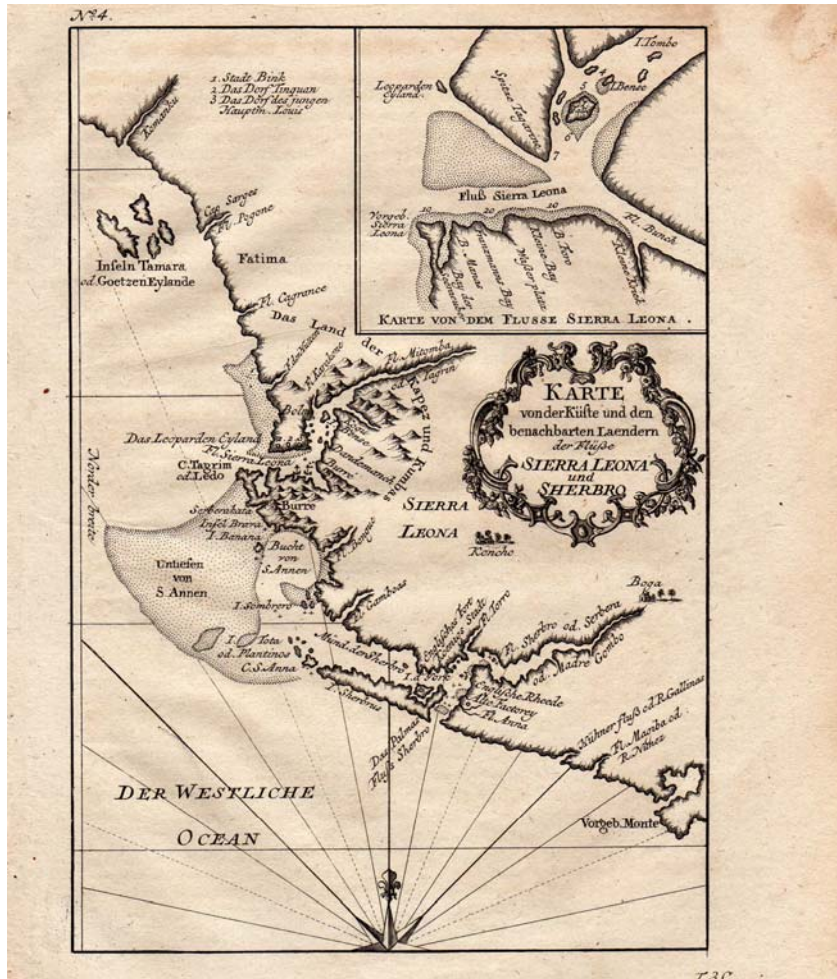


SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE OUTREACH AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE



A 16TH century German map showing Sierra Leone and the Sherbro Estuary.

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:

Thursday, 4 March 2010

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

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Premier News
Thursday, 4 March 2010

Charles Taylor Trial

My statement was misrepresented, witness says, as prosecutors point out inconsistencies in his written statement and oral testimony

Charles Taylor's defense witness, Mr. Yanks Smythe has said that certain aspects of his written statement were misrepresented as prosecutors today pointed out inconsistencies in his written statement to defense lawyers and his oral testimony in court.

Prosecution counsel Nicholas Koumjian today tried to point to Mr. Smythe that certain things about which he has testified in court differ from what he had said to Mr. Taylor's defense lawyers when they obtained a statement from him in June 2009. For example, Mr. Koumjian pointed out that the witness has testified in court that Mr. Taylor's rebel group, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) did not use child soldiers. However, his written statement made to defense lawyers in 2009 differed from this account. In his response, Mr. Smythe said that such inconsistencies were as a result of misrepresentations made of what he had said in his written statement. The witness in his testimony has said that contrary to what prosecution witnesses said in court, there was no group for child soldiers called Small Boys Unit (SBU). He said that the term SBU was created by NPFL commanders who had rescued and were taking care of children abandoned in the frontlines. Mr. Koumjian pointed out that the witness's written statement revealed a different story.

"Mr. Witness, you told the defense last year, didn't you that there was an SBU unit, that these were under-aged, and they were part of the NPFL," Mr. Koumjian put to the witness.

"This is a complete misrepresentation of what I said, I never said that. This was not what I said," the witness responded.

"The defense invented this, is that what you are saying?" Mr. Koumjian again put to the witness.

"I don't know what you mean by they invented but this is not what I said. I said SBU as I stated in my testimony here, yes, this is what I know about SBU," the witness again responded.

As Mr. Koumjian pressed further on what the words "SBUs were under-aged" meant when he said so in his written statement, the witness responded that "I'm saying this is a complete misrepresentation of what I said in my statement. This is not what I said."

Mr. Koumjian also pointed out that while the witness in his testimony in court said that he never fought on the frontlines for the NPFL, his written statement revealed a different story. In the witness's statement, he was quoted as having taken part in an attack during "Operation Octopus," a 1992 attack on Monrovia by NPFL rebels. The witness insisted that he had again been misrepresented by those who obtained his statement.

Asked whether he had taken part “in an NPFL attack from Mount Barkeley during 'Operation Octopus',” the witness responded that “I didn't take part, i was on that side but i was not at the frontline.” When Mr. Koumjian asked him whether he had said he “attacked from Mount Barkeley” as stated in his written statement, the witness again said that “I'm saying i don't know whether the person that wrote this misquoted me but i didn't say i attacked.”

The witness also in his testimony in court had said that the first time he met Mr. Taylor was in 1987 at the Mataba guesthouse in Libya where Mr. Taylor reportedly lived alongside dissident leaders from Gambia and Sierra Leone. Mr. Koumjian pointed out that the witness's written statement revealed that he had met Mr. Taylor at the Libyan revolutionary training camp Tajura, not Mataba.

Reading from the witness's written statement, Mr. Koumjian quoted that “the first time witness met CT [Charles Taylor] was in 1987 in Tajura, not at Mataba meetings.”

“Did you tell the defense that last year?” Mr. Koumjian asked the witness.

Again, the witness said that “this was a misrepresentation of what i said.”

“The person that wrote it is misrepresenting what you said?” Mr. Koumjian asked further.

“This is not what i said, that's what i am saying.” the witness insisted.

“So you are saying that the person who wrote this has told something that isn't true,” the prosecutor again put to the witness.

Mr. Smythe insisted that that was a complete misrepresentation of what he said. “I never saw Mr. Taylor in Tajura,” he said.

While Mr. Smythe in his testimony been rebutting prosecution evidence against Mr. Taylor, prosecutors have also under cross-examination been trying to discredit the witness's testimony. Like defense lawyers did with prosecution witnesses under cross-examination, prosecutors have also been trying to highlight inconsistencies in Mr. Smythe's oral testimony in court and his written statement made to defense lawyers. It will be left with the judges to determine the credibility of the witness and whether his testimony can be relied upon.

As prosecutors concluded the cross-examination of Mr. Smythe today. Mr. Taylor's defense lawyer, Morris Anyah commenced the re-examination of the witness. Under re-examination, Mr. Anyah will seek to clarify some of the issues that have been covered by prosecutors under cross-examination.

Premier News
Thursday, 4 March 2010

NaCSA Supports Reparation Victims

To make war affected victims self reliant, the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA) has decided to provide skills training program for victims who participate in the reparation program.

By Augustine Sankoh

The Sierra Leone Reparations Program originated from the Lome Peace Agreement of 1999 between the Government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations.

This program is largely focused on the rehabilitation of victims through the delivery of social service packages and symbolic measures which acknowledge the harm done to victims in the past and

empower them to rebuild their lives.

Speaking to Premier News in an interview, the Program Officer, Ibrahim S. Kamara, said NaCSA has since that start of implementation of the programme in November 2008, registered 31,665 victims across the country, adding that this figure did not cover all the war affected victims because these are the names of those that registered with NaCSA.

He noted that they are working on strategies

where genuine war affected victims would be identified and added to the number stated above.

Mr. Kamara said among the services NaCSA has been providing are the provision of emergency medical assistance, micro grants for 14,000 adult victims and educational support for over 7,000 children across the country.

He stated that the provision of skills training is the next phase of the programme, which is intended to make victims independent and able to help the country.

He said for those victims seriously affected that they can't work, NaCSA will give the facility to the person close to them.

Charlestaylortrial.org

Wednesday, 3 March 2010

As Witness Concludes His Testimony, He Says Charles Taylor Did Not Take Part In The 1999 Rebel Attack On Sierra Leone's Capital Freetown

By Alpha Sesay

Neither Charles Taylor nor his security forces supported or participated in the Sierra Leonean rebel attack on the country's capital Freetown in 1999, the Special Court for Sierra Leone heard today as Mr. Taylor's first defense witness ended his testimony.

Mr. Yanks' testimony – consistent on this point with Mr. Taylor's own testimony — stands in contrast to that of several prosecution witnesses, who had testified that the former Liberian president provided the support needed for the rebels to attack Freetown. Prosecution witnesses had also testified that both Mr. Taylor and his Special Security Services (SSS) director, Benjamin Yeaten, were in radio contact with one of the top Sierra Leonean rebels, Sam Bockarie, during the attack. In his re-examination today, Mr. Smythe dismissed the allegations as lies, adding that no member of Mr. Taylor's security apparatus travelled to Sierra Leone for the operation.

“To your knowledge, did Benjamin Yeaten travel overseas at any point in time around the first week of January in 1999?” Mr. Taylor's defense counsel, Morris Anyah, asked the witness.

“I'm not aware of him making any trip outside of Liberia at that time,” Mr. Smythe said.

“To your knowledge, were any employees or members of the SSS during that period of time engaged in any fighting in Sierra Leone?” Mr. Anyah asked.

“No, to my knowledge, none of the SSS were involved in any fighting in Sierra Leone,” the witness responded.

Seeking to clarify the issues further, Mr. Anyah asked the witness whether “to your knowledge, were any members of the SSS, in particular Benjamin Yeaten, engaged in any radio communications with persons in Sierra Leone during that period of time?”

Again, Mr. Smythe responded that “to my knowledge, no.”

Mr. Smythe also today told the court that a document bearing the name and signature of Mr. Yeaten did not reflect the correct spelling and signature of the former SSS director's name. In his 2008 testimony for the prosecution, Abu Keita, who reportedly served in Mr. Taylor's government in Liberia, testified to the authenticity of a document titled ‘Operation Orders’ and attested that the document bore Mr. Yeaten's name and signature. During his re-examination today, Mr. Smythe told the court that the name Benjamin had been misspelled and that the signature did not reflect that of Mr. Yeaten's as he knew it. Mr. Anyah sought to clarify the issue.

“In the time you were assistant director for operations when you worked with Benjamin Yeaten, have you ever know him to sign a document containing an incorrect spelling of his name?” Mr. Anyah asked the witness.

In his response, the witness said that “no, I’ve never known him to sign any document containing an incorrect spelling of his name.”

Looking at the document that bore Mr. Yeaten’s name, the witness observed: “that doesn’t look like Benjamin Yeaten’s handwriting.”

As Mr. Smythe concluded his testimony, Mr. Taylor’s defense team called the next witness to testify in defense of the former president. The witness, with pseudonym number DCT-125 will testify as a protected witness because, like some prosecution witnesses, security reasons demanded that his identity not be revealed to the public. The witness testified mostly in private session with the exclusion of the general public. For the short periods that his testimony moved from private session, the witness testified with voice and image distortion measures. Voice and image distortion measures ensure that the witness’s voice and image are not identified by members of the public.

DCT-125’s testimony continues tomorrow.

BBC WORLD SERVICE TRUST
 Wednesday, 3 March 2010

By John Kollie

NEWS ITEM

Defence Witness, Yanks Smythe has ended his testimonies declaring that neither Charles Taylor nor any member of his security participated in the invasion of Freetown, Sierra Leone. Before the end of his re-direct examination, the witness said Former Special Security Service Director, Benjamin Yeaten's signature was forged on a Prosecution document shown to him in court. The Defence second witness has taken the stand with certain protective measures. John Kollie has this transcribed report from the Hague...

Defence Witness, Yanks Smythe has told the Judges that his Former Boss, Charles Taylor played no role in the invasion of Freetown on January 6, 1999. Mr. Smythe denied Prosecution allegation that Charles Taylor contributed arms and fight forces during the invasion of the Sierra Leonean Capital.

The witness further denied that no member of Charles Taylor's security apparatus assisted the invading forces. But Defence Lawyer, Morris Anyah pressed the witness about the Prosecution allegation.

Mr. Smythe also described as incorrect a Prosecution document bearing the name of Former Special Security Service Director, Benjamin Yeaten. The document titled Operation Orders prepared by one Prosecution Witness, Abu Keita who allegedly served in Taylor's government spelled Benjamin differently.

Defence Lawyer, Anyah asked the witness about the authenticity of the spelling of Benjamin Yeaten's name and the accuracy of his signature in the Prosecution document. The Defence second witness took the stand immediately after Mr. Yanks Smythe concluded his testimonies.

For fear of his or her personal security, the Defence second witness is testifying with some protective measures. The witness has only been identified as DCT-125.

Through some electronic manipulation, the voice of the witness is distorted and his or her image is not clear to an identifiable level. Some Prosecution Witnesses used similar protective measures for fear of being identified by the public. The testimonies of Defence Witness, DCT-125 continues on Thursday.

BBC WORLD SERVICE TRUST

United Nations  **Nations Unies**

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary
3 March 2010

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

International Clips on Liberia

From New York to Liberia, Investigative Journalist Greg Palast Tracks Vulture Funds Preying on African Debt

<http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2010/03/03/18639416.php>

By via Democracy Now

Wednesday, March 3, 2010: Over the last five years Britain, the United States, and other countries have written off billions of dollars in loans to the world's poorest countries. But a small group of vulture funds have been trying to divert that money into their own pockets. Investigative journalist Greg Palast traveled to the West African country of Liberia to investigate how vulture funds have been operating there and why Liberia lost a \$20 million dollar case against two vulture funds in a British court. In Britain, lawmakers have voted in favor of a bill to restrict so-called vulture funds—that is, financiers that buy up poor country debts cheaply and then sue for massive profits. The Debt Relief Bill would pave the way for banning private investors from pursuing the world's poorest countries for debts in British courts. Over the last five years the Britain, the United States, and other countries have written off billions of dollars in loans to the world's poorest countries. But a small group of vulture funds have been trying to divert that money into their own pockets. Investigative journalist Greg Palast traveled to the West African country of Liberia to investigate how vulture funds have been operating there and why Liberia lost a \$20 million dollar case against two vulture funds in a British court. He filed this report for the BBC.

Women's Day to be marked with film on Liberia

The Ridgefield Press

<http://www.acorn-online.com/joomla15/theridgefieldpress/news/localnews/51132-womens-day-to-be-marked-with-film-on-liberia.html>

Wednesday, 03 March 2010 05:21: In observance of International Women's Day, the Ridgefield branch of the American Association of University Women in collaboration with the Ridgefield Library and the Ridgefield League of Women Voters will screen the film "Pray the Devil Back to Hell" Monday, March 8, at 7 p.m. at the Ridgefield Library. "Pray the Devil Back to Hell" is the story of a small band of Liberian women who came together in the midst of a bloody civil war, took on the violent warlords and corrupt Charles Taylor regime, and won a long-awaited peace for their shattered country in 2003. "A story of sacrifice, unity and transcendence, Pray the Devil Back to Hell honors the strength and perseverance of the women of Liberia," said Isabel Campos-Anello of AAUW. "Inspiring, uplifting, and most of all motivating, it is a compelling testimony of how grassroots activism can alter the history of nations."

Bilateral trade between China, Liberia up 65% in 2009

http://www.chinaknowledge.com/Newsires/News_Detail.aspx?type=1&NewsID=31783

Mar. 3, 2010 (China Knowledge) - Bilateral trade between China and Liberia was US\$1.89 billion, up 65% in 2009, according to statistics recently released by China Customs. The value of China's exports to Liberia was US\$1.88 billion, up 65.5% year on year. The value of China's imports from Liberia was US\$4 million, down 33.3% year on year. Ships were the primary product exported from

China to Liberia and accounted for 70% of the total export value. The second-most important export product was refined oil, which accounted for 11.1% of the total export value. Other major export products include rice, mechanical and electrical products and textiles. Major products imported from Liberia to China include natural rubber, logs, sawn timber and steel scrap.

International Clips on West Africa

Ivory Coast

Ivory Coast allows France 24 TV station to restart

Wed Mar 3, 2010

ABIDJAN, March 3 (Reuters) - Ivory Coast has lifted the suspension it placed last month on satellite TV news channel France 24, the West African country's National Council for Audiovisual Communication said on Wednesday. "We have lifted the suspension after a meeting yesterday," council (CNCA) President Franck Kouassi said. "France 24 may transmit again." The CNCA scrambled France 24's signal Feb. 22 after it displayed a headline reporting many deaths in a protest against elections delays. At least five people were in fact killed when Ivorian security forces fired live rounds at the protesters in the western city of Gagnoa. At least two other protesters were killed in subsequent demonstrations. At the time, Kouassi said France 24's scrolling headline reporting the deaths was displayed on screen for too long, instead of moving on to another item.

Ivory Coast waste victims get \$1,500 checks

Published: March 3, 2010

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast (AP) — The first victims of a 2006 toxic waste spill in Ivory Coast are receiving their compensation checks after a drawn-out legal battle. Claude Gouhourou, the president of the victim's association, said Wednesday that it would take three weeks to complete the process. Oil-trading company Trafigura Beheer BV paid roughly \$46 million in compensation to London-based law firm Leigh Day Co., which was supposed to distribute the money to the estimated 30,000 victims last fall. But Gouhourou's association sued and won control of the payments. The victims claim they fell sick after waste was offloaded at several sites around Abidjan in 2006. Trafigura has denied legal liability for the incident and has said the waste was dumped by a local company.

Local Media – Newspaper

House, Senate Set Committees To Probe The Lofa Violence

(Liberia Journal, Front Page and New Democrat)

- The Liberian Senate has constituted a six-member Legislative committee to investigate what it referred to as a religious crisis into the violence that erupted in Lofa County during the weekend.
- The Legislative committee which is expected to leave for the county during the weekend is to investigate the root cause of the violence that claimed lives and destroyed properties in Voinjama.
- The six-member committee include Nimba County Senator, Adolphus Dolo, Senator Lahai Lassana of Bomi County, Sinoe County Senator, Mabutu Nyenpan, Senator Abel Massaley of Grand Cape Mount County and Montserrado County Senator, Geraldine Doe-Sheriff.

Lofa County Bar Association Wants Probe in Lofa Violence

(The Analyst, The Inquirer and The News)

- The Lofa County Bar Association has condemned the last weekend's violence in Voinjama Lofa County which left several person dead and thousands of dollars worth of properties destroyed.

- The association in a statement issued in Monrovia called for the setting up without delay a team of inquiry to conduct a full scale investigation into the violence.
- The President of the Lofa Bar, Counsellor Kobo Johnson said during the Liberia National Bar Association's First Quarterly Assembly of 2010 in Voinjama "unpatriotic individuals instead, planned and disrupted the Liberian National Bar Association's efforts to use the Lofa Bar Association to bring rule of law to the county.
- At the same time, Lofa County Senator Sumo Kupee said the mêlée, in which hundreds of people, including women and children, were displaced, had been planned by some individuals.
- Though he did not name the masterminds of the violence he called for an independent probe into the incident.

UNMIL Refutes Media Reports

(In Profile Daily)

- The United Nations Mission in Liberia has refuted reports that its forces protected one party to the violence that erupted in Voinjama, Lofa County.
- UNMIL reaction comes in the wake of media reports that UN troops in the area had assisted in turning over a boy to hooligans who was later discovered dead.
- In an interview however, UNMIL Spokesperson Yasmina Bouziane described the allegations as false, unfounded and misleading.
- She said UNMIL is working according to its mandate and investigations into the violence are ongoing.

US Government Contributes US\$10 To Pilot School Feeding Programme

(The News, The Informer and The Inquirer)

- The United States government says it is contributing US\$10 million to the pilot school feeding programme for Liberia.
- Last year, the programme was funded by the American Howard Buffett Foundation.

Supreme Court To Convene National Judicial Confab March 8

(The Informer)

- The Supreme Court of Liberia says it would convene a four-day National Judicial Conference beginning March 8.
- A release says the conference would be held in the Chambers of the Supreme Court at the Temple of Justice in Monrovia under the theme, "The Judiciary: Cornerstone of Our Democracy."
- Chief Justice Johnnie Lewis has mandated that circuit and specialized court judges be in attendance.
- Also mandated to be in attendance are stipendiary magistrates and one associate magistrate from each magisterial district.

Star Radio *(News monitored today at 09:00 am)*

Prosecution Begins Producing Evidence In The Keith Jubah Murder Trial

- Prosecution will today begin producing evidence in the Keith Jubah murder trial following the completion of jurors' selection Tuesday in Criminal Court 'A'.
- The eleven males and four females make up the fifteen-member jury selected to hear the case.
- The court has also denied another defense motion calling for the dismissal of the indictment.
- In the motion, the defense alleged the indictment is not clear as to charges against the accused.

Supreme Court To Convene National Judicial Confab March 8

(Also reported on Truth FM, Sky FM, and ELBC)

Lawmaker Warns Of "Impeding Political Crisis" If...

- Grand Cape Mount Senator Abel Massalley has warned of an impending political crisis unless crucial electoral bills before the Legislature are enacted.
- Senator Massalley identified the draft legislations as the threshold bill, constitutional amendment act and the constituency delimitation act.
- According to him, if these crucial bills are not enacted on time there could be confusion before the 2011 elections.
- Senator Massalley said it was time for the Legislature and the Executive Branches of government to meet and reach a compromise on these crucial electoral bills.

Media Corporation Turns Down State Security's Request for Video Recording

- Infinity Corporation operator of Power FM and television has turned down a request by state security to make available video recording of a burnt police officer.
- State security wants the recording in order to help investigate how a senior officer of the Police Support Unit was burnt to death allegedly by angry mob.
- In a letter to the entity, state security requested that the video clip be made available or its investigators permitted to view the clip in order to enhance its investigation.
- In response, the Executive Director of Infinity Corporation, Aaron Kollie rejected the request as it is intended to make the entity a party to the investigation.

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

House, Senate Set Committees to Probe The Lofa Violence

(Also reported on Truth FM, Sky FM, and ELBC)

US Government Contributes US\$10 to Pilot School Feeding Programme

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

Governance Commission Wants Government Quash Assistant Minister Position

- The Governance Commission has proposed to President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and the cabinet to quash the position of assistant minister in government.
- The Commission wants the position of assistant minister renamed as director and should be a civil servant position rather than presidential appointee.
- The retreat also proposed the separation of the Ministry of Information from a Bureau of Culture and Tourism.
- According to reports, the cabinet also resolved to create an unhindered access to education for Liberians.

Montserratado Senator Challenges Justice Ministry

- Montserratado Senator Joyce Freeman Sumo has challenged the Justice Ministry to prove that the 52-year old man allegedly shot and killed by a Police Support Unit officer was a criminal.
- The Justice Ministry Sunday reported that the Chief Inspector Amos Tutu acted in self defence after he was allegedly attacked by the suspected criminal while affecting an arrest of a criminal gang Saturday on the capitol Bye-pass.
- But Senator Sumo strongly refuted the claim and said the government was in error to make such pronouncement without an investigation into the matter.
- She said the late Preston Davis served the Liberia National Police in various positions ranging from patrolman to investigator in the burglary division.

Star Radio (Liberia)

Wednesday, 3 March 2010

“Taylor played no role in invasion of Freetown”, says defense witness

By Matthias Daffah

Defense Witness Yanks Smythe has told Judges in The Hague his former boss, Charles Taylor played no role in the invasion of Freetown on January 6, 1999.

Mr. Smythe denied Prosecution allegation that Charles Taylor contributed arms and fighting forces during the invasion of the Sierra Leonean capital, Freetown.

The witness further denied that no member of Charles Taylor’s security apparatus assisted the invading forces.

Mr. Smythe also described as incorrect a Prosecution document bearing the name of Former Special Security Service Director, Benjamin Yeaten.

The document titled: Operation Orders, prepared by one Prosecution Witness, Abu Keita who allegedly served in Taylor’s government spelled Benjamin differently.

The Defense second witness took the stand immediately after Mr. Yanks Smythe concluded his testimonies.

Some Prosecution Witnesses used similar protective measures for fear of being identified by the public.

The testimonies of Defense Witnesses continue on Thursday.

Associated Press

Wednesday, 3 March 2010

Ex-Warlord to run in Liberia's president poll

One of Liberia's most infamous warlords, Johnson says he plans to run for the presidency himself even though a government commission wants him tried for crimes against humanity. Despite being widely known for the gruesome torture and slaying of Samuel K. Doe - a videotape of the event was even sold on Monrovia's streets - Johnson was overwhelmingly elected in 2005 to the Senate by his native Nimba county for a nine-year term.

MONROVIA, Liberia—One of Liberia's most infamous warlords drank beer as he ordered his men to cut off an ousted president's ears 20 years ago. Now a senator, Prince Johnson says he plans to run for the presidency himself even though a government commission wants him tried for crimes against humanity.

Despite being widely known for the gruesome torture and slaying of Samuel K. Doe -- a videotape of the event was even sold on Monrovia's streets -- Johnson was overwhelmingly elected in 2005 to the Senate by his native Nimba county for a nine-year term.

In place of camouflage fatigues, Johnson now wears a business suit with a Liberian flag lapel pin. Johnson said in an interview with The Associated Press that he wants to serve in this West African nation's highest office to cement peace. A civil war that had ravaged the country, turned children into cold-blooded killers and was marked by cannibalism ended only seven years ago.

"We are seeking the presidency to properly address the security situation of this country. The Liberian peace process is still fragile because of insecurity. Armed robberies, etc., are giving our people sleepless nights," Johnson said, hammering a blow on his desk in his Senate office.

But human rights groups are concerned about Johnson's bid for the presidency in the 2011 elections because of his wartime past. Tania Bernath, a Liberia expert for Amnesty International, said Johnson's notorious history may have helped propel him to the Senate.

"There's still a lot of support because there's a lot of fear," she said. "Many may still believe if they don't vote for him, he may cause problems."

In the election, Johnson would face current President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, a Harvard-trained economist who has won respect from the international community since she became Africa's first democratically elected female president in 2005.

But the country's truth and reconciliation commission recommended last year that Johnson and dozens of others should be banned for 30 years from holding public office for their alleged roles in the war. Sirleaf was even on that list. She has acknowledged giving up to \$10,000 while abroad to then rebel leader Charles Taylor's group, but says it was intended for humanitarian services.

The commission also recommended that Johnson, Taylor and six other former warlords be prosecuted for crimes against humanity in Liberia by a court that has yet to be set up. The commission can only recommend action and lacks authority to issue indictments.

Taylor is currently on trial in the Hague, Netherlands, for crimes against humanity for his alleged role in the war in neighboring Sierra Leone.

Liberia's back-to-back civil wars began with the 1989 invasion by Taylor's rebels against the Doe government. Doe himself was no saint. The former army master sergeant came to power in a coup in 1981 in which President William Tolbert Jr. was assassinated. Ousted top officials were tied to stakes on the beach and summarily shot.

In 1990, Doe fell into the hands of Johnson's men, who tortured him as Johnson looked on and a camera rolled. In the AP interview, Johnson said he was sorry that violence was used and that civilians suffered during the conflict, but insisted there was no other way.

"Of course, we're sorry that we had to fight to remove a dictator," Johnson said. "When two elephants fight, the grass suffers," referring to the suffering of noncombatants.

But Johnson was involved in other acts during the country's back-to-back civil wars that lasted until 2003 and killed an estimated 250,000 people in this nation of 3 million. In 1990, Johnson allegedly executed a Liberian relief worker whom he accused of profiteering from rice sales. A photographer at the scene said the crumpled victim briefly lifted his head and asked "Why, why?" before Johnson finished him off.

Despite Johnson's wartime ruthlessness, he remains popular among many for overthrowing Doe and taking a stand against Taylor. Johnson trained in exile under Taylor but later broke away and formed his own group.

"Liberians are people that forgive. He's a Liberian and has the right to run," said Tokay Tomah-Karlie, a top local musician.

Associated Press Writer Carley Petesch in Johannesburg contributed to this report.

Cocorioko

Wednesday, 3 March 2010

ICTJ : Guinea junta -sponsored inquiry into stadium killings not credible

Written by International Center For Transitional Justice (ICTJ)

The report commissioned by Guinea's military junta into the massacre and rape of civilians on September 28, 2009 in the national soccer stadium in Conakry cannot be regarded as credible fact finding, the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) said today. "Guinea has a long history of impunity for state-sponsored human rights violations, and has consistently failed to establish effective investigations into abhorrent abuses committed against the exercise of civil and political rights," said Suliman Baldo, director of ICTJ's Africa Program. "This junta-sponsored investigation is no different."

On September 29, 2009, more than 150 civilians were killed and more than 100 women raped as they protested against Guinea's military junta, styled as the Conseil National pour la Democratie et le Developpement (CNDD). The junta confidentially commissioned US-based consulting firm, CW Group International, to investigate. The consulting firm comprises former Chief Prosecutor at the Special Court for Sierra Leone, David Crane, and the Special Court's former Chief Investigator, Alan White.

The firm's report, known as the Crane Report, was obtained by two media outlets in February and appears to be glaringly inconsistent with the detailed findings of the high level UN inquiry, called the International Commission of Inquiry on the 28 September 2009 events in Guinea. The UN commission found that there was sufficient reason to believe that CNDD leader, Captain Moussa Dadis Camara, was directly responsible for the mass killings and rape of protesters, which it also found to constitute crimes against humanity. The Crane Report reportedly exculpates the junta leadership, and confines its finding of responsibility to the army unit led by Lieutenant Aboubacar Sidiki Diakite Toumba. These findings coincide with the official Guinean military view. While the UN commission found that there were grounds to prosecute crimes against humanity, the Crane Report reportedly found that no such grounds existed. It also omitted any mention of the strong evidence of governmental cover-up found by the UN commission, and also claimed a substantially lower death toll.

"An inquiry paid for by individuals or organizations implicated in the very human rights violations under investigation can never be regarded as independent and impartial," Baldo said. "Truth seeking should confront the past with honesty, integrity, and vigor. Any truth-seeking exercise to examine Guinea's record of human rights abuses must meet these standards to be credible."

[For further background on the Guinea stadium massacre and Guinea's failure to investigate, see the ICTJ press release issued Oct. 9, 2009: <http://www.ictj.org/en/news/press/release/3156.html>]

About ICTJ

The International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) works to redress and prevent the most severe violations of human rights by confronting legacies of mass abuse. ICTJ seeks holistic solutions to promote accountability and create just and peaceful societies. For more information visit www.ictj.org.

Voice of America
Wednesday, 3 March 2010

Guinea Massacre Probe Lacks Credibility, Says Justice Center

By Howard Lesser



Photo: AFP

Guinean junta chief Captain Camara signs pact on 15 Jan 2010 in Ouagadougou during a meeting with interim junta chief General Sekouba Konate and Burkina Faso President Blaise Compaore

ICTJ background on Guinea stadium massacre

A fact-finding report commissioned by Guinea's military junta to study last

September's Conakry soccer stadium massacre has come under fire for having sharp inconsistencies with the findings of a high level U.N. inquiry. The International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ), says that the report into the September 28 killings and raping of civilians protesting against Guinea's military junta failed consistently to account for what it called the "abhorrent abuses committed against the exercise of civil and political rights."



Guinea

NGO's and international agencies estimate that more than 150 civilians were killed during the rampage and more than 100 women were raped. The Conakry regime only confirms that 50 civilians lost their lives.

For its study, the junta hired an American consulting firm headed by former Chief Prosecutor at the Special Court for Sierra Leone David Crane and former Special Court investigator Alan White. But the director of the ICTJ's Truth and Memory program, Eduardo Gonzalez, says the

discrepancies go beyond a distinguished panel of jurists and the junta's dispute over the number of victims involved.

"The numbers are not perhaps the best place to start an inquiry. The important thing to know is whether there is a pattern of criminality that can be confirmed and on the basis of understanding the pattern, then

go to the exact death toll and human costs of these violations. Now, in order to get to that step, you require, first of all, to ask the victims. If the victims do not feel in a situation of security and safety that is appropriate for them to share their stories, then this is not going to be possible,” he said.



Guinea's military leads away protesters during violent government crackdown at a Conakry soccer stadium. 28 Sep 2009

A high level U.N. commission inquiry said it has sufficient grounds for finding coup leader Captain Moussa Dadis Camara directly responsible for the rash of killings and rapes, which it classified as crimes against humanity. On December 3, Captain Camara was wounded by soldiers under the command of his aide, Abubakar Sidike "Toumba" Diakite. Although he recovered from his wounds, Camara has agreed not to return to Guinea, pending that country's holding of democratic elections and its return to civilian rule.

While the junta-commissioned Crane Report assigns culpability for the massacre to the army unit commanded by "Toumba" Diakite, Mr. Gonzalez of the International Center for Transitional Justice contends that greater international scrutiny will uncover evidence that the September 28 violence was planned and organized by authorities above the units that carried it out.



Deputy prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) Fatou Bensouda (L), flanked by Conakry central hospital's director Fatou Sikhe Camara (2ndL), listens to doctors on February 18, 2010 during a visit at Hospital Donka.

“First of all, we are talking here about a crime that was committed using a state apparatus. There are individuals who carried out the massacre, individuals who planned these activities, on top of the direct orders and the direct involvement of Mr. Camara. So if Guinea is going to have a chance at reconstructing its democracy, it has to try to comply with international standards going way beyond what these preliminary investigations have shown,” he argued.

Guinea's current military chief, Brigadier General Sekouba Konate, has agreed to a plan to hold elections by June. The International Center for Transitional Justice, which operates in more than 20 countries on five continents, contends that to make the transition succeed, civil society groups and others in Guinea must be allowed to “confront the past with honesty, integrity and vigor” and conduct a credible probe that assigns accountability for the recent misdeeds that the junta has so far allowed to go unpunished.

The Daily Star (Lebanon)

Wednesday, 3 March 2010

Cassese submits first annual report of STL to UN, Lebanon

By The Daily Star

BEIRUT: President of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) Antonio Cassese submitted the first Tribunal's Annual Report to the UN secretary general and the Lebanese government pursuant to Article 10(2) of the Statute, an STL statement said on Tuesday.

"The Annual Report aims to illustrate the steps taken, the achievements made as well as the hurdles encountered during the STL's first year [March 2009-February 2010]," it said.

"Subject to the consent of the secretary general and the government of Lebanon, the Annual Report will be made public in due course," it added.

Commenting on the STL's first anniversary, Cassese said the aims of the STL "are to render justice, to provide truth and peace of mind for the victims [and] to contribute to reconciliation in Lebanese society."

The Tribunal "further intends to strengthen the culture of accountability," he said.

"We aim at dispensing justice impartially, fairly and free from any political or ideological bias, in full respect for the rights of defendants and victims," he added.

Cassese stressed that the STL is aware of the challenges it has to face. But the Tribunal, he added, is prepared to meet these challenges and successfully complete its mandate.

In other STL-related news, Herman von Hebel was appointed as Acting Registrar. The appointment is effective from 01 March 2010.

Von Hebel will be in charge of the organ of the Tribunal which provides administrative, legal and other support essentials for the successful completion of the institution's mandate.

He has been the STL's Deputy Registrar since 2009. He served as Registrar and Deputy Registrar of the Special Court of Sierra Leone. Before joining the Special Court, he served as Legal Advisor to the Dutch Foreign Affairs Ministry (1991-2000) and as Senior Legal Officer in the Chambers of the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (2001-2006). – The Daily Star

News24.com

Thursday, 4 March 2010

ICC: 20 Kenya suspects named

The Hague - The International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor on Wednesday gave judges 20 names of "senior political and business leaders" he claims backed deadly violence after Kenya's 2007 presidential election, his office said.

The 20 were associated with the Party of National Unity of President Mwai Kibaki and the Orange Democratic Movement led by Raila Odinga, which was then in opposition, prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo's office said in a statement.

The two sides are now in an uneasy power-sharing government.

They "organised, enticed and/or financed attacks against the civilian population on account of their perceived ethnic and/or political affiliation pursuant to or in furtherance of a state and/or organisational policy," it said.

Moreno-Ocampo filed his list after judges asked him last month for more information on his bid to open an investigation into violence that killed 1 500 people after Odinga accused Kibaki of voter fraud.

'The gravest responsibility'

"These senior leaders from both PNU and ODM parties were guided by political objectives to retain or gain power," the prosecutor's statement said.

"They utilised their personal, government, business and tribal networks to commit these crimes.

"They implemented their policy with the involvement of a number of state officers and public and private institutions, such as members of the parliament, senior government officers, the police force and youth gangs."

His confidential list contained the names of those "who appear to bear the gravest responsibility for these crimes," said the statement.

The prosecutor in November asked judges to allow a full-scale probe of the violence in which thousands of people were injured and about 300 000 internally displaced, which he claimed were crimes against humanity.

Kenya has yet to act on the recommendation of its own inquiry that a special tribunal be set up to probe the violence.

The ICC, the world's only permanent independent tribunal to try war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, can only take cases when countries are unwilling or unable to do so.

Tehran Times

Wednesday, 3 March 2010

http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=215261

Israelis are getting away with war crimes

By Gulf News

It is wrong that no one has yet been held accountable for war crimes committed during the brutal fighting in Gaza in January 2009. The alleged war crimes were the subject of a UN commission of inquiry by South African judge Richard Goldstone, which reported in November 2009. Goldstone asked both Israel and Palestine to hold independent enquiries and report back to the UN in three months. That deadline has just passed with no action taken.

The matter could have gone to the UN Security Council, to pass the matter on to the International Criminal Court. Instead, a new UN non-binding resolution with Palestinian support has been passed giving both Israel and Palestine five more months in which to come up with their independent enquiries. This resolution should have been tougher, and it should have been binding on member states.

Israel is frightened that the enquiry will find that the Israeli armed forces used banned weapons, such as white phosphorus. The whole world saw TV footage of its distinctive shells, and Israel is worried that the Goldstone process could end up with a prosecution in the International Criminal Court, where both the serving officers and those responsible for their actions would be tried for crimes against humanity.

The Palestinians need to bring Israel to book for its crimes, but in their desire to build a broad consensus in the UN, the new resolution has allowed another five months to slide past. The victims in Gaza need justice to be served.

Mizzima

Thursday, 4 March 2010

www.mizzima.com/news

Junta must be referred to ICC: Nobel Laureates

Burma's military junta must be brought to justice for crimes against women constituting rapes, sexual violence and trafficking and other physical tortures and harassment, said judges of an international tribunal.

Judges of the tribunal, where 12 Burmese women victims were heard in New York on March 2, along with rights campaigners on Thursday met United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to push for Burmese military junta to be referred to the international Criminal Court for Crimes they have committed against humanity.

A mock-trial on Crimes Against Women of Burma on Tuesday was presided over as judges by Nobel Peace Laureates Shirin Ebadi and Jody Williams - along with human rights experts Dr. Heisoo Shin (Korea) and Professor Vitit Muntarbhorn (Thailand).

The testimonies were organized into three categories - violence against women (rape, sexual violence, trafficking), civil and political violations (torture, arbitrary arrest and detention, harassment), and social, economic and cultural violations (forced labour, portering, relocation).

"They raped us all without a second thought, until we finally escaped their drunken grasps. News spread quickly throughout my village... The shame I brought to my family, my village, was so difficult to bear," one of the 12 victims, said in her testimony to the tribunal.

"I was caned by my teacher in front of the entire school and expelled from school and community for bringing shame on it. Left without a home, a school, friends or a family, I was arrested by the police for "defaming" the soldier who raped me," she added.

The story was one of the stories of rape, sexual violence, torture, forced labour, imprisonment and forced relocation told to the panel formed by the Nobel Women's Initiative – a group created by six Nobel Peace laureates – and the Women's League of Burma (WLB) – a group of 13 Burmese women's organisations.

The panel, in their press release on the findings and conclusions of the tribunal said, violence against women in Burma is often ethnically motivated, particularly on minority groups such as the Karen, who have been brutally persecuted by the military regime.

The findings said, Burma's junta supremo Snr Gen. Than Shwe is the war criminal, who has unleashed terror over the people of Burma for decades. But the international community has failed to hold General Than Shwe and his cronies criminally responsible, and this resulting impunity has given the junta even more license to enhance their power and continue to inflict violence on the people of the country.

With crimes against Burmese women continuing, the recommendation urged on the United Nations Security Council to refer Burma to the International Criminal Court and urged members of the UN to fulfill their obligations to exercise universal jurisdiction and to prosecute through their national tribunals perpetrators of the crimes against the civilian population of Burma, including women.

The conclusions also “Urge the United Nations system to take measures to ensure that the Burmese authorities comply with international human rights standards and international humanitarian law.”

Burma is a member state to international conventions and treaties including the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discriminations Against Women (CEDAW), but has consistently failed to honour the pledges.

The military-ruled Southeast Asian nation has long been the focus of international pressure for detaining opposition leader and Nobel Peace Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi and about 2,000 other political prisoners. The regime, however, has denied having any political prisoners saying none of the over 2,000 prisoners, claimed as political prisoners by Rights Groups, were arrested for their political beliefs but for criminal acts.

The testimonies presented at the tribunal also said that women in remote areas of Burma such as in Karen, Shan and other ethnic minorities dominated regions, are frequently subjected to sexual violence and other forms of rights violations, forcing hundreds of thousands to flee to neighbouring countries including Thailand, China, and India.

According to the Thai-Burma Border Consortium (TBBC), a group providing assistance to Burmese refugees along the Thai-Burmese border, there are currently over 140,000 Burmese refugees in nine camps along the border.

While many flee the country and reside in refugee camps, several others seek better opportunity and remain as migrant workers. According to Thailand, there are over two million Burmese migrants working in various fields.

The panel, in their statement, also urged neighbouring countries and the Southeast Asian Nations to exercise their influence on the Burmese regime to stop the violations.

A complete list of recommendations made by the panel to the Burmese junta, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and the United Nations, of which Burma is a member state, can be viewed at www.nobelwomensinitiative.org.

Mungpi is a special correspondent to Mizzima based in Oklahoma City