

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



Photos from Saturday's intramural football games in today's *'Special Court Supplement'*.

PRESS CLIPPINGS

Enclosed are clippings of local and international press on the Special Court and related issues obtained by the Press and Public Affairs Office

as at:

Monday, 5 February 2007

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Concord Times
Monday, 5 February 2007

US\$ 33M TO try Charles Taylor

In its quest for justice, the international community may have to garner about US\$33 million to try former Liberian President,

Charles Taylor, whose trial is set to commence June 4, 2007 at The Hague.

In all, 133 witnesses have been

listed by the prosecutor, Stephen Rapp, as core witnesses, whose evidence the United Nations Special Court on War Crimes believes are



Charles
Taylor

necessary to prosecute the case.

At the UN headquarters in New York, United States, Rapp, the prosecutor hired by the world body for the case, told the international media that the court was ready for Taylor's trial.

Since last year, the US has

contributed about \$15 million towards the prosecution of the case at the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

The case was transferred to the The Hague, The Netherlands to

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US\$ 33M to try Charles Taylor

From page 1

assuage fears of security breakdown should Taylor's trial hold in Sierra Leone, where the court is mainly based.

Rapp said the trial is envisaged to last between 12 and 18 months. He said the case would be challenging considering the movement of witnesses, who will travel a roundtrip of 10,000 kilometers to testify at The Hague.

Rapp, who was appointed last year, however, assured that the witnesses would be protected where they lived, "not just in Sierra Leone but in Liberia and other countries in the region."

He hoped that only 80 witnesses would have to be called in person, while an attempt would be made to ask the Trial Chamber to admit evidence in writing, which is permitted under the rules. Under precedent of the Tribunals and the Special Court, testimony can come in writing if it is not dealing with the specific actions of the accused.

He said the plan to

complete the trial in less than two years is to give enough time for the Trial Chamber to render a verdict in about three months, while the Appeal Chamber will need six or seven months to deal with the appeal, if there is one, adding that this process is envisioned to be much faster than the Slobodan Milosevic's case.

Rapp said Taylor, who was indicted for war crimes and crimes against humanity by the Special Court in March 2003 and transferred to the court in March 2006, would have a trial that is fair under a just and equitable process.

The evidence presented by the prosecution, he added, will be vigorously tested and the defence will get its opportunity to present its case in a manner that is transparent to the world, particularly to the people of Sierra Leone.

Taylor's indictment was originally a 16-count charge. But before his arrest and transfer, an amended indictment had been proposed by former prosecutor, Desmond de

Silva and approved by the judge, reducing the counts to 11.

They include both counts of crimes against humanity and war crimes, essentially for other acts of violence, namely mutilation, rape, sexual slavery, forced marriage and the use of child soldiers.

He said the prosecution would attempt to present the most concise case possible, trying to limit it to the connection between Taylor and the groups that committed the offences directly in Sierra Leone.

Rapp said that unlike the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, the court was supported by voluntary contributions and not mandatory assessments.

Taylor had sought and secured asylum in Nigeria in 2003 as he hurriedly quit office, but was released by the Federal Government in 2006 after much international pressure, especially from the US, Liberia's new democratic government and the UN.

For di People
Monday, 5 February 2007

SIERRA LEONE BAR ASSOCIATION

The Struggle Continues!

IT IS most interesting that the Sierra Leone Bar Association has decided to stand up against the 'sand' that Attorney-General and minister of Justice, Fred Carew has put in their bowl of 'gari.'

It is not all that easy for lawyers to strike and their participation in the civil society movement starting from 1996 to present has been rather lacklustre. Sometimes, they do appear to question some of the undemocratic laws of the SLPP but these attempts have been feeble and normally

die a natural death. But for the first time, the lawyers have brought the Courts to a standstill by refusing to sit Court. Trials have been paralysed and the wheels of justice cannot turn and thus many people will be adversely affected by their action.

The action of the "Whigs" is therefore symbolic. A few days ago, pupils of the Annie Walsh Secondary School staged a protest "No Roberts-No School"

Continued Page 7

Sierra Leone Bar Association

From Page 2

and marched all the way from their Kissy Road abode right across the city to the ministry of Education at New Englandville. Some people quickly drew the analogy of a similar incident on that same 29 January 1977 when secondary school pupils and university students protested against the APC under Siaka Stevens.

As for the lawyers, it must have been a reflection, if not an inspiration when they stood up against the intentions of the SLPP to introduce a one-party system in the country and they succeeded in thwarting the moves by then Prime Minister Albert Margai. The SLPP went on to lose the 1967 elections and they staged the first coup.

So it might be safe to say this is the second time the lawyers of Sierra Leone are in protest against the government. The lawyers in 1966 protest stood against dictatorship. Today, even though their cause has to do with legality, yet it is basically to defend their own pot which the SLPP wants to broke.

The lawyers are simply saying that the government, if it is democratic and believes in the Rule of Law and transparency, has an obligation to consult them on any legislation that bothers on legal interpretation. Not only the right to know, but that the SLPP wants to create legal chaos and confusion that might even lead to instability if every Jack and Jill has the authority to prepare Articles of Memorandum and Association for the operations of businesses etc.

This is one easy area that lawyers, even those who have just joined the profession can make some good cash from businessmen as well as cars and even partnership or acting as secretary in such businesses. Removing this from the grip of lawyers apart from its legal implications to the public deprives them of a steady 'han to mot.'

But the SLBA over time has weakened its bargaining position for I believe that an effective SLBA in co-operation with civil society might have checked the many abuses committed by the SLPP on the constitution and in so many other areas. But instead, most of the corrupt practices by big societal operatives do profit the lawyers, fan corruption and contribute to the rampant corruption within the judiciary.

For the judiciary to be blamed as one of the areas that caused the rebel war is an indictment to SLBA and the entire judiciary for refusing to have a body that could have campaigned to set things right and improve on the tarnished record of that institution. The hounding of Judges and other members of the judiciary and the death of Pierre Boston during 6 January 1999 by the AFRC-Ruf is a clear testimony how accumulated anger and frustration against an institution can lead to terrible losses and repercussions.

The government has fidgeted with several laws. The SLBA protested when Eke Haloway was made A-G without going through parliamentary scrutiny. The Anti-Money Laundering Act was fingered even though it had passed through parliamentary scrutiny. They allowed Berewa to unilaterally adjudicate the matter of Lilian Lisk and Abass Bundu in private even though the matter was before the Court. They know about the confidentiality secret clause (6a) between Sierra Minerals as well as so many other dubious laws passed against the national interest without comment. The list abounds.

All the same, the SLBA can make a lot of noise but in the end they would behave in a manner similar to how parliamentarians would howl over certain legislations only to allow the government to have their way in the end.

Fred Carew has already told them he doesn't give a damn. Let us see if the SLBA has balls to stand up for the law even if it bothers also on their interest.



For di People
Monday, 5 February 2007

The Judiciary Is A Disgrace-PMDC

INTERIM SECRETARY General of the Peoples Movement for Democratic Change, Ansu Lansana has labeled this country's judiciary as one that is disgraceful.

Speaking at a sensitization tour at Fourah Bay College, Lansana said the judiciary has failed the people. "The people no longer have trust in the judiciary," he said.

Briefing students on the PMDC constitu-

tion, Mohamed Momoh Fofanah said his party wants to ensure that the constitution of the land is respected.

He said presently, there are different interpretations of the laws of the land for certain people.

"There are difficult interpretations of the same laws for the poor, the rich and those in authority," Fofanah pointed out. He said the

PMDC believes in the rule of law which is why they have taken the question of Vice president Solomon Berewa of the Sierra Leone Peoples Party to the Supreme Court. He said his party wants to restore the glory of this country and ensure that the judiciary becomes fair and independent

by FUAD YILLAH

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 2 February 2007

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

International Clips on Liberia

Liberia urges donors to emulate China debt relief

By Alphonso Toweh

MONROVIA, Feb 2 (Reuters) - Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf has welcomed China's decision to forgive all the war-torn country's debt, and appealed for a donors' meeting later this month to follow suit. On a visit to the dilapidated seaside capital Monrovia on Thursday, Chinese President Hu Jintao signed a series of health and education projects and cancelled all the debt owed by Liberia to China up until 2005, worth an estimated \$15 million.

VOA 02 February 2007

Chinese President Signs Cooperation Agreements with Liberia

By James Butty, Washington, D.C.

Chinese President Hu Jintao visits Sudan Friday, the third stop of an eight-nation tour of Africa. President Hu spent Thursday in Liberia, the first visit there by a Chinese leader since the two countries re-established diplomatic relations in 2003. Lawrence Bropleh is Liberia's minister of information. Bropleh said the Chinese leader and President Sirleaf signed seven technical and economic cooperation agreements. "There was an agreement on economic and technical cooperation between the two governments; there was an agreement on the protocol of the government of Liberia to China that China has agreed to cancel all the debt Liberia owes China that matured by the end of 2005. And then also there was an exchange of letters on the implementation of the China-aided project, a school building at the Fendell Campus of the University of Liberia. I must say that this is a trilateral cooperation because the American government, The Chinese government, and the Liberian government are working to revitalize that aspect of the University of Liberia," Bropleh said.

International Clips on West Africa

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH 02/01/2007 07:05:04

Commander Blood waits for ex-president to face justice over war

Mike Pflanz in Freetown

THE MAN once known as Commander Blood sat bare-chested on his bed, rubbing sleep from his eyes, and began to talk of his life as a 15-year-old rebel leading 50 child soldiers. "They gave us injections so we were wild, we saw the enemy like animals, we killed them before they could kill us," he said in Freetown, Sierra Leone's cramped and rundown coastal capital.

The State of the Sierra Leone Woman

By Mariama Kandeh

Freetown, Feb 01, 2007 (Concord Times/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) --The state of the Sierra Leone woman is deplorable and painful. Despite efforts by organizations such as Amnesty International and other human rights agencies to change these deplorable lives, it

is still worrisome and alarming a situation in Sierra Leone. Dr. Nana Pratt of National Organization of Women in Sierra Leone once said about violence "Gender based violence is still continuing, women and children abducted during the war have not been accounted for". Women are facing human rights abuses in various sectors of life in the country. Starting from the home, prominent cases of violence perpetrated against women include wife battering.

Ivorian prime minister in Burkina Faso as foes set for talks

OUAGADOUGOU, Feb 1, 2007 (AFP) - The prime minister of the transitional government in Ivory Coast is due to meet Burkina Faso's president Thursday as part of preparations for direct talks between the country's political foes set for next week, an official said. "The Ivorian prime minister (Charles Konan Banny) is to hold talks this evening with President Blaise Compaore," an official in the president's office said. Preliminary direct talks between Ivory Coast foes to re-start the country's stalled peace process are due Monday under the mediation of Burkina Faso's president.

Local Media – Newspaper

China Unveils Big Package to Liberia and Promises US\$25M for two Years

(Daily Observer, The News, Heritage, The Analyst, The Inquirer, New Liberia, The Evidence, Public Agenda, Liberian Diaspora and New Democrat)

- The Chinese Government has made a commitment to make available to the people of Liberia a cash amount of approximately US\$25 million.
- The amount, according to Information Minister Laurence Bropleh, would be provided over a two-year period.
- In addition to providing the amount, China and Liberia signed seven agreements for possible Chinese assistance to Liberia.
- The first agreement centered on economic cooperation while the second bordered on debt cancellation to the tune of US\$15 million.
- The Chinese will provide cash gratuity of US\$1.5 million to the Liberian government; build three top-notch schools in rural Liberia; and modernize the University of Liberia Fendell Campus.

American Billionaire and Queen of Jordan Visit Liberia

(The Analyst, The Inquirer and Daily Observer)

- An American billionaire and philanthropist, George Soros, accompanied by Queen Noor of Jordan arrived in the country yesterday as guests of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf.
- Queen Noor is the widow of the late revered King Hussein of Jordan. While in the country, Queen Noor will pay a moral boosting visit to the Jordanian peacekeeping troops currently serving in UNMIL.

Political Parties, Council of Churches Scorn "Anti-Donor Conference" Sentiments

(Daily Observer and New Democrat)

- Ten registered political parties and the Liberia Council of Churches yesterday expressed opposition to call by three political parties, the Liberty Party, National Patriotic Party and the Liberia Action Party, for the postponement of the pending donors' conference on Liberia scheduled to be held in the United States of America.
- The three political parties in a joint statement called for international economic isolation of the country and a boycott of the planned donor conference because the President violated the Constitution by delivering her annual message to splintered

Legislature despite the Supreme Court's ruling reinstating Mr. Edwin Snowe as the legitimate Speaker.

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

China Waives Liberia's Debt

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Commerce Minister Says Chinese President Visit will Improve Economy

- Commerce Minister Olubankie King Akerele predicted during the visit to Liberia yesterday of Chinese President Hu Jintao that China would help improve the economic and commercial development of Liberia as China was committed to expand the business relationship that exist between Liberia and China.
- Meanwhile, Chinese Commerce Minister Mr. Bo Xilia yesterday dedicated a Malaria Prevention and Treatment Center at the John F. Kennedy Medical Center as the first of 30 anti-malaria centers China would set up across Africa.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

American Billionaire and Jordan Queen Visit Liberia

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Star Radio *(News culled from website today at 9:00 am)*

Solicitor-General Says Former Leader Could Be Tried

- In an interview, Solicitor-General Tiawan Gongloe announced that even though former National Transitional Government of Liberia Chairman Charles Gyude Bryant pleaded 'not guilty' to allegations of financial wrongdoings during the tenure of his Government, the Government could still press charges against him.

Complete versions of the UNMIL International Press Clips, UNMIL Daily Liberian Radio Summary and UNMIL Liberian Newspapers Summary are posted each day on the UNMIL Bulletin Board. If you are unable to access the UNMIL Bulletin Board or would like further information on the content of the summaries, please contact Mr. Weah Karpeh at karpeh@un.org.

Voice of America
Friday, 2 February 2007

Taylor's Family Concerned About Trial; Other Liberians Move On

By Nico Colombant
Dakar

The war crimes trial for former Liberian President Charles Taylor is set for early June at the Hague. Prosecutors at the Special Court for Sierra Leone have charged Mr. Taylor with war crimes and crimes against humanity linked to the killing and abuse of thousands of people during Sierra Leone's civil war. Mr. Taylor's family is concerned he will not get a fair trial. Most other Liberians appear not to be paying much attention to the court's proceedings. VOA's Nico Colombant reports from our regional bureau in Dakar, with additional reporting by Prince Collins in Monrovia.

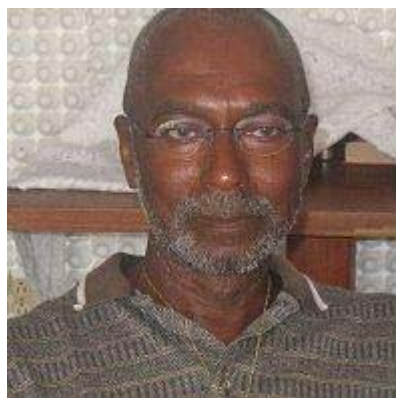
Sando Johnson, Mr. Taylor's cousin and an official spokesman for the Taylor family is cleaning up the offices of the association for the legal defense of the former president. He says the former president's family is doing well and moving on with their lives. But he says Mr. Taylor's upcoming trial is on their minds.

"What they are concerned about is the well-being of their brother, the former president of Liberia, that is their primary concern right now," he said.

"They are worried about his well-being, they are worried about his trial, and asking that he be given a fair trial, and saying that under the law Mr. Taylor is innocent until proven guilty," he continued.



Charles Taylor makes his first appearance at the Special Court in Freetown, Sierra Leone, 3 Apr 2006



John Richardson, another Taylor cousin, is the executive director of the association. He says the international community has made it hard for the defense team to get help.

"Publicly, the United Nations, the United States, have created considerable fear about the mere mention of the [Taylor] name," he said. "So a lot of people are publicly frightened as to what could possibly befall them should they want to help or even show sympathy with the plight of Mr. Taylor."

John Richardson

But a student at the University of Liberia, Varneh Karneh, says he is grateful the international community made it possible to force Mr. Taylor out of power.

"His [Taylor's] regime was characterized by tyranny, he was very very much despotic and he even brought the entire subregion, the entire Mano river subregion into complete and total disrepute," he said.



Varneh Karneh does not miss former Liberian President Charles Taylor

Charles Taylor launched Liberia's civil war in December 1989. He is accused of using child soldiers during the conflict. He is also blamed for perpetuating a bloody civil war in neighboring Sierra Leone by supplying weapons to rebels in exchange for diamonds.

Taylor left the presidency in Liberia in 2003, under pressure from rebels seeking to oust him from power. He went into exile in Nigeria but vowed to return. He has denied all charges of war crimes against him.

A resident in the capital, Monrovia, says whatever happens to Mr. Taylor, Liberians are doing fine not thinking of their former president.

He said, "We have normal life going without Mr. Taylor and his family and we love living a normal life."

Other Liberians say they are happy Mr. Taylor is being tried for his alleged role in Sierra Leone's conflict, rather than for what he may have done in Liberia. They say they too are ready to put memories of war behind them.



Former Liberian President Charles Taylor looks for defense help

International Justice Tribune

Monday, 5 February 2007

Taylor's trial postponed

On January 26, the Special Court for Sierra Leone postponed the opening date for the trial of former Liberian president Charles Taylor to June 4. The trial was initially schedule for April 2.

Given the criticism over the trial being held in The Hague and not in Freetown, hence far from the Sierra Leonean people, the new prosecutor, Stephen Rapp, said in a press release on January 29, "every effort is being and will be made to ensure that Sierra Leoneans have transparent access to this trial."

According to the UN news service, the BBC is planning to send two Sierra Leonean journalists and two Liberian journalists to cover the trial from The Hague. However, no plans have been made yet for a live television broadcast in Sierra Leone.

Miami Herald

Monday, 5 February 2007

Torture case a test for new law

The first torture case of its kind will be tested in a Miami federal courtroom as defense attorneys seek the identity of a man who claims the son of the former Liberian president tortured him.

BY JAY WEAVER

jweaver@MiamiHerald.com

The son of former Liberian President Charles Taylor is locked up in a maximum-security cell in downtown Miami awaiting trial. The charges: torturing a man in his father's homeland. Today, an attorney for "Chuckie" Taylor Jr. will urge a federal judge to dismiss the indictment -- the first such criminal case in the United States -- because it does not name the Liberian man who accused him of torturing him at gunpoint.

Assistant Federal Public Defender Miguel Caridad says his client, a 29-year-old U.S. citizen born in Boston, cannot properly defend himself against such "vague and incomplete" accusations. "The government's unprecedented, close-to-the-vest, poker-game method of indictment in this case is constitutionally inadequate," Caridad wrote in a motion to dismiss the case. "The defense errs," retorted federal prosecutor Karen Rochlin. "Indeed, its motion seems driven by the wish to learn the victim's identity. . . ."

The legal clash is no small matter because this case could ultimately point the way for future U.S. prosecutions of human-rights violations in foreign countries. That's because Taylor's prosecution is built around an untested law passed in 1994.

The little-known law allows the U.S. government to prosecute anyone suspected of carrying out torture outside the United States as long as the suspect is a U.S. citizen, a legal resident or is present in this country, regardless of nationality.

In December, Federal Magistrate Judge William Turnoff indicated the U.S. government could not withhold the name of Taylor's accuser indefinitely. The judge said his identity would be relevant as both sides exchange evidence to prepare for trial, which is set for September.

Taylor grew up in the Orlando area, where he had a criminal history as a teen. He left Florida for Africa in the mid-1990s and eventually settled in his father's country.

His father, the Liberian president from 1997 to 2003, was arrested last March in Africa and now faces a U.N.-backed war crimes trial for alleged atrocities during Sierra Leone's civil war. He also has been linked to killings, kidnappings, torture and other violence in Liberia, where his son headed the "Demon Forces," an anti-terrorism unit blamed for many of the alleged atrocities.

SON SERVING TIME

The son -- also arrested last March by federal agents upon his arrival at Miami International Airport -- is finishing an 11-month prison sentence for lying about his real father's name on his application for a passport to enter the United States from Trinidad.

In December, "Chuckie" Taylor was charged with one count each of torture, conspiracy to torture and using a firearm during a violent crime. He faces up to 20 years in prison. He was denied bond because he is considered a danger to the community and a flight risk.

The controversy surrounding the victim's identity first arose at the bond hearing when Rochlin told the court that the victim should not be identified for his own safety.

She said Taylor and his security forces kidnapped the victim from his home on July 24, 2002, because they suspected him of being part of a rebel group known as Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy, whose goal was to force Taylor's father from office. "He denied having any information or involvement in the [group]," Rochlin said. "The motive of the torture was to obtain information about the insurgents."

According to the indictment: The unidentified victim was abducted from his home and transported to various locations, then taken to the residence of the Liberian president. His son oversaw questioning at the presidential residence, known as Whiteflower. He was then transported to the residence of an unidentified co-conspirator, who was a member of the Liberian Special Security Service. The interrogation continued -- but with torture. Taylor threatened the victim at gunpoint and poured scalding water on his hands and body, while the co-conspirator applied a hot iron to his flesh.

ELECTRICALLY SHOCKED

Taylor electrically shocked the victim's genitalia and other body parts. He also rubbed salt into his open wounds, the indictment says.

At the bond hearing, Rochlin said Taylor's government held the victim for about a year in an "underground hole," which was filled with water.

An FBI agent testified that the victim was medically examined in the United States and that he had reviewed his medical records. The agent, Thomas Gregory Naples, said he reviewed photos of the victim showing hot-iron scars.

The agent also testified that the victim was in the United States and had identified Taylor as his torturer in a photo spread.

The magistrate asked Rochlin if the victim was available to testify at trial. She answered yes. Taylor's lawyer, Caridad, said he just wants to know the accuser's name so he can learn more about him -- from his credibility to his motives -- to prepare a defense.

Caridad said he also wants to know the identity of his client's alleged co-conspirator. At this early stage, his bid to dismiss the indictment outright may be a long shot. An indictment doesn't have to allege every detail of factual proof to support the charges.

A lawyer for Human Rights Watch, a New York-based group that advocated Taylor's prosecution, said there is no legal reason to dismiss the indictment based solely on the government's refusal to identify the victim.

"Right now, the judge only has to determine whether the case is legally sound," said attorney Param Preet Singh.

Institute for War and Peace Reporting

Friday, 2 February 2007

First ICC Case Goes to Trial

ICC judges confirm there is enough evidence for prosecutors to make a case against Lubanga.

By Katy Glassborow in The Hague

Pre-trial judges at the International Criminal Court, ICC, have decided there is “sufficient evidence to establish substantial grounds to believe” that Thomas Lubanga Dyilo is responsible for charges brought by prosecutors, meaning his case will proceed to trial.

On January 29, a packed courtroom at the Hague-based ICC heard that Lubanga will become the first indictee to stand trial at the new court, charged with enlisting and conscripting children under 15 to fight in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, DRC.

Just over a year ago, the pre-trial chamber issued a warrant of arrest for Lubanga, who was transferred from the DRC to the ICC’s detention facilities in The Hague in March 2006.

In August 2006, the chief prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo charged Lubanga with three counts of enlisting and conscripting children, and using them to fight in the military wing of the Union des Patriotes Congolais, UPC, in the Ituri region of DRC.

In November, the prosecution and defence presented their evidence in a confirmation of charges hearing to pre-trial judges, whose job was to determine whether there was enough incriminatory evidence to support the charges against Lubanga.

The presiding judge of the pre-trial chamber, Judge Claude Jorda, said that having heard both sides, a decision had been made that there was sufficient evidence for prosecutors to make a case that Lubanga is “criminally responsible as co-perpetrator” for these crimes.

A trial chamber will now be convened to hear the case, but no indication has been given as to when this is likely to begin, or the estimated length of the trial.

Lubanga’s defence attorney Jean Flamme said at a press briefing after the announcement that his team would need at least a year to build a robust case against the charges.

Maintaining his client’s innocence, Flamme told journalists that his small team has not received as much time, money and resources as the prosecutor, so will need a substantial amount of time to prepare.

He also mentioned his clients concern over his conditions of detention in The Hague; that he is “cut off from the other prisoners” at the International Criminal Court for the Former Yugoslavia, so “is socially isolated”.

Flamme explained that the only contact Lubanga has with detainees is with the former Liberian president Charles Taylor, who is set to be tried before the Special Court for Sierra Leone in a courtroom set aside for the hearing in the ICC building.

“Normally it is a punishment to isolate prisoners, but there is no need to punish Mr Lubanga this way,” said Flamme.

Judge Jorda mentioned that the conflict was more international in nature than the prosecutor had described in the indictment against Lubanga, explaining that Uganda had been occupying the DRC, and weapons had been supplied by Rwanda.

The deputy prosecutor Fatou Bensouda would not be pressed on how these findings affected the prosecution case, but told the press conference that “we are confident of our evidence, and are looking forward to bringing justice to victims of the DRC”.

The legal representative of victims, Luc Walley, said that on behalf of the victims he represents, “this is an important decision, and the first time they have had their voices heard in an international court”.

Bensouda added that the participation of victims in the confirmation of charges hearing had brought a human face to the proceedings, and had a “good impact on the final outcome”.

Any party wanting to appeal this decision to proceed to trial has to request permission from the pre-trial chamber, and has under a week from the time the announcement was made to contact the judges with their request.

Flamme said that his team is “studying the possibilities of appeal”, but has not yet been able to read the entire judgement, which is more than 100 pages long.

Katy Glassborow is an IWPR reporter in The Hague.

The Washington Times

Monday, 5 February 2007

UN Report

Del Ponte's exit

Carla Del Ponte, the silver-haired, chain-smoking, bracelet-rattling prosecutor for the International Criminal Court for the former Yugoslavia, announced last week that she would leave the Hague-based tribunal in September.

Mrs. Del Ponte, who focused throughout her two terms at the tribunal on the prosecution of the three architects of the Balkan genocide -- Slobodan Milosevic, Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic -- may be leaving unfulfilled.

Mr. Milosevic died four years into his war-crimes trial, abruptly ending a prosecution more than a dozen years in the making. And the other two are still at large, although hardly living underground.

"I plan to step down from the chief prosecutor's office, the post I've occupied for eight years," she told correspondents at The Hague last week. "I wish to see Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic behind bars in The Hague by that time, and I'll work on it. I hope to leave my office satisfied and not frustrated."

Last month, Mrs. Del Ponte asked the Security Council, which created the tribunal in 1994, to extend the court's mandate until the two generals could be prosecuted. The court is currently required to complete all initial trials by 2008 and appeals by 2010.

Taylor trial

The U.N.-created court for Sierra Leone, the Freetown-based tribunal that is trying former Liberian strongman Charles Taylor and nine other perpetrators of a disastrous civil war, will need about \$33 million in voluntary contributions for its activities next year.

That's a large bump for the purposely modest tribunal, but most of the expenses are related to the extraordinary measures for Mr. Taylor's trial, which will be conducted in well-equipped and secure facilities in The Hague.

Mr. Taylor, already in detention in the Netherlands, is expected to go on trial in June.

Stephen Rapp, a former Iowa attorney general who serves as prosecutor for the Special Court for Sierra Leone, said the proceedings should last 12 to 18 months, not counting any appeals.

Mr. Rapp said the original 16-count indictment against Mr. Taylor had been whittled down to 11 core charges, including crimes against humanity and war crimes, for abetting the mutilation of civilians, rape, sexual slavery, forced marriage and the use of child soldiers.

In a nutshell, the prosecutor will argue that the former Liberian dictator worked with rebel commanders to destabilize and terrorize Sierra Leone in return for diamonds. Mr. Rapp expects to call up to 133 witnesses.

Travel logistics aside, Mr. Rapp said the most difficult thing about holding the trial in the Netherlands will be keeping the Sierra Leoneans abreast of developments.

The BBC World Service Trust has pledged to underwrite coverage by revolving teams of West African journalists, whose reports will be carried on local television and radio and in publications. The court, in the past, has carted televisions into remote areas and shown what amounts to

videotaped highlights reels from the proceedings.

Bahel bail hearing

And, finally, a legal update from New York.

The U.S. District Court has denied bail to Sanjaya Bahel, a former U.N. procurement officer and post office manager who has been accused of steering U.N. contracts to companies from his native India. Mr. Bahel has pleaded not guilty, but a representative of the named companies has confessed to making real estate deals with him. Prosecutors argued against bail on the grounds that Mr. Bahel had lost his legal status in the United States when he lost his job at the United Nations.

Mr. Bahel's attorney, Richard Herman, had proposed a bail package of more than \$550,000 and lamented that "the presumption of innocence is lost" when it was denied.

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BBC Online

Monday, 5 February 2007

Paris hosts child soldiers forum

By Alasdair Sandford

An international conference on child soldiers is due to open in Paris.

The aim is to put pressure on governments to do more to stop children from being enlisted in armed conflicts.

The forum - entitled "Free children from war" - is being jointly hosted by the UN children's agency, Unicef, and the French government.



The use of children in combat is now defined as a war crime

They say more than 250,000 children were used in armed conflicts in 2006, and that 12 nations have been named for using them on a massive scale.

Six countries - five of them in Africa - have been referred to the UN Security Council.

'Paris Principles'

Unicef has gathered evidence from many children who have been coerced into fighting, often to witness and commit atrocities.

Since 2002, the International Criminal Court has defined the use of children in combat as a war crime.

Last week, it announced it was opening its first trial - against a Congolese militiaman.

Thomas Lubanga is accused of recruiting child soldiers during the Democratic Republic of Congo's civil war between 1998 and 2003.

Prosecutors say he trained children as young as 10 to kill.

The conference in Paris will seek to get countries to sign up to a new framework of action known as the Paris Principles - the aim being to get them to work harder to release children from conflict and reintegrate them into normal life.

The conference will bring together governments from affected countries in several continents as well as humanitarian organisations.

Voice of America
Friday, 2 February 2007

Frustrations Mount in Guinea as President Delays Naming PM

By Naomi Schwarz
Dakar

Frustration is growing in Guinea as President Lansana Conté delays naming a national unity prime minister, the key concession that ended a deadly strike one week ago. Naomi Schwarz reports from our regional bureau in Dakar.

Union leaders say they are impatient for Guinea's President Conté to name his candidate for a consensus prime minister.

But analysts say it may be difficult to find a candidate that satisfies people's demands.

Gilles Yabi is an analyst based at International Crisis Group's West Africa office in Dakar.

"They do not want somebody that has been associated with Conté, who has had government positions with Conté, for example," he said. "So that excludes a lot of people."



Lansana Conte (2002 photo)

But Yabi says a bigger problem is that the prime minister's position is not guaranteed by the constitution. This means that, unless there is a constitutional amendment, Mr. Conté could fire his new prime minister at any moment. Yabi says this has happened to several reform prime ministers recently.

"Perhaps it is because of this absence of guarantees of the power of prime minister that it is difficult to find someone really willing to take that position," he added. "If it is a good candidate for the position, he will certainly understand that he needs more guarantees than what we have"

A week has passed since union leaders ended the nationwide strike that paralyzed the country for more than three weeks and left dozens dead. Now they are saying that if Mr. Conté does not make his choice soon, they will resume the strike.

Mamadou Mansarè, leader of the National Council of Guinean Workers, says that they are vigilantly waiting for the president's choice and that the strike is suspended, but not called off entirely.

But local journalist Maseco Condé says that the strike could resume even after Mr. Conté names a prime minister.

He says if Mr. Conté names a prime minister who does not meet their criteria, they will take to the streets.

In recent years, inflation has spiraled to more than 40 percent, and the price of a single 50 kilogram sack of rice now exceeds the monthly salary of many workers. Union leaders have said that Mr. Conté, a reclusive, diabetic in his seventies, is unable to govern the country out of this quagmire.

Special Court Supplement

Intramural Football Matches at the National Stadium Practice Field – 3 February 2007
WVS lost to Detention by forfeit, Police 4, FMU 1



