

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



“Flora and Fauna”. Photographer: Stephanie Hussey.

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 September 2008

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

Thursday, 4 September 2008

More RUF atrocities recounted in court

By *Mariama Khai Fornah and Joseph Cheeseman in The Hague*

New testimonies have emerged of how rebels of the Revolutionary United Front committed serious atrocities during the ten-year-long civil war in Sierra Leone. Speaking at the trial in The Hague of the former Liberian president Charles Taylor, a new prosecution witness on Monday said that the rebels did not only commit atrocities but were also engaged in the habit of eating human beings.

Led in evidence by prosecution lawyer, Brenda Hollis, the 37th witness, whose identity is protected, said the rebels would rape civilians, kill them and then eat them sometimes.

Asked who did that, the witness replied "Well, the actual person who was involved in that was one "Dawn 18-18 [alias] Kono Bypass". He said that in 1995 the RUF carried out an operation in Yengema in the eastern Kono District, on the orders of their leader, Foday Sankoh, that if they encountered any resistance on the way they should burn down "all the strategic houses" in the town. The witness told the Court that Sankoh used to go to Liberia to collect arms and ammunition from Charles Taylor to attack Sierra Leone.

He had earlier on told the court that he was assigned in Zogoda where Sankoh was based and that they were divided into two groups and headed for two different locations. They one was code-named "Libya", which led to Sorogbema in Pujehun, and "Burkina Faso", which led to Giema in Kailahun District.

He said Kamajors forced those in "Libya" into Liberia and that following Foday Sankoh's arrest in Freetown following the protests in Freetown on 8 May 2000, they went to Liberia with Issa Sesay upon a message Issa had received from Charles Taylor through a satellite phone.

The witness said Charles Taylor ordered that they be reinforced with ammunition so that they would be able to launch an attack on the Kamajors in Sierra Leone. The arms were offloaded, he went on, and some were taken to Koidu in Kono, where Issa was based, while others were stored in Foya.

He told the court that they used the arms to fight against the pro-government Kamajor civil militia group.

Courtesy: BBC World Service Trusts

Awoko

Thursday, 4 September 2008

Why RUF freed UN peacekeepers

By Joseph Cheeseman in The Hague

The 37th Prosecution Witness in the ongoing trial of the former Liberian leader Charles Taylor has told the Special Court in The Hague of the role Mr Taylor allegedly played in the release of hundreds of UN peacekeepers taken hostage by RUF rebels in 2000.

The insider witness, in a distorted voice to disguise his identity, said it was Mr Taylor's desire to become Chairman of ECOWAS that led him to facilitate the release of the UN Peacekeepers.

He said Mr. Taylor invited RUF Commander Issa Sesay to his Executive Mansion in Monrovia and ordered that he release the captured UN Peacekeepers.

Taylor allegedly said that the UN was after him to talk to the RUF to release the peacekeepers and that he had been promised that if he spearheaded the release he would be made chairman of ECOWAS.

The witness quoted the accused of assuring that he would help Issa in the struggle as he helped release the peacekeepers.

Asked by prosecution attorney Brenda Hollis in what way Taylor said he would help Issa in the struggle, the witness said "with anything that he asked for, because he had been promised to become the ECOWAS chairman."

Under direct cross-examination, the witness told the court that on July 26, 2000, in the presence of four African Heads

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Why RUF freed UN peacekeepers

From Page 2

of State, Charles Taylor effected the change of the RUF leadership. The four were President Olusegun Obasango of Nigeria, Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo, Yahya Jammeh of the Gambia and Omar Konare of Mali.

He quoted Mr Taylor as saying that there was a need for the RUF to have a new leader because “Foday Sankoh was too old and that he was too stubborn and he was always being arrested and that he was a lazy leader so that he should be

changed”.

Augustine Gbao and Issa Sesay, continued the witness refused any such change but that Taylor spoke with them to understand with the regional leaders; hence the appointment of Issa Sesay as Interim leader of the RUF.

The witness said when Issa Sesay was appointed leader of the RUF, he made several trips to Monrovia where he presented diamonds to Mr Taylor.

“When he went and handed over the diamonds, Charles Taylor told him that

he shouldn’t be coming frequently with diamonds to him.

He said because the UN Observers and the international community were having eyes on him to see whether he had connections with the RUF,” the witness said.

He therefore looked for an intermediary to be bringing the diamonds to him.

He said Taylor assisted the RUF with arms and ammunition, fuel, money and food.

Courtesy: BBC World Service Trust

Awoko

Thursday, 4 September 2008

Revealed: Pademba Road Prisoners' feed on Le 1,880 per day

By Ophaniel Gooding

The Assistant Director of Prisons Dennis Harman has disclosed that the official amount for three square meals a day for one prisoner at the maximum security Pademba road prisons is one thousand eight hundred and eighty Leones only (Le1,880.)

Mr Harman made this disclosure at the opening ceremony of a two-day training session organized by 'Prison Watch' on the topic: 'Human Rights Approach to Detention Management Looking at the Special Court Model.'

Mr Harman confirmed an annual death rate of 20 prisoners, who died as a result of malnutrition related diseases.

He however played down the number of deaths saying that "if you have over 2,000 as a prison population and just 20 died... [no cause for alarm]"

Mr Harman also disclosed that the prison is grossly understaffed adding that they have instituted strict security measures at the maximum prison because of the sensitive accused persons, the prison now has under its watch.

He furthered, "we have evidence that some counsel [lawyers] tried to traffic [restricted items] to the cocaine accused, but we've warned them."

Mr Harman maintained, "Human rights approach to detention management is a very important phenomenon considering that the aspect of good governance all over the world hinges on how best human rights are upheld and maintained (and) it is for this reason that the United Nations peace keeping office decided to include in one of its various department an area specifically for

correctional duties that is the department for correctional facilities."

Superintendent Nepor S Senesie in his statement explained that the Sierra Leone Police had made great strides in its performance, including the detention management system.

"We have been able to win the confidence of our communities as could be seen from the high incidences of 'Arrest and Brought In cases'.

He disclosed, "we now have a heavy case load because our people trust us to give them justice, fair play and professionalism."

"Our people no longer fear us, but they only have respect for law and order, and that's the reason you see me a senior police officer, carry no arms," he stated.

The Human Rights Commission's representative, Mr Sam Edwards gave a fearless analysis of the deplorable state of detention centers in Sierra Leone.

"As a commission, we strongly believe that the way societies treat those who have been deprived of their liberty is a test to their commitment to human rights," he said.

Prison Watch Programme Coordinator, Mambu Fedika in his statement noted that "a great African statesman once said, 'one can truly know a nation when you are inside a prison. And you can judge a nation best by the treatment meted out to its most vulnerable citizens that is it prisoners."

The Chief of Detention Special Court, Mr Ray Cardinal explained why human rights and detention management and admonished participants to copy the Special Court model

News24

Wednesday, 3 September 2008

TRC: Taylor must testify

Monrovia - The head of Liberia's Truth and Reconciliation Commission said on Tuesday he wants former President Charles Taylor to testify about his role in the country's brutal 14-year conflict.

Chairperson Jerome Verdier said it is important for the commissioners to make "as much effort as possible" to ensure Taylor tells his side of the story. They have sent him several requests to appear.

"It is former President Taylor's prerogative to decide. The choice will be his - whether to speak to the commission and have his version of history documented and recorded for the people of Liberia to hear and read," he said.

If Taylor chooses to appear, he would be following the lead of other rebel leaders who have appeared before the truth commission in recent weeks, agreeing to tell their version of atrocities in an effort to put the past to rest.

Critics have called the process toothless, saying that war criminals should face justice, not a microphone. They point to the fact that most of the perpetrators have denied wrongdoing. Few have shown remorse.

Taylor is viewed by many as the chief architect of Liberia's civil war. He is believed to have received training in Libya before leading the rebel army that invaded the West African nation in 1989.

Assassinations and cannibalism

His men are accused of systematic rape, razing villages, targeted assassinations and cannibalism. He won a much-criticised presidential election in 1997 and led the country for five years, before being forced into exile in 2003 by a different rebel group.

He is now on trial at The Hague where he is accused of war crimes committed by rebels he allegedly supported in Sierra Leone, Liberia's neighbour.

Unlike Liberia, Sierra Leone opted to have a war crimes court as well as a truth commission. Several of the top rebel commanders have been sentenced. The highest profile case - Taylor's - is being held in the Netherlands because of fears that holding his trial in either Liberia or Sierra Leone could destabilise the region.

Verdier said "all options are open" as far as how Taylor would testify. He need not return to Liberia, he said, and could instead testify before the commissioners inside his detention facility in the Netherlands.

BBC World Service Trust

Wednesday, 3 September 2008

The war crimes trial of Charles Taylor has made another big revelation of the mediatory role of some ECOWAS Leaders in the Sierra Leone conflict and its impact on Taylor and the RUF. The insider witness of the prosecution named Former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo as the man who encouraged the relationship between Taylor and the RUF. Joseph Cheeseman reports from The Hague.

CHEESEMAN: The witness, testifying from behind a shield with his voice distorted for security reasons, said at a July 26 meeting held in 2002 in Monrovia, Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo praised the relationship between Charles Taylor and the RUF. The witness said Mr. Obasanjo told the RUF delegation to keep up the relationship with Mr. Taylor.

WITNESS: The Nigerian President, Obasanjo, was the first person to talk to the delegation. He also thought the delegation that had come from the RUF and told them that they were to continue with the good relationship that they had with Charles Taylor. He said because Charles Taylor was doing good things to them. And he continued saying that Charles Taylor was a good leader. If Africa could only get ten of his type, then the unity Africa is fighting for, they would be able to achieve it. And from there Yahya Jammeh spoke.

PROSECUTOR BRENDA HOLLIS: And what did Yahya Jammeh say?

WITNESS: Yahya Jammeh also thanked the RUF delegation, and he said it was Charles Taylor who had invited them to come and talk to the RUF delegation for them to have a new leadership so that they would be able to carry on with the peace process so peace and stability would return to Sierra Leone.

CHEESEMAN: The protected witness said after the meeting with the four African leaders, Taylor sent for Issa Sesay and two other members of the RUF delegation at about midnight and told them not to take advice from what he called British-controlled leaders.

WITNESS: They went and met with Charles Taylor, and Charles Taylor said that Issa should bear in mind that the people who were talking to him before then were British-elected presidents and were remote-controlled by the British and so he should not listen to them. And so any time he would be asked to disarm he should just say "yes" but he should not do it in reality.

HOLLIS: Now you said that Issa should bear in mind that the people who were talking to him before then were "British-elected presidents". Who is that that were being referred to?

WITNESS: He was referring to the four heads of state.

CHEESEMAN: He testified that Charles Taylor gave Issa 15-thousand United States dollars that night and promised continual support to the RUF.

The witness told the Court that after the night meeting with Charles Taylor, Issa Sesay and delegation boarded Taylor's Anti-Terrorist Unit helicopter and flew back to Foya in Lofa County and then rode cars into Sierra Leone. Prosecution lawyer Brenda Hollis was interested in what Issa Sesay may have taken back with him from Monrovia to Sierra Leone.

WITNESS: This time round he took arms and ammunition with him, (a) few AK rifles, (a) few GT rifles, [G3] rounds and RPG rockets. He took with him some bags of rice and about four drums of diesel.

CHEESEMAN: The witness said Issa Sesay stopped taking instruction from Charles Taylor when Taylor advised him not to give in to UN Force Commander Daniel Opande's request to disarm the Small Boy and Girls' Units of the RUF. He said he heard Issa grumbling that Taylor has given peace to Liberia and he was now president but he didn't want Sierra Leone to have peace.

Cocorioko website

Wednesday, 3 September 2008

'Taylor assisted Sierra Leone's rebel army RUF with arms and ammunition, fuel, money and food.'



Written by Joseph Cheeseman

Wednesday, 03 September 2008



The Prosecution 37th witness at the Special Court for Sierra Leone has testified to Charles Taylor's role in the release of some UN Peacekeepers captured by the RUF, the change of the RUF leadership, the supply of arms and ammunition and the safekeeping of the RUF's diamonds and money. BBC World Service Trust Joseph Cheeseman reports from The Hague.

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He said Mr. Taylor invited RUF Commander Issa Sesay to the Executive Mansion in Monrovia and ordered him to release the captured UN Peacekeepers.

WITNESS: Charles Taylor said the United Nations was after him to talk to the RUF to release the UN peacekeepers. So because he had even been promised that if he spearheaded the release of the UN peacekeepers he'd be made the ECOWAS chairman. He discussed that he should help to release the UN peacekeepers that he had with him – that was Issa – and so if Issa released, he will help Issa in the struggle.

BRENDA HOLLIS: In what way Charles Taylor would help Issa in the struggle?

WITNESS: He said he would help him with anything that he asked for, because he had been promised to become the ECOWAS chairman.

CHEESEMAN: The witness testifying on direct examination, said on July 26, 2000, in the presence of four African Heads of State, Charles Taylor effected the change of the RUF leadership.

The witness named President Olusegun Obasango of Nigeria, Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo, Yahya Jammeh of the Gambia and Omar Konare of Mali. The witness said in a meeting held at the Executive Mansion in Monrovia with the four heads of state, Mr. Taylor stated why the RUF leadership should be changed.

WITNESS: Charles Taylor himself said that it was necessary to change the leadership of the RUF because he said Foday Sankoh was too old and that he was too stubborn and he was always being arrested and that he was a lazy leader so that he should be changed. It was necessary that he be changed. Augustine Gbao and Issa emphasised that "no, that should not happen". But Charles Taylor spoke with them to listen to what the leaders were telling them. So they went on and appointed Issa. First he suggested that he would want to take Mosquito back, and Issa said no.

The witness said when Issa Sesay was appointed leader of the RUF, he made several trips to Monrovia where he presented diamonds to Charles Taylor. He testified that after Issa made several trips to Monrovia with diamonds, Mr. Taylor told him to stop bringing diamonds.

WITNESS: When he went and handed over the diamonds, Charles Taylor told him that he shouldn't be coming frequently with diamonds to him. He said because the UN Observers and the international community was having eyes on him to see whether

he had connections with the RUF, and that they were always bringing diamonds to him. He said Issa shouldn't be bringing diamonds to him, but that he was going to try and present somebody to him who would be assisting him, when he got diamonds from him, to get certain items for him.

CHEESEMAN: The witness who continues his direct examination on Tuesday told the court Foday Sankoh or anyone in the RUF did not take back the 5,000 carats of diamonds and the 150-thousand United States Dollars that Charles Taylor kept for the RU . The prosecution 37th witness however, said Taylor assisted the RUF with arms and ammunition, fuel, money and food.

Patriotic Vanguard website

Thursday, 4 September 2008

In the Hague: Court told why RUF freed UN peacekeepers

- Thursday 4 September 2008.

By Joseph Cheeseman and Mariama Khai Fornah in The Hague.



The 37th Prosecution Witness in the ongoing trial of the former Liberian leader Charles Taylor has told the Special Court in The Hague of the role Mr Taylor allegedly played in the release of hundreds of UN peacekeepers taken hostage by RUF rebels in 2000.

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Taylor allegedly said that the UN was after him to talk to the RUF to release the peacekeepers and that he had been promised that if he spearheaded the release he would be made chairman of ECOWAS.

The witness quoted the accused of assuring that he would help Issa in the struggle if he helped release the peacekeepers.

Asked by prosecution attorney Brenda Hollis in what way Taylor said he would help Issa in the struggle, the witness said "with anything that he asked for, because he had been promised to become the ECOWAS chairman."

Under direct cross-examination, the witness told the court that on July 26, 2000, in the presence of four African Heads of State, Charles Taylor effected the change of the RUF leadership. The four were President Olusegun Obasango of Nigeria, Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo, Yahya Jammeh of the Gambia and Omar Konare of Mali. He quoted Mr Taylor as saying that there was a need for the RUF to have a new leader because "Foday Sankoh was too old and that he was too stubborn and he was always being arrested and that he was a lazy leader so that he should be changed".

Augustine Gbao and Issa Sesay, continued the witness refused any such change but that Taylor spoke with them to understand with the regional leaders; hence the appointment of Issa Sesay as Interim leader of the RUF.

The witness said when Issa Sesay was appointed leader of the RUF, he made several trips to Monrovia where he presented diamonds to Mr Taylor.

“When he went and handed over the diamonds, Charles Taylor told him that he shouldn’t be coming frequently with diamonds to him. He said because the UN Observers and the international community were having eyes on him to see whether he had connections with the RUF,” the witness said.

He therefore looked for an intermediary to be bringing the diamonds to him.

He said Taylor assisted the RUF with arms and ammunition, fuel, money and food.

Also at the court, new testimonies have emerged of how rebels of the Revolutionary United Front committed serious atrocities during the ten-year-long civil war in Sierra Leone.

Speaking at the trial in The Hague of the former Liberian president Charles Taylor, a new prosecution witness on Monday said that the rebels did not only commit atrocities but were also engaged in the habit of eating human beings.

Led in evidence by prosecution lawyer, Brenda Hollis, the 37th witness, whose identity is protected, said the rebels would rape civilians, kill them and then eat them sometimes.

Asked who did that, the witness replied “Well, the actual person who was involved in that was one “Dawn 18-18 [alias] Kono Bypass”.

He said that in 1995 the RUF carried out an operation in Yengema in the eastern Kono District, on the orders of their leader, Foday Sankoh, that if they encountered any resistance on the way they should burn down “all the strategic houses” in the town. The witness told the Court that Sankoh used to go to Liberia to collect arms and ammunition from Charles Taylor to attack Sierra Leone.

He had earlier on told the court that he was assigned in Zogoda where Sankoh was based and that they were divided into two groups and headed for two different locations. They one was code-named “Libya”, which led to Sorogbema in Pujehun, and “Burkina Faso”, which led to Giema in Kailahun District.

He said Kamajors forced those in “Libya” into Liberia and that following Foday Sankoh’s arrest in Freetown following the protests in Freetown on 8 May 2000, they went to Liberia with Issa Sesay upon a message Issa had received from Charles Taylor through a satellite phone.

The witness said Charles Taylor ordered that they be reinforced with ammunition so that they would be able to launch an attack on the Kamajors in Sierra Leone. The arms were offloaded, he went on, and some were taken to Koidu in Kono, where Issa was based, while others were stored in Foya.

He told the court that they used the arms to fight against the pro-government Kamajor civil militia group.

Courtesy: BBC World Service Trust.

Photo: Charles Taylor arriving in Sierra Leone, after he was arrested in Nigeria in 2006. He was later transferred to the Hague.

[Note: The photo was not taken in Freetown. It appears to be a press photo taken during Charles Taylor's arrest by UNMIL in Monrovia.]

UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries 2 September 2008

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

Newspaper Summary

Government Sets up Probe Commission for Cyber Scandal - PUL Declines Inclusion

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

- Presidential Press Secretary, Cyrus Badio said government has set up a committee to investigate a "corruption" scandal involving aides of President Sirleaf and the Liberia Ship and Corporate Registry (LISCR).
- Speaking to journalists in Monrovia, Mr. Badio said the committee comprising the National Bar Association, Press Union of Liberia, the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission and two independent investigators would firstly determine the authenticity of the email exchanges linking the President's office to corruption.
- Mr. Badio said the President has assured that whoever is guilty will face the full weight of the law despite their status. Meanwhile, the Press Union of Liberia (PUL) has reacted to its inclusion on the probe commission saying the media would be following and reporting the work of the commission and therefore could not form a part of the investigation.

Catholic Cleric Abhors Establishment of War Crimes Court for Liberia

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

- The media reports that Monsignor Robert Tikpor of the Catholic Church says the establishment of a war crimes court in the Liberia will undermine the peace and security of the country. Speaking at the ongoing Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) historical review hearings, Father Tikpor urged the commission not to recommend the establishment of a war crimes court.
- Father Tikpor believes that such recommendation would not solve the country's problem but rather ensure a return of the country to the path of confusion. He recommended that leaders of the former warring factions be granted amnesty so that the country can remain peaceful.
- Meanwhile, the Catholic Prelate has clarified that his recommendation was personal, a view which is in direct contrast to the position of the Catholic Church in Liberia. The Catholic Church in Liberia officially declared its support for the establishment of a war crimes court for Liberia.

Police Arrest Three Armed Robbers

(Heritage, News, The Informer)

- Police in Monrovia have arrested three alleged armed robbers who broke into the compound of the Christian Evangelistic Ministry on 19th Street in Sinkor, Monrovia.
- Those arrested are Junior Joe, Jallah Massaquoi and Darren Wilkins. According to a release, the incident took place during the weekend and the suspects made away with several items valued at over US\$10,000. The items which include one 2.5kva generator, a 5kva generator, a nokia cell phone; eight pieces of lapper and six yards of lace material have been retrieved. Police say the three suspects have been charged with armed robbery and sent to court for prosecution.

Huge Quantity of Marijuana Seized in Margibi

(Daily Observer)

- The Margibi detachment of the Liberia National Police (LNP) has arrested a 26-year-old man identified by the Police as Roosevelt Sieh alias Rahim with 86 kilograms of marijuana with a street value of over L\$300,000 in Kakata. The Police Commander of the Margibi County, Col. Augustine Brown said the suspect was arrested with the drugs following a tip-off. Col. Brown said during police preliminary investigation, Sieh admitted to being in possession of the narcotics.

President Sirleaf Makes More Appointments in Government

(The Inquirer, Heritage)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has appointed members of the Anti-Corruption Commission of Liberia pending confirmation by the senate. According to an Executive Mansion release issued in Monrovia, those appointed are Cllr. Frances Johnson Morris, Chairperson; Mr. Joseph Acquoi, Vice Chairperson; sman Kanneh, Moulai Reeves, and Madam Sandra Howard-Kendor. Others nominated yesterday are Miata Beysolow, Commerce Minister designate, Cllr. Ceaineh D. Clinton, Circuit Judge, 1st Judicial Circuit Court, Montserrado County; Cllr. Augustine Fayiah, Assistant Minister of Justice for Litigation and Cllr. Aaron B. Kparkillen, Assistant Minister for Taxation, Ministry of Justice.

Radio Summary

Star Radio *(News culled today from website at 8:00 am)*

Press Union Declines Inclusion on Commission to Probe Email Scam linking Presidential Aides

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

More Changes in Government

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

Local Catholic Priest Opposes War Crimes Court For Liberia

Three Financial Experts Debate Draft Act to Place Budget Bureau Under MOF

- Three Liberian financial experts have given their backings to a Draft Act, seeking the merger of the Bureau of the Budget with the Finance Ministry.
- The financial experts made their positions known Monday during a hearing at the Legislature by the House Committee on Ways, Means and Finance.
- Deputy Finance Minister Tarnue Mawolo thought the passage of the Act would improve the technical efficiency and coordination of the budget process.
- Acting Budget Bureau Director, Julius Caesar stressed that with the draft act the financial system of the Country would be developed.
- The Dean of the Business College at the University of Liberia, Professor Jugbe A. Jugbe said he supported the merger but that the Department of Revenues in the Finance Ministry must be concomitantly scrapped in the process.
- An Act of 1953 created the Budget Bureau within the office of the President of Liberia.

Associated Press

Thursday, 4 September 2008

Ex-Khmer Rouge jail seeks UNESCO archive role

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP) -- The United Nations cultural agency said Wednesday that a former Khmer Rouge prison is on its way to becoming part of a global documentary archive for the role it has played in the country's tragic past.

The U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization said it is working on the Cambodian government's application to get the notorious S-21 prison -- now known as Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum -- and its torture archives listed in the agency's Memory of the World program.

"While crimes against humanity have happened elsewhere in the world, nowhere have they reached the extremes of systematic and nationwide suffering by their own regime that were seen in Cambodia," UNESCO said in a statement Wednesday on its Web site.

"The S-21 archive has achieved iconic status internationally, representing the tragedy of the crimes that took place in Cambodia and has become one of the main images of the country," UNESCO said.

Of the 16,000 men, women and children who passed through the S-21 prison gates, only 14 are thought to have survived. An estimated 1.7 million people died as a result of the Khmer Rouge's radical policies from 1975 to 1979. Watch the story of a survivor of the Khmer Rouge genocide »

The museum's archive includes 4,186 confessions -- often falsely given by prisoners through torture -- 6,226 biographies of prisoners, 6,147 photographic prints and negatives of prisoners, demolished buildings, research activities, mass graves and remains of victims, UNESCO said.

The museum, formerly a high school in Cambodia's capital, Phnom Penh, was turned into a torture and interrogation center under the Khmer Rouge. Watch a slideshow on the horrors of the former prison »

The prison was headed by Kaing Guek Eav, also known as Duch, who is currently being detained as he awaits trial by Cambodia's U.N.-assisted genocide tribunal. Watch Duch's court appearance »

Tan Theany, secretary-general of the Cambodian National Commission for UNESCO, said the government submitted an application Friday requesting international status for the museum.

She said the museum and atrocities committed there are "very important for everybody to remember" and for preventing such crimes from occurring again. Watch an ex-inmate of the former prison describe what he endured »

UNESCO said it established the Memory of the World Program in 1992 to respond to the growing awareness of the problems of preservation of, and access to, documentary heritage in various parts of the world.

Its guidelines state that the world's documentary heritage should be preserved, protected and made permanently accessible to the public.