

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



Historical postcard

PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

Tuesday, 7 December 2010

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Awareness Time4s

Tuesday, 7 December 2010

Charles Taylor's Verdict Expected by July 2011

Brenda Hollies, Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone is reported to have made a revelation in Freetown at Fourah Bay College past Thursday December 2 2010 that judgment in the case of Charles Taylor will be passed next year June or July. The court's sitting in The Hague has concluded the evidence phase of the trial and written arguments from both the Prosecution and Defence are expected to be presented in January 2011.

Commentary=

Jail Break? Who Let The 'Dogs' Out?

By Abdul Karim Fonti Kabia

Several hardcore criminals escaped from the Pademba Road prisons in the afternoon hours of Sunday 5th December 2010 and the circumstances surrounding the escape remains a mystery.

The 19 confirmed escapees include a convict who was serving a jail term sentence of 60 years after being convicted of robbery with aggravation and others standing trials for various offences ranging from robbery with aggravation, conspiracy, house breaking and larceny, to possession of forged bank notes.

In what seems to be a well coordinated escape, the prisoners were spotted with pistols and gun shots were also allegedly fired by them. The prison officers on duty took to their heels when they saw the armed prisoners marching out of the prisons compound. This was because they were armless and cannot confront armed criminals.

I beg to defer from the assertion that what took place was a jailbreak. How can it be a jailbreak when there has been no evidence to show that the prisoners damaged any door or window to make their escape?

It has been learnt that the escape took place shortly after some three female visitors in a black jeep visited one of the criminals at the Pademba Road Prisons. This visit is considered as an illegal visit since Sunday is not among the two visiting days at the Pademba Road Prison. Why the officers in charge allowed such an illegal visit leaves much to be desired. Unconfirmed reports also have it that the visitors handed over a black plastic to one of the escapees and it is widely believed that the plastic posses the guns used by the escapees to pull out.

Eyewitnesses even allege that most of the escapees went into a jeep which speedily drove off to the central parts of Freetown.

This is a major security threat to the country. We are in the month of December full of festivities and a time at which Sierra Leoneans in the Diasporas come home to spend Christmas with their relatives. How safe are we in the midst of hardcore criminals? It will come as no surprise if armed robbery returns; an occurrence that forced President Koroma to institute MACPI sometimes early this year.

What a prison department that can allow 19 prisoners to escape without trace? Following this, the head of the prisons department was expected to do the honourable thing – resign his position – but he maintained the position until he was sacked.

Had it not been for the decision to relocate the war crimes convicts to Rwandan cells, all of the efforts and resources of the Special Court would have been useless and wasted. The convicts would have used Sunday's incidence to make their escape from prison.

The location of the central prison is also a cause for concern to many Sierra Leoneans. Let us assume the prison officers were armed with guns when this incident took place and they decided to trace the criminals. It would have resulted to untold casualties of innocent citizens, especially those who were coming from church, since the prison is located in the densely populated area of Pademba Road.

Now that this has happened, the country's security apparatus must do all in its powers to re-arrest these hardcore criminals and the prisons officers must be speedily investigated and brought to book.

We have suffered a lot in this country and cannot afford to go back to those dark days. We want positive answers. Who let the 'dogs' out???

Hirondelle News Agency

Monday, 6 December 2010

ICTR Sentences lieutenant Hategekimana to life imprisonment

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) Monday sentenced former Rwandan military officer, Lieutenant Ildephonse Hategekimana to life imprisonment after he was found guilty of genocide and murder and rape as crimes against humanity.

"Considering the relevant circumstances in the judgment, the Chamber sentences the accused to a single sentence of imprisonment for the remainder of his life," Presiding Madagascan Judge Alertte Ramarason announced as she was flanked with two other judges of the bench.

"The Chamber finds, beyond reasonable doubts that Hategekimana ordered the genocide of Tutsi refugees who had sought refuge at the Ngoma church," said the Presiding Judge.

The officer who commanded the small military camp of Ngoma, in Butare (southern Rwanda) in 1994 is part of the five accused that the ICTR prosecutor, Hassan Bubacar Jallow, sought in vain to transfer to Rwandan courts. The convict is a native of Mugina, in the former prefecture of Gitarama (central Rwanda).

After the verdict, Defence counsel for the accused, Jean de Dieu Momo from Cameroon told Hirondelle News Agency in an interview that he would appeal the decision handed down against his client.

"We are not satisfied with the decision of the court. Our duty and our rights are to go to the Appeals Chamber. We just lost a battle we have not lost the war. We will do what we can to succeed in the appeal," Momo emphasized.

On the other hand, ICTR Prosecution Attorney, Cameroonian William Egbe was happy with the decision, stating: "we are pleased with the verdict which has been delivered in the case of Hategekimana (...) It is a victory of the international justice."

The prosecution concluded its case on May 4, 2009 after presenting 20 witnesses and the defence rested its case on October 7, same year, after fielding the same number of witnesses.

This trial started on March 16, 2009. Four other cases involving a total of 15 accused are awaiting judgment at the UN Tribunal.

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UN News

Monday, 6 December 2010

Strengthen fight against impunity through ICC, Ban tells States parties



International Criminal Court Headquarters in The Hague

6 December 2010 – In an era of accountability, there can be no immunity for serious international crimes, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stressed today, citing the need to “stay on the offence” to prevail in the fight against impunity.

“At a time when international justice is under attack in many places, we must strengthen our resolve to shut the door on the era of impunity and ensure that in this new era perpetrators truly answer for their crimes,” Mr. Ban told the Ninth Session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

The gathering, which is taking place at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 6 to 10 December, brings together representatives from the 113 States parties to the Rome Statute, which established the ICC, to discuss matters central to the Court's operation.

“The international community has overwhelmingly embraced the idea that we have entered an age of accountability, and that there can be absolutely no immunity for international crimes,” he told the meeting.

“But make no mistake: to prevail in the fight against impunity, we must stay on the offence,” he added, while underlining the “crucial importance” of States complying with their responsibilities to enforce all outstanding arrest warrants.

The Ninth Session follows the Kampala Review Conference which concluded in June of this year with agreement on a definition and framework for the prosecution of the crime of aggression.

The Secretary-General acknowledged that while the Court does not yet have universal support, “the battle for trust in the ICC” must be won in the courtroom. He urged that trials be conducted expeditiously and transparently “in a manner that instils confidence.”

“The ICC is the centrepiece of our system of international criminal justice,” Mr. Ban said. “If we are serious about combating impunity and promoting accountability, we must support its work.”

According to the provisional agenda, issues to be discussed include reports concerning the activities of the ICC, budgetary and financial matters concerning the operation of the Court, as well as amendments to the Rome Statute.

“Our generation has the opportunity to decisively advance the cause of justice and prevent horrendous suffering,” Mr. Ban concluded. “If we fail to heed Kampala’s call, we fail humanity.”

The ICC is a permanent court based in The Hague in the Netherlands and tries people accused of the most serious international offences, such as genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Euro News

Tuesday, 7 December 2010

New pressure on Serbia to capture Mladic

Every six months the international criminal court for the former Yugoslavia releases a progress report on Serbia and its cooperation with judges in the Hague.

One of the keenly followed subjects is Bosnian Serb war crimes fugitive Ratko Mladic.

Serge Brammertz is the chief prosecutor of the court. At the UN Security Council in New York he reaffirmed the need for Serbia to arrest Mladic, who is charged with genocide and crimes against humanity.

euronews reporter Frédéric Bouchard spoke to him and began by asking what the current situation was regarding Serbia's efforts to capture Ratko Mladic.

Serge Brammertz:

"A lot still needs to be done. We have renewed our demand that more resources are made available for this. Today that is not the case. We are fully aware of the fact that the job is not easy, given that the majority of the population today, unfortunately, are against the capture of Mladic."

Frédéric Bouchard, euronews:

"The Serbian government has multiplied by ten its reward for Mladic's arrest, to 10 million dollars. Is this just a cover, to say: 'Look at all the effort the Serbs are making'. What do you think?"

Serge Brammertz:

"Listen, of course I hear the Serbian government, I hear the president who swears to us that everything will be done and there is the political will to arrest these two fugitives, Mladic and Hadzic. As far as we're concerned, of course we don't evaluate the political will, we look at what is happening on the ground, and there, we can see that something is happening, but we believe that Serbia can do better, that they have the means to do more. More has to be done to succeed."

euronews:

"Can we say that the long arm of the law is reaching Ratko Mladic, given what's been happening this year?"

Serge Brammertz:

"That's certainly what we hope. We have several contacts in the police and intelligence services who are doing a good job. Of course we also know there are support networks attempting to make this work impossible. We hope that those who want to meet the objectives will come out on top. But as I say, there are several forces operating at the same time: on the one hand there are those looking for an arrest; on the other there are those who want to prevent it."

The Sofia Echo

Tuesday, 7 December 2010

State co-operation vital to completing work of UN war tribunals, Security Council told



Former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic appears in the courtroom of the ICTY War Crimes tribunal in The Hague, November 3 2009.

Photo: Reuters

The co-operation of states is vital in bringing to justice those responsible for war crimes in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda and in facilitating the successful completion of the United Nations tribunals mandated with this task, the UN Security Council was told on December 6 2010, the UN News Service said.

Serge Brammertz, Prosecutor for the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), said that Serbia's failure to capture the two remaining fugitives, Ratko Mladic and Goran Hadžic, is a major concern.

"Serbia must bridge the gap between its stated commitment to the arrests and the effectiveness of its operations on the ground," he told the Council, as it met to consider the work of the ICTY and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR).

"Time is passing and we are not seeing results," he said. "Serbia needs to adopt a more pro-active approach to arresting fugitives."

Since its inception 17 years ago, the Tribunal, which is based in The Hague, has indicted 161 persons for war crimes committed on the territory of the former Yugoslavia. The proceedings against 125 individuals have been completed. Only two indictees remain at large – Mladic and Hadžic.

The failure to arrest Mladic and Hadžic would leave the victims without redress, as well as impede reconciliation in the region and damage the credibility of the international legal system as a whole, Brammertz said.

He also cited the request made to Croatia for important military documents, as well as the need for Bosnia and Herzegovina to redouble its efforts against fugitive networks.

In terms of expediting trials and completing its work, the President of the ICTY, Judge Patrick Robinson, highlighted the pressures placed on staff and resources at the Tribunal and called for action to reduce staff attrition.

He explained that the Tribunal "continues to take all measures possible to expedite its trials, without sacrificing due process."