

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



A woman winnowing rice

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:

Wednesday, 4 February 2009

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

Wednesday, 4 February 2009

Special Court: Prosecution Concludes Testimony in Taylor Trial

The Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Stephen Rapp, said Monday that his team had "achieved what we set out to do" with the presentation of testimony in the trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor in The Hague.

On Friday afternoon, the final witness for the prosecution, a double amputee from Sierra Leone, concluded testimony at the trial in The Hague, Netherlands. He was the 91st in a procession of prosecution witnesses whose testimony began in January 2008, and had filled 205 days, or 41 full weeks, of court sessions.

Prosecutor Rapp praised his trial team, led by Principal Trial Attorney Brenda Hollis, the Special Court judges, and all court personnel for "the great professionalism shown in bringing the trial forward to this milestone."

"It has been demonstrated that it is possible to prosecute a former chief of state in a trial that is fair and efficient, even where the indictment covers wide-ranging crimes.

We have seen international justice conducted in accordance with the highest standards," said Mr. Rapp.

Charles Taylor is charged with 11 counts of War Crimes, Crimes Against Humanity and other violations of International Humanitarian Law committed during the civil war in Sierra Leone from 1996 to 2002. The Prosecution built its case on the strength of the 91 witnesses, including 31 "insider" witnesses who testified to the links between Taylor and the crimes committed in Sierra Leone, and 52 "crime base" witnesses who themselves had seen or suffered these atrocities.

The Prosecutor praised the contribution to justice made by the victim witnesses.

"Brave men, women and children have taken the stand against Charles Taylor and recounted their suffering. They have included amputees, rape victims, former child soldiers, and persons enslaved, robbed, and terrorized. We are awed by their courage and

grateful for their willingness to travel thousands of miles to bear witness."

"The contrast between these victims and the accused could not be more stark," said Rapp.

"This was brought home in particular by the last witness, a man whose left hand was amputated by rebels alleged to have been controlled or aided by Taylor. When his 4-year old son protested the injury to his "papa" and the rebels then threatened the boy with amputation, the witness offered his own right hand to save his son."

"Here we saw a man who sacrificed his hands for the future of his son bearing witness against a man charged with sacrificing the lives, the hands, and the futures of thousands of human beings in pursuit of his own wealth and power," said Rapp. Of the 91 witnesses, only four testified entirely in closed session. All the rest were heard in open court, with some protected by partial security measures, such as voice or facial distortion. All open session testimony has been streamed

worldwide over the internet. There has been daily radio and newspaper coverage in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

The Prosecution's case will not officially close until certain pending motions before the judges are decided and there remains the possibility that further evidence may be presented by the Prosecution depending on these decisions.



former Liberian President Charles Taylor

Independent Observer
Tuesday, 3 February 2009

Prosecution Witness Testimony Ends In The Trial Of Charles Taylor

The Prosecution today concluded witness testimony in the trial for former Liberian President Charles Taylor, on trial before the Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague. Taylor, the first African head of state to be tried by an international tribunal, faces an 11-count indictment for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Since the trial began in January 2008, Prosecutors have called 91 witnesses, including 52 crime base (victim) witnesses, 31 insider (linkage) witnesses, four expert witnesses and 4 witnesses of fact. Sixty-four of the witnesses testified in open session, and 23 testified in open session with protective measures. Four of the witnesses testified in closed session.

The Prosecution is now waiting for the Trial Chamber to take a number of important decisions on outstanding motions before it will be able to conclude its case. It is expected that will happen in the coming month.

Charles Taylor was indicted by the Special Court Prosecutor in March 2003. The indictment remained under seal until June 2003. Two months later, Taylor stepped down as President of Liberia and went into exile



in Nigeria. On 29 March 2006 he was transferred to the Jurisdiction of the Special Court.

Two of the four trials conducted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone are complete, including appeals. A judgment in the trial of three former leaders of the Revolutionary United Front is due shortly.

Awareness Times

Wednesday, 4 February 2009

Cotton Tree Foundation Boosts War Wounded

The Cotton Tree Foundation (CTF) has on Thursday 29th January 2009, handed over the newly constructed War Wounded Secondary School and a Technical Vocational Skills Training Center at the War Wounded Resettlement Camp at Grafton. In his statement, the Commissioner General of the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA), Conton Sesay, thanked CTF for a good work done and called on the beneficiaries to make the most of the facilities which he noted will help improve not only their livelihoods but enhance their self reliance and overall development. Also speaking at the handing over ceremony was the Director of CTF, Michael M. Kamara, who disclosed that the project worth over Three Hundred Million Leones.

UN Radio (New York)

Monday, 2 February 2009

Steven Rapp at the UN

The prosecution of the Special Court for Sierra Leone Steven Rapp said Monday that his team has concluded the presentation of testimony in the trial of former Liberia president Charles Taylor. On Friday the Court in The Hague heard the ninety-first and final witness for the prosecution, a double amputee from Sierra Leone.

Charles Taylor is charged with eleven counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity and other violations of international humanitarian law committed during the civil war in Sierra Leone from 1996 to 2002.

Steven Rapp told UN Radio that the prosecution has attempted to prove to the judges the connections between the atrocities in Sierra Leone and the former Liberian President.

“ Charles Taylor really cant contest that those rebel groups committed those horrible atrocities, the amputations, the murders, the rapes, the sexual slavery, the terrorisation of the civilian population; the case comes down to the links between him and those rebels. In that regard, we’ve presented witnesses to really sort of every chain in the link, and multiple witnesses”

Prosecutor Rapp said his trial team has demonstrated that it is possible to prosecute a former chief of state, in a trial that is fair and efficient even where the indictment covers wide ranging crimes.

International Herald Tribune

Monday, 2 February 2009

Prosecutor sees early 2010 Taylor war crime verdict

By Patrick Worsnip

A verdict in the case of former Liberian President Charles Taylor, accused of war crimes in neighbouring Sierra Leone, is expected early next year, the prosecutor at the U.N.-backed court trying him said on Monday.

Taylor, on trial before a special court in The Hague, has pleaded not guilty to 11 counts including murder, rape, conscripting child soldiers and sexual slavery during the 1996-2002 civil war in the impoverished West African state.

Prosecutor Stephen Rapp told a U.N. news conference that the last of 91 prosecution witnesses gave testimony on Friday in the trial, which began in June 2007.

"We believe that we have accomplished what we set out to do," he said.

Rapp said he expected the defence case to start just after Easter -- mid-April this year. If Taylor, the first former African head of state to stand trial before any court, chooses to testify, as his defence team expects him to do, he will be the first defence witness heard.

Defence testimony was likely to take four to six months, Rapp said.

"We believe that all of the evidence and all of the argument will be concluded in this case this year, and it'll be in the hands of the judges for a decision then on guilt or innocence in the early part of 2010," he said.

More than 250,000 people died in intertwined wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia marked by brutal attacks on civilians, drug-crazed child soldiers and amputations of limbs.

SHAKY START

The Sierra Leone court was set up to try those with the greatest responsibility for war crimes there. Unlike other defendants, Taylor, 61, is being tried in The Hague and not in the Sierra Leone capital Freetown to avoid local unrest.

The last prosecution witness was a man who had both his hands amputated by rebels allegedly controlled or aided by Taylor. When his 4-year-old son protested at the amputation of his father's left hand, the rebels threatened the boy with the same fate and the witness then offered his right hand to save him, Rapp said.

Defence counsel Courtney Griffiths says his client tried to bring peace to Sierra Leone, denying in an interview with Reuters last week that Taylor supplied weapons to the Revolutionary United Front rebels, as alleged.

Taylor's trial got off to a shaky start when he failed to show up and demanded more money to fund his defence, prompting a six-month delay, but has since proceeded more smoothly.

The prosecutor said if Taylor was convicted and appealed, the appeal should be concluded by the end of next year. Britain has offered to imprison Taylor if he receives a jail term from the court, which is barred from passing a death sentence.

Last month, a Miami court sentenced Taylor's son Charles "Chuckie" Taylor Jr., a 31-year-old U.S. citizen, to 97 years in prison for mutilations and executions in Liberia. It was the first U.S. prosecution for torture committed abroad.

Rapp said the judges in The Hague would not be influenced by that verdict.

(Editing by John O'Callaghan)

UN News (New York)

Tuesday, 3 February 2009

Sierra Leone: International Drug Trafficking Poses Biggest Threat, UN Warns

Although Sierra Leone continues to progress in consolidating peace six year after a devastating civil war, more remains to be done to make the achievements irreversible, with international drug trafficking posing a critical threat to stability in the impoverished West African country and the region at large, according to a United Nations report released today.

"Illicit drug trafficking, a new phenomenon with huge potential for disrupting the security and socio-economic stability of the country, and indeed the region, has to be addressed before it takes root and poses even greater dangers," Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon says in the report to the Security Council, noting the increasing use of Sierra Leone for transshipment of drugs from South America to Europe.

"Cocaine trafficking represents the biggest single threat to Sierra Leone, especially since drug trafficking tends to be accompanied by arms and human trafficking, corruption and the subversion of legitimate State institutions," he adds.

It is "critical" that the international community continue to support the country in combating the menace as well as in fighting sea piracy and supporting the overall process of peacebuilding, he stresses. Various UN agencies are currently helping the operations of the national drug interdiction force

The report is the first since the October opening of the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL), the latest in a series of UN missions over the past 10 years that have helped the country get back on its feet from a horrific 10-year war that killed tens of thousands of people and injured countless others, many of whom had their limbs amputated by rebel forces.

In it, Mr. Ban charts the progress made and the challenges that still lie ahead, highlighting the need for all segments of the country, including the Government, political parties and civil society to work together to enhance national cohesion and political reconciliation and the urgency of making greater efforts to meet crucial socio-economic demands, including poor infrastructure and an extremely low revenue base.

He stresses that urgent action is vital to combat youth unemployment, which remains "the most acute concern" in a country where the young constitute the largest proportion of the population, while calling on both the Government and the international community to ensure that the victims of the war receive the care and rehabilitation they need.

On the plus side, he notes that the Government has made the fight against corruption a key element of its reform plan, with the help of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and that infant, child and maternal mortality rates have declined sharply, with

support from the UN World Health Organization (WHO), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA).

Major security institutions have continued to improve, with UNIPSIL providing substantial input in developing appropriate policing standards, while armed forces reform has advanced. The country continued to register a consistent trend towards respect for civil and political rights, and for the first time in its history there appears to be a change of attitude about female genital mutilation, with some traditional chiefs pledging not to subject anyone under 18 to the practice.

Meanwhile, overall economic performance has been mixed with gross domestic product growing at an encouraging 6 per cent in 2008, but economic risks in 2009 include a decline in official development assistance, the high cost of food and fuel, reduction in export revenues due to a slowdown in mining activities, and a decline in remittances from abroad due to the global recession.

Sierra Leone is one of the first two countries, along with Burundi, to receive support from the UN Peacebuilding Commission, established in 2005 to help post-conflict countries avoid slipping back into chaos and to determine the priority areas for rebuilding out of the vast array of challenges they face.

More than 90 per cent of the \$35 million granted to Sierra Leone from the Peacebuilding Fund has been used on 14 projects ranging from anti-corruption, decentralization and local governance to the development of an independent national broadcasting service.

Committee to Protect Journalists

Tuesday, 3 February 2009

www.cpj.org

THE HAGUE: Liberian journalist could be forced to reveal his source

February 3, 2009—A Liberian journalist who testified against ex-President Charles Taylor should not be forced to reveal a confidential source, the Committee to Protect Journalists said today.

The journalist, Hassan Bility, testified on January 14 about a 1997 reporting trip to Sierra Leone in which he documented alleged ties between Liberian government troops and Sierra Leonean rebels. Liberia's ex-President Charles Taylor is being tried by the Special Court for Sierra Leone for crimes against humanity and war crimes based on his alleged sponsorship of the brutal Revolutionary United Front rebels in Sierra Leone.

During his testimony, Bility refused to provide the name of the source that facilitated his reporting trip to Sierra Leone, saying only that he was a Nigerian soldier who was participating in a regional peacekeeping operation. The source, Bility said, remains on active duty in Nigeria.

The presiding justice, Teresa Doherty, said she would consider written submissions from both the defense and the prosecution before making a decision on whether to compel Bility to reveal his source. The defense motion, filed on January 23, calls on the court to make a distinction between "facilitators," who provide access, and "sources," who provide information. Journalistic privilege, the defense argues, should not be extended to those who merely facilitate access.

"Journalists cannot report from war zones without sources who often risk their careers and even their lives to ensure that the media has access," said CPJ Executive Director Joel Simon. "Compelling Hassan Bility to reveal his source could set a dangerous precedent that would complicate access to conflict zones, potentially hindering future reporting."

Bility, the former editor of the Liberian weekly *The Analyst*, was jailed for six months in Liberia in 2002 and accused by the Taylor government of being an "illegal combatant." Bility later alleged that Taylor was present while he was tortured. Under pressure from the U.S. government and press freedom groups, including CPJ, the government released Bility from jail. He then went to Ghana for an operation related to his severe torture, then into exile in the United States before returning to Liberia.

Taylor was forced into exile in Nigeria in 2003. He was arrested in 2006 after the newly elected president of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, requested his extradition to Sierra Leone to face trial. He was later moved to The Hague. The Special Court for Sierra Leone was created by agreement between the government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations.

"We are monitoring developments in the case very carefully," added Simon. "As Hassan Bility's own reporting demonstrates, journalists play a vital role in documenting human rights abuses in conflict zones. A decision to compel Bility to reveal his confidential source could make it that much harder for journalists to play this vital role."

CPJ is a New York-based, independent, nonprofit organization that works to safeguard press freedom worldwide. For more information, visit www.cpj.org.

Voice Of America
Monday, 2 February 2009

Rwandan Genocide Court Upholds Official's Life Sentence

An appeals court has upheld the life sentence given to a former Rwandan official charged with killing Tutsis during the country's 1994 genocide.



AP Photo

Francois Karera in detention in Rwanda before his trial at a traditional gacaca court on genocide and other charges, 09 Aug 2007

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda sentenced Francois Karera to life in prison in December 2007 on charges of genocide and crimes against humanity.

The appeals chamber of the Tanzania-based court upheld that ruling Monday.

Three counts of Karera's earlier conviction were reversed. Others such as ordering genocide and extermination of ethnic Tutsis in Kigali-Rural province, where Karera was regional chief in 1994, were maintained.

The court says Karera will remain in detention in Arusha, Tanzania, pending his transfer to the country where he will serve his sentence. The tribunal did not specify which country.

Some information for this report was provided by AFP.

The Daily Nation (Kenya)

Tuesday, 3 February 2009

Seal the loopholes in law on tribunal

By PATRICK LUMUMBA

THE WAKI REPORT, PREPARED after thorough interaction with victims of post-election violence is unprecedented in the history of post-independence Kenya, hence the mixed reaction and the fear that it has instilled in the political class who have mastered the art – nay the science – of manipulating institutions for personal benefit.

When the report was first published, a number of politicians dismissed it as trash until former UN secretary-general Kofi Annan and the international community stated categorically that the findings of the report had to be implemented in their entirety.

When the international voice came out so eloquently, the report's erstwhile opponents retreated and changed tact, even declaring their support for it.

The concerned politicians quickly used the occasion to assert Kenya's sovereignty and insisted that the recommended trials should be under a local tribunal to immunise the culprits from a possible trial at the International Criminal Court (ICC) governed by the Statute of Rome which Kenya has ratified.

To implement the Waki recommendations domestically, several pieces of legislation are in various stages of enactment. These include the International Crimes Bill, 2008, and the Bill for the Establishment of the Special Tribunal for Kenya and the Constitutional Amendment 2009 to entrench the tribunal in the Constitution.

While one Bill proposes to establish the tribunal and the constitutional amendment to anchor it in the Constitution, the International Crimes Bill 2008 proposes to "domesticate" the Statute of Rome.

In fact, the statute is proposed to be a part of the eventual Act through annexure.

WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO ITS MERITS, the Bill has one major flaw, which in my view is a landmine waiting to explode. The flaw is to be found in Section 77 (4) of the current Constitution which reads:

"No person shall be held guilty of a criminal offence on account of an act or omission that did not, at the time it took place, constitute such an offence, and no penalty shall be imposed for a criminal offence that is severer in degree or description than the maximum penalty that might have been imposed for that offence at the time when it was committed."

I have no doubt that if the tribunal is set up without the above provision being taken care of, culprits will rush to court through constitutional references on the basis of the case of *Okunda v. Republic* decided in 1970 where Kenyan courts declared that the Constitution supersedes all domestic and international law.

As many know, Kenyan courts can sometimes be more executive-minded than the Executive.

Therefore, all the loopholes must be sealed, otherwise the tribunal will be caught up in a complex local legal web never to be rescued.

If Parliament is reluctant to seal the loopholes, there may be justification for a special UN resolution to create a tribunal a la Sierra Leone which will not be subject to domestic law and will be out of reach of conniving local politicians.

Dr Lumumba is a lecturer in law, University of Nairobi.