”: Final Report of Liberia’s TRC Diaspora Project Released

newliberian.com

At the request of the Liberian Truth & Reconciliation Commission (TRC), The Advocates for Human Rights coordinated the work of the TRC in the Diaspora, including the U.S. , U.K., and the Buduburam Refugee Settlement in Ghana. “A House with Two Rooms”, the final report of the Liberia TRC Diaspora Project, documents the experience of human rights abuses and humanitarian law violations that forced Liberians to leave the country. Published by DRI Press of Hamline University, the report is based on an analysis of more than 1600 statements, fact-finding interviews, and witness testimony at public hearings held in the U.S. The report also tells the story of the “triple trauma” experienced by members of the Diaspora during their flight through Liberia and across international borders, while living in refugee camps in West Africa, and in resettlement in the U.S. and U.K.

IMF predicts total debt relief for Liberia in 2010

APA-Monrovia (Liberia) The visiting Africa Department Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Dr. Antoinette Sayeh, has predicted a total debt relief for **Liberia** in 2010, if the post-war country’s economy continues its strong performance, and following progress in implementing the new Public Financial Management Act and other actions, APA learnt in Monrovia. Madam Sayeh, the first Finance minister in the Ellen Johnson Sirleaf led government, told a news conference Wednesday in Monrovia that the IMF was optimistic that economic growth would accelerate next year in Liberia, as the world economy recovers. Growth will result in job creation and over time stronger revenues to deliver government services, she said.

Guinea

US Government Imposes Travel Restriction on Guinea Military Junta

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The U.S. government has restricted travel to the United States by Guinea's military junta, which has been accused of planning a bloody crackdown on opposition protesters who killed more than 150 people. "On October 23, 2009, the United States imposed restrictions on travel to the United States by certain members of the military junta and the government, as well as other individuals who support policies or actions that undermine the restoration of democracy and the rule of law in Guinea," State Department spokesman Ian Kelly said on Thursday. Human Rights Watch said this week that Guinean security forces planned the bloody crackdown on anti-government protesters that killed 150 people and wounded countless more in the West African nation. The September 28 incident has drawn broad international condemnation of the ruling military junta led by Captain Moussa Dadis Camara.

Ivory Coast

UN: Ivory Coast arms, diamond embargoes violated

Source: General Financial/ Business News Date: October 28, 2009 UNITED NATIONS_The government and former rebels in Ivory Coast have repeatedly violated a U.N. arms embargo and a ban on diamond exports is being flouted with help from many countries, according to a report by U.N. exports. The West African nation was split into a rebel-controlled north and government-controlled south after an attempted coup sparked civil war in 2002. A peace deal in March 2007 brought key rebel leaders into the administration and offered the best hope yet of a single government after years of foundering accords and disarmament plans but deep divisions remains. In the report to the U.N. Security Council circulated Tuesday, the experts recommended that Burkina Faso investigate the transfer of arms, ammunition and other military equipment across the border to the rebel-controlled north "without delay." They said the systematic transfer of weapons may be linked to the smuggling of cocoa. Ivory Coast is the world's largest cocoa producer and the government controls the largest share of cocoa production, in the south.

Ivorian election 'not possible' on time: economic chief

<http://www.timeslive.co.za/news/africa>

A close ally of Ivory Coast President Laurent Gbagbo said Wednesday it was not possible to organise presidential elections by the scheduled date of November 29. The polls have already been postponed on numerous occasions since 2005, when Gbagbo's mandate expired. "If you want a transparent, solid, reliable (voters') list like everyone has recommended to us, it won't be possible to hold an election on November 29," economic council chief Laurent Dona Fologo told AFP. "The independent electoral commission, the only body with the power to fix the date of the elections, should assume its responsibilities and announce a delay," he added. "It seems to me that not even a miracle will enable us to meet the deadline." Observers have already said that it is unlikely that all will be ready for November 29, as the electoral list has yet to be published by the independent electoral commission.

Local Media – Newspaper

IMF predicts total debt relief for Liberia in 2010

(The Inquirer, The News, The Informer, New Vision, New Democrat)

- The visiting Africa Department Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Dr. Antoinette Sayeh, has predicted a total debt relief for Liberia in 2010.
- Dr. Sayeh said total debt relief will be possible if the country's economy continues its strong performance and progress in the implementation of the new Public Financial Management Act and other actions c

- Addressing a news conference, the IMF official said the fund was optimistic that economic growth in the country would accelerate next year as the world economy recovers.
- She said growth will result in job creation and over time stronger revenues to deliver government services.

Nigeria Signal 10 Trains Amadiyyah Students in Computer

(The Informer)

- The Nigerian Signal Unit (NISIG 10) of UNMIL has conducted training in computer education for students of the Amadiyyah Elementary and Junior High School in Monrovia.
- A release issued in Monrovia said the Commanding Officer, Lt Col GS Abdullahi led the team of instructors who drilled the students in the basics of computer education and introduced them to the different hardware components of computer.
- The students were also taught installation, connection and booting during the practical session. The training is part of the Civil Military Coordination Programme of NISIG 10.

Korean Businessman Complains Of Ill-Treatment

(The Inquirer, The Analyst, The Informer, National Chronicle)

- A Korean businessman identified as Young Ho Cho, has alleged that he was manhandled and ill-treated by some officers of the Liberia National Police (LNP) last Friday at his Bushrod Island residence.
- Mr. Cho former president of the Korean Community in Liberia expressed dissatisfaction over the manner in which he was ill-treated by the officers at his evergreen Restaurant and has threatened to take legal action against them.
- However reports say Police Director Marc Ambarld has apologized for the alleged manhandling of the Korean businessman.

5 Children Killed In Fire Incident

(New Democrat, New Vision, The Inquirer, Heritage)

- A fire disaster has left five children dead near the WATUSI Hotel in the Doe Community on Bushrod Island.
- The children between the ages of one to twelfth years died Tuesday night when fire gutted a three bed room building.
- A resident of the building said the parents of the children were not home when the incident occurred.
- According to him the fire was caused by candle lighted by one of the victims. The belongings of the sixteen occupants of the house were completely destroyed.

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

President Sirleaf in Sinoe County

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has arrived in Greenville, Sinoe County for the induction of Superintendent Milton Teahjay.
- While in the County, the President will visit the controversial border between Sinoe and Rivercess Counties.
- Sinoe Acting Superintendent McDonald Wlemus said the President will also dedicate projects including school buildings in Geetro and Jlay Towns.
- President Sirleaf will also celebrate her 71st birth anniversary in Sinoe on Thursday, October 29.

Senator Prince Johnson and Education Minister Set to Resolve Differences

- Talks aimed at resolving verbal exchanges between Senator Prince Johnson and Education Minister Joseph Korto have been announced in Monrovia.
- Nimba County Representative Martin Farngalo said the planned reconciliation talk is expected to be held in Nimba County and will thrash out whatever differences the men may have.
- Verbal exchanges erupted between the two men on Sunday after Dr. Korto openly condemned the Nimba Legislative Caucus of lacking leadership.

ULSU urges Tougher Actions Against Corruption

- The University of Liberia Student Union (ULSU) says tough measures were required to successfully siphoning of state funds by public officials.
- ULSU believes Government's fight against corruption was cosmetic saying there were still public officials misusing state funds despite Government's professed fight against corruption.

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

Liberty Party Accuses Monrovia Mayor of Tearing Down Campaign Posters

- The Opposition Liberty Party has accused acting Monrovia City Mayor Mary Broh of tearing down posters and banners belonging to its candidate Darius Dillon.
- The National Chairman of the Liberty Party Israel Akinsanya told a news conference Tuesday several banners and posters were brought down in Monrovia and parts adjacent.
- But the Monrovia City Corporation Wednesday issued a statement disassociating Ms. Broh and her team from such disorderly conduct.

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

Plans to Thwart Guthrie's Takeover uncover

- Some concerned workers of the Guthrie Rubber Plantation say there are plans to thwart the takeover of the plantation by the Sime Darby Company.
- A spokesperson of the workers John Opoku Pewu said the plan by the youths is in demand of the release of findings into the March 19 shooting incident on the plantation.
- Mr. Pewu described the plan as counterproductive to the smooth operations of the Guthrie Plantation and the survival of the workers.
- He wants the workers to resist any attempt by the youths to thwart the takeover by Sime Darby.

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

Seminar to Launch EITI 2nd Report Opens in Monrovia

- Over 50 representatives from the agriculture, forestry, oil and mining sectors have begun a three-day technical workshop in Monrovia organized by Moore Stephens, a UK-based firm of chartered accountants.
- The workshop will bring together relevant agencies of Government to discuss the preparation, submission and publication of Liberia's 2nd Extractive Industries Transparency International (EITI) report. Liberia was in February this year named the best EITI implementing country.

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

IMF Rates Liberia's Economic Recovery Programme

- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) says the Liberian Government has made significant progress in its economic recovery programme to reach the final point of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC).
- The Director of the IMF Africa Department and former Liberian Finance Minister Dr. Antoinette Sayeh said if Liberia continues its current economic policy in the fight against corruption, the country will be on the verge of achieving the benchmark set to meet the HIPC point for final debt relief.
- Speaking after a 2-day assessment visit of progress made by Liberia in its recovery programme, Dr. Sayeh said Liberia has many good economic practices despite the global economic meltdown.
- She said the IMF needs to continue its financial assistance to Liberia mainly to build better economic systems.

The New Times

Wednesday, 28 October 2009

Rwanda: Country to Host International Prosecutors

Gashegu Muramira

Kigali — Rwanda will next month host the sixth Colloquium of Prosecutors from international criminal tribunals.

The Spokesperson of the International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda (ICTR), Roland Amoussouga, confirmed the meeting in an interview yesterday. It will take place from November 11-13 at the Kigali Serena Hotel.

To be held under the theme: "International Criminal Justice: Lessons from the Past, Reflections on the Future," the meeting seeks to review new developments in international criminal law and share experiences.

It will bring together current Prosecutors and Deputy Prosecutors, Chiefs of Prosecutions, Chiefs of Investigations, Chiefs of Appeal, all former Prosecutors and former Deputy Prosecutors of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR).

Other high profile jurists will come from the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), the International Criminal Tribunal for ex-Yugoslavia (ICTY), the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the Extraordinary Chambers in the Court of Cambodia (ECCC).

Sixty Prosecutors are expected in Kigali at the event that is usually held on a rotational basis.

The Toronto Star

Thursday, 29 October 2009

'Kill, rape and pillage': Rwandan gets life in jail

Andrew Chung Quebec Bureau



Rwandan Désiré Munyaneza, right, is shown in a courtroom sketch as he stands to hear sentence in Montreal.

MONTREAL—In sentencing genocidal killer Désiré Munyaneza to the harshest penalty possible, Quebec Superior Court Justice André Denis quoted an ancient philosopher who insisted that even when everyone else is going one way, you can always go another.

"Many Rwandans of all ethnicities, as the proof showed, behaved courageously

during the genocide, often paying the price with their lives," said Denis. "The accused, an educated and privileged man, chose to kill, rape and pillage, in the name of supremacy of his ethnic group."

Handing down a sentence of life in prison with no chance of parole for 25 years, as Munyaneza stood unmoved, the judge added, "Each time a man affirms to belong to a superior race, a chosen people, humanity is in danger."

Munyaneza, known as "Scarface" to his victims, is the first person to be convicted under Canada's Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Act. The 42-year-old father of two will serve his sentence in Canada. It's a case watched closely by legal observers because of the implications it could have for similar cases here and abroad and even, some say, for preventing such tragedies in the first place.

Denis found Munyaneza guilty last May of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity during the 1994 Rwandan genocide that saw the Hutu-led extermination of hundreds of thousands of people, primarily ethnic Tutsis.

A businessman in his home city of Butare, Rwanda, Munyaneza came from a well-known bourgeois family and had a master's degree in economics.

During the genocide he also acted as a leader among the brutal *Interahamwe* militia.

Denis found that Munyaneza, a failed refugee claimant to Canada who was arrested at his home in Toronto in 2005, used his access to vehicles to transport innocent Tutsi to their deaths. He looted Tutsi businesses. He murdered four Tutsi in a store, saying, "All Tutsi must die."

He called them "vermin."

He even used sticks to beat to death children who were tied up in sacks, the judge found.

The defence is appealing the verdict, but a hearing before the Quebec Court of Appeal isn't likely until next year and both sides agree the case will ultimately wind up before the Supreme Court of Canada.

"We've got what we believe to be a pretty strong appeal," defence lawyer Richard Perras said outside the courtroom.

The trial was extraordinary in that it took nearly two years and even travelled to Butare to hear witnesses. The total cost reportedly reached \$4 million.

Munyaneza's defence contended much of the evidence was faulty, witnesses were hazy on dates, and that many couldn't identify his prominent facial scar.

But Denis said he believed the prosecution's witnesses, noting Thursday that Munyaneza's witnesses often denied there was even a genocide.

"We know that to deny a genocide is to kill the victims a second time," Denis admonished.

Jayne Stoyles, executive director of the Ottawa-based Canadian Centre for International Justice, said in an interview that the sentence "sends a really strong message both that people can't escape justice when they participate in atrocities that serious, and also to victims ... that we'll all try to prevent these kind of crimes."

Stoyles said just like enforcement of any crime serves as a deterrent to it, the same is true for war crimes. If more countries prosecute within their borders like Canada, in addition to the International Criminal Court in The Hague, there would be a preventive effect, she said.

Even so, the government estimates there are at least 1,500 other war criminals and human rights abusers in Canada.

A Montreal Rwandan genocide survivor support group that first turned the RCMP's attention toward Munyaneza applauded the sentence and said it would continue its efforts to pursue other criminals.

"We're going to keep working for justice for the survivors," Jean-Paul Nylinkwaya said.

Denis's message in the sentence was clear: "It must be said and repeated," he intoned, "there is no worse crime than genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, which are still occurring today."

With files from The Canadian Press

Associated Press

Thursday, 29 October 2009

Bosnian president angry over war criminal release

By AIDA CERKEZ-ROBINSON

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina — Bosnia's top official canceled a diplomatic visit to Sweden on Wednesday, angry that the Swedish government chose to grant Bosnian Serb war criminal Biljana Plavsic an early release from jail.

Plavsic, the former Bosnian Serb president, was freed Tuesday from a Swedish prison after serving two-thirds of an 11-year jail term for crimes against humanity during Bosnia's 1992-1995 war.

More than 100,000 people were killed during the conflict, most of them by Bosnian Serb forces.

President Zeljko Komsic said he will not go to Stockholm because although Swedish law offers the possibility of early release, the government had to actively make that choice. Komsic, chairman of Bosnia's three-person presidency, was supposed to meet King Carl XVI Gustaf during a four-day visit starting Nov. 4.

"The Swedish government wanted to do it, it was not forced to do it," Komsic said in a statement.

Other Muslim Bosniak and Croat officials as well as the media expressed outrage over the early release and the fact that Plavsic flew from Sweden to Belgrade on a Bosnian Serb government jet bought with tax money from some of her victims, who still live in the Bosnian Serb republic.

Plavsic was warmly welcomed in Belgrade by Bosnian Serb Prime Minister Milorad Dodik.

Komsic also called the behavior of the Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt "unacceptable and compromising for the Swedish government." Bildt, he said, testified at the U.N. war crimes tribunal to Plavsic's benefit, visited her in jail in Sweden and took part in the decision for her to be released early.

Komsic had urged the Swedish government and parliament last September not to grant the early release, saying it would be a mistake to show this kind of mercy shown to a person who committed the worst crimes against humanity.

A headline in the Sarajevo daily Dnevni Avaz said "Victims paid for the flight to Belgrade," and the daily Oslobodjenje had a photo of Dodik holding Plavsic by the hand with a headline "Flown by Dodik's plane to freedom."

In Belgrade, Dodik defended his decision to send a government jet to pick up Plavsic, saying "it was a moral thing to do." He said Plavsic will remain in Belgrade for now but stay out of political life.

"She has served her time in jail, and she's now a free person," Dodik said.

Plavsic, 79, is the only woman among the 161 people indicted by the International Criminal Court for the former Yugoslavia.

She had pleaded guilty to a single count of persecution — a crime against humanity — as part of an ethnic cleansing campaign to drive Muslims and Croats out of Serb-controlled areas of Bosnia. Her guilty plea was part of a plea bargain to have other charges, including genocide, dropped.

Plavsic was then transferred to Sweden to serve her sentence.

Associated Press writers Jovana Gec in Belgrade contributed to this report.

The Muslim News

Friday, 30 October 2009

<http://www.muslimnews.co.uk/paper/index.php?article=4308>

Editorial 1: Collusion with war criminals

It is nine months since Israel's latest massacre of more than 1,400 Palestinians in Gaza. Such was the blatancy and intensity of the bloodletting that it provoked a huge backlash of opinion worldwide against Israel. Millions joined in mass demonstrations; sit-ins were staged at dozens of UK universities; in the British Parliament, MPs condemned Israeli leaders as "mass murderers" and "war criminals. For the very first time, it seemed that Israel finally would be brought to account for its continuous defiance of international law.

Back in January, Foreign Secretary, David Miliband, told MPs that the British Government supported an independent investigation into Israel's war crimes after resisting pressure to join the international outrage. Miliband insisted that allegations of war crimes must be "closely and speedily investigated" to "find out if they are true and, if they are, take appropriate action." But following the publication UN-sponsored Goldstone report that evidenced the extent of the atrocities, he remained silent.

Despite previous pledges, the US and EU governments refused to endorse the conclusions of the independent fact-finding mission led by South African jurist Richard Goldstone. The Report found that the entire population of Gaza was still being subjected to collective punishment. Goldstone himself insisted that it was "time for action" when presenting his findings to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. "The lack of accountability for war crimes and possible crimes against humanity has reached a crisis point; the ongoing lack of justice is undermining any hope for a successful peace process and reinforcing an environment that fosters violence," he warned.

The report was eventually endorsed by the UN Human Rights Council, despite opposition from the US and Britain and France abstaining. US Secretary of State, Hilary Clinton, instead supported the Israeli claim that it was "one-sided" but did not go as far as accusing Goldstone of being a so-called "anti-Semite," as many have done, despite being Jewish and a Zionist.

The main recommendation was for the Security Council to require Israel to report within six months on prosecutions it carried out on war crimes accusations and to refer the matter to the International Criminal Court in the Hague if it failed.

Human Rights Watch described the US effort to dismiss the report as "downright shameful" as an Administration that claims to promote the rule of Laws and accountability for war crimes. "It was also deeply disappointing that key EU governments did not seize this valuable opportunity to demand justice for victims on both sides of the conflict," its Geneva Director, Juliette de Rivero, said. Amnesty International, which reported similar findings to Goldstone, said that it showed "a lack of political will to deal robustly with issues of accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law in Gaza and southern Israel."

The position by Britain was to seek a delay. The UK's Permanent Representative at the UN Mission in Geneva, Peter Gooderham, said the Report has "flaws." He argued that it did not reflect "the right of Israel to protect its citizens or paid sufficient attention to Hamas's actions." His sense of logic was that "because Israel did not cooperate with the mission, the report lacked an authoritative Israeli perspective."

Given that Israel has acted with impunity in killing an average of between two to three Palestinians every day since its creation over 60 years ago, the latest prevarications should come as no surprise. There was not even a war crimes' investigation relating to the killing of over 1,100 civilians during its 2006 invasion

of Lebanon, where Israel remains in defiance of a UN request to disclose the locations of 350,000 cluster bombs dropped.

The extent of the US double-standards towards Israel was also confirmed in a report in the Washington Times, confirming that President Barak Obama reaffirmed a 4-decade-old secret understanding to allow Israel to keep a nuclear arsenal without opening it to international inspections. Obama was also seen offering little hope of even implementing the first initial step of the supposed road map to Middle East peace, when bowing down to Israel's defiance in continuing to build illegal settlements.

For its part, the British Government even went as far as welcoming Israeli Defence Minister, Ehud Barak, to Labour's annual conference in Brighton in the face of attempts to arrest him for war crimes. Miliband insisted that the unlisted meetings on the sidelines of the conference would go ahead regardless of the threatened court action.

"He is the democratically elected Defence Minister of Israel and I will be pleased to meet him," he was quoted saying. Needless to say attempts by British lawyers acting on behalf of Gaza victims failed to obtain an arrest warrant after Westminster magistrates' court was reported to have asked the Foreign Office to clarify the status of Barak's unpublicised visit. It was judged that the Israeli minister should be offered immunity from prosecution as "he would not be able to perform his functions efficiently if he were the subject of criminal proceedings." The only conclusion that can be drawn is that a British court is more independent than a UN-mandated international jurist.

It remains doubtful that Israel will be brought to justice as any UN Security Council referring the crimes to the ICC would almost certainly be vetoed by the US. The role of Britain will be to catch 'diplomatic flu' and will again abstain rather than stand up against human rights abuses as it does with other countries.

Voice of America

Friday, 30 October 2009

ICC Indictment Forcing Bashir to Stay at Home

An African Union summit in Nigeria was held to discuss the recommendations of a high-level panel report on resolving the Darfur conflict. Noticeably absent from the conference was Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, despite a formal invitation from Abuja to attend.

In March, the Sudanese president became the first sitting head of state to be indicted by the International Criminal Court at The Hague.

Since acquiring the distinction of being the first head of state to officially double as an international fugitive, the president has categorically avoided stepping foot in any country that is a signatory to the ICC. Nigeria is just the latest in a number of African invitations skipped by the Sudanese leader, despite the defiance taken by the African Union against the arrest warrant.

Legal obligations

An international law lecturer in Nairobi, Gideon Maina, says that the AU stance to not recognize the indictment does not change the legal obligations many African nations face.

"What complicates the African situation is that those states who have acceded to the ICC statutes are in a political dilemma," said Maina. "The African Union has taken a position in terms of cooperation with the ICC as far as the case of Bashir is concerned. But Nigeria, or any other country that is a state party, has an obligation under the statute to arrest and surrender Bashir."

The president has since turned down formal invitations to travel to South Africa and Uganda, both state parties to the international court's founding charter. In the case of South Africa, Khartoum was reportedly informed that if Bashir actually attended South African President Jacob Zuma's inauguration, South Africa would have to arrest him.

A senior Ugandan official similarly told the media in July that Uganda would have no choice but surrender up the Sudanese president if he came to the country, despite having formally invited him to attend a regional conference in Kampala. Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni reportedly called President Bashir to apologize for the official's remarks, but the Sudanese leader avoided the Kampala conference as well.

Taking extra caution

The shunning of the AU conference this week, though, is the most serious signal yet as to the level of caution the ICC indictment has imposed upon President Bashir. Unlike the cases out of Uganda and South Africa, reports indicate that Nigerian authorities have been assuring the president that he would not be arrested.

There was also a strong practical reason to have the Sudanese leader present for the conference, as Sudan is the primary focus of the meeting.

The delegates of the AU Peace and Security Council are to debate a report produced by the special AU panel, led by former South African president Thabo Mbeki, commissioned in response to the United Nations rejection of the African body's request that Mr. Bashir's indictment be deferred for one year.

The African Union says the arrest warrant will hinder the Darfur peace process. The Mbeki panel was tasked with recommending an African alternative to ending the conflict.

Maina cites the example of former Liberian president Charles Taylor as one example of why the Sudanese leader is being extra careful. Taylor was given refuge in Nigeria, but international pressure proved too much and Taylor was

eventually kicked out. He now is undergoing trial at The Hague.

"I am just putting myself in the shoes of the advisors of Bashir," said Maina. "You do not want to take any risk."

While President Bashir's critics may welcome the isolating effect the arrest warrant has had on the leader's ability to travel, others argue that the indictment has had so far done little to undermine his authority. Bashir remains head of his ruling National Congress Party, and the only perceptible change in the Darfur conflict has been the retaliatory removal of Western aid groups from the region.

Domestic support

An analyst on the ICC for the Africa-based Institute for Security Studies, Godfrey Musila, says the international arrest warrant has not hurt Mr. Bashir at home.

"The indictment, and even the arrest warrant, does not seem to have lessened or dented his domestic support," he said. "If anything it seems to have galvanized various sectors in Sudan behind the president."

Musila foresees a likely re-election in April that would renew President Bashir's legitimacy in the eyes of much of the world.

In addition, he says, the escalating focus from the international community on the North-South negotiations may force some Western countries to back off their support for the indictment.

"I do believe that at one stage those who are asking for his arrest may have to re-think their positions, or relax a little bit," said Musila. "What is significant to note is that although there is an arrest warrant against him, not a single foreign country - not a single one of them - has said, 'We do not recognize al-Bashir as a head of state.'"

Many analysts think that if the world wants to prevent the re-ignition of a North-South Sudanese civil war, it has little choice but to deal with a man many consider a war criminal.