

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



PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

as at:

Tuesday, 8 May 2007

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

Trial of Charles Taylor Set for June 4 Opening / <i>Office of the Prosecutor</i>	Page 3
RUF Uses Beretta Guns To Dislodge SLAs / <i>Awoko</i>	Page 4
Norman's Legacy / <i>The Spark</i>	Pages 5-6

International News

Charles Taylor Lawyer Says Potential Defense Witnesses Fear... / <i>Associated Press</i>	Pages 7-8
Prosecutor Sees Rapid Trial of Charles Taylor / <i>Reuters</i>	Pages 9-10
Liberia's Taylor Wants More Lawyers / <i>Agence France-Presse</i>	Page 11
Taylor Defence Want More Time / <i>Institute for War and Peace Reporting</i>	Page 12
UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary / <i>UNMIL</i>	Pages 13-15

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTOR

PRESS RELEASE

Freetown, 7 May 2007

Trial of Charles Taylor Set for June 4 Opening

Following today's Pre-Trial conference in The Hague, opening arguments in the highly anticipated trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor are set to take place on June 4.

"Great efforts have been made to bring this case to trial since Mr Taylor was indicted in March 2003", said Stephen Rapp, Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

"His arrest and transfer last year were the result of three years of intense diplomacy by many in the sub-region and abroad. Up to now, attention has been on the process. On June 4, all eyes can focus on the trial itself".

"The very fact that this man is going on trial is a victory over impunity. Taylor's indictment, apprehension and arrest are a credit to the persistence of the world community, the governments of the region, and above all the courageous people of Sierra Leone."

"That Charles Taylor will now face justice is the very embodiment of the maxim that no one is above the law."

Taylor is charged with 11 counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law, including mass murder, mutilations, rape, sexual slavery and the use of child soldiers.

The Prosecution has indicated its intention to present up to 139 core witnesses. Of these, 62 will be predominantly "linkage" witnesses. Proving the connections between Taylor and the atrocities committed in Sierra Leone is a necessary part of the Prosecution's case. Witnesses to these connections will include persons with inside knowledge of Taylor's alleged activities.

#END

Produced by the
Office of the Prosecutor
Special Court for Sierra Leone
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Visit the Special Court's website at www.sc-sl.org

Awoko

Tuesday, 8 May 2007

‘RUF uses Beretta guns to dislodge SLAs — Issa Sesay tells court

By Betty Milton

Continuing evidence in his defence at the Special Court, the former interim leader of the Revolutionary United Front, Issa Hassan Sesay has explained how his group used Beretta guns to dislodge members of the Sierra Leone Army who were based in Bomaru in the eastern Kailahun district.

He disclosed that during the attacks in Bomaru, the SLA soldiers fled to the bush abandoning their armored cars and other weapons. He said his troops then moved into Bomaru, Mobai, Quiva, Pendembu and other neighboring towns, adding they never met any resistance whatsoever.

Sesay averred that after the capture of Pendembu, where the rebel leader Foday Sankoh addressed the people where he came

across one S. Y. B. Rogers who later became the RUF secretary general.

“One of my colleagues went to speak to him and he told us that he was happy to see civilians in the midst of the RUF.” Sesay told the court.

He said that at Quiva he and some other fighters were detained while one Augustine was killed, but that Foday Sankoh later pleaded on their behalf and so they were released by the RUF’s PRO Pa Tengbeh.

On the military coup of 29 April 1992 by the National Provisional Ruling Council, which toppled the All People’s Congress (APC), he said the people of Geima were afraid of the NPRC government troops.

He said in Geima, they met a nurse, Susan Lahai who agreed to join the rebel movement and worked with on Dr Farbah from camp Nama. He said later, Susan

was appointed by Foday Sankoh to man the hospital.

Sesay said that during morning and evening muster parades, corporal punishment was meted out on fighters who had commit crimes.

The former interim leader of the RUF stated that the ICRC would provide relief services to civilians in Kailahun and these items included non-food items such as Bulgar wheat and corn soya meal but that these items were never supplied to the armed fighters.

The supply which was coordinated by the Organization for the Survival of Mankind (OSM) formed by Foday Sankoh in 1994, was headed by Fayia Musa but later this supply chain was stopped because of attacks by the NPRC government troops.

The Spark

Tuesday, 8 May 2007

Norman's Legacy

The Special Court that was established in Sierra Leone by the UN in conjunction with the government of Sierra Leone to try those responsible for crimes against humanity has suffered again another big loss. This loss came few weeks after the court received an astronomical amount from the EU to up keep its operations. The death of Mr. Hinga Norman who served as Deputy Defence Minister during Kabbah's first regime and later Internal Affairs Minister during Kabbah's second and last term, was received with mixed feeling by the general public. Chief Norman a retired soldier, was very instrumental during the AFRC era, he was the coordination of the Kamajors and the Civil Military Groups, that served as an auxiliary force to the national army. These militia's, especially the Kamajors were loyal to Chief Norman. When the coup took place in Freetown in May 1997, the government of President Kabbah, fled to neighbouring Guinea, Norman barely stood on the ground together with his militia's to resist the illegal junta regime headed by fugitive Johnny Paul Koroma.

In the early period of the coup, Norman was at the British High Commission's residence before he pulled out via an American Naval boat, he later returned to the shores of Sierra Leone to coordinate and organise the activities of the militia's. Norman's action was supported by pro-democrat supporters who were residing in Sierra Leone and also those who were out of the country. His movements received total supports from the exiled ousted government in Conakry and some loyal SLPP stalwarts in the America's and Europe. Prior to the intervention of ECOMOG the militias were very stubborn and powerful. Some believed that they had some super-natural powers. They fought bravely against the AFRC rebel soldiers and the RUF rebels and also against some Ukrainian mercenaries hired by the illegal regime in Freetown. During these turbulent days much destruction took place, many people were killed indiscriminately by the Kamajors, AFRC rebel soldiers (sobels) and RUF rebels. The Kamajors number grew to several thousands. Recruitments were made without any proper methods, children ~~were abused and women raped.~~



crats for his courage and bravery he put up to deny the blood thirsty rebel soldiers and their RUF partners the chance to pillage this country. Those supporters of the rebel soldiers/RUF would see Norman as a villain because he denied them vehemently. It could be recalled that Norman was disgracefully arrested in the 10th of March 2003 in his office by the Special Court and was put in detention in a solitary confinement for close to four years. His health deteriorated over the years and he finally succumbed to death in a military hospital in Dakar Senegal on Thursday February 23rd 2007. Also on Saturday in Bo during the annual convocation ceremony at Njala University, President Kabbah himself praised and commended Norman as one of his best ministers during his ten years administration, but said his administration could not do anything towards Norman's arrest and that they were waiting to see what would happen. He also urged the public not to accuse Norman of war crimes because he was not convicted by the Special Court and that his administration would ensure that a befitting funeral is given to Norman.

Norman and his militia's were determined to crush their opponents, the Junta forces and to see the immediate return to power of Kabbah's SLPP government. He suffered in areas controlled by the Junta regime where some were killed, raped and maimed by the militia's Junta supporters and sympathisers. The entire situation was anarchy. There was a time when the Kamajors went on the rampage

Kamajors in their homes. This resulted to the burning of several houses in the interior by these three different factions.

The Kamajo's were boosted by the regional alliance, the Ecomog who were given the mandate to forcefully remove the illegal Junta and restore the Kabbah administration.

Ecomog entered and captured Freetown easily with the help of the Kamajors who had an

special Court people would like to see justice done which will serve as a deterrent so that would not do what the previous people did. Norman himself as an individual was not seen committing any of those acts, although some say he was aware, there is no proof to that. Because he was their coordinator, he was indicted by the Special Courts for crimes committed against humanity. Norman's efforts would be seen as a good gesture by both the SLPP supporters and pro-demo-

His movements received total supports from the exiled ousted government in Conakry and some loyal SLPP stalwarts in the America's and Europe. Prior to the intervention of ECOMOG the militias were very stubborn and powerful. Some believed that they had some super-natural powers

causing havoc and destruction that was contrary to their initial ideology.

Many people started to see them as worse than the rebels. People were not safe in areas occupied by neither the Junta nor the Kamajor's. The Kamajors were accusing the sensitive information about their activities while at the same time the Junta rebel soldiers and their allies, the RUF rebel were suspicious about the attitude of the civilians, accusing them of hiding some

understanding of the terrain, the struggle's still continue for the impoverished people of Sierra Leone. The Junta during their retreat caused havoc to the civilians accusing them of betrayal. Norman was given praises by the legitimate government and the divided civilian populace for work well done. The killings and destruction went embattled by these three factions. There were every salient reasons for the government to request for the Spe-

Associated Press

Monday, 7 May 2007

Charles Taylor lawyer says potential defense witnesses fear Security Council travel bans

By Mike Corder
ASSOCIATED PRESS

THE HAGUE, Netherlands – Potential defense witnesses for Charles Taylor are refusing to testify at the former Liberian president's war crimes trial for fear of being slapped with U.N. travel bans, Taylor's lawyer told a court Monday.

Taylor, 59, is to go on trial June 4 on 11 charges, including terrorism, murder, rape, sexual slavery, mutilation and recruiting child soldiers linked to his alleged support for rebels in Sierra Leone's brutal 1991-2002 civil war.

He has pleaded innocent and faces a maximum sentence of life imprisonment if convicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

At a pretrial hearing in The Hague, Taylor's lawyer Karim Khan said his efforts to build a defense were being hampered by the perceived threat of U.N. sanctions.

“Numerous individuals ... are unwilling to speak to the defense (because) they are petrified of having travel bans imposed upon them and having their assets frozen by the Security Council because they are associated to the defense of Mr. Charles Taylor,” Khan said.

Khan said he would file a motion asking judges at the court to grant witnesses protection from sanctions.

He said that the possibility of sanctions, “would amount to witness intimidation, whether it comes from a group or a party or even as august a body ... as the Security Council of the United Nations.”

The Sierra Leone court usually sits in the capital, Freetown, but Taylor's trial is to be held in a court room rented from the International Criminal Court in The Hague because of fears the case could trigger fresh violence.

Taylor sat in court listening to proceedings wearing a dark suit and brown tie. Judges also allowed him to wear sunglasses in the windowless courtroom because of an eye infection.

At Monday's hearing, slated to be the last before the trial starts next month, Khan also complained that the court was not funding an adequate defense team for Taylor.

Taylor has two attorneys and three legal assistants, while prosecutors have a trial team twice that size.

“The concern of my client is that he is being shortchanged,” Khan said, adding that Taylor was having trouble meeting court officials to discuss the problem.

Presiding judge Julia Sebutinde of Uganda said court officers responsible for funding Taylor's defense needed to sort out the problem to ensure the trial can start on time.

“I do not want to hear afterwards that as a result of some decision taken somewhere that Mr. Taylor is not in a position to start trial,” Sebutinde said. “This would be very, very unfortunate if it did happen.”

Taylor's lawyers are seeking to appeal the decision setting the start date for the trial, arguing that they have not had enough time to prepare.

Prosecutors say that in exchange for diamonds smuggled out of Sierra Leone, Taylor provided rebels with arms, ammunition, communication equipment, as well as alcohol, drugs and cigarettes.

Reuters

Monday, 7 May 2007

Prosecutor sees rapid trial of Charles Taylor

By Anna Mudeva

THE HAGUE, May 7 (Reuters) - The U.N.-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone has learned the lessons from other tribunals and is ready for a rapid war crimes trial for former Liberian President Charles Taylor, the court's prosecutor said on Monday.

Taylor, indicted on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity for stoking civil war in Sierra Leone through an illicit trade in guns for diamonds, is going on trial in The Hague on June 4.

He was moved to The Hague in June 2006 due to fears a trial in Freetown could spur unrest in Sierra Leone or Liberia.

The court's prosecutor Stephen Rapp told Reuters he expected the trial to be concluded in about 18 months.

"That's a very rapid period," he said. "In other cases like that of (former Yugoslav President Slobodan) Milosevic it took four years and didn't complete. But we believe that the judges have learned lessons and we have from those past experiences."

"The crucial thing is that we want to focus this case and not call one more live witness than we need to."

Milosevic died in jail in March last year before a verdict was reached in his marathon war crimes trial, prompting a storm of criticism about the fact his case was allowed to drag on for more than four years.

WASTE NO TIME

The Sierra Leone court held a pre-trial conference on the Taylor case on Monday, agreeing to sit five days a week with limited breaks.

"The judges certainly sent a signal that they want to work very very hard on this case. They also recognise the fact that to hear all these evidence will take some time, so they are keen not to waste any time," Rapp said.

The court indicted Taylor in March 2003 on 17 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity but condensed the charges to 11 counts in March 2006 to ensure a more focused trial.

Taylor's rise to power in 1989 led to a 14-year, on-and-off civil war in Liberia that spilled across regional borders. He fled into exile in Nigeria in 2003 but was returned to Liberia and transferred to the court in Sierra Leone in March 2006.

The court initially set April 2 as a tentative start date for the trial but later postponed it to June 4 because defence lawyers requested more time to prepare.

Taylor was present in court on Monday, wearing sun glasses because of an eye problem, his lawyers said.

Rapp said Taylor was generally in good health and his case was not complicated by health problems like that of Milosevic but the trial faced challenges in bringing witnesses and victims on a different continent.

The prosecution plans to present evidence from about 201 witnesses from Liberia and the region. Almost all of them have been guaranteed protection, Rapp said.

Taylor's defence lawyers expressed concerns that some of their witnesses might not be able to come to The Hague because of travel bans imposed on them by the U.N. Security Council dating from the time when Taylor was still a president.

Proceedings on the case are being held in the premises of the International Criminal Court (ICC), which is not involved in the trial. The Security Council authorised Taylor's transfer after Britain said it would jail him if he is found guilty.

Agence France-Presse

Monday, 7 May 2007

Liberia's Taylor wants more lawyers

THE HAGUE, May 07 -- The defence of former Liberian president Charles Taylor, due to go on trial for war crimes here next month, said on Monday that they needed more senior counsels for the complex case.

In a pre-trial hearing of the case before the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), Taylor's lawyer Karim Khan said his client was concerned he was being "short-changed" with only two attorneys who can attend his trial against a prosecution legal team of at least 10 people.

The trial, which was moved to The Hague to the premises of the International Criminal Court (ICC) for security reasons is set to start on June 4 and the defence is trying to get a more senior lawyer on board, Khan said.

Before the hearing adjourned on Monday the judge called on the registry of the court to help with the defence's problem.

"There is a bottleneck somewhere," presiding judge Julia Sebutinde said.

"I do not want to hear afterwards that as a result of a decision of somebody somewhere mister Taylor is not ready to stand trial," she added.

Taylor, who is detained in The Hague, has asked to meet the court's defence liaison to discuss the arrangements but the trip was cancelled.

The defence has asked for more time before the trial starts because of the problems but the court has denied it. Khan is now asking for leave to appeal that ruling but the court has not yet made a decision.

Taylor is seen as the single most powerful figure behind a series of civil wars in Liberia and neighbouring Sierra Leone between 1989 and 2003 which left around 400 000 people dead.

The former warlord-turned-president has been indicted by the United Nations-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone on charges of crimes against humanity, war crimes and violations of international human rights. He maintains his innocence.

Taylor was in court on Monday listening attentively to the proceedings and making notes. Dressed in a dark grey suit Taylor also wore sunglasses in court because he suffered from an eye infection, his lawyers said.

On Monday the defence also complained they had difficulty getting witnesses to testify in the case because of a UN Security Council resolution that imposes travel bans on people deemed close associates of Taylor.

According to Khan many witnesses are reluctant to testify because they are afraid of being slapped with a travel ban if they appear on his behalf during the trial. – AFP

Institute for War and Peace Reporting

Friday, 4 May 2007

Taylor Defence Want More Time

Defence lawyers for former Liberian president Charles Taylor are seeking leave to appeal the decision to start his International Criminal Court, ICC, trial on June 4, saying that they need more time to prepare their case.

By Caroline Tosh in London

In their April 30 application, Taylor's lawyers argue that judges have failed to give proper regard to defence concerns that preparation time was lost as a result of video surveillance cameras installed in the room where they consult with their client, from November 10, 2006 to March 22, 2007.

They argue that for three and a half months "client-attorney privilege was seriously impinged" as a result of the video cameras.

Taylor was first indicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone in March 2003, for his alleged role in the 10-year civil war during which tens of thousands died. For security reasons, proceedings will be held at the ICC in The Hague.

He is accused of having supported the Revolutionary United Front, RUF, rebels, who - according to the indictment - launched armed attacks on the civilian population of Sierra Leone.

Lawyers suspended consultations with Taylor at the beginning of March to protest the cameras, which they argue had a "chilling effect" on their discussions. The ICC agreed to stop using them on March 22.

On April 17, the defence called for the trial to be put back to September to make up for the time lost.

In the three and a half months the cameras were installed, the defence was "hamstrung and largely unable to take proper instructions from the accused, causing substantial impairment to its trial preparation programme", said the motion.

But on April 25, judges said moving the trial back three months was not justified because although the video surveillance began on November 10, the defence team "didn't actually suspend consultations until March 5".

The judges said the trial would start on July 4 as scheduled, but added that the prosecution would start its case by making an opening statement only. The case will then adjourn for 18 days "to make up for preparation time lost by the defence".

Caroline Tosh is an IWPR reporter.



United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 07 May 2007

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

International Clips on Liberia

THE SUNDAY INDEPENDENT (IRELAND) 05/06/2007 01:43:42

Liberia troops coming home

DON LAVERY

TROOPS in Ireland's largest overseas mission, Liberia, will begin packing their bags this week to leave the African country by the end of the month. The withdrawal comes 3 and a half years after Ireland committed a mechanized infantry battalion to UNMIL, the UN mission in the country. The 325-strong unit, equipped with Mowag and Panhard armored vehicles, has been used as a quick reaction force conducting patrols in the capital Monrovia and long-range patrols along the country's borders.

AP 05/07/2007 07:13:06

Charles Taylor lawyer says potential defense witnesses fear Security Council travel bans

MIKE CORDER

THE HAGUE, Netherlands_Potential defense witnesses for Charles Taylor are refusing to testify at the former Liberian president's war crimes trial for fear of being slapped with U.N. travel bans, Taylor's lawyer told a court Monday. Taylor, 59, is to go on trial June 4 on 11 charges, including terrorism, murder, rape, sexual slavery, mutilation and recruiting child soldiers linked to his alleged support for rebels in Sierra Leone's brutal civil war.

Liberia's immigration authorities solicit Nigeria's assistance in capacity building

ABUJA, May 4, 2007 (Xinhua via COMTEX) -- The Liberian immigration authorities have solicited the assistance of the Nigeria Immigration Service in capacity building, official said here on Friday.

International Clips on West Africa

BBC Last Updated: Friday, 4 May 2007, 18:17 GMT 19:17 UK

Sierra Leone to delay elections

Sierra Leone has said that it is pushing back the date of presidential and legislative elections by two weeks. The polls, the first since UN peacekeepers left in 2005, had been scheduled to take place on 28 July. But electoral officials said that the original date does not allow sufficient time from the dissolving of parliament to organize an election.

114 killed aboard plane in Kenya Airways crash

NAIROBI, May 7, 2007 (AFP) - All 114 passengers and crew were killed aboard the Kenya Airways airliner that crashed Saturday after taking off from Douala airport in Cameroon on a flight to Nairobi,

witnesses at the scene said Monday. An updated passenger list released by the airline said the occupants included 85 Africans, 21 Asians, seven Europeans and one US citizen. Following is the breakdown of the nationalities of the 105 passengers. All of the nine crew were Kenyans: Thirty-seven Cameroonians, 15 Indians, seven South Africans, six each from Ivory Coast and Nigeria, five Britons and five Chinese, three from Niger and two each from the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Equatorial Guinea.

Local Media – Newspaper

Government Cancels Exams on Account of Suspected Leakages

(The Informer, Public Agenda, New Democrat, The Monitor, The Parrot, Daily Observer, The News, New Vision, The Inquirer and Heritage)

- The Ministry of Education last Friday cancelled the Senior High School Certificate Examinations administered by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) on account of suspected leakages, especially in Montserrado and Margibi Counties.
- According to the *New Democrat*, the exams could be cancelled nationwide. However, *The Analyst* said that the cancellation of the exams was likely to cause chaos on campuses as many students were looking forward to graduation in June and July with or without WAEC results.

Court Holds Pre-trial Conference for Ex-Liberian Leader Today

(The Diary)

- Former Liberian President Charles Taylor is expected to appear in court today for a pre-trial conference ahead of his trial on 4 June.

Liberians Want UNMIL Boss Intervene in “Fraud” Case

(The Parrot)

- Liberians across the divide are calling on the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Alan Doss, to probe allegations of fraud within the National Staff Association of UNMIL involving the leadership of the Association. According to the paper, the allegations could create a “bad image” for the Mission.

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

National Human Rights Group Asks Journalists to Remain Focus

- In a statement issued by the National Human Rights Centre to mark this year’s World Press Freedom Day, the organization urged Liberian journalists not to be deterred by any practices to detract them from their effort to inform and educate the public. The Centre reminded reporters that freedom of speech and press remained the core of democracy; and condemned an alleged brutality and other maltreatment meted against journalists by State security in recent times.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

International Rights Group Says Liberia Heading to Police-State

- The Foundation for International Dignity (FIND) lamented that Liberia was becoming a Police-State as human rights violations and police brutality increased, emphasizing that the Country’s Police were disrespecting the rights of Liberians they must protect and defend.
- Releasing a situation report of the April 27 riot at Firestone during the weekend, FIND’s Regional Coordinator Dixon Gblah noted that the constant police brutality was reminding the public of the ugly past and urged the Executive Branch of Government to check these excesses.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Parents Want WAEC to Fund Re-administration of Exams

- Some parents of students who sat this year's West African Examination Council exams last week said that the Council should be made to fund the re-administering of the exams, which it nullified in Monrovia, Montserrado County and Harbel, Margibi County due to "exams fraud".

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

UN Agencies Repair Roads in Lofa County

- A UNHCR release said that the agency, in collaboration with the Government of Liberia, UNMIL and UNDP has begun to rehabilitate the Voinjama-Kolahun and Foyah as well as the Kolahun-Vahun highway to facilitate the repatriation and reintegration of refugees.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Opposition Party Threatens to Suspend Lawmakers

- The opposition Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) announced that it would indefinitely suspend some members of the House of Representatives who are members of the Party. The Party's Assistant Secretary General Acarous Gray named Representatives Dave Kumeh and Rufus Neufville as some of the members to be affected for violating the principles of the CDC.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

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. Weah Karpeh at karpeh@un.org.