

**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:**

Monday, 31 August 2009

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.  
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact  
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## Sierra Express Media

Friday, 28 August 2009

### Johnny Paul Is Alive in Sa. Lone

Former junta leader Johnny Paul Koroma is alive and is in Sierra Leone, the *Sierra Express Media* has been reliably informed, and sources have confirmed his existence through a recent telephone conversation with him.

According to a source who asked for anonymity, the former military leader of Sierra Leone, commonly known as J.P., is healthy and is in the country, and that he is constantly on the touch through e-mail correspondences with friends and family members. Though the source refused to mention the whereabouts of Johnny Paul Koroma, it is highly believed that he might be in a secluded location somewhere in Northern Sierra Leone.

It could be recalled that Johnny Paul Koroma, a former Major in the Sierra Leone Army was arrested while commanding troops in the war front in 1995 and accused of planning a coup against the government of Ahmad Tejan-Kabbah. J.P. Koroma was arrested together with some soldiers following a series of skirmishes between Soldiers and members of the Kamajor militia in the Southern and Eastern parts of the country.

Following his arrest, Johnny-Paul Koroma was initially taken to the Bo Military Brigade headquarters before he was flown in a military helicopter to Freetown and thrown into the maximum Pademba Road prisons awaiting a military tribunal. At the time, more than a thousand soldiers were said to be incarcerated in the Pademba Road prisons. On the 26<sup>th</sup> of May 1997, the prison was broken open

and Johnny-Paul was released by soldiers from the war front loyal to him. Johnny Paul was proclaimed Head of State of the hastily formed Armed Forces Revolutionary Council Sierra Leone under the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, and made Commander-In-Chief of the country's military.

The coup came six months after the Kabbah government signed a tentative peace agreement with the rebels which was rejected because their leader, Corporal Foday Sankoh was under arrest in Nigeria.

On hearing about the coup, Tejan-Kabbah had fled to neighbouring Guinea where he formed a government in exile and through the assistance of Nigerian troops, drove out the junta from power.

Speaking to *Sierra Express Media*, a businessman who asked not to be named said he had believed long ago that Johnny-Paul Koroma is alive and that it is just a matter of time for him to emerge from hiding. This



view was supported by several people asked as to their opinion concerning the whereabouts of the former junta leader.

Johnny Paul is said to be keeping a low profile while making attempts to win support from the international community. "J.P. is trying to make his innocence known concerning the Special Court's indictment of him and the international arrest warrant for him," said the source.

Johnny Paul Koroma is believed to be hiding from the Special Court and he can only emerge from hiding if he is acquitted and discharged.

"Johnny Paul Koroma will never escape the claws of justice, and as long as Hinga Norman and others have faced the music, he should also act like a man and come out and prove to the world that he is innocent," said a member of the civil society movement.

Attempts to contact the Special Court Prosecutors have proved futile. The Out-Reach office of the Special Court was also not available for their comments

Concord Times  
Monday, 31 August 2009

# 'International community against me'

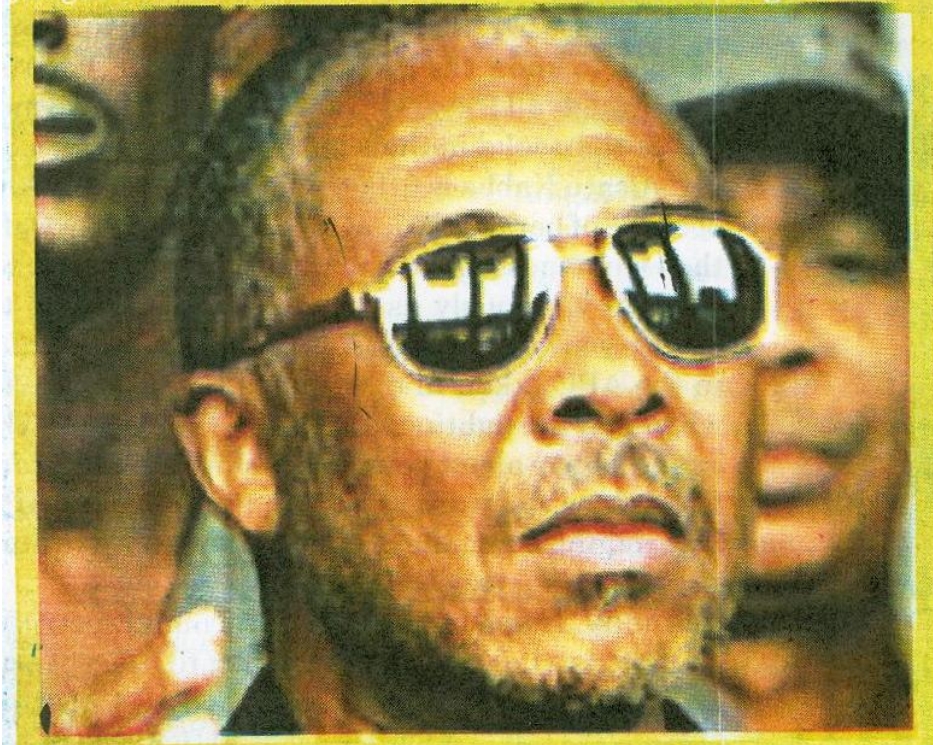
## ...Taylor tells trial judges

*By Alpha Sesay*

Former Liberia president, Charles Taylor has told judges at his war crimes trial

sitting in The Hague that almost a decade, the international community

*Contd. Page 3*





# "International community against me"

From page 1

has seen his role as one which fuelled Sierra Leone's civil conflict through gun running and drug smuggling.

He lamented that nothing he did could change this impression and that Liberia suffered because of it.

"They had made up their minds, it really did not matter whatever I did," Mr. Taylor told judges when responding to international community allegations against him that he provided support to Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels who waged an 11-year war in Sierra Leone.

Taylor has been responding to a 2000 United Nations (UN) Expert Panel Report which alleges that he was fueling the conflict in Sierra Leone through an arms-for-diamond trade with the RUF rebels.

He told the judges that when the UN Expert Panel Report came out in 2000, accusing him of providing support to the RUF rebels, the United Kingdom, through its ambassador at

Greenstock, proposed sanctions against Liberia at the UN Security Council. As a condition to lift the sanctions against Liberia, Ambassador Car Cook said that the UN needed to take up steps to stop support to the RUF and the trafficking of diamonds and arms to and from Sierra Leone.

ECOWAS leaders, Mr. Taylor said, asked for a delay of the sanctions "so Liberia could take steps to address the concerns in the report in two months."

Despite this plea from ECOWAS leaders, the UN Security Council went ahead and voted for sanctions against Liberia. "Sometimes, regional response does not matter. When one of these big countries want to do something, they will do it."

He said similar fate befell him when he became president of Liberia in 1997. Prior to his election as president, the UN had imposed an arms embargo on Liberia. After his election as president, Taylor said

ECOWAS lifted the arms embargo on Liberia and requested the UN Security Council to do the same. The Security Council, he said, refused this request from ECOWAS.

In 2001, Taylor made another plea for the lifting of the arms embargo when he wrote a letter to the UN giving them the "list of weapons we wanted for self defense purposes and told them to send observers to monitor the use of the said weapons." The UN, he said, refused his appeal at a time when insurgents were attacking his government with support from Guinea.

As a condition to lift sanctions, Taylor said that the UN asked him to address the following concerns: expel all RUF members from Liberia; stop all military and financial support for the RUF; stop the importation of diamonds from Sierra Leone; freeze all RUF assets in Liberia; ground all Liberian aircraft.

Mr. Taylor's testimony continues today.



Concord Times  
Friday, 28 August 2009

# Taylor blasts UN report as travesty of justice

By Alpha Sesay

Charles Taylor said that a 2000 United Nations report charging him with gun running and diamond smuggling made recommendations that not only hurt him, but punished Liberia. This, Mr. Taylor told Special Court for Sierra Leone judges, was a "travesty of justice."

For the past three years, Mr. Taylor has been responding to allegations made against him in a 2000 United Nations Expert

Panel Report that he was involved in fueling the conflict in Sierra Leone through diamond and arms trade with Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels. The UN report reinforces prosecution allegations against Mr. Taylor that he supported RUF rebels through the supply of arms and ammunition in return for diamonds. Mr. Taylor has denied these allegations.

"This report actually is at the heart of this case and because of the way

this report is written, together with the level of disinformation in it, it puts us in a bad position because it talks about diamonds, arms and training bases in Liberia. This is the basis of the case that has not been subject to legal scrutiny," Mr. Taylor said.

Mr. Taylor accused the UN of writing an intelligence report rather than an investigative report against him, telling the judges that "Ian Smillie was not an academic but an

intelligence analyst. This was not a report about going out to an investigation. These are words that you use in an intelligence report. The inclusion of Ian Smillie on the panel contaminated the panel from the onset."

Mr. Taylor accused the UN of ignoring the good work he did to facilitate a peaceful end to the conflict in Sierra Leone.

He said that any fair report would have pointed out that he made significant contributions to take the RUF rebels to the negotiating table. The report, Mr. Taylor said "does not present the whole truth. There is not one mention of my contribution towards peace in Sierra Leone. This report is not fair, it is fickle and should not stand."

## 'Salone not disabled

From page 1

citizens.

"People that are disabled are more

Hon. Jumu observed that passing the convention was just the first step and that more



The Exclusive  
Monday, 31 August 2009

# "Sorious Samura Was Sent to Assassinate Me"

## - Taylor Told Judges at The Hague

Accused Former Liberian President, Charles Taylor has said London based Sierra Leone Journalist, Sorious Samura, the Producer of Cry Freetown, was

*Continued page 2*

## Sorious Samura Was Sent to Assassinate Me

*From front page*

sent to Liberia in 2001 to assassinate him. Mr. Taylor testified to the role of the United States in the brutal killing of the late Liberian President, Samuel Doe. The massacre of over 600 Liberians in 1993 at Carter Camp dominated the Former President's testimonies on Thursday.

"Sorious Samura and his so-called Journalist colleagues entered Liberia with a poisonous camera to assassinate me," Mr. Taylor told the Judges. He said Samura and his colleagues were arrested after a tip off from some members of the international community.

Mr. Taylor also testified to the United States role in the assassination of Former Liberian President, Samuel Doe. A Taylor Government document read in court al-

leged that the United States informed Prince Johnson immediately after President Doe left the Executive Mansion.

Mr. Taylor however said Prince Johnson acted contrary to the Americans instruction concerning Former President Samuel Doe.

Mr. Taylor further testified to the massacre of over 600 internally displaced Liberians at the Carter Camp in Harbel, Margibi County in 1993. He said the Carter Camp massacre planned and executed by members of Armed Forces of Liberia was the initial attempt by Great Britain and the United States to prosecute him.

The Former Liberian Leader told the court that the United States was disappointed when a UN Panel exonerated him and the NPFL. Mr. Taylor

said the civilians massacred at Carter Camp were Combatants and sympathizers of the NPFL.

Mr. Taylor is not being tried for events in Liberia during his days as Rebel Leader or as President.

But the Prosecution told the court that Mr. Taylor operated a criminal empire in Liberia, and later transported that empire to Sierra Leone, Liberia's neighbour.

Mr. Taylor said his administration revoked Former RUF Leader, Sam Bockarie's Liberian Citizenship and expelled him in 2001.

He told the court Sam Bockarie's presence in Liberia had cast a dark cloud on the Liberian nation. Taylor continues his testimonies at his war crimes trial for Sierra Leone sitting at the International Criminal Court in The Hague.



Standard Times  
Monday, 31 August 2009

# TAYLOR OPERATED A CRIMINAL ENTERPRISE "SAYS UNITED NATIONS"

**U**N Panel of Experts Report of December 2000 continues to take center stage in Taylor's trial in The Hague. The UN Panel claimed that Mr. Taylor supported the Sierra Leone Rebels at all levels. *Contd. Page 2*



## TAYLOR OPERATED A CRIMINAL ENTERPRISE

*FROM PAGE 1*

But Mr. Taylor says the UN Panel report is travesty of Justice. The Former Liberian Leader accused the UN Panel of going beyond its mandate. John Kollie has this transcription of the Hague reports for the BBC World Service Trust Taylor Trial Project...The Panel reported to the UN Security Council in 2000 that the accused Former Liberian Leader operated a criminal enterprise with the aim of destabilizing his neighbours.

The UN Panel alleged that Mr. Taylor supported the Sierra Leone rebels with training, weapons, related materials, logistics and safe haven in exchange for diamonds. But Mr. Taylor told the court that the UN Panel report was full of misrepresentation, inconsistencies and selective conclusion. "So for me this report is not fair, I think it's fickle, it does not deal with the full truth" Mr. Taylor said. Mr. Taylor maintained that all the allegations against him were meant to remove him from power by two Western powers, the U.S. and Britain.

He described the ousting of his government as an accident that was waiting to happen. "I was the focus of regime change and they did what they could to change it." Mr. Taylor continued. Mr. Taylor described the Panel report as a political report that lacks legal basis.

He told the court that the mandate of the Panel was to investigate the violation of UN sanction, and not to recommend punitive measures.

The Accused Former Liberian Leader said the Panel and the UN Security Council exceeded their mandates. "The

United Nations Charter, as we have read does not give the security council the right to get involved in the level of activities that they got involved with in Liberia," Mr. Taylor asserted.

"Unprecedented, you are saying to a country, you cannot sell timber, that's not drugs, that's not arms, how do you tell a country that its commodity cannot be sold? Mr. Taylor asked.

This is not proper. They've got nothing to do with commodities and their pricing, I don't understand it, it's not part of the United Nations charter", the former Liberian leader argued. "My government's initial reaction after the Panel report was to withdraw from the Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS Committee of five", Mr. Taylor told the court. Mr. Taylor said his next reaction was to expel all RUF Combatants including Sam Bockarie from Liberia.

Here Judge Teresa Doherty wondered how Sam Bockarie who according to earlier testimony by Mr. Taylor was supposed now be Liberian citizen be expelled?

On this Mr. Taylor responded, "If one is not granted citizenship that is not by reason of birth, what will we then do under the law as I was advised as president, we will withdraw the citizenship and expel him, this is the intent here.

Defence Lawyer, Courtenay Griffiths has indicated that Mr. Taylor's testimonies on direct examination would end with the Former President's activities in 2003. Mr. Taylor is now giving testimonies about his activities in 2000. The former Liberian Leader's testimonies continue.



# African Champion

Friday, 28 August 2009

## Charles Taylor Accuses Sorious Samura

Accused Former Mr. Taylor also testified to the United States role in the assassination of former Liberian President, Samuel Doe. A Taylor Government document read in court alleged that the United States informed Prince Johnson immediately after President Doe left the Executive Mansion. Mr. Taylor however said Prince Johnson acted contrary to the instruction concerning Former President Samuel Doe. Mr. Taylor further testified to the massacre of over 600 internally displaced Liberians at the Carter Camp in Harbel, Margibi County in 1993. He said the Carter Camp massacre planned and executed by members of Armed Forces of Liberia was the initial attempt by Great Britain and the United States to prosecute him. The Former

Liberian Leader told the court that the United States was disappointed when a UN Panel exonerated him and the NPFL. Mr. Taylor said the civilians massacred at Carter Camp were Combatants and sympathizers of the NPFL. Mr. Taylor is not being tried for events in Liberia during his days as Rebel Leader or as President. But the Prosecution told the court that Mr. Taylor operated a criminal empire in Liberia, and later transported that empire to Sierra Leone, Liberia's neighbour. Mr. Taylor said his administration revoked Former RUF Leader, Sam Bockarie's Liberian Citizenship and expelled him in 2001. He told the court Sam Bockarie's presence in Liberia had cast a dark cloud on the Liberian nation. Taylor continues his testimonies at his war crimes trial for Sierra Leone sitting at the International Criminal Court in The Hague.



Former Liberian President Charles Taylor now defend



Sierra Leonean journalist, Sorious Samura arrested with oth



## Cotton Tree News

Friday, 31 August 2009

### **Charles Taylor lashes out at United Nations**

Written by Ndeamoh Mansaray

Former Liberian President Charles Taylor has described the UN Panel of Experts Report of December 2000 as a political report that lacks objectivity and legal basis.

He spoke on Wednesday while continuing to testify as the first witness in his defense before the Special Court for Sierra Leone sitting in The Hague. Mr. Taylor said the mandate of the panel was to investigate violations of UN sanctions and not to recommend punitive measures.

The UN Panel Report accused Mr. Taylor of operating a criminal enterprise with the aim of destabilizing neighbouring countries. The report further alleged that the former Liberian President supported the RUF in Sierra Leone with training and weapons for diamonds. He told the court that his government's initial reaction after the panel report was to withdraw from the ECOWAS Committee of five and expel all RUF Combatants including Sam Bockarie alias Mosquito from Liberia.

He was questioned by one of the Judges as to how Sam Bockarie Mosquito who was then a citizen of Liberia could have been expelled.



## BBC World Service Trust

Thursday, 27 August 2009

### Report From The Hague

#### NEWS ITEM

*Accused Former Liberian President said London based Sierra Leone Journalist, Sorious Samura, the Producer of Cry Freetown, was sent to Liberia in 2001 to assassinate him. Mr. Taylor testified about the role the US played in the brutal killing of the late Liberian President, Samuel Doe, and the massacre of over 600 Liberians at Carter Camp in Liberia. Adolphus Williams reports.*

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WILLIAMS: Mr. Taylor told the court Sorious Samura and his Journalist colleagues entered Liberia with a poisonous video camera to assassinate him.

He said Samura and his colleagues were arrested after a tip-off from some members of the international community. TAYLOR: Here is an attempt to kill me, and let me just mention, I think that the [indistinct] report is available, why those journalists were arrested. In fact, we were told that the camera that was supposed to be used for this so-called documentary where they insisted on interviewing me, contained some [beam] or something that are fired at me would over a period of time lead to cancer. The [tipoff] not to talk to them came from a particular Western intelligence source that said “do not meet that group, the camera is going to be your demise.”

WILLIAMS: He also testified about the U S role in the assassination of former Liberian president Samuel Doe. A Taylor Government document read in court alleged that the United States informed Prince Johnson immediately after President Doe left the Executive Mansion.

Mr. Taylor however said Prince Johnson acted contrary to the Americans’ instruction concerning Samuel Doe. TAYLOR: He received a call that Doe was coming into that area and in fact he was advised not to interfere. And so Johnson even betrayed them. They were trying to protect Doe to get him out. I do not think, I wouldn’t even allege for a minute, that the Americans supported the killing of Doe. No. They had warned Johnson apparently that “President Doe is coming, he’s leaving, do not interfere with that process. He used that information to attack.”

WILLIAMS: Mr. Taylor further testified to the massacre of over 600 internally displaced Liberians at the Kataka Camp in Harbel, Margibi County in 1993.

He said the Kataka Camp massacre, planned and executed by members of Armed Forces of Liberia, was the first attempt by Great Britain and the United States to prosecute him. Mr. Taylor said the United States was disappointed when a UN Panel relieved him and the NPFL.

TAYLOR: The American government was pushing that we want to pursue this to the end. The British government pursued it, and other NGOs, non-governmental organizations, human rights groups, were all saying “whoever is responsible for this must be brought to justice.” And it did not turn out that way because of the intensive investigation done with forensic studies and all of these, once it was said the NPFL was not responsible, and this report goes further to name names, and identified who carried out, who participated in the massacre. No arrests are made, nothing happened [indistinct].

WILLIAMS: He said the civilians massacred at Kataka Camp were combatants and sympathizers of the NPFL. Mr. Taylor is not being tried for events in Liberia during his days as rebel leader or as president. The Prosecution allegation is that, Mr. Taylor operated a criminal empire in Liberia, and later transported that empire to Sierra Leone.

Mr. Taylor said his administration revoked former RUF leader, Sam Bockarie’s Liberian citizenship and expelled him in 2001.

He said Sam Bockarie’s presence in Liberia had cast a dark cloud hanging over Liberia.

## CharlesTaylorTrial.org (The Hague)

Thursday, 27 August 2009

### **Liberia: The International Community Had Its Mind Made Up Against Taylor, He Says**

Alpha Sesay

For almost a decade, the international community has seen Charles Taylor's role as one which fueled Sierra Leone's civil conflict through gun running and drug smuggling, he lamented to Special Court for Sierra Leone judges today. Nothing he did could change this impression and Liberia suffered because of it, Mr. Taylor said.

"They had made up their minds, it really did not matter whatever I did," Mr. Taylor told the judges today when responding to international community allegations against him that he provided support to Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels who waged an 11 years war in Sierra Leone.

Mr. Taylor has been responding to a 2000 United Nations (UN) Expert Panel Report which alleges that he was fueling the conflict in Sierra Leone through an arms-for-diamond trade with the RUF rebels.

Mr. Taylor told the judges that when the UN Expert Panel Report came out in 2000, accusing him of providing support to the RUF rebels, the United Kingdom, through its ambassador Jeremy Greenstock, proposed sanctions against Liberia at the UN Security Council. As a condition to lift the sanctions against Liberia, Ambassador Greenstock said that Liberia "needed to take urgent steps to stop support for the RUF and the trafficking of diamonds and arms to and from Sierra Leone."

ECOWAS leaders, Mr. Taylor said, asked for a delay of the sanctions "so Liberia could take steps to address the concerns in the report in two months."

Despite this plea from ECOWAS leaders, the UN Security Council went ahead and voted for sanctions against Liberia. "Sometimes, regional response does not matter. When one of these big countries want to do something, they will do it."

Mr. Taylor said similar fate befell him when he became president of Liberia in 1997. Prior to his election as president, the UN had imposed an arms embargo on Liberia. After his election as president, Mr. Taylor said ECOWAS lifted the arms embargo on Liberia and requested the UN Security Council to do the same. The Security Council, Mr. Taylor said refused this request from ECOWAS.

In 2001, Mr. Taylor made another plea for the lifting of the arms embargo when he wrote a letter to the UN giving them the "list of weapons we wanted for self defense purposes and told them to send observers to monitor the use of the said weapons." The UN, Mr. Taylor said, refused his appeal at a time when insurgents were attacking his government with support from Guinea.

As a condition to lift sanctions, Mr. Taylor said that the UN asked him to address the following concerns:

1. Expel all RUF members from Liberia
2. Stop all military and financial support for the RUF
3. Stop the importation of diamonds from Sierra Leone
4. Freeze all RUF assets in Liberia



## 5. Ground all Liberian aircraft

To address these issues, Mr. Taylor said that he gave a 72-hour ultimatum to all RUF personnel to leave Liberia. Mr. Taylor said that even RUF commander Sam Bockarie, who had relocated to Liberia with the approval of the international community had to leave for the Ivory Coast with a handful of his followers. The bulk of the followers that Sam Bockarie took with him to Liberia when he left Sierra Leone in 1999 had to stay in Liberia because they had now become Liberian citizens and were part of Mr. Taylor's Anti Terrorist Unit (ATU). He said he therefore saw no need to ask them out of the country. Mr. Taylor said that Sam Bockarie had become a "center of allegations and was bringing harm to the Liberian republic" and so he had no option but to ask him to get out of the country.

On the other conditions raised by the UN, including stopping all support for the RUF, Mr. Taylor said there was no need to respond, as he had not been providing any support for the RUF. He said that he took steps to stop the importation of diamonds from Sierra Leone and even asked for international support to monitor the Sierra Leone-Liberia border but he did not receive any such support. Mr. Taylor also said he took steps to check if RUF members had any assets in Liberia which needed to be frozen but he found none. Mr. Taylor said he further grounded all aircraft that was registered in Liberia.

Mr. Taylor also told the judges that Ambassador Greenstock accused him of setting up a meeting in January 2001 in Ivory Coast between the RUF and an international businessman Lionel Menning. Mr Taylor denied this allegation, saying that "Liberia was not involved in setting up this so called meeting." He said that at the time of this "so called meeting," Lionel Menning was in custody in Italy. "There was no such meeting," he said.

Mr. Taylor is responding to allegations that he had control over RUF rebels in Sierra Leone and that in return for diamonds, he provided arms and ammunition for the rebels which they used to cause mayhem on the people of Sierra Leone. He is presently testifying as a witness in his own defense.

## CharlesTaylorTrial.org (The Hague)

Wednesday, 26 August 2009

### **Liberia: United Nations Panel Is At The Heart Of Case Against Taylor, He Says**

Alpha Sesay

Charles Taylor said that a 2000 United Nations report charging him with gun running and diamond smuggling made recommendations that that not only hurt him, but punished Liberia. This, Mr. Taylor told Special Court for Sierra Leone judges today, was a "travesty of justice."

For the past three days, Mr. Taylor has been responding to allegations made against him in a 2000 United Nations Expert Panel Report that he was involved in fueling the conflict in Sierra Leone through diamond and arms trade with Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels. The UN report reinforces prosecution allegations against Mr. Taylor that he supported RUF rebels through the supply of arms and ammunition in return for diamonds. Mr. Taylor has denied these allegations.

"This report actually is at the heart of this case and because of the way this report is written, together with the level of disinformation in it, it puts us in a bad position because it talks about diamonds, arms and training bases in Liberia. This is the basis of the case that has not been subject to legal scrutiny," Mr. Taylor said.

Mr. Taylor accused the UN of writing an intelligence report rather than an investigative report against him, telling the judges that "Ian Smillie was not an academic but an intelligence analyst. This was not a report about going out to an investigation. These are words that you use in an intelligence report. The inclusion of Ian Smillie on the panel contaminated the panel from the onset."

Mr. Taylor accused the UN of ignoring the good work he did to facilitate a peaceful end to the conflict in Sierra Leone. He said that any fair report would have pointed out that he made significant contributions to take the RUF rebels to the negotiating table. The report, Mr. Taylor said "does not present the whole truth. There is not one mention of my contribution towards peace in Sierra Leone. This report is not fair, it is fickle and should not stand."

Mr. Taylor told the court that when the report was published in 2000, his government in Liberia sent an immediate response to the UN Secretary General in which they tried to put the record straight. "We were furious and we did not hesitate to respond immediately. The government put a team together and we responded," he said.

Mr. Taylor told the judges that the Panel of Experts exceeded their mandate by recommending punitive actions against Liberia. "It was like we are accusers and we are now the judge and jury," Mr. Taylor said about the Panel of Experts.

Among other things, the report recommended that a moratorium be put on all export of diamonds and timber from Liberia. In response to this, Mr. Taylor said that this recommendation was not even necessary as 80-90% of diamonds from Liberia were exported without his government's knowledge. Mr. Taylor said that there were many conflict diamonds that entered the market from countries like Angola and Congo but were certified as coming from Liberia.

Mr. Taylor also denied allegations in the report that he had a training base at Batala in Liberia where RUF rebels were trained. "My government denies that anyone other than Liberian personnel were trained at Batala," he said.

Mr. Taylor dismissed the entire report as a step by Western countries to smear his image and get him out of power. Pointing fingers at the United States, Mr. Taylor said that at some point, US Senator Judd Gregg even asked for his assassination during his presidency.

"I told you I was an accident waiting to happen as part of a regime change policy. This is a travesty of justice. This is all made up, there is no truth in it," Mr. Taylor said.

Mr. Taylor's testimony continues tomorrow.



## UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 28 August 2009

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

### **International Clips on Liberia**

#### **The International Community Had Its Mind Made Up Against Taylor, He Says**

Aug 28, 2009 (CharlesTaylorTrial.org/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- For almost a decade, the international community has seen Charles Taylor's role as one which fueled Sierra Leone's civil conflict through gun running and drug smuggling, he lamented to Special Court for Sierra Leone judges today. Nothing he did could change this impression and Liberia suffered because of it, Mr. Taylor said. "They had made up their minds, it really did not matter whatever I did," Mr. Taylor told the judges today when responding to international community allegations against him that he provided support to Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels who waged an 11 years war in Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor has been responding to a 2000 United Nations (UN) Expert Panel Report which alleges that he was fueling the conflict in Sierra Leone through an arms-for-diamond trade with the RUF rebels. Mr. Taylor told the judges that when the UN Expert Panel Report came out in 2000, accusing him of providing support to the RUF rebels, the United Kingdom, through its ambassador Jeremy Greenstock, proposed sanctions against Liberia at the UN Security Council. As a condition to lift the sanctions against Liberia, Ambassador Greenstock said that Liberia "needed to take urgent steps to stop support for the RUF and the trafficking of diamonds and arms to and from Sierra Leone."

#### **Liberian Man Pleads Guilty To Bank Fraud**

**The Hartford Courant**

August 28, 2009

A Liberian citizen who admitted swindling banks of up to \$200,000 in an identity fraud scheme pleaded guilty Thursday in federal court in Hartford to charges of bank fraud and identity theft. Sam Kennedy, 34, whose last known address is the Bronx, N.Y., was a member of a ring of swindlers who targeted New York banks with branch offices in Connecticut, the U.S. Attorney's office said. Another member of the group, Sasha Haywood, 22, of the Bronx, pleaded guilty to related charges in June. Authorities did not identify additional members. The indictment charging Kennedy, who also is known as Prince, accuses him of stealing Social Security numbers and other information. He is accused of using the stolen information to create fraudulent driver's licenses and tax records and, with those documents, establishing false identities. Kennedy and Haywood are accused of using the false identifies to obtain post office boxes and open bank accounts. Prosecutors said that Kennedy deposited counterfeit checks in the bank accounts and withdrew cash before the banks realized that the checks were phony.

#### **Police recommend charges vs. parents in Liberian case**

**by Michael Ferraresi - Aug. 27, 2009 12:00 AM**

**The Arizona Republic**

Phoenix police investigators are recommending felony child-abuse charges against the parents of an 8-year-old Liberian rape victim, alleging they were responsible for a series of incidents of neglect and abuse. An investigative packet submitted Wednesday to the Maricopa County Attorney's Office detailed several separate incidents - including the July 16 incident in which the girl was held down and gang-raped by four Liberian neighborhood boys at a Maryvale apartment complex. As many as five incidents included police officers making referrals to Arizona Child Protective Services, according to Phoenix police Sgt. Andy Hill. Two of the incidents were in Glendale in 2007, just days apart, Hill said. The earliest incident in the report was in 2005, when the girl was as young as 4 years old. Hill

would not confirm which two adults were targeted in the probe. But a source close to the investigation, who asked to not be identified, confirmed they are the girl's parents. The Republic is not naming the adults, to protect the identity of the child.

## **Peacekeeping - The Country Regains UN Confidence**

Abuja, Aug 28, 2009 (This Day/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- Nigeria ended years of ridicule in the United Nations over ill-equipped troops, with the re-equipment and re-kitting of its troops serving under the Nigerian Contingents in the United Nations African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). Despite commending the outstanding performance of Nigerian troops, the UN had in January 2008, threatened to deactivate the two Nigerian Contingent (NIGCON) battalions serving in UNMIL, as a result of inadequate equipment holdings arising from lack of implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Nigeria signed before the deployment of the troops. The UNMIL headquarters had decried the poor logistics holding of Nigeria, adding that the nation has "failed to meet UN-Nigeria MOU on equipping its troops with the right calibre of military and other peacekeeping equipment."

## **International Clips on West Africa**

### **Local Media – Newspaper**

#### **House Postpones Action on TRC Report to January 2010**

(The News, The Analyst, New Democrat, The Inquirer, Heritage, Liberia Express)

- The House of Representatives has approved a joint resolution to suspend all actions on the final report of the TRC until January next year.
- The House unanimously approved the joint resolution Thursday during its sitting following a report by its Peace and Reconciliation Committee.
- Under the joint resolution, it is stated that no action or conduct should be taken by the Executive or otherwise to any content of the TRC report.
- The warning in the joint resolution is to prevent President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf from submitting a progress report on the implementation of the TRC report.
- Under the TRC Act, President Sirleaf is mandated to submit a progress report to the Legislature on the implementation of the TRC report every three Months.
- The House said the decision to suspend action on the TRC report is intended for the lawmakers to consult their constituencies during its ensuing break.

#### **Deputy Minister Sacked, As Extortion Investigation Continues**

(Heritage, The News, New Democrat National Chronicle, The Parrot)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has sacked the man at the centre of a US\$300,000 attempted extortion claim.
- The President dismissed Aloysius Jappah on Thursday, though investigation is continuing at the Justice Ministry.
- Mr. Jappah is accused of requesting US\$300,000 from the Managing Director of the Liberia Petroleum Refining Company, Mr. Harry Greaves as inducement for members of the committee investigating the LPRC-Zakhem contract.
- Meanwhile, Presidential Press Secretary Cyrus Wleh Badio says the President will also take appropriate actions against any government official found guilty by the investigation.
- Government says President Sirleaf has accepted the report of the Independent Committee on the Zakhem Contract and would implement it while dealing with the allegation of bribery against the committee.

#### **Education Minister Gets New Mandate to Regulate School Fees**

(Heritage, The News Daily Observer, Liberian Express, The Informer, Public Agenda)

- Education Minister Dr. Joseph Korto has been mandated to ensure no private school increase its tuition and other fees above fifteen percent.



- The House ordered Minister Korto to hold dialogue with private school authorities to enforce its mandate and report to the body within one week.
- The House mandated Dr. Korto on Thursday after he appeared before them to comment on what the lawmakers referred to as the collapsed of government's regulation on schools.
- Education Minister differed with the House that government's regulation has collapsed although he said government could not determine tuition of private schools.
- Minister Korto said there was no law to compare private schools to set their tuition fees at certain level.

### **Dead UNMIL American Personnel Body Flown to Ghana for Autopsy**

*(The Inquirer, New Democrat, National Chronicle)*

- Government says the body of the UNMIL personnel who reportedly killed himself would be flown to Ghana for an autopsy.
- Acting Information Minister Cletus Sieh said the autopsy would be conducted on the body of Dale Allen Fosnight to establish the cause of death.
- He said the autopsy would be conducted under the auspices of the United Nations Mission in Liberia, UNMIL.
- Minister Sieh disclosed that three Liberians and a Sierra Leonean believed to have aided Fosnight in the commission of the acts have been arrested.
- He said the children ages of 11 to 15 who were abused by the late UNMIL personnel are currently in the protective custody of the Women and Children Protection Section of the Liberia National Police.

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

### **House Postpones Action on TRC Report to January 2010**

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

### **Deputy Minister Sacked, As Extortion Investigation Continues**

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

### **Five Prison Officials Suspended...For Planning Jailbreak**

- Justice Minister Christiana Tarr has ordered the immediate suspension of five correction officers at the Monrovia Central Prison.
- IN an interview, Minister Tarr said the officers were suspended following credible reports that they were planning to facilitate a jail break on Friday.
- The Attorney General warned that government would not tolerate any one engaging in acts that would endanger public safety.
- Though Minister Tarr failed to release the names of the five correction officers, she said the suspension was to enable them go through the due process of law.

### **Dead UNMIL American Personnel Body Flown to Ghana for Autopsy**

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

### **Education Minister Gets New Mandate to Regulate School Fees**

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

### **Senate Confirms Several Presidential Nominees**

- The Senate has confirmed several Presidential nominees following separate reports by its sub-committees.
- Those confirmed include Liberia's Ambassador to the Kingdom of Belgium and the European Union, Commany Wesseh.
- Others are Nimba County Superintendent Edith Gongloe Weh and Cooper Myers, Development Superintendent of Nimba.
- The Senate also confirmed Sylvester Grigsby as Deputy Foreign Minister for International Cooperation and eleven commissioners of Grand Kru County.

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## UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 27 August 2009

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

### **International Clips on Liberia**

#### **Charles Taylor on trial ...Man of peace, man of war**

Aug 27th 2009 | THE HAGUE From The Economist print edition

AP...IN A small courtroom on the upper floor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) building in The Hague, closed off to the public gallery behind thick glass, Charles Ghankay Taylor has spent the past month giving testimony in his trial for war crimes and crimes against humanity. Indicted on 11 counts in 2003 by the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), a body that combines national and international judicial procedures, the former president of Liberia has been before the court for the past three years. The SCSL is borrowing a courtroom from the ICC (a purely international body set up by the UN) because his trial might have been "an impediment to stability and a threat to the peace" had it been held in the Sierra Leonean capital, Freetown. There, eight others have already been convicted and sentenced in the SCSL's especially constructed building for their part in the appalling civil war of 1991- 2002.

#### **Police recommend charges vs. parents in Liberian case**

**<http://www.azcentral.com/news/articles/2009/08/26/20090826liberia0826-ON.html>**

The Arizona Republic--Phoenix police investigators are recommending felony child-abuse charges against the parents of an 8-year-old Liberian rape victim, alleging they were responsible for a series of incidents of neglect and abuse. An investigative packet submitted Wednesday to the Maricopa County Attorney's Office detailed several separate incidents - including the July 16 incident in which the girl was held down and gang-raped by four Liberian neighborhood boys at a Maryvale apartment complex. As many as five incidents included police officers making referrals to Arizona Child Protective Services, according to Phoenix police Sgt. Andy Hill.

### **International Clips on West Africa**

#### **Sierra Leone**

#### **United Nations Panel Is At The Heart Of Case Against Taylor, He Says**

Aug 27, 2009 (CharlesTaylorTrial.org/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- Charles Taylor said that a 2000 United Nations report charging him with gun running and diamond smuggling made recommendations that that not only hurt him, but punished Liberia. This, Mr. Taylor told Special Court for Sierra Leone judges today, was a "travesty of justice." For the past three days, Mr. Taylor has been responding to allegations made against him in a 2000 United Nations Expert Panel Report that he was involved in fueling the conflict in Sierra Leone through diamond and arms trade with Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels. The UN report reinforces prosecution allegations against Mr. Taylor that he supported RUF rebels through the supply of arms and ammunition in return for diamonds. Mr. Taylor has denied these allegations. "This report actually is at the heart of this case and because of the way this report is written, together with the level of disinformation in it, it puts



us in a bad position because it talks about diamonds, arms and training bases in Liberia. This is the basis of the case that has not been subject to legal scrutiny," Mr. Taylor said.

## **Guinea**

### **Anti-junta demonstrators battle police in Guinea**

CONAKRY, Aug 27, 2009 (AFP) - Youths urging Guinea's junta leader to stand down immediately after elections next year held a demonstration Thursday in Conakry, which led to violent clashes with police and paramilitary gendarmes. A new group calling itself the Dadis Must Go Movement -- in reference to junta chief Captain Moussa Dadis Camara -- marched with placards, burned tyres and threw stones on the Le Prince boulevard leading from the inner suburbs to the city centre. "We want the leader of the putschists to quit power after the elections of January 2010, in which he can't be a candidate," one of the demonstrators told AFP. The protesters demanded that Camara does not stand as a candidate in the elections and also called on his junta colleagues in the National Council for Democracy and Development (CNDD) to abstain in the polls. At least two people were slightly hurt, one by a stone and the other by a riot baton, and police made about a dozen arrests, including that of a local television reporter, according to journalists at the protest.

### **Local Media – Newspaper**

**Two UN Investigators in the Country to Probe Death of Sex Crime Suspect** (Heritage, The Monitor, New Democrat, Daily Observer)

- The United Nations Mission in Liberia has announced the arrival into the Country of two investigators in the wake of the death of its civilian staff.
- In a statement, UNMIL said the investigators are from the UN's regional Office of Internal Oversight in Nairobi, Kenya.
- According to UNMIL, the two investigators would carry-out a full investigation into the death of Dale Allen Fosnight.
- The American National reportedly committed suicide at his residence near the Kailondo Hotel in Sinkor on August 24 was the subject of an investigation into allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse of minors.
- In a statement, UNMIL strongly reiterated that it is the UN policy and practice to promptly investigate every single allegation of misconduct by its staff.

### **President Sirleaf Admits Shortfall in Fight against Corruption**

(The News, The Analyst, The Monitor, The Informer, Heritage, New Democrat)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has described corruption as a dark cloud over her Government shielding the progress she has made since ascending to the presidency.
- Speaking when she commissioned a number of government officials recently confirmed by the senate, President Sirleaf said the fight against corruption was not yielding results primarily because government is yet to implement reports from the General Auditing Commission.
- President Sirleaf said the reports are before the Justice Ministry and assured necessary actions would be taken.
- Those commissioned include Justice Minister Christiana Tah, National Security Minister Victor Helb, Solicitor-General Wilkins Wright and Police Director Marc Amblard.
- Others are Deputy Justice Minister for Economic Affairs Sam Russ, SSS Director Samuel Brisbane and Liberia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Marjon Kamara.

### **President Sirleaf Signs LISCR Agreement**

(The News, The Analyst, Daily Observer)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has signed the 'Public Financial Management Act of 2009' into law.
- An Executive Mansion release says the President also signed into law "An act ratifying the extended and restated agency agreement between the Republic of Liberia and the Liberia International Shipping and Corporate Registry (LISCR)."
- During a signing ceremony Wednesday the President lauded the National Legislature for the passage of both bills.

- President Sirleaf welcomed the Public Financial Management Law of 2009 saying it is a requirement for Liberia to meet the Completion Point under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC) in Liberia's debt relief campaign.

### **Dead Soldier Family Demands Autopsy**

(The Inquirer, Daily Observer)

- The family of Private Welleh Ambrose Swen, an officer of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) is requesting the Ministry of Justice to conduct a comprehensive investigation to authenticate the cause of his death.
- According to family sources, Pvt. Swen reportedly died during the early morning of Tuesday, at the Sandi Ware Military Barracks in Careyburg.
- In a release, the family noted that circumstances surrounding his death are rather strange and requested an autopsy.
- The family said their decision is based on several factors including failure of authorities of the Ministry of National Defense to inform the family on a timely basis.

### **"Hunger Creates Anger"... Labor Minister Says of Unemployment**

(The News, Heritage, National Chronicle, Daily Observer)

- Labor Minister Tiawon Gongloe has warned that it is not in the interest of the Country to have more angry people than happy ones.
- Cllr. Gongloe said unemployment creates hunger and hunger creates anger which does not augur well for post-conflict Liberia.
- He advised the country's mass unemployment rate needed to be reduced in order to fight poverty.
- The Labor Minister made the statement Wednesday when he appeared before the House Committee on Labor to speak on the enforcement of the Liberianization policy.

### **More Appointments in Government**

(The Analyst, The Inquirer)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has made additional appointments in Government.
- An Executive Mansion statement said those appointed are Mr. Jenkins Mendis-Cole, Deputy Minister for Technical Services, Ministry of Public Works; Mr. J. Milton Teahjay, Superintendent, Sinoe County; and Mr. Christmas Lawrence, Acting Mayor, City of Arthington, Montserrado County.
- Others appointed are Mr. Anthony Harmon, Acting Mayor, City of Pleebo, Maryland County and Mr. N. Konmana Nyannah, Township Commissioner, Elizabeth Collinsville Township, Grand Kru County.

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

### **Two UN Investigators in the Country to Probe Death of Sex Crime Suspect**

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

### **President Sirleaf Admits Shortfall in Fight against Corruption**

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

### **"Nullify Committee Report" Says LPRC Managing Director**

- The Managing Director of the Liberia Petroleum Refining Company (LPRC), Harry Greaves has called for the Special Independent committee report on the LPRC-Zakhem contract to be nullified. Mr. Greaves who is yet to see the content of the report believes it is not credible.
- He said there's no way a committee which has been tainted by attempted extortion can produce a credible report.
- Mr. Greaves alleged that one of the committee members, Aloysius Jappah attempted to extort US\$300,000 from him during the process but Mr. Jappah has promised to respond to the allegations tomorrow.
- The LPRC Managing Director also claimed the committee had a preconceived notion that the contract had flaws and that influenced its investigation.



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

## **"Hunger Creates Anger"... Labor Minister Says of Unemployment**

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

#### **Three AFL Officers Being Investigated in Connection with Death of Colleague**

- Reports say three officers of the Armed Forces of Liberia are being interrogated in connection with the use of live bullets that led to the death of a cadet in training.
- Cadet Welleh Ambrose Swen was on Tuesday shot by a colleague while in an ambush training at the Camp Sandi Ware military barracks in Careysburg.
- Defense authorities said the death of the army personnel was an accident but could not make further comment on the matter pending an outcome of the investigations.

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# Cocorioko

Sunday, 30 August 2009

## **Bloody wars in West Africa: Lessons from Liberia**

Written by Lindsay Barret

The Liberian civil war that ended more than five years ago was long considered to have been the major test of West Africa's resilience and unity as a fraternity of nations able to help heal each other's wounds. This perception was not only strengthened by the sacrifices in men and materiel made by the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) but also because as the violent insurgency in Africa's oldest republic spawned a copycat uprising in neighbouring Sierra Leone the sub-regional body did not retreat but grew even more deeply embroiled in the conflict and succeeded eventually in restoring some semblance of order to both beleaguered nations.

In spite of this signal achievement common wisdom in the international media continues to overlook this historic triumph of African diplomacy and conflict resolution and portray the return of democratic governance to both these nations as either UN-led or even British engineered. Nothing could be further from the truth and when the real history of these conflicts and their resolutions is written by the true stakeholders it is to be hoped that somehow the record will be set straight. Until then one could do worse than to get hold of a copy of a highly controversial but nonetheless fundamentally important report that has just been published in Liberia. This is the report of the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) that has been examining the causes and effects of the conflict in Liberia for the past three years.

This report has earned some immediate notoriety because of the fact that one of its blanket recommendations appears to indict the sitting President of the nation Madam Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf for having been one of the financiers of Charles Taylor's insurrection. This issue however tends to distract attention from much more important and fundamental elements of the report. These include

recommendations that tend to strengthen the relevance of the Liberian crisis as a major learning experience for the entire sub-region (and indeed the entire continent) in how to turn a brutal conflict into the basis for a genuine renewal of hope for the people. At the same time as this process was being consolidated Charles Taylor was beginning his defence in The Hague not for his actions in his homeland but for war crimes committed in neighbouring Sierra Leone. A cursory glance at the voluminous (359 pages) report indicates however that Mr. Taylor should in fact be held liable for a plethora of criminal acts of wanton destruction and human rights violations in his own country. The report indicts him with a massive list of evidence and eyewitness reports but none of this is going to be considered as relevant to the case that he is facing in The Hague. This is one of the ironies of modern day diplomacy that has led to the misinterpretation of the Liberian experience as a regional cause and there is a need to rethink the issue.

Charles Taylor's appearance in The Hague has set off alarm bells once again throughout the West African sub-region as his trademark arrogance and grandstanding attracts fickle public attention. There is no gainsaying it that he is a charismatic and even dashing figure and that he possesses an uncanny ability to present himself as a credible reformer and a genuine advocate of human rights. His rhetoric is however not matched either by his record or the evidence that has been unearthed about his actions while in office after having initiated the practice of recruiting child soldiers to execute his insurrection against the Samuel Doe regime.

Here again is the irony: that while the regime that he set out to overthrow was universally regarded as being a brutal and incoherent autocracy the consequence of the Taylor insurrection was to create an even more disastrous and devastating arena for the violation of the rights of the Liberian people than Doe had ever instituted. The spread of the impact of this insurrection to neighbouring Sierra Leone was not only an



indirect consequence of the fall-out of the hostilities in Liberia but it was also a direct extension of the strategic and importunate recruitment of young people for irregular military action that he encouraged. While the brutality that was displayed in Sierra Leone seemed to take on a unique level of distress and depravity the general principles of terror that were deployed in that war had its genesis in the Liberian insurrection.

Charles Taylor has made it clear from the start of his defence that he will challenge this perception of his culpability as the inspirer of the Sierra Leone insurrection on the grounds of him never having been declared as such by the rebels themselves. This line of argument will depend heavily on the short memories of the recorders of West African history for its success.

The one-time President of Sierra Leone Mr. Tejan Kabbah who took over after the insurrection was put down by ECOMOG, with belated support from the British Army, has come out to challenge the Taylor version of events with his own statement. He says he will find it difficult to forgive Mr. Taylor for the destruction of lives and property in his nation. However the two sides are losing sight of an even more fundamental reason why the events that commenced in Liberia in 1990 when Mr. Taylor introduced a new level of public disorder into the West African sub-region should serve as the basis for considering the issue of sub-regional stability in the future.

It was a breakdown of governance and credibility of the state in Liberia that provoked the Taylor insurrection and as such it was indeed a popular movement when it began. In Sierra Leone where the failure of the state was based on incompetence rather than on autocratic cruelty, as was the case in Liberia, the Liberian example served as a catalyst for the challenge that eventually deteriorated into the complete failure of that state. The lesson here is that it is vitally important not only to maintain order within a nation but also among its neighbours.

Ever since the intervention of ECOMOG halted or at least reduced the outright brutalization of the populace by the insurgents and the state forces the Liberian theme has been that cooperation with the rest of the sub-region is an imperative part of government policy. This was underscored further recently when the incumbent President of the ECOWAS Commission Dr. Mohamed ibn Chambas was given one of Liberia's highest national honours the Humane Order of African Redemption in recognition of his stewardship of the eventual return to a truly democratic dispensation in the nation.

Having scaled the hurdle of a hotly contested election and achieved the remarkable feat of returning an impressive victory for Africa's first female President Liberia has emerged from the ashes of war with enormous goodwill. However in Africa goodwill too often descends into distress when the strategic interests of an individual collides with the corporate interests of the state. It will bear watching to see just how the present Liberian government deals with the issue of the recommendations and the findings of the TRC Report.

The fact that the TRC was not just allowed to sit and produce its report but was actually encouraged to make its findings known marks a sea-change over past experiences in governance in Liberia and elsewhere. Certainly if Taylor had not been removed this would not have happened and there is no doubt that the human rights record of the Johnson-Sirleaf Presidency, especially if compared to that of Master Sergeant Doe or Mr. Charles Taylor's, has been an exemplary one so far and has therefore vindicated the people's wishes as reflected in her election. By any measure this should compensate for any retroactive blame that the TRC report has found in her.

## IPS

Saturday, 29 August 2009

### **Khmer Rouge trial enthralled Cambodian public**

The ongoing Khmer Rouge tribunal here of Kaing Guek Eav, known as Comrade Duch, has heard some highly charged testimony in recent weeks, as civil parties have told the court of how the murders of their loved ones ruined their lives.

Robert Carmichael/IPS - On Aug. 17 it was the turn of French national Martine Lefevre, who was married to Cambodian diplomat Ouk Keth, to testify.

At the invitation of the Khmer Rouge government, Ouk Keth returned to Phnom Penh in 1977 to help rebuild the nation, but was immediately arrested, tortured for six months and then killed at the infamous Tuol Sleng, otherwise known as S-21, prison that Duch (pronounced Doik) ran.

Duch is the first senior Khmer Rouge cadre to be tried in the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, or the Khmer Rouge tribunal, which is backed by the United Nations (UN). He faces a life sentence on charges of crimes against humanity and war crimes, as well as homicide and torture.

Her husband's fate unknown to her, Lefevre told the court how she searched for several years for news of her missing husband. In 1980 a family friend in a refugee camp on the Thai-Cambodian border told her he had seen Ouk Keth's name on a list of people murdered at S-21, a former high school that the Khmer Rouge converted into a prison in 1975. Ouk Keth was one of more than 15,000 thought to have been tortured and executed in the Tuol Sleng (which means 'Hill of the Poisonous Tree') facility under Duch's command.

Lefevre returned to France and her two young children.

"I had to tell my children that they must grow up without their daddy," she said breaking down. "My son, who was seven, and my daughter, who was four and a half, asked me every day: 'Have you seen Daddy? Will we see Daddy again?' I had to tell them, no, they will never see their daddy again."

Much of the testimony from the tribunal is harrowing, and the experiences of many Cambodians explain why many do not talk about what happened under the Khmer Rouge regime that ruled the country between 1975 and 1979. Around two million people are thought to have died under one of the most brutal regimes in recent history.

But telling Cambodians about those terrible years is a key part of the remit of the joint U.N.-Cambodian tribunal, said Reach Sambath, the head of the tribunal's public affairs office.

That is a challenge here, where around 85 percent of people live in rural areas, and illiteracy is widespread.

For that reason, the court endorses a number of methods of informing the public, Reach Sambath said. One method that his office runs, for example, is to bus in people from across the country to watch proceedings in the 500-seat auditorium. By mid-August more than 17,000 Cambodians from across the country had attended the trial, he said.

The public affairs office, which operates with limited resources, also produces material that is distributed online and by hand at the court itself. But measured in sheer numbers, the most successful way of letting Cambodians know about the proceedings and workings of the tribunal is through the use of television and radio.

The tribunal's daily proceedings are broadcast live on national television every day. But many people do not have the time to spend four days a week following events, which is where a surprisingly successful television show has come in.

The weekly half-hour TV show, which is mainly funded by the British Embassy, is entirely independent of the tribunal's public affairs office. It is broadcast by national broadcaster Cambodia Television Network in its prime lunchtime slot on Mondays and repeated the following day.

The show's producer, Matthew Robinson of independent production company Khmer Mekong Films, said between two and three million people watch it each week – a sizeable proportion of the South-east Asian country's 15 million population.

The format is straightforward enough. Robinson, an experienced British producer and director who lives in Phnom Penh, says that two presenters and a guest examine the events of the previous week.

Co-presenter Neth Pheaktra said the purpose of the show is to provide a concise summary of Duch's trial, which began on February 17.

"During the 24 minutes of the programme we have the summary, the diary of the Duch trial, and the key points that the witness, the defendant and the judges reveal in the court," Neth Pheaktra said.

According to Robinson a key challenge when devising the format was to create a show that was relatively simple to make but that would appeal to the target audience of mainly rural and often poorly educated Cambodians.

"Then (we mould) them all together in a fairly fast-moving way in language that our audience could understand and be interested in," he explained, "so that over a short period, you have seen the most important things in the proceedings that week."

Ung Chan Sophea, the other presenter, said the show's writers ensure that the scripted wording is as simple as possible, even when trying to convey the complicated legal jargon that characterises legal proceedings.

That is something the live feed, understandably, cannot do.

At a small coffee shop in Phnom Penh, Mao Sophea said he loves the analysis the show provides of the week's proceedings.

"For me this is a good show, and the presenters are excellent too," he said. "But to tell you the truth, I haven't heard too many people talking about it – most of the people I know prefer to watch the all-day broadcasts."

And not everyone is a convert. Lah Yum, seated at another table, hardly watches it "because I am normally asleep during lunchtime when this show is broadcast."

But some of Lah Yum's friends do watch it, and as the trial of Duch heads towards its conclusion, they are interested in more than just the proceedings. They want to see what the process and the verdict will mean to those who lost loved ones under the Khmer Rouge regime:

"What they are waiting to see is how the trial will manage to deliver justice for the families of the victims," he said.

See online: [Khmer Rouge trial website](#)