

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



Roman statues depicting justice at the Law Courts building in Freetown. Photo by Atiq Shaikh

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:

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Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
Martin Royston-Wright
Ext 7217

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Witness Say Taylor Got Diamond, Supplied Ammunition to RUF

Feature

By Olusegun Ogundeji

While being examined by Prosecutor Kounjian yesterday, witness TF1-060, a 55-year old Mende teacher from Tongo Field named Abdul Otonjo Conteh, disclosed that former President of Liberia, Charles Taylor, got diamond and supplied ammunition to the Revolutionary United Front (RUF).

According to www.charlestaylortrial.org, a site which serves as the primary resource for those interested in the ongoing trial, with a particular emphasis on reaching West African audiences, when Mr. Conteh was asked if he ever heard the name Charles Taylor mentioned, he mentioned a conversation he had had with an RUF commander he had befriended, Captain Eagle.

Conteh said Captain Eagle told him "the RUF was not only supported by Foday Sankoh, but also by Charles Taylor. The Diamonds were sent to Charles Taylor in Liberia, Charles Taylor then being President of Liberia, and that Taylor supplied the ammunition for the RUF in Sierra Leone."

A university graduate with a grade in Economics with honours in Sociology, Conteh testified that there are about 10 villages in Tongo Field where he was working as a secondary school teacher between 1992 and 1994.

He moved to Kenema in 1994 when the rebels came to the mining area and returned to teaching in 1996 up to 1997 when again Kabbah was overthrown. Conteh said he was a teacher and doing diamond mining too from 1996 to 1997 in Tongo Fields in a village called Sandiema.

Explaining further, Conteh said he inherited some land and he purchased a license from the government office to execute his mining activities. When diamonds are found, he said, they are taken to diamond dealers who have government licenses to buy them from the miners.

They were Lebanese, Mandingos and Marakas. After the coup in 1997, he testified that all the dealers left so whenever a worker finds a diamond, the price is agreed upon, the worker gets a third, the owner gets a third and a third is used for the taking care of the workers, supplying lodging and food. But there were no guns involved then.

When the Kabbah government was overthrown on May 25, 1997 and replaced by the AFRC junta government headed by Johnny Paul Koroma, the witness said he was at his mining place in Sandiema Swamp when a friend informed him about the military coup.

Conteh said things changed rapidly in Kenema thereafter as soldiers from the Sierra Leonean Army and RUF rebels formed the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC).

Within three days, an AFRC secretariat was formed in Kenema town with Eddie Kanneh as Secretary of State East which refers to the Eastern region of Sierra Leone. Another authority in the AFRC was Sam Bockarie aka Mosquito.

On August 16, 1997, Conteh said heard from his nephew Morison Farma and a man called Ibrahim that Sam Bockarie had had two meetings with civilians and all tribes were represented at the gathering.

It was at the meeting that Mosquito told the civilians must go back to their towns and cooperate with the AFRC government, or else all the natives in Lower Bambara Chiefdom would be in trouble.

At this time, Conteh said, most of the population of the Lower Bambara Chiefdom had fled to the bush, as they had heard about the atrocities committed by the

RUF and were afraid the same might happen to them.

The witness also testified to mining done under the control of the AFRC citing that one mine was even named Cyborg mine which was 100 yards long and 50 yards wide. Surface mining was done there, not deep mining.

He explained that RUF rebels would go to villages and raid civilians who were forced to mine for them without being paid but only received two cups of food every evening. He added that soldiers guarding these miners were usually armed.

He even recalled an instance when some civilians tried to mine for themselves and Sam Bockarie sent child soldiers to them. The children opened fire on the spot and three people were killed while many others were wounded.

The witness mentioned that a committee formed to work with the AFRC, the Lower Bambara Caretaker Committee, received several reports about these kinds of killings by child soldiers.

The committee consists of 13 people with Conteh being the Secretary. Conteh said he had to report to the

Paramount Chief every week or fortnight. Responsibilities of the Committee are to take care of their brothers and sisters in the bush. If anything happened, it should be reported to the committee which will in turn report to the Secretary of State Sekou Kunnateh; the second responsibility was to get the people of the Lower Bambara Chiefdom to leave the bush and go back to their towns. It was the Paramount Chief who told them to do that, which was in agreement with the demands of the AFRC.

The committee also received many reports concerning people who die while engaging in deep mining which are often dangerous as the mining pits can be up to 20 feet (= 6 meter) deep. People get killed when the sides of these pits collapse.

Conteh said he was introduced to Sam Bockarie on 16th of August 1997. He explained that Bockarie was not in Tongo Field permanently but used to come at 8 am in the morning to collect diamonds that would be taken to Kenema. Conteh said Bockarie is usually accompanied by rebels in a convoy, adults and child combatants who were between 12 and 14 years old.

BBC World Service Trust

Friday, 30 September 2008

Taylor Absent from Court

Former Liberian President Charles Taylor is absent from his war crimes trial today, Tuesday, not for security measures this time but for religious reason. Mr. Taylor's Morris Anyah told the Judges Mr. Taylor is a member of the Jewish Faith. Mr. Anyah said Mr. Taylor is observing the Jewish Religious Holiday called Rosh Hashanah.

According to the Jewish calendar, Rosh Hashanah is the most important of the Jewish Holy days. This day which occurs on September 30, is marked by two days of prayers, mediation, soul-searching, and acts of repentance in the Synagogue and homes.

During the Rosh Hashanah, apples and honey are eaten to encourage a sweet and good year.

The observance of this day by Mr. Taylor will come as a surprise to many because back home in Liberia, the Former Liberian President was a Baptist and a Deacon in the Church.

According to Mr. Anyah, indicted Former Liberian President gave his consent for the trial to continue in his absence.

UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries 29 September 2008

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

Newspaper Summary

Bridge Linking River Gee, Maryland Collapsed

(The News)

- Reports from Rivergee County in south-eastern Liberia, say the bridge linking the county to Maryland County has collapsed. The bridge collapsed due to the over flooding of the Gee River caused by heavy down pull of rain. The County's Superintendent Karku Sampson via telephone said the collapse of the bridge has prevented the movement of motorcycles and vehicles to Maryland County.
- He said the local authority of both counties are presently collaborating to ensure the speedy reconstruction of the bridge. "We are working with all stakeholders to ensure that the bridge is reconstructed in the next few weeks," he maintained.
- Mr. Sampson also called on NGOs working in the counties to render them some technical supports in order to rehabilitate bridge which is the only major link between the two counties. Recently, citizens of River gee and other users of the road leading to Maryland County complain about bad conditions between the both counties.

Head of War Crimes Advocacy Group Arrested

(Heritage, The Monitor, The News, National Chronicle)

- The Chairman of the Forum for the Establishment of a War Crimes Court in Liberia, Mulbah Morlu has reported been arrested. The Opposition Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) announced the arrest and detention of Mr. Morlu at a news conference on Sunday
- The party said state security picked up Morlu at about 6:00PM on Friday on Broad Street and that he has since been detained at the Headquarters of the National Security Agency (NSA) in Monrovia.
- Authorities of the NSA are yet to comment on the arrest. Mr. Gray expressed concern about the health of Morlu saying few minutes before his arrest he complained of being ill. According to him, this is the fifth time Morlu has been arrested by state security and the second time by the NSA. In previous arrest, he was taken to the police for questioning.

Container Truck Crushed Woman to Death in Monrovia

(The News, The Inquirer, The Monitor, Daily Observer, Public Agenda, National Chronicle, New Vision)

- The Daily Observer reports that thousands of grief-stricken people on Saturday, September 27, 2008 swamped the vicinity of Johnson Street-Slipway intersection when a 40-foot container abruptly fell from a trailer onto a nearby blue pick-up, subsequently crushing a woman to death.
- The Inquirer newspaper quoting eyewitnesses said the accident occurred when a truck with a container onboard from the Freeport of Monrovia and was on its way to central Monrovia to discharge goods, reportedly lost control and collided with a pick-up.
- The victim, whose name could not be immediately obtained, is believed to be a businesswoman who was said to be on her regular business routine when the accident occurred. Several individuals who thronged the accident site to catch a glimpse of the episode recommended to the government to thoroughly regulate the movement of container trucks and enforce safety rules and regulations.

Some Senators are poised to Re-instate Suspended Pro-Tempore Today

(The Inquirer, Daily Observer, Heritage, National Chronicle, The News, Plain Truth, New Vision, Liberian Express)

- The media reports that an agreement to reinstate suspended President Pro-temp, Isaac Nyenabo is expected to be announced by a group of Senators today. This followed a disagreement on the deferral of the re-instatement of Senator Nyenabo after a ruling by Chamber Justice Jamesetta Wolokollie.
- Acting Senate President Pro-tempore, Lahai Lassanah said the re-instatement order by Justice Wolokollie would be discussed next year but some key members of the Senate announced on Friday that the Supreme Court's ruling will be enforced today. The Senator met on Friday but could not announce the reinstatement of Nyenabo due to the absence of Lahai Lassanah.
- It was gathered that Mr. Nyenabo would be asked to resign immediately following his re-instatement to end the leadership crisis at the Senate. The Daily Observer reports that credible information suggests that the United States Congress has threatened to impose travel restrictions on some members of the Liberian Senate for their failure to adhere to a Supreme Court of Liberia ruling ordering the Senate to reinstate the suspended Senate Pro-Tempore.

Chinese Company Launches New Malaria Drug ...Government Pledges Support

(Heritage, The Inquirer, Daily Observer)

- A new drug set to combat malaria has been launched in the country. The anti-malaria drug called ARCO was launched by a Chinese company, Kunming Pharmaceutical Corporation, at the weekend.
- The Inquirer reports that the launch coincided with the donation of a consignment of the drugs to government.
- ARCO is a new generation of highly efficacious oral fixed doses of ACT based combination therapy. Receiving the drugs, the Chief Medical Officer of Liberia, Dr. Bernice Dahn lauded the Chinese group for the donation and said the issue of malaria is very critical to government. She pledged government support to the initiative.
- Earlier, the Vice President of the Company, Dong Shaoyu said the medicine is very effective in treating malaria.

Judge Denies Motion to Overturn Ruling in Blah vs. Urey Case

(The Inquirer)

- The Civil Law Court of Montserrado County has denied motion to overturn its previous judgment on an earlier Motion to Dismiss a Motion for Summary Judgment in the case 'Urey vs Blah.'
- In Judge Yussif Kaba's ruling last week to both parties present in court, he said that the respondent's request was denied because the court sees no justification to disturb the ruling which this motion is seeking the court to rescind. He said that because the respondent in said case was the same that filed for the motion to dismiss and subsequently filed for a summary judgment, it was the same respondent that elected to have heard the summary judgment. And according to him, the same could not be denied but it was noticed that similar and identical issues raised in one motion was in the same.

In Margibi Murder Trial, State Lawyers Want Judge Step Aside

(Heritage, Public Agenda, Plain Truth)

- State Lawyers in the suspended murder trial involving Margibi Senator, Roland Kaine have asked the Judge of Criminal Court "B" to step aside from all proceedings in the case because he is believed to be biased. The Heritage reports that the State's request for Judge Korboi Nuta to step aside from the case comes against the backdrop of the Judge's recent decision to grant an application filed by the defense which was intended to admit the detained Senator to bail.
- According to them, this will serve the interest and purpose of transparent justice and integrity of the proceeding. In a five-count motion filed over the weekend, State Lawyers argued that they would not receive a fair determination of the case as the Judge has already determine

that that the State has no convincing evidence against co-defendant Kaine before hearing the case.

Back To School Parade to Kick Off YMCA Membership and Fund Drive

(Daily Observer, The Inquirer)

- A Back-to-School Parade involving some 60 schools in the greater Monrovia area is scheduled to take place this Friday, October 3, 2008, to mark the commencement of the 44th Membership Campaign and Fund Drive of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) of Liberia. The YMCA was founded in Harper, Cape Palmas in 1881. For over a century the organization has striven to cater to the needs of young people. The theme of this year membership campaign and fund drive is "Inspiring Young People and Communities for Transformation and Self Fulfillment". It targets 10,000 members and US\$100.000. The aim is to recruit members in all 15 counties so that the Y may extend its activities throughout the country.

Radio Summary

Star Radio (News monitored today at 10:00 am)

Group of Senators determined to Re-instate leader

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

Liberian Security arrest Advocate of War Crimes Court

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

Labour nullifies Motorcycle Union's Certificate

- A Ministry of Labour release issued in Monrovia has nullified the operational certificate of the Liberia Motorcycle Union, describing it as a self-styled.
- The Ministry said the certificate in the possession of the union's leadership was issued by unauthorized personnel saying it has never approved any certificate to such a union.
- The statement said the proposed leadership of the motorcycle union was advised to re-file its documents to certify the criteria for legitimate certification but this has not happened.
- The ministry said the action contravenes provisions of the Labour Practices Law of Liberia, which call for all criteria to be met for granting of certificate.

Juror attacked in Buchanan - in Critical Condition

- A juror serving on the August Term at the 2nd Judicial Circuit Court, Mr. Leroy Zeegar has been attacked by some unknown men in Grand Bassa County.
- Leroy explained that the men entered his house in the Pipeline Community Friday at about 3:00 AM and chopped him all over his body and left him unconscious.
- There has been no arrest so far in connection with the act and the cause of the attack has not been officially established.
- However, Leroy was a member of a jury that brought down a guilty verdict for murder against one Judoe Memei last week Wednesday.

Truth F.M. (News monitored today at 9:00 am)

Chinese Company Donates Malaria Drugs to Liberia

The NEWS (Monrovia)

Monday, 29 September 2008

War Crimes Advocate Detained At NSA, CDC Official Reveals

The man who has been advocating for the establishment of a War Crimes Court in Liberia was Saturday picked up and detained at the National Security Agency (NSA).

Assistant Secretary General of the Congress for Democratic Changer (CDC) Acarious Gray told this paper that Mr. Morlu was picked up by officers of the NSA last Saturday in Monrovia for questioning.

Mr. Gray said he was with Mr. Morlu that day when an officer from the NSA identified as Alexander Gram said Morlu was wanted by the NSA.

According to Gray, the officer did not say why Morlu was needed, but indicated that it appears to have national security implication.

The CDC official said he escorted Mr. Morlu at the NSA after which he (Gray) was informed by NSA officers that Mr. Morlu would be under detention much longer.

Mr. Gray expressed concern about the health of Morlu who informed him few minutes before his arrest that he was suffering from malaria.

According to him, this is the fifth time Morlu has been arrested by state security and the second time by the NSA.

In previous arrest, he was taken to the police for questioning. In all, there was no warrant used to arrest Morlu.

Meanwhile, the CDC has criticized the arrest of Morlu without warrant.

In recent days, Mr. Morlu has been very vocal, speaking on the issue of the war crimes court in Liberia, emphasizing that warlords as well as those who financed the 14-year armed conflict must not go with impunity.

Voice of America

Friday, 30 September 2008

Amnesty International Highlights Eastern Congo Human Rights Abuses

By Tom Rivers

London

A new Amnesty International report highlights the ongoing problem of child soldier recruitment in North Kivu province of eastern Congo. It also describes the physical and sexual abuse of women and children. For VOA, Tom Rivers reports from London.



Despite a cease-fire on paper, the conflict in North Kivu rages on and as Amnesty International reports, children and women are often the victims of abuse under such conditions.

Report author Andrew Philip says he estimates there are up to a million people displaced in the troubled province.

"We have daily reports of rapes, killings of civilians and continued abductions of children for use as child soldiers," said Andrew Philip. "This continuing conflict comes despite the fact that there is a peace process in eastern DRC [Democratic Republic of Congo] which has never really got off the ground."

Since the official end to the conflict in the greater Congo in 2003, Philip says great strides have been made to demobilize up to 30,000 child soldiers from the various armed groups but he points out that is not the case in North Kivu.

"Children who in a period of stability of one to two to three years ago were reunified with their families now find themselves again in the middle of a war zone and the armed groups who value their expertise, the experience of these children as former child soldiers, the armed groups seem to be particularly targeting those children for re-recruitment," he said.

Amnesty International estimates that as many as half of the former child soldiers in North Kivu have now been re-recruited by armed groups there.

Andrew Philip says in addition to this, other abuses are widely reported in the province.

"Several hundred rapes are reported every month, committed by either the armed groups, the government army or in many cases also civilians," said Philip.

Philip says if a credible peace process can be established in the region, then human rights must be at the core of any negotiations. And he says, the immediate release of child soldiers from within the armed groups and a rudimentary judicial system that can hear cases of physical and sexual abuse must be established.

"I think possibly we also need much more focus in U.N. peacekeeping operations on the plight of women and children in eastern DRC so that peacekeeping operations take more account of their vulnerability to attack by armed groups," he said.

And as Amnesty International points out, general security for civilians provided by the government in the province needs to improve dramatically if life is to change there.