

**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:

Friday, 7 March 2008

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

Friday, 7 March 2008

To The Victims Of War ...

Taylor To Return Billions

"If we can get the money back to the victim, that's a critical part of justice," Spe-

cial Court's Chief Prosecutor, Stephen Rapp is reported as stating, adding, "it may be even close to a billion Dol-

lars when you add together all the resources and money that went through the government

of Liberia when he was President."

It could be recalled the United Nations Backed

Special Court for Sierra Leone had called on the UK government to assist them in tracking down

money believed to have been stolen by Ex-President Charles Taylor who

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Taylor To Return Billions

From front page

is currently on trial at The Hague, Netherlands for among other charges, funding rebels in Sierra Leone while he was President of Liberia.

If he is he is convicted

pillage, Rapp says he would be asked to return his alleged stolen money.

If we obtain a conviction for him on pillage, we are going to go forward and try to obtain the restitution orders," Rapp is

reported to have stated.

According to the Chief Prosecutor, the real tragedy of the war in Sierra Leone is that much has been to help the victims of the war.

Independent Observer
Friday, 7 March 2008



The Special Court for Sierra Leone has asked the UK government to help track down money believed to have been stolen by Liberia's ex-leader Charles Taylor.

He is on trial accused of funding rebels in Sierra Leone while in office.

Mr Taylor denies the charges, but the chief prosecutor says if he is convicted for pillage he wants his alleged stolen millions to be returned.

"If we can get the money back to the victims, that's a critical part of justice," Stephen Rapp told the BBC.

During Sierra Leone's decade-long civil war, which officially ended in 2002, tens of thousands of people died and thousands more were mutilated, raped and had limbs amputated.

Mr Taylor's war crimes case has been transferred from Sierra Leone to The Hague for security reasons, although it is still being conducted by the UN-backed court.

The former Liberian president is charged with 11 counts of crimes against humanity and war crimes.

"Forensic evidence" Mr Rapp has been in London to meet with the UK government to discuss the alleged looted money which is believed to be in the region of several hundred million dollars.

"It may be even close to a billion dollars when you add together all the resources and the money that went through the government of Liberia when he was president," Mr Rapp told the BBC's World Today programme.

Special Court Targets \$650m From Charles Taylor's Bank Account Prosecutors say he provided guns for diamonds

Indications are that some \$650m was due to the people, due to the treasury - first money

all flowed through his personal bank accounts."

Tracking down the funds was

an "ongoing forensic effort", but governments around the world have been co-operative

when asked for help. "If we obtain a conviction for him on pillage we're

help, he said. conviction for re going to

go forward and try to obtain the restitution orders," the
Contd. Page 2

Special Court On Taylor

From Front Page

chief prosecutor said.

He said the real tragedy of the war in Sierra Leone is that not enough was being done to help the victims of the war.

He said he hoped any recovered money would go to a victim reparation programme.

"For the thousands of people who had arms and legs and sometimes ears and other body parts chopped off cruelly during the course of the conflict - and victims of sexual violence."

Awareness Times

Friday, 7 March 2008

Ex-UNAMSIL Boss to testify at the Special Court

The former UNAMSIL Force Commander, Kenyan born Lt. Gen. Daniel Opande is expected to testify at the Special Courts for Sierra Leone in the ongoing appeal trial of former members of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). This was reportedly disclosed in a press release issued by the Court recently. According to the release, Lt. Gen. Daniel Opande who supervised the disarmament programme in Sierra Leone will serve as one of the witnesses that will give an eye witness account of the role played by Issa Sesay.

[Note: Copied from the 6 March 2008 edition of The Pool. There is still no press release.]

Salone Times
Friday, 7 March 2008

News & Views About The Country In The Diaspora
MANUFACTURING BLOOD DIAMONDS
AND OTHER MOCKING STONES

By Elyse Gbanahom Hollowell

"Sometimes I wonder whether God will forgive us for what we have done to each other...God left this place a long time ago."
Danny Archer as acted by Leonardo de Caprio

Finda was born in Kono, Sierra Leone's diamond zone, but until she was 13 years old, she did not set eyes on a diamond. Although most of her relatives live, breathe and thirst for diamonds, and fantasize all the time to her about how they would shake the pillars of the earth with wealth on the day they happen upon a giant stone, Finda's first contact with a diamond was when an unassuming American lover, whose mission to Sierra Leone she didn't know, placed a sand-like object in her palm (meanwhile her relatives continue to bask in chronic persistent poverty).

When he told her that it was a diamond, Finda only retorted, asking if it was the tiny object that had all the fuss about it. That slight they made love, and while Finda gave all her body and soul to the affair so that she can carve a charm in the heart of the American, to hurriedly file the papers for her to travel to the United States, that country that, in her dream, could be the only place where "diamonds" really grow, the American went for the ultimate erotica associated with the pleasures of finality, wealth and accomplishment. When the two detached and separated after the affair, the possibility of their paths crossing again was flung to a probability of one in a million chances. Blood Diamond was made, with its attendant Herculean tasks undertaken by a white foreign merchant, with a utilitarian perspective: that, in the perception of the West, and as a furtherance of their policing of world matters, the readiness to make sacrifices, the highest virtue can be found in the culture of the West.

There are a million unassuming Westerners roving through the streets of Angola and Sierra Leone, in time of war or peace, looking deeply into the bottom of these vulnerable countries, waiting to find diamonds. A million more middle easterners, mostly Syrians and Lebanese are sitting in front shops, coordinating the dirty affair of illicit mining under the noses of African leaders, who had in the first place signed papers of legitimacy for these Martians of predators.

By the same mathematical token, thousands of unschooled, unfed, uncreed-for underage boys are shaking the wash-pans in large awkward pits by day and by night to search out diamonds for their impetuous abusers. Whatever the reason for making the movie, Blood Diamond, an ambitious atomizing creation, the producers failed to delay the cameras, to capture the first port of human rights abuse: when they only glossed over the



wash-pan shaking boys and instead, dwelled on war captive and diamond slave, Solomon vandi and his discovery of a large diamond he skillfully hid between his toes and later buried in a place only he knew. In search of this treasure, the picture zoomed to the white foreign merchant, Danny Archer visiting war torn Sierra Leone and who had gotten wind of Solomon's diamond and would dare every bloody scene to reach the stone.

The trouble with Blood Diamond is that its metaphorical substance as promised in its title sagged under a mundane story line. A movie carrying such a title should have several anecdotes of amorphical episodes to its storyline because real conflict are as a result of human paradoxes. But instead what we see are two storylines: one of civil conflict not properly developed, and another of dirty business deals and both stories fail to intertwine. This calls into question as to whether the West is insinuating that the Sierra Leone civil conflict was fought over diamonds, or was fueled by diamonds. But of course the movie did not provide an answer.

Meanwhile, in the daily wait for diamonds, merchants and warlords, to kill the time, and ease their impatience, continue to pull the virgin skirt of the many unsuspecting Findas, pouring into the flesh only to draw out the first blood of defilement.

Every so often cases of this nature occur in the heartland of Angola, Sierra Leone, and the DRC. While the diamondiferous relationships that forge between the white foreign merchants and the indigenes glitter with radiance, it lacks every essential of commercial goodwill. Let us immediately bring in the circumstances of the ethic of justice to our narration. All the while we have in mind the metaphor of blood as we follow Danny Archer, the white merchant and Solomon Vandi, the local farmer turned digger of diamonds into the pit where the dialogue of exploitation has made bedfellows of people with nothing in common, only that of the two, Archer (the Westerner) is reaching for a manger, Vandi the other, as a dog (the Southerner) knows not how to lie in.

To Be Continued

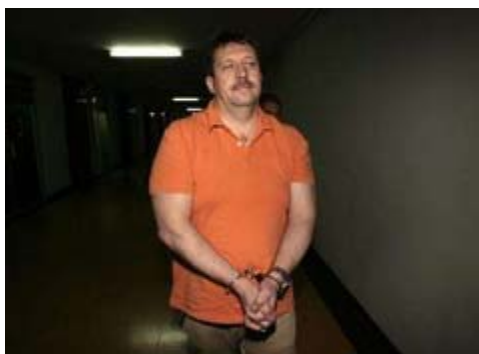
Reuters

Thursday, 6 March 2008

Thais arrest "Merchant of Death" arms dealer

BANGKOK/NEW YORK (Reuters) - Viktor Bout, an international arms dealer dubbed the "Merchant of Death," was arrested in Thailand and charged in New York on Thursday with trying to sell weapons to Colombian rebels, officials said.

Bout, the target of U.S. sanctions, was charged with conspiring to sell millions of dollars worth of weapons to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, U.S. Attorney Michael Garcia said in



The United States, which has given billions of dollars in military aid to Colombia to fight the Marxist rebels and drug cartels, plans to pursue Bout's extradition from Thailand, officials said.

The FARC are fighting a four-decade-old insurgency against the Colombian government and are designated as a foreign terrorist organization by the U.S. State Department.

The group is at the centre of a diplomatic dispute that threatened to erupt into military conflict this week, after Colombia crossed the border into Ecuador to attack FARC rebels and kill one of their commanders on Saturday. Venezuela, an Ecuador ally and U.S. antagonist, leaped into the dispute, and the two countries sent additional troops to their borders with Colombia.

Bout's associate Andrew Smulian, 46, was charged on Thursday with conspiring to provide material support to a terrorist organization. Smulian's whereabouts were not immediately clear.

FORMER SOVIET OFFICER

A former Soviet air force officer born in Tajikistan in 1967, according to Russian media reports, Bout was picked up at a Bangkok hotel after entering Thailand on February 29. Police were searching for an associate.

He was attempting "to procure weapons for Colombia's FARC rebels," Thai police said in an arrest report.

He has run a network of air cargo companies in the Middle East, Africa, Eastern Europe and the United States.

According to the United Nations and the U.S. Treasury Department, Bout has sold or brokered arms that have helped fuel wars in Afghanistan, Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Sudan.

The U.S. Treasury Department seized his cargo planes and froze other assets in 2006.

Bout has repeatedly denied the allegations.

Stephen Rapp, Chief Prosecutor at Sierra Leone's U.N.-backed war crimes court, welcomed the arrest: "It's very good news for justice and for international law enforcement."

He accused Bout of using his international network to smuggle arms through neighbouring Liberia to fuel Sierra Leone's 1991-2002 civil war, which killed more than 50,000 people.

Rapp said Bout could be indicted by Sierra Leone's Special Court, which is currently due to close in 2009, if international donors came forward to provide funding.

"These kinds of cases need to be made against not just the politicians and the fighters, but the people who provide weapons of war," he said. "This is a great opportunity."

Rapp said Bout could also be a witness in the continuing trial of former Liberian president Charles Taylor in The Hague. Taylor is accused of crimes against humanity for his role in Sierra Leone's civil war.

(Reporting by Nopporn Wong-Anan in Bangkok and Edith Honan in New York; additional reporting by Katrina Manson in Freetown; writing by Michelle Nichols, editing by Patricia Zengerle)

Associated Press

Friday, 7 March 2008

Thais Nab So-Called 'Merchant of Death'

By MICHAEL CASEY

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP) — The U.S. is seeking the extradition of a suspected Russian arms dealer dubbed the "Merchant of Death," but for now he will remain in Thailand, where authorities are investigating if he used the country as a base to negotiate a weapons deal with terrorists, officials said Friday.

Viktor Bout, a 41-year-old whose dealings reportedly inspired a 2005 movie about the illicit arms trade, is accused of running weapons to al-Qaida, the Taliban and parties involved in bloody conflicts across Africa. He was arrested at a Bangkok hotel after a four-month sting operation by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, Thai and U.S. authorities said.

"He is called the 'Merchant of Death' and 'Man of War' for a reason," Thomas Pasquarello, regional director of the DEA, said in Bangkok.

American authorities intend to extradite Bout but the timing still has to be "worked out" between the two nations, Pasquarello said.

Thailand is investigating whether Bout was involved in "procuring weapons for terrorists and conspiring with terrorists," Lt. Gen. Adisorn Nontree said.

Authorities in New York unsealed a criminal complaint Thursday charging that Bout conspired to sell millions of dollars in weapons — including 100 surface-to-air missiles and armor-piercing rockets — to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC.

The U.S. considers the leftist rebels, who have been fighting Colombia's government for more than 40 years, a terror group. Bout and associate Andrew Smulian were charged with "conspiring to provide material support to a foreign terrorist organization."

The DEA was involved because, according to the criminal complaint, the FARC uses weapons to protect its cocaine trafficking business, which helps to finance its operations.

Thai police Col. Petcharat Sengchai said Smulian was still being sought.

Handcuffed and expressionless, Bout was paraded before journalists at the news conference but refused to answer questions.

Regarded as one of the world's most wanted arms traffickers, Bout's alleged list of customers is said to include African dictators and warlords, including Charles Taylor of Liberia, Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi and both sides of the civil war in Angola.

He is believed to have used a fleet of planes and contacts from his days in the Soviet Air Force to buy weapons in formerly communist Eastern Europe and deliver them to rebel groups around the world.

He is generally believed to have been a model for the arms dealer portrayed by Nicolas Cage in the 2005 movie "Lord of War."

The DEA complaint filed in New York federal court reads like a spy thriller, telling how agents infiltrated Bout's organization and posed as FARC rebels. They used at least three informants to reach the reclusive and secretive Bout through Smulian, identified as a business associate.

Meetings between the informants and Smulian took place over four months on the Caribbean island of Curacao and in Copenhagen and Romania to discuss the purchase of armaments and surface-to-air missiles worth millions of dollars, the complaint said, and included air dropping the weapons into FARC territory.

Smulian at one point even suggested Bout could procure helicopter gunships for the rebels.

In New York, U.S. Attorney Michael Garcia would not say how much the weapons involved in the alleged deal were worth but said the cost of transporting them alone was set at \$5 million. He said the weapons were to be parachuted to FARC fighters in Colombian territory.

U.S. authorities tipped off Thai authorities Monday that Bout was expected to arrive to complete the FARC arms deal and a Thai court issued an arrest warrant the next day, Adisorn said.

Bout arrived from Moscow on Thursday morning and checked into a luxury hotel in downtown Bangkok. Within hours, nearly two dozen Thai police and U.S. law enforcement agents poured into the hotel and apprehended him, said police Col. Petcharat Sengchai. He did not resist arrest.

In 2000, Peter Hain, then Britain's Cabinet minister for African affairs, called Bout "the chief sanctions-buster" flouting U.N. arms embargoes on the warring parties in Angola, Sierra Leone, Congo and Rwanda and said he supplied al-Qaida and the Taliban with arms. He dubbed Bout "a merchant of death."

A 2007 book by journalists Douglas Farah and Stephen Braun, called "Merchant of Death: Money, Guns, Planes, and the Man Who Makes War Possible," claims that planes in Bout's fleet made several airdrops of weapons to FARC guerrillas between December 1998 and April 1999.

The book says the flights dropped about 10,000 weapons to the rebels, "enabling them to greatly enhance their military capabilities."

Bout has been investigated by police in several countries, but has never been prosecuted for arms dealing. He has denied being involved in illicit deals: "Never in my life have I done anything that would cause me to hide from anyone," he told a Russian radio interviewer in 2002.

In 2005, the U.S. Treasury Department issued a statement saying Bout has the capacity to transport tanks, helicopters and weapons "by the ton" to virtually any point in the world.

U.N. reports say Bout set up a network of more than 50 aircraft around the world, owned by shadowy companies with names such as Bukavu Aviation Transport, Business Air Services and Great Lakes Business Co.

A U.N. travel ban imposed on Bout that was still current as of last November said he supported former Liberian President Charles Taylor's regime in efforts to destabilize Sierra Leone and gain illicit access to diamonds, which became known as "blood diamonds" for the warring they inspired.

In October 2006, President Bush issued an executive order freezing the assets of Bout and several associates and warlords in Congo and barring Americans from doing business with them.

They were accused of violating international laws involving targeting of children or violating a ban on sales of military equipment to Congo, and Bout had been under similar sanctions since 2004.

Associated Press reporters Ambika Ahuja and Grant Peck in Bangkok and Peter Leonard in Moscow contributed to this report.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

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

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

Newspaper Summary

Irish Aid Advisory Meets President Sirleaf - Announces Permanent Mission Set Up

(The Analyst, The Informer, The Monitor)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf says the partnership between Liberia and its bilateral partners is crucial to national recovery. Speaking Wednesday during a meeting with a nine-member Advisory Board of Irish Aid, President Sirleaf lauded Ireland for its continuous interest and support to Liberia's development agenda.
- An Executive Mansion release says the President spoke of the need for the setting up of an Irish Aid permanent office in Liberia to increase the level of interaction that would ensure the active participation of the Irish Government in the country's development agenda. Speaking earlier, the head of the delegation of the Irish Aid Advisory Board, former Irish Foreign Minister Mr. David Andrews, congratulated the President for the progress made by her Government thus far. Mr. Andrews said the Board's visit is intended to conduct a first hand assessment of the situation in Liberia. The Advisory Board of Irish Aid, he disclosed, has agreed to set up a permanent mission in Liberia.

Student Protest Disrupt Classes at State-Owned University

(Heritage, The Informer, New Democrat, The News, National Chronicle, The Inquirer)

- The media reports that classes were on Wednesday disrupted at the State-owned University of Liberia by protesting students of the Science and Agricultural Colleges. The protesting students blocked the main gates leading to the University vowing to disrupt classes until their demands are met.
- The students are requesting additional buses to transport them to and from the University's Fendall Campus outside Monrovia and that professors and students attend classes regularly. A spokesman for the students said they are also demanding medical and security services. University of Liberia President, Dr. Al Hassan Conteh said he was aware of the students' plight but warned against demonstration to state their case.
- Dr. Conteh said no amount of violence could address their plight. This is the second time students of the Science and Agricultural colleges have staged a protest to demand transportation. Similar protest by the student led to the temporary closure of the University last year.

Defense Ministry Discharges "Drug" Carrying AFL Soldier

(Daily Observer, Heritage)

- A soldier of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) arrested in Ganta for carrying 6.7 kilograms of marijuana has been discharged from the Army, the Defense Ministry has announced.
- A Defense Ministry release said it had immediately discharged Pvt. Carson Cooper from active duty in the army to allow the due process to take its course in a civilian court. The release quotes Defense Minister, Brownie Samukai as saying that the discharge of Pvt. Cooper should serve as a deterrent to any member of the AFL who associates with any illegal substance use, abuse or possession. The soldier was picked up by Immigration authorities at the checkpoint in Ganta, Nimba County while en route to Monrovia.

Police to Weed out Impersonators

(New Democrat, The Inquirer)

- Police authorities have launched a scheme to weed out imposters amongst officers via identification. Speaking Wednesday, Police Inspector General, Munah Sieh said from now the police will not only use badges to identify its officers but that Identification Cards would be demanded. Col. Sieh said some people were in the habit of posing as police officers using military hardware and police uniforms to intimidate peaceful citizens. Meanwhile, the police boss said the force have reached its targeted 3000 officers since it commenced recruitment and training in 2005.

Liberia Clears Arrears with Regional Labour Administration Centre

(The Analyst)

- Liberia has cleared all its outstanding indebtedness owed to the African Regional Labour Administration Centre (ARLAC). In a statement the Labour Ministry said the country is now eligible to benefit from the regional organization through consultancy services, training and enhanced capacity-development for workers, employers and Government.
- The indebtedness was cleared when Liberia's Labour Minister, Attorney-at-Law Samuel Kofi Woods at the head of a two-man delegation attended the 34th ARLAC Governing Council of African Ministers of Labour held in Kariba, Zimbabwe from 25th -29th February 2008. ARLAC, founded in 34years ago, is the premier African regional institution responsible to strengthen labour administration in member countries through training, research and advisory services. The Centre looks at practical real world solutions to meet the demands of today's changing economy where new management thinking must reflect the interest of everyone in the world of work.

Radio Summary Local Media – Radio veritas *(News monitored today at 9:45 am)*

Classes Resume at State-owned University following Students Protest

- Classes have resumed at the State-owned University of Liberia following Wednesday's violent protest by students of the Science and Agricultural Colleges.

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

Defense Ministry Confirms Arrest of "Drug" Carrying AFL Soldier

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

UNICEF Says Liberia Has Highest Rate of Teenage Mothers

- Speaking at UNMIL regular press briefing yesterday, the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) Country Representative to Liberia, Rozanne Chorlton said Liberia is rated as having the world's highest population of teenage mothers.
- Ms. Chorlton said a survey conducted last year in Lofa County alone shows that 73 percent of teenage girls in that part of the country were teenage mothers.

Liberia Clears Arrears with Regional Labour Administration Centre
