

**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

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Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
Martin Royston-Wright
Ext 7217

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Concord Times

Tuesday, 8 December 2009

Judges admit 'new evidence' in Taylor trial

Charles Taylor, being tried for his role in Sierra Leone's 11-year civil war, has been ordered by the Special Court for Sierra Leone judges to disclose to the defence all new documents intended for use in the cross-examination of former Liberian president, Charles Taylor.

Taylor is responding to charges that he was involved in a joint criminal enterprise with neighbouring rebel forces who waged an 11-year conflict in Sierra Leone.

In delivering the chamber's ruling, presiding judge, Justice Richard Lussick said the prosecution's "piecemeal disclosure of individual documents" was unaccept-

able. "This cannot be allowed to continue and the chamber needs to set out a disclosure regime," Lussick said.

The order came in the wake of Monday's decision by the judges to allow "new evidence" in the case against Taylor, who is testifying as a witness in his own defence. In their decision, the judges ordered that the documents, which are meant to impeach Taylor's credibility, can be used by the prosecution without the need to disclose the documents to the defence. "These documents will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis," the judges ordered. The judges further ordered that all docu-

ments which have probative value to the guilt of the accused must be disclosed to the defence before they could be used by the prosecution in cross-examination of the witness.

During cross-examination last Friday morning, Taylor's defence counsel objected to the use of a bundle of bank documents regarding which prosecutors sought to question Taylor in order to establish that he had not been truthful during his direct-examination about various bank accounts he is alleged to have had before his detention by the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

The Spectator

Tuesday, 8 December 2009

Judges Order Prosecution to Disclose to Defence

After debates over the use of "fresh evidence" threw the cross-examination of former Liberian President, Charles Taylor, into disarray in recent weeks, Special Court for Sierra Leone judges told prosecutors last Monday that they were in fact allowed to use new documents to test Mr. Taylor's credibility. Any documents used to try to show Mr. Taylor's guilt, however, would need to be handed over to Mr. Taylor's defense team in advance. After problems during the week with the distinction between the two types of documents, prosecutors agreed on Thursday to disclose all documents they intend to use throughout Mr. Taylor's cross-examination to avoid further "misunderstandings".

Monday's ruling allowed the cross-examination to continue with greater predictability while still leaving room for an "acceptable" element of "surprise" - while Thursday's disclosure orders narrowed down the prosecutors' discretion in disclosure, demonstrating that the judges were keen to stave off potential problems for the defense going forward.

In cross-examining Mr. Taylor, prosecutors have sought to use new evidence to impeach the former president's credibility as a witness in his own defense - a move that his defense team has called a "trial by ambush." The dispute arose when prosecutors tried to use a document to which Mr. Taylor's defense team objected on the basis that it was not submitted as part of the prosecution's case and was not used in Mr. Taylor's direct-examination. On Monday, the judges ordered that documents which are meant to impeach the credibility of Mr. Taylor could be used by the prosecution without the need to disclose the documents to the defense. The judges further ordered that all documents which have probative value to the guilt of the accused must be dis-

closed to the defense before they could be used by the prosecution in cross-examining Mr. Taylor.

After the decision was handed down on Monday, however, Mr. Taylor's defense counsel objected to the use of several documents which the prosecution sought to use to impeach Mr. Taylor's credibility. These documents included records of bank transactions which prosecutors allege provide evidence of Mr. Taylor's financial undertakings and a newspaper report of Mr. Taylor's 1997 wedding to his former wife, Liberian Senator Jewel Taylor. The judges agreed with the defense that the documents were probative to the guilt of Mr. Taylor.

On Thursday, presiding judge Justice Richard Lussick said that the prosecution's "piecemeal disclosure of individual documents" was unacceptable.

"This cannot be allowed to continue and the Chamber needs to set out a disclosure regime," Justice Lussick said.

On Thursday, lead prosecutor Brenda Hollis agreed that to avoid further misunderstanding of the judges' order as issued on Monday, all documents - whether intended for use to impeach Mr. Taylor's credibility or to point at Mr. Taylor's guilt - will be disclosed to the defense.

Addressing all the parties on Thursday, Justice Lussick made the following orders:

"1. All such documents should be disclosed to the defense by close of business day on Tuesday, and

2. Prosecution should give 24 hours notice to the defense of documents it intends to use for cross-examination on a particular day."

Prosecutors also on Thursday told Mr. Taylor that he did not share the risks and hardships of his soldiers, that he never went to the front lines, and that he was never under fire. Mr. Taylor agreed that he never went to the front lines.

Comparing Mr. Taylor to the late General Quiwonkpa who was assassinated by former Liberian president Samuel Doe af-

ter a failed coup attempt, prosecution counsel Nicholas Koumjian told Mr. Taylor that the late General was popular among his troops because he was a fighter, unlike Mr. Taylor.

"Thomas Quiwonkpa was admired, and in fact, you could even say, would you agree, loved by many of the soldiers under him? And this is because soldiers admire and respect those leaders who share the hardships and risks of combat with them, correct?" Mr. Koumjian asked Mr. Taylor.

In his response, Mr. Taylor said "Yes, I would agree."

When Mr. Koumjian put to Mr. Taylor that "you don't share the hardships of your soldiers," the former president responded that "No, but you were talking about soldiers. In the first place, I'm not a soldier, never taken military training. You spoke about soldiers caring for their men, I agree. Now you've put me-I have not, have never been- have never taken military training, so I'm not a soldier."

When Mr. Koumjian pushed Mr. Taylor further to answer whether he shared the risks and hardships with his soldiers, the former president eventually said "oh, I do. Oh, I do."

Mr. Koumjian told Mr. Taylor that "You stay behind the lines in your executive mansions while you send young men and women to fight." Mr. Taylor dismissed the prosecutor's assertion as "totally incorrect."

Mr. Taylor agreed with Mr. Koumjian that he has never been to the front line.

"I have not been on the front line but I was under fire because I was on the ground," Mr. Taylor said.

"As the leader, my protection was-my protection was very important. I must admit, I was very well protected and would have been stupid if I didn't," he added.

On Wednesday, prosecutors questioned Mr. Taylor on his decision to grant Liberian citizenship to Sierra Leonean rebel forces who relocated to Liberia in December 1999 after falling out with the Sierra Leonean rebel group's hierarchy.

Mr. Taylor has long stated in his direct-examination that when Sierra Leone's notorious rebel commander Sam Bockarie became a hindrance to the peace process in the country and eventually fell out with Revolutionary United Front (RUF) leader Foday Sankoh, West African leaders took a decision to get Mr. Bockarie out of Sierra Leone and have him relocated to Liberia. As Mr. Bockarie departed Sierra Leone for Liberia, hundreds of his loyal rebel fighters followed him to Liberia. Prosecution witnesses have testified that Mr. Bockarie relocated to Liberia on the invitation of Mr. Taylor. The former Liberian leader has denied these assertions. Mr. Taylor has stated that upon arrival in Liberia, Mr. Bockarie and his rebel followers were all granted Liberian citizenship before Mr. Bockarie's followers were recruited into Liberia's Anti-Terrorist Unit (ATU).

In cross-examining Mr. Taylor, Mr. Koumjian read from various portions of Liberian legislation dealing with Liberian citizenship and pointed out that Mr. Taylor flouted the legal procedures to grant citizenship to the Sierra Leonean rebels. Mr. Taylor responded that he acted on the advice of his lawyers.

"I am not a lawyer. I was president. I was given legal advice by my lawyers. So it's unfair for me to answer questions on these legal documents when I am not a lawyer," Mr. Taylor said.

On Monday, Mr. Taylor told the court that he received money from both Taiwan and Libya as contributions to his campaign to become president of Liberia in 1997.

"In 1996-1997, I received money from Taiwan and Libya," Mr. Taylor told the court.

Mr. Taylor explained that during his campaign in the Liberian presidential elections in 1997, the Taiwanese government gave him 1,000,000 United States Dollars to support his candidacy. The money, Mr. Taylor said was delivered through the Taiwanese embassy in Ivory Coast and was received by his Chief of Protocol, Musa Sesay. Although the check was addressed in his name, Mr. Taylor said that it was cashed by Mr. Sesay in Abidjan, based on his (Taylor) authorization. Asked by lead prosecutor Ms. Brenda Hollis why the Taiwanese government had given him such amount of money, Mr. Taylor explained that the Taiwanese government probably did so for Public Relations (PR) reasons.

"They developed an interest in me," Mr. Taylor said. "At that particular time, it was clear that elections were coming up. There was this concern that after the elections, they were concerned that China will block their interest in Liberia. It was like a form of PR for them because they were concerned that diplomatic support will continue after I became president. It was part of a policy to try to court foreign countries or prospective leaders."

Mr. Taylor is responding to charges that he provided support to RUF rebels in Sierra Leone. Prosecutors allege that Mr. Taylor received Sierra Leone's diamonds from RUF rebels and in return supplied them with arms and ammunition, which were used to commit atrocities in Sierra Leone. It is further alleged that Mr. Taylor occupied a position of superior authority to RUF rebels and that he knew or had reason to know that the rebels were committing atrocities in Sierra Leone but failed to prevent the commission of those crimes or that he did not punish perpetrators when he knew that such atrocities had been committed. He is now charged of bearing the greatest responsibility for the crimes committed by rebel forces in Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor has denied all the allegations against him. He has testified in direct-examination as a witness in his own defense and he is presently being cross-examined by the prosecution.

Junta Leader shot and citizens under panic

BY ALHAJI SAIDU KAMARA

Residents of Conakry in neighboring Guinea are now in constant fear and panic following an assassination attempt by the Minister of Presidential Guards Abubakarr Toumba Diakite who shot the Chairman of the junta regime in Guinea Capt. Moussa Daddis Camara last Thursday 3rd December, 2009 who reportedly sustained head injuries.

The Minister of Information and Communication Mr. Idrissa Cherif has however denied that Capt. Daddis Camara had been shot on the head, saying that the bullet "grazed" the President's head and that his life was not in danger.

The attack came after weeks of persistent rumours of a power struggle within the Guinea Armed Forces.

According to the Minister of Information and Communication Mr. Cherif, Captain Daddis Camara was at a Military Camp in the capital when the shooting occurred. "He is out of danger and those that orchestrated this insurrection will be punished" A resident in the military barracks said that he saw a vehicle enter the barracks and that the President was inside the said vehicle with injuries to the head.

A team of medical personnel comprising doctors and nurses arrived overnight from Senegal and flew the President out of the country on Friday 4th December, 2009 to Morocco.

It was Captain Daddis Camera's first departure from the country since taking power last year. Reports say he had made several attempts to leave the country only to cancel plans at the last minute because of fear of a counter coup.

The assassination attempt came nearly a year after Capt. Moussa Daddis Camara himself seized power in a bloodless coup following the death of General Lansana Conte who ruled the country for 24 years and several months after the massacre of civilians at the Guinea's National Stadium on the 28th September, 2009 at the hands of members of the Presidential Guards under the supervision of Abubakarr Toumba Diakite.

The Thursday shooting is the culmination of a rift between Capt Daddis Camara and members of the Presidential Guards following the massacre of 157 people that were attending a pro-democracy rally on the 28th September, 2009.

Local Human Right Groups said more than 1,200 people were wounded when the soldiers opened fire during a protest rally in Conakry at the stadium, in which the protesters were calling on Capt. Daddis Camara to step down and hand power to civilian rule. The government officials put the death toll at 57 people.

Unconfirmed reports say it was Capt. Daddis Camara who ordered his Minister of Presidential Guards Diakite and his men to open fire on the demonstrators.

Pressure has been mounting

on Capt. Daddis Camara following the widespread accusation that it was the Minister of the Presidential Guards that led the troops that opened fire on the demonstrators.

Members of the Presidential Guards were also accused of raping women and having bayoneted demonstrators to death during the rally.

Capt. Daddis Camara had earlier blamed the violence on what he called "uncontrolled elements" in the military. However the erratic rule of Capt. Camara and his clique has prompted ridicule, protests and international condemnation.

Arms embargo and travel restrictions have been imposed against the junta regime and its leaders by the European Union and West African regional grouping, ECOWAS.

The EU Said Capt. Daddis Camara should be tried for crimes against humanity, while the African Union has urged him to stand down.

After the demonstration Capt. Daddis Camara banned all protests and gatherings while the junta regime embarked on arresting human rights activists and political party activists.

Capt. Moussa Daddis Camara was an unknown military commander when he took power last year December and his breaking down the doors of the state television and declaring the national constitution dissolved and proclaiming himself President of Guinea.

Initially, he was loved by Guineans due to his stance in the fight against drugs which was very rampant in the country. He told his people that enough is enough for the military to govern the country.

However the opposition protest came after Capt. Camara suggested that he will run in the presidential election slated for Jan 31 contrary to what he had earlier pledged that he would not contest.

No sooner Capt Camara was flown to Morocco for medical treatment there was sporadic gun shoots in various military barracks. However the Minister of Information and Communication said the situation is now under control. Many people are fleeing the country and seeking refuge in neighbouring countries like Liberia, Sierra Leone and Ivory Coast.

For years, Guinea which has the world's largest reserves of bauxite and rich in cooper and other minerals including gold diamonds has seen some of the most brutal regimes in West Africa. Since the country attained independence from France in 1958, a good number of its 11 million people are living in poverty.

However, latest reports monitored by this writer state that the Junta Leader Captain Daddis Camara is languishing in a state of shock and unable to recognize nor speak to attendants and visitors.

The Taylor affair

It took him a long time to say anything in his own defence, but when the former Liberian president, Charles Taylor, got the opportunity in court in The Hague, he did not bite his tongue. So far, his testimony has been riveting.

Osei Boateng has been following it.

WHEN FORMER PRESIDENT Charles Taylor was arrested in March 2006 and flown to The Hague to stand trial, our editor, Baffour Ankomah, predicted in his column (*Baffour's Beefs, NA, May 2006*), that: "If Taylor gets a fair trial and such a simple thing as an average intelligent lawyer, the prosecution will have a torrid time in Court."

And so it has been, so far. After calling 91 witnesses over a period of 13 months (from 7 January 2008 to 30 January 2009), the prosecution is now slowly finding the testimonies of some of its key witnesses falling apart, four months into Taylor being put on the stand by his lead counsel, Courtenay Griffiths, to answer the charges against him himself.

Taylor faces 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, as committed in Sierra Leone between November 1996 and December 2001 by the rebel group, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) which he allegedly "commanded and controlled". Taylor has denied all the charges.

Using largely documentary proof to support Taylor's testimony, Griffiths has taken the former president of Liberia through an "examination-in-chief" that has essentially discredited large sections of the prosecution case.

Taylor has been relying on a rich archive of "presidential papers" and communications, between him and the United Nations, Ecomog, governments in and outside Africa, and other prominent African and world personalities involved in the Sierra Leone saga – including media reports (such as articles in *New African*

and other magazines and newspapers), and status reports written by RUF commanders – to dismiss the testimonies of key prosecution witnesses who, in hindsight, appear to have either blatantly lied to the court or told little fibs. Taylor told the Court that he had collected the archives with the hope of building an American-style "presidential library" in Monrovia on his retirement. Now it has come in handy, so much so that it has succeeded in exposing serious inconsistencies, and sometimes sheer fabrications, in the testimonies of many prosecution witnesses.

And this is even before the defence (which opened its case on 13 July 2009) has called any witnesses at all in support of Taylor. The defence has put the Court on notice that it intends to call 227 witnesses. The sheer number of the potential defence witnesses sent shivers through prosecution ranks, forcing Brenda Hollis, the lead prosecutor in the absence of the chief prosecutor Stephen Rapp – who has been given a new job by President Barack Obama – to express concern that if all 227 listed witnesses were to be called by the defence, it would take another two-and-a-half years for them to give their testimonies and be cross-examined.

According to Hollis, the high number of 227 defence witnesses will also run foul of the legal principle of "equality of arms". The prosecution, which has a higher burden of proof, called 91 witnesses, and it would be disproportionate for the defence to counter with 227 witnesses, Hollis argued.

This brought a wry smile to the face of Courtenay Griffiths, a brilliant British

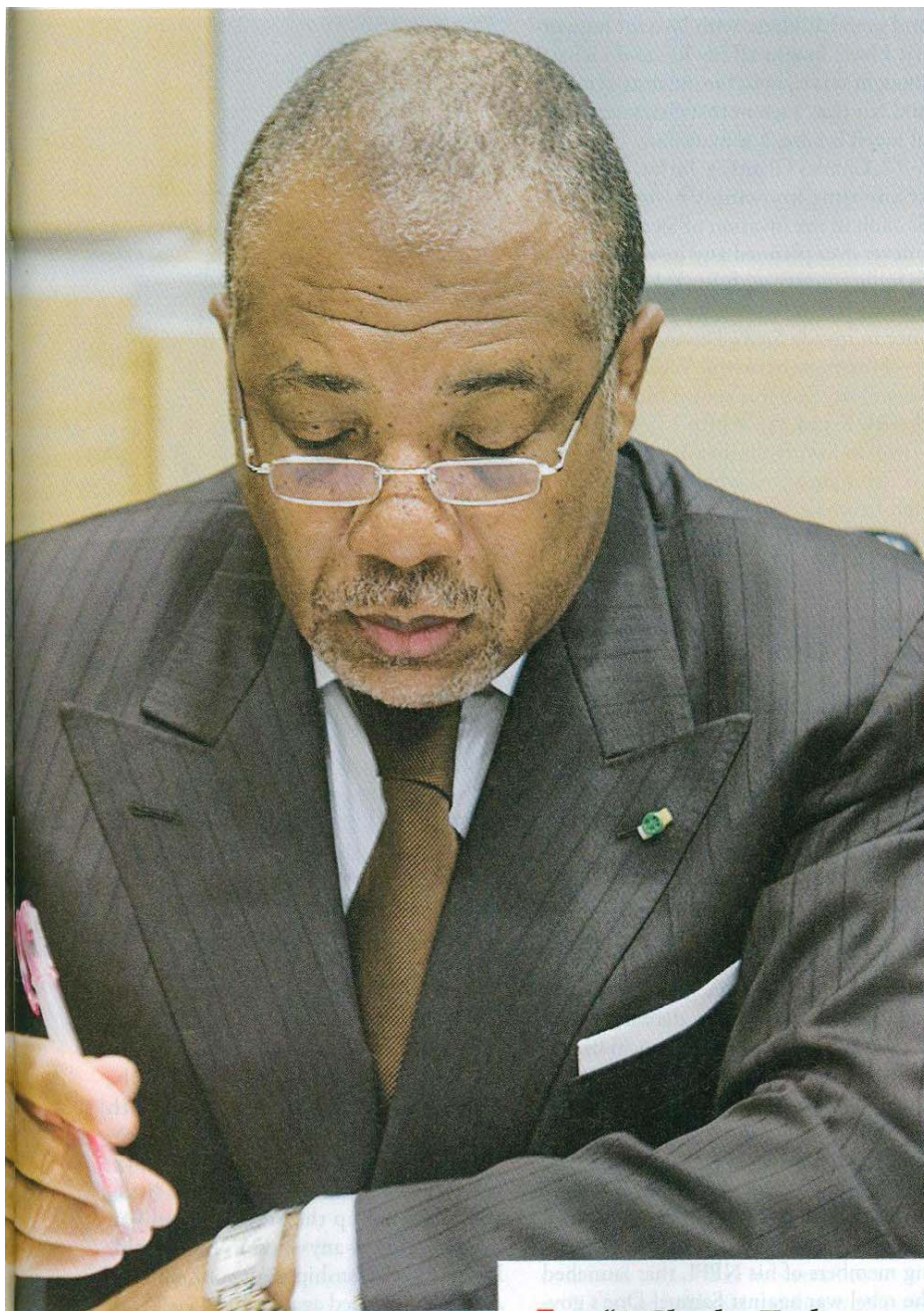
QC of Jamaican descent. He allayed the prosecution's fears by reminding Hollis that before the prosecution opened its case on 7 January 2008, it had filed a list of 300 potential witnesses it intended to call, but in the end it called only 91. In the same vein, the defence may not call all the listed 227 witnesses, but it still had to put them on file in case they were needed.

The indictment

Originally the indictment against Taylor covered 17 charges, which were later reduced to 11. The prosecution claims that between November 1996 and December 2001, Taylor, the RUF, and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) headed by the former Sierra Leonean coup leader, Lt-Col. Johnny Paul Koroma, "shared a common plan and purpose" and formed "a joint criminal enterprise [while training their forces in Libya]...to gain and exercise political power and control over the territory of Sierra Leone, and in particular over the diamond mining areas in order to exploit the natural resources of the country".

Interestingly, on 20 June 2007 the Court ruled in a related case involving former members of Koroma's AFRC, that a "common purpose to take actions necessary to gain and exercise political power and control over the territory of Sierra Leone, in particular the diamond mining areas, was not an international crime, nor a crime punishable under statute".

This panicked Hollis and her prosecution team to file an amended case summary, alleging that the common plan shared by Taylor and his co-participants



in the “joint criminal enterprise” was to inflict a campaign of terror on the citizens of Sierra Leone in order to pillage the resources of the country. But in court so far, Taylor’s performance and his lead counsel’s tactic of going chronologically through, not only the indictment period (Nov 1996–Dec 2001) but also the history of the Liberian civil war (1989 to 1996), has put a different gloss on the whole proceedings.

“I, Charles Taylor, never ever at any time knowingly assisted Foday Sankoh in the invasion of Sierra Leone...I did not provide the RUF with any military assistance to invade Sierra Leone.”

Charles Taylor in court: “I never met Foday Sankoh in Libya. I didn’t even know him”

The defence case

When the defence opened its case on 13 July 2009, Courtenay Griffiths, in his opening address, reminded the Court that Taylor’s “case has been played out over the last six years by the prosecution in the Court of public opinion worldwide; so we are conscious that our audience is far wider than the judges in this courtroom. Inevitably we must address that wider audience, so long as, of course, we adhere to the rules.”

Griffiths then referred to an admission by the first chief prosecutor of the Court, David Crane, who said in 2006 that “the United States was given a copy of the Taylor indictment two months before it was unsealed on 4 June 2003”, even though “all [other] parties were warned 24 hours in advance of the unsealing”.

“Now, one has to ask,” said Griffiths, “why was the USA granted this particular favour two months in advance? And was this Court notified, given that the indictment was under seal, that the seal had indeed been broken?”

It is generally believed, and Taylor has repeated it again and again in court, that the trial has been driven by the USA and Britain behind the scenes for their own reasons, which, according to Taylor, were to get him out of power and destroy him in the process.

In his opening address, Griffiths touched on “the deeply ingrained popular prejudice against Mr Taylor ... based, we say, on lies, unsubstantiated rumour and hearsay without independent support – that public opinion, which has already given its outspoken verdict and condemned Charles Taylor. Yes, I’m talking about that prejudice which nullifies objectivity, neutralises independence of thought, and thereby corrupts justice. Surely we are all here for more than that.” Griffiths reminded the Court that Taylor “bears no obligation to prove his innocence. His protection is that it is for the prosecution to prove his guilt.”

Outlying the defence case, Griffiths said Taylor would give evidence to show that in late 1997, Liberia was made a member of the Ecomog Committee of Five on Sierra Leone and that he was placed on the frontline by his colleagues in Ecomog

to get personally involved in helping to bring peace to Sierra Leone.

"And yet now everything is turned on its head, and that is now used against him as evidence of his control [of the RUF rebels] when he was merely acting in accordance with United Nations policy which [the prosecution] know about, and had they had the diligence to find the documentation and place it before this Court, we would not have been proceeding on a misconception these past few months."

He continued: "There is ample documentary proof of it. And [Taylor] will say that these activities in which he engaged were, in fact, carried out on behalf of Ecomog, and at no stage was he acting in an individual capacity as president of Liberia.

"In this regard, we will ask this Court to note the shadowy role of certain foreign powers [a reference to America and Britain] whose pursuit of their own selfish interests in the region led to the continuation of the wars in both Liberia and Sierra Leone...

"And he will describe how the agreement which led to that momentous decision, him standing down [as president of Liberia in August 2003], was backed by the United States, the UK, the United Nations and several African leaders and how that agreement was betrayed and he was handed over, contrary to the agreement, to this Court for trial."

Griffiths said Taylor's decision to give evidence was because since his arrest on 29 March 2003, he had not said a word in his own defence. "He has kept his own counsel. This is his first and perhaps only chance to give his account. Now he takes the opportunity to put forward his defence, not because in law he has to, but because he wants to. He feels it is important to set the historical record straight."

Taylor's testimony

So far, Taylor has told the Court that descriptions of him in the indictment that he was "everything from a terrorist to a rapist" were "quite incredible ... [It is] very, very, very unfortunate that the prosecution because of disinformation, misinformation, lies and rumours, would associate me with such titles or descriptions. I am none of those, have never been, and will never be whether they think so or not."

He went on: "I am a father of 14 children

and grandchildren, with love for humanity. I have fought all my life to do what I thought was right in the interests of justice and fair play. I resent that characterisation of me, it is false, it is malicious.

"I, Charles Ghankay Taylor, never ever at any time knowingly assisted Foday Sankoh in the invasion of Sierra Leone... I never ever planned any invasion of that friendly country with Sankoh... I did not provide the RUF with any military assistance to invade Sierra Leone.

"However, between August 1991 and May 1992, there was cooperation between the RUF and the NPFL [Taylor's rebel group] following the invasion of Liberia by ULIMO [an anti-Taylor group that operated from Sierra Leone]. They had been armed, trained and sent in by President Momoh's government.

"I provided for the protection of the borders of Liberia, as was my duty and responsibility at the time – I provided small amounts of arms and ammunition, more ammunition than arms, to the RUF [to check ULIMO's advance]...

"[But the NPFL-RUF relationship] ended in May 1992 after the [RUF] killed several of my men [who] were providing security on that border, and in fact [were] jointly fighting a common enemy [ULIMO]. We withdrew our men and ceased all, and I mean all, cooperation with the RUF [in May 1992]... Never ever did I receive, whether it [was in a] mayonnaise or coffee or whatever jar, any diamonds from the RUF. It's a lie, it's a diabolical lie."

The highlights

The following are some of the highlights of Taylor's evidence:

Despite strident denials by Liberia's current president, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Taylor told the Court that the three founding members of his NPFL that launched the rebel war against Samuel Doe's government in December 1989 were Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Tom Wowieyu and himself, Charles Taylor.

"I did not put the NPFL together alone," Taylor told the Court. "There was a gentleman called Tom Wowieyu, and there was the current president of Liberia, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. The three of us were the individuals that put the NPFL together. Ellen raised money throughout while the [NPFL was] training [in Libya]... Ellen raised most of the money that we needed in the early



stage and even during combat... Ellen, as she sits there now as president of Liberia, has been part of every guerrilla movement. She was [also] part of LURD."

Taylor told the Court that the Americans via the CIA also helped the NPFL during the war, and while it lasted the NPFL had a good relationship with Washington. The CIA, he said, even provided him with a sophisticated radio system called Fly Away. "And it was little, you just whip up the antennae and you can call almost anywhere," Taylor said. Later the relationship went sour, and the Americans turned against him.

Training in Libya

"Whether people like it or not, [Libyan leader, Muammar] Gathafi is an African hero," Taylor told the Court, adding that but for Libya [where he had trained the 186 NPFL 'special forces' who launched the rebellion in Liberia], the revolutionary struggle in Africa, especially in South Africa and Namibia, would have floundered.

"The Libyans were seriously involved in



Courtenay Griffiths (above): “Taylor bears no obligation to prove his innocence. His protection is that it is for the prosecution to prove his guilt.”

trying to free the rest of Africa, and that’s why I think that Gathafi, whether people like it or not, is an African hero – by helping people to stand up against some of the terrible things that were going on, on the African continent...

“He was the only leader who had the backbone to stand up to them, and that’s the Libya I met. Almost every major functioning government of any revolutionary credentials from East, Central, Southern and West Africa owe it to the Libyan people... If it had not been for Gathafi, apartheid would still be [flourishing] in South Africa and Namibia.”

Ali Kabbah

Taylor said that when his NPFL fighters arrived in the training camp in Libya, outside Tripoli at a place called Tajura which used to be an American military

base built before Gathafi came to power in 1969 (the base can hold 15-20,000 soldiers at any one time), they met a Sierra Leonean group already in training led by one Ali Kabbah, who said he had been sent there by his “uncle” Tejani Kabbah, the former president of Sierra Leone, to train a group to launch a rebel war in Sierra Leone.

“[Ali Kabbah] told me that within the Armed Forces of Sierra Leone and the police and the other security apparatus, he had all the assistance that he needed, and that the men he was training in Libya would return directly to Sierra Leone and launch the revolution. Ali Kabbah’s group was called the Sierra Leonean Pan-African Revolutionary Movement, so the RUF is something that doesn’t even play. I didn’t know them. The Sierra Leoneans that I got to know [of] and did not meet, except for their leader Ali Kabbah, were called the

Sierra Leonean Pan-African Revolutionary Movement that was registered in Libya... It was not called the RUF at all.

“So when [in 1991] I heard about the RUF, I was shocked because I had never heard that name before. And when they said Sierra Leoneans, what clicked was: ‘Oh, maybe these are the Sierra Leoneans that were in Libya, but they were not called the RUF in Libya.’”

Pressed by his lead counsel, Griffiths, on the issue of having planned with Foday Sankoh, leader of the RUF, in Libya to take over Sierra Leone, Taylor reiterated that he did not meet Sankoh at all in Libya. The first time he heard of Sankoh, he said, was when Sankoh was speaking on the *BBC* in 1991. “Now, it did not take Charles Taylor to tell Ali Kabbah and his people that were at Fourah Bay College to plan to fight. I met these people in Libya. They were there in their numbers. They didn’t go there for a party. They went there to train to fight.

“So this nonsense that Taylor was supposed to be the brains and godfather [of the RUF]... I didn’t take them there. These people went there, they were in a military camp training to launch a revolution... And in fact, how would a young man like Ali Kabbah [get] all the way to Libya? Ali got there through Tejani. His family met Tejani Kabbah, former President Tejani Kabbah, [he] was the one who – from what Ali told me – made the arrangement for Ali to go to Libya through Ghana. So as far as I can tell, from what Ali told me, their revolution was something that they had planned.

“And it would not be fair to me – it would not be in the interests of justice – if this gentleman, Ali Kabbah, doesn’t show himself up here in this Court to tell the truth. He is alive. We’ve tried to track him down in Canada, and he has been hiding, for what reason I don’t understand...”

“Now Ali, if you can hear me, wherever [you are] in the world, come forward and tell these people that I didn’t know Sankoh, because they [claim] I knew him; and I think in the interests of justice, if [you’ve] got any heart [you] should come forward. I mean I’m suffering here on a lie that I planned this whole thing when he [Ali] was the one. Their roots come from Sierra Leone based on what he told me ... They put their stuff together...”

The trial continues. ■■■

The redundant court for Sierra Leone

For six years, as many as *eight people* stood trial at the Special Court for Sierra Leone, at a cost of \$300m, salaries included. All eight were convicted and flown to Rwanda at the end of October this year to serve their long jail terms. But the large, well-dressed and professional-looking staff of the Court still goes there each morning, surf the internet, eat at the canteen, and collect their fat salaries at the end of each month. It appears to be a never-ending bonanza at the idle court. And nobody knows when it will all end. **Lansana Gberie** reports.

ON 27 OCTOBER, APPROPRIATELY without fanfare (indeed, almost furtively), the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) – jointly set up in July 2002 by the UN and the Sierra Leone government to try certain figures associated with the country's decade-long “rebel” war – concluded the trials of all eight accused persons who had been in its detention facilities in Freetown for well over five years. All were convicted, and the convictions were re-affirmed by the court's Appeals Chamber.

The last of the cases upheld the convictions of three leaders of the former rebel group, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF): Issa Sesay (the group's very reluctant “interim leader”), Morris Kallon (his acolyte) and Augustine Gbao (an anodyne-looking former police officer said to have been one of the group's key enforcers). Almost immediately afterwards, all eight convicts – two from the Civil Defence Force (Allieu Kondewa and Moinina Fofana), three from the Armed Forces Ruling Council (Alex Tamba Brima, Bazy Kamara, and Santigie Borbor Kanu) and the three RUF figures – were flown to Rwanda, there to serve their lengthy jail sentences. It was the first time in post-colonial Sierra Leone that its citizens have been taken out of the country to serve

jail sentences decided inside Sierra Leone. There is a colonial precedent, however. In 1898, after the most serious anti-colonial struggle was brutally suppressed, the British – in a less squeamish age – hanged 83 Sierra Leoneans and deported the key figure in the rebellion, Bai Bureh, to the Gold Coast (now Ghana). Bureh was brought back years later, blind and decrepit, and died soon after.

The recent convictions, the Special Court's acting prosecutor Joseph Kamara said in language now stock and formulaic, were “a final condemnation of one of the most brutal and notorious rebel groups in modern times.”

With the end of the trials, he added, “there is now a final recognition of their crimes. And there is a strong measure of justice and accountability for their victims – the families of those who were slaughtered, the women who were raped, the children forced to fight and kill, the many thousands who were mutilated and terrorised.”

I was in Kailahun, in the east of the country, when the convictions were announced. It was not covered by the local FM radio station, and no one that I met there in the two days I spent in the town mentioned the trials. This is unfortunate since, as it happens, the war itself began



after the RUF overran Kailahun District and occupied the town.

It remained a base of the RUF throughout the war, and marks of that presence are still highly visible – in the awful number of scorched houses; in the square at the centre of the town where 12 pregnant women were buried alive by Sam Bockarie, the RUF key commander; and in the ruins of a redbrick house at the edge of the town, a few yards from the fading elegance of a Roman Catholic Cathedral, where dozens of civilians had their heads sawn off by Bockarie and his men. The district in fact recorded the highest number of refugees fleeing to neighbouring countries, as a percentage of its population – over 60%, and that is not counting the thousands who fled to other places in the country, the internally displaced. It is also the home of 8,307 registered ex-combatants, again the highest ratio per population.



Left: The Special Court in session in Freetown. Now, after trying eight people, the Court is idle

That there was no evident interest in Kailahun in the happenings at the Special Court in Freetown would suggest, at least in part, that the entire exercise in international justice, which has now cost nearly \$300m and taken over six years, is probably ineffective.

In this context, it is almost beside the point to analyse judgements delivered so far by the Court – for they magnify the strange fatuity of this very expensive and prolonged exercise.

When it was set up in 2002, the hope was that the trials would last for three years and cost \$75m – ten times more than that for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which was set up at the same time and mandated to last for the same period.

The UN reckoned, of course, without the prosecution and judges who gave themselves such attractive salaries, that there was definite interest in allowing the

trials to drag on and on. A judge is paid \$170,000 tax-free per annum, and with the addition of other allowances and operating expenses, the cost of judges rose to nearly \$3m a year; and ditto for the prosecutors: the office of the prosecutor, in fact, had an annual budget of more than \$4m. The Court hired a permanent staff of 422, so that about 70% of its entire budget is used up on the salaries and bonuses of these employees, most of them foreign nationals. With the completion of the Sierra Leonean-based trials, there now remains the ongoing trial of former Liberian president, Charles Taylor, in The Hague, which might continue till the end of 2010 or possibly well into 2011. In plain words, the Court – and its now largely idle and extravagantly paid staff – is likely to be around until 2011.

So what has international justice or Sierra Leone got out of this huge investment? The great merit of international

tribunals, from the Nuremberg trials on, is the satisfaction they give to previously helpless victims who now see their powerful former tormentors humbled and punished. This is a species of primal vengeance, but it is perfectly human.

I went to the Court on my return from Kailahun. There is still a huge military barricade, with Mongolian troops (paid by the UN) perched high on the barbed-wired, and razor-taped, walls of the Court, whiling away their vacant time by fidgeting with their shining rifles.

The curiously domestic jail-house is now empty, but the armed security detail still pretends to be busy around it. The large, well-dressed and professional-looking, staff still goes there each morning, surf the internet, eat at the canteen, and collect their fat salaries at the end of each month. Life, it seems, must go on, even though the reason for this presence has now moved to Rwanda and The Hague. International justice, in other words, can happen without any accused, and it is a never-ending bonanza.

The spokespeople for the Special Court always bristle when the huge cost of the Court is mentioned. It is crass, they would say, to measure justice in monetary terms. Once out of the court, however, the spokespeople appear more honest. In an interview with *Time* magazine shortly after he left the Court as chief prosecutor to take a job in Obama's administration, Stephen Rapp said of the Special Court:

"The concern all of us [at the Special Court] had was that we were conducting justice in a comfortable courtroom with long trials and well-paid attorneys. Prisoners had single cells, and they had committed the worst crimes. A mile away in the local prison there were simply no resources. Cases can't go forward, witnesses are lost, and people stay in detention for many years at a stretch. [If I was] to do it over, I would try to develop a court within the national system. That would be my preference. Maybe not a court that costs \$30m a year like the Special Court, but an appropriate court."

Cynicism, indeed, has its uses: moments of truth can be revealed... ■ **NA**

CharlesTaylorTrial.org (The Hague)

Monday, 7 December 2009

Liberia: Personal Bank Account In Charles Taylor's Name Was A 'Covert' Account Operated On Behalf Of The Government Of Liberia, He Says

A bank account opened in Charles Taylor's name and worth millions of dollars was operated to fund "covert" operations on behalf of the government of Liberia – it was not a personal account used to squirrel away money for himself from activities including the trading of arms in exchange for Sierra Leone's diamonds, as prosecutors' allege — the accused former Liberian president told the Special Court for Sierra Leone today. Prosecutors today challenged Mr. Taylor on the truthfulness of this claim.

"This account is a covert account opened by the government of Liberia at this time. It had to be opened in my name," Mr. Taylor told the judges today when confronted by prosecutors about the existence of an account in his name.

Prosecutors have been seeking to impeach Mr. Taylor's credibility as a witness testifying in his own defense. From July 14 to November 10, 2009, Mr. Taylor testified as a witness in his own defense, during which he denied all allegations against him, including that he enriched himself through receipt of Sierra Leone's conflict diamonds from Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels. Prosecutors say that Mr. Taylor stashed away huge amounts of money and stored them in numerous bank accounts. Mr. Taylor has denied operating any secret accounts and has challenged prosecutors to bring evidence of any secret accounts that bear his name. On Friday, prosecutors disclosed to the defense several documents, some of which allege that Mr. Taylor operated an account with the Liberian Bank for Development and Investment (LBDI).

When court resumed today, prosecutor Nicholas Koumjian read portions of Mr. Taylor's past statements in which he challenged anybody to bring evidence of any secret account that he is alleged to have operated.

"I challenge any human being on this planet to bring one bank account that I have money there. If anyone on this planet knows of any asset or bank account anywhere, I authorize you to come forward. There are no bank accounts in the world that I have. If anyone can bring any evidence that Charles Taylor has money in a bank account, then Charles Taylor is a liar," Mr. Taylor was quoted as having said in his direct-examination on July 20, 2009.

After Mr. Taylor's assertion that he did not have a personal bank account at the LBDI, prosecution counsel Mr. Nicholas Koumjian read from an LBDI document dated December 8, 1999 and indicating the opening of a new bank account with account number 00201-32851-01. The document indicated the person opening the account as "Charles G. Taylor", home address "White Flower" and business address as Executive Mansion, with an initial deposit of 1,000 United States Dollars (USD). The appended signature on the document was Mr. Taylor's.

"It is my signature," Mr. Taylor agreed with Mr. Koumjian.

Mr. Koumjian also submitted a "checking account signature card" dated December 15, 1999 with Mr. Taylor's signature as well as a second authorized signatory named Khadiatou Darra. Mr. Taylor agreed that the details on the card were correct. Ms. Darra served as personal assistant to Mr. Taylor while he was president of Liberia.

Mr. Koumjian further read that as of July 17, 2000, a business operated by Dutch businessman Guus Kouwenhoeven deposited 1,999,975 USD into the account at LBDI. In June 2006, Mr. Koewenhoven was convicted in a Dutch court on charges of “arms smuggling and complicity in war crimes in Liberia,” but was acquitted on appeal in March 2008.

Mr. Taylor responded that “I told this court that monies were deposited into a special operating account” but denied that the account belonged to him.

“I had no personal accounts. Khadiatou Darra and Charles Taylor had the same bank account. This account is a government of Liberia account. I am a signatory to that account, Khadiatou is a signatory. It is an operational account,” Mr. Taylor said.

“Why is this account in your name and stated as a personal account?” Mr. Koumjian asked Mr. Taylor.

“This account is opened by the Liberian government under my authorization. This account is a covert account opened by the government of Liberia at this time. It had to be opened in my name,” Mr. Taylor responded.

In response to Mr. Koumjian’s assertion that the account was opened in Mr. Taylor’s personal name and only listed Khadiatou as a co-signatory, Mr. Taylor said that “it does not matter.”

Mr. Taylor explained that the United Nations had imposed an embargo on the government of Liberia at this time and any transactions coming from a government of Liberia account for certain operations would have been blocked since the clearing house for LBDI’s foreign transactions was with Citi Bank in New York.

“And you put that account in the name of the president?” Mr. Koumjian asked Mr. Taylor.

“Yes, with the authorization of the legislature,” Mr. Taylor said.

The former president explained that monies were needed for covert operations like the purchase of arms and ammunition to confront rebel forces who were threatening to unseat his government in Liberia. He said that the Liberian legislature gave him authority to use “any and every means” to protect the Republic of Liberia and having a covert account to finance covert operations for the protection of the Liberian people was a necessary thing. He said that all monies that went into the government’s account at the Central Bank of Liberia were monitored by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank.

Mr. Koumjian also pointed to records indicating that on March 30 2000, the “Embassy of ROC” in Monrovia deposited 3,500,000 USD into the same account. The “Embassy of ROC” was referenced as the Taiwanese embassy.

“I acknowledge that 3,500,000 went into this account,” Mr. Taylor said.

When asked by Mr. Koumjian why the government of Taiwan would want to “give covert money” to the government of Liberia, Mr. Taylor responded that “Because it was covert. That is it. It was covert and was used correctly and I am under no obligation to explain to you what covert operations included. It is for the Liberian people to ask me.”

In his direct-examination as well as his earlier cross-examination, Mr. Taylor has admitted that in 1996-1997, while preparing for presidential elections in Liberia, he received a personal donation from the Taiwanese government in the amount of 1,000,000 USD.

Mr. Taylor further told the court today that in 2000, amounts withdrawn from this covert account were used for the purchase of arms and ammunition from Serbia, in violation of a UN arms embargo on Liberia. The arms and ammunition, Mr. Taylor has consistently stated, were purchased to fight against rebel forces in Liberia.

Mr. Taylor said that the account was also used to pay salaries for the Special Security Service (SSS), the Anti-Terrorist Unit (ATU), as well as to “carry out humanitarian acts on behalf of the president.”

“Covert military operations” were paid for under this account, Mr. Taylor said.

Mr. Koumjian also read records of other transactions that were made with the account such as a debited amount of 917,000 USD, credited amounts of 6,975,500 USD, 3,400,000 USD and the withdrawal of 4,700,000 in about 68 transactions.

Mr. Taylor responded that “I was kept informed but I do not recall individual amounts. I do not remember the specific details.”

Mr. Taylor also said that he could not recall the source of 2,000,000 USD deposited into the account on December 4, 2000, records of which were read by Mr. Koumjian.

“I don’t recollect. This could have been from the government of Liberia,” Mr. Taylor said.

Prosecutors have sought to prove that Mr. Taylor enriched himself through his involvement in the conflict in Sierra Leone. It is alleged that Mr. Taylor received diamonds from RUF rebels and in return supplied them with arms and ammunition which were used to commit atrocities in Sierra Leone. The former Liberian president is accused of involvement in a joint criminal enterprise with RUF rebels and that he bears the greatest responsibility for crimes such as rape, murder and terrorizing the civilian population, committed by RUF rebels in Sierra Leone from November 30 1996 to July 18 2000. Mr. Taylor has denied these allegations, asserting that his involvement in Sierra Leone was only for peaceful purposes in concert with other West African leaders. Upon his arrest and detention by the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Mr. Taylor declared himself partially indigent, indicating that he does not have money to pay for his defense. The court has been paying all bills related to the conduct of his defense. Prosecutors now seek to prove that Mr. Taylor lied when he testified that he does not have money in any secret bank accounts.

With the court rising today for its end of year recess, Mr. Taylor’s cross-examination will continue on January 11, 2010.

CharlesTaylorTrial.org

Monday, 7 December 2009

Court Takes Early Recess As Defense Lawyers Request More Time To Study Documents Disclosed By Prosecutors For Mr. Taylor's Cross-Examination

By Alpha Sesay

The trial of former Liberian president, Charles Taylor, took an unexpectedly early recess today after his defense team asked for more time to study documents disclosed by prosecutors for use in Mr. Taylor's cross-examination.

After judges issued an order last Thursday requiring prosecutors to disclose to Mr. Taylor's defense team all new documents intended for use by prosecutors in cross-examining Mr. Taylor, prosecutors have now disclosed more than 100 new documents. These documents will either be used to try to impeach Mr. Taylor's credibility as a witness in his own defense or to point to his guilt on the 11 charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity and other serious violations of international humanitarian law for his alleged role in the crimes committed by rebel forces during the Sierra Leonean conflict.

Today, defense lawyers told the judges that the magnitude of the documents already disclosed — with more expected from the prosecution — they would need more time to study them and prepare for Mr. Taylor's cross-examination based on those documents.

The team requested that proceedings be adjourned immediately and that they be given the entire period of the Christmas recess to study all the disclosed documents. The court's recess was due to run from December 11, 2009 to January 11, 2010.

"I am asking that we be given this week and the rest of the recess to have time to assimilate these documents," lead defense counsel Courtenay Griffiths told the judges.

The defense also asked the judges to exercise some judicial supervision over the use of the documents that prosecutors intend to use in cross-examining Mr. Taylor. The defense requested that "before any document is used, we should establish that the document is in the interest of justice and does not violate the fair trial rights of the accused."

Prosecutors did not object to the defense application. On the defense request for the court to order an immediate adjournment of the proceedings, lead prosecutor Brenda Hollis told the judges that "should the defense think that they need more time to consider these documents, then it is their right to do and it is for you to determine."

After conferring with each other, the judges issued an order granting the defense request for an immediate adjournment that will run into the court's Christmas recess. The court also ordered that all documents intended for use in cross-examination of Mr. Taylor be served on the bench for "judicial supervision."

Mr. Taylor's cross-examination will continue on Monday January 11, 2009.

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 7 December 2009

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

International Clips on Liberia

Several Ambassadors Present Letters of Credence

Dec 07, 2009 (All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- Scores of ambassadors have presented their Letters of Credence to President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf at her office in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Amongst them are the Ambassador of France who promised training for senior police officers. They are expected to undergo crowd control training in one of the best military academies in France. Ambassador Gerard Larome told President Sirleaf that following the training of the five senior police officers; France will send trainers to train 150 police officers to beef up the strength of the Emergency Response Unit. Receiving the letters of credence, president Sirleaf recalled the peacekeeping role of France in Africa and hoped that France will be of help to keep the sub-region stable. President Sirleaf applaud the strong partnership between Liberia and France commending that country for the donation of the fire trucks, ambulance - things that had not been seen in the country for almost decades adding that "since that time France has been supporting us in many areas.

International Clips on West Africa

Sierra Leone

The Irish Times: Sierra Leone taking tentative steps towards creating itself

Source: The Irish Times Date: December 07, 2009, FREETOWN LETTER: The west African country is keen to show visitors things have changed since the civil war ended in 2002. On the flight from London to Freetown, not much appeared to have changed since my last visit to Sierra Leone in 2003. There was the usual collection of returning migrants, aid workers and evangelicals. One young American couple, for example, who were on their first trip overseas, were coming to help orphans through Children of the Nations, a Christian non-profit organisation. On arrival, it was strangely reassuring to discover that Lungi airport offered the same level of chaos as on my previous trip. The seven-minute helicopter ride into Freetown, however, brought a surprising level of comfort. Travelling by helicopter may sound extravagant, but when your flight arrives at midnight, it is the only viable option. The road from the airport to the city is appalling and the journey takes about five hours. The other option is a ferry, which is notoriously unsafe. In 2003, the year after the war ended, there were no seats on the helicopter: passengers had to sit on their luggage and look out through an open door. It was terrifying.

Guinea

Guinean junta must be "ostracised" - region head

LONDON, Dec 7 (Reuters) - Guinea's ruling junta must face full international isolation to persuade it allow a transition to civilian rule, the head of the 15-state regional body of West African states said on Monday. "We must make life uncomfortable for them. They must be ostracised in the region, Africa and internationally," ECOWAS commission president Mohammed Ibn Chambas told Reuters on the margins of an event in London. Junta leader Captain Moussa Dadis Camara -- being treated in Morocco after an assassination attempt -- was "part of the problem not the solution", Chambas said of the political crisis in the world's top exporter of the aluminum ore bauxite.

Some mining staff quit Guinea, production steady

CONAKRY, Dec 7 (Reuters) - Some mineworkers have left Guinea in response to growing tension in the West African country but production at major minerals operations has not been affected, resources companies said on Monday. An unsuccessful attempt on the life of military ruler Captain Moussa Dadis Camara last week ignited fears of more turmoil in the world's top exporter of bauxite, used to make aluminium, where firms including RUSAL, Alcoa, Rio Tinto and AngloGold Ashanti operate. Camara was flown to Morocco for medical treatment on Friday after suffering head wounds in the gun attack. The doctor in charge of his treatment said on Sunday his health was not a cause for concern after an operation. There was a brief outburst of gunfire in Conakry early on Monday, which a military source said was linked to efforts to track down those behind the assassination attempt. Residents said the city was calm by day time.

Cote d'Ivoire

Ethical KitKat will give cocoa growers a break

nzherald.co.nz

Monday December 7, 2009

KitKat uses cocoa grown in Cote d'Ivoire. Photo / Dean PurcellNestle, the world's biggest food company, will pay poor cocoa farmers more for their beans by switching its best-selling KitKat bar to Fairtrade. Embarking on what its British chocolate boss described as an ethical "long journey", the four-finger KitKat will carry the Fairtrade logo from next month. Over the next two years the two-finger and other versions of the £183 million (\$420 million) a year bar will make the switch. More than 8000 cocoa farmers in Cote d'Ivoire (formerly Ivory Coast) will benefit, receiving an extra US\$150(\$208) a tonne, 4 per cent above the US\$3384 (\$4715) world price.

Local Media – Newspaper

Bangladeshi Peacekeepers Train 1st Engineer Company for Liberia's New Army (New Vision, The Informer, The News, Public Agenda)

- The first engineer company of the new Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) have graduated after receiving three months of training in basic combat engineering from Bangladesh Engineer Contingent-12 of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL).
- Speaking at the graduation ceremony, UNMIL Sector B Commander Brigadier-General Rahman Muhammad Majibur urged the AFL and other security agencies to take full charge of the country's security and other law and order situations.
- Also speaking during the ceremony, Deputy Defense Minister, Dionysius Sebwe assured that the new army would play a major role in the country's reconstruction process.
- For his part, the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of Liberia, Major General, S.A. Abdurrahman described the Engineering Company of the new army as a "path finder that will lead the way for Liberia's recovery and reconstruction".

Cache of Arms and Ammunition Discovered in Firestone

(Heritage, New Democrat, Liberian Journal)

- Reports say a cache of arms and ammunition has been discovered in Firestone, Margibi County.

- According to the report, the cache of arms and ammunition were discovered on November 26 in the Division 29 area in Firestone.
- The weapons which were sealed up in a yellow plastic include six AK-47 rifles and one hundred rounds of ammunition.
- Following the discovery of the weapons, the joint security in Margibi County was immediately alerted and they have launched a full-scale investigation to establish the source of the weapons.

UN Official Says Liberia's Future Depends On Its Youths

(The Inquirer, New Democrat)

- A UN official has challenged Liberian youths to help change Liberia for the better.
- The Acting Chief of UNMIL Civil Affairs Section, Mr. Felix Forster urged the youths to be focused because the future of the country depends on them.
- Mr. Forster speaking at the 5th graduation ceremony of the Child Advocacy Programme organized by the Liberian National Red Cross called on the 150 graduates to put into practice the skills acquired for the good of Liberia.
- The head of the vocational training centre, Madia Reeves-Fully said the Red Cross initiated the programme to train war-affected youths in the community.

Government Hails Legislature's Delay Of Discussion On TRC Final Report

(The Monitor, Daily Observer, New Vision, Liberian Journal)

- Government says it respects the final edited version of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Report.
- In a release, the government also hailed the Legislature's position deferring discussion on the final report pending consultation with their constituencies.
- Although government describes the TRC report as crucial for peace and security, it says the Legislature needs ample time to act on the report.
- The Information Ministry statement which warned against politicizing the TRC report said doing so would be a great disservice to the country.
- Meanwhile, one of those indicted in the report, Senator Prince Johnson said the TRC final report is a recipe for chaos and conflict and should be thrust aside.

UP Partisans Disenchanted, Present 10-Count Petition To Standard Bearer

(The Inquirer)

- Partisans of the ruling Unity Party are said to be disenchanted with the party over its alleged failure to provide them basic social services.
- Inside sources say the partisans most of whom are youths made their disappointment known in a 10-count petition to President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in a closed-door meeting.
- The sources said the youths named the lack of scholarships, failure to incorporate them in government and the bringing of US-based Liberians to work in government among others.
- A party stalwart, John Ballout confirmed the youths' position to the President Sirleaf and said the partisans spoke their minds but refused to agree that there was disagreement within the party.

Senator Ballout Says Confidence in Liberia's Justice System Slowly Eroding

(Heritage)

- Maryland County Senator John Ballout says public confidence in Liberia's justice system is eroding.
- Senator Ballout said people are losing trust in the system because it is not delivering justice to them noting that as a result of the situation the people do not even want to listen to their leaders anymore.
- The Maryland lawmaker cited the case in which a couple was murdered in the county on their way from Rock Town to Harper.

- Speaking at the official launched of the County Security Mechanism (CSM) in Kakata, Margibi County the Senator said in the absence of an effective security system it was necessary to forge partnership with community residents to cut back crimes.
- The National Security Pillar launched the CSM to provide county-based security framework, including civilian and local government participation.

Guinea Military Leader in Stable Condition after Head Surgery

(Public Agenda, The Inquirer, The News, Liberian Journal, Heritage, New Democrat, Liberian Express)

- Guinea's foreign minister says the country's hospitalized president is now alert and in possession of his mental faculties, though there is no set date for his return.
- Alexandre Cece Loua said he had spoken with Guinean President Capt. Moussa "Dadis" Camara in the hospital and his condition was "encouraging."
- Earlier Monday, Loua said Camara could not communicate but that he recognized his entourage.
- Loua denied reports out of Guinea that the president's return was imminent.
- On Friday, Camara was airlifted to a hospital in Morocco after being wounded in an assassination attempt by the head of his presidential guard. He was operated on for cranial trauma at the military hospital.

Government to Restitute US\$500,000 Seized From a Nigerian Businessman

- The Government through the Justice Ministry Thursday asked for out of court settlement of the controversial US\$500,000 case at the Supreme Court.
- Cllr. Dempster Brown said government made the request with the intention of paying back the money it seized from a Nigerian businessman Valentine Ayika in two installments.
- State and defense lawyers had gone to the Supreme Court to argue a defense petition for a writ of error, when the prosecution made the request.
- Defense lawyers claimed government forced Ayika out of Liberia after it seized his money in September 2007.

Police Raid Criminal Hideout, Arrests 75 Suspects

- The Liberia National Police have arrested over 75 suspected criminals for crimes ranging from armed robbery, theft, burglary among others.
- According to source, the suspects were arrested early Saturday morning from various ghettos and criminal hideouts within the Soul Clinic area in Paynesville.
- Reports say those arrested are being investigated to either be exonerated or be charged and prosecuted.
- The early morning raid according to reports is expected to be extended to other parts of Monrovia and its environs in order to make the city a crime free environment for this Christmas season.

Local Media – Star Radio (*culled from website today at 09:00 am*)

'Disenchanted' UP Partisans Present 10-count Petition To Standard Bearer

US Diplomat Wants Support For Liberia's Arts And Craft

- The US Embassy near Monrovia has called for support to Liberia's arts and craft sector.
- Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield believes support to the sector would improve the state of artists.
- Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield said the country should be proud that its artists are not beggars but are utilized in their skills.
- The US Ambassador spoke over the weekend at a one-day arts and craft fair at the US Embassy held in collaboration with Liberian artists and the US Marines.

Justice Ministry Break Silence Over Zehkham Contract

- The Ministry of Justice has finally broken silence over the controversial Zehkham contract.
- Justice Minister Christina Tah said the contract is invalid but not cancelled.

- According to Minister Tah, the investigation conducted showed that the Zehkham contract has what she called “some legal missteps which needed to be rectified.”

Bong Mines Widows Appeal For Arrears Settlement

- Hundreds of widows of former employees of the Bong Mining Company (BMC) have launched an appeal for arrears of their late husbands.
- The women want President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to prevail on BMC authorities to settle their arrears before mid December.
- The women at a mass meeting, of hardship and said they were no longer able to send their children to school.
- They said their present condition was negatively imparting the poverty reduction strategy as they and their children were getting poorer and illiterate by the day.

UN Official Says Liberia’s Future Depends On Its Youths

Senator Ballout Acknowledges Lack Of Trust In Liberia’s Justice System

Government Hails Legislature’s Delay Of Discussion On TRC Final Report

Government to Restitute US\$500,000 Seized From a Nigerian Businessman

State Presents Remaining Documents To Defense In Angel Tokpah Case

- The prosecution has presented, what it called, the final batch of documents including statements of the defendants and their relatives to lawyers representing Hans and Mardea Williams.
- The prosecution also presented the signed report of the special investigative team, investigations into the unnatural death and a post mortem probe report.
- Defense lawyers believed the documents are relevant to the Angel Tokpah murder trial expected to begin in Criminal Court B.

Current NEC Team Credible To Conduct 2011 Polls: ALCOP

- The All Liberian Coalition Party (ALCOP) has described as impressive, the present level of political democracy in Liberia.
- ALCOP said it is particularly pleased with the free, fair and transparent conduct of a number of by-elections.
- The Party’s Acting Chairman, Mr. Ansu Dorley said the National Elections Commission has demonstrated its neutrality in the electoral process.
- Mr. Dorley said Liberia’s democracy is heading in a positive direction with the credibility of the NEC increasing.
- He said if opposition parties are winning by-elections under the present NEC leadership, it means the James Fromayan Team is credible to conduct the 2011 elections.

Truth FM (News monitored today at 10:00 am)

Police Raid Criminal Hideout, Arrests 75

Associated Press (Pakistan)

Monday, 7 December 2009

New UNMIL force commander arrives in Liberia

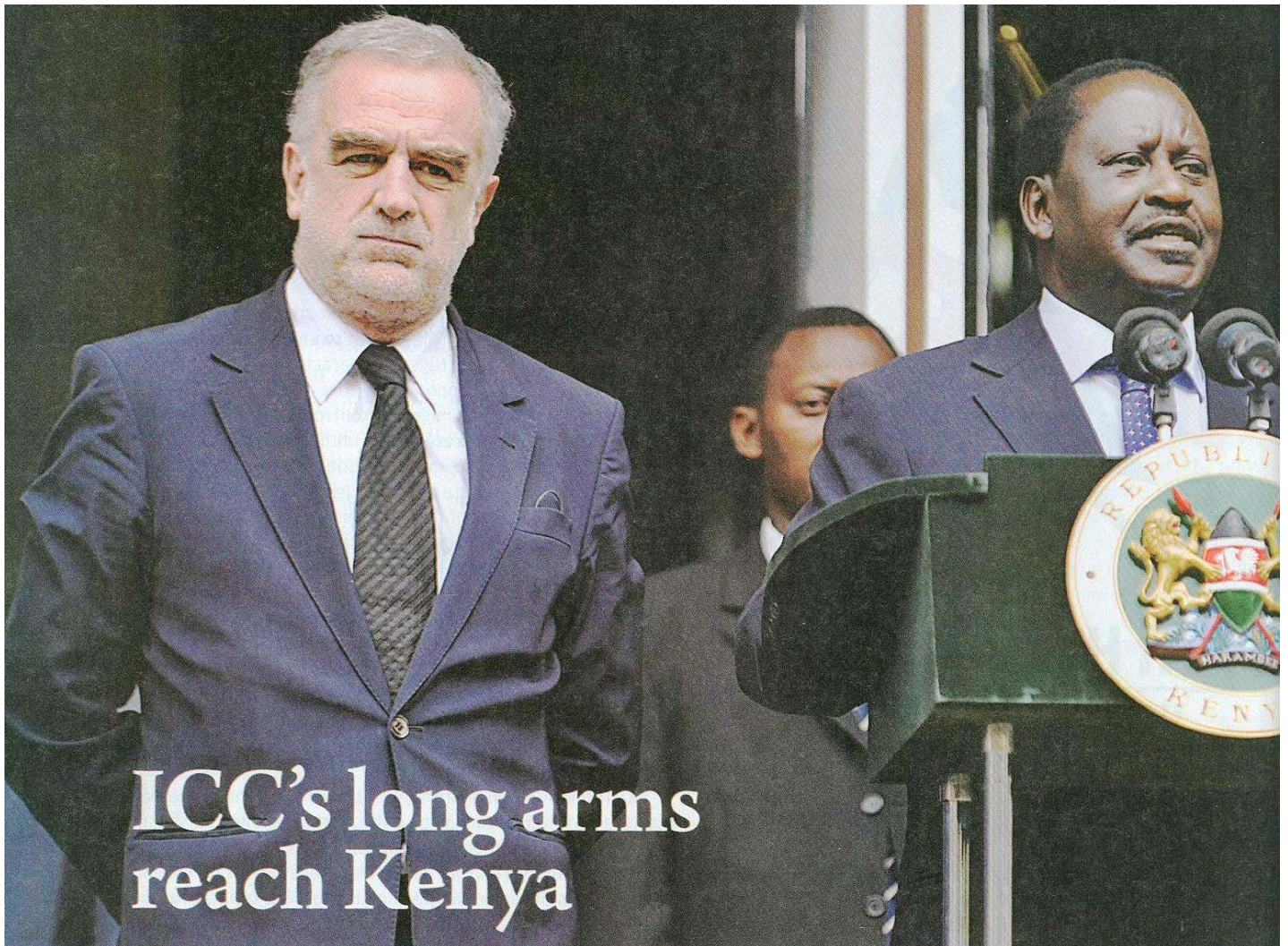
The newly-appointed force commander of the United Nations Mission in Liberia, Lieutenant General Sikander Afzal of Pakistan, has arrived in Monrovia to assume responsibility for a force of 10,000 multinational troops, the UN said in a news release on Monday.

He replaces Lt. Gen. A.T.M. Zahirul Alam of Bangladesh, whose duty ended at the end of November. The peacekeeping force monitors a ceasefire agreement between Liberian warring factions following the resignation of President Charles Taylor.

The UN mission played major role in restoring stability and a democratic government chosen in free elections after more than a decade of civil war. But in a report to the Security Council in August, Ban warned that the gains remain fragile, especially with regard to security, rule of law and job creation. Lt.-Gen. Afzal was appointed in October by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and brings to UNMIL extensive leadership and operational experience.

He previously served as the Quick Reaction Force (QRF) Commander with the UN Mission in Somalia (UNOSOM II) between 1994 and 1995. Gen. graduated from the universities of Punjab and Balochistan with Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science (Honours) degrees. He later earned a Master of Science degree from Quaid-i-Azam University in 1998. He completed the Pakistan Army Staff Course in 1984 and the National Defence Course in Islamabad in 1999.

Since joining the Pakistani Army in 1972, Lt.-Gen. Afzal has had a distinguished military career, serving in numerous important command and instructional assignments at home and abroad. He has commanded armoured and infantry brigades, two infantry divisions and served as the Director-General for Strategic Analysis in the country's Inter-Services Intelligence. From 2006 to his recent appointment with UNMIL, Lt.-Gen. Afzal has been serving as Corps Commander at Multan with responsibility for more than 30,000 military personnel. He is married to Mahlaqa Sikander and has two children, a daughter and a son.



ICC's long arms reach Kenya

"Crimes committed in Kenya [after the 2007 elections], are crimes against humanity," says the ICC chief prosecutor, Luis Moreno-Ocampo. "In December 2009, I will request the judges of the ICC to open an investigation." His words have created jitters in Nairobi, reports **Wanjohi Kabukuru**.

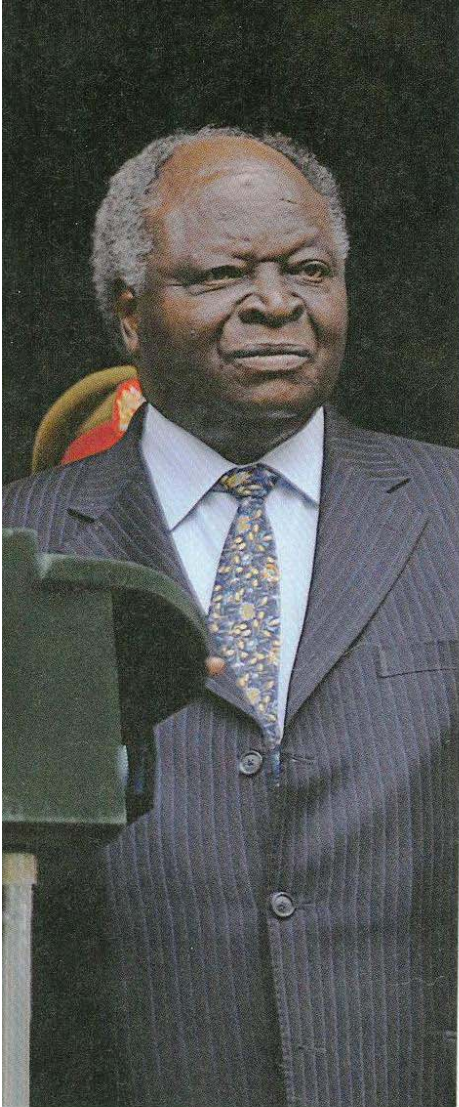
KENYA WILL SHOW HOW TO MANAGE past violence, and how to create a peaceful process for the upcoming elections in 2012. Kenya will be an example to the world." With these words, Luis Moreno-Ocampo, the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), served notice in Nairobi in early November that Kenya would not be the same after his visit.

While the Kenyan government did not directly give Ocampo a free hand, he managed to get a firm commitment from President Mwai Kibaki and Prime Minister Raila Odinga that Kenya "will cooperate with the ICC to ensure that those who bear the responsibility for crimes committed during the post-election conflict [in 2008] are brought to justice."

That the ghosts of Kenya's moment

of infamy continue to haunt the masterminds of the election violence is obvious. Some cabinet ministers and prominent politicians from both sides of the governing coalition are said to be on the list of 10 politicians alleged to be the initiators and financiers of the post-election trouble. However, 21 months after the violence, not a single man or woman has been charged and this is what has given rise to more questions than answers on the political future of Kenya if the ICC takes charge. Since July this year when Ocampo received the envelope containing "the names of the accused" from former UN secretary-general Kofi Annan, Kenyan politics has taken on a new dimension.

When the coalition government was cobbled together in mid-2008, the real-



Luis Moreno-Ocampo (left) meets President Mwai Kibaki (right) and Prime Minister Raila Odinga

in Nairobi. In late October, Washington, through its embassy in Nairobi, revoked the visa of Kenya's attorney general, Amos Wako, describing him as a "senior government official who has been obstructive to reforms".

Washington has further warned that it would revoke visas for another dozen prominent government officials if Nairobi continued to obstruct the prosecution of those responsible for the post-election violence. It was the visa revocation, which has seen Wako threatening to sue the US government, that paved the way for Ocampo's visit to Nairobi. The EU, through its head of delegation, has also waded in. "The European Union expects and looks forward to full and effective cooperation of the Kenyan government with the ICC," says Ann Dismor, the EU representative who also doubles as

"For adopting a 'time-will-heal attitude', the Kenyan political elite has allowed Western capitals to call the shots and given Ocampo a shot in the arm."

ity that Kenyan politics were set for realignment came to the fore. Interestingly, the re-engineering of Kenyan politics has all the hallmarks of external interference.

Annan came to Kenya under the auspices of the AU Panel of Eminent African Personalities and led the international community in brokering a peaceful end to the chaos and a power-sharing deal. Yet the reality is that while Annan is officially an AU representative, the AU has not been calling the shots in Kenya. Instead, many of the issues pertaining to the post-election violence have been discussed in The Hague and Geneva and not in Addis Ababa (the AU headquarters) nor in Arusha (home of the East African Community).

Besides, the Obama administration in Washington has been pressing for "reforms"

Swedish ambassador to Kenya.

Indeed all these manoeuvres have been necessitated by the unwillingness of the Kenyan government to bring the perpetrators to book. Somehow, Brussels, Washington and Geneva seem to have a keen interest in the prosecution of the culprits. This has unsettled the Kenyan political establishment.

Though political violence seems to have become a fad in Kenya, the entry of the ICC seems to have created jitters among the political elite. Under the guise of issues around land ownership, poverty, political representation, inequitable resource-sharing and wealth allocation, politically-fanned clashes mostly instigated by politicians have taken root in the country. The cycle of violence began in 1992 at the onset of multiparty politics

and has been recurring during elections in 1997, 2002 and 2007. But the 2007-08 violence surpassed them all.

Now some action seems to be on the way, at last! The names of the key financiers of the 2007-08 violence were contained in a dossier presented to the Waki Commission by the director general of the Kenya National Security Intelligence Service (NSIS), which revealed that violence would have erupted anyway whoever won the 2007 general election. The Waki Commission later passed on the names to the ICC via Kofi Annan. The dossier revealed that the entire security establishment and the major powers were well informed of the impending violence. Why they did nothing to prevent it has now become a refrain in Kenya. Now the politicians who stoked the violence that claimed 1,555 people, displaced 500,000 families, and massive destruction of property, find themselves confronted by the long arms of the ICC, and many Kenyans see it as the ultimate answer to impunity.

In February this year, the Kenyan Parliament's efforts to set up a special tribunal to try the instigators of the rioting were defeated. The government failed to secure the necessary two-thirds majority (145 of 222 MPs) to push for a constitutional amendment to set up the special tribunal. It is this dilly-dallying and political posturing on the special tribunal that forced Annan to forward the names to Ocampo. During the power-sharing negotiations, Kenya had agreed to investigate the violence and its causes, carry out a raft of reforms and probe the conduct of the election. Though a number of the recommendations from the Annan-led negotiations, which culminated in the National Accord and Reconciliation Act have been implemented, whenever the issue of prosecution arose, the grand coalition floundered time and again.

For adopting a "time-will-heal attitude", the Kenyan political elite has allowed Western capitals to call the shots and given Ocampo a shot in the arm. "Crimes committed in Kenya," Ocampo said in Nairobi, "are crimes against humanity. In December 2009, I will request the judges of the International Criminal Court to open an investigation."

In hindsight, "time will heal" was not a good policy. ■ **NA**

Reuters

Tuesday, 24 November 2009

Hague prosecutor accuses Congo warlords

By International Justice Desk



*The Hague,
Netherlands*

Two Congolese militiamen were the top commanders of forces that raped,

killed and looted civilians in a brutal attack that left 200 dead, a war crimes prosecutor said on Tuesday.

Germain Katanga and Mathieu Ngudjolo Chui went on trial at the International Criminal Court (ICC) on charges of directing a February 2003 attack on a village in the Ituri region of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as rival groups fought for control of the region's gold, diamonds and oil.

"Some were shot dead in their sleep, some cut up by machetes to save bullets. Others were burned alive after their houses were set on fire by the attackers," Chief Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo said, adding others were shot as they fled.

Katanga, 31, an ethnic Ngiti, is said to have commanded the Patriotic Resistance Force (FRPI). Ngudjolo, 39, a Lendu, is accused of being the former leader of the National Integrationist Front (FNI).

Both men are charged with seven counts of war crimes and three of crimes against humanity, including murder, sexual slavery, rape, using child soldiers and pillaging.

Both men pleaded not guilty to all charges.

"I have said since I arrived here that I am not guilty. I still continue to plead not guilty," Katanga said, speaking through an interpreter.

The two defence teams will give their opening statements later on Tuesday.

"Easy prey"

Moreno-Ocampo said both the FRPI and FNI were in conflict with the Union of Congolese Patriots (UPC), mostly of Hema ethnicity, and attacked the village of Bogoro to open up a road link and prevent UPC attacks against Ngiti and Lendu targets.

He said hundreds of women, men and children attacked the village in the morning with automatic weapons, machetes and spears and did not distinguish between soldiers and civilians.

Villagers were "easy prey" as they sought refuge at a UPC camp in the village, he added.

Prosecutors say forces commanded by Katanga and Ngudjolo had encircled the village from the north and south, having jointly planned to have their forces meet in the centre of the village.

"Victims lost everything," said Fidel Nsita Luvengika, one of two legal representatives defending the interests of 345 court-recognised victims, having said on Monday that "some do not even know where their children were buried."

Victim participation

He said the trial will help them to overcome their trauma and mourning, to establish truth and "to finish impunity".

Victims may participate in the trial by expressing their views and concerns if it is done in a way consistent with the principle of a fair trial. They can also seek compensation.

Tuesday's trial is the ICC's second trial and the first involving charges of murder after the court's debut case focused on charges alleged Congolese warlord Thomas Lubanga enlisted and conscripted child soldiers to the military wing of his UPC.

Prosecutors will call 26 witnesses, 21 of whom are protected witnesses. The trial is expected to take several months.

CNN.Com

Tuesday, 8 December 2009

U.N. chief talks with Sudan president on crisis

By Atitya Chhor,

Ban Ki-moon urged al-Bashir to use "direct engagement" in securing the release of two men who have been held hostage for 100 days -- one of whom has fallen "gravely ill." The two men were part of the joint United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur when they were abducted at gunpoint on August 29.

"The situation is critical," U.N. spokesman Martin Nesirky told reporters at a Monday briefing.

"The president assured the secretary-general that everything possible was being done," he added.

The U.N. chief's phone call on Sunday to al-Bashir followed two deadly attacks on UNAMID peacekeeping forces in the Darfur region of Sudan on Friday and Saturday. Five Rwandan peacekeepers were killed in the attacks, bringing to 22 the total number of people lost since the mission was deployed in 2008.

Ban urged the government of Sudan to swiftly identify and bring the perpetrators to justice, and shared his appreciation for the service of the victims in "the search for peace in Darfur."

"President al-Bashir indicated he had issued instructions to his security agencies that the perpetrators be apprehended as soon as possible," Nesirky said.

Members of the U.N. Security Council condemned the attacks and expressed condolences to the families of those killed and the Rwandan government, according to a statement read by Security Council President Michel Kafando.

The Security Council also noted and encouraged the action taken by the Sudanese government, but looked to all parties in Darfur "to cooperate fully with the mission."

The weekend attacks coincided with a Security Council briefing Friday by the International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor on the continuing violence in Darfur and the lack of cooperation with investigators by al-Bashir and his government.

Luis Moreno-Ocampo highlighted the role played by the Sudanese president in what he said are the ongoing crimes in Darfur, which include "indiscriminate bombings of civilians" and the "use of child soldiers."

The International Criminal Court has issued a warrant for al-Bashir's arrest for war crimes and crimes against humanity.