

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



Fourah Bay College students Abdul Karim Koroma and Margaret A.L. Kamara strike a confrontational pose for the camera on Wednesday. They were the winners of last week's Outreach-sponsored debate competition on the topic, "Should Charles Taylor be Extradited to The Hague". They were congratulated yesterday at the Special Court.

**PRESS CLIPPINGS**

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

Thursday, 8 June 2006

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.  
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact  
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Concord Times  
Thursday, 8 June 2006

# AFRC start defense at Special Court

The Defence opened its case Monday in the trial of three alleged former leaders of the Armed Forces Revolutionary

Council (AFRC).

Alex Tamba Brima, Brima Bazzy Kamara, and Santigie Borbor

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## AFRC start defense at Special Court

*From page 1*

Kanu each face a 14-count indictment alleging war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law.

In an opening statement, which lasted for just under an hour, Prof. Geert-Jan Knoops, Lead Counsel for Third Accused Kanu, laid out the Defence case on behalf of all three defendants. Opening statements on factual points from Lead Counsel for First and Second Accused followed this.

The trial, which is being

held before the Special Court's Trial Chamber II, began on 7 March 2005. The Prosecution concluded its case on 21 November 2005 after calling 59 witnesses.

In December 2005, counsel for the Defence filed Motions for Judgment of Acquittal on behalf of all three accused. The Trial Chamber dismissed those motions on 31 March 2006, clearing the way for the start of the Defence case.

Following the opening statement, the Court began hearing evidence from the First Accused, Alex Tamba Brima, who is testifying in

his own defence.

The AFRC trial is the second Special Court trial in which the Defence has opened its case. Defence counsel opened their case in the trial of three alleged CDF leaders on 19 January 2006.

Awoko

Thursday, 8 June 2006

# “Mosquito ordered men to kill us” - *Tamba Brima*

**C**ontinuing his evidence yesterday at the Special Court, Tamba Brima who is the first accused in the trial of the three Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) indictees, revealed how Sam Bockarie aka Mosquito, of the defunct Revolutionary United Front (RUF), gave orders for them to be killed.

Mr. Brima stated that he  
*Contd. Page 4*

## Mosquito ordered men to kill us

*From Page 2*

together with Johnny Paul Koroma, AFRC Chairman, Captain Kalogu Kamara, Lieutenant Jeff Kallon and some other members of the Sierra Leone Army were arrested in Kailahun, and that Mosquito who was the leader of the RUF ordered other rebels to kill them.

Explaining further, the witness said he was first arrested at “West Side” by some men and that he was not told why he was arrested until he was brought to Junior Lion whom he had known as “Junior Bolo” working as a houseboy to one Sergeant Ibrahim Kamara.

The witness maintained that during the arrest he together with Foday Bah Marrah were hesitant to go and when they approached Junior Lion, he shot at them but was warned by “Tito” not to harm them. He [Junior Lion] later shot Tito.

During their arrest, the witness maintained, they were taken to a dungeon where they stayed for some days until Johnny Paul pleaded for their release.

Mr. Brima said he first knew Junior Lion as a civilian in Kono where police personnel arrested him for killing a businessman. He stressed

that at no point in time was Junior Lion recruited into the Army.

The former AFRC council member earlier disclosed that he became acquainted with other council members of the regime when they were in Freetown for meetings.

Tamba Brima, who is facing a fourteen-count charge, stated that while he was admitted at the 34 Hospital he was told that Mosquito and Lieutenant Yemeh Marrah had been involved in a road accident and after he [Mosquito] was discharged he returned to Kenema on the grounds that people had plotted to kill him

## *At Special Court...*

# AFRC's Gullit speaks out

*By Saffia S. Kabba*

Special Court detained former Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) strongman, Alex Tamba Brima alias Gullit, has started giving testimony before the Special Court for Sierra Leone, in defence of charges preferred against him.

In his testimony, he stated that he came to know about the May 25<sup>th</sup> coup through his boss, Captain Paul Thomas, while at his deployment at the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion.

According to him, Captain Paul Thomas called up a muster parade on the very day of the coup, and addressed them

saying, there was heavy firing in Freetown.

Mr. Brima went on to state that it was while they were there that they got to realize that it were soldiers who were carry out the firing.

He said after the parade, he went to his house, and was

*Contd: page 2*

# AFRC's Gullit speaks out

*From front page*

alerted by the sound of a heavy blast. On hearing the blast, he went straight to the parade ground from where they were taken to the armory by his boss, Captain Paul Thomas; Mr. Brima said, adding that each of them was armed and deployed at strategic locations.

Mr. Brima went on to testify that their boss did tell them that their specific mission was to take note of all vehicles entering into the Barracks.

He said after a while, he was redeployed to a checkpoint around Cockerill, where he first saw Corporal Tamba Gborie.

He said on the following day, he was visited by Corporals Tamba Gborie and Abu Sankoh alias Zagalo, who

invited him to a meeting at Cockerill. He said before the meeting commenced, he heard an announcement that the RUF rebels have been invited to join the junta regime in Freetown. He further explained that when the meeting time drew near, a vehicle was sent to collect him at the 34 Military Hospital where he was admitted after an accident in which he sustained some injuries.

At the meeting, he stated that he met with senior military officers like A.K Sesay, Johnny Paul Koroma, Hassan Bangura, Corporal Tamba Gborie and others.

He said it was at that meeting that he was appointed member of the Supreme Council.

Exclusive

Thursday, 8 June 2006

# Junior Lion Shot Me, Killed Titoe

## *-Gullit*

*By Joseph Turay*

Former AFRC commander now first accused in the ongoing AFRC trials at the Special Court, Alex Tamba Brima alias Gullit,

yesterday testified in court that he was shot on his right foot by Special Court witness, 'junior lion' and at the same time, shot and killed a former AFRC commander named Titoe.

Displaying the scars in court yesterday under cross

examination by his lawyer Kojo Graham, Gullit said the incident occurred in August 1999 after he and other AFRC commanders retreated to the Okra Hills, about Seventy Kilometres away from the capital

See page 2

## Junior Lion Shot Me, Killed Titoe

From front page

Freetown, where the West Side Boys had their base. Gullit further told the court that, 'Junior Lion' and other commanders accused them of retreating from the capital, abandoning it at the hands of the invading then government troops and ECOMOG forces.

He said Lion killed Titoe merely because the latter cautioned him against the attempt.

"I" together with Fodaybah Marrah were detained in a Dungeon (cave)," Gullit told his lawyer. The first accused further told the court that together with his colleagues, they spent some-

time in the Dungeon before Johnny Paul Koroma ordered their release.

He further disclosed that 'Junior Lion,' had never been a serving soldier, but that the former West Side Boys commander was just an ordinary civilian who prior to the coup, was a house boy to the second accused Brima Bazy Kamara.

New Vision  
Thursday, 8 June 2006

## "ACCOUNTABILITY" UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW

By: Nicholas Mitchell

Every international body created to adjudicate crimes of war or crimes against humanity has articulated a goal of achieving "accountability", as has the Special Court for Sierra Leone. As the trials of the Special Court progress, it is important that we examine this goal and the possible outcomes of the Special Court's jurisprudence.

The aim of achieving "accountability" has been articulated throughout the history of international criminal justice. It was reflected in the Nuremberg Charter of 1945 and in subsequent developments in international criminal law, such as the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the enabling statutes for the Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. In a criminal law context, accountability usually means identifying a crime, finding its culprit and imposing punishment. On the surface, this seems quite simple. An examination of the goals of criminal punishment is in order. Punishment is generally thought to have 2 basic aims: retribution and deterrence. Under retribution theories, it is believed that principles of morality or natural law dictate that those who commit crimes deserve to be punished for their acts. This is usually expressed as a matter of right and wrong.

It's not exactly revenge, but is not that far from it either. A retributive would believe that because the crimes dealt with by the Special Court are so serious, the punishment for those convicted should be equally severe. Deterrence theories are not based on ideas of moral right and wrong.

They are utilitarian and aim to impose punishment in order to prevent those convicted (and others) from committing similar crimes in the future.

These two goals will likely play an important role in the punishment that might one day be meted out by the Special Court. However, by themselves, will they be enough to achieve the international community's often-articulated goal of accountability?

The Marriam-Webster English Dictionary defines accountability as "1. Subject to going an account: ANSWERABLE. 2. capable of being accounted for: EXPLAINABLE". (Emphasis added)

Criminal law, and the rationales of deterrence and retribution, primarily evolved to deal with discrete and easily identifiable criminal acts. For example, a man may be accused of stealing. He is arrested, tried, and if there is sufficient evidence, he is

convicted of the crime. The context of his crime is probably not important to holding him or someone else, subject to account or explaining it.

If he is properly convicted, society (and the criminal justice system) is satisfied that accountability was achieved. This would be an easy case. But what about other, more complex types of crime? What if a crime cannot be isolated as one act, such as stealing, or even a series of acts? Do the theories of deterrence and retribution still function effectively to provide accountability?

The root causes of Sierra Leone's war are up for debate, and should be debated, yet, scholars have noted that the wrongs committed during the war did not occur in a vacuum, and were not merely a series, or several series, of isolated criminal acts.

Rather, the conditions that gave rise to the war developed over years; years of grinding poverty and other sources of strife. To achieve the accountability, that is; the goal of the international community, as expressed by its creation of the Special Court, are dealing with those causes not as important as punishment of individual perpetrators? If they are, then relying on retribution and deterrence of judgment. No act or decision of the Special Court, nor any other body of criminal justice, will aid in the economic development of Sierra Leone or alleviate the oppressive want that provided such a fertile ground for violence.

The international community has high hopes that we will one day achieve accountability through the opinions of the Special Court, and this is a valid desire. It is unlikely that any tribunal would ever be able other render the war explainable, since some events may simply be too terrible to be explicable by law, religion or any doctrine. But there may, at least, be a good chance of holding people answerable for their actions. In that sense, deterrence and retribution might be achieved. Yet if one concludes that the conditions that gave rise to the war in Sierra Leone have not changed significantly, as some contend, perhaps the focus of the international community in post-war settings must be re-examined.

Perhaps a more expansive definition of accountability should be adopted which focuses as much on identifying as well as in examining and overcoming the conditions that facilitated the violence, as it does on the punishment of the individuals responsible. (Culled from LAWCLA News December 2005).

Spectator

Thursday, 8 June 2006

## *Tension "No 9"*

# Special Court cook to contest election

A Chief cook attached to the Special Court of Sierra Leone Pa Hassan Fornah has informed The Spectator of his determination to contest for the position of Area Chief in Wilberforce. "I am the people's choice; in fact one councilor in our ward has advised that the people present me to him for endorsement".

Pa Hassan Fornah is contesting against the current area Chief Pa Kolleh Dumbuya who has been in that position for the past five years.

In 2001, Pa Hassan was asked by the community resident in the area normally called "NUMBER 9" to step down for Pa. Kolleh for the area Headmanship.

"But since that time it is like we do not have any area chief in our community,"

according to one Michael Tucker (known as Uncle Mike).

Uncle Mike claimed that "our Chief is so dormant that we always have to go under other area Chiefs to solve our own problems".

He referred to micro-credits given out to communities but which did not reach their own area.

Another resident of the community said Pa Kolleh Dumbuya never set up any administrative structure by which the community could be governed.

"He just took the title and went to rest". Many 'No 9' residents say that since the death of the former area chief the late Pa Serry, the office had not got any effect since Pa Kolleh is not up to the job.

"Pa Hassan was the loyal speaker to Pa Serry for more than ten years; it was

only because Pa Kolleh was older

than Pa Hassan that led to the latter to step down for the former "one of the residents explained.

She further stated that they want an area chief who will seek their interests. "We know that one man cannot solve our problems, but we need to have somebody with whom we can share our feelings".

Pa Hassan himself told The Spectator that "this is a community of very influential people, the Deputy Speaker of Parliament, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Tourism, Deputy Ministers, Diplomats and wealthy business people reside in this area".

Therefore, he said, the community



needs one who can mobilize support from those intelligentsia to develop the area.

"The community's church and Mosque have not been completed, nor do we have community centre or street pump".

Pa Hassan although a staunch Muslim (he is deputy chairman of the area mosque) and also interested in Christianity. "I want everybody to be religiously inclined either

in the Muslim or Christian faith as that would help people to be law abiding. He further stated that in the absence of a constituency representative, the area chairman has a lot of work to do and so he has to fully co-operate with the Local Councilors and the ward committee members.

"I can even work with the councilors to urge the politicians in the community to create jobs for the unemployed youth in the area and provide skills training for those interested in such.

The election will take place on Sunday June 11, 2006.

Pa. Hassan's home at 3 E Lumley Road is called Temne Compound.



Standard Times  
Thursday, 8 June 2006

# Truth Commission kicks off in Liberia

Liberia's Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Monday announced it had begun collecting information on alleged human rights abuses and atrocities linked to the country's 14 years of civil war.

The commission, which was officially launched in February by the then barely one-month-old government, is to look into a quarter-century of coups, instability and war that began in January 1979 and ended in October 2003.

On announcing its launch, newly elected President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf said the Commission would offer "hope" to Liberians working to overcome the trauma of war.

"This commission is our hope," she said. "To define the past on our behalf in terms that are seen and believed to be fair and balanced, and bring forth a unifying narrative on which our nation's rebuilding and renewal processes can be

more securely anchored."

In a statement on Monday the Commission said it was collecting information on "human rights violations of any kind whether as witness or victim including massacres, killing, looting, rape, arson".

It would also seek to establish the role of international actors during the conflict, whether they be individuals, institutions or governments, to see whether they had a negative or positive impact on

the conflict. The commission said it aimed to receive data also on what it called "Economic crimes and corruption".

The commissions was created under a comprehensive peace agreement signed in August 2003 by Liberian warring parties and civilians in place of a war crimes tribunal and was subsequently enacted into law by Liberia's past power-sharing transitional parliament in June 2005.

But there has been a mounting public campaign for the establishment of a war crimes court instead of a truth commission. And last week, the Liberia parliament debated a petition by a group named Forum for the Establishment of a War Crimes Court demanding the trial of former warlords. The group's petition included a catalogue documenting abuses.

Presidential spokesman Cyrus Badio told reporters however that Sirleaf disapproved of the formation of a war crimes court. "All

Liberia needs is a truth and reconciliation commission now to heal the wounds of the past" the spokesman said.

Since the end of the war, key figures from past violence have entered parliament including Prince Johnson, a former warlord in the early days of the civil war, and two former armed group commanders.

This has left many Liberians wondering whether some individuals would be immune from abuses of the past. But the head of the nine-member commission, renowned rights advocate Jerome Verdier, has insisted that no one will be permitted to hid.

"No Liberia will be immune from appearing before this TRC," Verdier said.

"The commission is a forum providing an opportunity for victims and perpetrators of human rights violations to share their experiences, in order to create a record of the past and facilitate genuine healing and reconciliation".

## Business in Africa (Johannesburg)

Wednesday, 7 June 2006

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200606070003.html>

### In Africa's Legal Spotlight

More than any other West African country, Sierra Leone was thrust into the international spotlight when President Olesegun Obasanjo of Nigeria eventually succumbed to world pressure and sent former Liberian leader, Charles Taylor, to face a Special Sierra Leone Court and answer multiple charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity. It was a personal victory for people who would not give up, for international institutions that kept turning the screws, and for the West African region in its long and weary drive to bring stability and economic growth back to the blood bespattered region.

More than any leader, newly-elected Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf - banker, relentless crusader and survivor of Liberia's brutal politics - fought tooth and nail to see Taylor safely in the Special Court dock.

The Nigerian leader's acquiescence had a curious string attached. He said he'd always made it clear that Taylor would only be handed over when Obasanjo was requested to do so by the head of a duly elected democratic government in Liberia. In the end, that's the way it played out. Johnson-Sirleaf issued the request and Taylor was taken to Liberia (in Obasanjo's presidential jet). There United Nations forces were under orders to arrest Taylor if he ever set foot on Liberian soil again. This they did and transferred Taylor to Freetown to await trial.

Undoubtedly, the election of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf in late 2005 and her accession to power in January 2006 has irrevocably changed the region's political landscape. Most importantly, precedent has now been set that will not allow political leaders immunity from prosecution, as was previously the case. Also brushed aside were objections by Taylor's National Patriotic Party that his arrest and extradition was in breach of the 2003 peace deal that ended the 14-year Liberian civil war. These were countered by the fact that Taylor himself rendered the agreement by attempting to influence Liberian politics while he was in exile.

West Africans, most Liberians and Sierra Leoneans especially, would dearly love to see Taylor tried on home soil. The international community, as well as Sirleaf-Johnson, are keen to move the hearing to The Hague in Holland, and has offered to transport witnesses there, according to a UN official.

The fear is that 58-year-old Taylor, whose name still inspires fear and awe throughout the region, could still spark unrest in West Africa, especially those whose peace and security is not yet a sure thing.

Another sticking point is what to do with Taylor if and when he is convicted. The Dutch have made it clear that they want a third country to imprison him in the event he is convicted.

Whatever happens, and no matter where the case is heard, it will remain under the auspices of the independent, international Special Court sitting in Sierra Leone, with the ICC providing only the courtroom. In any event, the proceedings will probably not get underway for months yet as the prosecution puts its case together and the defence fires up its legal arsenal.

The Special Court court's chief prosecutor, Desmond de Silva, says Taylor will "face the people of Sierra Leone, against whom he is accused of committing heinous atrocities".

### **Cooling the cauldron**

Liberia was the lynchpin for Taylor's extradition from his place of exile in Nigeria. Sierra Leone was where he would get his comeuppance. Obasanjo had made it clear that Taylor would be sent to Liberia only, and specifically when that country had a duly-elected government, and the new administration requested Taylor's transfer. Much of the diplomatic bargaining befell Johnson-Sirleaf, a virtual freshman in the presidential hot seat. Choices weighed heavily.

In the months that led up to Taylor's eventual handover, Johnson-Sirleaf was in the cleft stick of calls for justice and the need for peace; the cauldron seemed ready to boil over at the slightest spark.

"Our peace is fragile," she said in an interview. "We still have lots of Taylor operatives in the country. We don't want to see us return to a state of war."

She had other pressing matters on her plate. Taking over the presidential reins, Johnson-Sirleaf faced a raft of troubles in the wake of a brutal and ruinous 14-year civil war. The country's infrastructure is in a shambles. Piped water is non-existent. Electricity grids, roads, schools and health centres, where they still exist, barely function.

Since warlord-turned-president Charles Taylor fled Liberia in 2003, an interim government, imposed to start a rebuilding process, came to little as rampant corruption caused many donors to withdraw their support. Now, after the new president's inauguration, the reconstruction of Freetown will resume with an upfront \$70mn grant from the European Union to begin reconstructing the city's electricity infrastructure. The United States has agreed to rebuild the country's military establishment while the United Nations will maintain its 1500 peacekeeping troops at a cost of about \$700mn a year.

The latter-day "Queen of Africa", as her supporters call her, intends sweeping the calamity and chaos of the last 15 years aside and making "a fundamental break with the past, thereby requiring we take bold and decisive steps to address the problems that for decades have stunted our progress, undermined national unity and kept old and new cleavages in ferment."

She's known as The Iron Lady, a tag that was attached after many tough years as a professional in a male-dominated world, and also as Ma Ellen from the "suffering I have seen, and the despair and lack of hope, that brought out the motherliness in me," she says.

"I love Ellen because she is going to do so much for us," says former fighter Pandora Matati. "With Ellen, anything is possible."

The tragedy is that Sierra Leone and its neighbour Liberia were forced to submit to nearly a decade-and-a-half of war that virtually wiped out their economies, and shattered their people. The good to come from this end game is a lesson to all Africa, at least it should be: that inaction by Africa's leaders to deal with despots and dictators should no longer be part of the continent's political status quo. War mongers like Charles Taylor should have nowhere to go and no place to hide.

## Awareness Times

Wednesday, 7 June 2006

### **AFRC commander testifies at Special Court for Sierra Leone**

By Saffia S Kaba

Special Court detainee former Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) commander, Alex Tamba Brima alias Gullit, has started giving testimony before the Special Court for Sierra Leone, in defence of charges proffered against him.

In his testimony, he stated that he came to know about the May 25th coup through his boss, Captain Paul Thomas, while at his deployment at the 7th Battalion.

According to him, Captain Paul Thomas called up a muster parade on the very day of the coup, and addressed them saying, there was heavy firing in Freetown.

Mr Brima went on to state that it was while he was there that he got to realize that it was soldiers who were carrying out the firing.

He said after the parade, he went to his house, and was alerted by the sound of a heavy blast.

On hearing the blast, he went straight to the parade ground from where he and others were taken to the armory by his boss, Captain Paul Thomas Mr Brima said, adding that each of them was armed and deployed at strategic locations.

Mr Brima went on to testify that their boss did tell them that their specific mission was to take note of all vehicles entering into the Barracks.

He said after a while, he was redeployed to a checkpoint around Cockerill, where he first saw Corporal Tamba Gborie.

He said on the following day, he was visited by Corporals Tamba Gborie and Abu Sankoh alias Zagalo, who invited him to a meeting at Cockerill.

He said before the meeting commenced, he heard an announcement that the RUF rebels had been invited to join the junta regime in Freetown.

He further explained that when the meeting time drew closer, a vehicle was sent to collect him at the 34 Military Hospital where he was admitted after an accident in which he sustained some injuries.

At the meeting, he stated that he met with senior military officers like A.K Sesay, Johnny Paul Koroma, Hassan Bangura, Corporal Tamba Gborie and others.

He said it was at that meeting that he was appointed member of the Supreme Council.

## BBC Online

Wednesday, 7 June 2006

### Timber trader guilty over Liberia

**A Dutch court has found a timber merchant guilty of breaking a UN arms embargo on Liberia.**

Guus van Kouwenhoven, 63, was sentenced to eight years in prison but was acquitted of war crimes charges.

The court said it could not prove the Dutchman had any links to any of the many atrocities committed during Liberia's 14-year civil war.

He sold weapons to ex-President Charles Taylor. In return, van Kouwenhoven allegedly received logging concessions.

During the three-week trial, prosecutors demanded a 20-year prison sentence and a fine of 450,000 euros (\$575,000; £310,000).

He denied the charges and his lawyers say prosecution witnesses were paid.

They wanted a fine because of the profits he allegedly made through his companies - the Royal Timber Company and Oriental Timber Corporation.

During Liberia's civil war, lobby group Global Witness successfully campaigned for UN sanctions to be imposed on the country's exports of "blood timber".

#### 'Inner circle'

According to a UN report submitted to The Hague, van Kouwenhoven, known in Liberia as "Mr Gus", formed part of Charles Taylor's "inner circle".

"Militias formed by the Dutchman's timber companies are alleged to have participated in massacres of civilians where even babies were not spared," a prosecution statement said.

"The weapons used by the militias to commit these war crimes are alleged to have been supplied by the Dutchman."

But the court ruled that: "The evidence was insufficient to show factual involvement and knowledge" by van Kouwenhoven in the commission of war crimes.

Charles Taylor launched a rebellion in Liberia in 1989, before eventually being elected president in 1997.

He soon faced accusations of diamond smuggling and arms dealing on behalf of rebels in neighbouring Sierra Leone.

From 1999 Liberia descended once more into civil war as rebels mounted a campaign to oust the president, who went into exile in 2003.

Mr Taylor was arrested earlier this year and may also end up on trial in The Hague.



Van Kouwenhoven was reportedly in Charles Taylor's 'inner circle'



Liberia was wracked by civil war for most of the 1990s

## BBC Online

Wednesday, 7 June 2006

### Profile: Liberia's 'Mister Gus'

**Dutch timber merchant Guus Kouwenhoven is to spend the next eight years in a prison cell - a far cry from the world of Montecristo cigars and Rolex watches that he once inhabited at the Hotel Africa on the edge of Liberia's capital, Monrovia.**

Van Kouwenhoven, widely known in Liberia as "Mr Gus", has been convicted by a Dutch court of violating a UN arms embargo imposed on the regime of former Liberian President Charles Taylor.



Kouwenhoven went from importing luxury cars to trading guns for timber rights

He was, however, acquitted of war crimes charges. It found that he had traded guns for timber rights and used his lumber company to smuggle weapons used by militias to commit atrocities against civilians in West Africa.

Van Kouwenhoven, who was born and brought up in Rotterdam, appeared on the Liberian scene in the late 1980s during the time of the late President Samuel Doe.

He settled in the country, marrying a Liberian woman with whom he had children.

#### Hotel Africa

At first, he ran a business importing luxury cars and oversaw the revival of the Hotel Africa, a flashy hotel on the edge of the capital that became popular with international businessmen.

It had been built in 1979 and featured European-style chalets along the beach and a swimming pool built in the shape of the African continent.

Talking to the Dutch magazine *De Nieuwe Revu* a few years ago, van Kouwenhoven referred to the hotel's heyday: "Everyone thought I was crazy when I took over the hotel. To get people in, I arranged for entertainment: a discotheque, a restaurant, a pool," he said.



Kouwenhoven became a business associate of Charles Taylor

"Soon the hotel became the calling card for Liberia, the oasis of Monrovia."

Later, during the country's civil war, the Hotel Africa was reduced to a shell - but it was reportedly still frequented by shady Europeans in the business of running guns or smuggling diamonds.

It was not until 2000, when Charles Taylor was running the country, that Kouwenhoven became a key player at the Malaysian-based Oriental Timber Company - the largest single foreign investor in Liberia - and director of the country's Royal Timber Company.

#### Timber merchant

Operating under various names, OTC exported tonnes of Liberia's tropical hardwoods to places as far apart as France and China, using its own fleet of ships.

In an interview with a Dutch weekly a few years ago, van Kouwenhoven said: "If you do business in Africa, you have no choice but to be on good terms with those in power."

But, at his trial at the Hague, he made light of his dealings with Mr Taylor. He acknowledged that he met Mr Taylor regularly, but said: "I wasn't his friend in the sense that I did not go swimming with him and never ate at his home."

Letters entered as court exhibits indicated that van Kouwenhoven brought Mr Taylor's regime millions of dollars in profits from the logging trade.



The UN eventually banned the export of Liberian timber

"In everything I do I always think about you and what would be best for you because your future and mine are the same. I will never let you down," Mr Kouwenhoven wrote to Mr Taylor in one letter included in the prosecution's evidence.

In 2000, van Kouwenhoven was described in a UN report as being part of Mr Taylor's "inner circle".

The UN's Expert Panel Report on Sierra Leone, whose wars was closely linked to that in Liberia, described the kind of businessman he was.

"Gus van Kouwenhoven," the report summarised, "was responsible for the logistical aspects of many of the arms deals.

"Through his interests in a Malaysian timber company project in Liberia, he organises the transfer of weaponry from Monrovia into Sierra Leone."

### **Concessions**

OTC was based in the port city of Buchanan, which, according to lobby group Global Witness, had become a primary location for arms imports by sea.

Van Kouwenhoven was alleged to have provided weapons for militias loyal to Mr Taylor in return for logging concessions.

According to a recent report in the Independent newspaper in London, after a military service, he "embarked on a career of buying and selling anything he could get his hands on, starting with tax-free cars for Nato personnel and moving on to bulk supplies of rice from South-east Asia."

“  
business to make money but  
”  
Gus Kouwenhoven

It said that by the 1970s, he was an entrepreneurial figure on the international scene, and was spotted at diplomatic parties in Beirut and Los Angeles.

His career nearly ended in LA, when he was caught in an FBI sting trying to sell stolen paintings, including a Rembrandt, and sentenced to two years, the Independent says.

He served 17 days and was deported, before resurfacing in Liberia.

### **Victory salute**

It was his activities as a timber merchant that brought him to the attention of Global Witness, which campaigns to expose the link between natural resource plunder and human

rights abuse.

The group estimated that OTC harvested up to 10,00 hectares of virgin forest every month.

Pressure was stepped up for van Kouwenhoven's arrest and the UN placed a travel ban on him. He remained elusive and sought refuge in Congo.

Despite the travel ban, he managed to travel regularly to residences in Paris and Rotterdam, according to Global Witness.

He was arrested at a train station in Rotterdam in March 2005 by the Dutch police.

Throughout the trial, the prosecution painted a picture of van Kouwenhoven as a cunning, money-hungry businessman.

In his defence, he said: "Of course I set up my business to make money but that doesn't mean I'm money-grabbing."

The trial also gave a glimpse of van Kouwenhoven's flamboyant personality - with his pressed safari suits, a penchant for silk ties and gold-rimmed sun glasses.

On Wednesday when the verdict was delivered, van Kouwenhoven raised his fingers in a victory salute to friends in the public gallery before being led off.



## Voice Of America

Wednesday, 7 June 2006

### **Dutch Court Convicts Businessman for Arming Liberia's Taylor**

A Dutch court has sentenced a businessman to eight years in prison for violating a United Nations arms embargo imposed on the government of former Liberian President Charles Taylor.

The court Wednesday ruled that Guus Kouwenhoven illegally sold weapons to Taylor in exchange for timber, thus helping to arm west African militias. A defense lawyer says Kouwenhoven will probably appeal the ruling.

The court acquitted the Dutch businessman of war crimes charges, citing a lack of evidence to prove his complicity.

Prosecutors had sought a 20-year prison term for Kouwenhoven, arguing that by providing weapons he enabled the militias to commit atrocities.

Taylor is being held in Sierra Leone, awaiting his own trial on war crimes charges.

He faces 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, stemming from his role in Sierra Leone's civil war from 1991 to 2002. That conflict intertwined with neighboring Liberia's own civil war, which Taylor started in 1989.

Some information for this report was provided by AFP and AP.

## JURIST

Wednesday, 7 June 2006

### **Dutch timber dealer receives split verdict on Liberia arms trafficking charges**

A Dutch court convicted arms dealer Guus Kouwenhoven of violating the UN embargo against former Liberian President Charles Taylor's government, but found him not guilty of war crimes, saying he did not have direct knowledge of the atrocities committed during the Liberian civil war.

Kouwenhoven was generally accused of trading guns for timber to assist Taylor in destabilizing Sierra Leone in a bid to gain access to diamond stockpiles. The UN Security Council released a 2001 report banning Kouwenhoven from traveling, accusing the arms dealer of breaching

Security Council the embargo against the Taylor regime, and of being "someone who supported the efforts of ex-President Taylor in destabilising Sierra Leone to gain illegal access to its diamonds."

Both the prosecution and the defense plan to appeal the split verdict, as lawyers for Kouwenhoven say he was merely "involved" with the Oriental Timber Co. through which the deal was made, while the prosecution says there is enough evidence to convict Kouwenhoven on the more serious war crimes charges, though the ruling said the connection was too vague.

Taylor is currently awaiting trial before the Special Court for Sierra Leone on charges of crimes against humanity and violations of international humanitarian law. AP has more.

## The Independent

Thursday, 8 June 2006

### **Dutch Court Jailed Liberian Warlord's right-hand man**

By Steve Bloomfield, Africa Correspondent

A one-time used-car salesman who became the right hand man of Liberia's former warlord president Charles Taylor was convicted yesterday of breaking a UN arms embargo and jailed for eight years.

A Dutch court found that Guus Kouwenhoven, 64, had sold weapons to Taylor in return for rights to the country's tropical timber. Kouwenhoven used his logging firm, Oriental Timber Company (OTC), to smuggle weapons into Liberia which were used by militias loyal to Taylor to kill civilians, including children and babies.

But the court acquitted Kouwenhoven of war crimes charges, dismissing the prosecution's claims that because Kouwenhoven supplied the weapons he could be directly linked to the atrocities. The court also found insufficient evidence to prove that Kouwenhoven had a 2,500-strong militia at his disposal.

More than 250,000 people were killed during Liberia's 14-year civil war. Taylor launched a rebellion against the military dictatorship in 1989, before eventually being elected president in 1997. The country descended into civil war again two years later, which only ended in 2003 after Taylor stepped down and fled to Nigeria.

During the conflict, Kouwenhoven - known in Liberia as Mr Guus - was busy running various lucrative businesses. Timber was Liberia's most valuable commodity, with exports totalling about \$100m a year. It is estimated that Kouwenhoven controlled around 40 per cent of the country's timber market as the trade increased tenfold in the space of four years.

The environmental damage was enormous. Liberia's rainforest is home to 9,000 species of plants and 1,300 species of vertebrate animals. According to Greenpeace, it is the last bastion of the forest elephant in west Africa.

As well as running two of Liberia's largest timber firms, Kouwenhoven also owned the luxurious Hotel Africa. With its swanky cocktail bars, swimming pools, casino and opulent villas, Hotel Africa was the place for Monrovia's elite to see and be seen. Former colleagues and employees of Kouwenhoven claim that a procession of politicians and influential businessmen visited the Dutchman at his hotel base.

"Mr Guus" was no stranger to Liberia's most powerful players. Taylor is said to have called the Dutchman his "pepper bush", a local reference to someone very close. According to a UN report submitted to the International Criminal Court at The Hague, Kouwenhoven was part of the warlord president's inner circle.

In yesterday's ruling, Judge Roel van Rossum alluded to just how close the two men were. The judge said Kouwenhoven "contributed significantly to violations of international peace and to the destabilisation and danger in the region around Liberia".

The ruling said Kouwenhoven imported weapons through the port of Buchanan using the OTC in co-operation with Taylor, who was the target of a UN arms embargo imposed in 2001. "He acted only with regard to his financial interests... even though he knew about the embargo," the judge said.

Kouwenhoven's lawyer said his client would probably appeal. Prosecutors may also consider an appeal after the failure to convict Kouwenhoven on the more serious charges of committing war crimes.

Either way, "Mr Guus" may soon be seeing more of his old friend Taylor. The former warlord, who fled Liberia in 2003, was arrested in Nigeria earlier this year and is currently in Sierra Leone awaiting trial for war crimes. West African leaders are still hopeful that the trial will be moved to the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

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United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

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## UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 7 June 2006

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

### **International Clips on Liberia**

**BBC** Last Updated: Wednesday, 7 June 2006, 13:05 GMT 14:05 UK

#### **Timber trader guilty over Liberia**

A Dutch court has found a timber merchant guilty of breaking a UN arms embargo on Liberia. Guus van Kouwenhoven, 63, was sentenced to eight years in prison but was acquitted of war crimes charges. The court said it could not prove the Dutchman had any links to any of the many atrocities committed during Liberia's 14-year civil war. He sold weapons to ex-President Charles Taylor. In return, van Kouwenhoven allegedly received logging concessions. During the three-week trial, prosecutors demanded a 20-year prison sentence and a fine of 450,000 euros (\$575,000; £310,000). He denied the charges and his lawyers say prosecution witnesses were paid. They wanted a fine because of the profits he allegedly made through his companies - the Royal Timber Company and Oriental Timber Corporation.

**VOA** 07 June 2006

#### **Liberian President Calls Employment Key to Stability**

By Lisa Schlein, Geneva

*Liberia's President, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, has appealed for international support in her country's efforts to build a stable, democratic society. In a keynote speech to the International Labor Conference in Geneva, the Liberian president told delegates decent work was at the heart of development.* Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf did not mince her words or try to hide the desperate straits of her country. In an impassioned speech, she told the more than four 4,000 delegates that Liberia faced a critical period. She said the country's long civil war has decimated its institutions and undermined its socio-economic fabric. She said Liberia needed all the help it could get to recover.

**The New York Times** 7 June 2006

#### **World Briefing Africa: Liberia: U.S. Backs Easing Of U.N. Arms Embargo**

The United States asked the Security Council to ease its ban on weapons sales to **Liberia** so that President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf could arm newly trained police and security forces as well as her own security detail. A draft resolution would exempt from the embargo all security and police officers trained since October 2003, as well as members of Liberia's Special Security Service. The Council imposed the ban in 1992.

### **Local Media - Newspapers**

#### **Presidential Committee Says Security Forces Provoked Row with Weah and Entourage**

*(The News, The Inquirer, The Analyst, Daily Observer, Heritage and The Informer)*

- In its report to President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf yesterday, the Presidential Committee that investigated an alleged harassment of Congress for Democratic Change standard bearer George Weah and entourage at the Roberts International Airport (RIA), said

that the National Security Agency Director and Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization Commissioner should be blamed for the actions of their commanders at the airport.

- The committee said it discovered that the security were ignorant to regulations and procedures of international civil aviation prohibiting certain actions at airports.
- The committee also said it was unable to establish how Mr. Weah's aides obtained the diplomatic passports which they hold

### **President Off to ILO Conference in Switzerland**

*(The News, Heritage and The Informer)*

- President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf will today travel to Geneva, Switzerland to attend a conference of the International Labor Organization, an Executive Mansion statement said.

### **Government Reiterates its Commitment to One-China Policy**

*(Daily Observer, New Democrat and National Chronicle)*

- Addressing a news conference in Monrovia yesterday, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf reiterated her government's commitment to the One-China Policy because China is highly significant to the reconstruction of Liberia.
- President Johnson-Sirleaf described as garbage a newspaper report yesterday that she had dumped Mainland China and was holding secret meetings with Taiwan to start diplomatic relations with the Asian province.

### **Lawmakers Differ on Setting up War Crimes Court for Liberia**

*(National Chronicle)*

- Former rebel leader Nimba County Senator Prince Yormie Johnson told journalists yesterday that House of Representatives Speaker Edwin Snowe's support for the establishment of a War Crimes Court for Liberia was a move to undermine the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- Senator Johnson aligned Speaker Snowe to the despotic regime of former President Charles Taylor which he said suppressed Liberians and therefore should be indicted if the court was established. But Speaker Snowe's Chief of Office Assistant Darius Dillon said that the Speaker has done nothing wrong to warrant his indictment by such a court.

### **Senators Squabble over Who Travels to Canada with President Johnson-Sirleaf**

*(Heritage)*

- President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf's letter requesting the National Legislature to designate one of their colleagues to travel with her to Vancouver, Canada allegedly bred tension among the lawmakers.
- *Heritage* Capitol Building correspondent said that River Gee County Senator Isaac Johnson and Nimba County Senator Prince Yormie Johnson had advised their colleagues to let the Plenary to decide on who travels with the President.
- But one Senator Joyce Musu Sumo and Bomi County Senator Richard Devine contented that the Lawmakers who have traveled in the past have done based on their experts not based on plenary decision.

### **Government Delegation Attends U.S. Forum on Africa Growth**

*(The Informer)*

- A Liberian government delegation is in the United States to participate in this year's Sub-Saharan African Trade and Economic Cooperation forum of the African Growth and Opportunities Act.
- The eight-man delegation includes the Ministers of Commerce and Finance as well as the Chairman of the National Investment Commission and representatives from the Liberian Business Association. According to a dispatch from the Liberian Embassy in

Washington, Liberia was invited to the forum as a special observer by the United States government.

### **House Speaker Drops Decision to Boycott Executive Mansion Functions**

*(National Chronicle)*

- House of Representatives Speaker Edwin Snowe said he was dropping his decision to boycott State functions at the Executive Mansion for disrespecting him and other Lawmakers during a program organized in honour of the visiting Saudi Prince last week. In a Letter to Speaker Snowe, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf had regretted the situation, attributing it to poor arrangement on the part of Protocol Officers at the Mansion.

### **Liberia Regains membership to African Parliamentary Union**

*(Daily Observer)*

- According to a press statement from the Office of the President Pro Tempore, the Pan African Parliamentary Union has restored the membership of the National Legislature of Liberia during its annual conference which was recently held in Algiers, Algeria. Senate President Pro Tempore Isaac Nyenabo had represented Liberia at the conference.

### **European Commission Imposes Ban on Airlines Registered in Liberia**

*(The News)*

- *The News* newspaper correspondent reported that the European Commission has imposed a ban on airlines which were registered in Liberia on grounds that they are unsafe to ply the European routes.

### **Detained Former President Taylor's Associates Launch Legal Aid**

*(New Democrat)*

- In his letter to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), former President Charles Taylor's confidante John T. Richardson said that the Association for the Legal Defense of Charles Taylor needed its support to secure an observer status at the African Union summit to be held this month in Abuja, Nigeria.
- Mr. Richardson said that a team from his Association was interested in meeting with some leaders of the AU and requested ECOWAS to facilitate the process.

## **Local Media – ELBS Radio**

### **Lawmakers Attend UNDP-Sponsored Workshop Today**

- The UNDP in collaboration with the World Bank will today begin a workshop for members of the Legislative and Executive Branches of Government.
- The World Bank Institute Operations Officer Kofi Anani told journalists yesterday that the forum would focus on the formulation, enactment, implementation and monitoring of the national budget as a vision for national development.

*(Also reported on Star Radio)*

### **US-Based Liberians Donate to US\$150,000 to Liberia's Reconstruction**

- The spokesman of two United States-based Liberians who donated US\$150,000 to help rehabilitate the youths of their motherland, Chuck Morrison said that they were delighted to be able to assist in reconstruction of Liberia and encouraged their countrymen in the diaspora to do likewise.

*(Also reported on Star Radio)*

### **Presidential Committee Says Security Forces Provoked Row with Weah and Entourage**



*(Also reported on Star Radio)*

**President to Attend ILO Conference in Switzerland**

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**Government Reiterates its Commitment to One-China Policy**

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*Complete versions of the UNMIL International Press Clips, UNMIL Daily Liberian Radio Summary and UNMIL Liberian Newspapers Summary are posted each day on the UNMIL Bulletin Board. If you are unable to access the UNMIL Bulletin Board or would like further information on the content of the summaries, please contact Mr. Jeddi Armah at [armahj@un.org](mailto:armahj@un.org).*