

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



PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

as at:

Thursday, 7 February 2008

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

Thursday, 7 February 2008

Special Court recognizes prisons officers

Ten members of the Sierra Leone Prison Services have reportedly been awarded certificates on the completion of a training course in 'Control and Restraint Techniques' conducted by the Special Court. The Registrar of the Court, Herman Von-Hebel is said to have intimated that the skills acquired by the officers during the exercise would increase their professionalism and effectiveness in the country's national authority when the grandaunts would have returned to the prisons service. The Registrar maintained that part of the legacy of the Special Court will be strengthening the country's justice sector, hence the significance of this special training.

Standard Times
Thursday, 7 February 2008

LAWCLA launches "Criminalization of Freedom of Expression in Salone" handbook today

BY ALHAJI SAIDU KAMARA

Journalists, human rights activists and the civil society will converge this Thursday, February 2008 at the Miatta conference hall, Brookfields, Freetown to officially witness the formal launching of a handbook entitled "Criminalization of Freedom of Expression in Sierra Leone: Time for change". The book will be launched by the Vice President of Sierra Leone Mr. Sam-Sumana.

According to the Lawyers Centre for Legal Assistance (LAWCLA), Mr. Abdul D. Kposowa said the handbook advocates for the repeal of the Public Order Act of 1965 with special reference to the anti press provisions contained in sections 26, 27 and 33 of the Act. The book provides extensive evidence of how the limitation on Freedom of Expression contradicts regional and international human rights instruments.

Since 1965, journalists have been shackled with the effects of the Public Order Act. Guaranteed freedom of expression in the media and elsewhere ensure a dialogue between government and society that serves as a check on government power and paves the way for a process of development and growth.

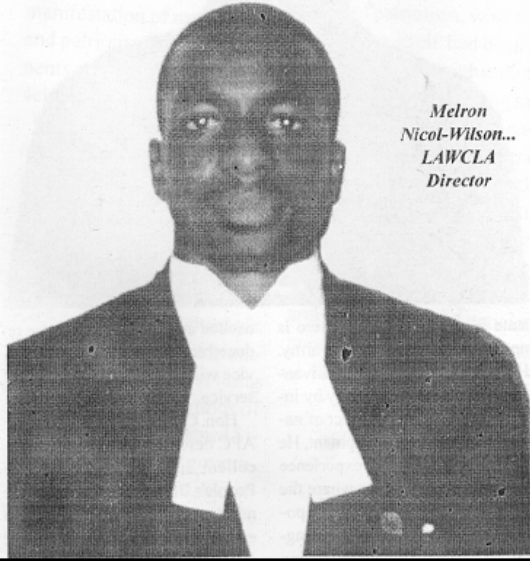
But criminal defamation and seditious libel laws have shackled this process by inciting fear and suppressing change.

The Minister of Information and Communications, Alhaji I.B. Kargbo, SLAJ President Philip Neville, the Secretary General of the Sierra Leone Bar Association, Mr. Mohamed Turay will deliver statements while the director of LAWCLA, Mr. Melron Nicol-Wilson will give an overview of the book and Mr. David Tam Baryoh of Citizen FM in Kissy, will chair the ceremony.

emphasized the importance of respect for human rights and civil rights, but also discussed the significance of non-violent means employed by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and other civil right leaders, which found success.

"The way to see real change in a society is through non-violent, rational resistance against unjust laws and unjust leaders through an on-going dialogue between all parties. The principles of non-violence were central to the success of the civil rights movement in the United States, and should be at the core of any civil rights movement that intends to succeed. It is with that in mind that we celebrate the achievements of the civil rights movement in the United States and of African-Americans in general", said June Carter Perry.

In addition to the showing at the Kissy Library, the film was screened at the Embassy for selected students and Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone.



Melron
Nicol-Wilson...
LAWCLA
Director

The Independent*

Wednesday, 6 February 2008

Man's Beheading of Wife Shocks Country

News of a man beheading his wife in Moyamba southwest of the country last week has shocked the nation.

Violent acts are increasing at an alarming peak in postwar era.

Police say the man who beheaded his wife is an ex-combatant, who had fought in the pro-government Civil Defence Force militia known as kamajors. The CDF's leaders were tried by the special court for war crimes for various crimes that included torture and cannibalism. The beheading of the woman is reported to have emanated out of jealousy. Reports say the man allegedly lured his wife into the forest near their farm on the pretext that they were going to do some work and violently attacked and behead her with a machete.

The rising incidence of violence has aroused concern in law enforcement agents.

At Newton twenty- four miles from the capital Freetown, Police are interrogating a man who allegedly murdered a woman and burnt her corpse. He too was reported being seen with the woman who is believed to be his girlfriend prior to the murder incident . Her charred remains were later found in a bush.

Also, at Newton police are still looking out for a teenager called Aruna, who is suspected of murdering a twenty-one old girl believed to be his girl friend. Prior to the killing, Aruna is reported to have gone to the deceased's house and told her that her grandmother wanted to see her. Two days later, her body was found in a bush close to a road, with a fractured head and a slash on her neck caused by a machete Many other violent acts have taken place over the past couple of years that included the man's killing of another man who quarreled with him, the killing of a teenager by his colleague in a heated argument over soccer star Mohamed Kallon and the brutal killing of Ann Fady a Lesbian who advocates for her colleagues .

**The Independent is no longer published in Freetown, but the former editor provides content to AllAfrica.com under the newspaper's name.*

BBC World Service Trust

Wednesday, 6 February 2008

By Joseph Cheeseman at The Hague

CHEESEMAN: The Prosecution has ended its direct examination of the tenth witness. Perry Kamara, testified to Mr. Taylor's alleged involvement with the RUF and the atrocities committed in Sierra Leone. Kamara said the fall of Freetown was preceded by a massive destruction of lives and property. He testified that Sam Bockarie ordered nothing should be spared.

KAMARA: Before we left, during the meeting for us to be dispatched, the order they gave to [O-five], Superman and SAJ Musa, they said a guerrilla should destroy and after the war you can make. That was the order they had from the headquarters. Therefore, who was not supposed to see us, if that person saw us, so either go with him or her or kill him or her. We should use – they used the word “fearful” – we should make the area fearful. Those whose hands were supposed to cut off, we should amputate. Those who were to kill, we should kill them. And we are to burn all villages.

Perry Kamara, considered an “insider witness” of the Prosecution, concluded his testimony, indicating that from May 6, 2000 to 2001 Issa Sesay, the then-leader of the RUF, took a lot of diamonds from Sierra Leone to Charles Taylor in Liberia.

KAMARA: Any time we would bring these vehicles he would call us and say ‘I’ve brought one or two vehicles from Mr. Taylor, Mr. Taylor donated these, and at the same time he would keep the diamonds. He said Mr. Taylor was storing the diamonds for any time Sankoh would be released. So that would be the time when he would report the diamonds to Sankoh. He said that was what Mr. Taylor said. He would bring documents to the [effect], and they would read that to us, we will see the number of diamonds, the date and time that he left it there. Sometimes he would bring diesel, petrol, engine oil for the machines that were working at the fields, and even food.

CHEESEMAN: Defence lawyer Andrew Cayley started his cross-examination of Perry Kamara in a rather hash tone, describing a contradiction in Perry's testimony as “nonsense”. Kamara, in a previous interview with the Prosecution, said he met Mr. Taylor three times in Liberia. But in his testimony to the Prosecution in open court he said he met Mr. Taylor on two different occasions and heard his voice on one occasion.

CAYLEY: What I am saying to you, witness, is this: It's because you now realize that you lied in that first statement you are attempting to explain away that particular part of the statement with this story of nonsense that you heard Charles Taylor but you didn't see him – aren't you?

KAMARA: This is not nonsense, I am saying something realistic.

The former RUF radio operator testified that Mr. Taylor's radio code was Ebony, but an RUF radio document exhibited by the Defence Team indicated that Taylor was referred to as Father, Chief and Subject, and not Ebony. But the witness said codes were changed every now and then to confuse their enemies. Mr. Taylor's defence team continues its cross-examination of the prosecution tenth witness on Thursday.

Meanwhile, indicted former Liberian President Charles Taylor continues his attendance of Court, neatly dressed in dark suit, an appearance which makes him look like one of the lawyers representing him.

He continues his attentive listening, whispering in the ears of his lawyers and taking notes throughout a day's proceeding in the court. The war crimes indictee constantly clears his throat – something reminiscence (sic.) of his days as President of Liberia.

One can deduce from Mr. Taylor's constant presence in Court and his cooperation with the Trial Chamber that he's quite satisfied.

This is Joseph Cheeseman reporting for the BBC World Service Trust and Search for Common Ground, at The Hague.

International Justice Tribune

Monday, 4 February 2008

Taylor betrayed by his own

Thierry Cruvellier

The prosecutor continues to present testimony from the "insiders"; former Liberians or Sierra Leoneans who claim to have worked for the former president of Liberia. After three weeks of public arguments, the trial of Charles Taylor was moved behind closed doors on January 24. But before that happened, the public had been able to hear a witness who linked Taylor to the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone – Abu Keita, a former leader of the Liberian armed group Ulimo-K like a previous witness, Varmuyan Sherif [IJT-81].

Keita doesn't know how to read, but he was deputy chief of staff of this rebellion mounted in 1990 against Taylor, who would share the power with him starting in 1994. Following a thwarted conspiracy against Taylor in September 1998, Keita was put in prison in Monrovia. It was his friend Sherif, who had become a member of the special security services, who came to have him released. The price for Keita's rehabilitation was to go into Taylor's service. His mission: to join the Sierra Leonean rebellion of the United Revolutionary Front (RUF). In a matter of hours, Keita went from being a suspect in an attempted coup d'état to being invited to the home of Benjamin Yeaten, Taylor's right-hand man and head of the security services. There he met, among others, Sam Bockarie (alias Mosquito), the RUF commander, and Eddie Kanneh, a renegade from the Sierra Leonean army who called himself "the liaison officer for the diamond business between Sierra Leone and Liberia". Keita testified, "Yeaten said he wanted a stand-by force in Sierra Leone, and I would be the commander of this force. He said I should be based in Sierra Leone with Sam Bockarie. He said he had planned it with the boss, Charles Taylor, who gave orders."

He also told the court that he met General Ibrahim Bah, a powerful financial player in Taylor's entourage. "That was when I first saw the diamonds with Sam Bockarie. It was in Bah's room. Bockarie was showing diamonds to Bah." However, he continued, "I did not see him give him the diamonds." Then Keita was taken to White Flower, Taylor's residence. "In the hallway there was a red carpet and large cushions. We were waiting there. Charles Taylor appeared. We all rose. He told us to sit down. Bockarie said, 'I am on my way going, sir. I have come to pay my respect.' Taylor said to take care of the RUF, that if there was any problem, Yeaten or Cissé should be immediately contacted. Then we left." Keita had just enough time to take two weapons and say goodbye to his wife before heading into the bush of Sierra Leone.

Gradually the prosecutor tried to shine light on the Taylor's authority over the RUF's operations. According to Keita, for example, one of the other military leaders of the RUF, Dennis Mingo, alias Superman, "didn't want to take instructions from Bockarie", but "Yeaten said he would address that issue and would talk to Mingo". For its part, the defense did not miss the chance to express surprise that Keita, suspected the night before of treachery, would be invited the next day to meet with Taylor's entire network to discuss the most sensitive matters.

Just after his arrival at RUF general headquarters, Keita saw Bockarie return from Liberia with 300 boxes of ammunition. Keita recounted, "That was the first time he had a huge amount. He was happy, so he shot in the air." Keita had not been sent to fight in Sierra Leone alone. One hundred fifty men were sent from Liberia for him to command. But Bockarie's authority was immediately confirmed. "He said that there would not be two commands of the RUF. He came with a letter of assignment to me. It was signed by Charles Taylor." The public held their breath in suspense and then exhaled. "I lost the paper because in the last attack in Liberia my mother's house was burned down," revealed Keita. And the defense added that, in

subjugating Keita and his men, Bockarie showed that he didn't care about the order supposedly received from Yeaten and Taylor.

Keita spent three years in the ranks of the RUF, from September 1998 to 2001. He produced an operational order, dated June 2001, which suggested that the RUF had attacked Guinea on Yeaten's orders. Calmly, the witness drew the court into the command center of the Sierra Leonean rebellion. "Bockarie said we should take over Kono and Makeni and terrorize the highway. He said Kono was strategic so that the mining would continue. He said we needed to raise funds for the RUF and the only place was Kono to do mining," explained the witness. This seemed to contradict the prosecution's theory that the diamond operation was an end, rather than just a means of waging war. Keita said he also saw General Bah again in Kono after Issa Sesay took command of the RUF in 2000. He stated, "Bah and four Lebanese came to Kono, with Eddie Kenneh, to get the RUF diamonds."

According to him, Sesay traveled to Liberia at the time of the hostage crisis, when the RUF had disarmed and held 500 UN peacekeepers captive in May 2000. "When Sesay returned from Liberia with a satellite telephone, he called a meeting in Makeni. He said that Charles Taylor said we should release the peacekeepers to him through Liberia. So we took them to the border and they were handed over to Ben Yeaten in Foya."

At the end of his testimony, Keita finally talked about the purges at the top of the RUF. He said Rambo was killed on Yeaten's orders and then the same thing happened to Superman. Then, in 2003, it was Bockarie's turn. Keita heard from the brother of the victim's sister that Yeaten personally killed Bockarie along with his wife and children. Bockarie (indicted in March 2003 by the Court for Sierra Leone), according to his younger brother, was killed "because of this Special Court. They would destroy the evidence".

BoxText:

When Sesay implicated Taylor

On March 15, 2003, on the island of Sherbro, south of Freetown, the Special Court for Sierra Leone organized its very first public hearing: the initial appearance of four defendants arrested a few days earlier. The Bonthe prison had just been repainted. The barbed wire surrounding it still shone. Simple wire netting separated the public from the improvised court. Foreigners, ties pulled off, suffered in the heat. A few dozen villagers, in their finest clothes, listened with dignity. The instructions to journalists were strict: no photos, no videos, no recordings. The last head of the RUF was the second defendant to appear. But Issa Sesay, 32 at the time, did not yet know how to keep quiet. He wanted to clarify the charges brought against him. On the seventeenth charge, his response provoked a shiver. When his troops took hundreds of UN soldiers hostage, he claimed to have "brought them to Kono, where Taylor ordered me to take them elsewhere". The judge pushed the matter. "Charles Taylor sent a helicopter to give me orders," Sesay clarified, before shutting his mouth.

Taylor's trial provides a model at The Hague

Prepared, conscientious prosecutors, tenacious lawyers concentrated on the evidence, a chamber presided over with firmness and competence, pertinent witnesses: the trail of former Liberian president Charles Taylor, opened January 7 by a Special Court for Sierra Leone moved to the premises of the ICC at The Hague [IJT-69-70-44], has begun with dignity.

"All of this is about diamonds. This is what our case is about. This is why we brought Mr. Smillie," was the immediate chorus of the prosecutor. Canadian diamond traffic expert Ian Smillie taught English in one of the two major areas of diamond exploitation in eastern Sierra Leone from 1967-1968. At the time already, he remembered, "It was almost like a wild west. There were thousands of people who came to dig diamonds. It was all about diamonds." Thirty years later, in Ottawa, while the civil war had been ravaging Sierra Leone for eight years, one of his friends declared, "This is really all about diamonds, and as long as it is not dealt with, the war will continue." So Smillie devoted himself to this subject. In August 2000, he was part of a five-person panel tasked by the UN with investigating the diamond traffic between Sierra Leone and Liberia. These experts' report is the primary exhibit of the complicated puzzle the prosecution is trying to put together to get Taylor sentenced.

According to this report, the diamonds supposedly brought the Sierra Leonean rebellion, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), annual revenues of 25 to 125 million dollars. Interrogated in his presidential residence, Taylor told experts it was "highly probable that the RUF was dealing in diamonds and that some could pass through Liberia, but the borders were porous and that he didn't have any control over that". Based on the report, however,

the UN Security Council concluded, "The bulk of RUF diamonds leave Sierra Leone through Liberia. Such illicit trade cannot be conducted without the permission and involvement of Liberian government officials at the highest level." At the end of this assignment, remembered Smillie, "We were dismayed at the amount of information leading to Charles Taylor."

"Worthless" figures

The defense, however, underlined how vague and weak the evidence is. How reliable is the information on the diamond trade? The witness honestly admitted that the figures presented by Belgium, where 75-90% of the world's diamonds pass through, are "worthless". Smillie admitted, "These figures [from Belgium] cannot be related to either Liberia or Sierra Leone." The defense also pointed out that in Liberia, the largest increase in diamond production happened in 1995-1996. However, one of Taylor's lawyers clarified, the RUF controlled neither of the two major mining zones during this period.

The prosecution appears to be weaving a tapestry of elements that taken alone are insufficient but that could result in conviction if tied together. This delicate operation shines light on one of the major difficulties in this trial: how to draw a link between the defendant's support of the RUF and, on the other end of the chain, the crimes committed against civilians. "I think that [the use of a] tactic like the chopping of hands was to create such a fear that the RUF could do whatever they wanted [in the diamond-rich areas]," explained Smillie.

The second prosecution witness was chosen precisely to bring the trial to the immediate brutality of the violence.

Truth Commission in Liberia

Liberians exhumate the catalogue of horrors p.3-4

Universal jurisdiction in Canada

Time for the defense marathon p.4

Reverend Alex Tamba Teh was captured by RUF men in April 1998. He told of 250 civilians who, like him, were lined up by the rebels who had passed themselves off as Nigerian soldiers with the West African intervention force ECOMOG. Tamba Teh described the mass execution of 101 of his companions in misfortune by a certain RUF commander known as "Rocky". "Then he gave the order to the SBU,"—the Small Boys Unit, made up of children enrolled for combat. "The SBU cut off the heads of all those Rocky killed. He said his name was Rocky, but his real name was Emmanuel Williams; he was Liberian, a Bassa."

Rocky, Rambo, Superman—parts of the sinister folklore of the RUF. The most infamous of these warlords is also at the center of the trial: Mosquito, real name Samuel Bockarie, indicted by the Special Court in March 2003 and eliminated several weeks later, in Liberia. According to the prosecution, after 1998, Mosquito was the key cog in the criminal plot between Taylor and the RUF. In recruiting Tamba Teh to the RUF, Mosquito supposedly told him that Charles Gankay Taylor was "his boss".

In 1990, Varmuyan Sherif was 21 when the war started by Charles Taylor's NPFL caused him to flee into exile into Sierra Leone, his mother's homeland. He climbed quickly in the ranks of what would become the Ulimo, the Liberian rebellion fighting the NPFL. In 1995, after the primary Liberian armed groups decided to get along, he was named deputy director in charge of operations within the Special Security Services (SSS). Based at the presidential palace, he became "responsible for the security of the president [Taylor], his family, his properties". In particular, he was in charge of the president's motorcade. He testifies that at the end of 1998, Taylor asked him to go find Bockarie in the bush

of Sierra Leone. At this hideout, Bockarie wanted to make sure it wasn't a trap. "Up to then, I didn't know about a connection between the RUF and the Executive Mansion in Monrovia. The next day we walked to the radio room. He told the operator to contact the Monrovia Executive Mansion. "405" answered the radio. I know "405" to be one of our radio operators. He said, 'Please wait. I am going to contact Joseph Montgomery,'"—Sherif's superior within the SSS.

After Bockarie's stay in Monrovia, Sherif claimed that he received the order to go deliver arms to him. The witness presented photos, but none of them illustrated exactly what he was saying. In successive strokes, the prosecutor attempted to demonstrate the correlation between these events and the horrible attack on Freetown in January 1999 by the forces of the defunct military junta of the AFRC and the RUF. But the witness did not know what Taylor and Bockarie said to one another. He claimed to have seen a mayonnaise jar full of diamonds in the inside pocket of Bockarie's uniform jacket, but he admitted that the diamond traffic between Taylor and the latter was a deduction on his part. He never saw it.

With Sherif, a veil was lifted on the extreme porosity of the border between Liberia and Sierra Leone. The same families lived on both sides, the same language was spoken, they traded everything and in the same currency. According to the defense, it is also a region that was most often under the control of the ULIMO, then later the LURD (a rebellion that fought Taylor from 1999-2003), and therefore not under the defendant. The porosity applied not only to the borders, but to armed groups. Sherif fought Taylor before ensuring his security, then testifying against him. However credible he may be, he knows which way the wind is blowing. Dennis Koker, another witness, is an example of the fluidity between the Sierra Leonean army and the ranks of the rebellion. Enlisted in the government forces in March 1991, Koker has a brother who was a bodyguard of the number two man in the first military junta before becoming the driver of one of the RUF leaders. His aunt is also tied to the family of Johnny-Paul Koroma, head of the AFRC. When the latter, allied to the RUF, was driven from the capital by the ECOMOG forces, Koker was caught up in the tide of runaways. "The RUF, the junta, we were all one group now," he said. According to the witness, it was the time of the "No

Living Thing" operation ordered by Bockarie. The terror reached its pinnacle.

"Sam Bockarie became the most important RUF commander because of his direct relationship to Charles Taylor," agrees Africanist Stephen Ellis. But the ties between the RUF and the NPFL do not date back to Mosquito or to diamonds. Ellis reinforced the prosecution's case, but sometimes he buried the prosecutor's simplifications. Since the first days of the Special Court, the prosecution has hammered that this war "was all about diamonds", irritating many observers of the conflict. Ellis opposed this simplistic and deterministic account with a dynamic analysis of history that is more true to the reality. "I disagree with the analysis that the war was about diamonds from beginning to end. Those analysts were not characterizing the war accurately. It was about other matters—social, political. With the years, the nature of the war changed, not least because of the use of diamonds to finance the continuation of the war." He also emphasized the role and serious involvement of other actors: Nigeria, the United States, Sierra Leone and Guinea opposing Taylor almost uninterruptedly; Libya, Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire supporting him. The association of the RUF and the NPFL can then be understood within this context. Citing the conclusions of the Sierra Leonean Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), Ellis explained that Taylor supposedly initially asked Freetown to support his armed struggle against dictator Samuel Doe. But after having imprisoned him for two weeks, the Sierra Leonean government chose to expel him. On the radio on November 4, 1990, Taylor warned that if Freetown continued to support the armed groups hostile to him, "Sierra Leone would know the bitter taste of war". Four months later, the RUF crossed the border from Liberia.

"It is well-established that the RUF and the NPFL were very close from the beginning," said Ellis. According to him, the RUF attack "was largely an attack by the NPFL". But the conclusions of the TRC held a surprise: toward the end of 1992, the two movements had a serious disagreement that the defense used to deny that their relationship lasted. At the end of 1999, said Ellis, Taylor "reached the peak of this influence." In the eyes of the international community, "He appear[ed] to be the person who can turn the violence on and off." But that was also the beginning of his downfall which would finally lead him to the defendant's dock.

International Justice Tribune

Monday, 4 February 2008

Liberian perspective on the Taylor trial

Gibson W. Jerue

The editorial in the Liberian Diaspora newspaper on January 18 was scathing about the ongoing hearings of the Liberia Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). It argued that the Commission wants to validate and reinforce the trial of former president Charles Taylor before the Special Court for Sierra Leone at The Hague.

The paper is published by Taylor's former Minister of Information, Reginald B. Goodridge. According to him, TRC Chairman Jerome Verdier is supposedly Sierra Leonean and was simply ensuring that his previous "campaign against Taylor" comes to fruition. The coincidental timing of the public hearings before the TRC and the opening of the trial at The Hague are what the paper called a "showcase". Several Taylor loyalists, who now refer to themselves as "friends of Taylor", said they perceive the TRC process as a "strategy of the Special Court to nail Taylor and demonize him", according to Sando Johnson. This former member of parliament under Taylor and now in his early 40s, described the TRC as "trash" and "another ploy by America and Great Britain to punish Taylor for not bowing down to them".

Acarous Gray, a member of the opposition party led by George Weah, believes the TRC "has to be extremely careful not to accommodate testimonies about Sierra Leone". In his opinion, the TRC has nothing to do with the trial, but he did not rule out the possibility that "some invisible hands could be trying to corroborate the trial of Taylor". Other Liberians argue that the two events have nothing in common. "Testimonies before the TRC cannot be used against Taylor - at least that is what we were told," says Jethrode, a political science student at the University of Liberia. For him, the problem is that the trial is not as widely publicized in Liberia as promised. "We read stories on the proceeding in few newspapers, listen to it on Star Radio and view clips seldom on Power TV, but that is not enough," he said. Most of Liberia's newspapers are read only in Monrovia. The FM stations hardly go beyond the capital. Televisions signals are only received within a 25 mile radius. Darryl Kpan, 15, shook his head as he watched the trial on Power TV. He struggles to understand why the former president is accused of rape. "The papea [Taylor] had money; he could get any woman. Why should he rape anybody?" he asks, adding, "Taylor is finished!"

International Justice Tribune
Monday, 21 January 2008

Liberians exhume the catalogue of horrors

The day after the opening of the Taylor trial at The Hague, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) has begun its public hearings in Monrovia. A first group of victims of the civil wars that devastated Liberia from 1989 to 2003, in which Charles Taylor played a central role, testified of the atrocities committed by all factions.

This is the victims' time to be heard. By definition, they are at the center of the arguments before a truth commission. The first witnesses before the Liberian TRC did not lose this opportunity. Some of their stories illustrated the shared experience of hundreds, if not thousands, of Liberians. Others imprinted in the minds of listeners the horror and brutality of the violence they related. Amelia Densee, in her mid 40s, told of how in June 2003 rebels of the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) gashed her body multiple times and for no reason when she was captured by them. Today she bears numerous scars all over her body. Although she says the wounds have partially healed, they have evolved into what she calls a "cancer". Pale and sickly looking, despite everything, Amelia Densee left the city of Tubmanburg, about 35 miles west of Monrovia, to go to the Centennial Pavilion, the historic location in the town center where the TRC public hearings are being held. "As I stand before you here, I am dying slowly," Densee declared. "Some people chose death; some people chose short sleeves or long sleeves, and other people chose smiles, but I was lucky to choose design," she added. Such is the list of horrors that pierced Liberia in the 1990s. "Short sleeves" meant that the victim authorized the rebels to cut off an arm from the elbow. "Long sleeves" meant the captive "chose" the amputation of a limb from either the shoulder or the thigh. A "smile" gave the rebel the right to cut both the lower and upper lips off, exposing the teeth. Amelia's "preference" for "design" permitted the rebels to slash her body. "So when I chose 'design' the [LURD] fighters used

a kitchen knife to design my body by gashing my skin, cutting under the left and right sides of my breast, further chopping the skin of my back and other body parts," continued Amelia. Silence engulfed the hall. Previously unmoved commissioners and general public listened, contemplative. Others gaped, disbelieving.

The victim explained that she is receiving medical treatment in the same city the LURD had used as its main base. Following her testimony, the TRC sent out an SOS to humanitarian and women's organizations to come to Densee's aid and enable her receive proper medical treatment.

One of the country's most popular musician suspected of gang rape

The first witness to take the stand, David D. Sayweh, calmly and firmly explained how his sister, Yorpay Sayweh was gang raped in District 3C of Grand Bassa Province. Yorpay died as a result of the incident. The victim's brother said, "During the war in 1994, the LPC [Liberian Peace Council] came and the NPFL group [National Patriotic Front of Liberia, led by Taylor] went to Nimba Province." He said that a few months later, one of the commanders of the naval division of NPFL, who the witness identified as Marcus Davies, alias Sundaygar Dearboy, ordered 25 rebel fighters to rape his sister. His sister was first used as an interpreter by the NPFL men, but when they decided to escape the city, one night, Commander Davies ordered her arrest and supervised her gang rape. President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, present during the testimony of Marcus Davies, looked on with particular interest. Davies, one of the country's most popular musicians, was recently appointed director of entertainment at the Executive Mansion. He had drawn attention to himself by producing campaign songs for Johnson-Sirleaf in the 2005 elections.

Sayweh's testimony to the TRC was supported by those of his uncles, Emmanuel Johnny and Paul Flomo. The

two men wrote in their statements that Marcus Davies victimized several people in their village. They claimed that about 500 people were fully prepared to provide their testimonies if their torturer puts up a challenge. Marcus Davies is presently visiting the United States. He issued a press release in local dailies denying the charges against him and announcing that he will appear before the TRC to exonerate himself.

Mohammed Teah claimed that he was forced by ULIMO-K fighters to eat two and a half cups of sand. Augustine Tuopay alleged that LPC fighters forced him, under the threat of execution, to have sex with a dead pregnant woman. "I wanted to refuse but the fighters fired in the air and I was scared. I had to do the thing," Tuopay said. Gladys Attoh and members of her family were captured by the NPFL. A rebel commander she iden-

tified as General Domego allegedly killed her mother and took her as a sex slave, at the age of 12. She said this man is still demanding 300 dollars as ransom for her brother, but she did not say where Domego is.

Former presidential contender, Winston A. Tubman has however expressed concern about the process underway. He has demanded that those who incited, funded and fought should be made to appear before the TRC, not only those he called the "little people", who were sent and carried out orders. He did not mention any names, but some Liberians believe the president herself, among others, should testify before the TRC regarding their role in the events in Liberia since 1979. Tubman asks, "Why is it necessary for the TRC to exhume mass graves? When similar things were done in Iraq and in the former

Yugoslavia, it was in preparation for criminal prosecutions. In our country, we appear to have opted for a confusing and dangerous hybrid, in which, at the conclusion of the TRC process, recommendations will be made to the government regarding who should be pardoned and who should be sent to trial."

One of those who had much responsibility and will be neither pardoned nor tried is the former dictator Samuel Doe, assassinated in September 1990. His supporters were notably involved in a massacre at the Saint Peter Lutheran church in July 1990, regarding which a testimony was also heard by the TRC. Among the 600 victims of the massacre was the father of another important actor who will not appear before the TRC but who will be tried: Charles Taylor [see p. 1-2].

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

**UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries
6 February 2008**

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

Newspaper Summary

Bush Visit Will Showcase Strong Pro-Africa Legacy - Trip to Emphasize Economic Development

(Public Agenda, The News, and The Analyst)

- President George Bush's February 15-21 trip to five African nations is going to be "very historic and significant" because it will "solidify one of the strongest components" of his legacy, former Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Africa, Rosa Whitaker has said. In a January 29 interview with America.gov, Whitaker, who is now President and Chief Executive Officer of her own U.S.-Africa trade consulting firm -- the Whitaker Group -- said when you look at President Bush's trip to Benin, Tanzania, Rwanda, Ghana and Liberia, the benefits cannot be measured.
- The trip is likely his last visit to Africa before leaving office in January 2009.

Deputy UN Envoy Lauds Pakistani Peacekeepers for Humanitarian Assistance

(The Informer and Heritage)

- The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Rule of Law, Ms. Henrietta Mensa-Bonsu has commended Pakistani peacekeepers for their peacekeeping contribution, and for going beyond their regular duties to provide social amenities to Liberians.
- Commissioning the new Pakistani-renovated Frank Town Public School in Careysburg outside Monrovia, DSRSG Mensa-Bonsu said the school should help meet the educational needs of the people of the community and benefit Liberia as a whole.

DSRSG Ryan re-assures Liberians of carefully-planned UNMIL drawdown process

(The Informer)

- The Deputy United Nations Envoy to Liberia responsible for Recovery and Governance, Mr. Jordan Ryan has re-assured Liberians that the drawdown or scaling down of the UN's peacekeeping operations is being done in a measured manner to ensure that the country continues to develop in a secure environment.
- "The drawdown process is being done in a cautious, careful and well-calibrated manner, so that no security vacuum is created," said the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General as he decorated a batch of officers of the Nigerian Formed Police Unit with UN peacekeeping medal in Liberia's central city of Gbarnga. Mr. Ryan stressed that the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the United Nations were not leaving Liberia. "We still have very important security, peacebuilding, and development work to do."
- DSRSG Ryan stressed the need to empower Liberians to effectively sustain peace and development in their country. "Development is all about people – empowering people to improve their own lives," he noted, adding, "all of us working in the UN here in Liberia have an important role to play in this effort."

Liberia Qualifies for HIPC Assistance

(The Inquirer, Daily Observer, The News, National Chronicle, New Democrat)

- Liberia would be qualified for unconditional debt relief under the HIPC initiatives. Accordingly, the country would also qualify for debt relief under the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI) from the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA) and the African Development Fund (ADF), together with beyond-HIPC assistance from the IMF.
- There was no public reaction in the media regarding this development. However, one can expect that the debt relief initiative will help reduce the constraints on economic growth and poverty reduction imposed by the debt- service burden in Liberia.
- The HIPC Initiative was launched by the World Bank and the IMF in 1996 to create a framework in which all creditors, including multilateral creditors, can provide debt relief to the World's poorest and most heavily indebted countries.

Ethic Tension Brews over Land Dispute in Nimba County

(Daily Observer)

- [sic:] Land dispute, which had taken its toll on the country, is again brewing tension in Nimba County where two ethnic group, the Mano and Gio, are at each other's throats for a parcel of land situated in Tappita.

Radio Summary

Local Media – Radio Veritas (News monitored today at 9:45 am)

Liberia Qualifies For HIPC Assistance

(Also reported on Star Radio, Truth FM and ELBC)

Court Orders Arrest of Justice Minister and Police IG

- The Civil Law Court has ordered the arrest of Justice Minister Philip Banks and Police Inspector General Munah Sieh for their failure to honour a compulsory writ of habeas corpus served on them by lawyers representing nine Ghanaians arrested with a huge quantity of cocaine on board the Blue Atlantic, a Liberian registered vessel.
- The court in the writ described the Police and Justice Ministry's refusal to honour its precept as a gross violation of the rule of law and said the Senior Law Enforcement Officers and their deputies are to go to court to show why they should not be held in contempt.
- The nine Ghanaians were arrested and detained last Thursday without charge.

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

Renovation Work Commences On Burnt Executive Mansion

- Renovation work on the 5th floor of the Executive Mansion has begun for the return of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to the official residence of the President.
- Reports say the offices of the President on the 4th floor have been sealed off since the July 26 fire incident which burnt the entire floor causing the relocation to the Foreign Ministry.
- Executive Mansion sources say upon completion the President and employees of the Ministry of State will return to the Executive Mansion.

Star Radio (News culled today from website at 8:35 am)

No Jury in Re-trial of Treason Case, Defense Team Says

- In an interview, the Lead Defense Counsel for two former senior army officers, Charles Julu and Andrew Dorbor, says the team will proceed with the trial next week without jurors.
- Counsellor Dempster Brown alleged that the jury system is polluted with "criminal activities" and cannot be trusted saying the defendant has the right to waive jury trial where necessary.
- Counsellor Brown said the continued presence of jurors on such a landmark case could undermine the credibility of the judiciary if not curtailed.

Grotian Moment: The International War Crimes Trial Blog

Wednesday, 6 February 2008

<http://www.law.case.edu/saddamtrial/>

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Biographies & Contact Info for our Expert Panel

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[Gregory S. McNeal](#)
[M. Cherif Bassiouni](#)
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SEARCH CONTENT

"Grotian moment" – as envisaged by the father of international law, Hugo Grotius (1583-1645), the term signifies a legal development that is so significant that it can create new customary international law or radically transform the interpretation of treaty-based law. Modern international war crimes trials have the potential to give rise to such Grotian moments related to international humanitarian law, human rights law, and international criminal procedure. This award-winning Website features key documents, breaking news, and expert debate and commentary on issues and developments related to the major international war crimes trials of our time, including the trials of the Khmer Rouge leaders before the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, the trial of Charles Taylor before the Special Court for Sierra Leone, and the trials of the Ba'ath Party Leaders before the Iraqi High Tribunal.

Grotian Moment: The International War Crimes Trial Blog

February 6th, 2008

No Chaos in this Courtroom!

By Michael P. Scharf

*This essay was originally posted on the Trial of Charles Taylor Blog:
<http://charlestaylortrial.org/expert-commentary-2/professor-michael-p-scharf-no-chaos-in-this-courtroom/>*

After the conclusion of the Saddam Hussein trial, which was perhaps the messiest trial in legal history, I was invited by Luis Moreno-Ocampo, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, to make a presentation to his staff about the best ways an international criminal court can maintain control of a war crimes trial in the face of a defendant or defense counsel who seeks to disrupt the proceedings. I subsequently was invited to speak about this important issue to the judges and prosecutors of the Rwanda Tribunal and Cambodia Tribunal. The text of my presentation is available on the ICC's website: http://www.icc-cpi.int/otp/otp_guest_lectures.html and has subsequently been published as: Michael P. Scharf, Chaos in the Courtroom: Controlling Disruptive Defendants and Contumacious Counsel in War Crimes Trials, 39 CASE WESTERN RESERVE JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL LAW 155-170 (2007).

Because of the political context and widespread publicity, former leaders on trial such as Charles Taylor, Saddam Hussein, Slobodan Milosevic, and Vojislav Seselj, are more likely than ordinary defendants to perceive that they do not stand a chance of obtaining an acquittal by playing by the rules. Instead, such individuals will often attempt to derail the proceedings, hoping for a negotiated solution such as a pardon or amnesty. They may try to hijack the trial, hoping to transform themselves through their political diatribes into heroic martyrs in the eyes of their followers. And at the same time, they may seek to discredit the tribunal, hoping to provoke the judges into inappropriately harsh responses which will make the process appear patently unfair. For this reason, major war crimes trials are often perceived as extremely messy or worse, completely out of control. When the Charles Taylor trial began last summer, there were indications that it would follow that pattern, as Taylor made inflammatory speeches, fired his lawyer, and sought to represent himself at the trial's first session.

As Robert Jackson, the Chief Prosecutor at the Nuremberg trial, observed sixty years ago, war crimes trials, whether before international tribunals or domestic courts, seek to establish a credible historic record of abuses and elevate the rule of law over the force of might, thereby facilitating the restoration of peace and the transition to democracy. While tolerating dissent is a healthy manifestation of a democratic government, a courtroom is not an arena in which dissension, particularly of a disruptive nature, may supplant, or even take precedence over, the task of administering justice. Unlike other forms of acceptable political expression, a disruptive defendant or defense lawyer who interferes with the "grandeur of court procedure" (as Hannah Arendt once described the judicial process) threatens the proper administration of criminal justice in several fundamental ways. First, disruptive conduct renders it more difficult for the defendant and any co-defendants to obtain a fair trial. Second, it hampers the court's ability to facilitate the testimony of victims

and other witnesses. And third, it undermines the public's confidence in and respect for the legal process.

With this in mind, the Special Court for Sierra Leone wisely held in *Prosecutor v. Norman* (2005) that the defendant's right to employ disruptive tactics which seek to discredit the judicial process must give way to the tribunal's obligation to protect "the integrity of the proceedings" and "to ensure that the administration of justice is not brought into disrepute." Following the recipe outlined in my presentation/article, the Special Court for Sierra Leone has taken appropriate actions to make sure that the Charles Taylor trial avoids the missteps of the messy war crimes trials of the past. For example, the Tribunal has required that Taylor be represented by counsel, rather than allow him to use self-representation to turn the trial into a circus. And it has provided Taylor and his counsel detailed warnings of the incremental and calibrated Judicial responses they can expect to encounter if they engage in disruptive conduct.

Based on my impressions from watching the live feed of the Taylor trial at <http://www.scs-l.org/> it appears that the Tribunal has succeeded. Defendant Charles Taylor is behaving himself quite admirably in the courtroom, and at the same time is taking a constructive part in his own defense. He is seen constantly writing and often passing sticky notes to his lawyer, Courtenay Griffiths, who uses them during cross-examination. Taylor stands respectfully when the judges enter the courtroom, and has done nothing remotely disruptive - though his very presence is of course intimidating to witnesses who fear for their lives and are under the heaviest security imaginable. The press made a big deal that Taylor blew a kiss to his daughter sitting in the public gallery viewing to the trial on the first day, and he occasionally stares people down in the public gallery, but for the most part he seems to be quietly paying attention to what's going on in the court.

Taylor's new legal team has been doing an impressive job. British Barrister Courtenay Griffiths is quite tough on the witness, he grandstands from time to time, he tries to induce the witnesses into making exculpatory statements about his client, and he does his best to generate inconsistencies in their stories -- basically he's doing exactly what an outstanding defense attorney should be doing, which in turn bumps up the credibility of the entire process. The Taylor trial is animated - but within the ground rules of the court. This is a far cry from the Milosevic, Seselj and Saddam Trials, where the defendants and their counsel regularly disparaged the judges, interrupted witness testimony with outbursts, turned cross-examination into political diatribes, and staged frequent walk-outs, hunger strikes, and boycotts. It remains to be seen whether things will continue to go so well, but for now it does appear that the SCSL has learned from the lessons of the past and is setting a good precedent for the future.

 Michael Scharf is Professor of Law and Director of the Frederick K. Cox International Law Center at Case Western Reserve University School of Law in Cleveland, Ohio (USA).