

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



An aerial view of Lumley Beach Road

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:

Wednesday, 8 October 2008

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

Wednesday, 8 October 2008

Child soldier tells of Sierra Leone's hope

Smiling and deftly working on her sewing machine, Helen A looks like any hard-working woman you would find in Africa.

Apart from the garment she is making, the 18-year-old appears to be without a care in the world.

However, just six years ago, she was a child soldier in Sierra Leone's 11-year civil war, high on drugs and capable of shocking brutality.

Helen - whose real name has been changed to protect her identity - was one of thousands of youngsters kidnapped by rebel forces and used to help overthrow the government.

Helen remembers when she was just 11 and how she was drugged with cocaine before being sent out to kill.

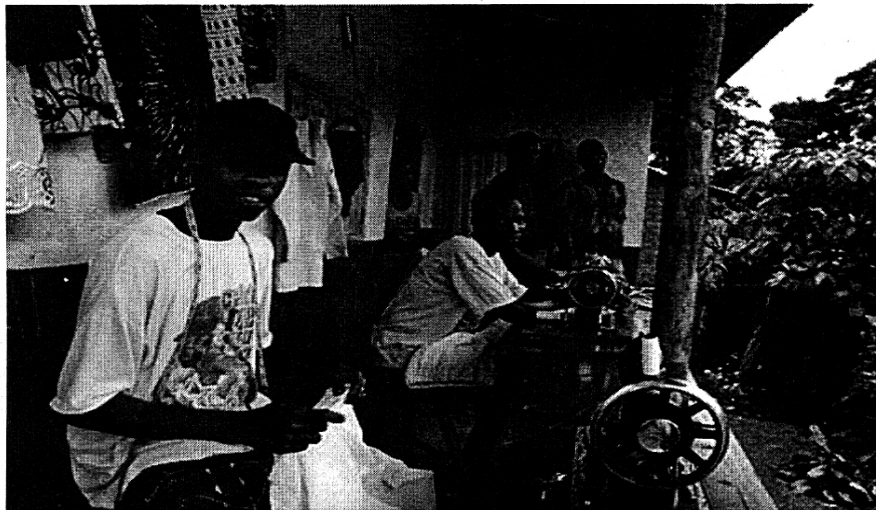
'When I was on the drug, I just didn't see people as human beings any more - they were more like just chickens running around,' she says.

'I shot an old woman in her hut. As she was struggling, fighting to stay alive or to die, I was just laughing. I thought it was just a joke.'

Often the rebel fighters - led by Revolutionary United Front leader Foday Sankoh - would force their captives to kill their own relatives.

They also burned down villages, decapitated rival tribal chiefs, raped women and looted homes.

The war ended in January 2002. A truce was reached



Helen new skills and hope for the future.

partly thanks to the arrival of 20,000 UN peacekeepers - including 400 British soldiers patrolling the capital, Freetown. A nationwide programme was launched to reintegrate former fighters back into society.

But this often ignored many of the estimated 23,000 child soldiers and sex slaves in the country.

Child Advocacy

To address this issue, the Red Cross set up Child Advocacy and Rehabilitation centres for 14 to 18-year-olds, offering literacy lessons, training, apprenticeships and counselling.

Helen who, in the aftermath of the war had no home or family to return to and had drifted into prostitution in a desperate attempt to scrape a living, has been one of the programme's beneficiaries.

A chance meeting with a friend introduced her to the CAR centre in the town of Kailahun - one of four that the Red Cross runs.

Victims

Young people take part in cookery, carpentry, dancing and dress-making sessions. Victims of all kinds in the war - those who were attacked and those who

were forced to kill - mingle together at the centre. Helen says: 'I try not to think about the things that happened, or the things I've done.'

'I was afraid for a while that a few people who were victims might see me now and be angry.'

But, for now, tailoring lessons have given Helen new skills - and new hope for the future.

'I now have good work, which is helping me survive,' she says.

'And I am very, very happy about that.'

Cocorioko

Wednesday, 8 September 2008

Interview: Rapp raps on Taylor's "hidden wealth"

Written by By Joseph Cheeseman in The Hague

The Special Court for Sierra Leone and the United Nations some times ago launched a search for the alleged hidden wealth of the former Liberian President Charles Taylor. How far have they gone with that? When is Taylor's trial likely to end? Does the court have enough money to complete the trial? What's the greatest challenge still in the way of the court? These were some of the questions Joseph Cheeseman posed to the Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Stephen Rapp when they met in The Hague.

Rapp: There are a variety of investigative efforts that are being undertaken by both the United Nations and also by national assistance, and the tracing exercises are continuing. There's been I think some good progress though we can't disclose that at this stage. Understand our focus in all of this is more to the point of view of trying to locate those assets and create a process where some of them could potentially go to the victims in Sierra Leone if Taylor were convicted, and some of them could go back to the victims in Liberia if his money [was acquired] out of corruption, the sale of public timber, and that kind of thing. But the important thing for us at this time is through the United Nations process, and through individual countries' law enforcement, that the accounts that we've identified, many of which were closed, many of which saw money flowing out from other accounts, that those accounts are investigated and that the resources are located and frozen.

CHEESEMAN: Some people are saying that you are engaging in a fruitless effort, that you will not find Taylor's money.

Rapp: Well certainly we've seen accounts in which millions of dollars have flowed. We've heard reports of many funds being invested in various places, there are certainly assets that are there. The question is how much.

CHEESEMAN: How much are you talking about?

Rapp: Clearly there is talk about how much money he took, and there's talk about the accounts and the amount of money that moved through them. We're targeting, I mean the UN of course has frozen about 6 million to date. We'd like to freeze many times that amount. We'd like to freeze tens of millions if possible and to make that available to victims.

CHEESEMAN: What can you say to the Liberian people regarding the status of the trial of Charles Taylor now, from the perspective of the Prosecution?

Rapp: Well the status from the Prosecution is that we're at a stage when we think that at least two thirds, perhaps three quarters of the Prosecution witnesses, have been presented. There have been 50 witnesses to date. If we have a lot of these crime victim witnesses there may even be 90 witnesses. But the major witnesses, the ones that are going to take a long time, are largely completed. We're looking to complete all of our evidence by December or January from the Prosecution side. At that point Taylor's attorneys will have an opportunity to move to dismiss those parts of the case that they don't think we've proven. The judges will have to rule on that, we will submit that we have proven.

CHEESEMAN: Are there any challenges still in that part of the trial?

Rapp: I think a lot of the challenges have been met. I mean the challenge remains being sure that we can protect the witnesses both before and after their testimony. As each of the witnesses concludes their testimony they're going back and meeting the neutral group in the court in the victim's section, in order to determine what kind of future arrangements will be necessary to ensure their safety. In a few cases that's going to require relocation outside their community, and a few cases even relocation outside of the country.

CHEESEMAN: Sometimes we see some of the witnesses calling for protective measures, shields, pseudonyms, and what have you. Have there been any serious threats against witnesses that left the witness stand for which you have had to engage in such protective measures?

Rapp: Well witnesses tell us afterwards that sometimes members of their family are harassed, that siblings or others are told your brother went up there and testified, he's betrayed our former President, and people sometimes get angry. There's one case of an assault on a witness' daughter. So those kinds of things can happen. Keep in mind that in the case of all of the witnesses Taylor knows who those witnesses are. He's entitled to disclosure of their identity for 42 days beforehand.

CHEESEMAN: So from the funding side of the trial what can you say, do you have enough money to complete the trial?

Rapp: We think we will have enough money to complete the trial. We don't have it now. The Court in August we were very low on funds and the EU came through with 2.5 million Euros that lasted us for about a month and a half. The US contribution of \$ 12.5 million arrived in mid September. That's going to carry us until February [next year]. There's sort of a calendar of countries. Holland will give a contribution of 2 million Euros just before the end of the year. The United Kingdom a contribution of 2 or 3 million pounds probably by March or April we hope. While we see these pledges coming, we will have the resources to complete this trial, but we won't have a surplus.

Cocorioko

Wednesday, 8 October 2008

Interview: Special Court Prosecutor on prosecution witnesses

Written by Cocorioko Newspaper Limited

The Prosecution of the Special Court for Sierra Leone have presented almost half of their witnesses at the ongoing trial in The Hague of the former Liberian president, Charles Taylor. Mr Taylor faces charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Sierra Leone's civil war.

So far, different categories of people including victims of the war have testified at the trial. The man leading the prosecution against Mr Taylor is Stephen Rapp. He spoke in The Hague with Mariama Khai Fornah who started by asking him to explain how many witnesses are expected to take the stand.

Rapp: Well we've now had as of today [2 October]...50 witnesses that [have] appeared. I think at the end of the day it will probably be about 80 or 85 witnesses the total that will appear for the prosecution. To some extent the issue is still a little indefinite because there's an issue over whether all of the crime victims that we've listed will need to come personally to testify. We had proposed to essentially allow some of their testimony to come in writing so that they wouldn't have to go through the stress of coming here. Many of them have testified before in Freetown and we could put in the transcripts of their testimony from before. And these crime victims are generally individuals who saw Charles Taylor.

We're not of course alleging that Charles Taylor ever came to Sierra Leone. We're alleging that he was responsible for what the rebels did. They can testify to what happened in their community, and under our rules potentially that could be presented in writing because it doesn't go directly to Charles Taylor. The Defence however wants to see them. It's insisted that they come. And the judges had decided in the first group that yes, they shall come.

There's still several groups that they haven't yet decided. And we're prepared to have them come. We recently contacted I think about 48 of these people and said 'do you still want to be witnesses?' And they said 'absolutely'. They really do want to come and tell a story, or provide that account, and we're ready to do that. Now those witnesses tend to be quicker witnesses than some of the insiders. They tend to be just a few hours, so very dramatic, and very important. But we didn't want to put them through this if they didn't have to be. But if it's required we have to prove it, we have to prove these crimes happened. We can't just ignore it. And that's why we're seeing a lot of those. That's why we don't know quite the number. We'll probably have about 8 more linkage witnesses, but whether we have another 20 or 30 witnesses of crimes will depend on some judicial decisions.

FORNAH: Recently we noticed that most of the crime-based and insider witnesses that were supposed to testify under protective measures are now testifying openly in court. Why did you change this?

Rapp: Well, sometimes with the insider witnesses, when they arrive and they realize that Charles Taylor knows their identity, they say well since it's Taylor's people that we're afraid of, if he's going to know our identity we might as well let everyone know our identity and that may give us some protection. People will be looking out for us. So you do have some witnesses that initially insist on appearing with a pseudonym, so that they don't face harassment when they go home. But when they arrive they change their mind. And particularly we discovered with the Sierra Leonean witnesses, and I think it's a credit to

the fact that Sierra Leone has become a much more peaceful society. They've gone through this election with no significant violence, that people I think are less fearful than they used to be. And some of these people may have testified under a pseudonym in a prior trial, and they come here and they say look, I'm happy to have people know who I am. And they then say we're willing to testify not as TF-1273, we're willing to tell people what our name is. We then make a motion in court as they begin their testimony and ask that that part of their protection be changed, the judges agree with that, and at that point they testify.

FORNAH: Will this not serve as an obstacle for other insider witnesses that will testify in court?

Rapp: Well many of the witnesses are still, particularly insiders, many of them we're still anticipating will testify with protection. Now keep in mind there are various levels of protection. There's the most extreme level of protection which is the witness testifies entirely in a closed session, so no one really knows whether they testified or not. And that happens when somebody is so prominent, and perhaps at such risk that whether you call him TF-161 or not, and even if his voice is homogenated through the electronic system people say well, I know who that is, and figure it out. So sometimes you have to have a closed session.

Most often it's possible to simply give the person a pseudonym and have him testify in court without people seeing his picture. Or his face can be changed electronically, and sometimes it's necessary to homogenate the voice. But those protection measures are still there. They exist! The judges already ordered them for the vast majority of our witnesses. It's only that some people arrive and decide; no I really don't need that. And we eliminate. For instance the idea that they'll testify under a number or something like that, but some of the other protections remain in effect.

There are protections always that say they can't ask the witnesses where they're living.

Courtesy: BBC World Service Trust

BBC World Service Trust

Wednesday, 8 October 2008

Report from The Hague

Conscripting or enlisting children under the age of 15 years into armed forces or groups, or using them to participate actively in hostilities is a violation of International Humanitarian Law. Former Liberian President, Charles Taylor is on trial for allegedly aiding Sierra Leonean Rebels to recruit children less than 15 years in to the rebel forces. Well, a Former Child Soldier testifying against Mr. Taylor said he was trained and given a gun, but as Joseph Cheeseman reports Defence Lawyer, Courtney Griffiths tries to impeach the credibility of the young witness' testimonies.

CHEESEMAN: On cross-examination, Witness Komba Sumana told the Judges he was trained as a rebel fighter in a Sierra Leonean Town called Buedu and given an AK-47 at age 14 by a Liberian woman named Monica Pearson. But Defence Lawyer, Griffiths told the court Sumana was not trained by Monica.

GRIFFITHS: What I'm suggesting to you you see, is that you never worked in a camp in Buedu.

SUMANA: What? That was where we were trained. And she was the one who trained us there. There was a camp there where she trained us.

GRIFFITHS: Are you sure you went to a training camp in Buedu where a female Liberian Monica trained you? Are you sure?

SUMANA: Yes.

GRIFFITHS: Because what I'm suggesting is, that that Monica was no where near Buedu training recruits. Is it possible you made a mistake?

SUMANA: That woman trained in Buedu, and that was where I saw her.

CHEESEMAN: Mr. Griffiths also pointed out what he considered contradiction between the witness's previous interview with investigators of the Special Court and his present testimonies in court. The Former Child Soldier testified in court that he was given a gun after graduation from the rebel training. According to his previous interview, Sumana said he was not given a gun because he could not shoot. Mr. Griffiths and the witness argued over the two accounts.

GRIFFITHS: According to them, on this occasion you tell them that you didn't in fact get a weapon because you couldn't shoot. Now, according to what you're telling us today, that is a lie, isn't it?

SUMANA: I did not come here to tell lies. I cannot take an oath to tell lies.

GRIFFITHS: What is here written on this page, where it says I did not receive any weapon at the (indistinct), that's a lie isn't it?

SUMANA: They gave me a gun.

CHEESEMAN: During Sumana's direct examination, he said one of the fighters told him that the soldiers who brought the weapons at their graduation ground were Charles Taylor's Soldiers. According to

Defence Lawyer, Courtney Griffiths, Sumana did not mention Charles Taylor's Soldiers in any of his previous interviews. Mr. Griffiths wondered why the prosecution witness did not mention Charles Taylor until he came to The Netherlands.

GRIFFITHS: Why did you not mention to Corrine Dufka in September 2003 that there were three Charles Taylor soldiers present wearing red military hats.

SUMANA: No, that way I explained, she asked me, who did you see bring the guns? And I said I saw soldiers dressed, I said I saw them, they brought the guns. I said I did not know where they had come from, I just saw them come. So when I came here, the way they asked me, that was why I explained that part, how it all happened.

CHEESEMAN: The prosecution's 51st witness has completed his testimonies and the 52nd witness has taken the stand against Charles Taylor. The 52nd witness is a Sierra Leonean woman testifying under protective measures so she is only identified as TF1-305. The witness started her testimonies by saying she was raped at gun point by eight Liberian English-Speaking rebels. She wept and brought the trial to a brief stop as she reflected on her past ordeal. The testimonies of the 52nd prosecution witness continue on Wednesday.

Rolling Stone Magazine

September 2008 Edition

American Warlord

AMERICAN WARLORD

In the midst of this reign of terror, Chucky was among the most feared men in the country. Only 25, he created and commanded the Anti-Terrorist Unit, the president's personal security force—a source of such pride that Chucky had the group's emblem, a crest of a hissing cobra and a scorpion, tattooed on his chest. In the capital, he cut a terrifying figure, scattering crowds as he raced through traffic in a Land Cruiser with a license plate that read DEMON. When he appeared in public, he was almost always outfitted in black or camouflage fatigues, a well-built figure strapped with a 9-millimeter, a cigar in hand. His face—the dark eyes, the round cheeks, the neatly trimmed beard—was immediately familiar to Liberians who had endured the long civil war. Not only because of his menacing reputation but because of the man he so closely resembled: his father, Charles Taylor, the president of Liberia, who had set the region ablaze with four devastating wars over the span of two decades.

As the son of the president, Chucky was among the most powerful leaders in his father's military. But standing in the villa outside Monrovia, brandishing his weapon over his prisoner, he was a long way from home. Only a decade earlier, Chucky had been an American teenager growing up in a modest, two-story brick house with his mother and stepfather in a parched subdivision of Orlando, a short drive from Disney World. He had come of age in a strip-mall landscape of payday loan shops and an endless parade of fast-food joints. He attended Evans High School, a squat structure with the motto "A Place of High Achievement." He loved hip-hop and spent countless hours in his bedroom rapping, spinning records, preparing for the day he would enter the studio and become an MC. Like most American teens, he knew almost nothing about Africa, let alone its brutal and divisive politics.

Now, standing in the villa outside Monrovia, Chucky leveled his gun at the helpless university student before him. He wanted information. His father's opponents were closing in on the capital, on the brink of overthrowing the government. Where were the rebels? Who was providing them weapons? Were the Americans involved? There was little to keep Chucky from extracting the information any way he wanted. After all, he was a U.S. citizen. His father was president of the country. No one could touch him. "Chucky was very much like the Hussein sons," says David Crane, the founding chief prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone. "He was com-

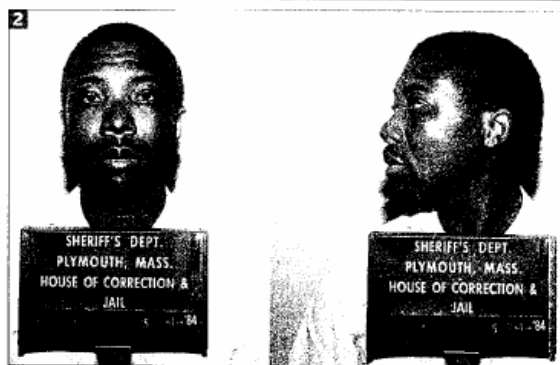
First-time contributor JOHNNY DWYER spent two years reporting this story, traveling to Liberia, New England and Florida.

pletely above the law, protected by his father and his henchmen."

Chucky tried threatening the student with his gun. Then, as dawn approached, he and Yeaten began to torture the man. According to a 17-page federal indictment brought by the U.S. Attorney's Office in Miami, Yeaten, who is referred to as "co-conspirator B," burned the student with a hot iron and doused him with scalding water. Chucky shocked the victim's genitals repeatedly with an electrical device. It was the kind of interrogation that those closest to Chucky had seen him conduct many times before. "Chucky Taylor executed a lot of people," says retired Brig. Gen. John Tarnue, who served under Chucky in the Anti-Terrorist Unit. "In my presence he tortured people. He tied them. He called it tabay. Elbow to elbow. And twine went into the flesh. He sit there, cross his legs, and smoke cigars. He didn't touch them, but he gave them the order. He said, 'I want to see blood!'"

Today, as his father stands trial for war crimes at the U.N.'s court in The Hague, Chucky Taylor sits in the Federal Detention Center in Miami. On September 15th, he will face trial as the first civilian in American history to be charged with committing torture abroad. In phone calls and letters to me over the past two years, he has repeatedly denied the charges, implying that he is a victim of an American policy targeting his father. His conversations, like his letters, ramble, alternating between swaggering defiance and confused despair. At the very least, he suggests, he is a victim of a bizarre double standard, prosecuted by a U.S. government that itself has engaged in torture, in open defiance of the Geneva Conventions.

"Innocence is not my dilemma," he wrote in March 2007 in a letter that covered five handwritten pages torn from a yellow legal pad, punctuated with the occasional smiley face. "It is how do I prove my innocence, and not make this intelligence-gathering exercise for these cocksuckers in Washington—that's the challenge presented. . . . They say absolute power corrupts absolutely [but] there is no other government in the world that operates with [more] impunity than Washington, and those that operated with its covert support."



From America to Liberia

(1) For two decades, Charles Taylor was the most feared warlord in Africa. Taylor fled the U.S. after a 1984 arrest (2), leaving his son Chucky behind. "It destroyed our family," says Chucky's mother, Bernice (3), with Chucky and his then-wife Lynn. In Liberia, Taylor's reign left 250,000 dead. Many of his troops, who sometimes wore masks to terrorize their enemies (4), were conscripted as children (5).

CHUCKY'S MOTHER, BERNICE EMMAUEL, first saw Charles Taylor in the mid-1970s in the Dorchester neighborhood of Boston, when he was an economics student at nearby Bentley College. "I met him through one of his neighbors," she recalls. "I was coming out of the building, and he asked for my number." She quickly fell for the handsome young man, the son of an

elite Liberian family. Taylor belonged to a close-knit community of expat students who had been sent to Boston to receive an American education. At the time, revolution was sweeping across Africa, and the Liberian students were agitating for a seismic change in their nation, from the rule of the traditional elite to political power for the tribal disenfranchised.

Emmanuel and Taylor eventually moved into a cozy apartment together.



They soon had a son, Michael, who passed away at seven months, and a daughter, Zoe. On February 12th, 1977, after a torturous labor, Emmanuel gave birth to Chucky; he weighed 12 pounds, 1.4 ounces. Chucky had gray eyes and a ghostly pale complexion, a vestige of Emmanuel's white grandfather. When Charles Taylor arrived at the hospital, "he didn't believe that the boy was his kid," Emmanuel says. "He didn't look like

he was a black baby." They named their son Charles McArthur Emmanuel.

The couple never married, but they enjoyed several idyllic years in their Dorchester apartment. "We lived together for eight years," Emmanuel says. "I was considered his common-law wife."

During Chucky's first year, Emmanuel was the breadwinner, though Taylor juggled jobs at Sears and Mutual of Omaha. Chucky, Emmanuel says, "was the happiest baby." One day, around Chucky's first birthday, Taylor saw his son drinking from a baby bottle. He plucked it from his son's hands and threw it out the window. "You're too grown for bottles," he declared.

Despite moments of domesticity, Taylor led a separate life outside the home. He partied and protested with other Liberian activists living along the East Coast. In 1980, he traveled back to Liberia just in time for a coup by a small band of army officers. In a volatile political climate, Taylor quickly proved to be a canny opportunist: He mar-

ried the niece of a general, ingratiating himself with the new government. He called Emmanuel, asking her to move to Liberia, but she refused. "We weren't educated enough to know that Africa wasn't backward," she says.

From then on, Chucky's father became a transient presence in his childhood. Put in charge of the General Services Agency, Liberia's main procurement office, Taylor ran it as his own private kingdom. He proudly displayed his

he made room for a turntable, a mixer and a massive set of speakers. As he grew from a boy into a teenager, his light complexion darkened. He began to strongly resemble his father, who was drifting in and out of prisons in Ghana and Sierra Leone, and into Muammar el-Qaddafi's paramilitary training camps in Libya. In 1989, on Christmas Eve, Taylor re-emerged as a self-styled revolutionary leader, invading Liberia with a small band of guerrillas. A month later, Chucky went with his mother to the Orange County Clerk's Office and changed his name to that of his stepfather, becoming Roy Belfast Jr. "I was his father at the time," Chucky's stepfather says simply.

A few years later, right around Christmas, Chucky answered the phone at home. Now in his early teens, he was a quiet kid, awkward and shy. The man on the line asked to speak to his mother. Emmanuel wasn't home at the time, but before Chucky hung up, the stranger explained that he was the boy's father.

"My dad called," Chucky announced when Emmanuel returned home a short while later. "I didn't want to talk to him."

Emmanuel was stunned. It had been so long since she had heard from Taylor, she couldn't understand what Chucky was telling her at first. "Who's your dad?" she asked, bewildered.

"Chucky was like the Hussein sons," says a former prosecutor. "Completely above the law."

newfound wealth, chauffeured around Monrovia, surrounded by bodyguards, grasping a small dog. Within a few years, accusations that he had pilfered nearly \$1 million in state money forced Taylor to flee back to America, where he shuttled between New Jersey, Staten Island and Boston. "Every year he came back twice to visit the kids," says Emmanuel. "He gave the kids everything they wanted." In 1984, when Chucky was seven, U.S. marshals arrested Taylor on an extradition request from the Liberian government. But Taylor conned a car thief into arranging his escape, breaking out of the Plymouth County Jail in Massachusetts and fleeing the country, never to return to the U.S. or his children again. "It destroyed our family," Emmanuel says.

Emmanuel moved on with her life. In the mid-1980s, she married a man named Roy Belfast and relocated the family to a two-story brick home on the corner of a quiet street in Orlando. Chucky slept in a small bedroom, barely big enough for his bed and dresser, but

TAYLOR BEGAN TO CALL frequently, eventually inviting the family to join him in Liberia. He seemed hurt by the separation and eager to reunite with his children. The next summer, Chucky traveled to Africa, where he, his mother and sister reconciled with Taylor after nearly a decade apart. The family arrived in Gbarnga, a small city in the Liberian bush outside Monrovia. From there, Taylor ruled over "Greater Liberia," the bush empire he had built over years of fighting in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Taylor arranged for Emmanuel and their daughter to stay at a separate residence, but insisted that Chucky stay with him.

At first, the boy from Orlando had trouble grasping that this imposing African warlord was his father. Taylor was surrounded by soldiers from his army, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia, some of whom went into battle in a sort of macabre burlesque, often cross-dressing in wigs and women's under-

AMERICAN WARLORD

wear, wearing amulets believed to make them impervious to bullets. The child soldiers called Chucky's dad "Papay" — Liberian slang for "Father."

The country that Taylor was fighting to control was conceived in America on December 21st, 1816, at the Davis Hotel in Washington, D.C. A group of prominent judges, congressional leaders and clergymen had gathered to address what they saw as a growing problem: what to do with the increasing number of freed slaves. The group, which came to be called the American Colonization Society, engineered a novel solution: Send the free blacks back to Africa, in the hope that they would build their own country in the image of the new American republic. It became America's first experiment in nation building.

What followed remains an abject lesson in the perils of U.S. intervention. After securing a spit of land under the guns of an American naval escort, the settlers set about re-creating an almost exact replica of the society they had just left behind. The freed slaves quickly assumed the role of master, exploiting the new nation's wealth in rubber, timber and iron ore, and even selling the natives into slavery. After World War II, the U.S. began plying the small African nation with military aid and developing its infrastructure, even as Liberia's leaders became increasingly criminal in their disposition.

By the time Charles Taylor emerged from the bush in the early 1990s, he was able to take advantage of long-festering tribal animosities, building his empire from the ashes of civil war. Unencumbered by ideology, Taylor took whatever position served him best. To curry favor with tribal elders, he became a shaman. To win the sympathies of American religious leaders like Jesse Jackson and Pat Robertson, he became a Baptist minister. As his troops closed in on Monrovia, he also briefly gained acceptance from the U.S. government, in the words of former ambassador to Ghana and the Ivory Coast Kenneth Brown, as the "lesser evil for the greater good."

"He was calm," recalls Brown, who slipped across the border of the Ivory Coast to meet Taylor in June 1990. "He was impressive. He had lived in the U.S. He looked like he was someone who was in control." Never mind that his bodyguards wore pearl necklaces and had painted nails — he seemed like the kind of warlord America could work with.

Chucky couldn't help but be impressed by his father's power and by the brutality of the civil war raging around him. After the reunion in Liberia, Chucky returned home changed. He was defiant; he began to drink, smoke pot and carry weapons, getting into confrontations with the police. In let-



The Sins of the Father

Like his father before him, Chucky Taylor fled the U.S. a fugitive from justice. After arriving in Liberia, Chucky (1) commanded his father's Anti-Terrorist Unit, with its insignia of a cobra and a scorpion (2). For five years, the ATU waged a campaign of terror, often beheading victims (3) and executing them in plain view (4). From the "Executive Mansion" of the ATU's training compound (5), Chucky allegedly tortured prisoners and oversaw brutal killings.

ters from prison, he dismisses the impact that exposure to Liberia's civil war had on him. "My story is a deep and complex one that encompasses different regions of this globe," he says. "My childhood is but a fraction of my makeup."

Lynn Henderson, Chucky's high school sweetheart, recalls him as "mean-looking" and "intimidating," even as a teenager. Around her, Chucky had a serious manner, and he rarely partied to excess. But with his friends, he became a different person. "He was a bad boy," she says. "But he was always nice to me. I was totally, totally in love with him."

At 16, Chucky was arrested for obstruction of justice after he interfered with an arrest of one of his friends, but no charges were filed. Then, on February 25th, 1994, Chucky and two accomplices attempted to mug another teenager. When the victim ran home, the crew followed. There, according to police, Chucky pointed a pistol in the face of the boy's father. "Shoot him!" one of his friends urged. The boys fled but were

soon arrested; Chucky was charged with four felonies. If convicted, he faced a minimum of three years in prison.

Following the arrest, a mental-health assessment suggested that Chucky had problems with drugs and alcohol, and noted his possible suicidal urges and his difficulty controlling his anger. His stepfather says that Chucky was "tough" but insists that he was a "normal kid." His mother chalks his behavior up to Chucky running with the wrong crowd. But one afternoon, Chucky did something that stunned his parents: He climbed into a bathtub and slit his wrist.

With her son facing years in jail, Emmanuel called Taylor in Liberia.

"I've had him until he's 17," she told Taylor. "Now it's your turn."

Emmanuel sent her son to live with Taylor. Like the founding fathers of the American Colonization Society, she saw a solution in Africa. And in 1994, as his father had a decade before him, Chucky Taylor fled the United States a fugitive from justice.

IT'S HARD TO EXPLAIN THE SITUATION over here," Chucky wrote to his girlfriend Henderson after his arrival. "All I can say is this: I'm in a place called Gbarnga, Bong County, Liberia, on the West African side of the continent. There are several warring factions in the country. It's a complex issue that needs a lot of research which I want you to do, because I want you to know what's going on over here, you look up L.I.B.E.R.I.A. and N.P.F.L. Leader Charles Ghankay Taylor my father it will shed light on what the fuck I'm going through."

By the time Chucky arrived, the civil war in Liberia had metastasized into a half-dozen warring ethnic factions, among whom Taylor's NPFL remained the most powerful. Chucky's father had also launched a war in neighboring Sierra Leone. The Revolutionary United Front, the rebel group in Sierra Leone that Taylor armed and traded diamonds with, soon became known for its signature act of terror: the amputation of



hands, arms and feet. What united both conflicts was Taylor's ambition to become the region's reigning power. "Everybody is scared of my father," Chucky wrote Henderson. "They say he wants to destabilize the whole of West Africa."

Chucky's reunion with his father was not always a happy one. Taylor enrolled Chucky in Accra Academy, an elite boarding school in Ghana. But before long, Chucky was arrested by authorities and expelled from school, reportedly for possessing drugs and weapons. Chucky explained the incident differently to Henderson. "Yea muthafuckers for no reason arrested me a locked my ass up for 5 days not knowing it was a plot to kill me for political reasons," he wrote. "When they set me free I bounced. I guess they thought I wanted to overthrow the country or something."

Taylor might have been a feared African warlord, but he didn't have any experience raising an American teenager. Father and son fought often; at one point Chucky took a razor blade to a photo of Taylor, slashing it repeatedly. "I'm firmly in control of my Destiny," Chucky insists in one letter from prison, sounding like any child determined to form a separate identity from his famous parent. "Not

even my father could influence my independent thinking."

A few years into his exile, homesick and eager for companionship, Chucky invited Henderson to visit Liberia. She accepted, but when she landed in Monrovia in 1997, it was nothing like the fairy tale she had envisioned. "They had just gotten out of war," she recalls. "There was no electricity. No running water. You had to bathe out of a bucket. Even living with the president's son was never extravagant."

After eight years of fighting, Taylor had finally been elected president, sweeping into power with 75 percent of the vote. His campaign slogan was a bizarre mixture of honesty and thinly veiled threat: "He Killed My Ma, He Killed My Pa, But I Will Vote for Him." The Taylors moved to Monrovia, and Chucky began attending the College of West Africa, a sort of prep school in the capital. When he accompanied his father, Chucky donned traditional dress and adopted the distinct syntax of Liberian English. "Nobody would notice that he was an American," says Koisee Garmo, a cousin of Chucky's who attended school with him. "He was a very kind person. He was generous." Yet Chucky also held onto the gangsta swagger from his Orlando days, twisting his hair into cornrows, suiting up in Kevlar, and moving nowhere without his

walkie-talkie and pistol. Not long after Chucky enrolled in the College of West Africa, the principal asked him to leave.

Henderson celebrated her 18th birthday in Monrovia, and two years later she became pregnant with Chucky's child. In January 2000, the president hosted a lavish state wedding in Monrovia for the couple. "My people shall be your people," he told Henderson. The newlyweds flew off to Trinidad for their honeymoon and settled into a two-story oceanfront home in Monrovia. President Taylor helped out with expenses at first, but he expected his son to make his own living.

Initially, Chucky pursued the timber trade, but he didn't show much of a knack for business. Before long, though, the 23-year-old found something he wanted to pursue. "Security," says Garmo. "The protection and well-being of himself and his father." Despite their fractious relationship, Taylor and his son now found

Jackson Mulbah, a former conscript in the Anti-Terrorist Unit, remembers Chucky from the base. "He was the chief of staff," says Mulbah. "He was bad, I will tell you that." The ATU trainers were mercenaries from the Gambia, Burkina Faso, Ukraine and Libya—some had been recruited by Taylor from el-Qaddafi's camps in the mid-1980s. Like other former child soldiers, Mulbah was put through "Zero Week," a brutal hazing that combined intense physical training with starvation. Trainees were sometimes mowed down in live-fire exercises; others were burned alive during rope drills over flaming barrels of gasoline. Mulbah recites a grim list of a few of the conscripts who didn't survive the training: "Moses Sumo. Roland Garwein. Sengbe Mulbah."

When Chucky appeared on the base, Mulbah recalls, a commander would ring a bell and shout, "Movement, cease!" Chucky would then address

"You abide by our law," Chucky told his men. "Go above the law and the law will lay hand on you."

a common cause. A fresh insurgency, intent on unseating Taylor, had crossed over the Guinean border. The threat focused Chucky's attention on the family business: war.

CHUCKY SET UP THE training facility for the Anti-Terrorist Unit in Gbatata, a small town several hours outside of Monrovia in Bong County, which had served as a base of operations for his father during the long civil war that brought him to power. The facility, also known as Cobra Base, was among the most feared locations in Liberia. Today it sits vacant, slowly disintegrating as the jungle reclaims it. On a nearby hilltop stands the "College of Knowledge," a roofless, five-room cinder-block structure painted in a cartoonish camouflage pattern, which once served as a training center and interrogation facility. On a ridge below are a handful of similar buildings; on one, where Chucky slept when he stayed at the base, faded, hand-painted letters read **EXECUTIVE MANSION**. The site had been a gravel quarry, and several deep pits are dug into the rock. Conscripts once filed through the base for training, many of them illiterate teenagers who had served in Taylor's Small Boys Unit throughout their adolescence.

the recruits. "Gentlemen, this is training base," he warned. "When you come here, you abide by our own law. When you go above the law, the law will lay hand on you." Recruits were disciplined by being beaten as they carried massive logs. Mulbah received 25 lashes from his own best friend on Chucky's orders after failing to hit a bottle during target practice. At one point, he says, Taylor removed Chucky from the base "because of his wickedness."

The Anti-Terrorist Unit soon became the best-equipped—and ultimately the most powerful—outfit in Taylor's security apparatus. In April 1999, a rebel group attacked the town of Voinjama, near the border with Guinea. As described in the federal indictment, Chucky traveled to a checkpoint near the site of the attack with members of the Anti-Terrorist Unit. Civilians fleeing the town streamed over the St. Paul River Bridge, deeper into Liberia. Chucky stopped a group passing through the checkpoint. He asked whether there were rebels among them. According to the indictment, he then "selected three persons from the group and summarily shot them in front of the others." The ATU detained several survivors and brought them to the base at Gbatata; by that time the prisoners had been pistol-whipped by Chucky and several ATU officers. The prisoners were then tossed into pits, which

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were covered with iron bars and barbed wire, and subjected to a laundry list of torture, including being burned by cigarettes and having plastic melted on their genitals. At one point, according to the indictment, Chucky ordered the execution of a prisoner, but when an ATU officer raised his gun, Chucky instructed him to cut off the man's head instead. Several officers held the man down, forcing his head over a bucket. "The soldiers then severed [the victim's] head by cutting his throat from back to front as blood dripped into the bucket, while he screamed and begged for his life," the indictment states.

Some close to Chucky claim that he had little to do with the Anti-Terrorist Unit. "He was a military adviser," says Samuel Nimley, a former ATU commander. "As a military adviser, he could assume leadership of any unit." Nimley is especially dismissive of those accusing Chucky. "If you get bitten by a snake once," he says, "even if you see a worm, you will get frightened."

Yet many others insist that Chucky



Troubled Prince

Chucky enjoyed his status as the first son of Liberia (1), but his relationship with his father was strained. Once, in a fit of rage, Chucky took a razor to Taylor's picture (2). Still, his father threw a lavish state wedding for Chucky and Lynn (3), telling the bride, "My people shall be your people."



When Chucky's driver dented his car, he reportedly ordered the man beaten "till you see bones and shit."

directed the ATU. "He started doing the Anti-Terrorist Unit, and he was really proud of it," Henderson says. Tarnue, the general who served under Chucky, says he witnessed the president's son ordering executions at Gbatata. When he confronted Taylor about the abuses, however, the president refused to hear any criticism of his son. Ultimately, Chucky had Tarnue arrested and brought to the holding cell near Chucky's office behind the Executive Mansion. There, ATU officers tied Tarnue's arms behind his back, slammed a rifle butt into his eye, gouged his face with a bottle cap and yanked on his genitals with a rope.

Tarnue is no stranger to war atrocities. As a general in the NPFL, Taylor's fighting force, he trained an army notorious for murder, rape, torture and mutilation, though he denies any direct involvement in human rights violations. Today he works as a security guard in Baltimore and serves as a witness for the Special Court for Sierra Leone, recasting himself as a victim of the same human rights abuses the forces he commanded have been accused of. "Chucky, he knew that he was a U.S. citizen," Tarnue says. "But the atrocities that he committed were because his father was

the president. He feel that he become lawless. He became the commander of the ATU and had all the authoritative-ness to do anything to anybody. And the father couldn't do anything about it."

BEFORE LONG, CHUCKY'S ambition spilled over Liberia's borders. Following his father's lead, he began providing arms and personnel to Sierra Leone. He became involved in smuggling gems, a trade that drew all brands of international criminals to Liberia, including operatives for Al Qaeda. Chucky worked with Israeli arms dealer Leonid Minin and South African mercenary Fred Rindle to orchestrate diamond deals that would in turn fuel weapons purchases. His trade in "blood diamonds" earned him an honor also bestowed on his father: a travel ban issued by the U.N. Security Council.

In August 2000, Chucky's name turned up when Italian police stormed a hotel room outside Milan and found Minin passing the evening with four prostitutes and 58 grams of cocaine. Minin's personal effects included more than \$25,000 in cash, \$500,000 in diamonds and 1,500 pages of documents. Several faxes mentioned Chucky. One

detailed a "special package for JUNIOR" of 100 "units" (what Italian officials believed to be missiles). After Minin's arrest, according to documents seized by the Italian police, Chucky faxed a final message signed "Charles McArthur Taylor Junior" that read, "And from this day forward never in your life ever contact me again."

Chucky's personal life also began to suffer. His young wife had undergone the jarring transition from an American high school to being the wife of one of Liberia's most notorious warlords. She rarely ventured beyond the couple's oceanfront villa, where she cared for their young son. Although she insists that she had little inkling of the terror her husband inspired, their marriage started to fall apart. The president took notice and counseled Henderson to stand by Chucky. "The patient dog gets the biggest bone," he told her.

But Chucky's personality was taking on what Henderson calls a "Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde" turn. One day Chucky came home with his hand in a cast; Henderson believed he'd broken it punching someone. The deeper he became involved in the Anti-Terrorist Unit, the less she recognized the sweet, shy boy she'd known from Orlando. "One day he decided he

just didn't want to be in a relationship," Henderson says. "He couldn't deal with being a husband and a father." She filed for divorce in 2002 and returned to Orlando. Chucky rarely contacted his wife and child, and provided no support for his family.

In the years they were apart, Chucky's violence spun out of control, encompassing even those closest to him. On the streets of Monrovia, average Liberians still recite the enduring legend that Chucky murdered his own driver, a man named Isaac Gono, for hitting a dog and denting Chucky's BMW. One human rights report quotes Chucky as ordering his bodyguards to beat Gono "till you see his bones and shit." The Justice and Peace Coalition, another human rights group, received a letter from Gono's family indicating that he was beaten to death by ATU officers "allegedly acting upon the instructions of Charles Taylor Jr. on September 18th, 2002, at about 4 a.m." According to the report, the Liberian Ministry of Defense denied Chucky's involvement, attributing Gono's death to "manhandling" by two ATU officers.

George Wortuah, Gono's brother-in-law, lives on the outskirts of Monrovia, not far from Chucky's beachfront home. As Wortuah tells it, Gono had grown close to Chucky, a relationship that made the other officers jealous. "The bodyguards beat Isaac because of Chucky gave order to punish Isaac," he says in Liberian English. When the guards finished, they drove Gono's body to JFK Medical Center. Wortuah viewed the corpse there. The body was mutilated, Gono's clothes torn to shreds by the ferocity of the attack.

Soon afterward, Chucky summoned the family. "He apologized," Wortuah recalls. "He assured us he ordered his bodyguard to punish Isaac. He don't say you should beat him to kill him. That was mistake." At the meeting, Chucky gave the family \$1,000 in cash for Gono's two children. Eventually, Wortuah says, the family received \$16,000 to pay for the funeral and provide for the children. The money came directly from President Taylor.

Taylor may have tolerated and even encouraged the abuses Chucky carried out against helpless civilians and his enemies, but he couldn't stomach the senseless murder of an ATU officer. Soon after Gono's death, Taylor revoked Chucky's command. By this point, Taylor's regime was under siege. A rebel faction had beaten back his forces to Monrovia, and Taylor ineptly tried to tamp down the insurgency by ordering the ATU to arrest enemies of the state. In March 2003, the Special Court for Sierra Leone indicted Taylor on 17 counts of crimes against humanity [Cont. on 118]

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(Cont. from p. 92) — including murder, rape and enslavement — making him the first African head of state to face such charges.

As his father's empire collapsed, Chucky reconnected with his estranged wife after a year of silence. Chucky's mother begged Henderson to help rein in his increasingly erratic behavior. "Even though he was a shitty father and a shitty husband, I didn't want him to die," Henderson says. "I felt like he was just going to kill himself." Henderson returned to Monrovia with her son and found Chucky wasted away. "He now had a heavy drug problem," she says. "I think it was cocaine." His father's indictment had left Chucky rattled and paranoid. "He was just not all there," she says. "He probably knew it was over." Though Chucky and his father had reconciled, Gono's death had driven a wedge between them. When Henderson asked Chucky about the incident, he refused to discuss it other than to say that he "absolutely did not do it."

As fighting outside the capital intensified, the mood at Taylor's mansion grew somber. Sitting with the president one day, Henderson began to sob quietly, saddened by the prospect of fleeing Liberia once more, never to return. When Taylor asked her what was wrong, she gave her father-in-law a hug, unable to explain her emotions. Taylor was taken aback. "He's not the type of guy used to getting hugs," Henderson says.

By that point, Chucky had retreated to his villa. One afternoon, Henderson recalls, an ATU officer ran to the door, frantically reporting that "the rebels had breached the city." Mortars sounded in the distance. Chucky rushed his wife and three-year-old son into the back seat of his truck and threw a Kevlar vest over them. Henderson was terrified.

"OK, we're going to die," she said.

"It's OK, Mama," her tiny son replied.

The ATU officer shattered the truck's rear window to give him a line of fire, and the group raced the short distance to the president's residence. When they arrived, they found President Taylor sitting calmly among several of the mothers of his other children. Chucky's father laughed at his son for overreacting.

At home, Henderson could do little to control Chucky's drug use. One day she opened the bathroom to discover Chucky with what she thought was cocaine. When she knocked the drugs out of his hands, he leapt on her, wrapping his hands around her neck. Summoned by Henderson's screams, Chucky's mother and his son rushed into the bathroom. Chucky had never laid a hand on Henderson before. Soon after, Henderson returned home to Orlando. "That's my son's last memory of his dad," she says. "Him strangling me."

IF CHUCKY HAD BOTTOMED out, so had the Taylor presidency. By the summer of 2003, a ferocious battle known locally as "World War III" engulfed Monrovia. The fighting was savage, even by Liberian standards. Desperate for intervention from the United States, citizens stacked the dead in front of the U.S. Embassy. World leaders united in their call for Taylor to resign. On July 18th, 2003, Chucky fled Liberia. The following month, his father stepped down and accepted exile in Calabar, Nigeria.

Chucky followed him there, and over the next several years his life took a nomadic turn. He ventured to South Africa, Libya, Paris and London. In 2005, he spent several weeks at a studio in Trinidad, recording 20 hip-hop tracks. "I grew up in the era of hip-hop," he says. "Obviously, my evolution has taken place at a rapid pace. It is a snapshot of my mind frame at that time." Federal agents confiscated a notebook of his lyrics, which included the lines "We ain't takin' no slack/Y'all try to tackle mine/Layin' bodies in stacks" and "Take this for free/

accountable," says Morton Sklar, executive director of the World Organization for Human Rights USA, a group that has filed two amicus briefs in Chucky's case. "The Bush administration is supporting human rights enforcement in a foreign country. But it's hard not to see the implications of this case: whether U.S. officials can and should be held similarly accountable."

The U.S. government, citing "security concerns," refuses to allow a face-to-face interview with Chucky. In his frequent letters and phone calls to me, however, Chucky criticizes everyone involved in his case: his public defenders (whom he wants to fire), the federal investigators ("No disrespect, but what experience do they have in Liberia?"), even the judge ("There's a great deal of political pressure on her. She's one of the youngest on the circuit. She's a female"). Chucky is a convert to Islam; he sprinkles his conversations with Arabic phrases and now goes by the name Hamza Abdul Aziz. He remains cagey about his father, whom he refers to alternately as "my father" or simply "Taylor." Chucky insists that he

question arises, am I a big fish in Liberia, and among panafricanists in the region, my response is, I'm a mere tad pole in a vast ocean, filled w/ sharks, scavengers, and whales, pounded by hurricanes."

The closest he gets to a direct statement on war crimes comes in an opinion he offers about a U.S. Marine accused of executing two prisoners of war during the battle of Fallujah. Chucky says he can empathize with the accused soldier: "I know that in conflict, men, particularly brave men, can see their actions blurred by circumstance." In simple terms, Chucky views himself as a victim, not a perpetrator. "The average human rights group thinks about the little man," he tells me. "Well, I am the little man."

Were it not for his arrest, Chucky would be nothing more than an asterisk on his father's legacy: the destruction of an entire country. Monrovia today remains a shell of a city. Only the wealthiest live with power or running water. Mountains of steaming trash tower over rusted tin shacks. U.N. peacekeepers man machine-gun nests along roadways with billboards reminding Liberians that RAPE IS A CRIME. The nation that Charles Taylor and his son left behind is like a drunk uncle who has finally dried out: broke, unemployed and prone to maudlin binges of self-destruction. Chucky's path in life has always mirrored that of his father, from beloved son to American fugitive to African warlord. Now the arc of their shared biography has terminated with their respective court dates: Charles Sr. at The Hague, Charles Jr. before a federal court in Miami. Their trials will seek to answer fundamental questions of guilt and innocence and to provide a measure of justice for the millions in Liberia and Sierra Leone whose lives have been destroyed by civil war. But Chucky's story also serves as a reminder of the way in which the pull of family can transmit violence across the generations like a virus, oblivious to national boundaries. One of the most tragic crimes a father can commit, in the end, lies in the lessons he imparts to his son.

Last November, as he awaited trial, Chucky wrote a letter to his own son. "Daddie has some things to take care of before you see him," it read. "Sorry for the times when you came to visit, I was not a better man, and father."

"The U.S. has no right to prosecute me," Chucky says. "In conflict, brave men can see their actions blurred."

Six feet under is where you gonna be."

In March 2006, when Nigerian authorities arrested Taylor to face extradition to The Hague, Chucky boarded a flight for Miami. He had just gotten a phoenix tattoo, a symbol of his hope to restart his life in America. But when he arrived, immigration agents met him at the plane and placed him under arrest. As they read Chucky his Miranda rights, he recited along.

The Justice Department, which had stood by while the Bush administration renounced the Geneva Conventions and authorized the use of torture on detainees in its War on Terror, was nonetheless eager to prosecute Chucky on charges of violating the Geneva Conventions. The normal procedure in such cases, to avoid the political expense of a trial, is either to ignore the offenses or to extradite those charged with torture back to the country where the abuses were committed. But officials in Immigration and Customs Enforcement made the case a priority, coordinating agents from the FBI to fly all over the world to gather evidence against Chucky. If convicted, he faces up to life in prison.

Human rights groups hailed his indictment as a milestone. "The Chucky Taylor case is a dramatic step forward in support of holding torturers criminally

should be extradited, and that any trial should take place in Monrovia. "I am a Liberian first and foremost," he says. "The U.S. has no right to prosecute me. If I am going to do a day under conviction, it should be in Liberia." All of his actions, he insists, fall within the Geneva Conventions. He holds out hope that the CIA's destruction of videotapes of its interrogations of Al Qaeda detainees will somehow unravel the government's case. His attorneys have requested access to the classified Department of Justice memo that approved the use of torture, and presented a side-by-side comparison between the acts Chucky is accused of and those committed by American agents in the War on Terror.

But Chucky makes few attempts to explain his own actions, and when he does, they come across as little more than incoherent ravings, with mangled metaphors and paraphrased shards from Clausewitz and *The 48 Laws of Power*. "Clearly this indictment is meant to smoke me out," he writes at one point. "For me to talk or to create a clearer picture, there is intense anger due to my declines, based upon there several request, thru what is called queen for a day letter aka use of immunity, a five day debrief, before this indictment was ever pursued." He closes the letter: "Now the

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United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

**UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries
7 October 2008**

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

Newspaper Summary

Key Opposition Figure opts for Prosecution of Corrupt Public Officials

(The Analyst, Daily Observer, Heritage, The News, National Chronicle, The Informer, The Inquirer)

- Addressing a news conference Monday, the political leader of the opposition Liberty Party (LP) spoke to allegations of corruption involving government officials who he said must be prosecuted.
- "By any measure, corruption is today, more than ever in the history of our country, unrestrained and persistent, as average Liberians struggle to survive. It now seems like almost every interaction with our government has become transactional, with personal graft becoming more important than raising our national revenue; and individual interests superseding the common good," Counsellor Brumskine said.
- Brumskine's Liberty Party has insisted on the conduct of an investigation into a recent email scam involving some presidential aides including a former Minister of State for Presidential Affairs, Willis Knuckles, to be treated as a criminal matter and those accused of involvement dismissed by the government to pave the way for proper investigation.

Liberia Shows Biggest Leap in African Governance Index

(New Democrat, The Analyst, The News, The Informer)

- The new 2008 Ibrahim Index of African Governance, which was published Monday by the Mo Ibrahim Foundation indicated that governance has improved in nearly two-thirds of sub-Saharan African nations between 2005 and 2006 with Liberia showing the biggest leap in government performance in the period, while Mauritania deteriorated the most.
- Liberia, the fastest riser, ranked 38th with a change in score of 10.4 points to give a score this year of 48.7.
- The 2008 Ibrahim Index of African Governance said 31 of 48 sub-Saharan nations recorded higher scores than in last year's survey, with Liberia the best improver. Mauritius was the best-run country and Somalia the worst.

Captain of French Vessel to testify on high seas in US\$500M Cocaine Case

(Daily Observer)

- State prosecutors in the US\$500 million cocaine case involving nine Ghanaians on Friday, October 3, 2008 submitted that Justice Minister Philip A.Z. Banks, III had concluded arrangements for the captain of the French vessel that allegedly intercepted the cocaine ship to give his testimony on high seas. The testimony, according to the Prosecution, would be given live on screen. It is not known when the captain would give his testimony.

World Bank Launches Adolescent Girls Initiative This Week

(The News, Daily Observer, The Informer)

- The World Bank is expected to formally launch the Adolescent Girls Initiative for Liberian girls in the United States of America, Presidential Press Secretary, Cyrus Wleh Badio said Monday.

- According to him, the Adolescent Girls Initiative would be launched during the bank's annual meeting in Washington, D.C. He said the initiative, also supported by Denmark, is intended to provide increased economic opportunities for the targeted Liberian girls.

Mercy Ship Restores Eye-Sight to 33 Persons

(The News)

- Statistics provided by doctors and county officials have confirmed that at least 33 persons from various localities in Bomi County have regained their sight through a voluntary optical surgery service provided by Mercy Ship.
- The 33 persons attributed their visual impairment to communicable diseases in their environments.
- At a thanksgiving program in appreciation to Mercy Ship, the city mayor of Tubmanburg, Bomi County, Mr. Gballey Karnley said the restoration of sight to anyone is a glorious opportunity.

Residents Report Rise in Criminal Activities at Bong Mines Pier

(The News)

- [sic:] Residents of Bushrod Island have complained about a rise in criminal activities, particularly robbery in the once viable iron ore shipment base located at Bong Mines Company compound, and a notorious hideout popularly called "Didicon" which is directly opposite the former company. Some of the residents interviewed over the weekend alleged that most of the notorious robbers were once part of various warring factions during the 2003 round of fighting. Predicated upon the upsurge in hijackings and other heinous crimes permeated against residents, their interim Chairman Titus Toe called on the Police through the Ministry of Justice to deploy the newly trained Emergency Response Unit to weed out criminals in these two areas and also break down ghettos. The densely criminal infested community, according to victims, is also infamous for selling a range of dangerous drugs and other stolen items thereby posing deviant threat.

Radio Summary

Star Radio *(News culled today from website at 11:00 am)*

Liberia Improves Performance in African Governance Index

(Also reported on ELBC and Truth FM)

Opposition Politician wants Corrupt Public officials Prosecuted

Truth F.M. *(News monitored today at 10:00 am)*

Liberia Places Temporary Ban on Chinese milk

- Liberia has banned Chinese milk products following the tainted milk scandal that left tens of thousands of children ill in the Asian country.
- "In September we received reports that these products made lot of victims in China, and that a good quantity has been shipped towards Africa. On October 2 the same report was reiterated," a senior Liberian Commerce Ministry official, Frederick Nuckeh, told journalists Tuesday.
- "Based on this information, we have decided to put a temporary ban on the milk from China until the problem is solved," he added.
- He said the customs authorities on the borders will be extra vigilant to make sure Chinese milk does not enter the country illegally.

BBC World Service Trust

Tuesday, 7 October 2008

Former child soldier tells of torture, murder and enslavement

Written by By Joseph Cheeseman in The Hague

A former child soldier has testified to the torture, enslavement and murder of civilians by Sierra Leone's RUF rebels allegedly supported by the indicted former Liberian president, Charles Taylor. Captured by rebels at age 12, Komba Sumana gave a vivid account of his ordeal saying he was captured by people he identified as Liberian English-speaking men commanded by one Major Wallace formerly of Alhaji Kromah's ULIMO rebel group.

Sumana, who is now in his early 20s, is the 51st prosecution witness. He told the court that he hid in a forest when he saw the rebels pour boiling water on the head of a man who had just got a new hair cut, simply because he failed to produce rice as the rebels had demanded. Mr. Sumana testified to the invasion of their hiding place by six AK-47-toting rebels whom he said spoke Mende and Liberian English.

He recalled that his father, mother, and other captives under gun point carried looted goods for the rebels. The witness described to the court his recruitment into the rebel faction along with 200 captives which included being taken on a three-week walk to Kailahun for training. He said a Liberian woman he could only identify as Monica trained them in various manners of warfare. "They trained us how to attack a town, how to burn a house, how to take over a town" he said. Under cross-examination by the prosecution, Sumana said that they were badly treated as they were beaten and starved.

Once they had passed out from the training Sumana went on, the rebel battlefield commander Sam Mosquito Bockarie gave them AK-47 rifles, RPG bombs and other weapons. He told the judges that during the distribution of the arms he saw some men dressed in military uniform and wore red caps. He told the court that one of the fighters identified the men as Liberians. "There was one rebel who was standing close to me at the time I was standing in the line.

I asked him about the soldiers who had come and he said to me that they were Charles Taylor's soldiers". Sumana told the judges that his father was amputated and his elder brother was killed by the rebels. Crime against humanity which includes murder, cruel treatment, and rape are some of the charges against Charles Taylor.

Courtesy: BBC World Service Trust

The Liberian Journal

Tuesday, 7 October 2008

Ending Impunity: Taylor, “Chuckie”, and the Gaudy Other Ex-Warlords

By: Samuel G. Toe (Guest Commentary)

The landmark torture case involving Charles “Chuckie” Taylor, Jr., son of war crimes indictee and former Liberian president, Charles Taylor, bears significantly on the new regime of international justice fast taking sway.

Under the weight of international law and hefty shelling of universal jurisdiction, notorious figures like rebel Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) leader Joseph Kony, Sudanese leaders Ahmad Muhammad Harun and Ali Muhammad Ali Abd-Al-Rahman, and other culprits of gross human rights violations are frantically scurrying for cover, making it increasingly difficult for them to operate in safety. Bodies such as the International Criminal Court (ICC), the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY), the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), and the UN-backed Sierra Leonean Special Court (SLSC) are leading the charge against these men.

The likes of “Chuckie”, Charles Taylor, Sr., Jean-Pierre Bemba Gombo and Thomas Lubanga Dyilo of DRC, and Radovan Karadzic, the Bosnian Serb leader, are already secured behind bars waiting to face their victims in the presence of the law.

Of particular interest to Liberian human rights advocates, however, is the fact that charges in Chuckie’s torture case are in connection to crimes committed in Liberia in the course of its civil conflict from 1989 – 2003, particularly under the rule of his father’s criminal presidency when he headed the infamous Anti Terrorist Unit (ATU).

To the many victims of torture and other atrocities, this case whistles the turn of the rusty wheels of justice, however slowly. But to the rest of the kitschy perpetrators in Liberia’s 14 years conflict, it may signal something else – an ominous precursor of things to come.

If the assortment of former rebel leaders and ex-generals – the likes of Alhaji Kromah, Edward Slinger, Lewis Brown, Joe Wylie, Prince Johnson, Sekou Damate Conneh, Adolphus Dolo, Kabineh Ja’neh, Daniel Chea, Melvin Sogbandi, Coco Dennis, Richard Saa Gbolie, and others – think they can dazzle and flaunt the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) process, and invariably flout justice with impunity, they must now stop and re-think. In light of this case, they are all potential indictees should they ever travel or reside in the U.S.

Here is why

In 1994, the U.S. Congress voted to enact a federal anti-torture statute (18 U.S.C. § 2340A) in conformance with its obligation as signatory to the International Convention against Torture (entered into force July 1987). This law included very robust language –thanks to ardent advocates and rights champions in U.S. Congress.

The 14-year-old federal law allows the United States to wield jurisdiction over and bring charges against (1) an “alleged [torture] offender who is a national of the United States”; or (2) “an alleged [torture] offender who is present in the United States, irrespective of the nationality of the victim or alleged offender”, and no matter the location of the crime. Chuckie’s trial is within the rubrics of this law.

A somewhat similar law, the U.S. Alien Tort Claims Act (ATCA) of 1789, allows comparable recourse to alien victims for “violation of the law of nations or a treaty of the United States” for “civil action by an alien for a tort only”. For its part, this statute opens U.S. federal courts to suits by aliens for tort in violation of their rights. Where it is impossible to launch criminal prosecution, victims can at least seek compensatory damages against their victimizers.

Under this law, reparations and compensation suits have been heard, and verdicts issued against ex-generals, former presidents, and war criminals from Argentina, Ethiopia, Bosnia, Guatemala, the Philippines, Chile, and other countries. A suit against two Salvadorian generals living in Miami resulted in a 54 million jury verdict in 2002; a 10,000-person class action suit against ex-Philippines president Ferdinand Marcos for “torture, execution and disappearances”, returned a 1.2 billion exemplary damage verdict, and a \$766 million compensatory damage in 1995.

With these measures in place in the U.S. where many Liberian warlords have either resided, regularly stay, or maintain families and residence statuses, the avenue is now opening for rights advocates to seek justice in U.S. courts when it becomes impossible in Liberia.

Like his father’s two years ago, the case of “Chuckle” Taylor is unprecedented and historic.

Both men are charged for acts that constitute war crimes under the rubric of international law – Taylor Sr., by an international criminal tribunal, and Taylor Jr., by a U.S. federal prosecutor; Taylor Sr., for crimes in connection with Sierra Leone’s “dirty” war, and Taylor Jr., for despicable torture acts in connection with his father’s criminal presidency in Liberia.

Taylor Sr. was the first sitting president to be indicted, ordered arrested, and, after his departure from power, tried before an international criminal court. Taylor Jr. is the first under a 14-year-old U.S. federal law to be tried for the crime of torture committed outside the United States.

After flaunting and taunting international justice for eight years as warlord and leader of the notorious NPFL gang, and six years as leader of a criminal regime, (1997-2003), Charles Ghankay Taylor, the biggest and most colorful rebel actor in the Liberian conflict, was indicted in July 2003 by UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone (SLSC) for war crimes in connection with atrocities by the notorious Revolutionary United Front (RUF), a faction he is accused of arming, commanding, and supporting from afar.

By this move, the Sierra Leonean Special Court helped script a new accountability regime in international law that would make it difficult, if not impossible, for state officials to invoke presidential or diplomatic immunities as a basis for evading justice for war crimes and grave breaches of international human rights norms.

In 2006, Nigerian authorities who until then accorded former president Taylor sanctuary after an ECOWAS-brokered peace deal in 2003, bowed to international pressure and released him to the government of Madam Ellen Sirleaf who swiftly turned him over to authorities of the Special Court. Since August 2006, Taylor has been answering to 11 counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity and other serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in Sierra Leone, facing the evidentiary weight of prosecutors in trial chambers of the Special Court now sitting in The Hague.

Taylor Jr., for his part is being dragged before a judge in the U.S. state of Florida as a result of similar bold steps, this time, by the U.S. Justice Department. Florida’s Court is charging Taylor Jr. (and criminal co-conspirator to his father), for torture in connection to Liberia while he presided over the notorious

ATU torture camps. Dragged before Judge Cecilia M. Altonaga of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida, “Chuckie” will answer to charges of “criminal responsibility for acts of torture, which include burning victims, shocking them with an electrical device, imprisoning them in holes in the ground, and ordering that their genitals be mutilated”. His charges also include ordering executions. (Human Rights Watch, 2008).

“Chuckie” was initially arrested for forging signatures and traveling on an illegal passport. Before his sentencing could be announced out of a guilty plea, the prosecution deemed it necessary to charge him with additional serious crimes against innocent victims. His innovative torture tactics executed in the cesspools, pit-holes and catacombs of his Gbatala military base in Gbarngba, Bong County, could not go unaccounted for.

With the far-reaching and robust language of international human rights instruments, and the mandate and authority of the ICC, it seems more difficult for culprits to escape justice. Even more encouraging are recent U.S. Congressional support to the Torture Convention, the Genocide Convention, and prohibitions on recruiting child soldiers in conflict; bringing these crimes under U.S. jurisdiction irrespective of faraway occurrence.

But the Taylors are not the only culprits of torture and other serious crimes. Many other leaders of rebel movements in Liberia’s conflict may be equally culpable as Charles and “Chuckie”.

Like “Chuckie” Taylor, those responsible for the excruciating torture of student leader Momo Siafa Kpoto and others in February 2003 during Taylor’s rule must brace themselves for the possible torture trial in the U.S. should they ever travel there, and should they escape the TRC process.

Those responsible for the overnight transformation of the basements at the Executive Mansion and Pan African Plaza building into torture chambers where some forty-seven students of the University of Liberia, including student Michael Lahai, were held and tortured as a result of an SOD and ATU raid on 21 March 2001, must brace themselves for similar fate as “Chuckie” Taylor (Amnesty International Report: 2001).

Culprits of Taylor’s security forces torture in mid-2002 of journalist Hassan Bility and three other men, Ansumana Kamara, Blama Kamara and Mohammad Kamara, all belonging to the Mandingo tribe, are also potential torture indictees (Amnesty International, 2002).

The culprits of torture of the human rights activist and lawyer Tiawon Gongloe, who on 24 April 2002 was arrested for a speech he made in Guinea concerning instability in West Africa, must account for their torture acts. Gongloe was briefly detained in a police cell in Monrovia, “where he was reportedly brutalized and tortured before being released, that Catholic Archbishop Michael Francis is said to have wept openly when he visited Gongloe on his sickbed in Monrovia. (See the book, *Impunity Under Attack*, by Sleh, Toe, and Weah, 2008). With sore body, beaten bones, “puffed and bloodshot eyes”, Tiawon Gongloe could hardly carry the weight of his own physique on the morning when he was brought out of the police cell. “He continued to complain of severe internal pains, suggesting internal bleeding, and had to be carried on a volunteer’s back.”

In similar light, the beating and torture of civilians of New Kru Town by security forces loyal to Daniel Chea, Benjamin Yeaten, General Roland Duo, and others, may fall under the rubric of this anti-torture law. Thomas Yaya Nimely and others may be liable for torture and inhumane acts for brutalizing civilians in Bassa, Lofa, and Southeastern Liberia. Momo Geeba, Sahr Gbollie, Yekeh and others, may be culpable for torture and other inhumane acts at Gbatala, Watanga and other places (Amnesty International Report,

2001). General Alhaji Kromah and others may be liable for torture for ULIMO's actions in Lofa County and elsewhere.

Today, Liberians victimized by rebel brutality have greater cause to celebrate than ten years back. As the tables turn and its people muster sufficient courage (notwithstanding threats of reprisals) to demand accountability for human right violations; and with the help of U.S. and international justice systems, we are potentially witnessing the true dawn of a new day, when our country is ordered by the rule or law, and not the rule of men.

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