

**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

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Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Fallout from Ibrahim Bah's 'escape'

CARL blames state officials

By Hassan G. Koroma

Executive Director of the Centre for Accountability and the Rule of Law (CARL), Ibrahim Tommy, yesterday told journalists that justice was under threat in the country. He was reacting to the fact that Ibrahim Bah (Balde), for the second time in less than two weeks, has failed to appear in court to answer to charges that have been brought against him in the Freetown Magistrates Court No. 1 presided over by Magistrate Tonia Barnett.

It could be recalled that CARL and Swiss human rights organization, Civitas Maxima, had through their lawyers, Halloway and Partners, filed a private criminal summons against Ibrahim Bah aka Ibrahima Balde, to answer to multiple charges of conspiracy, false imprisonment, kidnapping, wounding, wounding with intent, assault occasioning actual bodily harm and threatening to kill. The charges relate to atrocities that were allegedly committed against innocent men and women during Sierra Leone's civil conflict spanning eleven years.

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CARL blames state officials

From Page 1

The current case was brought to court by both rights groups on behalf of a woman victim from Kono (name withheld) who is willing to testify against General Bah, a lynchpin in the planning and execution of war and terror in the Mano River Basin from the 1990s to 2000s.

Gen. Bah was due to appear in court yesterday and answer to multiple charges brought against him. However, after the case was called at the Magistrate Court in Freetown, the defendant was conspicuously absent, prompting his defence counsel to inform the court that all efforts to reach him had proved futile.

Speaking to pressmen at his Brook Street office, the Executive Director of CARL said he was ninety percent convinced that the defendant was out of the jurisdiction. He alleged that such could only be made possible by the complicity of certain state officials, whom he said might have helped the fugitive warlord escape justice.

"I am very much convinced that certain government officials have a hand in helping the defendant escape. This development means a lot to the people of Kono District and

the entire Sierra Leone," Mr. Tommy said.

He added that the private criminal summons by CARL and Civitas Maxima was necessitated after state officials said there were limited funds to prosecute the case, in an apparent disregard for justice, and an inclination to promote impunity.

He charged that official claims that the fugitive was under house arrest were false, as he was alone in his Aberdeen residence when the summons was served on him.

Meanwhile, as we went to press, no official comment was available as to whether Ibrahim Bah is still within the jurisdiction or had fled.

Gen. Bah had apparently been living in and travelling out of Sierra Leone since 2008, despite being under a United Nations travel ban. His cover was recently blown to the local media after CARL brought pressure to bear on the government to have him arrested and tried for his involvement in egregious acts of human rights violations during the conflict in Sierra Leone, as well as his role in the illegal diamond trade in West Africa, and the alleged recruitment of mercenaries to fight in conflicts in the sub-region.

ISSUE Questions and Answers on Ibrahim Bah

By Human Rights Watch (Washington, DC)

1. Who is Ibrahim Bah?

Ibrahim Bah is a Senegalese national living in Sierra Leone. During the Sierra Leone civil war, from 1991 to 2002, Bah allegedly provided arms and materiel to the rebel Revolutionary United Front (RUF), according to a United Nations panel of experts and the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone.

During the conflict, the RUF committed widespread and systematic abuses, including murder, mutilation, amputation, torture, rape, and forced abductions.

Bah has been under a UN-imposed travel ban since 2004 for his alleged role in illegal arms and diamond dealing and for supporting the former Liberian President Charles Taylor's effort to destabilize Sierra Leone.

Although Bah was not prosecuted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone, testimony was given in the case of *Prosecutor vs. Charles Taylor* on Bah's involvement in the conflict. The court found that Bah was a close associate of Taylor, who was convicted by the court in 2012 for his role in providing arms and other assistance to the rebels.

The decision states that: "Bah was a trusted emissary who represented the RUF at times and the Accused at times, and served as a liaison between them at times. He was a businessman who helped arrange arms and

diamond transactions, and did not maintain an ongoing affiliation as a subordinate or agent with either the RUF or the Accused."

Bah was believed to be living in Burkina Faso, but a report issued by the UN panel of experts on May 31, 2013, found that he had been living in Sierra Leone since 2008.

2. What is the criminal prosecution against Bah?

On July 5, a Sierra Leonean citizen from the diamond-rich Kono district of eastern Sierra Leone filed a private criminal prosecution against Bah for the following offences under Sierra Leonean law: conspiracy, false imprisonment, kidnapping, wounding and wounding with intent, assault occasioning actual bodily harm, and threatening to kill.

In Sierra Leone, a criminal case may be brought by a private citizen instead of the state. In such cases, it is generally the responsibility of the complainant to gather the relevant evidence and present it to the court.

The state may also assist in the case by investigating the issues or gathering relevant evidence. It may also take over the prosecution if it determines that the case involves an issue best handled by the government. Alternatively, the state may determine that the case

should not proceed and terminate the prosecution, discharging the case.

3. What are the next steps?

Bah was served with information on the case on July 15. The next step should be an appearance by the defendant in court for the charges to be read to him and for him to enter a plea. An appearance is typically scheduled within several days of when a defendant is served. July 18 was initially scheduled as the day when the appearance was expected to take place, following the case's assignment to a judge.

However, no developments occurred on that day. On July 29, the matter was raised in court and a lawyer for Bah said that Bah had not been aware of any proceedings to move the case forward and requested an adjournment. The complainant and the defendant agreed to adjourn until August 5, when Bah is now scheduled to make his initial appearance.

4. Why didn't the prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone indict Bah?

The Sierra Leone government and the United Nations established the Special Court for Sierra Leone to prosecute those "bearing the greatest responsibility" for crimes committed during Sierra Leone's conflict. The

court has completed trials of nine people associated with Sierra Leone's three main warring factions, including Taylor.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone is winding down operations, although the court's prosecutor is not prevented from bringing a case against Bah. Human Rights Watch has urged the Sierra Leone authorities to prosecute, through the regular courts, those allegedly responsible for serious crimes committed during the conflict whom the Special Court has not tried. This would ensure wider accountability for the crimes.

5. Why hasn't the Sierra Leone government taken action against Bah?

Human Rights Watch and others have urged the Sierra Leone government to open a criminal investigation of Bah for his alleged role in crimes committed during Sierra Leone's conflict. It is unclear why the Sierra Leone government has not done so.

A number of possible criminal offences could be brought under Sierra Leone domestic law. However, the country's law does not include some serious crimes that violate international law, such as crimes against humanity. Sierra Leone should adopt laws incorporating these crimes.

IS RUF'S Ibrahim Ba on the run?

The Executive Director of Centre for Accountability and Rule of Law (CARL), Ibrahim Tommy, has expressed fear that erstwhile RUF Lynchpin. Senegalese national- Ibrahim Ba, has fled the country despite facing a lawsuit made against him by a war victim in Kono. Tommy, who was addressing journalists Friday, said following revelations that the RUF strongman has been in the country since 2008, CARL in partnership with a Swiss-based agency, urged the government

Contd. page 2



Is RUF's Ibrahim Ba on the run?

to examine whether he could be investigated for crimes he allegedly perpetrated against Sierra Leoneans during the war years.

He said their concern was based on several reports, including the Mid Term Report on Liberia and the UN Security Council Report on the "notorious" activities of Ibrahim Ba and the threat he posed after saying he had enough resources to destabilize the region.

He said it was as a result of this that they urged the Inspector General of Police to investigate Ba, adding that when a victim in Kono approached them for help in bringing up charges against Ibrahim Ba, they hired the services of a lawyer who filed a private lawsuit on 5th June this Year.

According to him, police at the time assured them that he (Ba) was under house arrest at his Aberdeen residence and would be taken to the

Trans-International Organized Crime Unit at Murray Town.

"When we went to his residence to serve him the court summon we were surprised to realize there was no indication he was under house arrest," he said.

"On 18th July 2013 the Court Clerk told us the matter would come up for hearing but nothing happened. On Monday 29th 2013, the matter eventually came up at Magistrate Court No. 1 where a lawyer representing Ba said he was not around," Tommy explained, adding that the matter was later adjourned to 5th August 2013.

He said he was afraid that Ba may have fled the country, though he noted, that Ba's lawyer allayed their fears by assuring them that he is still in the country.

Ba is facing charges of conspiracy, false imprisonment, threat to kill, rape and other crimes against humanity.



The RUF war between 1991 and 2002 left a trail of human and infrastructural damage in Sierra Leone

The New Dawn
Monday, 5 August 2013

Taylor Complains From Prison

By Othello B. Garblah

Detained ex-President Charles Taylor has written the African Union, complaining about the prison



condition and the discrimination being meted out against him and other African detainees there, describing it as racist.

Taylor is currently appealing against his 50 years jail sentence at the UN backed Special Court for Sierra Leone sitting in The Hague at the ICC facility. If upheld, Taylor will serve his sentence in a UK prison.

Taylor says, European detainees are being given a more preferential and dignified treatment as compared to Africans at the International Criminal Court or ICC facility.

"In this day and time in the heart of Europe, is it unreasonable to ask to be treated fairly and with dignity?

It is a damn shame that one has to fight for equal rights and dignity in a United Nations' facility." Taylor told AU leaders in his memo also copied to all detained persons.

Taylor's Memo to the AU dated May 29, 2013, a copy of which is in the possession of this paper, is said to be in the framework of Regulation 179-1 and 185-1 of the court's registry concerning room for private visit.

The memo is in response to one issued on May 28, 2013, by the ICC following an ICRC's visit at the facility that the Registry is faced with budgetary constraints.

However, Taylor complains that Europeans at the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia or ICTY have a full size room for use during private visits, while Africans at the ICC have a tiny unfurnished cell for same purpose.

"The ICTY room is well furnished and set up in a dignified way with a bed and dignified environment with respect for human dignity away from the legal and general family visit areas," he said.

"The fact of the matter is that the ICC has only two cells for all of its visiting programs. That includes, Legal visit, Private visits and Family visits," Taylor continued.

He said detained persons are confined to these two adjoining cells separated by a wall in which is affixed a large transparent glass sheet designed to see through and monitor the adjoining room. "The glass is now covered with a sheet of plywood or something equivalent in order for the cell to be used for private visits," he added.

He went on further to state that while confidentiality must be maintained, especially with legal matters, it has not been possible because whenever a legal or another family visit is going on in the adjoining room, one can hear discussions in the other room (private).

"...During family visits, the African families find themselves confined to a cell size room with their kids having nowhere to play for several hours, depending on the length of the visit; while the Europeans' families have a large hall where their children can play", Taylor bemoans.

He wonders while they (African detainees) have not been treated with the same sensibility and respect for human dignity provided the Europeans at the ICTY with whom they share the same building. Taylor said despite series of discussions with various ICC officials on the issue, much is yet to be done by authorities at the ICC to address the issue.

This 'We don't get for damn' attitude by the Registry is further indication of Racism in the system whether intentional or otherwise...It is there. Its ugly, violates the dignity of detained person and is WRONG", said Taylor.

Comments

#5 **Ramsey Enders**  2013-08-05 22:12

  0

Welcome to reality Charles Taylor. You reap what you sow and what goes around comes around.

Quote

#4 **WHITE**  2013-08-05 16:00

  -2

White lives are different from black it's more valuable than Black. So Mr. Taylor shut up and put up. As a white man like me, my life is valuable then any black man, mainly the ones from Africa.

Quote

#3 **Alphonso Wisseh**  2013-08-05 15:00

  0

This fool room should have been reduced to a 4X4 size . He is criminal like most African leaders that kill and suffer their citizens. Thanks to the Sierra Leoneans for helping to keep this monster in jail. To the brothers and sisters of Bong County, your criminal friend is not coming back. He will die in jail.

Quote

#2 **Efessayf**  2013-08-05 12:19

  +1

...Live by the Sword – Die by the Sword...

Matt. 26: 52

Quote

#1 **Seegba**  2013-08-05 04:24

  +1

If you think the jail house is no good, think about those you left dead more than twenty years ago. THEY were pleading for their lives, but you took it away without prudence. You are a designer and as such you design your own room with the human skulls you left behind. You are a fool to even complain about your treatment. You did not give those you killed time to defend themselves in the court of law. Stop those foolish complaining.

Quote

Frontpage Africa (Liberia)

Monday, 5 August 2013

Volunteering for Ghankay - Ex-Fighters, Bong Residents Revive Ex-President's Property

By Selma Lomax

More than 1,000 ex-combatants of former president Charles Taylor's defunct Anti-Terrorist Unit (ATU) Saturday joined scores of Bong residents who volunteered their services to revitalize the "Charles Taylor Farm" on the Gbarnga-Monrovia highway.

The volunteer workers, hopeful of getting employment with the farm when operation resumes Monday, August 5, 2013, sang slogans expressing wishes for Taylor's healthy return.

"Ay Taylor, we like you oh Taylor that's the fact," they said. How the papay looks, alright!"

The former Liberian president was last year sentenced to 50 years by the International Court in The Hague for crimes against humanity.

The farm, approximately 6,000 acres, had been lying in ruins since 2002 after the rebel group Liberia United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) took controls of Gbarnga from Charles Taylor's rebel group the National Patriotic Front of Liberia.

Before its closure, the farm was a major source of employment for Bong residents.

Casual laborers reportedly earned LD\$100 a month. Many now boast of owning homes bought with their wages.

There are reports in Gbarnga that Taylor made available US\$1million to reopen the farm.

Taylor's younger brother Adolphus Taylor, along with Kuku Dennis and Adolphus Dolo - two former elite members of Taylor's rebels - were seen Saturday supervising workers at the farm, but could not confirm or deny the rumored funding.

It is such information that reportedly attracted scores of citizens, with many who had worked with the farm relishing the return of the "Taylor Days."

Former unskilled workers at the farm said they continued to feel the pinch of the economy, and that the farm's closure has taken a toll on their life.

Some now survive on the sale of crushed rocks at the former ATU base in Gbartala, Suakoko District, while others drive pehn-pehns for a living.

'Our life will now change'

Beatrice Cooper, a well-known palm wine seller in Gbarnga, told FrontPageAfrica she was not only celebrating the reopening of the farm but a revival for her life, marred by hardship for the past eight years.

"I don't have problem leaving my business to come here to work for Charles Taylor. This farm did well for some of us and I must pay back," she said. "The name Charles Taylor will always remain in my memory despite him being away from the country."

She said the reopening of farm would transform her life and make her a respectable woman in society. "My life will improve when I start working on the farm. During the days of Taylor when I worked here as a casual worker, I managed to build my house from my pay," she said.

Patrick Davis, a pehn-pehn driver and a volunteer, said the huge presence of citizens was a clear demonstration of love for their former president.

He said they would work for months for the sake of Taylor. "My pekin when it is for the papay business no problem. We know what he did for us in Bong County," a cheerful Davis told FrontPageAfrica.

Like many volunteers, ex-combatants who participated in the volunteer process said the revival of the farm marked the return of the 'Charles Taylor Era' in Bong County.

Former National Patriotic Front of Liberia general Martha Benson, a cook of the volunteer workers, said Saturday that the restoration of the farm marked a turning point in her life.

"For Charles Taylor to be jailed and still be thinking on how to employ his supporters means he is a true patriot that will never be forgotten," Benson said.

She said the farm would empower ex-combatants whose livelihood continues to worsen due to lack of jobs in the country.

"The government continues to ignore the plights of ex-combatants only because we are associated with former president Taylor," Benson said. "No jobs to help restore our life but with the reopening of the farm, our life will get better day by day."

Howard-Taylor had "no idea"

The farm coordinator only identified as Jackson refused to confirm if Taylor was behind the reopening of the farm, and said Taylor's ex-wife Sen. Jewel Howard-Taylor had no link to the restoration of the farm.

"The senator has no idea about the farm," he said. When FrontPage Africa contacted the Howard-Taylor's offices, all of her office staffers refused to comment on the issue.

The reopening of Taylor's farm is one of Howard-Taylor's main unfulfilled campaign promises, which continues to put her at odds with many residents, especially ex-combatants.

Associated Press
Monday, 5 August 2013

Arms Dealer 'Expelled' From Sierra Leone

By CLARENCE ROY-MACAULEY and ROBBIE COREY-BOULET Associated Press
FREETOWN, Sierra Leone August 5, 2013 (AP)

A Sierra Leone court on Monday issued an arrest warrant for one of the most notorious arms dealers of its brutal 11-year civil war, but a justice official later said the ally of imprisoned former Liberian President Charles Taylor had already been kicked out — raising Western fears he will never be tried.

Adding to the confusion, his native Senegal denied it had received him.

Ibrahim Bah has been accused of arranging arms and diamond deals between Taylor and Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front rebel group, which has been accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including murder, rape, mutilation, amputation and forced abductions. Taylor received a 50-year sentence in May 2012 for supporting the rebels.

Judge Tonia Mbawa issued the warrant Monday after Bah didn't appear in court for a case brought by a private citizen on charges including kidnapping and assault. But Attorney General Frank Kargbo said Bah was "expelled" to Senegal in late July, despite pressure from rights groups and the United States to explore options for trying him in Sierra Leone.

Kargbo declined to provide details or give a reason for the decision. Sierra Leone's government has not pursued criminal charges against Bah and the claim that he was expelled raised suspicions that the government was determined to avoid prosecution.

"With Bah's deportation, Sierra Leone has taken a real step backward on promoting justice for grave crimes committed the country's brutal civil conflict that ended in 2002," said Elise Keppler, associate international justice director at Human Rights Watch. "Sierra Leone has ignored the interests of victims who deserve to see those implicated in the worst abuses be investigated."

In the court case against Bah, the complainant, from the diamond-rich eastern district of Kono, said Bah kidnapped him, injured him and held him for multiple days against his will, while threatening to kill him in 2000. During the hearing, a lawyer for Bah said he was unreachable and that his cellphones had been switched off.

Judges set a new court date for Aug. 15 even as one of the lawyers pursuing the case against Bah, Ronald Gidwani, expressed concern that he was no longer in the country. Officials took hours to say he had already been deported.

Senegal government spokesman Abdou Latif Coulibaly said late Monday that officials had no information on Bah. "The government of Senegal has received no notification concerning Ibrahim Bah," he said. "The interior minister has verified with all of the sections of the police, and they have not received any information about this person."

Justice Minister Animata Toure said by text message that any reports about Bah having been sent to Senegal were "not true."

Taylor received a 50-year sentence in May 2012 for supporting the rebels in Sierra Leone in exchange for "blood diamonds." Defense lawyers have disputed the allegations against Taylor, pointing out that Taylor did not physically travel to Sierra Leone.

But judges at the Special Court for Sierra Leone found there was enough evidence to link Taylor to the crimes, and identified Bah as a "trusted emissary" who served as a liaison between Taylor and the rebels.

Bah was believed to be in Burkina Faso when he was placed under a U.N. travel ban in 2004, but U.N. experts located him in Freetown, the Sierra Leone capital, earlier this year. A report from the experts published May 31 this year included his Freetown address.

The case was being closely monitored by the United States, which provided tens of millions of dollars to support the U.N.-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone.

On June 24, Congressman Frank Wolf of Virginia wrote a letter to Secretary of State John Kerry asking that the State Department pressure Sierra Leone to pursue criminal proceedings against Bah.

The U.S. embassy in Sierra Leone has urged the government "to investigate the circumstances around Bah's presence in Sierra Leone and to take appropriate legal action," according to a July 2 response to Wolf's letter from Acting Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs Thomas B. Gibbons.

Bah was briefly detained in June but was released soon after, Gibbons said in his letter. Officials had confiscated his passport and were requiring him to report daily while the case was being reviewed, he said.

A trial of Bah in Sierra Leone would have provided important information on the trade of "blood diamonds" that fueled the conflicts in Sierra Leone and Liberia, said Alain Werner, a former prosecutor in the trial of Taylor and current director of Civitas Maxima, a network of lawyers and investigators building cases on behalf of victims of crimes under international law.

"If Ibrahim Bah was allowed to leave Sierra Leone, then this golden chance to see justice rendered to war victims in a local court of law in Freetown will have been missed, and this would be very unfortunate to say the least," Werner said.

Corey-Boulet reported from Dakar, Senegal. Associated Press writer Babacar Dione contributed from Dakar.

Associated Press
Monday, 5 August 2013

Sierra Leone court issues warrant for arms dealer

CLARENCE ROY-MACAULEY and ROBBIE COREY-BOULET

FREETOWN, Sierra Leone (AP) — A Sierra Leone court on Monday issued an arrest warrant for a top ally of former Liberian President **Charles Taylor** who was recently found living in Freetown, though a lawyer involved in the case expressed concern that the suspect may no longer be in the country.

Ibrahim Bah has been accused of arranging arms and diamond deals between Taylor and Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front rebel group during the country's 11-year civil war that ended in 2002. Judge Tonia Mbawa issued the warrant Monday after Bah didn't appear in court for a case brought by a private citizen on charges including kidnapping and assault.

The complainant, from the diamond-rich eastern district of Kono, said Bah kidnapped him, injured him and held him for multiple days against his will while threatening to kill him in 2000.

Private prosecutions in Sierra Leone are usually reserved for minor offenses, though there is no rule barring private prosecutions for serious crimes.

Bah's defense team has been unable to reach him because his cellphones are switched off, said Edwin George, a lawyer representing Bah.

Ronald Gidwani, one of the lawyers pursuing the case against Bah, said the warrant could be served at any time and that Bah was due back in court on Aug. 15. But he also said it was not clear whether Bah was still in the country.

"We were expecting him to be in court today but he was not in court," Gidwani said. "It is possible that he's not in Sierra Leone."

Taylor received a 50-year sentence in May 2012 for supporting the rebels in Sierra Leone in exchange for "blood diamonds." Defense lawyers disputed the allegations, pointing out that Taylor did not physically travel to Sierra Leone. But judges at the Special Court for Sierra Leone found there was enough evidence to link Taylor to the crimes, and identified Bah as a "trusted emissary" who served as a liaison between Taylor and the rebels.

The RUF rebels have been accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including murder, rape, mutilation, amputation and forced abductions.

"Ibrahim Bah is implicated in fueling horrific crimes by Sierra Leone rebel forces during the country's civil conflict," said Elise Keppler, associate international justice director at Human Rights Watch.

Despite pressure from rights groups, Sierra Leone's government has not pursued charges against Bah.

Bah was believed to be in Burkina Faso when he was placed under a U.N. travel ban in 2004, but U.N. experts located him in Freetown earlier this year. A report from the experts published May 31 this year included his Freetown address.

The case is being closely monitored by the United States, which provided tens of millions of dollars to support the U.N.-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone.

On June 24, Congressman Frank Wolf of Virginia wrote a letter to Secretary of State John Kerry asking that the State Department pressure Sierra Leone to pursue criminal proceedings against Bah.

The U.S. embassy in Sierra Leone has urged the government "to investigate the circumstances around Bah's presence in Sierra Leone and to take appropriate legal action," according to a July 2 response to Wolf's letter from Acting Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs Thomas B. Gibbons.

Bah was briefly detained in June but was released soon after, Gibbons said in his letter. Officials had confiscated his passport and required him to report daily while the case was being reviewed, he said.

Officials could not be reached Monday to confirm whether they were still monitoring Bah.

A trial of Bah in Sierra Leone would provide important information on the trade of "blood diamonds" that fueled the conflicts in Sierra Leone and Liberia, said Alain Werner, a former prosecutor in the trial of Charles Taylor and current director of Civitas Maxima, a network of lawyers and investigators building cases on behalf of victims of crimes under international law.

"If Ibrahim Bah was allowed to leave Sierra Leone, then this golden chance to see justice rendered to war victims in a local court of law in Freetown will have been missed, and this would be very unfortunate to say the least," Werner said.

Corey-Boulet reported from Dakar, Senegal.

Reuters

Monday, 5 August 2013

S.Leone deports former Taylor associate days before trial

By Tommy Trenchard



People walk through the town of Kailahun in eastern Sierra Leone April 23, 2012. REUTERS/Finbarr O'Reilly

(Reuters) - Sierra Leone deported an associate of former Liberian president Charles Taylor a week before he was due to stand trial for crimes committed during the West African nation's 1991-2002 civil war, prompting an outcry from rights campaigners.

Ibrahim Bah has been named by United Nations' experts as an intermediary for Taylor's arms deliveries to Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels, notorious for using child soldiers and hacking off the limbs of civilians.

Taylor was sentenced to 50 years in prison last year by the U.N.-mandated Special Court for Sierra Leone for providing weapons, food, medical supplies, fuel and equipment to forces that committed atrocities during the 1991-2002 conflict in which more than 50,000 people died.

Bah has been targeted by a U.N. travel ban and asset freeze since 2004 for his alleged links to arms and diamond trafficking but has so far avoided prosecution despite pressure from rights groups.

He had been due to stand trial on Monday in Sierra Leone on charges including false imprisonment, kidnapping, assault, and making death threats in the diamond-rich Kono district in 2000, in a case brought by a private citizen.

However, Sierra Leone's President Ernest Bai Koroma ordered Bah's deportation to his native Senegal on July 27.

"We do not need a reason," Sierra Leone's Controller of Immigration Operations Abdulai Timbo said in response to a request from Reuters for the grounds of his deportation. "The president does not want him here. He is persona non-grata."

Justice Minister and Attorney General Frank Kargbo said he was not aware that Bah was due to appear in court on Monday and the accusations had no bearing on the decision to deport him.

In an interview with Reuters at the weekend, Bah admitted supporting Taylor's rebel National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) but denied dealing in weapons. He described himself as a "revolutionary brother" of RUF leader Foday Sankoh, who died in 2003 while awaiting trial for war crimes.

"I never bought or sold arms in my life. I fought alongside the NPFL but I never fought inside Sierra Leone a single minute," Bah said.

While Bah was not tried by the body, which the U.N. mandated with pursuing those most responsible for crimes during the war, rights groups including Human Rights Watch (HRW) have urged Sierra Leone to prosecute him in its own courts.

"Bah's deportation represents a real step backward for Sierra Leone," Elise Keppler, associate international justice director at HRW, told Reuters.

"The government has in effect blocked the private prosecution against Bah and ignored the interests of victims who suffered heinous crimes in which (he) is implicated during the country's civil conflict," she said.

(Editing by Joe Bavier and David Evans)

Africa Review (Kenya)

Tuesday, 6 August 2013

Charles Taylor ally and war crimes suspect 'disappears'

By KEMO CHAM in Freetown



Ibrahim Baldeh aka Ibrahim Bah. PHOTO | INTERPOL

The Sierra Leone government Monday said it had deported Ibrahim Bah, a Senegalese accused of conniving with convicted former Liberian president Charles Taylor to fund the activities of the former Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels during Sierra Leone's bloody civil war.

The government statement comes after an arrest warrant was issued for Mr Bah by a Freetown court.

But there was confusion as to the whereabouts of the war crimes suspect after Senegal said it had not received him.

Human rights groups want him tried for allegedly arranging arms and diamond deals between Taylor and the rebels who were notorious for amputating their victims.

Taylor was last May given a 50-year sentence by the International Criminal Court for his role in the war. Mr Bah was mentioned in that trial as well as in a UN report which said he played a critical role in the overall sustenance of the conflict.

The Senegalese suspect, who described himself as a businessman, allegedly provided the rebels with satellite phones, food and money, among others, between 1999 and 2001.

He also allegedly helped smuggle blood diamonds out of the country and was the subject of a UN-imposed travel ban in 2004 when he was thought to be living in Burkina Faso.

A UN panel of experts report on Liberia in May this year however located him to Freetown, where he is believed to have lived since 2008.

That report alleged the Senegalese had tried to recruit mercenaries to fight during the 2010-2011 Cote d'Ivoire political unrest.

Private prosecution

In June, the Freetown-based Centre for Accountability and Rule of Law (CARL) raised an alarm over his presence in the country following media reports of his detention.

The police refused to acknowledge his detention.

When human rights organisations failed to get the government to prosecute him, they used a private citizen from the diamond-rich eastern Kono district, scene of some of the gravest atrocities committed during the conflict.

The charges include kidnapping and assault.

The unnamed complainant alleged that Mr Bah kidnapped, injured and held him for days against his will, and also threatened to kill him.

Judge Tonia Mbawa has set August 15 for the next hearing in spite of uncertainty surrounding the whereabouts of the accused.

Attorney General Frank Kargbo claimed Mr Bah was expelled to Senegal late last month.

He said he was not aware that the suspect was due to appear in court, adding that the accusations he faced had no bearing on the decision to deport him.

However, a spokesman for the Senegalese government denied knowledge of Mr Bah's arrival in the country.

“The government of Senegal has received no notification concerning Ibrahim Bah. The interior minister has verified with all of the sections of the police, and they have not received any information about this person,” Justice Minister Abdou Latif Coulibaly told AP.

He said the reports of his deportation were “not true,” adding that his government had more pressing priorities than pursuing a ‘dormant’ UN Security Council resolution which imposed a travel ban on Mr Bah.

This would have been Sierra Leone’s first purely domestic prosecution in relation to war crimes or crimes against humanity committed during the conflict.

Charles Taylor remains the only foreign national to have been tried and convicted over the conflict.

Legalbrief Today

Tuesday, 6 August 2013

Injecting new values into society

Omar al-Bashir (the current President of Sudan), Joseph Kony (infamous leader of the Lord's Resistance Army) and others like them violate with impunity the universal and mutually beneficial values of international peace and security and human rights.

On the contrary, the architects and instigators of massive violent crime are much less likely to answer for their crimes than any 'ordinary' petty criminal. Political analyst Dr H J van der Merwe notes that the alleged perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes sometimes escape punishment because national criminal justice systems are either unwilling or unable to address mass atrocity, transnational crime and state criminality. "Transforming international criminal laws (ICLs) into national law and enforcing them on domestic level could not only help bring such perpetrators to book much easier, but may also hold broader transformative benefits. International criminal law holds "transformative value", which broadly refers to the ability to promote change that benefits humanity and national legal systems alongside, and in support of, other global transformative developments such as international human rights.' He notes that deterring would-be perpetrators from committing international crimes, bringing about social reconciliation and putting an end to the culture of impunity are just some of the main objectives of ICL. 'Punishment of perpetrators of international crimes, whether by an international or a domestic court, may act as a vehicle for transformation by facilitating a permanent acceptance of values within a society or a new collective consciousness that rejects those values which produced or sustained injustices in favour of universal and communitarian values. This type of transformation injects new values into societies and areas traditionally dominated by sovereign power.'

The Voice

Monday, 5 August 2013

Kenyan man seeks to quash Jesus' death sentence

East African lawyer aims to overturn decision made over 2,000 years ago

Written by Bart Chan



JESUS CHRIST'S death sentence could be the centre of the next major international legal, if one Kenyan lawyer gets his way.

Dola Indidis wants the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at the Hague to reverse the decision to convict the Christian faith's saviour and son of God – since the verdict was handed down, two millennia have passed.

According to the Bible and historical records, Jesus was accused of heresy by Jewish elders for claiming to God's son and performing miracles.

The central figure of the Christian belief was originally sentenced to a flogging by Judean governor Pontius Pilate, but he was pressured to change his ruling to crucifixion after the crowd demanded death.

Indidis told national publication the Nairobiian: "I filed the case because it's my duty to uphold the dignity of Jesus and I have gone to the ICJ to seek justice for the man from Nazareth.

"His selective and malicious prosecution violated his human rights through judicial misconduct, abuse of office bias and prejudice."

It is not the first time the lawyer has attempted to reverse the ancient judgment – in 2007, he sought to bring his case to the High Court of Kenya, but it was thrown out because of jurisdiction issues.

Not wanting to let it go, he set up a Facebook page to attract more attention to his mission.

However, his case is likely to experience the same fate on the international stage, because the ICJ only has jurisdiction to hear claims brought by one state against another.

A notable case heard at the Hague was that of former Liberian leader Charles Taylor, who was sentenced in 2012 to 50 years in prison for crimes against humanity during the Sierra Leone civil war between 1991-2002.