

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



The Law Courts building, on Siaka Stevens Street

PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

as at:

Tuesday, 8 April 2008

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

Tuesday, 8 April 2008

Defence counsel challenges witness statements

By Betty Milton

As Prosecution witness Issa Mongor continued on the witness stand for the third week running, Defence counsel for Charles Taylor, Terry Munyard has continued to question alleged inconsistencies of the witness's statement made to the investigators and his evidence to the court.

Reading from a transcript of 1st October 2006 it was revealed that according to the statement by the witness, he does not know about Taylor's involvement during the 1999 Freetown attack.

During cross examination the witness told the court that the Freetown attack was planned by Taylor and Mosquito who in turn informed the commanders who will implement them.

Adding that after the death of Saj Musa, Gullit became the

commander who led the men to advance to Freetown but he was later ordered to stop for reinforcement and that he was given orders by Saj Musa to join the team to Freetown.

Questioned by the lawyer which of the statements was true and whether he was lying the witness said that he does not see any reason to lie and that he told the investigators what he is aware of "maybe I would have used the wrong name but my evidence is true. The reason why they wanted to attack was to release Sankoh and take hold of Freetown."

Contrary to the statement made in

October, wherein he told the investigators that he was not aware that Taylor took part in the planning of the

Freetown invasion the witness yesterday told the court that he knew that Taylor planned the attack.

Washington Post

Tuesday, 8 April 2008

Letter to the Editor

Advancing Justice in Sierra Leone

It is misleading to suggest that Sierra Leoneans do not support the U.N.-backed special court created to address atrocities committed during their country's civil war ["Sierra Leone Special Court's Narrow Focus," news story, March 26].

An independent analyst's report from March 2007 found that 85 percent of Sierra Leoneans believe the court can break the cycle of violence and that 90 percent believe peace cannot be achieved without justice. Justice is a necessity, not a choice.

This survey was based on more than 8,000 interviews, not just on the views of a few people.

The article also reported opinions that the money used to create and operate the court could have been better spent on other things, such as development. But the court's funds come primarily from donors paying for "special justice initiatives," funds not available for other purposes.

The court connects with the affected populations through outreach programs. Each year, officers conduct thousands of meetings in rural villages to explain the court's work. Through newspaper, radio and television reports and Internet streaming of trials, the court reaches people throughout Sierra Leone, Liberia and the rest of West Africa.

The special court is the first of its kind to hold trials in the country where the offenses are alleged. And for the first time anywhere, individuals have been convicted for the recruitment and use of child soldiers and for acts of terrorism in a civil war.

HERMAN VON HEBEL
Registrar

BINTA MANSARAY
Deputy Registrar

Special Court for Sierra Leone
Freetown, Sierra Leone

BBC World Service Trust

Monday, 7 April 2008

Defence Makes Allegation

By Adolphus Williams, in The Hague

WILLIAMS: The Defence in the Charles Taylor war crimes trial said they've discovered discrepancy in which Prosecution lawyers are paying witnesses' fees which has no association with the trial thus a means to encourage witnesses to testify against the Former Liberian president, Charles Taylor.

The Prosecution challenged the contention of the Defence, saying the payments are provided for in the Rules of the Special Court. Adolphus Williams in The Hague has more.

MUNYARD: The Prosecution are perfectly entitled to reimburse genuine expenses that have been spent by witnesses – for example, travel costs, accommodation costs...expenses that are legitimately made by witnesses in order to see the Prosecution authorities and assist them in giving statements. What in our view is completely illegitimate and taints the value of the evidence that the witnesses are giving, are handouts to witnesses for...the assistance of their families to help them with school fees, school uniforms, medical expenses and so on – money that has no relation whatsoever to the process of being interviewed and giving statements.

WILLIAMS: The Prosecution has rejected the contention of the Defence, saying the payments were intended to maintain the state of mind of the witnesses to give testimony in the trial.

Special Court Chief Prosecutor Steven Rapp, who spoke in a telephone interview from the United States said, "The prosecution recognised that agreeing to testify may have negative consequences on either witnesses or their families. They may have to be re-located for safety reasons and their children may have to transfer from a local mission school to a private school, so in that case, fees might be paid including uniforms".

Rapp maintained that medical expenses are quite a common reason for payment. He cited an example about someone who is dying of AIDS or requires drugs for an HIV infection; they will obviously pay for treatment to keep that person alive to testify.

Rapp reiterated that, "witnesses should not be miserable or horrifying as a result of testifying. But neither will they be enriched as a result of it.

Rapp also mentioned the possibility of witnesses losing their livelihood or financial support as a result of testifying. They would be entitled to compensation. Losses genuinely incurred as a result of agreeing to testify should be reimbursed.

Munyard said there've also been instances where potential witnesses had come asking the Defence to pay them more than what the Prosecution can offer.

MUNYARD: All we will do is reimburse their legitimate expenses. We will not enter a bidding war with the Prosecution to buy a witness. But witnesses, when they know what other people are being offered by the Prosecution, and the help and the assistance that other witnesses are being given financially over and above their legitimate expenses, they understandably then come to the Defence and say "well what will you pay me if I give evidence for you"? We don't entertain that for one moment.

WILLIAMS: Rapp counter-claimed, saying nobody is going to be paid 1000 USD just for giving evidence. He said the Special Court for Sierra Leone has a specific rule obliging the Office of the Prosecution to take all necessary care for the safety, support and assistance for witnesses. Requests for payment are passed to the Victim and Witness Assistance section of the court's Registry. It decides whether the payment is justified, in consultation with the Witness Management Unit of the Office of the Prosecution. They are meeting every few weeks to discuss witnesses' payments.

The defence has finished its cross examination of the 21st prosecution witness, Isaac Mongorh Monday. During the cross examination, Taylor's lawyer repeatedly accused Mongor of contradicting earlier testimony in which he had linked Taylor to the RUF.

Mongor maintained Taylor formed the RUF, directed and funded its operations.

This is Adolphus Williams for the BBC World Service Trust, Search for Common Ground, reporting from The Hague.

Agence France-Presse

Monday, 7 April 2008

Former Liberian vice-president says he will testify in Taylor trial

MONROVIA (AFP) — Liberia's former vice president Moses Blah said Monday that he has been called to testify in the trial of Charles Taylor, the first African leader to face an international tribunal for war crimes.

Blah said the United Nations Special Court for Sierra Leone, which is trying Liberia's ex-president Taylor in The Hague for his alleged key part in a brutal civil war in the neighbouring country, had sent him a subpoena for April 14.

"I will speak the truth. This is why I am surprised that some people are worried that there is the possibility of me testifying," said Blah, who served as vice-president under Taylor and then briefly took over when he was ousted.

Blah said that he would tell the court in The Hague about the death of Sam Bockarie, who in 1988 and 1989 led Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front (RUF), a brutal force that waged a civil war at a cost of 120,000 lives.

Taylor came to power in Liberia as a warlord in a brutal conflict, but was toppled and forced into exile in Nigeria in 2003 by the combination of a rebellion against him and international pressure.

However, he is on trial in The Hague for what the prosecution presents as a key role in supporting and controlling the RUF, which ravaged Sierra Leone from 1991 and 2001.

Taylor allegedly funded and armed them in exchange for diamonds and other resources, while rebels terrorised civilians by cutting off arms, legs, ears and noses, leaving thousands of people mutilated.

Blah linked Bockarie's death to Taylor's then chief of general staff Benjamin Yeaten.

"The night of the killing of Sam Bockarie I saw Benjamin Yeaten. And other groups were travelling and they stopped in my village. I asked them 'Where are you guys going with such a huge convoy?' Sam Bockarie was among them, his wife also was there," Blah told journalists.

However, he on Monday gave no further details of that night, stating only that he would go to The Hague, where Taylor is on trial on 11 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Sierra Leone, all of which he denies.

Blah was head of state for about two months after Taylor went into exile in Nigeria, then he handed over in October 2003 to interim president Gyude Bryant, who oversaw a transition to democratic rule in 2006 under elected President Ellen Sirleaf Johnson.

Lawyer John Richardson, who heads a legal team defending Taylor, on Saturday welcomed reports that Blah could be called to testify before the tribunal in The Hague, which has heard a grisly series of accounts of atrocities from prosecution witnesses.

"If this is the truth, we will welcome it," Richardson said, describing Blah as "a credible individual, someone who comes from what we will say is a close range circle (and who) knows."

"Having seen the parade of non credible witnesses that the prosecution has lined up claiming they are insiders, we believe that the vice president of president Taylor... going to testify will open up and allow Liberians to share all things."

Taylor's trial before the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone was moved from Freetown to The Hague because there were fears his presence in the African country could destabilize the region.

FrontPage Africa
 Sunday, 6 April 2008

Moses Blah is 'Not a Traitor': Charles Taylor's Veep Subpoenaed by Special Court

04/06/08 - FPA Staff Report



Moses Blah, former Vice President to Charles Taylor makes a point during a news conference in Monrovia Sunday. Blah says for him who respects the rule of law, he takes the subpoena very seriously; but will not be able to honor the subpoena next Monday for a number of reasons.

Monrovia –

T

he Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) has subpoena the former Liberian President Mozes Z. Blah to appear before it as a “fact witness” in the trial against former Liberian President Charles Ghankay Taylor currently taking place at Trial Chamber II of the International Criminal Court in The Hague, Netherlands.

In a Subpoena Ad Testificandum dated 7th March 2008 with reference number (Ref/REG/155/2008/VM), the former Liberian President who was a one time Inspector General of the defunct National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), has been ordered to appear voluntarily before the SCSL next Monday, 14th April 2008 at 9:30 a.m. or show good cause why he cannot comply with this subpoena.

This is in pursuant to Rule 54 of the Rule of Procedure and Evidence of the Special Court.

Subpoena details

The Subpoena (Pseudonym TFI-561) also reminds Mr. Blah that willful failure with the terms of the subpoena constitutes contempt of the Special Court pursuant to Rule 77 of the Rules. "Should you fail to comply, the Trial Chamber may deal with the matter summarily itself, refer the matter to the appropriate authorities of Sierra Leone or, if there are sufficient grounds to proceed against you for contempt, issue an order in lieu of an indictment and direct independent counsel to prosecute the matter," the subpoena states; adding, "If you are convicted for contempt of the Special Court you may be imprisoned for up to seven (7) years or fined up to two (2) million leones, or both."

However, addressing journalists Sunday afternoon at his Paynesville residence, the former President Blah said for him who respects the rule of law, he takes the subpoena very seriously; but will not be able to honor the subpoena next Monday for a number of reasons.

Firstly, Mr. Blah said he has a heart problem and needs to seek regular attention. He noted that the doctor will have to qualify him as fit to testify before the Special Court. Secondly, he stated that his family is out of the country including his wife who is currently in the United States and until they return he cannot leave his home and properties vulnerable. "I have communicated to the Court raising a number of issues including my poor health and matters of law. These matters are unresolved and I am still in communication with the Court," the former Liberian President said.

Mr. Blah, a stalwart of the defunct NPFL that ignited the civil war on Liberia, said while he's quietly holding consultations with his family, lawyers, doctors, other groups and individuals as it relates to the subpoena served on him by the Special Court, he was constrained to make public the information after the head of the Association for the Legal Defense of Charles Taylor, Mr. John T. Richardson had earlier addressed a press conference starting a malicious rumor that he had been bribed to lie on his former boss, president Charles Taylor on behalf of his accusers.

'Tried to engage them'

He noted that contrary to suggestions from Mr. Richardson and others who want him to raise the "moot" issue of jurisdiction and sovereignty; he does have respect for the rule of law, takes the subpoena seriously and will continue to engage the court.

He noted that he continues to engage the court because "I saw what the court did to my President, so this is why I try to engage them. If I say the court is not legitimate and they were able to take Mr. Taylor away with no one saying a word, it means that I should recognize the court."

Mr. Blah said before being served the subpoena recently, as far back as October 2006, he was approached by the Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court to testify on behalf of the prosecution; but refused to do so for a variety of reasons, though he didn't go into details.

He did admit that at the time he did meet with the Special Court investigators here in Monrovia where he was questioned on a number of issues regarding Mr. Taylor, the war in Sierra Leone, amongst others which accumulated into approximately 78 pages of documents.

Mr. Blah said serving the NPFL from the position of Adjutant General to Inspector General, later a Liberian Ambassador, Vice President and President of Liberia, he was compelled to answer a number of questions which he did answer because he chose to cooperate with the court.



TRUTH PLEDGE

"If I swear on the Bible I will do so to say the truth and nothing but the truth. I will not be there to testify for or against, but the answer whatever questions truthfully."

Moses Blah, Former Vice President, RL

He disclosed that as far back as 30th October 2006, he received an official communication from the Acting Prosecutor of the SCSL which in part said, "As the prosecutor for the SCSL, I would like to take this opportunity to assure you that I have not laid any criminal charges nor do I intend to lay any charges against you because of your affiliation with any parties that have been charged by this court," the letter signed by James Johnson stated; noting further, "I trust that this letter may help put your mind at ease with regards to this matter."

Mr. Blah reiterated that even if the Special Court invokes its powers and he is constrained to appear before it, he will speak the truth. "If I swear on the Bible I will do so to say the truth and nothing but the truth. I will not be there to testify for or against, but the answer whatever questions truthfully."

'Blah is Not a Traitor'

"Let me assure all my friends and supporters that I Moses Z. Blah, who you know very well, is not a traitor or a betrayer as the rumormongers want us to believe. I'm a true nationalist. I will do nothing that will bring destruction to this country," he said. Moses Zeh Blah was named President of Liberia following the resignation of Mr. Taylor on August 11, 2003. He served as president for two months, until 14 October 2003, when a UN-backed transitional government headed by Gyude Bryant was sworn in.

Blah joined with Taylor because of a shared hatred of then-president, Samuel Doe who killed his wife along with hundreds of others in an ethnic-related massacre. He trained with Taylor in a Libyan guerrilla camp and served with him as a general during Liberia's civil war in the 1990s. He held the post of ambassador to Libya and Tunisia after Taylor was elected in 1997. In July 2000, Blah was appointed as Vice President after the death of , Enoch Dogolea which many suspected was a poisoning.

In June 2003, Blah was allegedly urged by the United States to take power from Taylor while the latter was absent for peace talks in Ghana (during the course of which Taylor was also indicted by the war crimestribunal in Sierra Leone. After Taylor's return, Blah was held under house arrest for ten days, but was subsequently absolved and reinstated as vice president.

During his two months as temporary President after Taylor's resignation in August, Blah was condemned by rebel groups in the country such as Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) for his close ties to Taylor; they charged that he would simply continue Taylor's practices. Blah responded by calling the rebels "brothers" and saying "Let bygones be bygones. If there is power, we can share it." Originally trained as a mechanic, Blah is fluent in German, French and Arabic He has many children by his wife.

Public Agenda (Liberia)
Monday, 7 April 2008

Blah, Musa To Testify Against Taylor In The Hague

Former Liberian President Moses Z. Blah has announced in Monrovia that he has been subpoenaed by the Sierra Leonean War Crime Court based in the Hague to testify in

the ongoing trial against his former boss Charles Taylor.

Blah told a news conference yesterday that he has been touch with the prosecution of the court. He has written a 72 page statement on his on his relationship with

Taylor and how much knowledge he has on the Sierra Leonean war. Blah said his decision to go to the court will depend on what his doctor will advise. 'I am not well, I have a heart problem and only base on the advise on my doctor,

before I will decide to go or not", Blah stated yesterday.

Blah is a former Inspector General and Adjutant General of the defunct National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). When asked whether

he was not undermining the friendship between him and Taylor by going to testify in the court, he said, "No. Who am I to disobey the UN? If I go there, I will talk nothing but the

See story on page 6

Blah, Musa To Testify

truth".

From the documents in my possession from the court, if I failed to appear, I will be fined 2million Leones or serve a seven-year jail sentence, Blah stated. Do you want me to be handcuffed and disgraced too, he asked.

Blah denied killing the notorious rebel leader General Mosquito of Sierra Leone. Blah admitted during the conference of knowing Sam Bukarie. According to him Bukarie was a friend of Benjamin Yeaten, a former Special Security Director of Charles Taylor.

According to Blah some years ago while in his home village in Nimba County, Bukarie and Yeaten paid him a visit while en-route to the boarder of Liberia and Ivory Coast. That night, I gave them food to eat and they told me they were going to patrol, he explained.

He noted that during the whole RUF saga, he was in the southeast of Liberia and therefore has no knowledge of the entire story. "But because I am forced to appear, I will talk only what I know about",

the former Liberian Leader said.

Moses Blah served for three months as president of Liberia. He was the Vice President of Liberia under President Taylor and took power after Taylor now facing war crime charges was forced to resign after the LURD rebels attacked and took most of Liberia.

Meanwhile, latest information reaching this paper has revealed that former NPFL rebel General Isaac Musa has also been subpoenaed by the Sierra Leonean War Crime Court to testify against his former boss.

Isaac Musa is a former member of the five-man council of state of Liberia representing the NPFL. During the war days of Liberia several formulas including the five-man council of state were used to find peace.

Isaac Musa was notorious during the war days as a commander of the NPFL. Efforts to contact him to comment on the report last night failed.

New Democrat (Liberia)
Monday, 7 April 2008

Moses Blah:

I'll Free Him

As John T. Richardson Claims Treachery



aylor leaving Sierra Leone in 2006

Even before taking the stand in The Hague, former President Moses Blah says his pending testimony before the Special Court will free Mr Charles Taylor, on trial for 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

"I am not going to testify for or against Taylor," Mr. Blah said Sunday. "I will just say the truth and I think my testimony will free Taylor."

He dismissed as "malicious rumor", information that he had been bribed to lie on President Taylor on behalf of his accusers.

"I am constrained to make public this information at this time because while I am consulting my family, my lawyers, my doctor and other groups and individuals, the head of the Association for the Legal Defense of Charles Mr. John Richardson has fed the press with information and started a malicious rumor that I have been bribed to lie on President Taylor on behalf of his accusers.

Talk or Be Jailed

Blah Faces Taylor April 14



Former Pres. Blah

Moses Blah, one of the original Libyan trained fighters of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia who briefly assumed the presidency after former President Charles Taylor's forced exit, has been ordered to testify before the Special Court in The Hague or go to jail. A subpoena from the Court says Mr. Blah must arrive in The Hague by 9:30 am on 14 April 2008 or risk a seven (7) year imprisonment or be fined up to two (2) million leones, or both.

At a press conference Sunday, Mr Blah said he was consulting his lawyers, family and doctor on his options. He said he has medical problems, which he must consider. But he maintained that when he goes to The Hague, he would neither testify for or against Charles Taylor, adding, "I will just tell the truth."

The Court subpoena, dated 3 March 2008, and signed by Justices Julia Sebutinde and Richard Lussick, noted among other things: "Orders you to appear as a witness in the case of Prosecutor v. Charles Ghankay Taylor on 14 April 2008 at 9:30 am, or to show cause why you cannot comply with his subpoena."

He said prior to receiving the subpoena on March 3, as far back as October 2006, the Chief Prosecutor of the Court to testify on behalf of the prosecution approached him but "I refused to do so for a variety of reasons."

Several witnesses before the Court have hauled in Mr Blah in their testimonies, and his appearance in court, face to face with a man he once loyally served, is expected to be crucial.

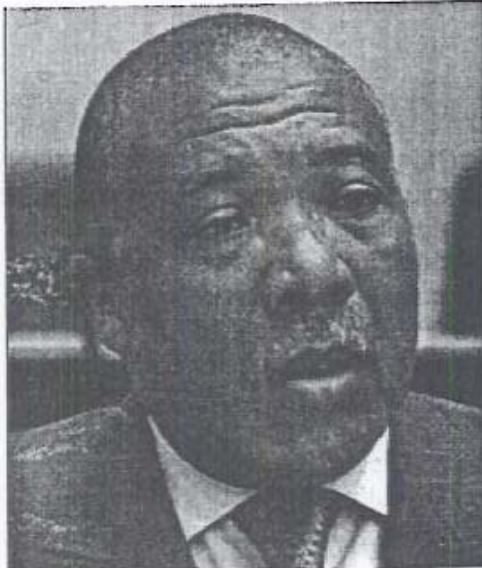
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Ellen Joins World's "Center-Left"



Talk or Be Jailed

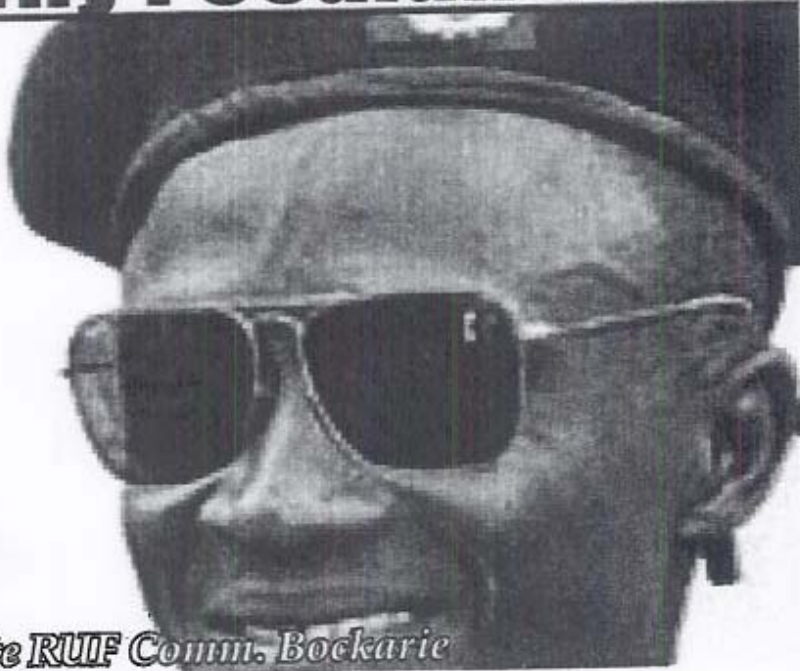
Zigzag Marzah, testifying before the court: "I spoke to him (Taylor) so many times, even before he established the poro society where we ate people's livers. The reason Taylor trusted me was the poro society law. I started sitting with Taylor during the death of Fia Doe (?) and we ate his liver. The same thing happened with Sam Dokie. This woman Annie Yenie (?), she cooked the liver and Taylor shared it with us. He trusted me. Even the time he escaped from Ghana and we arrested Moses Blah, he was there in Ben's veranda, and he said we should control those hearts until he came. When Taylor arrived, we took it and shared it."



Another witness, Suwane Camara, cited Blah in his testimony when he, Camara was at Taylor's mansion, and saw General Domingo and some Liberian Generals. He did not know their names at the time but came to know them later as Momoh Gibba, Cassius Jacobs, General Yeaten [sic] and another man called Moses Blah who was a member of Charles Taylor's Special Force.

New Democrat (Liberia)
Monday, 7 April 2008

Why I Couldn't Save Bockarie



ate RUF Comm. Bockarie

One of Mr Charles Taylor's top confidantes told journalists Sunday that saving former Sierra Leone rebel leader Sam Bockarie from execution would have landed him trouble with his former boss.

Mr Blah said that he saw ex-Sierra Leone rebel command-

er, Sam Bockarie, before he was announced executed. Mr Blah's statement comes as he has been cited to testify in The Hague against his ex-boss Charles Taylor in the ongoing trial for his alleged crimes in Sierra Leone.

Mr Blah said he saw Bockarie pass through his village in Nimba County in the company of Benjamin Yeaten en-route from Cote d'Ivoire, where he (Bockarie) was leading a military expedition. He said he offered the late rebel commander food and drinks

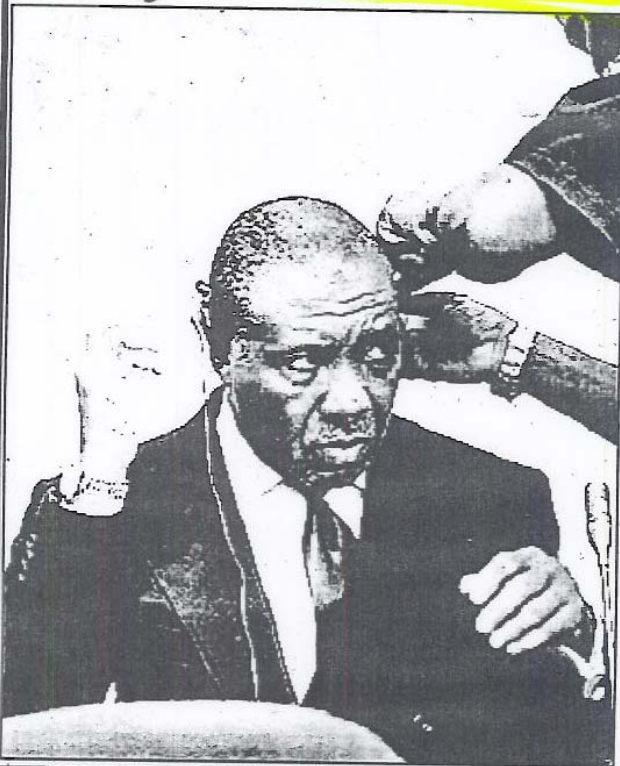
Taylor's government at the time said Bockarie was killed for resisting arrest. Several witnesses in the trial have cited Bockarie as a key figure in diamond transactions with Taylor.

The statement comes even before he can stand before the court to offer testimony of his knowledge of Taylor's role in Sierra Leone's war.

The Monitor (Liberia)
Monday, 7 April 2008

Discrepancy!

Defense claims



The Defence in the Charles Taylor war crimes trial say they've discovered discrepancy in which Prosecution lawyers are paying witnesses fees disconnected with the trial to encourage them to testify against the Former President of Liberia.

Defence lawyer Terry Munyard said prosecution lawyers are paying for uniform and school fees for children of witnesses and medical expenses of families of witnesses which have no relation to the trial.

Mr. Munyard said such payments 'taint the value of the evidence given by the witnesses and potentially poison the pure waters of the stream of justice.'

The Prosecution has rejected the contention of the defence saying the payments were intended to maintain the state of mind of the witnesses to give testimony in the trial.

Special Court Chief Prosecutor, Steven Rapp who spoke in a telephone

interview from the United States says " we recognise that agreeing to testify may have negative consequences on either a witness or their family - eg, they may have to be re-located for safety reasons and their children may have to

transfer from a local mission school to a private fee-paying school, so in that case, fees might be paid, uniforms etc.

The principle, says Rapp, is that a witness should "not be worse off
See Story on Page 6

Greaves appears before Senate C'ttee today

President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf's 'lone-ranger' at the Liberia Petroleum Refining Corporation (LPRC) Harry Greaves, Jr. is expected to appear before the Senate Committee on Lands, Mines & Energy & Natural Resources, the Committee's Chairman, Grand Kru County Senator Cletus S. Wotorson has announced.

The LPRC Managing Director who just returned to Liberia following flamboyant 'power point presentations' of the company's activities in the United States has failed on several occasions to appear before the committee.

It is not known exactly



LPRC Harry Greaves

what clarification Mr. Greaves will be providing at today's hearing, but issue of the controversial Nigeria oil deal is expected to be highlighted, among other key national energy issues.

The LPRC boss told the Front Page Africa recently that "no one in Liberia ever walked to

See Story on Page 6

Discrepancy!

as a result of testifying. But neither will they be enriched as a result of it. Nobody is going to be paid \$1000 just for giving evidence"

Another example, which has happened, is that someone who relies on the patronage of a person who is a Taylor supporter or, at least, hostile to the SCSL, loses their livelihood as a result of testifying. They would be entitled to compensation. Losses genuinely incurred as a result of agreeing to testify should be reimbursed.

Munyard said it was highly unlikely that in England and Wales where he comes from that such payments as medical fees are allowed.

But Rapp said medical expenses are quite a common reason for payment. "If you have someone who is dying of AIDS or they require drugs for an HIV infection, then you will obviously pay for treatment to keep them alive to testify. And if they have a child with an acute condition, the OTP will pay. Sierra Leone and Liberia have no Nat. Health Service, unlike the UK.

Munyard said there've also been instances where potential witnesses had come asking the Defence to pay them more than what the prosecution can offer. But he said 'we cannot enter in a bidding war with the Prosecution.

On the question of whether he was taking into account the poverty level of Liberia and Sierra Leone and the eventual consideration of people considering payment for their testimony, Munyard said 'this corrodes the very essence of justice that strikes the heart of what the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone are fighting against.

Rapp says the SCSL has a specific rule obliging the OTP to take all necessary care for the "safety, support and assistance" of witnesses (Rule 39 of the statute).

Requests for payment are passed to the Victim and Witness Assistance section of the court's registry. That decides whether the payment is justified, in consultation with the Witness Management Unit of the OTP. There are meetings every few weeks to discuss witness payments.

Munyard said the judges know about these allegations which he said 'are in evidence but can't give any opinion now rightly because the trial is in progress.

Meanwhile last week saw the continued cross examination of prosecution 21st witness Isaac Mongor in the war crimes trial of the Former Liberian President Charles Taylor in The Hague. During cross examination, Taylor's lawyer repeatedly accused Mongor of contradicting earlier testimony in which he had linked Taylor to the RUF.

Taylor's lawyer, Terry Munyard, told Mongor, he was lying.

Mongor told the court Tuesday that Taylor had sent him to train RUF rebels. But Mr Munyard reminded him that earlier he had claimed to have been recruited by Foday Sankoh. When this was pointed out to him, Mongor said he forgot to say that during the prosecution interview. At another point he said prosecution interviewers got his testimonies wrong.

Taylor's lawyer Munyard said he didn't believe Mongor's claim to have done his training with NPFL forces in 1989 and 1990. He also doubted that Mongor had been a member of Taylor's executive mansion bodyguard in 1990 and 1991. Mongor was asked to describe the bodyguard commander, Cassius Jacobs. He replied that he was dark-skinned and about the same height as himself. Mr Munyard said this too wasn't true:

Mongor said he was captured by NPFL fighters in a town near Lokatuo near the Ivorian border early before Christmas of 1989. And eventually joined the rebels. But the NPFL invaded Liberia through the Nimba border town of Butuo on December 24, 1989. Mongor who said he was a businessman in Nimba prior to being taken captive, said he could not remember the name of the town in which he was captured.

Mongor said he had only heard of Butuo. When pressed by defense counsel Terry Munyard, Mongor said he had heard that NPFL forces and the Armed Forces of Liberia forces had fought in Butuo.

He said he had been trained in Gborplay for two months. After he was captured. But does not remember his training commandant. When Taylor's lawyer asked Mongor whether he knew John Teah as one of the training commandant, Mongor said he only remembered Gborplay devil as one of his trainers. Taylor laughed at this point, bowing and placing his forehead in his palm. The Former Liberian President supplied his lawyers with notes on yellow pieces of papers, apparently furnishing his lawyers with dates on NPFL troop movement.

At one point when Mongor said NPFL soldiers seized the central commercial Nimba town of Ganta in a week as of invading

Liberia, Taylor signalled to his lawyer and whispered, one month and his lawyer countered Mongor's assertion.

Mongor said NPFL soldiers battled Prince Johnson's INPFL forces in the central Liberian town of Gbarnga with casualties on both sides. But Taylor's lawyer said Johnson's forces abandoned Gbarnga and that there was no fighting in the town.

Mongor said NPFL forces reached Kakata and then Cocacola factory on the outskirts of Monrovia in February. But Taylor's lawyer said this was a lie. Defense Lawyer Terry Munyard said it took NPFL forces one year- January 1991 before reaching Gbarnga.

The cross examination continues Monday.

The Analyst (Liberia)

Monday, 7 April 2008

Journalists For Criminal Proceedings Training

Monrovia

A three-day international media training for senior editors and reporters of two Mano River Union Countries, Liberia and Sierra Leone, takes place this month in the Liberian capital, Monrovia, with 50 professional and practicing journalists representing print, electronic and online media institutions attending.

Madam Afua Hirsch of the Advocates for International Development and Doughty Street Chambers, based in London, United Kingdom and Mr. Josephus Moses Gray, a professional Liberian journalist and 2006 graduate of the International Center for Journalists (ICFJ) in Washington, D. C, United States, and Journalism Exchange Program are the brain behind the training exercise.

It is intended to empower journalists from the two neighboring West African states devastated by long years of bloody rebel wars.

The training program is also geared towards widening journalists' knowledge, improving their reportage skills and equipping them with requisite techniques on international criminal proceedings in general, and the proceedings of the Charles Taylor Trial in The Hague in particular.

The three-day course, which promises to be intensive, educative and informative, will run from April 24 through the 26.

According to statistical breakdown of the participants, 15 of the 50 journalists will represent the Sierra Leonean media, while the rest are from the Liberian media, with eight of the Liberian participants representing leeward counties Community Radio Stations and 27 from media stations in Monrovia.

The exercise is organized by the United Kingdom based organization of pro bono lawyers, Advocates for International Development (A4ID), in collaboration with a West Africa media right group, International Centre for Media Studies and Development (INCEMSADWA), with funding from the Soros Foundation Network Media Program (NMP) based in London.

In a statement, the group said the objective of the training exercise is to provide basic training on international tribunals and international criminal laws in general, foster better understanding of international proceedings, including the purpose of the Taylor trial, the role of the Prosecution and Defense, and the rights of the accused to a fair trial and the presumption of innocence.

It will provide detailed training on the Special Court and the conduct of the Charles Taylor trial in The Hague. The training will also discuss and address the principle concerns about, and objections to the trial including the impact on the current political and justice situation in Liberia.

It will equip journalists with tools to better manage public expectations surrounding the trial and to create a network so that in future sources of information provided for example by fellowships in The Hague can be effectively shared by the media ensuring accurate up-to-date information.

The training will include teaching by facilitators, interactive panel sessions, and participative sessions whereby journalists gain practice writing stories and making programmes on the content provided.

At the end of the three-day exercise, media outlets in Sierra Leone and Liberia will be equipped with the requisite techniques and writing skills to use information that is available to provide objective, balanced and fair reporting, expressing views and providing information within an accurate factual and legal framework on international criminal proceedings in general, the Charles Taylor trial in particular.

Facilitators

The training will be conducted by a team of experts on international criminal proceedings in general, the Charles Taylor trial in particular, and a media trainer while the facilitators include a lawyer from the Office of the Prosecutor; a lawyer who has acted as Defense Counsel at the Special Court.

The trainers also include an expert from UK Legal Community and Advocates for International Development ("A4ID") and renowned Liberian lawyer and journalist, with impeccable international acclaimed records.

Meanwhile, the inability of the media to accurately and adequately cover the trial has however already taken its toll on public interest and engagement with the trial.

Since the proceedings commenced on 4th June 2007, the majority of reporting in Liberia has been based on international wires, or press releases from the Special Court, both of which sources are removed from the local context and are perceived as lacking objectivity by Liberians.

The task of relaying the crucial developments of this historical trial to the people of Sierra Leone and Liberia therefore falls to the media.

Hampered by the range of significant challenges and hindered by impacts of war, the press in Sierra Leone and Liberia are now encountering multiple problems of physical distance, the unprecedented format of a trial, whose jurisdiction belongs to a hybrid tribunal but whose facilities are those of the ICC, and general lack of capacity to report on legal proceedings of an international nature.

In this respect the removal of Charles Taylor's trial from the Liberian context to the jurisdiction of the Special Court, and the physical relocation of the proceedings to the ICC in The Hague, are significant factors detracting from the already limited ability of the Liberian and Sierra Leonean people to witness the trial.

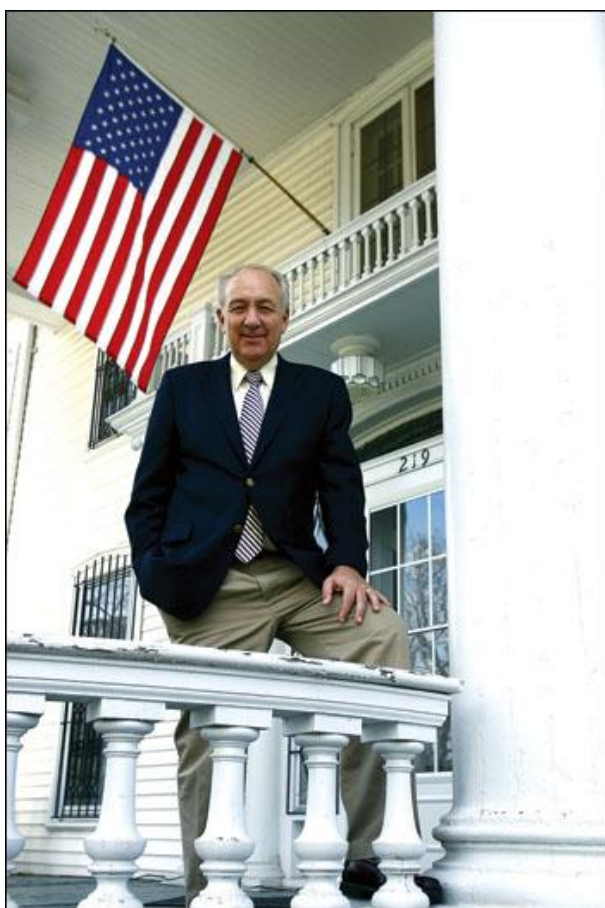
WCF Courier

Monday, 7 April 2008

Rapp continues war crimes prosecutions

BY PAT KINNEY, COURIER NEWS EDITOR

WATERLOO --- Steve Rapp was home over the weekend. He hasn't seen much of his hometown in the past eight years.



Rapp has practiced law, served in the Iowa Legislature, ran for Congress twice, chaired the Democratic Party in his county and congressional district and served nearly eight years as U.S. attorney for the northern district of Iowa. He has done everything from prosecute members of a drug-dealing motorcycle gang to fight for settlement of his dad's gas station property when it was acquired and relocated for a road project.

It was nothing compared to what he has seen the past eight years --- evidence of some of the worst brutality and mass murder known to humankind.

In 2001, Rapp was appointed by the United Nations to prosecute war criminals for their role in the genocide associated with the 1994 civil war in Rwanda as part of the U.N.'s International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.

"The most challenging part is the crime, the victimization --- in the case of Rwanda, the murder of 800,000 men, women and children over 100 days. A crime of unimaginable cruelty," Rapp said. Beginning on April 6, 1994, ethnic majority Hutu militia clubbed and hacked to death as many as 10,000 ethnic Tutsis a day.

He won international recognition for his successful prosecutions, serving as senior trial attorney in the so-called "Media Trial" in which principals of a Rwandan radio station and newspaper were convicted of genocide and public incitement to commit genocide.

In 2006, Rapp became chief prosecutor for a special court for atrocities in Sierra Leone.

He is involved in the prosecution of Charles Taylor, president of Liberia from 1997 through 2003, who is accused of fomenting civil conflicts there and in Sierra Leone that resulted in the deaths of 400,000 people between 1989 and 2003. President Bush called for Taylor's resignation, and he eventually stepped aside. After being given refuge in Nigeria for a time, he was caught trying to leave that country in 2006. Taylor was charged with 11 counts of crimes against humanity and his trial began several months ago.

"We're in the 11th week of (prosecution) presentations on the Taylor trial," Rapp said. "It's going exceptionally well -- 11 insiders, several experts, and it's a real battle every day."

According to Amnesty International, it is the first time a former head of state or government has been prosecuted in an international criminal court for crimes committed in Africa against Africans. According to the human rights watchdog group, Taylor's alleged crimes include killings, mutilations, rape and other forms of sexual violence, sexual slavery, the recruitment and use of child soldiers, abduction and the use of forced labor.

The difficult part of such trials is working with witnesses who fear retribution, Rapp said. According to the Concord Times of Freetown in Sierra Leone, Taylor's trial was moved to The Hague due to concerns Taylor could still muster a guerilla army.

"In war crimes courts, our mandate is not to go after the level-two killer, to go after the 'big man,' the 'big woman,' the one that gave the orders ... and whose hands never were bloody --- not physically bloody," he said.

It involves working with "people on the inside, who were themselves implicated in mass murder, and convincing them to testify," Rapp said. "And that's a moral, legal question, how you deal with their culpability." It is always a question "whether there's war crimes, or organized crime, or drug crime." Witnesses and their extended family must be protected from retribution by individuals who consider them traitors.

Part of his job includes soliciting international funds to keep war crimes courts operating. Rapp has appeared on a number of European talk shows and has endured some tough questioning.

"There's a BBC show called 'Hardtalk' that makes (CNN talk show host) Larry King look like a cream puff," Rapp said. He has also lectured throughout the U.S.

Though his wife, University of Northern Iowa history professor Dolly Maier, and their two grown children stay politically active, Rapp judiciously steers clear of domestic U.S. politics. Asked if he would consider a return to politics at home, he said, "We have to make sure this work is well on its way to being accomplished" before he thinks of anything else.

Rapp, 59, a graduate of Cedar Falls High School, received bachelor's and law degrees respectively from Harvard University and Drake University.

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United Nations  **Nations Unies**

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries
7 April 2008

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

Newspaper Summary

Ex-President Blah Subpoenaed to Testify at War Crimes Court

(Public Agenda, New Democrat, The Monitor)

- Media reports attributed to former President Blah said the ex-Liberian leader is due to stand before the Special Court for Sierra Leone to offer testimony of his knowledge of Charles Taylor's alleged role in Sierra Leone's decade long civil war. Mr. Blah says he has been subpoenaed by the Court to testify but maintains that when he goes to The Hague, he would neither testify for or against Mr. Taylor. Former President Blah served as Inspector General of Mr. Taylor's NPFL rebels. He served as Vice President and briefly assumed the presidency following the exit of former President Charles Taylor's from Liberia in 2003.
- Still on the Taylor's trial, The Monitor newspaper reported on an allegation levied by the defence that prosecution lawyers are paying witnesses fees to encourage them to testify against the accused.

Ghanaian Envoy Speaks to Security Concerns among Compatriots

(The Liberian Express, Public Agenda, Heritage, National Chronicle and Daily Observer)

- The Ghanaian Ambassador to Liberia, Francis Adu-Amanfoh says the embassy has received significant number of reports of threats of reprisal to and harassment of members of the Ghanaian community in Liberia which he presumed is resulting from the refugee crisis.
- Ambassador Adu-Amanfoh said the Ghanaian community in Liberia is coming under treat since the declaration by his government that Liberian refugees are no longer welcome in Ghana.
- The statement follows venomous comments by several groups including the Forum for the Establishment of a War Crimes Court in Liberia calling for reciprocal action against Ghanaians residing in Liberia if Liberian refugees supposedly held in the custody of their government were not released.

Liberty Party Wants Government Roll Back Increment in Petroleum Products

(The Inquirer, The News, Public Agenda, The Liberian Express and The Analyst)

- The opposition political party, Liberty Party says it foresees more hardship if the Ellen-led government fails to take decisions in the stability of prices.
- Liberty Party Vice Chairman Milton Quaye said every Liberian is aware that market forces are driving prices upward but that taxes and other levies should be reviewed in the interest of the citizens.
- The government last Tuesday increased the prices of petroleum products and Portland cement saying that the decision resulted from the current upsurge in the prices of some of the world's basic commodities which had an impact on domestic prices. But the opposition Liberty Party disagrees with the decision and encouraged the Government to roll back the prices of petroleum products, by making adjustment in LPRC's charges of storage and evaporation, and discontinue the insidious tax of giving free petroleum products to the "big shots" that the poor people have to pay for.

52-year Old man held for Raping 7-Year-old Girl

(Heritage)

- Police in Monrovia charged a 52-year old man with statutory rape based on an investigation conducted by the Women and Children Protection Section of the LNP, which was also corroborated by a medical report. According to the Police charge sheet, defendant Jeff S. Zogbay last march sexually abused the seven-year old girl on in Monrovia. The incident caused the victim to bleed profusely.

Liberia Celebrates World Health Day

(The Inquirer)

- The World Health Organization (WHO) in collaboration with friendly environmental organizations and Liberia's Ministry of Health and Social Welfare will today, 7 April, join other international bodies to observe World Health Day with a call on health ministries to strengthen public health policies.
- This year's occasion will be observed under the theme "The Need To Protect Health from Climate Change" and it is expected to be held in Monrovia.

Radio Summary

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

Former President Taylor's Vice President Subpoenaed by Special Court

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

Government, ADA Sign US\$30M Agriculture Concession Agreement

- The Liberian Government and the African Development Aid (ADA) at the weekend signed a US\$30 million concession agreement for large scale commercial rice production in Liberia.
- Speaking during the signing ceremony, Agriculture Minister Chris Toe said though the agreement has been signed but it was subject to review and ratification by the National Legislature.
- For his part, the President and Chief Executive Officer of ADA, Mr. Wendell McIntosh described the signing of the agreement as a huge step towards making Liberia self-sufficient in food production.

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

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

UNHCR to Assist Strengthen Rule of Law

- The Government and the UN Refugee Agency, UNCHR, on Friday signed a Memorandum of Understanding intended to strengthen the rule of law in post-conflict Liberia.
- Justice Minister Philip Banks signed for the government while the UNHCR's Representative in Liberia, Renata Dubini signed on behalf of the agency.
- Under the agreement, the Ministry of Justice would recruit ten qualified County Attorneys for deployment in the counties and would monitor and provide support and supervision during the duration of their deployment.
- A UN Refugee Agency statement said the MOU is in support of the rule law sector of the country, which is crucial to the maintenance of peace and stability in the country.

Commerce Ministry Has No Control over Prices, Says Minister

- In an interview, Commerce Minister Frances Johnson-Morris says the ministry has no control over the rise in the prices of rice, gasoline, cement and other basic commodities.
- Earlier, addressing the Senate Commerce, Industry and Transportation committee on the increase in the prices of basic commodities, Minister Morris attributed the problem to the current hike in the price of crude oil on the international market.

United Nations News Centre

Monday, 7 April 2008

UN war crimes tribunal and Slovakia sign agreement to enforce prison sentences

7 April 2008 – Slovakia today became the fifteenth European country to agree to enforce sentences imposed by the United Nations tribunal that was set up to deal with the worst crimes committed during the Balkan wars of the 1990s.

Anyone convicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and given a jail term can now serve that sentence in a Slovakian prison after an agreement was signed in The Hague, the Dutch city where the tribunal is based.

Italy, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Austria, France, Spain, Germany, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Ukraine, Portugal and Estonia have already entered into similar agreements with the ICTY.

More than 37 people convicted by the tribunal have either served, or are currently serving, their sentence in one of the countries which have signed an agreement. Five others are awaiting transfer to one of the States.

United Nations News Centre

Friday, 4 April 2008

Former top Yugoslav figure granted temporary leave by UN war crimes tribunal

4 April 2008 – The United Nations tribunal set up to deal with the worst crimes committed during the Balkan conflicts of the 1990s has granted temporary release to a former senior Yugoslav political figure facing trial over an alleged campaign of terror and violence against Kosovo Albanians and other non-Serbs in 1999.

Nikola Šainović, a former deputy prime minister of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, has been allowed by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), which is based in The Hague, to return to Serbia for personal reasons from tomorrow until Monday.

Announcing the decision today, the ICTY trial chamber said Mr. Šainović's temporary release was subject to several strict conditions, including 24-hour surveillance of the accused by Serbian authorities.

Mr. Šainović, 59, is on trial with five others – Milan Milutinović, Nebojša Pavković, Dragoljub Ojdanić, Vladimir Lazarević and Sreten Lukić – over an alleged campaign of terror and violence directed against Kosovo Albanians and other non-Serbs living in Kosovo in 1999. All six men face charges of murder, deportation, forcible transfer and the persecution of thousands of Kosovo Albanians and other non-Serbs.

The trial of the six men began in July 2006, with the prosecution completing its case in May last year and five of the six defence cases have now been completed, with Mr. Lukić's defence still ongoing.

United Nations News Centre

Thursday, 3 April 2008

Former leader of Kosovo acquitted of war crimes charges by UN tribunal

3 April 2008 – The United Nations tribunal set up to deal with the worst acts committed during the Balkan wars of the 1990s today acquitted a former prime minister of Kosovo of charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Ramush Haradinaj, 39, who was also a well-known commander in the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) during the conflict with Serb forces in 1998-99, had faced charges that included murder, rape, torture, abduction, cruel treatment, imprisonment and the forced deportation of Serbian and Kosovar Roma civilians.

But judges at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), based in The Hague, found that the evidence presented was sometimes inconclusive as to whether a crime had been committed or, if so, whether the KLA was involved as alleged.

The ICTY also acquitted one of Mr. Haradinaj's co-accused, Idriz Balaj, 36, of all charges.

But a third co-accused, Lahi Brahimaj, 38, was convicted of the cruel treatment and torture of two people at the KLA headquarters in Jablanica/Jabllanicë and has been sentenced to six years in jail.

The three men had been accused by prosecutors of being part of a joint criminal enterprise between March and September 1998 that aimed to consolidate the KLA's total control over the Dukagjin area in north-western Kosovo by unlawfully removing, mistreating and killing Serbian and Kosovar Roma civilians, as well as Kosovar Albanians perceived to have been collaborating with Serbian forces.

But the judges said the evidence indicated the victims may have been targeted mainly for individual reasons rather than because they were members of a targeted civilian group. The acts of ill-treatment, forcible transfer and killing were also not of a scale to conclude there was an attack against a civilian population.

Judge Alphonsus Orie (presiding) said the ICTY had encountered many difficulties in securing testimony from witnesses during the trials of Mr. Haradinaj, Mr. Balaj and Mr. Brahimaj.

“The Chamber gained a strong impression that the trial was being held in an atmosphere where witnesses felt unsafe,” he said.