

**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:

Monday, 7 December 2009

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

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The Spectator
Monday, 7 December 2009

Taylor Risk Young Men & Women

-says Prosecution

There's been a clash between the prosecution and the Former Liberian President, Charles Taylor in The Hague over prosecution accusation that Mr. Taylor did not share the suffering and risk

of young men and women he sent into combat.

Prosecuting Attorney, Nicolas Koumjian pinned down Mr. Taylor to agree that he stayed behind several layers of security while pushing fighters to the frontline.

Taylor Risk Young Men & Women

Mr. Koumjian compared Former Armed Forces of Liberia Commanding General, Thomas Quiwonkpa and Mr. Taylor in drawing the difference of soldiers' loyalty to their leaders.

He said unlike Taylor, the source of Quiwonkpa's popularity with soldiers

was that the General himself was a fighter.

Mr. Koumjian pointed to the arrest and execution of several National Patriotic Front special forces and Taylor's importation of Gambians to protect the NPFL leader.

Standard Times
Monday, 7 December 2009

Interview With Charles Taylor's Lead Counsel, Courtney Griffiths

Interview with Taylor's Lead Counsel Courtney Griffiths QC in The Hague
By Angela Stavrianou, The Hague

On Monday 26 October 2009 court monitor Angela Stavrianou met with Lead Defence Counsel Courtney Griffiths QC to discuss the Charles Taylor trial and relevant issues including the effect of prejudice on the trial and the allegation that the prosecution is bribing witnesses to present evidence against Mr. Taylor.

CARL: Having no previous experience in international criminal law, how did you come to be appointed as defence counsel for Mr. Taylor?

GRIFFITHS QC: I think different people bring different areas of expertise to the job. Because we are a team, even though I had no prior experience of international criminal law, there are others in the team who had. What I was primarily bringing to the team was my courtroom advocacy skills, which, irrespective of which tribunal you are operating in, are universal.

CARL: What is the biggest challenge for the defence in this case?

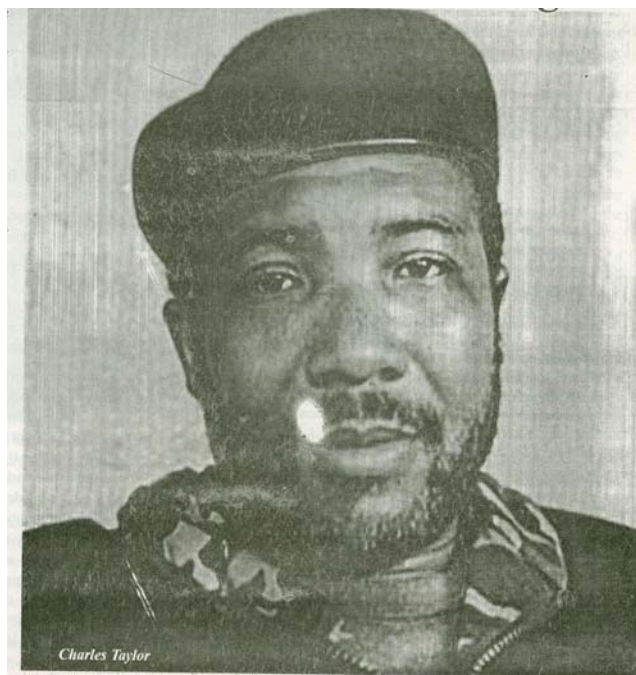
GRIFFITHS QC: I think the biggest challenge for the defence is the fact that public opinion has been led to believe over the years that Charles Taylor is guilty. The stock reaction I get from people when I tell them that I'm defending Charles Taylor is "How can you defend that monster?" because there is this widely held view that he is guilty which has been created by the western media over years. And that I think is our biggest problem.

CARL: What is the effect of this prejudice on the trial?

GRIFFITHS QC: You wonder whether anyone, including the prosecution and in fact also the judges, can approach the case objectively, with an independent frame of mind, basing their judgment solely on the evidence, as opposed to whatever prejudice they may be harbouring about Mr. Taylor, from the various newspaper and media articles they might have read.

CARL: In such a high profile case, what measures do you think could be taken to prevent such prejudices and ensure that the accused gets an impartial trial?

GRIFFITHS QC: Well I don't think there is anything that can be done in a case of this profile. Everyone, irrespective of their position, has been exposed to the prejudice which pervades this whole trial. Everyone has been exposed to it, so it is difficult to see what measures could be put in



Charles Taylor

only had one Sierra Leonean lawyer, Mohamed Bangura, on the team prosecuting Charles Taylor here in The Hague. I think that's a crying shame. I think that's an absolute disgrace.

And frankly, and I'm not saying this in a racist way it's just one of the concerns that I have, I find it very curious that we have a situation where the United States of America does not want to subject itself to any kind of international law and yet the three most important lawyers in the team prosecuting Mr. Taylor are from where? America. Now I am not questioning their ability, I am not questioning their intelligence or anything, I am just asking why is it, in a case which primarily concerns the people of West Africa, are you telling me they couldn't find one lawyer in West Africa to fill one of those positions?

I think it's one of the major shortcomings of this trial, the fact that they have not really engaged with the people of Sierra Leone. Going to Freetown, and entering that fortress which is the Special Court, I found that extremely disturbing. This is supposed to be a court for the Sierra Leonean people, and it's like a fortress. They can't

get in. I can understand the need for secure premises for the detainees. But the idea that you need these walls with these Mongolian soldiers armed to the teeth, and even an armored car there for protection. Who are they frightened of? I think it's an absolute disgrace. It's one of the things that particularly concerns me about the whole way that the court has been structured and the way in which it has proceeded over the years. It has done nothing whatsoever for the Sierra Leonean people. It's like this oasis has been plonked right in the middle of Sierra Leonean society, but it has nothing to do with them whatsoever.

Down to the extent of not putting in place any kind of measures to enable the Sierra Leonean people to actually take over that plant and machinery and put it to some use. For example, why not set up an ECOWAS human rights court in the building? And be asking ECOWAS, "Look, Sierra Leone by itself can't finance this building, but it all you guys, including rich Nigeria, stamped up some cash. Here we have wonderful facilities, put it to some use." Not a bit of it. I think it's an absolute disgrace.

CARL: A key aspect of the defence case is the suggestion that the prosecution is bribing witnesses to provide evidence against Mr. Taylor. This is a serious allegation. Has anything been done about this by the International Criminal Court?

GRIFFITHS QC: Not at all. There hasn't been any investigation. But can I ask you to watch this space because we are not done with that topic yet. It goes beyond the actual witnesses called and what was paid to them.

Moses Blah, the former President of Liberia, received something like US\$5000 of medical treatment in Accra. He was flown to Accra by the prosecution for this treatment.

The same Moses Blah tried to get the prosecution to pay for repairs to his Volvo motorcar. They finally balked at that. But other witnesses have made thousands.

But it doesn't end there. Even witnesses that they haven't called, in fact, some of the most important witnesses that they haven't called, they paid more money to them than to the ones they did call. One of them was

CONTINUED PAGE 11

Interview with Taylor's Lead Counsel Courtenay Griffiths QC in The Hague

FROM PAGE 10

here in The Hague, in June 2007, being prepared to give evidence. That person was in Holland for something like a month being prepped for trial. That guy, who they transported here, and who we know was paid something like US\$ 100,000, has never been called. And originally this whole prosecution hinged on the evidence of those three important witnesses.

That is why they paid them so much money, and relocated them elsewhere in the world. And they haven't called one of them. Even though they have paid each of them in the region of US\$100,000.

Can you believe that?

And they're not the only ones I know about.

There were other witnesses who were paid similar funds, who took the money and stuck two fingers up at them. I know that for a fact because we have spoken to these people.

So it's not just money going to ones they have called, it's money they've paid to others who eventually, wither they decided not to call or they were taken for a ride by.

I know this is a fact. I have got documentary proof to back this up. And I think it is an absolute disgrace. And where is this money coming from? It's not coming from WVS [Witness and Victims Section]. Where have the prosecution got access to those kind of funds?

It's [this issue] going to resurface.

CARL: What motivation do you think prosecution has for doing thing?

GRIFFITHS QC: Well I think there were two reasons. I think one, they needed to pay to get the version of events that they were tied to. I think two, there was an element of racism involved, in the sense that David Crane at the outset, in giving evidence to the House of Representatives Special Committee on Africa, said words to the effect that "The only way to get to an African is through their pocket." Is through money. David Crane is the one that set this agenda.

Brenda Hollis I have a lot of respect and time for. She is a decent, hardworking individual. Brenda inherited this case. This isn't her case. She is being forced to present something that I think, knowing the person that I think she is, she doesn't believe in. And she knows this case is rotten at its core. But she has been left carrying the baby. David Crane was the person who constructed this whole rotten edifice. He's the one I blame.

CARL: Thank you for your time.

Courtenay Griffiths QC expects Taylor to be on the stand until the end of February 2010. He anticipates that examination in chief will last for a further two weeks, followed by three to four weeks of cross examination.

Standard Times
Monday, 7 December 2009

President Koroma Launched War Victims Trust Fund

President Koroma

BY MOHAMED KONNEH

President Ernest Bai Koroma on Saturday launched the War Victim Trust Fund at a well attended ceremony held at the Miata Conference Hall in Freetown. The launching witnessed victims of the war, civil society, the donor community and well wishers coming together to support the process.

Launching the Trust, the President thanked the donor community and development partners for their support and pledged his government's support in caring for those who got damaged during the eleven year civil unrest.

The launching of the fund is a commitment of government to implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission the president said. 'We are gathered here to demonstrate our love for those who suffered human right violations. We can heal our nation without, if we cannot fulfill our obligation to the war victims the President said. President Koroma saluted the resilience of the war victims for the courage they showed all these years. The pro-

cess of reparation can not end with the TRC and Special Court President Koroma said adding that as the government matches forward with its agenda for change it will leave nobody behind. Though the war victims have been receiving support, it is the responsibility of the government to provide additional support for them President Koroma noted.

In his brief statement the Chairman of the War Victims Association Alhaji Jusu Jaka thanked the government for setting up the Trust Fund and called on well meaning organizations to contribute to the fund. Reparation he said is not just setting up trust fund but to address issues that will bring everlasting peace and sustainable development to the country. The day he noted marked another step in healing the wounds of those affected by the war. We will continue to care for our children our family as the process of reparation continues he said thanking the National Commission for Social Action NaCSA for all the good work they have been doing.

Yasmin Jusu-Sherif, Human Right Commissioner in her statement said

the day marked another step moving a post conflict journey as we recalled the pains this nation went through during the warring years. In 2002 former President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah in Lungi declared the end of the war she said. The war, madam Yasmin noted will never be over if issues that brought about the war are not addressed. Today, we continue to work to the path of ending the war by launching the Trust Fund a significant step towards caring for those who suffered the most. She called on other to continue demonstrating love and empathy for war victims.

The Sierra Leone Reparation

Programme is a key recommendation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It is predicted on the right to reparations for the harm caused during the eleven years civil war in Sierra Leone on five categories of civilian victim specific identified in the TRC report of October 2004. The fund recommended by the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission to provide support to civilian victims of the ten-year civil conflict.

The trust fund is a mechanism to mobilize voluntary contributions from all categories of agencies, institution, organizations and individuals for the sustainable implementation of the

reparations programme, which provides benefits and services to five categories of civilian war victims, namely amputees, severely war wounded, victims of sexual violence, war widows and war orphans.

NaCSA the implementing agency for the reparations programme, has already register 29,722 victims in the above categories and commenced provision of benefits and services, with support of the united nations peace building fund, the Sierra Leone and German government, with technical support by the international organization for migration and other agencies.

Charlestaylortrial.org

Saturday, 5 December 2009

As Judges Order Prosecution To Disclose To Defense All New Documents They Intend To Use In The Cross-Examination Of Charles Taylor, Prosecutors Say Taylor Did Not Share Hardships With His Soldiers

By Alpha Sesay

After debates over the use of “fresh evidence” threw the cross-examination of former Liberian President, Charles Taylor, into disarray in recent weeks, Special Court for Sierra Leone judges told prosecutors last Monday that they were in fact allowed to use new documents to test Mr. Taylor’s credibility. Any documents used to try to show Mr. Taylor’s guilt, however, would need to be handed over to Mr. Taylor’s defense team in advance. After problems during the week with the distinction between the two types of documents, prosecutors agreed on Thursday to disclose all documents they intend to use throughout Mr. Taylor’s cross-examination to avoid further “misunderstandings”.

Monday’s ruling allowed the cross-examination to continue with greater predictability while still leaving room for an “acceptable” element of “surprise” – while Thursday’s disclosure orders narrowed down the prosecutors’ discretion in disclosure, demonstrating that the judges were keen to stave off potential problems for the defense going forward.

In cross-examining Mr. Taylor, prosecutors have sought to use new evidence to impeach the former president’s credibility as a witness in his own defense – a move that his defense team has called a “trial by ambush.” The dispute arose when prosecutors tried to use a document to which Mr. Taylor’s defense team objected on the basis that it was not submitted as part of the prosecution’s case and was not used in Mr. Taylor’s direct-examination. On Monday, the judges ordered that documents which are meant to impeach the credibility of Mr. Taylor could be used by the prosecution without the need to disclose the documents to the defense. The judges further ordered that all documents which have probative value to the guilt of the accused must be disclosed to the defense before they could be used by the prosecution in cross-examining Mr. Taylor.

After the decision was handed down on Monday, however, Mr. Taylor’s defense counsel objected to the use of several documents which the prosecution sought to use to impeach Mr. Taylor’s credibility. These documents included records of bank transactions which prosecutors allege provide evidence of Mr. Taylor’s financial undertakings and a newspaper report of Mr. Taylor’s 1997 wedding to his former wife, Liberian Senator Jewel Taylor. The judges agreed with the defense that the documents were probative to the guilt of Mr. Taylor.

On Thursday, presiding judge Justice Richard Lussick said that the prosecution’s “piecemeal disclosure of individual documents” was unacceptable.

“This cannot be allowed to continue and the Chamber needs to set out a disclosure regime,” Justice Lussick said.

On Thursday, lead prosecutor Brenda Hollis agreed that to avoid further misunderstanding of the judges’ order as issued on Monday, all documents — whether intended for use to impeach Mr. Taylor’s credibility or to point at Mr. Taylor’s guilt — will be disclosed to the defense.

Addressing all the parties on Thursday, Justice Lussick made the following orders:

“1. All such documents should be disclosed to the defense by close of business day on Tuesday, and

2. Prosecution should give 24 hours notice to the defense of documents it intends to use for cross-examination on a particular day.”

Prosecutors also on Thursday told Mr. Taylor that he did not share the risks and hardships of his soldiers, that he never went to the front lines, and that he was never under fire. Mr. Taylor agreed that he never went to the front lines.

Comparing Mr. Taylor to the late General Quiwonkpa who was assassinated by former Liberian president Samuel Doe after a failed coup attempt, prosecution counsel Nicholas Koumjian told Mr. Taylor that the late General was popular among his troops because he was a fighter, unlike Mr. Taylor.

“Thomas Quiwonkpa was admired, and in fact, you could even say, would you agree, loved by many of the soldiers under him? And this is because soldiers admire and respect those leaders who share the hardships and risks of combat with them, correct?” Mr. Koumjian asked Mr. Taylor.

In his response, Mr. Taylor said “Yes, I would agree.”

When Mr. Koumjian put to Mr. Taylor that “you don’t share the hardships of your soldiers,” the former president responded that “No, but you were talking about soldiers. In the first place, I’m not a soldier, never taken military training. You spoke about soldiers caring for their men, I agree. Now you’ve put me—I have not, have never been—have never taken military training, so I’m not a soldier.”

When Mr. Koumjian pushed Mr. Taylor further to answer whether he shared the risks and hardships with his soldiers, the former president eventually said “oh, I do. Oh, I do.”

Mr. Koumjian told Mr. Taylor that “You stay behind the lines in your executive mansions while you send young men and women to fight.” Mr. Taylor dismissed the prosecutor’s assertion as “totally incorrect.”

Mr. Taylor agreed with Mr. Koumjian that he has never been to the front line.

“I have not been on the front line but I was under fire because I was on the ground,” Mr. Taylor said.

“As the leader, my protection was—my protection was very important. I must admit, I was very well protected and would have been stupid if I didn’t,” he added.

On Wednesday, prosecutors questioned Mr. Taylor on his decision to grant Liberian citizenship to Sierra Leonean rebel forces who relocated to Liberia in December 1999 after falling out with the Sierra Leonean rebel group’s hierarchy.

Mr. Taylor has long stated in his direct-examination that when Sierra Leone’s notorious rebel commander Sam Bockarie became a hindrance to the peace process in the country and eventually fell out with Revolutionary United Front (RUF) leader Foday Sankoh, West African leaders took a decision to get Mr. Bockarie out of Sierra Leone and have him relocated to Liberia. As Mr. Bockarie departed Sierra Leone for Liberia, hundreds of his loyal rebel fighters followed him to Liberia. Prosecution witnesses have testified that Mr. Bockarie relocated to Liberia on the invitation of Mr. Taylor. The former Liberian leader has denied these assertions. Mr. Taylor has stated that upon arrival in Liberia, Mr. Bockarie and his rebel followers were all granted Liberian citizenship before Mr. Bockarie’s followers were recruited into Liberia’s Anti-Terrorist Unit (ATU). In cross-examining Mr. Taylor, Mr. Koumjian read from various portions of Liberian legislation dealing with Liberian citizenship and pointed out that Mr. Taylor flouted the legal procedures to grant citizenship to the Sierra Leonean rebels. Mr. Taylor responded that he acted on the advice of his lawyers.

“I am not a lawyer. I was president. I was given legal advice by my lawyers. So it’s unfair for me to answer questions on these legal documents when I am not a lawyer,” Mr. Taylor said.

On Monday, Mr. Taylor told the court that he received money from both Taiwan and Libya as contributions to his campaign to become president of Liberia in 1997.

“In 1996-1997, I received money from Taiwan and Libya,” Mr. Taylor told the court.

Mr. Taylor explained that during his campaign in the Liberian presidential elections in 1997, the Taiwanese government gave him 1,000,000 United States Dollars to support his candidacy. The money, Mr. Taylor said was delivered through the Taiwanese embassy in Ivory Coast and was received by his Chief of Protocol, Musa Sesay. Although the check was addressed in his name, Mr. Taylor said that it was cashed by Mr. Sesay in Abidjan, based on his (Taylor) authorization. Asked by lead prosecutor Ms. Brenda Hollis why the Taiwanese government had given him such amount of money, Mr. Taylor explained that the Taiwanese government probably did so for Public Relations (PR) reasons.

“They developed an interest in me,” Mr. Taylor said. “At that particular time, it was clear that elections were coming up. There was this concern that after the elections, they were concerned that China will block their interest in Liberia. It was like a form of PR for them because they were concerned that diplomatic support will continue after I became president. It was part of a policy to try to court foreign countries or prospective leaders.”

Mr. Taylor is responding to charges that he provided support to RUF rebels in Sierra Leone. Prosecutors allege that Mr. Taylor received Sierra Leone’s diamonds from RUF rebels and in return supplied them with arms and ammunition, which were used to commit atrocities in Sierra Leone. It is further alleged that Mr. Taylor occupied a position of superior authority to RUF rebels and that he knew or had reason to know that the rebels were committing atrocities in Sierra Leone but failed to prevent the commission of those crimes or that he did not punish perpetrators when he knew that such atrocities had been committed. He is now charged of bearing the greatest responsibility for the crimes committed by rebel forces in Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor has denied all the allegations against him. He has testified in direct-examination as a witness in his own defense and he is presently being cross-examined by the prosecution.

Mr. Taylor’s cross-examination continues on Monday.

BBC WORLD SERVICE TRUST

Friday, December 4, 2009

John Kollie

Taylor doesn't share fighters suffering/risk

There's been a clash between the prosecution and the Former Liberian President, Charles Taylor in The Hague over prosecution accusation that Mr. Taylor did not share the suffering and risk of of young men and women he sent into combat. John Kollie has this transcription on the continuing trial of former Liberian president Charles Taylor...

Prosecuting Attorney, Nicolas Koumjian pinned down Mr. Taylor to agree that he stayed behind several layers of security while pushing fighters to the frontline.

Mr. Koumjian compared Former Armed Forces of Liberia Commanding General, Thomas Quiwonkpa and Mr. Taylor in drawing the difference of soldiers' loyalty to their leaders.

He said unlike Taylor, the source of Quiwonkpa's popularity with soldiers was that the General himself was a fighter.

Mr. Koumjian pointed to the arrest and execution of several National Patriotic Front special forces and Taylor's importation of Gambians to protect the NPFL leader.

BBC WORLD SERVICE TRUST

CharlesTaylorTrial.org (The Hague)

Thursday, 3 December 2009

Liberia: Judges Order Prosecutors To Disclose To The Defense All New Documents They Intend To Use In Cross-Examination of Charles Taylor

Alpha Sesay

Special Court for Sierra Leone judges today ordered prosecutors to disclose to the defense all new documents that they intend to use in the cross-examination of former Liberian president Charles Taylor who is responding to charges that he was involved in a joint criminal enterprise with rebel forces who waged an 11-years rebel war in Sierra Leone.

In delivering the Chamber's ruling, presiding judge Justice Richared Lussick said that the prosecution's "piecemeal disclosure of individual documents" was unacceptable.

"This cannot be allowed to continue and the Chamber needs to set out a disclosure regime," Justice Lussick said.

Today's order came in the wake of Monday's decision by the judges in response to prosecution's request to use "new evidence" in the form of documents to impeach Mr. Taylor's credibility as a witness in his own defense. In the decision, the judges ordered that documents which are meant to impeach the credibility of Mr. Taylor can be used by the prosecution without the need to disclose the documents to the defense. These documents will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, the judges ordered. The judges further ordered that all documents which have probative value to the guilt of the accused must be disclosed to the defense before they could be used by the prosecution in cross-examining Mr. Taylor.

When cross-examination resumed this morning, Mr. Taylor's defense counsel objected to the use of a bundle of bank documents which prosecutors sought to cross-examine Mr. Taylor on in order to establish that Mr. Taylor was not truthful in his direct-examination about various bank accounts which he is alleged to have had before his detention by the Special Court for Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor's defense counsel said the team had not been given sufficient time to study the bank documents. Mr. Taylor's defense asked to be given until Monday to study the documents. The judges granted the defense application.

Lead prosecutor Ms. Brenda Hollis, addressing the judges, agreed that to avoid further misunderstanding of the judges' order, all documents, whether intended for use to impeach Mr. Taylor's credibility or to point at Mr. Taylor's guilt will be disclosed to the defense.

Addressing all the parties, Justice Lussick made the following orders:

- "1. All such documents should be disclosed to the defense by close of business day on Tuesday, and
2. Prosecution should give 24 hours notice to the defense of documents it intends to use for cross-examination on a particular day."

Mr. Taylor is on trial for his alleged role in supporting RUF rebels who waged an 11-years rebel war in Sierra Leone. Crimes committed by the rebels ranged from amputation of civilian limbs, to rape, recruitment of child soldiers and murder. Mr. Taylor is accused of involvement in a joint criminal enterprise with the RUF rebels. He has denied all the allegations against him.

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 4 December 2009

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

International Clips on Liberia

LIBERIA: Rewarding nutritional risk-takers

GBARNGA-TA, (IRIN) - Most communities have individuals or groups whose exceptional approaches to problems help them find better solutions than their peers, say behavior change experts, who call such individuals 'positive deviants'. Two years ago NGO Catholic Relief Services (CRS) set out to find such entities in Liberia to see if they could shed light on why among children in the same village and socioeconomic bracket some were well-fed and others malnourished. The answers varied across the three counties studied – Nimba, Lofa and Bong – but in several Bong County villages the answers came down to chicken, fish, eggs and yams, according to CRS nutrition and health adviser Daniel Dharmaraj. The majority of Liberian children are fed a uniform diet of rice mixed with sauce and a smattering of vegetables, according to nutrition specialist Cherie Fulk with NGO Action Contre La Faim. "Fruit and vegetables are not highly valued among many communities – rice is the thing," she said.

Guinea

Wounded Guinea leader flown to Morocco after attack

CONAKRY, Dec 4 (Reuters) - Guinea junta chief Captain Moussa Dadis Camara flew to Morocco on Friday for hospital treatment after being wounded in a gun attack by a former military aide, Moroccan authorities said. Guinea's leadership played down the extent of Camara's injuries and denied his departure left a power vacuum in the unstable West African nation, the world's top exporter of the aluminium ore bauxite. His powerful deputy Sekouba Konate returned to the capital Conakry from a trip abroad. But Camara's evacuation for treatment in Morocco's main military hospital raised questions about his future, with many observers believing he may not return to Guinea and could be persuaded to take exile. "No bullet penetrated the president's body. There was just a graze on the head," Communications Minister Idrissa Cherif said of the attack in Conakry late on Thursday. "Power is in the hands of the CNDD (junta) and the government," he told Reuters of the regime which Camara created after a bloodless coup in December 2008 that followed the death of strongman leader Lansana Conte. However, a diplomat in Guinea said: "If he leaves the country that would be it for him." Metals analysts said prices of aluminium could be boosted if Guinea's troubles escalate, but said there was no lack of global supply and so the impact would be limited for now. Camara was rushed to the Hay Riyad military hospital outside the capital Rabat for treatment on what the Moroccan Foreign Ministry there said were "strictly humanitarian grounds". Morocco has been a longstanding destination for West Africa's elite to seek medical care. Officials there did not comment on his injuries.

Erratic Guinean leader sees himself as 'chosen by God'

CONAKRY, Dec 4, 2009 (AFP) - Military leader Moussa Dadis Camara, who was flown out of Guinea after being shot by a fellow army officer on Friday, has frequently expressed the view that he was chosen by God to lead his poverty-stricken west African country. Before he emerged as the top member of a junta that seized power almost a year ago, Captain Camara was unknown to most Guineans. On Friday, he survived a murder bid by his aide Lieutenant Aboubacar Sidiki Diakite, who has since gone into hiding. Camara was flown to Morocco for medical care. In his mid-40s, he is

known to have joined the armed forces in 1990 and to have served mainly in the army's fuel supply department.

Ivory Coast

Ivory Coast urged to stage early 2010 poll

OUAGADOUGOU (Reuters) - Ivory Coast should hold its long-delayed presidential election in late February or early March of next year, mediators aiming to end the political stalemate said on Thursday. The new target date was included in a statement issued by the so-called Permanent Framework of Consultations (PFC) on Ivory Coast after a day of talks with the main political parties in the Burkina Faso capital Ouagadougou. The world's biggest cocoa grower missed on Sunday the latest in a long line of failed target dates for a presidential election aimed at drawing a line under a brief 2002/3 civil war that has split the country in two. Authorities cited technical problems including a dispute over the eligibility of about one million voters. The timetable proposed by the PFC includes publishing a final voter list in January 2010 followed by the distribution of voter cards and the start of campaigning in February. Analysts say delays to the poll have prolonged a deadlock dating back to the war that has prevented reforms to the cocoa industry and unnerved potential investors in west Africa's former economic hub. Critics accuse President Laurent Gbagbo of deliberately delaying the election, something he has repeatedly denied. Earlier on Thursday former colonial power France urged Ivory Coast in a statement to organise the poll as soon as possible.

Local Media – Newspaper

Draft Laws To Serve People's Interest Says UN Deputy Envoy

(Public Agenda, The Informer, Liberian Express, Heritage)

UN Deputy Envoy Henrietta Mensa-Bonsu has reminded Liberian legislators that they have a critical role to play in promoting good governance and the rule of law in the country. In her remarks Tuesday during the launch of a 10-year legislative drafting training programme, Madam Mensa-Bonsu said the Liberian legislature has in its hands, the power to either advance or impede the interest of the people. "It is for this reason that the United Nations Mission in Liberia is supporting, and will continue to support the legislature and the whole of the Government of Liberia with initiatives to build institutional and operational capacity," she added. The training aims to improve the law-making process by enhancing the skills of legislators, government officials and senior level legislative staff. The Deputy SRSG for Rule of Law said good legislative drafting ensures that the intentions of the legislature are made known and preserved for the guidance of society.

Liberia's Crisis "Unchanged"

(New Democrat)

The International Crisis Group (ICG) has listed Liberia in its latest report amongst several other crisis-prone countries, such as Afghanistan, around the world as having "unchanged" crisis landscape. This suggests that nothing has fundamentally changed in terms of moving away from crisis or that the situation is stable. Three actual or potential conflict situations around the world deteriorated and none improved in November 2009, according to the new issue of the International Crisis Group's monthly bulletin CrisisWatch, released today.

Several Ambassadors Present Letters of Credence, France To Train More Police Officers

(New Democrat)

Scores of ambassadors have presented their Letters of Credence to President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf at her office in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Amongst them is the Ambassador of France who promised training for senior police officers. They are expected to undergo crowd control training in one of the best military academies in France. Ambassador Gerard Larome told President Sirleaf that following the training of the five senior police officers; France will send trainers to train 150 police officers to beef up the strength of the Emergency Response Unit (ERU). Receiving the letters of credence, president Sirleaf recalled the peacekeeping role of France in Africa and hoped that France will be of help to keep the sub-region stable.

Ex-AFL Commander Wolo Nagbe Resurfaces ...Says armed ERU Fired At Him

(Liberia Journal, National Chronicle)

The former commander of the de-activated Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), Wolo Nagbe who disappeared nearly eight months ago has broken silence. Retired Col. Nagbe said he had been nursing wounds he sustained following a fight between his men and personnel of the Emergency Response Unit (ERU) in March. He alleged ERU police opened fire on him and his men while staging a peaceful march at the Paynesville Town Hall on March 7 noting that the peaceful march was intended to claim the attention of international women attending the International Colloquium in Monrovia. He called on President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to ensure that the former soldiers are paid five months salary arrears this Christmas holiday.

Acting UNMIL Police Commissioner Challenges LNP Officers

(The Analyst)

Acting UN Police Commissioner Gautam Sawang has appealed to officers of the Liberia National Police (LNP) to devote themselves to their duties and to the service of their communities. Mr. Sawang made these remarks during a ceremony to handover the Jacob Town Police Station to the Government of Liberia in Jacob Town, Paynesville Community. The police station was rehabilitated by UNMIL under its Quick Impact Project at a cost of approximately US\$25,000.

EU Announces 20 Million Euros To Boost Liberia's 2010 Fiscal Budget

(Liberia Journal, Heritage, Daily Observer)

The European Union (EU) has announced an initial 20 million Euros to help support Liberia's fiscal budget beginning 2010. EU Ambassador to Liberia Attilio Pacifici said a meeting was held in Brussels recently to finalize discussion on the allotment. In another development, the new French Ambassador Gerard Lerome disclosed that five senior police officers would leave Liberia Friday to undergo training in France. Ambassador Lerome said at the end of the exercise, the officers would serve as trainers for over 150 other officers back home. He said the training exercise is his country's contribution to Liberia's reconstruction drive. The two diplomats spoke Thursday when they presented their Letters of Credence to President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf at the Foreign Ministry.

President Sirleaf Embroiled In Land Dispute

(Liberia Journal, National Chronicle)

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has surfaced at the center of a land dispute with over 20 family heads of the Morris' Farm Community. Two spokespersons for the residents, Jelson Kelman and Koiwu Scott said President Sirleaf has ordered that they vacate the premises on grounds it belongs to her. Messrs Kelman and Scott explained that President Sirleaf instructed the Lands and Mines Minister to carry out a survey of the disputed four acres of land, which they claimed they have title deeds to the area and alleged the President was using her power to dispossess them of their property. Lands, Mines and Energy Minister Eugene Shannon admitted his ministry was requested to carry out what he called an investigative survey to determine President Sirleaf's ownership to the land. According to Minister Shannon the investigation showed the land belongs to the President and that the residents were illegally occupying the premises. Presidential Press Secretary Cyrus Badio said President Sirleaf purchased the land in the 1970s and has only requested the Lands, Mines and Energy Ministry to carry out a re- demarcation of the property. Mr. Badio however assured the residents the President was not prepared to evict them now.

Government Lobbies For Debt Relief

(Heritage)

Finance Ministry authorities have reacted on the landmark lawsuit lost to two Caribbean Firms after Liberia was sued in British High Court in London. Deputy Finance Minister for Administration Tarnue Marwolo said government is currently consulting with the Ministry of Justice on whether to appeal the court's decision. Minister Marwolo said government is also reviewing the court's ruling following which it would give its position on the matter. He said government's defeat in the lawsuit further explains the constraints government is facing in tackling debt relief and economic recovery. The

Deputy Finance Minister said government has started lobbying the international community, including Great Britain and the United States to “secure an irrevocable debt relief” in a bid to fight what he called “vulture’s funds.”

US\$2.5M For MCC Soon, As 8,000 Liberians To Benefit

(Daily Observer)

Cooperative Housing Foundation or CHF International, in collaboration with Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation of the United States of America will shortly release US\$2.5 million to authorities of the Monrovia City Corporation (MCC). The disclosure was made Thursday by Monrovia’s City Mayor Mary Broh. According to Mayor Broh, the fund follows months of close consultations between the two institutions and the Liberian Government in its waste management programme drive. Mayor Broh said the fund would be released shortly following scheduled stakeholders’ meeting for December 9, 2009. She said the waste management programme which runs from January to June 2010 would create more than 8,000 job opportunities for Liberians.

PPCC, Partners Develop Strategic Documents

(Daily Observer)

The Public Procurement and Concessions Commission (PPCC) in collaboration with its partners has developed two key documents aimed at implementing the procurement and concessions reform agenda of Liberia. A PPCC release said the regulations underpin the Public Procurement and Concessions Act of 2005 and implementation manuals endorsed by the Cabinet. The PPCC said provisions and procedures in the regulations and implementation manuals ensure that procurement entities achieve efficiency and transparency.

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

EU Announces 20 Million Euros To Boost Liberia’s 2010 Fiscal Budget

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

Ex-AFL Commander Wolo Nagbe Resurfaces ...Says armed ERU Fired At Him

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

President Sirleaf Embroiled In Land Dispute

ERU police finally seal Sinoe Rubber Plantation

- Reports from Sinoe County say the Emergency Response Unit (ERU) in collaboration with local police officers has taken over the Sinoe Rubber Plantation.
- Sinoe County Police Commander Patrick Smith said the officers moved on the plantation early Thursday morning and sealed it up.
- Col. Smith said the officers encountered no resistance from illicit tappers or local residents.
- He said the residents welcomed the officers with jubilation and are helping the police to identify troublemakers on the plantation.
- According to Col Smith, the initial deployment includes 36 police officers and two UNMIL personnel.

Dujar Association Constructs 16 Schools Across Liberia

- The Liberia Dujar Association says it has successfully completed the construction and renovation of 16 modern schools across the country at the cost of US\$1.8 million dollars.
- The Association’s Board Chairman Jeremiah Sulunteh said the construction and renovation exercise cover six counties in all regions of the country.
- According to Mr. Sulunteh who is also Minister of Post and Telecommunications, the group is currently constructing a technical college to help train young Liberians in various life-skill disciplines.
- He said his organization was interested in education which is one of the key pillars of the poverty reduction strategy.
- The Dujar school project covered Nimba, Bong, Sinoe, Gbarpolu, Grand Cape Mount and Montserrado counties.

Valentine Ayika's Half Million US Dollar Case Gets Steam, Government Admits

- The controversial US\$500,000 case involving Nigerian businessman Valentine Ayika has started at the Temple of Justice in Monrovia following a petition for a Writ of Error filed by Plaintiff at the Supreme Court of Liberia.
- Lawyers representing the legal interest of Mr. Ayika, Cllrs. Dempster Brown and Theophilus Gould heard formal argument into the case Thursday morning claiming that Government illegally dispossessed their client of his money.
- The Nigerian businessman is accused of entering the country via the Robert's International Airport with the money plastered to his body.
- Meanwhile, the Government has admitted that its illegal used half a million United States dollars belonging to Mr. Ayika.
- The Government confiscated the money from the Nigerian businessman in September 2006 and used it for what it says was security operations.

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

PPCC, Partners Develop Strategic Documents

Deputy Labor Minister Says Threshold Bill Is Crucial To Margibi

- The Deputy Labor Minister for Administration John Josiah says the passage of the Threshold Bill by the Legislature is of great importance to the people of Margibi County.
- Minister Josiah said the passage of the Bill will enable Margibi County to be fully represented in the Legislature.
- According to Deputy Labor Minister the population of the county has overgrown to the extent that its current four representatives do not adequately represent the people.
- He said the passage of the Threshold Bill should be predicated upon the Census results submitted to the government by Liberia Institute for Statistics and Geo-Information Services.

Truth FM *(culled from website today at 10:00 am)*

Government Presents Check Worth Over US\$10,000 To Community Radio Stations

- The Liberian Government has presented a check worth more than US\$10,000 to community radio stations across the country.
- The money according to Deputy Information Minister for Public Affairs Norrison Tweh is intended to spread pro-government policy in the leeward parts of the country.
- Minister Tweh said the dissemination of government policies in the leeward parts of the country will help the locals understand the strides government is making to improve the wellbeing of its citizens.
- He said government's poverty reduction strategy will top the policy of government to be disseminated.

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

The Hague Justice Portal

Friday, 4 December 2009

Arrest of Mladic and Hadzic still key to ICTY Completion Strategy

On Thursday 3 December 2009, the President and Prosecutor at the ICTY reported to the UN Security Council on the Tribunal's Completion Strategy.

Pursuant to Resolution 1534, on 3 December 2009 the President and the Prosecutor at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) gave their six-monthly assessment of the Tribunal's progress towards its Completion Strategy. According to their estimations, all trials are set to be completed by mid-2011, with the exception of the Radovan Karadžić case, which is expected to last until 2014 including appeals.



Since they last addressed the Security Council in June of this year, progress has yet to be made in arresting the two remaining fugitives from justice, Ratko Mladić and Goran Hadžić. According to both the President and the Prosecutor, the continued flight from justice of the two fugitives remained an issue of concern for the Tribunal's mandate and would "tarnish the Security Council's historic contribution to peace-building in the former Yugoslavia."

The Prosecutor, Serge Brammertz, positively noted that Serbia's cooperation with the Tribunal has continued to progress, with his office being granted more expeditious and effective access to documents and archives. Nevertheless, the Prosecutor reiterated that the most critical aspect of Serbia's cooperation is the need to apprehend Mladić and Hadžić. He informed the Security Council that a "variety of operational activities including search operations were being conducted" to apprehend the two accused. Commenting further on the cooperation of Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, Brammertz noted that the cooperation of states was a "key condition" to a successful completion of the ICTY's mandate.

"Justice is not only about punishing perpetrators"

President Judge Patrick Robinson also detailed the Tribunal's work in transforming itself as a residual mechanism. He informed the Security Council of the "mammoth undertaking" required, specifically in declassifying many of the Tribunal's documents. Further, the President also briefed the Security Council on the work currently being undertaken to strengthen national jurisdictions in the former Yugoslavia as well as to ensure the Tribunal's legacy. The Prosecutor additionally stated that strengthening national judicial systems "remains a fundamental aspect of the Tribunal's completion strategy."

Concerning other issues, the President requested that the Security Council consider a claims commission for the victims of crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia under which they could seek compensation. Judge Robinson reiterated that "justice is not only about punishing perpetrators, but also about restoring dignity to victims".

Since it began work 16 years ago, proceedings against 121 individuals have been completed at the tribunal. Currently, 24 accused are on trial and 13 accused have appeals pending. With the recent commencement of the Karadžić trial, only the case of Zdravko Tolimir is at the pre-trial stage and is scheduled to commence on 17 December 2009.

Reuters

Friday, 4 December 2009

Karadzic files motion to remove appointed lawyer

By International Justice Desk



*The Hague,
Netherlands*

Former Bosnian
Serb leader
Radovan
Karadzic filed a
motion on Friday
to replace a
lawyer appointed

to him by a war crimes tribunal, saying he wanted to work with someone who shared his "heritage and language."

Karadzic, who has denied all 11 war crimes charges from the 1992-95 Bosnian war, including genocide at Srebrenica, had been representing himself and boycotted the first three days of his trial in an attempt to win more time to prepare his defence.

Judges at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) last month appointed London-based barrister Richard Harvey as Karadzic's legal counsel after the boycott.

The court, which adjourned the trial until March 2010 to give Harvey time to prepare the case, later denied Karadzic's request to appeal that decision.

Karadzic is now asking the court's registrar, who handles administrative and procedural matters, to allow him to choose someone else as a counsel. He also asked on Friday for the court to restore funding for the legal team assisting him.

"Dr. Karadzic isn't really prepared at this time to come on the first of March to appear at trial because his team is no longer funded by the registry and because he wasn't given a chance to choose a stand-by counsel with whom he can work," Peter Robinson, who advises Karadzic, told reporters.

Robinson said Karadzic remained in good spirits, working about 10 hours daily on the case into the early hours.

"The registrar's actions deprived Dr. Karadzic of the right to select a lawyer with whom he shares a common heritage, language and trust, and who has familiarity with the conflict in Bosnia.

"Instead the registrar has selected a lawyer from a NATO country who has represented at this tribunal only those who have fought against the Serbs," Karadzic wrote in Friday's motion.

Karadzic had been given a list of five lawyers by the registrar, but rejected all on the same basis.

The Nov. 5 ruling imposing a lawyer on Karadzic allowed him to continue representing himself, but compelled him to work with Harvey, or another lawyer if he were replaced. If Karadzic continues to boycott the trial, he loses his right to represent himself and the appointed lawyer will take over, the court said.

The Los Angeles Times

Sunday, 6 December 2009

Cambodia's first war crimes trial marred by flaws

The trial of Khmer Rouge prison commander Comrade Duch underscores the difficulties of such an endeavor in a country with a reputation for corruption and a compromised judiciary.



People arrive for the trial of Comrade Duch, head of the Khmer Rouge prison where 15,000 were slain. About 4,500 people attended watched the proceedings at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, as the war crimes tribunal is officially known. (Mak Remissa / European Pressphoto Agency / November 27, 2009)

By Brendan Brady

Reporting from Phnom Penh, Cambodia - The scene at the untidy conclusion of Cambodia's first war crimes trial was telling: a French defense lawyer with his face buried in his hands.

The tribunal promised a more inclusive approach than its counterparts at the International Criminal Court at The Hague. Instead, the trial closed in disarray late last month after an eleventh-hour disagreement between the Cambodian and foreign defense counsels, offering a stark reminder of the difficulties in carrying out international standards of justice in a country with a reputation for corruption and a deeply compromised legal system.

Kang Kek Ieu, referred to as Kaing Guek Eav in tribunal filings, but better known by his revolutionary alias, Comrade Duch, ran the infamous prison where 15,000 supposed enemies of the revolution were tortured before being executed in the nearby "killing fields."

Despite his seeming enthusiasm for the job at the notorious S-21 prison, Duch argued that he and his family would have been killed had he not carried out his superiors' orders.

For nine months, French lawyer Francois Roux crafted a defense strategy of admission and apology that implied the team would seek a lenient sentence. But in the trial's final moments, Duch and his Cambodian lawyer, Kar Savuth, broke with this posture, disputing the legitimacy of the court and calling for Duch's immediate release.

Roux's head-in-hands reaction underlined the rifts in this complex tribunal, a tenuous coalition of domestic and international judges, lawyers and administrators.

Speaking to journalists, Roux even hinted that his colleague's move was motivated by political pressure. Many members of the current government were Khmer Rouge cadres and remain opposed to the tribunal, which is trying the architects of the group's fanatical rule in the late 1970s, during which an estimated 1.7 million Cambodians were slain or died from overwork or starvation.

Over the last two years, claims of governmental interference and kickbacks have underscored the disadvantages of holding the tribunal in Cambodia.

The difficult negotiations to bring former Khmer Rouge leaders to justice started in 1997. By 2003, then-U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan said the extreme politicization of Cambodia's judiciary required that the tribunal be held outside the Cambodian system.

But after long negotiations, the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia was developed as a locally housed tribunal running largely under local laws, with the United Nations as a minor partner.

"No one in the U.N. or elsewhere will ever copy the Cambodian model," said Brad Adams, Asia head of Human Rights Watch. "It's the lowest standard the United Nations has been willing to go."

The most detrimental compromise in the tribunal's composition, Adams said, was a requirement that the prosecution and investigating judges seek approval from the Cambodian side of the court to conduct research, summon testimony and expand the docket.

"The Cambodian side has interpreted it as the international side shouldn't do anything without their permission," he said.

Adams said the Special Court for Sierra Leone, set up in 2002 to address war crimes committed during the country's civil war, has been more effective because the U.N. holds a majority on the judicial panel and has independent powers of investigation.

The U.N.'s current main body for prosecuting war criminals, the International Criminal Court, was established in 2002 in part to provide a permanent tribunal that is independent and financially secure.

Ex-Khmer Rouge leaders, however, don't fall under the court's jurisdiction because it can investigate only crimes committed after its founding.

"The hope with establishing the ICC was that it would obviate the need for ad hoc courts," said Beth Van Schaack, a law professor at Santa Clara University who attended the hearings. "They're expensive, time-consuming and require negotiations with governments."

But many hoped the tribunal would promote reconciliation and healing.

Had the hearings been held abroad, Van Schaack said, the 4,500 Cambodians who attended in the last week would have had to watch it on television or not followed it all.

The trial of the other four, more senior, Khmer Rouge leaders in detention is not expected to start until 2011. They are believed to be the masterminds of the vision to forge an agrarian utopia by abolishing religion, money and schools and forcing most of the population onto collective farms.

Prosecutors have doubted the sincerity of Duch's cooperation and have asked for a 40-year prison sentence. The judges are expected to deliver a ruling in March. The maximum penalty is life imprisonment.

"No one is happy about his request to be freed; in fact, most people want him killed," said Chum Mey, one of only a few people to survive Duch's prison, and now a civil party participant in the trial.

But despite the bitter insult of Duch's about-face, Chum said, the anger that once consumed him from memories of being horse-whipped and given electrical shocks has been released by his contact with the tribunal.

"After coming here, I feel very relieved to be able to see this process," he said. "Until they come to the tribunal to see it themselves, I think the pain for many Cambodians will never go away."

Brady is a special correspondent.