

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



PRESS CLIPPINGS

**Enclosed are clippings of local and international press on the Special Court and related issues obtained by the Outreach and Public Affairs Office
as at:**

Wednesday, 5 August 2009

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

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Total News

Wednesday, 5 August 2009

Taylor says IC Consented to his Contacts with RUF

By Alpha Sesay

THE International Community knew and approved of Charles Taylor's contacts with rebels forces in Sierra Leone during its 11-year conflict because it was seen as a way to help bring peace to the war-torn country, Mr. Taylor told a court in The Hague this week. He also said that he was wrongly accused by the international community of having links with, and control over, Liberian fighters in Sierra Leone during the war.

Mr. Taylor has been accused by the Special Court for Sierra Leone - a court set up by the United Nations and Sierra Leonean government of supporting members of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and their Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) junta counterparts during Sierra Leone's war, by supplying them with arms and ammunition in return for diamonds. He has also been accused of sending Liberian fighters to fight alongside rebel forces in Sierra Leone and that by his actions or inactions, he is responsible for the crimes committed by these rebel forces against the people of Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor has denied all these allegations.

On Monday July 27, 2009, Mr. Taylor told the judges that upon his appointment as head of the Committee of Five - a group set up by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to bring peace to Sierra Leone - he regularly communicated and held meetings with members of the RUF, but all these contacts were done with the consent and participation of ECOWAS and the United Nations.

"Subsequent to my appointment on the Committee of Five, I spoke with the RUF many times. I held meetings with them with the knowledge, consent and acquiescence of ECOWAS. The United Nations knew because for most of my discussions with the RUF, I spoke with Kofi Annan directly or through his Special Representative in Liberia. Everything I did in Sierra Leone was done with knowledge and consent of ECOWAS and I have documentary evidence to prove that," Mr. Taylor said.

Mr. Taylor also denied allegations that he supported the AFRC junta which overthrew the government of President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah in May 1997. He told the judges that, like other West African leaders, he was part of the decision that foreign governments should not recognize the junta government of the AFRC. For this reason, he said that Liberia did not recognize the AFRC junta regime in Sierra Leone. "There was a decision that the junta should not be recognized. My government did not recognize the junta," Mr. Taylor said.

Mr. Taylor denied allegations that he supplied arms and ammunition to the AFRC and RUF while he was president of Liberia. Taylor told judges that all fighting forces in Liberia had been disarmed and the Liberian military was non-existent at this time. "Here is a country just coming out of war with no economy, no army, what am I doing with another country? I did not even have arms for my own security. My protection was in the hands of ECOMOG," Taylor said.

Mr. Taylor also told the judges on Wednesday that as a member of the ECOWAS Committee of Five, he had no option but to support the decision to oust the AFRC junta from power and restore

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disparity in preparing

Taylor says IC Consented to his Contacts with RUF

the democratic government of Ahmed Tejan Kabbah.

“Liberia pledged its support for the ECOWAS decision to restore the government of President Kabbah to power,”

Mr. Taylor told the judges. He said that if Liberia had the military man power, he would have contributed troops to remove the junta from power by force. Mr. Taylor said he, however, wanted any use of such force to be authorized by the United Nations Security Council.

On Thursday July 31, 2009, Mr. Taylor accused the United Nations of making him responsible for the presence of Liberian fighters among rebel forces in Sierra Leone during its 11-year conflict. This misconception, he said, had landed him in jail today.

Mr. Taylor's defence counsel, Courtenay Griffiths, read from a

1998 United Nations Security Council report which stated that over 100 Liberian fighters were identified among rebel forces killed by Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) soldiers after the military intervention that forced the AFRC and RUF junta from power in 1998. The report further read that about 65 Liberian fighters had been arrested and detained at Sierra Leone's maximum security prisons. The information is said to have been provided by Mr. Francis Okello, the then Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in Sierra Leone.

Mr. Taylor denied these allegations and informed the judges that the government of Sierra Leone was aware that the Liberians fighting in Sierra Leone were not sent by him, but were former members of the Liberian army who had escaped to Sierra Leone and had become part of the Special Task Force (STF) a group of

Liberian fighters who reports indicate fought alongside the Sierra Leone military, I supported the AFRC coup of 1997 and became part of the AFRC/RUF junta. Mr. Taylor has denied any associations with the STF.

“We are shocked by this because we knew, the government of Sierra Leone and ECOWAS knew who the Liberians were,” Mr. Taylor said.

Mr. Taylor said that this was the first time that such an allegation had been made against him and it only happened when he asked the UN Security Council to lift the arms embargo that had been imposed on Liberia. “For the first time, this is raised. It is a complete shock to me and my government,” Mr. Taylor said. “If Okello had taken his time to investigate the matter, he would have known that they were not my people. If he had done his homework, he would have known the fact.” He did not do his homework.”

Rwanda Welcomes Special Court Convict

Local
News

Rwanda's Lower Chamber of Parliament has unanimously adopted the bill to allow Special Court convicts serve their remaining jail terms in the Mpanga prison. The bill follows an agreement signed between Rwanda and the court in Freetown.

The UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone convicted rebel leaders, Issa Sesay, Morris Kallon, Augustine Gbao, of crimes against humanity and war crimes in February last year. Sesay was sentenced to 52 years, Kallon to 40 years and Gbao to 25 years.

Rwanda is the only African country to have signed the agreement to take up some of the convicts.

According to the agreement, the prisoners who could be transferred to Rwanda are those whose sentences vary from between 15 years to life imprisonment.

The Court is an independent judicial body set

Rwanda welcome



Issa Sesay Morris Kallon Augustine Gbao

up to try those accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Sierra Leone during the civil war.

While presenting the bill to the lawmakers, Justice Minister, Tharcisse Karugarama said that government has met all the necessary requirements to host the war criminals.

After the passing of the bill, Rwanda is expected to sign a memorandum of Understanding with the Court that would detail how the prisoners will be treated while in detention.

Several lawmakers put the minister to task to guarantee that the prisoners will be trans-

ferred to Rwanda.

"Do we have a guarantee in this deal that these prisoners will be transferred here to serve their sentence since the same UN has deliberately refused to transfer Rwandan criminals to serve their sentence here?" Juvenal Nkusi asked.

In his response, Karugarama said; "The guarantee is what we have put in place to meet standards and surely we have gone far beyond the international standards in terms of prisons with high facilities and security."

Juliana Kantengwa expressed her worries over what she termed as

es Special Court convicts

negative forces that are against the transfers.

"Won't these people still call for the halt of transferring the Sierra Leone convicts to Rwanda?" Kantengwa questioned Karugarama.

Desire Nkusi immediately intervened ques-

tioning if the transfer of Sierra Leone prisoners is not a trap aimed at assessing Rwanda's preparedness in hosting international prisoners.

Karugarama assured members of parliament that it will instead be an opportunity for the country to exhibit its

preparedness.

The passing of the bill comes after a delegation from the special court visited Rwandan prisons to assess the country's preparedness in hosting the prisoners. Rwanda has put in place a transit centre at Kigali Central Prison.

Charles Taylor continues his marathon testimony

Written by Ndeamoh Mansaray



The Charles Taylor trial continues at the Special Court for Sierra Leone sitting in The Hague. Mr. Taylor for the third week running is testifying as the first witness in his defense. On Monday, the former Liberian President told the court that he first met with Sam Bockarie (Mosquito) in September of 1998. He said that was when he was invited to Liberia as a result of heavy fighting in Sierra Leone.

He said every discussion he had with Mosquito was centred on the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and how they could promote the November 1996 agreement in Ivory Coast. He said former President Kabbah knew about Mosquito's visit to Liberia, noting that he was very supportive about it because he said they all saw it as an opportunity to stop the violence and cessation of hostilities in Sierra Leone.

Mr. Taylor agreed that he gave Mosquito money as prosecution witnesses testified before the court, but denied of having promoted Sam Bockarie to a five Star General. He also denied sending fighters and trucks loaded with arms and ammunition to Sierra Leone after Mosquito's visit. He said that would have been impossible because ECOMOG was in charge of security in Liberia. Asked about his alleged support for an RUF operation code named 'Fita Fata' in Kono, Eastern Sierra Leone, Mr. Taylor told the court that he knew nothing about it and it made no sense to him.

BBC World Service Trust

Tuesday, 4 August 2009

NEWS ITEM

04/08/09

A sudden adjournment hit the August 4 Tuesday session of the war crimes trial of accused former Liberian President Charles Taylor in The Hague. The three regular Judges and the Prosecution Lawyers were present in court, but Mr. Taylor's Lawyer, Courtenay Griffiths, who is conducting the direct examination of Mr. Taylor was absent. Adolphus Williams has more.

ADVERA: All rise...please be seated. The Special Court for Sierra Leone is sitting in an open session in the case of The Prosecutor vs. Charles Ghankay Taylor, Justice Richard Lussick presiding.

WILLIAMS: Immediately after Tuesday's session started, Morris Anyah, the only Defence lawyer present in court, announced that Courtenay Griffiths would not be in court.

Mr. Anyah told the court he received a message from Mr. Griffiths late Monday Evening.

ANYAH: Mr. Griffiths sent me a text message late last evening, and I did not read it until this morning. And it simply said that he had sustained some food poisoning. This morning when I saw the text I also noticed a voicemail message from Mr. Griffiths. That came in this morning, and in the voicemail message he said that he was unable to be here today and that he was ill. I then telephoned him and we spoke, and he sounded terribly ill. He is, as we now know, unable to be here, and he suggested that he might be able to be here tomorrow, and so we have no recourse but to ask respectfully for an adjournment for one day, from today until tomorrow, at which time we'll better placed to advise the Chamber about the health status of Mr. Griffiths.

WILLIAMS: Presiding Judge Richard Lussick threw a statement over to the Prosecution to news that Defence Lawyer Courtenay Griffiths was sick and Morris Anyah's request for an adjournment. Lead Prosecution lawyer, Brenda Hollis.

HOLLIS: ...Mr. President, only to say that we would support the application.

WILLIAMS: Justice Richard Lussick announced the decision of the Court about the application for adjournment.

JUSTICE LUSSICK: We're sorry to hear that Mr. Griffiths is not well, and that he has the Trial Chamber's best wishes for a speedy recovery. We don't see any other alternative but to adjourn the case until tomorrow morning. We'll adjourn until 9:30 a.m. tomorrow morning.

WILLIAMS: News of the illness of Defence lawyer, Courtenay Griffiths and Tuesday's adjournment is likely to affect the duration of the Accused on the witness stand.

Despite Courtenay Griffiths' absence, Mr Taylor was present in court. The flamboyant former Liberian president continues to appear in court like he's still a president.

He never wears one suit twice a week since he started his testimonies. Every morning he's sandwiched to court by two security officers something reminiscent of his golden days as President of Liberia.

AW, BBCWST, n the Hague

Tuesday, 4 August 2009

Taylor Dismisses Allegations Of His Hidden Wealth As Lies

By Alpha Sesay

Charles Taylor today denied stashing away huge amounts of money, allegedly earned through through illicit diamond trading with Sierra Leonean rebels during the country's 11-year conflict, in secret bank accounts around the world – and challenged his accusers to prove any such accounts existed.

“I challenge the prosecutor to bring any evidence of a bank account that I have — they know it's a lie but they keep repeating it,” Mr. Taylor said during his testimony at the Special Court for Sierra Leone today. “I ask anyone on this planet, if you know of any account that I opened or if you know anyone who was acting in my interest, you are obliged to come forward and say it.”

“What bank account has the UN found out for me?” Mr. Taylor asked. “Nobody ever brings factual evidence but it is repeated, repeated and repeated, and you can never put things straight.”

The Special Court for Sierra Leone's prosecution team has alleged that Taylor benefited from diamonds mined by Sierra Leonean rebels, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), during the country's civil war, and that Mr. Taylor hid the proceeds in secret bank accounts. The prosecutor has been working with the UN Sanctions Committee to recover any moneys and assets, if at all they exist.

Yet evidence disproving these allegations might take a long time to emerge, Mr. Taylor told the court. “I may be dead and gone before somebody will say Taylor did not have any money or assets all over the world,” he said.

Mr. Taylor also denied allegations that he gave support to the RUF to attack the diamonds fields in Kono and that he helped the rebels plan the January 1999 attack on Sierra Leone's capital Freetown. Asked by his defence counsel Courtenay Griffiths whether he had anything to gain from these attacks, Mr. Taylor said “absolutely nothing. The allegation is false. I had everything to lose in the process if anything like that happened.”

Speaking about the January 1999 attack on Freetown, Mr. Taylor told the judges that “I was shocked and angry as anybody else to hear of that attack.”

Mr. Taylor, however, did admit that in September 1998, he invited RUF commander Sam Bockarie to Liberia and gave him some amount of money. He explained that such invitation was purely meant to convince him to end the war in Sierra Leone and that the money given to Bockarie was purely as a gift, not for the purchase of arms and ammunition.

“When you come, presidents will, what they do, we do envelopes, may be one or two thousand dollars, we give it to you for you and your boys to go and have a good time, may be buy some new jeans, some sneakers, that kind of thing,” Mr. Taylor told the court.

Asked by his defense counsel whether the money was for the purchase of arms and ammunition, Mr. Taylor responded with an emphatic “no.” Mr. Taylor also denied giving any other gifts such as satellite phones or vehicles to Sam Bockarie or promoting Bockarie to the rank of Brigadier General.

“There is no such thing as Taylor having money, assets or transferring arms and ammunition to Sierra Leone. They have reduced me to a petty thief or petty thug,” Mr. Taylor said.

Mr. Taylor is being tried on allegations of his support for the RUF rebels in Sierra Leone. The prosecution has alleged that he supplied arms and ammunition to RUF rebels in return for Sierra Leone's diamonds, that the rebel commanders in Sierra Leone were directly answerable to him and that by his acts or omissions, he is responsible for the crimes committed by the rebels in Sierra Leone during the country's conflict. Mr. Taylor has denied all these allegations.

The Inquirer

Tuesday, 4 August 2009

Charles Taylor on September 19 Incident



Former President of Liberia Charles G. Taylor

Former President Mr. Taylor said he believes the September 19 disturbance at the United States Embassy in Monrovia was the beginning of his trouble. "My life changed since that incident," the Former Liberian President declared to the Judges yesterday. According to John Kollie of the BBC Trust, yesterday's morning session of Charles Taylor's trial in The Hague was devoted to a Monrovia fracas which led to the killing of four members of Roosevelt Johnson ULIMO-J faction and the wounding of two U.S Embassy officials.

Mr. Taylor told the court that the incident led to what he described as "gun boat diplomacy between Liberia and the U.S." The Former Liberian President accused the United States of deliberately opening its Embassy in Monrovia to Former War-Lord Roosevelt Johnson and his dissident group. Mr. Taylor alleged that Roosevelt Johnson created a hostile parallel state which terrorized peaceful civilians on Camp Johnson in Monrovia. Mr. Taylor said to restore peace to Camp Johnson Road, Government Forces expelled Mr. Johnson and his rebel fighters.

He testified that Mr. Johnson and his men predominately from the Krahn Ethnic group took refuge in front of the U.S Embassy Compound where shooting broke out. Mr. Taylor said Liberian government security forces were not involved in the shooting at the U.S Embassy. The Indicted Former Liberian Leader told the court that the U.S responded by deploying a gun boat in Liberia's territorial waters with calls apology for what the Americans claimed was a violation of diplomatic privilege enjoyed by the U.S. embassy near Monrovia.

Mr. Taylor in his Monday August 3, testimony also responded to allegations by prosecution witnesses that Former RUF Commander Sam Bockarie took direct instruction from Mr. Charles Taylor to fight the war in Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor told the court that he invited Sam Bockarie to Monrovia in September of 1998 to persuade him to end the war in Sierra Leone. Former president Charles Taylor continues his testimony at the UN backed Special Court for Sierra sitting at the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 04 August 2009

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

International Clips on Liberia

Country Joins Liberia in Independence Celebration

Freetown, Aug 04, 2009 (Concord Times/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- Sierra Leone's Ambassador to Liberia and La Cote d' Ivoire, H.E. Rev. Mrs. Marie Jilo Barnett amidst diplomatic corps joined President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf in this year's commemoration of the 162nd Independence Day Anniversary of Liberia early this week in Gbarnga City, Bong County. In her Independence message to that nation at the historic administrative building in Gbarnga, Madam Johnson-Sirleaf said her country has come a long way in meeting the challenges it once faced. She said her administration has energized training programs for 2000 new soldiers and renovated army facilities at Schieffin and Gbarnga Military Barracks. She noted that Liberia's development agenda was well formulated and in full gear of implementation, adding that her government was close to the end of programs that would bring the country's relief from USD4.9 billion external debt that they inherited. She disclosed that plans are underway for other institutions in the Counties.

Continent's Women Making Progress in Legislative Politics

Aug 04, 2009 (America.gov/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- When Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton visits Africa starting August 4, she will be meeting with one of the continent's foremost success stories for women in politics: Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. Sirleaf became the first elected black female head of state in 2005 when Liberia's voters elected her president with a margin of nearly 19 percent, a triumph that came only after she endured house arrest and exile during the country's turbulent years. Women in Africa increasingly are making their presence felt on the political stage, but they still have a long way to go, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). IPU is a Geneva-based international organization established in 1889 to foster worldwide parliamentary dialogue and the firm establishment of representative democracy.

UN Air Service May Collapse

Freetown, Aug 04, 2009 (Concord Times/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- According to reports, the UN Humanitarian Air Service, UNHAS, which is operated by WFP, is in desperate need of US\$3.3 million to continue its West Africa operation this year. The West Africa service which comprises Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea needs the said amount to keep flying till the end of this year. The UNHAS carries aid workers to emergency operations where they provide support and assistance to populations affected by war and natural disasters but services is struggling to keep its planes flying in parts of the continent due to a dramatic shortage of funds. The UNHAS service in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea will run out of funds by 30 August, while the service in Chad will also run out of funds by 15 August.

International Clips on West Africa

Parliament Paves Way for SCSL Convicts Transfer

Kigali, Aug 04, 2009 (The New Times/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- The Lower Chamber of Parliament yesterday unanimously adopted the bill that will see Special Court for Sierra Leone convicts serve their sentences in Rwanda. While presenting the bill to the lawmakers, Justice Minister, Tharcisse Karugarama said that government has met all the necessary requirements to host the war criminals. The Special Court for Sierra Leone is an independent judicial body set up to

try those accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Sierra Leone during the civil war. The bill follows an agreement signed between Rwanda and the United Nations-supported court. Rwanda is the only African country to have signed the agreement to take up some of the convicts.

Local Media – Newspaper

Executive Mansion Releases Details on U.S. Secretary of State Visit

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

- The Executive Mansion has identified key issues that U.S. Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton will be discussing in areas she will be visiting in the country.
- Briefing reporters, Presidential Press Secretary Cyrus Badio said Secretary of State Clinton will discuss bilateral relations between the U.S. and Liberia.
- Mr. Badio said President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf will brief Mrs. Clinton on the progress Liberia has made towards national reconstruction and development.
- President Sirleaf is expected to use the occasion to thank the U.S. Government for its continued support towards Liberia's development agenda.
- While in the country, the U.S. Secretary of State will visit the John F. Kennedy Hospital in Sinkor and the Police Training Academy. The visit is part of her seven-nation trip to Africa.

Montserratado Senator Hannah Brent is Dead

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

- Montserratado County Junior Senator, Hannah Brent is dead.
- According to the Congress for Democratic Change (CDC), Senator Brent died on Monday at the SDA Cooper Hospital on 12th Street in Sinkor.
- The cause of the dead has not been established but reports say she had been nursing a swollen foot over the past few days.
- This brings to three the number of Senators to have died in two years.
- Last year, River Gee Senator, Isaac Johnson died in Monrovia following a surgical operation. Prior to his death, Senator Samuel Tometie died, following a brief illness.

U.S. Congressional Delegation to Visit Liberia Shortly

(The News, The Informer)

- An 11-member U.S. Congressional delegation is expected in Liberia on August 16 three days after U.S. Secretary of State Hilary Clinton leaves the country.
- The U.S. Congressional delegation headed by Democratic Party Congressman, Bobby Rush will hold discussions with President Johnson Sirleaf a day after their arrival.
- The Executive Mansion said during the visit the delegation will tour the facilities of the Freeport Port of Monrovia, Liberia Electricity Corporation and the Firestone Plantations Company.
- They are expected to also hold talks with international business leaders in Liberia as well as representatives of ArcelorMittal, Buchanan Renewable and the Liberia Agriculture Company.

UNFPA, Ministry of Health Takes Fistula Campaign to Bomi County

(The Inquirer, The News)

- A Fistula campaign pioneered by the Liberia Fistula Project in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare with funds from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) was has been launched in Bomi County.
- The launch of the project coincided with the establishment of a Fistula ward at the Government Hospital in Tubmanburg, Bomi County.
- According to UNFPA's Deputy Country Representative, Philderald Pratt the setting up of the ward was intended to provide treatment for fistula victims from in and around Bomi County.
- He said UNFPA in collaboration with Government was determined to restore the dignity of those suffering from Fistula.

Visiting Chinese and Ghanaian Legislative Delegations Discuss Formation of ARD

(The Inquirer)

- The visiting Chinese and Ghanaian judiciary delegations have started working sessions on the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR).
- The ADR is a term used to describe dispute resolution procedure that is alternative to the traditional court trial.
- This process includes negotiation and arbitration and is being practiced by China and Ghana.

Pro-Democracy Group Plans Peaceful March...Against TRC Report

(The News, The Inquirer, The Informer)

- A Pro-Democracy Group, the National Consciousness Movement of Liberia (NCML) says it is planning to organize a peaceful march against the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).
- According to the group, the TRC recommendation is not only untimely, but unnecessary and has the potential to create instability, disunity and insecurity.
- The pro-democracy organization in a statement issued Monday said during the peaceful march it intends to present a statement on reconciliation, peace and national unity to the international community through ECOWAS.

Chambers of Commerce Plans Economic Symposium

(The News, The Inquirer)

- The Liberia Chambers of Commerce (LCC) is expected to hold a big Economic Symposium aimed at looking beyond the Global Financial Crisis as it relates to Liberia.
- The two-day symposium which opens tomorrow in Monrovia will bring together members of the Liberia Chamber of Commerce, Representatives of the Government of Liberia (GOL) and Liberia's development partners.
- The symposium will be jointly sponsored by the Liberia Chamber of Commerce (LCC) the Government of Liberia (GOL) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

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

Executive Mansion Releases Details on U.S. Secretary of State Visit

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

Montserrado Senator Hannah Brent is Dead

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

U.S. Congressional Delegation to Visit Liberia Shortly

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

Political Wrangling Ensues at National Legislature over US\$2M Allotment

- Political wrangling has ensued between the Senate and the House of Representative over the apportioning of US\$2 million.
- The amount was allotted in the 2009/2010 fiscal budget under the Public Works Ministry as Legislative Constituency Development Fund.
- The money forms part of the additional US\$24 million captured by the Legislature during the review of the budget.
- The "controversial" US\$2 million is meant for Legislators to undertake development initiatives in their areas of representation.
- Correspondents say the 30-member senate is demanding equal share of the US\$2 million with the 64-member House of Representatives.
- Reports however say the House has rejected the proposal by the Senate saying it has more members.
- Meanwhile, Senate sources has confirmed the stalemate but said all is being done to find an amicable solution to the impasse.

Radio Veritas (*News monitored today at 9:45 am*)

Visiting Chinese and Ghanaian Legislative Delegations Begin Work on ARD

Science Daily

Tuesday, 4 August 2009

Khmer Rouge Trials Offer Baseline Study For Mental Health Impact To A Society Of War Crimes Tribunal

As leaders of the former Khmer Rouge regime testify in a human rights tribunal, in harrowing detail, for the killing of more than a million Cambodians from 1975 to 1979 a central medical question remains unanswered: will the trials help a society heal or exacerbate the lingering affects of widespread trauma?

A new study offers insight, but sustains the paradox: more than 75 percent of Cambodians believe the Khmer Rouge trials, formally called the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, will provide justice and promote reconciliation, but more than 87 percent of people old enough to remember the torture and murder during the Khmer Rouge era say the trials will rekindle "painful memories."

"Cambodians have high hopes that the Khmer Rouge trials will deliver justice. However, they also have great fears of revisiting the past," says Jeffrey Sonis, M.D., M.P.H., an associate professor in the departments of Social Medicine and Family Medicine at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine, lead author of the study that appears in the Aug. 6 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

"We just don't know how tribunals affect a society, whether they increase mental and physical disabilities or relieve them," Sonis says. Sonis and colleagues are now conducting a longitudinal study, funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, to measure the effects of the trials on Cambodians over time.

Preparation for the trials, co-sponsored by the Cambodian government and the United Nations, began in 2006, 26 years after the collapse of the Khmer Rouge under its leader, Pol Pot. The first public trial, of Kaing Guek Eav, leader of the notorious Tuol Sleng prison, where thousands were tortured and killed, began earlier this year. Accounts of the genocide estimate between 1 million and 2 million people were killed to create an "agrarian collectivism" a communist concept for an ideal society.

Between December 2006 and August 2007 Sonis and an international team of colleagues, including researchers from the Center for Advanced Study in Phnom Penh, conducted a national survey of more than 1,000 Cambodians age 18 and older; 813 were 35 and older and would have been at least 3 years old when the killings began.

More than 14 percent of respondents over age 35, and 7.9 percent of people 18 to 35, suffered from "probable posttraumatic stress disorder" (respondents met criteria on a common questionnaire, but did not receive an official clinical diagnosis), which resulted in significant rates of mental and physical disabilities. Previous studies have reported higher rates of PTSD in Cambodians, but were mostly conducted among Cambodia refugees. The rate (11 percent) of probable PTSD among all Cambodians over the age of 18 was more than 5 times the rate among U.S. adults, based on the National Comorbidity Survey.

Among the older group, half said they were close to death during the Khmer Rouge era and 31 percent reported physical or mental torture.

Respondents who did not believe justice had been served, up to the time of the survey, and those who felt the need for revenge were more likely to have PTSD. Also, people who had more knowledge of the trial had higher rates of PTSD. Yet most Cambodians had highly positive attitudes about the trials.

Another paradox emerged from the respondents: Almost half of the respondents in this overwhelmingly Buddhist country thought the trials "go against the teachings of Buddha." However, when asked about attitudes toward the Khmer Rouge, 63 percent of respondents strongly agreed, and 21 percent agreed with the statement, "I would like to make them suffer."

Tribunals to assess crimes of war and crimes against humanity are becoming more common. In June, Charles Taylor, former president of Liberia, answered questions in an international courtroom in Paris about his alleged role in genocide in Sierra Leone in the 1990s. The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, a UN-sponsored trial, has been underway since 1993 and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda since 1995. The Nuremberg Trials is perhaps the most well known.

The Khmer Rouge trials offer the opportunity to better gauge the efficacy of these trials, and those lessons hold relevance across a spectrum of injustice.

"The larger question raised by our study is whether attempts to promote justice for survivors of violence – whether en masse or inflicted by one individual to another – can help lessen its psychological toll," Sonis says. "We simply don't know the answers yet."

Journal reference:

1. Jeffrey Sonis, MD, MPH; James L. Gibson, PhD; Joop T. V. M. de Jong, MD, PhD; Nigel P. Field, PhD; Sokhom Hean, PhD; Ivan Komproe, PhD. Probable Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Disability in Cambodia Associations With Perceived Justice, Desire for Revenge, and Attitudes Toward the Khmer Rouge Trials. *JAMA*, 2009;302(5):527-536 [link]

Adapted from materials provided by University of North Carolina School of Medicine.

The Daily Star (Lebanon)

Friday, 31 July 2009

Lebanon selects deputy prosecutor for Special Tribunal

Identity of citizen to be kept secret for now

By Michael Bergman

BEIRUT: Lebanon has chosen the deputy prosecutor for the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, although authorities will not reveal the individual's name until early next week for security reasons, sources at the Justice Ministry and the tribunal told The Daily Star on Thursday.

The Lebanese citizen will move to the tribunal's headquarters in a suburb of Holland's The Hague as soon as possible, while tribunal prosecutor Daniel Bellemare remains home in Canada receiving medical treatment for an undisclosed illness, said tribunal acting registrar Herman von Hebel. The tribunal was created by the UN Security Council in May 2007 and was officially established on March 1 this year, in order to try suspects in the February 2005 assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri as well as suspects in related political violence.

Bellemare, who previously headed the international commission investigating Hariri's killing, has not fixed a date for his return, which depends entirely on his health, von Hebel added. Bellemare's absence and the lack of the Lebanese deputy prosecutor have not adversely affected the course of the investigation, which Bellemare has supervised from Canada, von Hebel said.

"All work is going on as scheduled," von Hebel said in his first interview as the tribunal's acting registrar.

The tribunal recently received approval from its management committee to hire some 30 to 40 more staff for the prosecutor's office, which employs the majority of the court's staff of roughly 180 people, he said.

"We are intensifying our recruitment, in particular for investigators for the prosecutor's office," he added. "For the time being, the focus is really on the investigative side."

Tribunal officials have never commented on the status of the investigation, but no one is in custody in connection with any of the incidents under the tribunal's jurisdiction, which stretches from the October 2004 assassination attempt on former Telecommunications Minister Marwan Hamadeh to the January 2008 killing of Internal Security Forces Captain Wissam Eid.

The tribunal, meanwhile, is proceeding with plans to finish by February 2010 the construction of a courtroom to try prospective defendants, von Hebel said. Demolition has begun of the gymnasium in the former Dutch intelligence building which houses the tribunal, and construction of the courtroom in that space should commence soon, he added. The building project includes a public viewing area, a media center for journalists and a holding area for defendants, von Hebel said.

"The expectation is that by the end of January we will have a courtroom," he said, adding that equipment testing would occupy the first part of next February. "I'm quite confident that we are very much on track."

UN officials continue raising funds for the tribunal's \$65 million budget for 2010, 49 percent of which will come from the Lebanese state, as stipulated in the tribunal's charter, von Hebel said. The tribunal has received more than \$10 million in pledges for next year, led by a \$6-million pledge from the US. The

registrar said he expected other members of the court's management committee – which includes the UK, France, Germany and the Netherlands – each to contribute at least \$1 million.

“We are quite confident that we will have sufficient funds available next year,” said von Hebel, adding that this tribunal differed from his previous post as registrar of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, where he witnessed an annual challenge to raise contributions. “The financial condition of this court is much sounder than what I was used to.”

Von Hebel, a Dutch lawyer who also spent five years with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), is serving as acting registrar between the July 1 departure of former registrar Robin Vincent and the August 26 arrival of new registrar David Tolbert. Von Hebel, who also helped with the establishment of the International Criminal Court during his 10 years at the Dutch Foreign Ministry, will stay on at the tribunal as deputy registrar after the arrival of Tolbert, an American who also worked at the ICTY and served as UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon's special expert on

Agence France Presses

Tuesday, 4 August 2009

US criticises Kenya for failing to form poll unrest court

(AFP) – 20 hours ago

NAIROBI — The United States on Tuesday criticised Kenya for failing to form a special tribunal to try suspects in the 2007 election violence, hours before a visit by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

The government last week said it would reform the police and the judiciary and amend the law establishing a Truth, Justice and Reconciliation panel for the unrest in an apparent shift from efforts to establish a local court.

"The United States is deeply concerned by the coalition government's decision that appears to indicate it will not pursue establishment of an independent special tribunal to hold accountable perpetrators of post-election violence," a statement from the US embassy said.

It said the government's decision was "not a credible approach in the eyes of the Kenyan people and the international community."

But Prime Minister Raila Odinga said the country should not be told what reforms to undertake.

"It's only after the fall of the Berlin wall that new terminologies were invented; transparency, accountability and good governance. But these we have re-introduced not because we want to placate any donors. We are doing it because we know it is right for Africa," he said.

"We need more lectures on how we are going to trade with the rest of the world than how we are going to govern ourselves," Odinga said at the venue of a trade forum to be attended by Clinton.

Parliament in February rejected a government bill aimed at establishing the local tribunal, arguing that it would be prone to political interference. The cabinet has been divided over the matter.

Former United Nations chief Kofi Annan, who brokered an end to Kenya's worst violence since independence, last month handed the names of key suspects to the International Criminal Court following Kenya's failure to set up the tribunal.

Although the names have not been made public, top government officials are believed to be among the suspects.

"The United States will stand firmly behind the Kenyan people as they insist on full implementation of the reform agenda. We will take the necessary steps to hold accountable those who do not support the reform agenda or who support violence," the US statement said.

Clinton begins a tour of seven African countries in Kenya, where she is to open the trade forum and hold talks with President Mwai Kibaki and other senior government officials.