

**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 March 2011

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Ex-rebel Commando turns Pastor

A former rebel commando of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) has chosen a new path to life, transforming from a dreaded gun-wielding fighter to a born-again Christian and eventually a Pastor.

In his testimony during one of Fambul Tok International's reconciliation ceremonies in Nyadehun village, Luawa chiefdom, Kailahum district, Mattia - whose bush name was "Commando Agama" - regretted joining the then fighting forces. He told an audience of community people that he was captured by RUF rebels and that due to threats of being executed should he attempt to escape, he decided to join the RUF

movement.

Pastor Mattia, as he is now known - in a remorseful mood - apologized to all those he had wronged during the war. He said since he returned to Nyadehun village after the war, he has continued to work with his people to develop the area and its environments.

"We are working together as brothers and sisters; the only problem was that I did not have the opportunity to apologize to my people for what went wrong but since Fambul Tok has created that space, I want to use it to say sorry and once again reconcile with the victims," he said.

One of the victims of Mattia's atrocities, Lahai

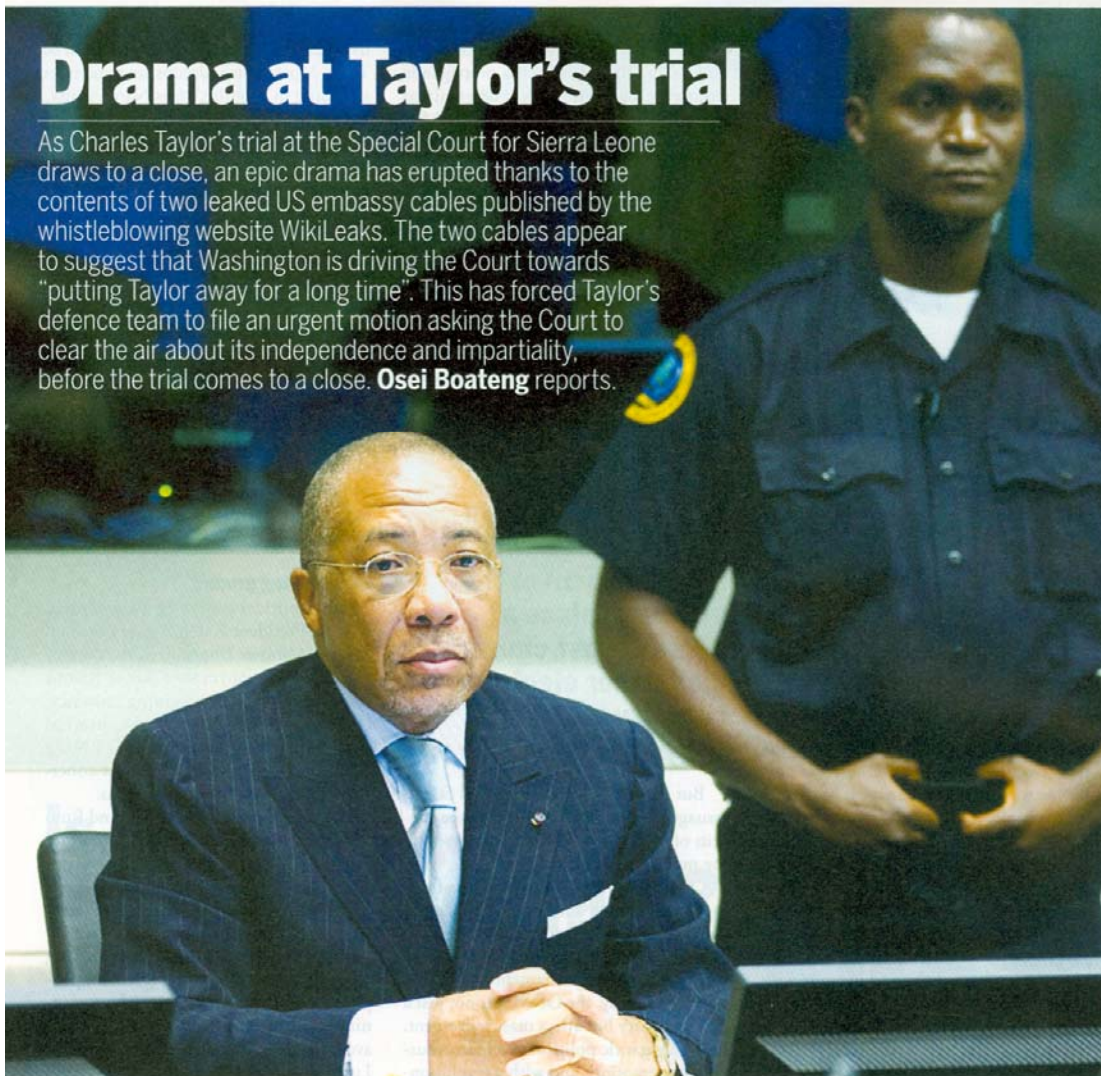
Jusu in a tearful mood, explained how he lost his brother during the war. He revealed that because his brother had refused to carry rebel looted goods from one village to the other, he was ordered to be beaten to death by Mattia.

"As I stand here this evening, I'm still in pain and could not walk upright. I'm just from Kenema to seek medical attention. But as Fambul Tok has asked us to forgive, I'm ready to forgive Mattia," said Jusu. The reconciliation committee of Fambul Tok succeeded in bringing together Pastor Mattia and Jusu and both men were encouraged to work in the interest of peace and reconciliation in the community.

Feature | Liberia/Sierra Leone

Drama at Taylor's trial

As Charles Taylor's trial at the Special Court for Sierra Leone draws to a close, an epic drama has erupted thanks to the contents of two leaked US embassy cables published by the whistleblowing website WikiLeaks. The two cables appear to suggest that Washington is driving the Court towards "putting Taylor away for a long time". This has forced Taylor's defence team to file an urgent motion asking the Court to clear the air about its independence and impartiality, before the trial comes to a close. **Osei Boateng** reports.



When your master is your enemy, you are doomed, said Charles Taylor, the former Liberian president currently standing trial at the Special Court for Sierra Leone, in June 2002. Since his arrest in March 2006, Taylor has maintained that his troubles have been driven by America, supported by Britain. But not many people be-

lieved him. Now, two US embassy cables leaked by the whistleblowing website WikiLeaks, appear to support Taylor's assertion. This has compelled his defence team to file a last-minute "urgent" motion seeking clarification from the Court that it has not been influenced by outside forces, particularly the American government, to convict Taylor by all means, fair or foul; and that the

Court's impartiality and independence have not been compromised.

The cables, one from the US embassy in the Liberian capital, Monrovia, and the other from the US embassy in The Hague, appear to suggest that the American government is interfering and driving the Court towards "putting Taylor away for a long time".

Because the motion and five other out-

Charles Taylor on trial. He wants the air cleared about the independence and impartiality of the Special Court

be allowed to run the trial as he pleased, and that by failing to meet the 14 January deadline, he had effectively forfeited his chance to file his “final trial brief”, a critical document that encapsulates a party’s strongest argument, based on the facts and evidence before the Court. The final trial brief is intended to assist the judges in writing their judgements.

When both the Trial and Appeals Chambers finally handed down their decisions on the outstanding motions on 3 February (some of which went in Taylor’s favour), Taylor filed his “final trial brief”, but again, by a majority decision of 2-1 (with Justice Sebutinde again dissenting), the Court refused to accept the brief as filed even though Rule 86(B) of the Statute establishing the Court allowed the filing of the brief “not later than five days prior to the date set for the presentation of that party’s final argument.”

The refusal really annoyed Taylor’s lead defence counsel, Courtenay Griffiths, so much so that he walked out of the Court in protest, despite being told to sit down by the presiding judge, Justice Teresa Doherty (from Northern Ireland). He was later followed out by his client, Taylor.

On 9 February, the Court ruled (again by majority decision, with Justice Sebutinde again dissenting), that Griffiths should attend court on 11 February to apologise for his behaviour on 8 February or the Court would impose sanctions against him.

When the Court sat on 11 February to hear the apology, the Defence offered none but managed to get an adjournment for two weeks (until 25 February) to get an experienced lawyer to defend Griffiths on the disciplinary case.

On top of that, the Defence got a favourable majority decision (this time with Justice Richard Lussick of Samoa dissenting) for leave to appeal against the Trial Chamber’s decision to refuse Taylor’s final trial brief. The Court therefore adjourned the substantive Taylor case until the Appeals Chamber decides on the Defence’s appeal to be allowed to file the “final trial brief”.

WikiLeaks cables

The first of the two classified cables at the heart of the new drama in court, was written by Linda Thomas-Greenfield, the American ambassador in Monrovia, on 10 March 2009. She was unremitting in her comments. She began: “Chief Prosecutor Stephen Rapp’s ill-considered announcement in the press February 24 [2009] that Charles Taylor may walk free because of a supposed budget shortfall for the Special Court for Sierra Leone, where Taylor is presently on trial, made headlines in the local press, and raised anxiety here about Taylor’s imminent return.

“The GOL [Government of Liberia] was alarmed enough that President Johnson-Sirleaf called Ambassador on February 28 [2009] to raise her concerns. Johnson-Sirleaf pointed out that Liberia’s stability remains fragile, and such remarks reverberated throughout the country, as people are still traumatised by Taylor and the war.”

Thomas-Greenfield, an African-American, continued: “The threat of a return of Taylor strengthens [the hand of pro-Taylor forces] and for now they see no need to give in at all. However, if Taylor is put away for a long time, the government may feel a bit bolder in recovering assets and bringing Taylor backers who committed war crimes to justice.

“The international community has just a few tools to pressure the Taylor people into accepting the new reality. The UN sanctions appear to have the intended effect of keeping them somewhat marginalised and fearful of further attempts to strip them of their ill-gotten gains. However, we have regularly heard of travel outside Liberia of those on the travel ban list, without prior approval.”

The ambassador went on: “*However, the best we can do for Liberia is to see to it that Taylor is put away for a long time and we cannot delay for the results of the present trial to consider [the] next steps. All legal options should be studied to ensure that Taylor cannot return to destabilise Liberia* [italics added]. Building a case in the United States against Taylor for financial crimes such as wire fraud would probably be the best route,” Thomas-Greenfield continued. “There may be other options, such as applying the new law criminalising the use of child soldiers or terrorism statutes.

“The peace in Liberia remains fragile,



standing ones had not been decided upon by the Trial and Appeal Chambers of the Court, by 14 January, Taylor refused to file his “final trial brief” to wrap up his defence, as ordered by the Court on 22 October last year.

But by a majority decision of 2-1 (one of the three judges on the case, the Ugandan Justice Julia Sebutinde, dissented), the Court ruled that Taylor would not

and its only guarantee is the robust and adaptable UNMIL [UN Mission in Liberia] presence. The GOL does not have the ability to quell violence, monitor its borders or operate independently to fight crime. *A free Taylor could tip the balance in the wrong direction.*"

Cable No. 2

As if Thomas-Greenfield's comments were not revealing enough, the legal counsellor at the American embassy in The Hague, Denise G. Manning, sent another vexing cable on the Taylor trial to Washington DC on 15 April 2009, talking about "contacts" the embassy has in the Prosecution, Registry, and the Trial Chamber itself who were giving inside information to the US government "outside the official lines of communication".

Manning even claimed that one of the three judges at work on Taylor's case, the Ugandan Julia Sebutinde, was deliberately "slowing things down" so she would be the one to give the final judgement.

He wrote: "Further muddying timing predictions, Court employees have intimated that the Trial Chamber could work more expeditiously. The Taylor Chamber consists of three judges who take turns presiding: Judge Richard Lussick (Samoa), Justice Teresa Doherty (Northern Ireland) and Justice Julia Sebutinde (Uganda), along with an alternate judge, Justice El Hadji Malick Sow (Senegal).

"A couple of Court employees have grumbled that when the last prosecution witness testified on January 20, 2009, the Court still had 11 outstanding motions, some over a year old. Additionally, one Chamber contact believes that the Trial Chamber could have accelerated the Court's work by excluding extraneous material and arguments.

"Moreover, contacts in Prosecution and Registry speculate that Justice Sebutinde may have a timing agenda. They think she, as the only African judge, wants to hold the gavel as presiding judge when the Trial Chamber announces the Taylor judgement. Reportedly, her next stint as presiding judge begins in January [2010]."

When the cables were published by WikiLeaks, an embarrassed Justice Sebutinde hotly denied Manning's allegations. In Monrovia, an equally embarrassed Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield rushed to the Executive Mansion to render



"The WikiLeaks cables...support the Defence position that the prosecution of Mr Taylor is in fact political and his indictment was selective."

an apology to President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf for the unflattering comments she had made about her government in the cable.

Legal arguments

As expected, the contents of the two cables were received with shock by Taylor and his defence team. They filed a multi-annexed urgent motion on 10 January seeking clarifications and fair trial assurances from the Court.

Signed by the lead defence counsel, Courtenay Griffiths, the motion said: "United Nations Security Council Resolution 1315 (2000) which called for the creation of the Special Court, emphasised

'the importance of ensuring the impartiality, independence and credibility of the process, in particular with regard to the status of the judges and the prosecutors.' Consequently, Articles 13(1) and 15 (1) of the Statute unequivocally state that the organs of the Court must act independently and impartially, and without instructions from any government or other source."

But, from the contents of the cables, the motion said, the impartiality and independence of the Court appeared to be compromised. "The probative value of the evidence in the cables is significant... In fact, the Defence submits that the admissions of the evidence contained in the cables and the apology [by Ambassador



Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield (left) arrives at the Robertsfield Airport in Monrovia

Thomas-Greenfield] is critical to ensuring that Mr Taylor receives a fair trial.”

According to the defence: “The cables clearly indicate, inter alia, two things: (1) the US Government’s desire to ensure that Mr Taylor does not return to Liberia, and (2) proof that there are and have been contacts between the Trial Chamber, the Prosecution and the Registry, respectively, and agents of the USG [US Government] outside the official lines of communication. This, it is submitted, raises grave doubts about the independence and impartiality of the Special Court’s prosecution of Charles Taylor. Viewed objectively, the evidence could lead to the reasonable conclusion that the indictment and trial of Mr Taylor by the Special Court is no more than an extension of United States foreign policy interests in West Africa, with there being no genuine connection to any alleged crimes in Sierra Leone.”

Courtenay Griffiths, a brilliant British QC (or Queen’s Counsel), has forever been

saying inside and outside the Court that Taylor’s trial has been driven by American political interests. Now he has support from the contents of the leaked cables.

In the motion, he argues: “In terms of relevance, the cables and the Apology support the Defence position that the prosecution of Mr Taylor is in fact political and his indictment was deliberately selective.

“It will be recalled that lead defence counsel submitted during the Defence’s opening statement that Mr Taylor was only indicted and arrested because of the USG’s interests and pressure.

“Mr Taylor subsequently testified that the USG had a vendetta against him and sought to remove him from power through various means, including by demonising and destabilising his government, giving military support to opposition LURD rebels, and working to install Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf as president.

“Mr Taylor also testified that the United States also attempted to oust him in furtherance of US commercial interests in the sub region. Other accounts imply the USG targeted Mr Taylor because of unsubstantiated evidence linking Liberia to al-Qaeda and the attacks on US embassies in 1998.”

The motion recalled that “when the Prosecution called Hassan Bility, a Liberian journalist, as a witness, the Defence challenged him on the basis that he was acting in cahoots with the United States Government.

“During cross-examination of Bility, lead defence counsel suggested that Bility was serving as a spy for the USG during the conflict in Liberia. Bility denied being a spy, but did say he had dinners with political counsellors and one human rights officer of the United States embassy in Monrovia, during which they ‘talked like friends’ and would ‘share opinions’.

“Bility also cooperated with the USG’s Federal Bureau of Investigation in its investigations of Charles Taylor and his son, Chucky... Mr Taylor testified that Bility was an intelligence officer for the

US embassy in Monrovia and Defence witness DCT-190 subsequently testified that Bility served as a source of information for LURD [the US and UK-backed anti-Taylor rebel group].”

“In short,” the motion concluded, “it is submitted that the contents of the cables further suggest that the Special Court has

Taylor’s lead defence lawyer, Courtenay Griffiths. “Mr Taylor was only indicted and arrested because of the USG’s interests and pressure,” he told the Special Court



been used to pursue ‘war by other means’, thus corrupting international law and justice in pursuit of a particular state’s enemy...

“The April 2009 cable exposes the fact that there are persons in the Trial Chamber, the Prosecution and the Registry, giving information to the United States Government outside the official channels of communication.

“Given the seemingly compromised impartiality and independence of the Special Court in light of its connection to the USG as alleged herein, the Trial Chamber should allow the defence to re-open its case and admit the selected portions of the March 2009 cable, and the entirety of the April 2009 cable, and the first paragraph of the Apology into evidence pursuant to Rule 92bis [of the Court].”

All in all, legal experts who have closely followed the trial are unanimous that the American government has exposed its hand too much in pursuing Taylor. ■NA

Diamond News

Thursday, 3 March 2011

"Blood Diamonds" Trial of Former Mandela Charity Official Postponed

The trial of former head of Nelson Mandela's children's charity, Jeremy Ratcliffe, has been postponed until March 30, news outlets report.

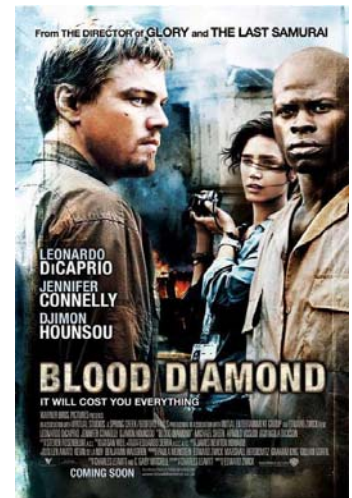
Ratcliffe is accused of having received rough diamonds from supermodel Naomi Campbell in 1997 in violation of South African law, which forbids individuals to be in possession of rough stones.

Campbell, who was attending a gala dinner in honor of Mandela, reportedly received the diamonds, which she described as "dirty-looking pebbles," from representatives of former Liberian president Charles Taylor, now under trial in The Hague for war crimes committed during his regime.

The model has maintained that at the time, she had never heard of Taylor or of conflict diamonds – diamonds traded illegally whose profits go to fund civil wars in the producing countries. Campbell showed the diamonds to Ratcliffe, suggesting that they could go to the charity fund.

Ratcliffe declined to involve the fund in any activity that could be illegal, and says that in the end, he "decided to just keep them."

South African authorities have said that Ratcliffe's trial is unrelated to the charges pending against Taylor in the Special Court for Sierra Leone.



The 2006 film "Blood Diamond" helped bring the issue of conflict diamonds into the cultural mainstream

Embassy of the Republic of Liberia in the United States (Washington, DC)

Sunday, 6 March 2011

Liberians Advised Against Using TRC Report for Political Gains

Press release

Washington, DC — A Liberian Diplomat based in the United States has warned that attempts to politicize the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) could undermine efforts by the Liberian Government to effectively implement the report.

The Minister Counselor for Press and Public Affairs at the Embassy of Liberia in Washington, D.C., Mr. Gabriel I.H. Williams said that as Liberians prepare to vote in a democratic election in 2011, it appears that the TRC report is being used in some quarters to try to force President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf from seeking re-election for a second term.

According to a dispatch from the Liberian Embassy in Washington, Mr. Williams was speaking recently at a forum held at the Headquarters of the National Endowment for Democracy. The well-attended event was held under the theme, Liberia: Elections, Corruption, Justice, and the Role of the International Community. The main speaker at the forum was Mr. J. Aloysius Toe, Founder and former Executive Director of the Foundation for Human Rights and Democracy (FOHRD), a Liberian-based human rights advocacy group.

In his address, Mr. Toe said the TRC recently made a number of recommendations, including prosecution of war criminals and political sanctions against individuals who financed, aided and abetted the war. “Unfortunately, the people who are subjects of the TRC recommendations are those who control power and wealth in Liberia, including the President,” he added.

Mr. Toe noted that because President Sirleaf was a financier of the war, the TRC recommended that she be banned from participating in political activities in Liberia for 30 years. However, he added, President Sirleaf has been doing everything possible to ensure that neither she nor those close to her are held accountable for their participation in the Liberian civil war.

Reacting to Mr. Toe’s assertions, Minister Counselor Williams indicated that the Government has done whatever was necessary over the years to support the work of the TRC, which has helped to identify some of the root causes of the Liberian conflict in its report.

The Liberian diplomat stated that while the government has endorsed some of the proposals such as the National Palava Hut programs and reparations so as to promote reconciliation, some of the TRC recommendations have constitutional and legal implications requiring the consideration of the Justice Ministry and the recently-constituted Independent Human Rights Commission.

For example, Mr. Williams pointed out, the TRC recommendation calling for the banning of Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and others from participation in political activities for 30 years is unconstitutional. He added that under the Liberian Constitution, an individual is banned from participation in political activities for only five years after said individual is tried and found guilty of treasonable acts by a court of competent jurisdiction.

“Under Liberian laws, as is the case with countries like the United States that subscribe to the rule of law, accused individuals are presumed innocent until proven guilty by a court of law,” he said, adding,

“Madam Sirleaf has never been taken to court, tried, and found guilty for her role in the Liberian civil war as being alleged.”

Mr. Williams wondered as to how the TRC could pardon someone like the ex-rebel commander called “Butt Naked,” who testified that he killed about 30,000 people and was involved in cannibalism, but the TRC would impose sanction against Madam Sirleaf, who simply testified that she provided some funds at the early stage of the NPFL uprising for humanitarian purposes, and she’s on record for opposing Mr. Charles Taylor for several years since the early stage of the NPFL armed insurgency.

Equally important, Mr. Williams also stated, is the fact that Madam Sirleaf has repeatedly apologized to the Liberian people for her ties with Mr. Taylor during the early stage of the uprising, and majority of Liberians voted for her to become President of Liberia in a free and fair democratic election in 2005.

Also addressing himself to claims of undue Executive or Presidential influence over the National Legislature and the Judiciary, the Liberian diplomat said such claims are questionable, considering that lawmakers of the ruling party constitute the minority bloc in the National Legislature, while ongoing judicial reforms are yielding positive results towards strengthening and making the judiciary more independent.

On the question of corruption, Mr. Williams agreed with Mr. Toe that corruption remains a major problem in the country. However, he added, Government is endeavoring to tackle this very serious problems through legislations, establishing and strengthening of institutions such as the Anti-Corruption Commission, the General Auditing Commission, the Judiciary, and the Ministry of Justice – all of which are faced with tremendous financial, logistical and manpower challenges in carrying out their duties.

Regarding Mr. Toe’s claim that freedom of press has been under attack since the Government of President Sirleaf came into office, Mr. Williams, a former leader of the Press Union of Liberia who recently served as Deputy Minister of Information, intimated, “I can say without any reservation that the Liberian people are enjoying a level of freedom unprecedented in the history of our country.”

Showing a scar on his hand which he attributed to security brutality during the past when he was a journalist, Mr. Williams reflected on those days when media houses were arbitrarily shut down or vandalized, and journalists were brutalized or jailed.

Speaking of the present, he said, “Liberia is today one of the few countries in the world where there is a very high level of freedom of speech and of the press, characterized by multiplicity of independent media entities. For example, Liberia is one of the few countries in Africa or the world with a Freedom of Information Act.”

He said that while much progress has been made in the area of press freedom, there are still challenges. He added that instances of abuse cited by Mr. Toe, such as attacks on journalists by security officers, are not officially sanctioned, and the government has been working to ensure that threats and attacks against journalists are completely discouraged.

Mr. Williams reaffirmed President Sirleaf’s commitment to the building of a new Liberia based on the rule of law, democracy, and good governance. Over the last five years, he added, President Sirleaf has labored tirelessly to restore Liberia’s international image, successfully carried out the reforms required under the Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) Initiative that led to the waiver of more than \$4.6 billion external debt by bilateral and multilateral lenders, and Liberia’s economy has attracted more than \$16 billion in private investment, among others.

Voice of America

Monday, 7 March 2011

NGO Official: Liberian Peace Threatened by Ivorian Conflict

Anne Goddard, CEO of ChildFund International, says Liberian President Sirleaf is also concerned Ivory Coast conflict threatens Liberia's peace

James Butty



Photo: AP

Residents of the Abobo district carry their belongings as they flee the neighborhood which has become a hub for street violence in the nation's ongoing political standoff, in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, February 28, 2011

An official of a US-based non-profit group says her organization and Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf are concerned the escalating violence in Ivory Coast and the refugees it generates could undermine Liberia's fragile peace.

The number of refugees flowing into neighboring Liberia increased dramatically last week from 40, 000 to 70,000, according to UN and aid agencies sources.

Anne Goddard, CEO of ChildFund International has just returned from Liberia where her organization works on a wide variety of child protection issues, including re-integrating former child soldiers back into their communities.

Goddard said President Sirleaf is concerned the fighting in Ivory Coast could encourage some former Liberian fighters to again take up arms.

"I did meet with the president (Sirleaf). She expressed great appreciation for our work. She was most concerned at the time about the situation in Cote d'Ivoire and the fighting that just broke out that day in the country and, suddenly, there had been an increase of people crossing the border," she said.

Goddard says, even though Liberians are trying to return the hospitality Ivory Coast showed them during Liberia's 14-year civil war, Sirleaf fears the gains made toward peace could be reversed if the fighting continues.

"Liberia is in a very fragile state, still. It's not that many years since peace came and her concern, which I agree with, is that fighting there (in Ivory Coast) and the great increase in refugees could really affect the country and its stability right now. Because Cote d'Ivoire had accepted so many Liberian refugees over the years,

people in Liberia were giving refuge because they were returning the great support that they had gotten from Cote d'Ivoire before," Goddard said.

She said her organization also works with former child soldiers helping them to reintegrate into their communities.

"We worked with a lot of them in the early days after peace broke out. We helped reintegrate many children back into their communities. There is concern now that some of these children have not been able to find jobs, etc. and, with the conflict spilling over from Ivory Coast into Liberia, these children, young adults now, could be dragged back into conflict again," she said.

Goddard says she was in Liberia to review her foundation's work with children, particularly in the area of child protection, which she says began soon after the agreement ending Liberia's civil war was signed.

"We've increased access to schools for many children in terms of helping extend school buildings so there are more schools available to children; we've opened what I believe is the first early childhood education program in the country for children from ages 3-5 before they start kindergarten school," she said.

Goddard also said her organization works on teen pregnancy, which she notes is caused by the breakdown of Liberia's social fabric because of years of civil war.

"I think, in many ways, in a country that has gone into civil war for so long, the social fabric of the country really broke down and it is slowly being rebuilt, and I think that (the) lack of social fabric, which is beginning to rebuild, means the social norms are not there. So, I think girls and boys having sex before marriage is common," Goddard said.

GMA News

Monday, 07 March 2011

<http://www.gmanews.tv/story/214658/>

Int'l Criminal Court in need of funds to prosecute Gaddafi

KIMBERLY JANE TAN, GMA News

The International Criminal Court (ICC) does not have enough funds to prosecute Libya's beleaguered leader, Muammar Gaddafi, its president Judge Sang-Hyun Song revealed Monday.

"I have to figure out where we (can) get the budget to finance this case," Song said during the ICC's briefing with the Philippine Senate's committee on foreign relations.

The ICC, which began operating in 2002, is the world's first permanent war crimes tribunal. It has jurisdiction over the most serious international crimes such as war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide.

Last February, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution referring the deadly crackdown against anti-government demonstrators in Libya to the ICC for investigation and possible prosecution.

Song said that the prosecutor of the ICC had found "reasonable grounds" to believe that crimes under their jurisdiction were committed in Libya. He said they plan to interview defectors if their prosecutor is not allowed entry to Libya.

However, Song said he was worried how he can get extra human resources to enable their prosecutor to handle the case. "My worry is how to budget this new extra prosecution activity."

He explained that they are not really part of the UN so they have to source funds on their own, most usually from their member states.

"State parties might be approached for some monetary donation to finance Libya situation activities," Song said.

President Benigno Aquino III had earlier signed the Rome Statute of the ICC and sent it to the Senate for concurrence.

Under the treaty, the court can step in only when countries are unwilling or unable to dispense justice themselves for genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes.

Sen. Loren Legarda, chair of the Senate foreign relations committee, said they have committed to prioritize the ratification of the treaty.

"It is something that the Philippines needs and we'll be in good company with 114 states," she said in an interview after the briefing.

Song said if the Philippines decides to become a member state of the ICC, it shall be required to pay a yearly membership fee of \$150,000.

Song is set to meet with Aquino later in the day.

"We all just want to contribute to the prevention of these heinous crimes. We want to achieve the peace through justice," he said. — KBK, GMA News

Capital News
Monday, 7 March 2011

MPs back Kalonzo's fresh bid on ICC

BY CORRESPONDENT



Legislators allied to the Party of National Unity (PNU) have supported the second round of shuttle diplomacy led by Vice President Kalonzo Musyoka saying it would enhance justice for the Ocampo Six.

Led by party Chief Whip Johnson Muthama, the MPs said Kenya had made key steps towards achieving judicial reforms to qualify it to try the suspects locally.

"We have already commenced reforms at the Judiciary. The Chief Justice has already left... the Judicial Service Commission has already started the recruitment process (for a new one). Judges will also be vetted," added East Africa Community assistant minister Peter Munya.

He said those named by International Criminal Court Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo would not get a fair hearing if tried in a foreign country since the judicial officers there could be compromised.

Speaking at St Paul's Methodist church in North Imenti constituency during a fundraiser, the leaders also criticised the list of ICC suspects saying those who quelled the post election violence were now being branded as perpetrators.

"If Ambassador Francis Muthaura and (former police commissioner Mohammed Hussein) Ali had not acted, the fight would have spilled into Nairobi's central business district. They should be praised instead of being persecuted," said MP Silas Muriuki who hosted them.

Manyatta MP Emilio Kathuri hailed the VP's negotiation skills saying his shuttle

diplomacy would boost talks among the communities that fought in 2008.

"If the communities have already agreed to talk, there is no need to push for the Hague agenda. We are in solidarity with the VP," he said.

The leaders also criticised the Ocampo list saying it was meant to bar top politicians who were a threat to Prime Minister Raila Odinga's presidential ambition.

"You have realised that you can't beat your opponent, what do you do? You devise ways to eliminate them," said Mr Munya.

Mr Musyoka left Kenya on Sunday afternoon for New York, where is set to meet UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon as part of the diplomacy effort. The agenda for a deferral is however not on the agenda of the UN Security Council in March.

Agriculture Minister Sally Kosgei also left for Brazil which is a non-permanent member of the security council while Chirau Mwakwere is leading similar efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Portugal, which also sit on the council.

The ministers are part of a team named by President Mwai Kibaki last week to lead the second round of diplomacy after the recent successful lobbying of African Union states to support Kenya's bid.

Read more: <http://www.capitalfm.co.ke/news/Kenyanews/MPs-back-Kalonzo%92s-fresh-bid-on-ICC-11945.html#ixzz1FueHqGay>

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The Daily Star (Lebanon)

Monday, 7 March 2011

Raad speech fuels war of words over U.N.-backed court

BEIRUT: Recent accusations by Nabatieh MP Mohammed Raad against the Special Tribunal for Lebanon provided the latest fodder for the ongoing war of words between the March 8 coalition and March 14 parties over the court.

Former Prime Minister Fouad Siniora said over the weekend that Raad's remarks were in fact political, but with a "legal and constitutional disguise."

"We got used to statements that have a legal or constitutional disguise but that are in fact political, we look at the issue from a different perspective," Siniora told reporters after visiting former Prime Minister Salim Hoss. "We have resorted to the tribunal only to put an end to assassinations and impunity,"

At a news conference, Raad, a Hezbollah official, urged all ministers, state officials and the public not to cooperate with the STL – the U.N.-backed court tasked with bringing to justice those involved in the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri.

Raad described the STL as "a formula of international interests that transgressed the will, interests and constitutional institutions of the Lebanese."

Raad said requests by Daniel Bellemare – the STL's prosecutor general – for new information about the fingerprints of 4 million Lebanese, including high-ranking political and military officials, were "clearly and without equivocation suspicious requests that carry with them an unprecedented tinge of intelligence action."

"We did not want this tribunal for revenge or for political gains, but for the interests of the Lebanese," Siniora said.

Siniora said reports that Bellemare had requested information about the finger prints of 4 million Lebanese aimed at frightening the Lebanese.

"It turned out that this is not true. The fingerprints of 1,000 individuals were demanded, and [these documents] should be signed [by concerned ministers]," he said.

The Daily Star disclosed last week that caretaker Interior Minister Ziyad Baroud, Telecommunications Minister Charbel Nahhas, Transport and Public Works Minister Ghazi Aridi and Energy and Water Resources Jibril Bassil had turned down demands by Bellemare to provide information and documents, in breach of the cooperation protocol signed with the United Nations.

But Siniora said the current period should be examined with wisdom and prudence. "Lebanon is always committed to the international legitimacy and is also keen on its interests and this requires that we should be aware."

Caretaker Minister of State Mohammad Fneish said that Bellemare's demands implied that the STL targeted the resistance. "The demands of Prosecutor General Daniel Bellemare reveal that the [STL] has obviously become part of the project that confronts the resistance and wants to distort its image," Fneish said during a ceremony in Tyre, as he praised the four caretaker ministers for their "national role."

But caretaker Justice Minister Ibrahim Najjar said that international law supersedes domestic laws, stressing that not cooperating with the STL would expose the government to international accountability "and leads to many dangers." Meanwhile, Progressive Socialist Party chief MP Walid Jumblatt slammed the STL and asked for the reasons behind the court's requests to ask for telephone data, saying that Aridi had rejected demands by the STL for details over some "peculiar" issues. – The Daily Star

Philippines Information Agency

Monday, 7 March 2011

Int'l criminal court judge shares knowledge on Rome Statute

PIA Press Release

President of the International Criminal Court Judge Sang-Hyun Song is in the country as primary resource person at the PHL Senate for a lecture on the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the Rome Statute.

Senator Loren Legarda, Chair of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations welcomed Judge Sang-Hyun Song as the Senate's primary resource to share his knowledge and experiences on the Roman Statute.

The ICC is an independent, permanent court that tries persons accused of the most serious crimes of international concern, namely genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. The ICC is based on a treaty, the Rome Statute, which governs its jurisdiction and functioning, the release read.

According to Legarda the Philippines shares the principles upon which ICC's mandate is anchored upon.

"It is our fundamental duty, as articulated in our Constitution, to protect human rights, including the right to human life and dignity, and we remain steadfast in our policy to condemn and penalize perpetrators of the most atrocious acts," she added.

The Senator noted that as a nation that gravely condemns the most heinous acts against humans, the Philippines now has a law, Republic Act 9851, that defines and penalizes crimes against international humanitarian law, genocide and other crimes against humanity.

Legarda added that the country, by Mr. Song's visit, can learn from the wisdom of ICC's experiences.

"As millions of Filipinos are deployed or reside in various parts of the world, we cannot help but be deeply concerned with the events that occur in foreign lands especially when circumstances become a threat to the lives and safety of our citizens," Legarda went on.

The current situation in Libya, for instance, where thousands of our countrymen remain trapped amidst the continuing unrest, makes us all the more persistent and eager in seeking ways to strengthen the protection of our citizens' life, welfare and rights, Legarda concluded. (PIA-7/Minerva BC Newman & reports from the Office of Senator Legarda)