

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



A panoramic view of River Sewa

PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

as at:

Tuesday, 8 November 2011

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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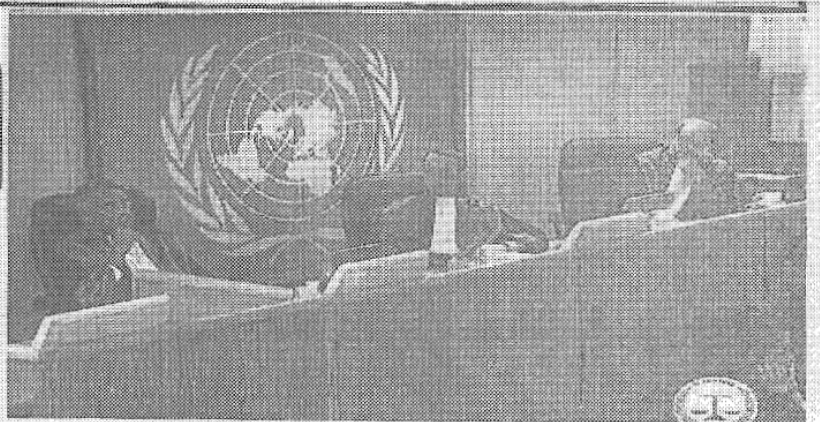
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Rwanda Denies Prisoners' Allegations



The Rwanda Correctional Service (RCS) has refuted claims by Sierra Leone war crime prisoners that they are not accorded standard care and instead, saying they receive 'extraordinary' care.

The Commissioner General of RCS, Paul Rwarakabije, said that the government had essentially provided all it was required of by the MoU, adding that the prisoners had been provided extra incentives.

He was reacting to a series of media reports published in Sierra

Leone's *The Exclusive* newspaper, that the prisoners want the Special Court to review their MoU with Rwanda and instead be relocated to another country to continue with the rest of their terms.

"Prisoners will always complain, but the fact is we have accorded them more than what we are required. They are frequently visited by their

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Rwanda Denies Prisoners' Allegations

From front page

relatives and are also accorded conjugal rights. These are international prisoners and we treat them in a special manner," said Rwarakabije.

He added that the Sierra Leone prisoners have access to telephone and special meals.

"We know and we have heard of their claims, but we are always in touch with the court which usually sends its

representatives to visit the prisoners.

There is a team from the special court which is in the country and will be visiting them soon," said the prisons boss.

Currently, eight Sierra Leonean war crime prisoners sentenced by the United Nations Special Court are serving their respective sentences at Mpanga Prison in the Southern Province

Awareness Times (Online)

Monday, 31 October 2011

http://news.sl/drwebsite/publish/article_200519055.shtml

Bring the War Crime Prisoners Back Home!

By Abu Bakar Shaw

As accusations and counter accusations continue regarding the eight Sierra Leoneans presently in prison in far away Rwanda for war crime convictions, many wonder if Sierra Leone is so unprepared to have its citizens in jail on home soil!

Reports recently making the rounds suggest that the eight Sierra Leone nationals imprisoned at the Mpanga Correctional Service in the Rwandan capital Kigali have raised concerns about mistreatments by prison authorities there.

No sooner had this accusation hits the streets in Freetown, the Special Court for Sierra Leone SCSL went on the defensive by denying all the allegations of mistreatments being meted out on the Sierra Leonean prisoners in Rwanda.

I am not here casting aspersions on whether the prisoners' complaint is correct or not or whether the SCSL reaction to the mistreatment story is right or wrong. My main concern is the continued imprisonment of our citizens in a foreign land! Now the families of these imprisoned Sierra Leoneans are calling on the government and Human Rights Organisations to help fast track the transfer of their relatives back home.

I honestly cannot understand why they are STILL imprisoned in a foreign land? Transferring these prisoners to a foreign prison few years ago is understandable as security was fragile in Sierra Leone then. But not any more! Sierra Leone's national security has improved dramatically thanks to the vigilance of the Sierra Leone Government.

I am of the view that Sierra Leone is very competent to take care of its prisoners. I see no reason why these eight prisoners could not finish their sentences HERE. The finances allocated for these eight prisoners in Kigali could also be allocated for them in Freetown as well!

Yes, Pademba Road Prisons has its own problems but I believe it can be renovated in no time if government and other stakeholders are really ready to do so. What about utilising the SCSL prisons? Is it not safer than Mpanga? These prisoners could be transferred here where they would be better protected as the saying goes 'there is no place like home.'

Have we forgotten that these Sierra Leone prisoners have their own families and loved ones who would like to visit them at intervals. Where does the government or the SCSL expect these poor families to get their air tickets from to see their loved ones in far away Kigali?

Yes, they are prisoners but they still have rights. I believe it is against the fundamental human rights of these eight prisoners to deprive them of family visits. It is wise and respectable if these prisoners are brought back to their mother land to continue their prison sentences.

Are the Mpanga prison authorities more efficient than our prison authorities? I do not think so. The government must stand up with pride and remember that we are a sovereign nation and any Sierra Leonean found wanting must be tried, sentenced and imprisoned here.

That is the way it should be done as the country is now safer than many countries in the world! We should be proud to showcase it. Shouldn't we?

This is just my view.

The New Times (Kigali)

Sunday, 6 November 2011

Rwanda: Harelimana Meets Sierra Leone Court Officials

The minister of internal security, Mussa Fazil Harelimana, yesterday met with the visiting delegation from the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

They discussed the state of Sierra Leonean wars crimes prisoners who are currently serving their sentences in Mpanga, Southern Province..

"The delegation has met with our side to review the recommendations and instructions on issues to do with money and access to telephones", the minister said.

Eight war crimes prisoners were sentenced by the Special Court for Sierra Leone jointly by the Government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations and are serving their respective sentences, ranging from 15- 52 years. They claim that their living conditions are not satisfactory.

The allegations by the prisoners prompted a two woman delegation composed of Binta Mansaray the, court's registrar and her deputy Fidelma Donlon, to come and verify the concerns raised by the convicts.

Harelimana noted that every inmate is supposed to use \$150 for communication every month which they fail to exhaust prompting taking back money to the court.

"Their issue has been that they want the unutilized money on telephony to be paid to them in cash which we cannot do as government because we implement the recommendations of the special court for Sierra Leone", he said.

According to a source that attended the closed door meeting yesterday, the delegation which is yet to give out their full observations on their findings, said that the inmates have been accorded full rights as required by the United Nations.

Harelimana added: "All these were lies and the delegation have found out that we have observed the Memorandum of Understanding."

The convicts had complained that they have been denied their West African food and cannot cope with East African meals, cannot access medication and want to be relocated to Europe which, according to sources, is their intentions to help their wives seek asylum in the guise of being close to their husbands.

The minister said the allegations were baseless noting that the court brought in a chef skilled in West African meals to train prison chefs how to prepare the special meals for the inmates.

He said that the delegation also witnessed how the prison staff conducted their trainings on prison management to meet international standards as required by the UN.

Agence France-Presse

Thursday, 3 November 2011

S.Leone war criminals complain about Rwanda jail treatment

FREETOWN -The families of eight Sierra Leone war criminals serving their sentence in Rwanda have complained about their treatment in prison there and want them transferred back home.

Two family sources, who asked not to be named, told AFP they had called on government to intervene and have the prisoners brought back to finish their sentences in Sierra Leone.

Government spokesman Ibrahim Ben Kargbo said that the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone, set up to probe atrocities during the country's 1991-2002 civil war, had warned the government not to interfere in the matter.

"We have been asked by the court to stay off from the matter as any such act will be interpreted as contempt," said Kargbo.

In a nine-page petition handed by the families to the government on September 7, the men alleged that since their arrival in Kigali in October 2009 they had suffered poor nourishment and a lack of access to medical facilities.

The prisoners are three ex-leaders of the rebel Revolutionary United Front (RUF), Issa Hassan Sesay, Morris Kallon and Augustine Gbao and three former leaders of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), Alex Tamba Brima, Ibrahim Bazy Kamara and Santigie Borbor Kanu.

The other two are former leaders of the Civil Defense Forces (CDF), Moinina Fofana and Allieu Kondewa.

The men, serving terms of between 15 and 52 years, were sent to Rwanda under a special arrangement as Sierra Leone does not have proper facilities for their detention.

Hirondelle News Agency

Thursday, 3 November 2011

Rwanda denies ill treatment claims by Sierra Leonean prisoners

Arusha, November 3, 2011 (FH) - Rwanda's prison authorities have refuted claims by eight Sierra Leonean war crimes convicts that they are being mistreated in a Rwandan jail, the New Times newspaper reported on Thursday from Kigali.

The Sierra Leonean prisoners, convicted by the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone, were transferred to the Mpanga prison in southern Rwanda in 2009, under a Memorandum of Understanding between the Special Court and Kigali. According to an article published October 16 by Sierra Leone's The Exclusive newspaper, the eight complain of "inhuman treatments" by the Rwandan prison authorities, including threats, beatings, lack of adequate medical care and the fact that their families do not have access to them.

However Paul Rwarakabije, the Commissioner General of the Rwanda Correctional Service, told the New Times that the Rwandan government was not only respecting its MOU with the Special Court but also providing extra incentives for the prisoners. He also said that a team from the Special Court was in Rwanda and would be visiting the prisoners soon.

"Prisoners will always complain, but the fact is we have accorded them more than what we are required," the New Times quoted Rwarakabije as saying. "They are frequently visited by their relatives and are also accorded conjugal rights. These are international prisoners and we treat them in a special manner."

The Sierra Leonean prisoners are former leading rebels, soldiers and militia from their country's 1991-2002 civil war: Issa Sesay, Morris Kallon, and Augustine Gbao of the RUF; Alex Tamba Brima, Santigie Borbor Kanu and Ibrahim Bazy Kamara of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC); Musa Kondowa and Moinina Fofana of the Civil Defence Forces (CDF). They are serving sentences ranging from 15 to 52 years.

"We want all Sierra Leoneans to forgive us and call on the Special Court to transfer us to serve our prison sentence in Freetown," The Exclusive quoted Santigie Kanu as saying. "Our families have abandoned us because they cannot get access to us."

According to The Exclusive, the eight Sierra Leoneans are also asking the international community to investigate "massive human rights abuses" against the 7,000 Rwandan inmates of Mpanga prison. It quoted Bazy Kamara as saying that most of the Rwandan inmates were malnourished.

The Exclusive did not say how it managed to conduct the interviews with the prisoners but Rwarakabije told the New Times the Sierra Leonean prisoners have access to telephone as well as special meals.

The Rwandan newspaper quoted other sources as saying that the inmates receive their medical treatment from King Faisal Hospital in Kigali, which is considered to be the best hospital in Rwanda. It also cited unconfirmed reports indicating that the Sierra Leonean prisoners "want to be relocated to Europe so that their wives can seek asylum in the host countries".

The Special Court for Sierra Leone has MOUs on prison sentence enforcement with Finland, Sweden and the UK as well as Rwanda, but all its convicts so far are in Rwanda. Under the MOU, the bulk of prisoner maintenance costs are borne by the Special Court.

The Special Court was established in 2002 by the United Nations, with a staff both Sierra Leonean and foreign nationals. It was the first mixed tribunal of its kind with judges appointed jointly by the United Nations and the host country. The Special Court is now winding up with only the judgment of former Liberian leader Charles Taylor still pending.

Newsday

Tuesday, 8 November 2011

Tribunal adjourns hearings for Rwanda genocide suspect

STAFF REPORTER

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) has adjourned indefinitely special hearings to preserve evidence against a former Rwandan top soldier believed to be hiding in Zimbabwe.

Former presidential guard commander, Major Protais Mpiranya, is charged with conspiracy to commit genocide, genocide or complicity in genocide, as an alternative count, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

According to latest reports from Rwanda, the prosecution has so far called 11 witnesses out of 30 expected to testify against Mpiranya. Proceedings, which took off on October 24, are being conducted in closed session,

The tribunal trying suspects of the 1994 Rwandan genocide has complained to the United Nations Security Council that it was encountering difficulties in tracking the top fugitive believed to be holed up in Zimbabwe.

Justice Hassan Jallow, prosecutor of ICTR, wrote to the UN Security Council saying there were difficulties in apprehending Mpiranya.

Jallow said Zimbabwe should prevent the genocide fugitive from evading justice.

The prosecutor said they had requested for cooperation and assistance from the Zimbabwean government in bringing Mpiranya to justice.

“Difficulties experienced in the tracking of the top-level fugitive Protais Mpiranya continue and I urge further cooperation and assistance from the Government of Zimbabwe in this regard,” Jallow said in a statement addressed to the UN Security Council.

But Zimbabwean police maintain they are not aware of the presence of the genocide fugitive in the country despite insistence by the tribunal.

The police have urged anybody with information regarding the whereabouts of Mpiranya to come forward.

Close to one million Rwandans, mostly from the Tutsi minority ethnic group, were massacred during 100 days of bloodletting.

The majority Hutu ethnic group is accused of orchestrating the mass killings.

According to reports from the ICTR, special hearings for ex-Defence minister Augustin Bizimana, earlier planned to start tomorrow, have been pushed to November 21.

Other special hearings concerning the most wanted genocide fugitive, Félicien Kabuga, have been adjourned indefinitely.

Kabuga is said to be carrying out his commercial activities in Kenya, while Bizimana is said to be hiding in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

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Hirondelle News Agency

Monday, 7 November 2011

Kagame Ex-aide Wants to "reveal all" on April 6 plane cra

A former close aide to Rwandan president Paul Kagame who claims Kagame downed his predecessor's plane says he wants to be heard by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) or another independent court to "reveal all the details". Théogène Rudasingwa told Hirondelle News Agency on Friday that he was not just requesting but "demanding" this.

"I would like to appear before the ICTR as soon as possible regarding this matter," he said to Hirondelle. "I am not just requesting this. I am demanding it as a witness to the most pivotal event in the 20th century whose consequences remain tragic almost two decades later."

The April 6, 1994 downing of the presidential plane that killed Kagame's predecessor, Juvénal Habyarimana, is widely considered the event that sparked the genocide.

In 1994, Rudasingwa was Secretary General of Kagame's Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), which came to power that year after the war and genocide. Rudasingwa later became Rwanda's ambassador to the United States (1996-1999) and then Kagame's principal private secretary (2000-2004). Rudasingwa went into opposition in 2004 and has been living in exile in the United States since 2005. On October 1, 2011, he published on his Facebook page a confession in English in which he accused Kagame of being "personally responsible" for the attack on Habyarimana's plane.

"I can confirm that Kagame told me he was responsible for the shooting down of Habyarimana's plane," Rudasingwa told Hirondelle. "I will divulge the details to the ICTR or the French Judge, or any other international jurisdiction. There is additional evidence that will be produced by others that will support my declaration."

The ICTR has always refused to investigate the shooting down of the plane. In France, a judicial investigation was opened in 1998 on behalf of family of the French crew who also died in the crash. This investigation was first led by Judge Jean-Louis Bruguière, who concluded in 2006 that the RPF was responsible for the attack. It is now in the hands of two anti-terrorist judges, Nathalie Poux and Marc Trévidic. Results are still awaited from ballistics experts who conducted a mission to Kigali in September 2010 at their request.

"I am willing and ready to appear before the ICTR, the French Judges or any other, at any time, to set the record straight," Rudasingwa told Hirondelle.

GF/JC

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