

**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:**

Tuesday, 5 June 2012

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.  
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Awoko

Tuesday, 5 June 2012

# Taylor to walk out a free man?

By Betty Milton

There have been questions and concerns as to whether Special Court convict Charles Taylor will one day walk as a free man after serving his jail term.

This the Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone Brenda Hollis says depends on the rules of the court which indicates that it will be the country in which Taylor serves his imprisonment that will determine his eligibility for sentencing relief.

Ms Hollis said once he becomes eligible under that country's law's the country's application for relief will go to the President of the Special Court he [Special Court President] "will confer with the judges who imposed the sentence and after

conferring with them he will consider whether to grant relief or not to the person. So that is dependent entirely in terms of initial eligibility on the laws of the country on which Mr. Taylor will serve his imprisonment." Given that Charles Taylor will be serving his jail term in Britain therefore the possibility of him walking as a free man will depend on Britain's rule on eligibility for sentence relief.

On the issue of whether the trial of Taylor was based on selective justice as was put forward by the lead defence counsel Courtenay Griffith who always saying that "this is a Western conspiracy theory and a 21st century neo-colonialism" the Special Court prosecutor responded that this is an issue that has been put forward "and it has been rejected by the

Trial Chamber so I think the Trial Chamber speaks eloquently about that. But we have to address it where it is proper to address it in the court room and it has been decided by the judges and it has been found without merit."

in terms of apologizing to the people of Sierra Leone for the atrocities that was committed on them, she stated that the case was the Prosecutor vs. Charles Taylor and not the case of the Prosecutor against Liberia "therefore in my view anyone who commits a crime against the people of Sierra Leone should apologize to the people, be they Sierra Leonean or Liberian they are the ones to apologize. They are the ones who did the wrong therefore they should apologize."



## Special Court indicts four others

The Special Court for Sierra Leone has indicted four Persons in Rwanda and Sierra Leone for Contempt with a maximum sentence of seven years in jail if found guilty.

The Accused Persons are Hassan Papa Bangura (AKA Bomblast), Samuel Kargbo (aka Sammy Ragga), Ibrahim Bassy Kamara (both serving lengthily sentence in Rwandan).

All Accused Persons are charged in the Order in Lieu of Indictment

with Contempt of the Special Court in two Counts, by knowingly and willfully interfering with the Special Court's Administration of Justice by offering a bribe and attempting to influence a witness who gave testimony before a trial Chamber in violation of Rule 77 (a ) (iv) of the Rules and Procedure of the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

The Accused persons are prosecuted by Robert L. Herbst on

*Contd. page 4*

## Special Court indicts four others

*From page 2*

behalf of the Special Court for Sierra Leone and represented by Melron Nicol- Wilson (Counsel for Hassan Papa Bangura), Abdul Serry-Kamal (Counsel for Ibrahim Bassy Kamara), Kevin Metzger (Counsel for Santigie Borboh Kanu) and Charles Taku (Coun-

The Trial presided over by Justice Teresa Doherty of Trial Chamber 2, will commence on the 18th of June and will be conducted in Sierra Leone and Rwanda.

The Court will for the first time in its history sit in the Rwandese Capital of Kigali from the 25th to the 27th of June this year.

# Update

Tuesday, 5 June 2012

## Amnesty International's Twenty Years With Charles Taylor

### **SPECIAL COMMENTARY**

Former Liberian president Charles Taylor has been given a 50-year prison sentence in the Hague by the Special Court for Sierra Leone for aiding and abetting war crimes.

The prison term is for crimes committed in Sierra Leone between 1996 and 2002.

Amnesty International looks at key dates in the organisation's campaigning work on his crimes and alleged crimes in Sierra Leone and Liberia prior to his arrest.

Charles Taylor, who also led the armed opposition group National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), was found guilty last month by international judges of aiding and abetting war crimes during the Sierra Leone internal armed conflict. He is yet to be prosecuted for crimes allegedly committed in his native country, Liberia.

While this historic judgment affirms that former heads of state cannot consider themselves immune from international justice, Amnesty International remains concerned that tens of thousands of people who suffered atrocities in Liberia and Sierra Leone are yet to see other perpetrators brought to justice.

#### **TIMELINE**

In April 1992, Amnesty International representatives just back from researching human rights abuses committed during the internal armed conflict in Sierra Leone noted that an invasion force led by the NPFL under Charles Taylor had captured towns and villages in the southern and eastern provinces of Sierra Leone. The rebel forces, Amnesty International said, had been responsible for major human rights abuses, killing hundreds of people who refused to help them.

In a report on the 1995 Liberia peace agreement released in September 1995, Amnesty International reported that a number of political assassinations - including two leading opposition party figures carried out in July 1994 - had been ordered by the NPFL under Charles Taylor's leadership.

In August 1997, Charles Taylor was inaugurated as President of Liberia following the general election of July 1997. In October 1997, Amnesty International called on the newly elected government of Liberia to place human rights on the national agenda and investigate human rights abuses committed during the war.

In December 1999, an Amnesty International press release noted that Charles Taylor had intimidated a Liberian human rights group, the Justice and Peace Commission of Liberia (JPC), after it called for a truth commission to be established in the country to look into violations committed during Liberia's seven-year internal armed conflict.

An April 2001 report remarked that Charles Taylor's government had done virtually nothing to investigate and bring to justice those responsible for widespread human rights abuses during Liberia's internal armed conflict, which had been raging since 1989.

The report also documented that since mid-2000, dozens of civilians had allegedly been extrajudicially executed and more than 100 civilians, including women, had been tortured by the Anti-Terrorist Unit (ATU) and other Liberian security forces. It noted that a former media consultant to President Taylor had 'disappeared' after he criticized exploitation of forest resources in southeastern Liberia by logging companies without benefits to the locals.

In July the same year, Amnesty International reported that at least 40 Liberian students attempting to hold a peaceful rally had been tortured by security forces. At least 20 students were detained and female students were reportedly raped while held incommunicado and without charge for weeks.



## Amnesty International's twenty years with Charles Taylor



Yet the Liberian authorities did not open any investigations into the allegations and no one was brought to justice, Amnesty International said.

In December 2001, Amnesty International called on the international community to take steps to protect the population from further human rights abuses in Liberia.

In June 2003, the Special Court for Sierra Leone announced publicly that Charles Taylor was charged with war crimes. Charles Taylor was in Accra attending talks aimed at ending Liberia's internal armed conflict and Amnesty International urged the Ghanaian authorities to arrest him. In August that year, Taylor resigned the presidency and was granted exile in Nigeria.

In the following years, Amnesty International repeatedly urged the Nigerian government to arrest Charles Taylor.

On 23 March 2006, Amnesty International called on Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo to comply with Liberian President Johnson-Sirleaf's request for Taylor to extradite Taylor and allow him to face trial at the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Taylor was captured by Nigerian authorities during a failed attempt to flee the country, and by 29 March he was surrendered to the Special Court for Sierra Leone in Freetown..

In February 2007 Amnesty International concluded that during Charles Taylor's presidency, no effort was made to remedy past human rights violations committed during the armed conflict.

Government security forces, including the Anti-Terrorist Unit, included former combatants who had not been vetted or retrained, nor undergone any process of demobilization or reintegration.

Numerous examples of interference of the executive in trials, especially those of political nature, proved that the judiciary was not independent of the executive, and it made no effort to bring any of the perpetrators to justice. Impunity reigned. Amnesty International continues to call for the investigation and prosecution of Charles Taylor for crimes he is alleged to have committed in Liberia.

**ENDS**



Global Times  
Tuesday, 05 June 2012

## The RUF's War and Blyden's Ignorance



**Written by Lans Gberie**

I have long advised myself against responding to Sylvia Blyden's frantic rants, but in a series of bilious and stupid ramblings she calls "Charles Taylor: Sierra Leone's Scapegoat", she has crossed the line between callow vulgarity and dangerous ethnic hatred. In substance, the series - disfigured by a tone of sub-literate violence and lack of taste - do no merit a response. But any attempt to promote ethnic hatred in our fragile country must be resisted. There seems to be as well a sinister (and foolish) kind of revisionism underlying all this.

I was amused, more than irritated, when Mohamed Tayid Bah, who told me in Ivory Coast during the peace talks in 1996 that he was the Revolutionary United Front's (RUF) representative in Liberia and that as soon as a peace agreement was signed he would set up the RUF's HQ in Freetown, piggybacking on Dr. Blyden's inanities in order to minimize his own participation in a defeated and discredited cause.

All this is coming against the fact that the war in Sierra Leone is the most extensively studied of any war in Africa in recent memory (with the exception perhaps of the Rwanda genocide). There are several books, and hundreds of serious reports and journal articles on the war. Most importantly, there are the thousands of pages of transcripts and report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The main report of the TRC is 1,500-pages long, plus 3500 pages of transcripts of testimonies of victims as well as some perpetrators. But this prodigious documentation seems negligible when compared to the output of the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL): the proceedings in the RUF trials alone, which ran from 5 July 2004 to 24 June 2008, with 85 prosecution witnesses appearing, produced a case file running to 32,096 pages, excluding the transcripts recorded of the proceedings of the 308 days of trial. Again, this,

too, now seems negligible. The marathon trial of Charles Taylor - 420 trial days in which 115 witnesses testified - produced 49,622 transcripts of testimonies and 1521 exhibits. The full trial judgment runs to 2493. Forget about what I and other individual authors have written: these are the definitive material on the war.

I have read thousands of pages of transcripts as well as the substantive parts of the SCSL judgments. Below is the picture that has emerged from both the records of the TRC and the Special Court.

Foday Saybanah Sankoh, the founding-leader of the RUF, trained in Libya along with the likes of Alie Kabba (who had been expelled from Fourah Bay College as a student leader and who arranged the trip). Only a handful of those who trained in Libya actually got themselves into the RUF, which was effectively set up in 1990 at Camp Naama in Liberia, then under the control of Charles Taylor. Taylor was at the time leader of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) in which Sankoh fought. Sankoh was clearly the leader of the RUF at this point; Rashid Mansaray was battle front commander (and No.2 in the RUF hierarchy), and Mohamed Tarawalie was battlefield commander (No.3). All three had trained in Libya, where Taylor had also trained with his men. None of these people is Mende or "south-eastern" (Blyden's euphemism for the Mende), and none of the records I have seen suggest that ethnicity was even of remote interest to any of them.

Approximately 300 people, including future leaders of the RUF - Issa Sesay, Sam Bockarie, Phillip Palmer, Augustine Gbao, and Morris Kallon - were recruited and trained at Camp Naama. They were trained by Isaac Mongor, a Liberian NPFL who had been a guard at Monrovia's Executive Mansion. They became the so-called Vanguard, and were second in importance to those who trained in Libya. They were the ones, along with loaned NPFL fighters, who constituted the original invading force in March 1991. Now who were these people?

The trial transcripts and judgments as well as the TRC report found that many of the Sierra Leoneans who were recruited into the RUF at that point were already prisoners held by Taylor's forces, and almost certainly would have been executed had they not joined Sankoh's RUF. On this, even Taylor's defence conceded, noting in its Final Brief for the judges that "recruitment into the RUF was accomplished in part by deceit and blackmail; and many were...reluctant volunteers preferring the relative safety of joining the RUF to the prospect of indefinite detention in a NPFL camp. The Sierra Leoneans recruited by Sankoh were predominantly expatriate Sierra Leoneans from Liberia and Ivory

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Coast."

Even Issa Sesay testified that he was forced to join the RUF on threat of death. Witness to Truth, the TRC's final report, estimated that as many as 1,600 NPFL fighters were involved in the early phase of the Sierra Leonean war, or about 80% of the RUF forces. This grew to 2000 within a few months of the invasion. The report called the original RUF recruits in Liberia "detainee-turned-vanguards", noting that "Sankoh personally accompanied members of NPFL 'hit squads' who visited some of the detention facilities, apparently for the sole purpose of enlisting the men and women he wanted to make into his first revolutionary commandos... Sankoh's favoured means of recruitment depended on convincing people that their lives lay squarely in his hands and that if they refused to join him, they would be responsible for their own fate - effectively, he blackmailed them into becoming members of the RUF. Many of those enlisted by this means were acutely aware of what Sankoh was doing, but were equally powerless to prevent it in view of the all-pervading dangers at that time of being a Sierra Leonean in Liberia..."

Once it invaded Sierra Leone, the RUF targeted children for recruitment, and this continued as a policy. The Special Court judgment in the case of the three RUF indictees - Issa Sesay, Moriss Kallon and Augustine Gbao, delivered on 2 March 2009 - determined that "thousands of children" were forcibly recruited by the RUF. It stated that the "military training of children by the RUF dates from its inception as an armed movement. Between 1991 and 1992, children between the ages of eight and 15 were trained at Camp Naama in Liberia and Matru

Jong and Pendembu in Sierra Leone. Prior to 1996, the RUF also trained children in military techniques at their Headquarters at Camp Zogoda..."

There is an issue persistently harped upon in Blyden's hate campaign: which is that once the RUF gained a foothold in Sierra Leone, particularly in Kailahun and Pujehun districts, there were many 'willing recruits' joining the RUF. The TRC report has a particular section on such recruits in its Volume 3, and it treats the matter with appropriate circumspection and sensitivity. Referring to "a variety of individuals in both the East and South of the country, with particular emphasis on young men from rural areas" who "joined the RUF of their own volition, stayed with the movement until the end of the conflict and, in many cases, have gone on to become members of the Revolutionary United Front Party (RUF), which they feel still embodies their ideas for change," the report noted that "some complicated sociological dynamics [are] to be considered when looking at the concept of 'volunteering' one's own or a family member's services to the RUF." The 'willing recruits' were mostly, the TRC concluded, of the 'stereotype' which would "fit a young man who had come from a lower-class background of abject poverty and whose parents had not enjoyed any favour or good fortune under the APC, despite often having worked hard in the agricultural sector." Such a young man "had nonetheless been able to acquire enough education to perceive some of the blatant injustices to which he was being subjected; but at the point the RUF found him, he had lost all social bearing and was therefore open to the option of taking up arms."

The hyperventilating Ms Blyden is an enemy of nuance, an enemy of the truth in so far as it is not in line with her momentary political interest or anxiety.



## The Gazette (Canada)

Friday, 1 June 2012

### **Butchers beware: Taylor war crimes case a giant leap forward for international law, say experts**

By Douglas Quan

The sentencing this week of former Liberian president Charles Taylor to 50 years in prison for aiding and abetting war crimes in neighbouring Sierra Leone has been described as a watershed moment in international justice.

Postmedia News talked to two international law experts - Valerie Oosterveld of Western University in London, Ont., and Errol Mendes of the University of Ottawa - to discuss the significance of this case, which world leaders might appear next on a court docket and the challenges involved in prosecuting them.

#### **Q: What did Taylor do?**

A: Though he never stepped foot in Sierra Leone during its civil war, Taylor provided arms and other support to rebels with the Revolutionary United Front in return for "blood diamonds." Those rebels were found to have committed numerous atrocities against civilians, including keeping sex slaves and hacking off the limbs of children.

#### **Q: Why is this case important?**

A: The case was significant because it was the first time since the Second World War that a head of state was prosecuted and convicted. Furthermore, the Special Court for Sierra Leone - the judicial body set up by the government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations - sent a clear message that "international justice will get you if you start fomenting crimes against humanity from another jurisdiction," Mendes said. "That's huge."

#### **Q: What leaders might be next?**

A: There are many active cases before the International Criminal Court, a permanent tribunal based in The Hague, Netherlands and formed in July 2002. The most prominent figure being tried at the moment is former Ivory Coast President Laurent Gbagbo on four counts of crimes against humanity.

The ICC has issued an arrest warrant against another head of state, Omar al-Bashir, the president of Sudan. He is accused of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide committed in Darfur.

There is also a warrant for the arrest of Saif al-Islam, son of former Libyan dictator Moammar Gadhafi, for alleged crimes against humanity. However, Libya has so far refused to surrender him because it wants to try him in that country.

In 2005, a warrant was issued for Joseph Kony, head of the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda. He is accused of a pattern of "brutalization against civilians."

Outside of the ICC, there are two ongoing trials before the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, involving Ratko Mladic, the former Bosnian Serb military leader, and Radovan Karadzic, the former Bosnian Serb leader.

**Q: What about Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe and Bashar Assad of Syria? Aren't they accused of atrocities?**

A: Generally, the ICC can only open cases against people in countries that are members. There are 121 members; Zimbabwe and Syria are not among them.

However, the ICC can open investigations into non-member countries if it gets a referral from the United Nations Security Council. This is what happened in the cases of Libya and Sudan.

Oosterveld said it wouldn't surprise her if the Security Council eventually makes such a referral in the case of Syria, especially if mass killings - such as the recent massacre in Houla - continue and efforts by special envoy Kofi Annan to strike a ceasefire do not succeed.

Mendes agreed, saying that even Syria's ally on the Security Council, Russia, may be compelled to go along with a referral.

**Q: Some arrest warrants were issued by the ICC years ago but nothing has come of them. Why?**

It is true that the ICC does not have its own police force to go after people with warrants against them. But Oosterveld said one weapon the ICC does have at its disposal is convincing other states to "tighten the noose" around a wanted leader by preventing that leader from crossing into their borders. Under ICC regulations, member countries are obligated to arrest a leader who is the subject of a warrant.

But Mendes noted that not all countries have complied. Sudan's al-Bashir, for instance, has freely travelled to ICC-member countries, such as Chad and Kenya.

**Q: Let's say al-Bashir or al-Assad are arrested. What kind of a trial might one expect?**

It's possible they would try to stall the process for as long as possible, in the same way that former Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic did up until his death in 2006, Mendes said.

Prosecutors might have an easier time gathering evidence against al-Assad given the large volumes of video and other evidence that have come out of Syria in the recent past. "That stuff will be pretty damning," Mendes said.

If those leaders insist they had no connection to atrocities, the ICC's chief prosecutor, Luis Moreno-Ocampo, likely would argue that the leader is still



criminally responsible even if the crime was committed through another person, Mendes said. Ocampo, he said, likes to use the analogy of a clockmaker who devises a bomb, sets the timer and walks away just before it blows - the clockmaker sets everything in motion right up until the final deadly act.

Oosterveld said leaders often are careful to avoid leaving behind any evidence of direct orders. The challenge for prosecutors is to somehow show that they were still intimately involved in a ``common plan." That's what happened in the case of Taylor, who insisted he was a ``peacemaker," she said.

**Q: After 10 years in existence, is the ICC effective?**

A: While the ICC has convicted only one person in the past 10 years, Congolese warlord Thomas Lubanga, the establishment of the ICC still marks a major milestone in international justice, on the same level as the impact of the Magna Carta, Mendes said.

``For the first time in human history the majority of the global community has said we're willing to abide by the rule of law even if it reaches to the highest levels of our own leadership," he said. ``It's a promise to combat impunity wherever and whenever it occurs, even within our own borders."

Oosterveld agreed. While the ICC has had growing pains, it has an active docket and is breaking new ground, she said. In the past wars were fought between two armies over land. Today's wars are much more complex, involving battles over resources and not just power.

The fact that the international community is prosecuting actors involved in these complex cases represents a ``huge step" for international justice.

``The world is beginning to say enough is enough."

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## Seeking Justice for Liberia: Reflections of a Prosecutor

JURIST Contributing Editor David Crane of Syracuse University College of Law says that the conviction and sentencing of former Liberian president Charles Taylor by the Special Court for Sierra Leone should not keep justice from being sought against him for crimes committed against his own people...



I watched the helicopter hover over the landing zone next to Lumley Beach near Freetown, Sierra Leone. It was my birthday and it was pouring rain. The craft settled on the pad, its blades slowing. Members of my investigative office watched intently as the back ramp of the helicopter opened. Standing next to me was my chief of investigations, Alan White. He turned to me and grimly smiled, "Happy birthday." He and his team moved forward to retrieve from the helicopter the body of Samuel "Mosquito" Bockarie, so-named as he enjoyed drinking the blood of his victims during the Sierra Leone civil war. His boss and mentor, then-President Charles Taylor, sent me his body on my birthday, May 29, 2003. I demanded the body when I learned that Bockarie had been killed "resisting

arrest" after I publicly called on Taylor to hand over Bockarie alive to be tried on an international indictment for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

We would learn later during the autopsy of the remains that Bockarie had been shot, most likely by a firing squad of five gunmen. He was struck five times in the chest around his heart, ending the life of one of those who, as battle group commander of the infamous Revolutionary United Front (RUF), bore the greatest responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity. We also learned that Taylor had ordered the deaths of Bockarie's entire family during those fateful days. We never found the bodies.

I publicly unsealed Taylor's indictment just a few days after receiving my special birthday gift on June 4, 2003, causing him to be removed from power in disgrace as an indicted war criminal — a fitting response to his birthday gift to me indeed. Jumping ahead nine years almost to the day, Taylor has now been sentenced to 50 years of imprisonment for aiding and abetting war crimes and crimes against humanity in Sierra Leone.

This vignette is a small footnote in the ten-year horror that was Sierra Leone, of which Taylor played such an important role along with his fellow presidents: Muammar Gaddafi and Blaise Campore. This joint criminal enterprise saw the destruction and forcible displacement of millions of human beings. Many of these victims died in unspeakable ways. Taylor's "gift" demonstrates the callous disregard to life and humanity that was pervasive during his reign of terror.



As this dark chapter in the history of Sierra Leone closes, it is now also time to consider justice for the people of Liberia who suffered terribly under Taylor. He allegedly destroyed tens of thousands of his own citizens. They, too, deserve justice and an accounting. Though I do not contemplate another international trial, I do believe an internationalized domestic court in Liberia could be a viable model to bring those accountable for destroying Liberia in the 1990s to justice. This cannot be overlooked, despite the desire to do so. Just because Taylor has been fairly and openly tried, convicted, and sentenced before the world for what he did to Sierra Leone does not give the international community, or the Liberian government, a pass on seeking justice for Liberia. A considered process needs to begin soon.

As I stated in my opening statement in the joint criminal trial of the leadership of the Civil Defense Force:

A people have stood firm, shoulder to shoulder, staring down the beast, the beast of impunity. The jackals of death, destruction, and inhumanity are caged behind the bars of hope and reconciliation. It is now time to put those who destroyed Liberia behind those bars.

*David Crane is a Professor of Practice at Syracuse University College of Law. He teaches international criminal law, international humanitarian law and national security law. He was the founding Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone from 2001-2005. Crane served over 30 years in the US federal government, holding numerous key managerial positions and also serving as the Waldemar A. Solf Professor of International Law at the US Army Judge Advocate General's School.*

**Suggested citation:** David Crane, *Seeking Justice for Liberia: Reflections of a Prosecutor*, JURIST - Forum, June 3, 2012, <http://jurist.org/forum/2012/06/david-crane-taylor-sentencing.php>.

## The New Dawn (Liberia)

Tuesday, 5 June 2012

### TRC Indictees Support War Crime Court?

ND Reporter



Over one hundred persons indicted by the defunct Truth and Reconciliation Commission or TRC are expected to back legislation intended for the establishment of a war crimes tribunal in Liberia.

Grand Bassa County Representative, J. Byron Brown, lead campaigner of the process in the House of Representatives expressed the belief that when passed into law, it would benefit those accused.

"I will officially write those indicted by the TRC of bearing the greatest responsibilities of the Liberian conflict to support the process because it is in their interest," Brown assured.

He told the media here that the establishment of the court was necessary, particularly for those indicted to clear the doubts about their involvement in the commission of crimes against humanity during the country's civil conflicts of which they have being accused.

"Before making such request to the United Nations, I will have to lobby with both Houses (Lower and Upper), as well as Liberian civil society organizations for support," Brown noted.

On 30 June 2009, the TRC submitted its final report to the Liberian legislature after working for 3 years of which 116 persons were listed as the most notorious perpetrators for prosecution.

The individuals included George Dweh, Joseph Montgomery, Roland Duo, Sando Johnson, Richard Flomo, Dan Morias, Prince Johnson, Saah Richard Gborlie, George Boley, Thomas Yaya Nimely, Joseph "Zig-zar" Massah, Sekou Conneh among others.

They were recommended for prosecution for gross human rights violations, including violation of international humanitarian laws, international human rights laws, war crimes and egregious domestic law violations of Liberia and economic crimes.

But the setting-up of a tribunal to try those accused of bearing the greatest responsibilities could require the political will of the present government.

In the case of the Sierra Leone, it was the administration of former President of



Alhaji Ahmed Tejan Kabbah that wrote the then-UN Secretary General Kofi Annan requesting assistance in setting up a war crimes tribunal in June 2000.

In August of the same year, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1315, authorizing the Secretary-General (Annan) to establish the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

In January 2002, the UN and Government of Sierra Leone signed an agreement to establish the Special Court. The agreement was ratified by Sierra Leone's Parliament in March.

In April, the UN Secretary General appointed the first Registrar and Prosecutor. The appointment of the first eight judges was also announced in August.

The Court, which could be winding down its activities by now, issued its first indictments in March 2003. Between March and September of the same year, 13 persons including former Liberian President Charles Taylor were indicted.

Of that number, 9 persons were tried, convicted and sentenced between 15 and 52 years imprisonment.

Unlike Mr. Taylor, who will serve his terms in a United Kingdom prison, the other 8 are serving their sentences at Mpanga Prison in Rwanda, which meets international standards of security and treatment of prisoners.

Two of the accused (Foday Sankoh and Sam Bockarie) died before they could be brought to trial, while the indictment against Johnny Paul Koroma, reported missing, is still in force.

Sierra Leone's former Deputy Defense Minister Samuel Hinga Norman died before the trial judgment, but the proceedings against the dead were later terminated by the Special Court.

Writes Throble Kaffa Suah

American.Com  
Tuesday, 5 June 2012

## Charles Taylor and Closing the Gates of Hell

By Ambassador Richard S. Williamson

*The conviction of Charles Taylor cannot undo the terrible crimes he committed, but it will contribute to reconciliation and renewal in Sierra Leone and throughout West Africa.*



Something extraordinary happened last week in an international court near The Hague. Charles Taylor, a former warlord and former president of Liberia, was convicted of crimes against humanity and war crimes for his role in brutal violence in Sierra Leone that included the murder, rape, and mutilation of thousands of civilians. The conflicts fomented and sponsored by Taylor between 1989 and 2003 claimed hundreds of thousands of lives.

Ten years ago, while ambassador to the United Nations Security Council, I visited Sierra Leone. Driving down the streets of its capital, Freetown, the scars of Taylor's atrocities were evident. Everywhere there were men and women missing legs and arms that had been viciously hacked off by machetes. On street corners, there were groups of aimless young men milling around. They had been the child soldiers recruited as young as eight, taken from their homes, and taught the skills of savage destruction. To feed their drug addiction, they were forced to kill, rape, and mutilate.

Everywhere there were men and women missing legs and arms that had been viciously hacked off by machetes.

With heartbreaking honesty, Ishmael Beah tells his story in his memoir *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier*. Kidnapped at the age of 13 and enlisted as a soldier, Beah endured a descent into hell and survived. He describes how he became one of tens of thousands of underage, drugged-up irregulars "fighting without inhibitions and killing without compunction." His is a powerful, gripping, and deeply disturbing story. Most of these child soldiers never regained their humanity. Now they are older, but with no skills except for a capacity to commit vicious violence. Visiting with many innocent survivors of Taylor's reign of terror, it was obvious that memories, nightmares, and fear haunted them—and hope eluded them.

A year later, I returned to Freetown on a UN Security Council mission to West Africa. Our delegation talked to civil society leaders, was briefed by David Crane, the chief prosecutor of the Sierra Leone Special Court, and joined the peace talks in Ghana aimed at ending Liberia's civil war. The news was very bleak. In Liberia, fighting had reached the edge of the capital, Monrovia, and it looked like more than 10,000 people would likely die when rebels crossed the bridge to engage Taylor's forces. No one believed Taylor could prevail, but the consensus was that he would fight to the end, creating a river of blood from combatants and innocent civilians.

On our delegation's last day in Africa, we were in Conakry, the capital of Guinea. That night, I went to a conference room and made a call to my old friend Andy Card, White House chief of staff. I told him the situation and said that in my opinion, Taylor had to leave Monrovia to avoid a further bloodbath. The situation was desperate and countless innocents' lives rested in the balance.

A few days later, President Bush made a public statement that Charles Taylor had to leave. Behind the scenes, the U.S. government and others engaged in frantic diplomacy to arrange for Taylor's exit. Soon the Liberian president, dressed in white from head to toe, was at the Monrovia airport making his final good-bye and boarding a plane to Nigeria. The peace deal for Liberia was quickly concluded.

Visiting with many innocent survivors of Taylor's reign of terror, it was obvious that memories, nightmares, and fear haunted them—and hope eluded them.

Two years later, I was in Monrovia heading the International Republican Institute's election observer mission for the first round of the presidential election there. The day before the vote, I met with Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, a leading candidate, in the garden of her home on the outskirts of Monrovia. I asked her what she intended to do about Charles Taylor, who was still in Nigeria and still feared throughout Liberia. She told me we needed patience. If she won, she said it would take six months to consolidate power for her new government. Then she would request that Taylor be returned to face the justice he deserved.

President Sirleaf remained true to her word. Some six months after she was sworn into office, she asked that Taylor be returned to Liberia to face the charges leveled against him by the Sierra Leone Special Court. Soon thereafter, Taylor was returned to Freetown, the first African head of state ever to face accountability for the atrocities he had unleashed.

Eventually, the proceedings were moved to a court in the Netherlands for security reasons. The trial took a long time, but in the end, justice was done. Taylor has been convicted and sentenced to serve 50 years in prison for his heinous crimes. Now 64 years old, the practical effect of his sentencing is that Charles Taylor will spend the rest of his life in jail.

This will not undo the atrocities that afflicted so many when Charles Taylor opened the gates of Hell to sustain and project his power, gain riches from blood diamonds, and create turmoil in West Africa. Nonetheless, this accountability is profoundly important.

Post-conflict societies face daunting challenges to reconcile, reconstruct, and renew. It is difficult and it takes time.

One requirement is to reclaim a sense of justice.

Truth and reconciliation commissions, like the one in Sierra Leone, record testimonials of victims and identify perpetrators so that the brutality is documented and cannot be denied, the victim's suffering is recognized, and the perpetrators are shamed. This can contribute to healing.

Post-conflict societies face daunting challenges to reconcile, reconstruct, and renew. It is difficult and it takes time.

But those who commit the worst crimes against humanity, the monsters that unleash the mayhem, should face a court of justice. There can be no immunity for such criminals, especially not heads of state like Charles Taylor. Holding those criminals to account provides justice, acts as a deterrent, demonstrates that the torn society is moving from a past of lawlessness and vicious violence toward a renewed society under the rule of law, and helps heal the wounds.

The Charles Taylor trial and his conviction strengthen the guardrails of international justice and accountability—values championed by the United States since the Nuremberg and Tokyo trials after World War II. It reinforces the principles of accountability and the rule of law even for the highest officeholders. It cannot undo the terrible crimes committed, but it will contribute to reconciliation and renewal in Sierra Leone and throughout West Africa.

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## Star Tribune

Monday, 4 June 2012

### **Rosenblum: For Liberians, despot's sentence half a world away still brings relief**

Article by: GAIL ROSENBLUM



Last week's sentencing of former Liberian President Charles Taylor took place in the Netherlands, far from the Twin Cities. That makes it tempting to tuck away the horror of his crimes against humanity as something that doesn't touch us here.

But as many as 35,000 Liberians live in Minnesota, said Ahmed Sirleaf, a Liberian human rights advocate. How many of them escaped, direct or indirectly, Taylor's brutal regime?

"Every single Liberian was impacted," said Sirleaf, an International Justice Program associate at the Minneapolis-based Advocates for Human Rights.

"Even if you were born here, you see your parents torn apart emotionally, or struggling financially, or trying to support relatives in refugee camps."

Taylor was sentenced to 50 years in prison for 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Among his atrocities: murder, rape, torture, the use of child soldiers, the mutilation of thousands of civilians and the mining of diamonds to pay for guns during the civil war in neighboring Sierra Leone.

He is the first head of state convicted by an international court since the Nuremberg trials after World War II.

I knew blessedly little about Taylor until contacted many months ago by Pastor Harding Smith, founder of the Spiritual Church of God ([www.spiritualchurchofgod.org](http://www.spiritualchurchofgod.org)) in Brooklyn Center. Smith began to tell me his story over the phone, the details so horrific I didn't at first believe him.

After many in-person interviews, I realized that the pastor, a survivor of the Liberian civil war, had been protecting me from far worse details.

Smith was just another happy kid growing up in Monrovia, Liberia. His father was the police chief. He'd sometimes skip school to go fishing, or walk 14 miles roundtrip to sell bread to workers in the iron mines. He'd use the money to buy his school uniforms.

In 1980, the country's president, who was a family friend, was assassinated in a coup d'état. Smith, then 12, was not spared. Taylor's forces cut off his little toe and

inserted a needle into his penis. He also was forced to watch a woman and her son from his village shot dead.

He came to the United States, but it is no surprise that he couldn't escape the demons. He married, had children. Then he began to hear voices. His wife left him. He lost jobs. He turned to drugs and alcohol. Eventually, he became homeless.

But the story I wrote about him this past Christmas was a story of triumph. He was found under a bridge by workers at St. Paul-based People Incorporated, who got him the mental health services he needed. Smith found God and is now adding to his flock, confident and kind as always.

So he's the first person I called after reading the news of Taylor's sentence. Will this bring relief? Will it help him sleep?

"This is something ... I won't say I wished for this, but this will bring closure," Smith said. "What we have been through ... the torture I went through ... the monster has finally been locked away."

That allows for the start of healing, he said. And yet, the stranglehold that Taylor held on Liberians remains powerful. For those who feel the 50-year sentence was excessive, and there are many who do, Smith explains that, with anything less, "people will still be walking on their toes."

Sirleaf confirms this. He was in Liberia a month ago, when rumors were flying that Taylor had been acquitted. Sirleaf knew that was untrue, "but it told me that Taylor still has lots of support. The country is divided on this. Some benefited from him," Sirleaf said, and warlords who committed crimes during the Taylor regime still roam the country.

Despite this, Sirleaf remains cautiously optimistic. "Lots of work needs to be done. It's still fragile," Sirleaf said.

But accountability, in the form of virtually a life sentence for Taylor, is an essential step.

"We can be very open," he said, "and address the issues that remain for Liberia."

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## Reuters

Tuesday, 5 June 2012

### **Cut off aid to states helping Sudan's Bashir: ICC prosecutor**

Aid should be cut off to states that help Sudan's President Omar Hassan al-Bashir evade arrest for war crimes to convince them to hand him over to the International Criminal Court if he visits those countries, prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo said on Monday.

The ICC indicted Bashir in 2009 and has also issued an arrest warrant for Sudanese Defense Minister Abdul Raheem Mohammed Hussein for war crimes in the western Darfur region.

Bashir's government in Khartoum has dismissed the charges as politically motivated and baseless.

Ocampo, who finishes his term this month at court based in The Hague, said it was time to get creative about trying to arrest Bashir.

"Stopping the assistance to those who help Bashir will work and it's not happening," Ocampo told an event in New York hosted by the groups United to End Genocide and the Coalition for the International Criminal Court.

"Stop all the money to them and they will arrest Bashir, it's simple," he said.

A U.S. House of Representatives committee last week voted to cut off economic aid to any country that hosts Bashir, but the provision is not yet law, and could change as foreign aid legislation moves through Congress this year.

In the past year and a half, Bashir has visited many countries including Ethiopia, China, Egypt, Chad, Malawi, Qatar, Libya, Saudi Arabia and Iraq, some U.S. lawmakers said.

Ocampo is due to brief the U.N. Security Council on Tuesday about the Sudan case and urged opponents of Bashir's government to visit the United Nations.

"They (the U.N. Security Council) try to imagine that nothing happens in Darfur today. It's important you are there reminding them that there's ongoing genocide," Ocampo said.

"The issues are not shooting so many people now because there are no more people in the villages, they are displaced. But the new weapons of the genocide -- starvation and rape -- are working, and fear, are working very well," he said.

Violence in Darfur, where the United Nations and the African Union maintain a large joint peacekeeping operation, has subsided since its peak in 2003 and 2004, but rebel and tribal fighting has continued.

Khartoum mobilized troops and allied Arab tribes to quell the rebellion, unleashing a wave of violence that the United Nations and other observers estimate may have killed as many as 300,000 people. Khartoum puts the death toll at 10,000.

"The issue is when will we stop Bashir? How many people will die? How many people will die of starvation? How many girls will be raped?" Ocampo said.

"Nothing indicates that the genocide is finished in Darfur, but because we don't talk people like to



imagine it's finished.”

Publicly reviled as a war criminal by campaigning Hollywood stars like Angelina Jolie and George Clooney, Bashir steadfastly rejects the charge that he is responsible for atrocities allegedly committed against local tribes by the Sudanese army and allied Janjaweed militia.

Former Liberian President Charles Taylor was jailed by the International Criminal Court for 50 years last week for helping rebels in Sierra Leone commit what a court in The Hague called some of the worst war crimes in history.

Taylor, 64, was the first head of state convicted by an international court since the trials of Nazis after World War Two, and the sentence set a precedent for the emerging system of international justice.

The court will soon start the trial of Ivory Coast's ex-president, Laurent Gbagbo.