

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



A. Lisk-Carew, Photo., Freetown, Sierra Leone.
**A TYPICAL FITISH DANCING GIRL, UPPER MENDI,
SIERRA LEONE.**

PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

as at:

Thursday, 5 March 2009

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
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Awareness Times
Thursday, 5 March 2009

UNICEF & FCO Back Special Court Verdict

By Abdul Karim Kabia

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) have respectively welcomed the decision by the Special Court for Sierra Leone to convict three Revolutionary United Front (RUF) leaders of war crimes, crimes against humanity and other serious violations of international humanitarian law.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa, Asia and UN, Lord Malloch-Brown, has paid special tribute to the Court's role in bringing to justice those who committed terrible crimes during Sierra Leone's civil war – those who committed rape and murder, who terrorized the civilian population, and who forced children to become soldiers.

Lord Malloch-Brown pointed out that the court has made a vital contribution towards sustainable peace in the region. "We encourage other states to

provide funding, as the UK has done, to ensure that the Court finishes its work", adding that, "I pay tribute also to the courage of the individuals who have testified as witnesses, and the contribution they have made to peace and justice".

He expressed optimism that this development will be recognized as further evidence of the international community's determination to ensure that there is no impunity for those who have committed the world's most serious crimes.

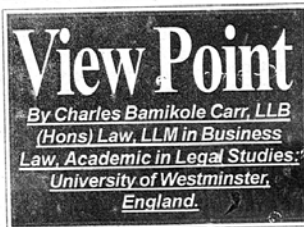
Meanwhile, a press release issued by UNICEF has quoted the organization's Country Representative, Geert Cappelaere as saying that "this is another demonstration that with concerted efforts, violations of human rights, especially that of children can never go unpunished". "This is a small but significant consolation for the childhood lost by thousands of children through armed

conflict. The rights and dignity of children must be accepted at all times and under all circumstances", he further said.

UNICEF used the press release as an opportunity to call on all partners to ensure that the rights of every child to life, survival, development and protection are respected. The release went on to state that between March 1991 and January 2002, the civil war in Sierra Leone killed thousands, and over one million people were internally displaced. It stated that more than 10,000 children were conscripted into armed groups and forced to carry out gruesome atrocities.

It could be recalled that in June 2007, the Special Court for Sierra Leone convicted three former Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) commanders of similar war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Exclusive
Thursday, 5 March 2009



It was just the other day that I read from a prominent Sierra Leone news Webpage that the Sierra Leone Law School celebrated its 19th Foundation Day, something that I see as a pillar for justice, fairness and equally for good governance not only in the judiciary but also within the other institutions in our blessed country. However, what must be borne in mind on such an august profession is that such a pillar cannot stand strong if the ethics and ethical behaviour of those within the profession is in disrepute.

Even the current Chief Justice Umu Tejan-Jalloh, who is also the Chair of the Council of Legal Education in Sierra Leone, in her speech to the audience at the conference held to mark the celebration of the 19th Foundation Day of the Law School, commented on issues on ethics and ethical behaviour of those within, as well as those about to enter into, the legal profession in the country. This shows what concerns she has, unreservedly, on such debateable issues such as the ethics and ethical behaviour of those within the profession.

What the legal students and even all the lawyers must not fail to understand and follow is that a good lawyer cannot reason logically if he/she lacks good ethical standards. Thus, it is the combination of such skills as legal reasoning and good ethics in a lawyer that portrays that refinement of being a learned person with the standard of education to exercise and practice justice, fairness and equality at all times.

The teaching of strong ethics within the legal profession will enable every lawyer, the students and the professionals, to show respect for themselves, their colleagues and collaborate with each other to promote justice even if it means that their individual client is on the losing end.

As lawyers, they are always on a negotiating

Ethics and Ethical Behaviour in the SL Legal Profession

but through inconsistent winning and losing to maintain fairness.

The Sierra Leone judiciary is now blessed with having a Law School as its support base. This institution must be an incentive of good conduct of the judicial personnel as it transforms on the trainees legal education with ethics in the form of good practices and legal culture.

Good Practices Judicial personnel must conduct themselves in a manner which maintains the public expectations that the law is no respecter of ignorance. Therefore they are to prepare to lead people within their communities to do what is right and fair and also encouraging support for resolution of disputes by legal means rather than by direct actions.

In all their dealings with the general public and their colleagues the lawyers must conduct themselves with unquestionable ethics and integrity, as that may enable them to perform their fiduciary duties with the highest moral, ethical and professional standards required in all aspects of the law.

Money culture and wealth creation must not be the perception of the students lawyers in their propositions to serve as lawyers in the country, nor must their comportment as lawyers be such that it compromise the "dignity and integrity of the institution". Instead, as lawyers, they are to behave in a way that could enable them to build on the lawyer-client relationships to give them full autonomy to act on their individual client's behalf.

The lawyers must not engage in practices that can damage their professional relationship and trust within the community. Therefore, all lawyers must refrain from nursing personal grievance with their colleagues to the extent that it leads to fisticuffs in the courts, just was the case when one lawyer slapped his colleague during court session.

In the words of Chief Justice Umu Tejan Jalloh, "you, the lawyers, must never allow yourselves to be involved in such unseemly behaviour". It is obvious that such behavior can lose a lawyer's means of earning his bread and butter because not only can such

person from the honourable and learned profession but also the community will cease from hiring the service of a lawyer with such an arrogant conduct.

Legal Culture The lawyers must always remember that the profession values continuous education, integrity, openness, fairness and credibility, all of which are vital strengths to a profession which is seen as a weapon in combating undemocratic practices such as corruption, negligence and inequality.

Every person within the profession must take responsibility to ensure that they are engaging in continuous training to undertake effectively the performance of their role within the state and their obligations to their clients.

The profession must organise various forums to encourage debates on ethical issues and lighten awareness of ethical behaviour within the legal luminaries.

There must exist, amongst the legalese, a professional body responsible for overseeing of ethics in the judiciary and this body must be aiming at strengthening the conducts of all the lawyers within the country. This can be done by constantly reviewing the standards of ethics required from the learned people, inviting trainee lawyers to talk in forums on ethical issues such as: the discipline dealing with amoral conduct within the profession; setting up moral codes and values for the professionals; conforming to the accepted professional standards of conduct within the profession; etc.

The lawyers must be put on challenges by their overseeing body to comply with codes of ethics such as the one set out by the English Law Society for lawyers in England and Wales. Breaches of the codes of ethics by any lawyer must be met with strict disciplines enforced by the overseeing professional body in the country.

Further, every person in the legal profession must create a mind situation in which they are to put themselves in the receiving end as a client to measure up the kind of discipline that may be expected from their lawyer

of the behaviour of lawyers as they see them and an ongoing annual survey is to be process on the ethics-related activities of personnel within the profession.

The legal education planned for the students of the Law School must be based on the concept of philosophical knowledge and judgement in decision making within a profession which values are influenced by ethical behaviour. Thus, giving the trainees the opportunities to understand the acceptable professional behaviour and part with their personal moral in preparation to becoming fully trained legal personnel.

Consequently, the lawyers within the profession must realise that they need to perform their roles with conducts that have ethical implications. So, when faced with such dilemmas, their educational training at the Law School would be at their disposal to enable them to provide some systematic or procedural method for handling facts, the rules and problem solving. Thus, their ability to respond to the professional challenges with the highest ethical standards will give the general public that positive perception of the legal profession which, I am certain, the senior lawyers, like Chief Justice Umu Tejan-Jalloh and Justice Bankole Thompson, are craving to see in existence in the Sierra Leone social environment.

All the senior lawyers are to be encouraged to conduct their practices within the ethical standards established for the profession. This will put all of the lawyers to the ethical test for behaviour. Thus, questioning whether their individual conduct as a lawyer is:

- legally acceptable;
 - complying with the professional codes and guidelines;
 - in line with their professional values;
 - making them feel comfortable and guilt free;
 - matching with the commitments of being a lawyer;
 - perfectly okay with someone, their client;
 - practised by someone senior in the rank.
- In complying with the test for behaviour, as mentioned, the senior/experienced lawyers will become a role model to the trainees, who, in time, will become attuned to the ethics of the

Voice of America

Wednesday, 4 March 2009

Former Liberian Leader Charles Taylor Could Go Free

By Scott Stearns

Dakar

04 March 2009



War crimes prosecutor Stephen Rapp (file photo)

The prosecutor of the international criminal court trying former Liberian leader Charles Taylor said he may go free if international donors do not cover a \$5 million shortfall in the court's budget. There have been mixed reactions to the news in the Liberian capital, Monrovia.

Unlike the international criminal courts for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, the special court for Sierra Leone is not funded by mandatory dues. It is supported by voluntary contributions.

Some of those contributions have slowed as the global economic crisis forced many developed economies to reconsider spending in the face of growing budget deficits. That has left the special court's budget \$5 million short at a time when it has only one case left to decide - the 11-count war crimes indictment against Mr. Taylor.

If the money runs out, Prosecutor Stephen Rapp expects defense lawyers to ask for Mr. Taylor's release.

"The defense would be in there trying to move to get Taylor freed because it wouldn't be fair to hold him if he couldn't be tried. And that would be a strong argument on their part. We would, of course, resist it. We would fight to keep him detained. But that is the kind of risk that a court faces. You can't hold somebody in jail indefinitely unless you are able to give him a trial," he said.

Mr. Taylor is facing charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity including acts of terrorism, murder, rape, sexual enslavement, and conscription of child soldiers.

He has pled not guilty. The prosecution rested its case last week. Oral submissions from the defense are scheduled to begin April 6 on a Motion for Judgment of Acquittal.

Reaction mixed to Taylor's possible release

News that the former Liberian leader could go free brought mixed reactions in the capital Monrovia.

Mr. Taylor's first cousin Sando Johnson said it is no surprise because the Taylor family believes prosecutors are using budget problems as an excuse to save them the embarrassment of a not-guilty verdict.

"It is a face saving from the prosecution. The prosecution has nothing to convict Mr. Taylor. There is no evidence. So they are embarrassed," he said.



Former Liberian President Charles Taylor sits in courtroom prior to hearing of witnesses in trial in The Hague, 08 Jan 2008

The indictment alleges that Mr. Taylor led members of Sierra Leone's rebel Revolutionary United Front across the border and acted as their effective leader for much of a ten-year civil war that killed at least 50,000 people. Johnson said it is not true.

"We know fully well that Mr. Taylor did not commit any crimes in Freetown," he said.

Other Liberians are less enthusiastic about prospects for Mr. Taylor's release.

"He can not go with impunity," said Lamin Weah.

Monrovia businessman Lamin Weah said news of a funding shortfall at the special court is most unwelcome because Mr. Taylor's release could lead to more violence.

"We think the international community should do everything to support the international court so Mr. Taylor's trial can continue because if they do not find the money and Mr. Taylor is free, there is the possibility for the sub-region to be in another instability," he said.

University student Williams Toe said no matter how long Mr. Taylor stays away, there will be more fighting in Liberia if he returns because the former rebel leader still has supporters.

"Even if he stays 10 years or 15 years in another country, he still has to come back to Liberia," said the student.

Mr. Taylor's trial was moved to The Hague because of fears that his supporters might disrupt proceedings held in neighboring Sierra Leone.

The Freetown session of the special court reached its final verdict last month, finding the three most senior surviving members of the rebel RUF guilty of murder, sexual enslavement, and attacks against U.N. troops.

A verdict in Mr. Taylor's case is expected later this year.

ISRIA

Undated

http://www.isria.info/en/4_March_2009_91.htm

Canada welcomes Judgment of Special Court for Sierra Leone

The Honourable Lawrence Cannon, Minister of Foreign Affairs, today issued the following statement regarding the judgment delivered by the Special Court for Sierra Leone in the trial of leaders of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF):

“The Special Court for Sierra Leone has achieved a significant milestone with its conviction of three Revolutionary United Front leaders for atrocities committed during Sierra Leone’s civil war,” said Minister Cannon. “This conviction sends a strong signal of accountability throughout the world and is an important step in the fight against impunity.”

“We greatly appreciate the commitment and contribution of Presiding Judge Pierre Boutet, a former judge advocate general of the Canadian Forces,” said the Minister.

On February 25, 2009, the Special Court found Issa Hassan Sesay, Morris Kallon and Augustine Gbao, three former leaders of the RUF rebel group, guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the country’s decade-long civil war.

The Minister also called on the international community to continue its support of the Special Court, which is nearing the conclusion of its last case, the trial of former Liberian president Charles Taylor.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone is mandated to try those who bear the greatest responsibility for serious violations of international humanitarian law and Sierra Leonean law that occurred during the country’s civil war (1991-2001). Canada chairs the UN’s Special Court Management Committee, which oversees the non-judicial aspects of the Court.

Since 2002, Canada has contributed more than million to the Special Court, which is funded solely through voluntary contributions. Canada has also provided approximately million a year of in-kind contributions to the Court in legal expertise and investigations training.

The Minister noted that Canada also assumed chairmanship of the Sierra Leone country grouping at the UN Peacebuilding Commission on February 25 and will be working closely with the Government of Sierra Leone and other international stakeholders to support the country’s peacebuilding process. Sierra Leone is one of the countries that draw from the UN Peacebuilding Fund, to which Canada has so far contributed million.

sib news

Public Investigation Bureau of Latvia, Riga 25/02/2009

Latvian journalist reveals multimillion weapon network in Liberia war and its aftermath in Europe nowadays

Ex-CIA agent Roger D'Onofrio in 90ies formed a company *IBC International Business Consult Monrovia* in Liberia together with local warlord Charles Ghankay Taylor (now being prosecuted for war crimes in The Hague) to fund the civil wars in Western Africa and gain millions of dollars from illegal weapons and diamond smuggling. New facts last week were revealed by a Latvian investigative journalist Imants Liepins during the Economic Crime Hearings at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia in Monrovia, Liberia. He described how money made in the Liberian Civil wars now invested in Eastern Europe.

Charles Taylor and international mafia

During his sworn testimony at the TRC of Liberia, Liepins quoted investigation materials from Italy, especially the document from 1995 where CIA ex-agent Roger D'Onofrio pledged himself guilty in weapons smuggling, trade of diamonds stolen in Liberia and Sierra Leone, money laundering, and conspiracy to kill Africans.

Journalist was invited by Liberian government to reveal facts the Public Investigation bureau of Latvia

had found during the investigations. PIB is an investigative journalism NGO which focuses on research of international economic crimes, mostly in oil business, toxic waste trafficking, weapon smuggling and money laundering.

Imants' testimony was based on investigation documents of Italian, German and Swiss law enforcement institutions from 90ies and documents collected from Austria, Switzerland and Latvia by Public Investigation Bureau.

Documents help to reconstruct the scheme how the money gained from weapons and diamonds smuggling after the legalization process was invested in real estate. The documents disclosed how Liberian dictator Charles Taylor and his aides organized smuggling of diamonds to Zurich and received weapons from a Bulgarian company *Kintex* in exchange.

In fact this was an international mafia network where every participant knows that a war is the most profitable business.

Illegal weapon trafficking scheme reconstructed in Latvia

The criminal profit was invested in Swiss banks and later reinvested in Europe. There are traces also leading to the Libyan president Muammar Gaddafi, although the financial centre was in



Zurich, in lawyer's Rudolf Meroni office.

Several companies are in the centre of attention, among them also PMT International which operated during the Liberian civil war under the name Merohaus Verwaltungen AG. PMT International now has a subsidiary company in Latvia which owns prestigious real estate properties worth several million Euros.

These investments of blood diamonds' money were the main topic during the TRC hearing.

Testimony of Roger D'Onofrio who was interrogated by Italian Carabinieri (the Italian police forces) in details describes the activities of the wide network.

The Swiss lawyer Rudolf Meroni came to the attention of European law enforcement agencies in the mid-90ies during an investigation by the Italian prosecutors of Torre Annunziata (in the region of Naples) into arms trafficking to the warfare in

the former Yugoslavia. The Cheque - to - Cheque investigation, as the Italian authorities nicknamed it, uncovered a spider web of shell and offshore companies that negotiated major arms trafficking with several armies and armed groups involved in the Balkans war.

Later, the investigation also led to weapon smuggling for Liberia and Sierra Leone.

We did not know about offshores...

TRC of Liberia is a specially formed investigation committee which operates by UN recommendations as pretrial investigation commission.

The TRC asked the Latvian journalist to cooperate with them as an expert and help to uncover diamonds and weapon smuggling schemes. TRC is widely supported by the Liberian society; its performance is intensively reflected in African media



and proceedings are on live radio broadcast.

PIB research was assessed by the chairman of TRC commission, Dr. Jerome Verdier: "Such help from Europe is very important to us because Liberian people that have suffered from continuous warfare, robberies, rapes and murders already for 15 years still have no idea about the whole offshore net that served for the warring gangs and their allies in Europe, USA and Asia."

Warlords in courtroom

More than 300 000 people were killed and disabled in Liberian and Sierra Leonean tragic civil wars (1989 – 2003); the main fight was not about ideologies, but about natural resources – the control over tropic timber, iron ore and primarily diamond mines.

Armed gangs which were led by the local warlords and who bought weapons from numerous weapon smugglers, especially Roger

D'Onofrio, and later from Ukrainian criminal Leonid Minin (later imprisoned in Italy) and Russian Viktor Bout (now arrested in Thailand).

The legal proceedings of the previous Liberian dictator Taylor (before he started the war, in 80ies he was trained in terrorist camps of Libya) can be read online on charlestaylortrial.org.

His sadistic son Chucky, who is a citizen of the US, is now sentenced to imprisonment of 97 years in Florida for murders and mutilations of Africans.

While Charles Taylor is tried in Hague for the crimes which were committed in Sierra Leone, citizens of Liberia are still waiting for investigations to be finished in Liberia under the guide of TRC.

The Liberian authorities have plans to bring more accusations to Taylor: for the crimes he committed in his own country.

From D'Onofrio Testimony

In the next paragraph you can find an excerpt from D'Onofrio testimony, which was fully read by Imants during the TRC hearings.

"As IBC was selling diamonds to Liberia liberation army, and the US government liked it, we earned our money and could manage necessary weapon deals.

And you, Mr. Sergeant-



major, already have all documents, for example, about our deals with Bulgarian Kintex, because this factory supplied weapons and bullets to us, and we sold diamonds, camouflaged as olives and oranges, with aid of some Bulgarian company in Zurich where Meroni was placed and which bought IBC diamonds in exchange of weapons. I and Charles Taylor only in year 1993 earned more than 3 million dollars."

"Taylor's drugged teenager army killed people for nothing – and I really mean for nothing. If you had a clean shirt, that meant that you were not a totally homeless person, and that was enough good reason to shoot you. Parents were shot in front of their children; they gave weapons to kids and ordered to kill fathers. Fathers crying begged the kids to shoot them, because then Taylor's soldiers would leave kids alive. Otherwise both – kids and fathers – would be shot. All dogs and cats we ate, because there was nothing to eat. Often when Taylor's soldiers saw that somebody owned a dog, they just came in and shot the people, so they could kill a dog and eat it. A dog was much worthier than a human's life."

Robert, a driver, survived war

More about Liepins' testimony:
liberiawebs.com,
liberianobserver.com,
theliberianjournal.com,
liberiapaper.com,
theliberiantimes.com,



Agence France-Presse

Wednesday, 4 March 2009

Leaders pursued by the international justice system

THE HAGUE -- Sudanese President Omar al-al-Bashir, for whom the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant Wednesday for war crimes in Darfur, has become the fourth serving head of state to be accused under international humanitarian law - and the first by the ICC.

Other cases:

CHARLES TAYLOR: Liberian president Charles Taylor was charged in March 2003 with war crimes and crimes against humanity stemming from the brutal 1991-2001 civil war in Sierra Leone in which some 120,000 people were killed.

Elected president in 1997, Taylor resigned in August 2003 and went into exile in Nigeria where he was arrested in March 2006.

His trial, which started in June 2007 before the Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague, is expected to conclude in 2009.

Taylor stands accused of arming, training and controlling Sierra Leone's notorious Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels.

SLOBODAN MILOSEVIC: Elected president of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in July 1997, Slobodan Milosevic was indicted in May 1999 by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) with genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Kosovo, Croatia and Bosnia between 1991 and 1999.

He resigned the presidency in October 2000 following an election defeat, and was arrested in April 2001.

A long-running trial was brought to a sudden end by Milosevic's death in his cell in The Hague in March 2006.

MILAN MILUTINOVIC: The president of Serbia from December 1997 to December 2002, Milutinovic was indicted by the ICTY in May 1999 and surrendered to the tribunal in January 2003. He was acquitted last week of war crimes committed in Kosovo following a trial that started in July 2006. Milutinovic and five others, jailed for between 15 and 22 years, had been charged with the forced deportation of some 800,000 ethnic Albanians, and a "widespread or systematic campaign of terror and violence" in the 1998-99 Kosovo war.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

**UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries
4 March 2009**

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

Newspaper Summary

Labor Ministry Not Aware of Iraq "Recruitment"

(National Chronicle, The Inquirer, Daily Observer)

- The Ministry of Labour has warned against the illegal recruitment of Liberians saying it has not authorized anyone to recruit men to fight in Iraq.
- In a communication to John K. Mannie, the man charged to carry out the recruitment, the Ministry said the exercise is in violation of the labor practices laws of Liberia, which sets the relevant legal conditions and procedures for recruitment.
- The Ministry noted that Mr. Mannie has not fully complied with these provisions and his act to begin recruitment violates the law.
- The media reported yesterday that there was a massive recruitment drive of Liberians to take up military assignment in Iraq.

New U.S. Report Says Corruption Widespread

(New Democrat, New Vision)

- The U.S. State Department Human Rights Report for 2008 has been released noting that corruption and impunity remain widespread at most levels of Government.
- The report said officers of the Liberia National Police (LNP) harassed citizens and were slow to respond to criminal activity and often ineffective resulting to an increase in armed robberies during the year.
- It added that LNP salaries were low and not always on time contributing to the widespread corruption.
- The report also stated that official corruption was exacerbated by low pay levels for the civil service, lack of job training and a culture of impunity.

Anti-Corruption Commission Troubled By Reports of Corruption in Government

(The News, Daily Observer, The Inquirer, The Informer, Heritage, New Vision)

- The Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC) says it is deeply concerned about persistent media reports of act of corruption in various institutions of government.
- In a statement the commission warned that those caught in corruption will not be spared the consequences of their action.

Intense Negotiations Over Leadership Wrangling at Liberian Senate Underway

(The News, National Chronicle, Heritage, Liberian Express, New Vision, Public Agenda, Informer)

- Intense negotiations are underway at the Liberian Senate to address the wrangling at the Upper House.
- The President of the Senate, Joseph Boakai is leading the negotiations to ensure an amicable resolution to the leadership crisis at the Senate.

- Over the past few weeks intense pressure has been mounted by key members of the majority bloc of the Liberian Senate for the resignation for Pro-temp Isaac Nyenabo.
- The pressure comes amidst allegations linking him to alleged dubious practices including academic fraud, misuse of public funds and lack of integrity.
- A group of four Senators last week threatened what they called an “acrimonious” assault on him if he does not immediately resign his post.

Panelists at FIND forum Spotlight Former Police Director Excesses under Taylor

(The News, Heritage)

- Panelists at a one-day interactive forum organized by the Foundation for International Dignity have called on President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to see reason to withdraw the appointment of Mr. Paul Mulbah as advisor to the Liberia National Police (LNP).
- In separate presentations, the panelists recounted series of human rights abuses allegedly carried out by Mr. Mulbah when he served as Director of the Police under former President Charles Taylor.

Fire at James Spriggs Payne Airport Engulfs Runway

(The Inquirer, Liberian Express, New Vision, Public Agenda)

- The New Democrat reports that normal activities came to a standstill at the James Spriggs Payne airfield yesterday fire gutted parts of the airport’s run-way. There were no casualties reported.
- The fire which was swiftly contained by two fire trucks provided by the Liberia National Fire Service (LNFS) and the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) was blamed on residents of the Lakpazee community who were given last October as deadline to vacate the area.

Radio Summary

Star Radio *(News monitored today at 9:00 am)*

Anti-Corruption Commission Troubled By Reports of Corruption in Government

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

Two Student Groups Alarm Over Arrest of Colleague

- Two students groups have reported the “arbitrary” arrest of one of their colleagues, Mohamed Kanneh.
- The student groups, the National High School Student Union and the National Student Intellectual Council of Liberia said their colleague was arrested in his uniform and taken to the Monrovia Central Prison for hours.
- They accused the National Drug Service (NDS) of being behind the arrest saying student Kanneh was handcuffed and placed in the back of a NDS pick-up.
- The reported arrest of the student comes as the two student groups accused the NDS of the illegal sale of drugs and equipment for the health sector something the National Drugs Service has persistently denied.

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

Normal Activities Remain Paralyzed At Guthrie Rubber Plantation

- Normal activities remain virtually paralyzed at the Guthrie Rubber Plantation in Bomi County despite a weekend pay out to striking workers.
- Striking tappers who constitute the main work force at the plantation said they would continue to go slow until all their arrears are paid.
- The workers are demanding additional one month salary arrears and benefits alleged owed them by the management. The Guthrie management denies owing the workers.
- In an interview, authorities at the plantation said normalcy had returned to the plantation but independent reports suggest otherwise.

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

Intense Negotiations Over Leadership Wrangling at Liberian Senate Underway

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

Bong County Senator Taylor Worried over Iraq " Recruitment"

- Bong County Senator Jewel Howard Taylor has called on Government to take control of the recruitment of Liberians for "work" in Iraq.
- Senator Taylor said the government must investigate who is doing the recruitment and what benefits the Liberians would get.
- The statement by the Senator comes amidst reports that a firm was recruiting Liberians for military and construction assignments in Iraq.
- Meanwhile, the Ministry of Labour has warned against the illegal recruitment of Liberians for a foreign land saying it has not authorized such recruitment.
- Diplomatic sources have described the recruitment as mere rumors.

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

International Criminal Court

Wednesday, 4 March 2009

Press Release

ICC issues a warrant of arrest for Omar Al Bashir, President of Sudan

ICC-CPI-20090304-PR394 يبرع

Situation: Darfur, Sudan

Today, Pre-Trial Chamber I of the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued a warrant for the arrest of Omar Hassan Ahmad Al Bashir, President of Sudan, for war crimes and crimes against humanity. He is suspected of being criminally responsible, as an indirect (co-)perpetrator, for intentionally directing attacks against an important part of the civilian population of Darfur, Sudan, murdering, exterminating, raping, torturing and forcibly transferring large numbers of civilians, and pillaging their property. This is the first warrant of arrest ever issued for a sitting Head of State by the ICC.

Omar Al Bashir's official capacity as a sitting Head of State does not exclude his criminal responsibility, nor does it grant him immunity against prosecution before the ICC, according to Pre-Trial Chamber I.

According to the Judges, the above-mentioned crimes were allegedly committed during a five year counter-insurgency campaign by the Government of Sudan against the Sudanese Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A), the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and other armed groups opposing the Government of Sudan in Darfur. It is alleged that this campaign started soon after the April 2003 attack on El Fasher airport as a result of a common plan agreed upon at the highest level of the Government of Sudan by Omar Al Bashir and other high-ranking Sudanese political and military leaders. It lasted at least until 14 July 2008, the date of the filing of the Prosecution's Application for the warrant of arrest for Omar Al Bashir.

A core component of that campaign was the unlawful attack on that part of the civilian population of Darfur – belonging largely to the Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa groups – perceived to be close to the organised armed groups opposing the Government of Sudan in Darfur. The said civilian population was to be unlawfully attacked by Government of Sudan forces, including the Sudanese Armed Forces and their allied Janjaweed Militia, the Sudanese Police Force, the National Intelligence and Security Service and the Humanitarian Aid Commission.

The Chamber found that Omar al Bashir, as the de jure and de facto President of Sudan and Commander-in-Chief of the Sudanese Armed Forces, is suspected of having coordinated the design and implementation of the counter-insurgency campaign. In the alternative, it also found that there are reasonable grounds to believe that he was in control of all branches of the "apparatus" of the State of Sudan and used such control to secure the implementation of the counter-insurgency campaign.

The counts

The warrant of arrest for Omar Al Bashir lists 7 counts on the basis of his individual criminal responsibility (article 25(3)(a)) including:

- five counts of crimes against humanity: murder – article 7(1)(a); extermination – article 7(1)(b);
- forcible transfer – article 7(1)(d);

- torture – article 7(1)(f); and rape – article 7(1)(g);
- two counts of war crimes: intentionally directing attacks against a civilian population as such or against individual civilians not taking direct part in hostilities – article 8(2)(e)(i); and pillaging – article 8(2)(e)(v).

Findings concerning genocide

The majority of the Chamber, Judge Anita Ušacka dissenting, found that the material provided by the Prosecution in support of its application for a warrant of arrest failed to provide reasonable grounds to believe that the Government of Sudan acted with specific intent to destroy, in whole or in part, the Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa groups. Consequently, the crime of genocide is not included in the warrant issued for the arrest of Omar Al Bashir. Nevertheless, the Judges stressed that if additional evidence is gathered by the Prosecution, the decision would not prevent the Prosecution from requesting an amendment to the warrant of arrest in order to include the crime of genocide.

Cooperation of States

The Judges directed the Registrar to prepare and transmit, as soon as practicable, a request for cooperation for the arrest and surrender of Omar Al Bashir to Sudan, and to all States Parties to the Rome Statute and all United Nations Security Council (UNSC) members that are not party to the Statute, as well as to any other State as may be necessary.

The Judges found that, according to UNSC resolution 1593 and articles 25 and 103 of the UN Charter, the obligation of the Government of Sudan to fully cooperate with the Court prevails over any other international obligation that the Government of Sudan may have undertaken pursuant to any other international agreement.

Pre-Trial Chamber I also found that the Government of Sudan has systematically refused to cooperate with the Court since the issuance of warrants for the arrest of the Sudanese Minister for Humanitarian Affairs, Ahmad Harun, and a regional Janjaweed militia leader, Ali Kushayb, on 2 May 2007. As a result, the Judges emphasised that, according to article 87(7) of the Statute, if the Government of Sudan continues to fail to comply with its cooperation obligations to the Court, the competent Chamber “may make a finding to that effect” and decide to “refer the matter [...] to the Security Council.”

Furthermore, the Judges noted that the dispositive part of UNSC resolution 1593 expressly urges all States, whether party or not to the Rome Statute, as well as international and regional organisations to “cooperate fully” with the Court.

BBC

Wednesday, 4 March 2009

Bashir vows to defy Darfur charge

Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir has angrily rejected the arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) against him.

Mr Bashir told thousands of cheering supporters in the capital that Sudan would not "kneel" to colonialists.

He said he defied outsiders to come to Sudan and talk about human rights.

He is accused of two counts of war crimes and five of crimes against humanity in Darfur, in the first ICC warrant for a serving head of state.

Mr Bashir, 65, told a rally in the city's Martyrs Square: "We are telling the colonialists we are not succumbing; we are not submitting; we will not kneel; we are targeted because we refuse to submit."

The African Union is holding an emergency meeting in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa to discuss the arrest warrant, a day after warning it would hurt an ailing peace process in Sudan.

“ We will carry on rejecting colonialism ”

Omar al-Bashir

Some Arab nations also said the ruling would hinder Darfur peace efforts, but the US and EU has welcomed the ICC decision.

China, which buys much of Sudan's oil and sells it weapons, urged the court to postpone the case, warning it risked destabilising Darfur.

Sudan reacted to Wednesday's ICC indictment by expelling 10 foreign aid agencies, including Oxfam, Care, Save the Children and Medecins Sans Frontieres from Darfur.

Between them they supply food and water to some 1.5 million people who have fled their homes during the six-year conflict.

The agencies say lives will be put at risk but the government insists the aid groups all have political agendas and are using their humanitarian activities as cover.

'Lions and tigers'

Thursday's rally in the capital was the latest show of public support for Sudan's veteran leader.

The BBC's Owen Bennett-Jones in Khartoum says pro-Bashir supporters, some in cars with loud-speakers, shouted slogans denouncing the West.

"We are lions and we have tigers," Mr Bashir told the crowd, waving his walking stick in the air. "We will carry on rejecting colonialism."

He said the ICC, together with the UN Security Council and the International Monetary Fund, were trying to "colonise people anew and steal their resources".

"They claim that human rights are being violated in Sudan," he said. "We defy them to come here in Sudan and show us what's happening here."



On Wednesday, the ICC accused Mr Bashir of responsibility for a campaign of extermination, rape and pillage during the Darfur conflict.

Mr Bashir was charged with two counts of two war crimes: intentionally directing attacks against civilians and pillaging.

He is also accused of five crimes against humanity counts: murder; extermination; forcible transfer; torture and rape.

But the tribunal at The Hague rejected a further allegation of genocide, saying there was insufficient evidence.

The UN estimates that 300,000 people have died and 2.7 million displaced in Darfur, since black African rebels took up arms against the Arab-dominated regime demanding a greater share of resources and power.

BBC

Wednesday, 4 March 2009

Confessions of a Sudanese deserter

The International Criminal Court has issued an arrest warrant for Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir for alleged war crimes in Darfur.

The Sudanese government has always said the accusations are political but now one of the country's former soldiers, who served in Darfur, has been telling his story to the BBC's Mike Thomson.

Khalid (not his real name), a polite and softly spoken man from Darfur, seems reluctant to talk about his past. It is soon clear why.

"The orders given to us were to burn the villages completely," he says.

"We even had to poison the water wells. We were also given orders to kill all the woman and rape girls under 13 and 14."

Khalid, who is of black African origin, says he was forcibly recruited into President Omar al-Bashir's Sudanese army in late 2002.

He and several other men where he lived were taken to the headquarters of his regiment which was based near the north-western Darfur town of Fasher.

“ Many couldn't take all their children. If you saw them you had to shoot and kill ”

He admits to having taken part in seven different attacks on Darfur villages with the help of Janjaweed militia.

"Khalid"

The first one was in the Korma area in December 2002 several months before the conflict in Darfur officially began.

He claims to have been extremely reluctant to carry out the savage orders he was given.

"When they asked me to rape the girl, I went and stood in front of her," he said.

"Tears came into my eyes. They said: 'You have to rape her. If you don't we will beat you.' I hesitated and they hit me with the butt of a rifle.

"But when I went to the girl I couldn't do it. I took her into a corner and lay myself on top of her as if I was raping her for about 10 to 15 minutes.

"Then, I jumped up and came out. They said: 'Did you rape her?' I said: 'Yes, I did!'"

Khalid says that soon after this he and the other soldiers went back to base.

When they got there he was told to join another patrol immediately.

When he refused they beat and tortured him, inflicting severe burns on his legs and back.

He spent five weeks in a military hospital recovering from his injuries.

Before long, he said, he was ordered to join other brutal raids on Darfur villages.

I asked him what he was told to do with unarmed civilians who did not resist in any way.

"They told us, don't leave anybody, just kill everybody," he said.

"Even the children, if left behind in the huts, we had to kill them," he said. "People would cry and run from their huts.

"Many couldn't take all their children. If they had more than two they had to leave them behind. If you saw them you had to shoot and kill."

In cold blood

Khalid insists that he always fired over the heads of civilians and didn't kill anyone himself despite the orders he was given.

He says he could do this without his fellow soldiers noticing but he admits that there was no way he could avoid carrying out orders to torch peoples homes.

"I did take part," he admitted. "They forced me. We had no choice. If you didn't they would kill you."

Did anyone refuse?

"Two of my colleagues refused and they were shot dead."

I asked him how the Sudanese officers had justified killing unarmed civilians in cold blood. How they had explained the need to slaughter women, babies and children?

He replied: "They said they are the ones who take food and water to the rebels.

"They said that if we kill these people and burn their villages then the rebels will not have any supplies so they'll have to move out to the neighbouring country."

Close to tears



The six-year conflict has spawned more than two million refugees



The war in Darfur began in 2003 when rebel groups took up arms

Khalid, who at times appeared close to tears, deserted from the army in 2003 and has now left the country.

He says he may never be able to return now that he has spoken out.

But, I asked him, if he does go back, will he ever be forgiven by his own people for taking part in these attacks, even if he was forcibly recruited?

"Up until today they will never have known that it was me," he said.

"They will only know that I became a soldier. They wouldn't know what part I took. Even my family don't know where I am."

Over the last six years it is estimated that around 300,000 people have died as a result of the conflict in Darfur and a further 2.5 million have been forced to flee their homes.

President Omar al-Bashir and the Sudanese government have always denied that the country's army committed atrocities in the region or commissioned Janjaweed militia to do this on their behalf.



Luis Moreno-Ocampo prepared the charge sheet

It is a claim they repeated firmly when the International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo announced last summer he was seeking an arrest warrant for the Sudanese president.

But a nervous Khalid, who fears officials from the court might soon come looking for him, says he is in no doubt who bears full responsibility for the suffering in Darfur.

"Omar al-Bashir is in the chair," he said.

"He is the first person that is responsible for the genocide, of the killing of the children, of everything. He should never say that 'I did not kill and I don't know'.

"If you are head of the country then you are responsible for any crimes done by your soldiers. It is Bashir doing all these things."