

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

Thursday, 9 March 2006

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.
If you are aware of omissions or have any comments or suggestions please contact
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Awareness Times
9 March 2006

At Special Court...

Witness says RUF rebels forced civilians to mine

***By Saffia S. Kabba
& Tom E. Tommy***

Prosecution witness, TF1.108, testifying at the ongoing RUF trial at the

Special Court for Sierra Leone, has revealed that RUF rebels used to force civilians to mine for them. He

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Witness says RUF rebels forced civilians to mine

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also stated that the rebels also used to force civilians to farm for them. He said civilian were captured and forced to do domestic works for the rebel commanders. The witness cited Commander Augustine Gbao as one such commander who was particularly using civilians for domestic purposes.

HE said during the harvest seasons, produce such as coffee, were handed over to Commander

Augustine Gbao, who was by then the G5 Commander.

The witness further testified that the movement of civilians within the areas occupied by the rebels were restricted, adding however that civilians coming in from Liberia were freely allowed entry into the country. He went further to state that civilians who failed to abide by the dictates of the rebels were either executed or subjected to inhumane treatment such as merciless beating and the likes.

Awoko
9 March 2006

Witness narrates

Four people were killed for attempting to leave Kailahun

By Betty Milton

The 60th witness in the prosecution, TF1-108 of the three indictees of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) has narrated that a man and his wife together with two other people were killed because they

attempted to leave Kailahun for Guinea.

The witness, a Mende who was led in evidence by the prosecution Allan Warner, explained that while they were in New York a town in the Lauwawa Chiefdom in the Kailahun District civilians were only allowed to leave

their area when they were given passes by the Military Police (MP) of the G5.

The civilians only left Kailahun for neighbouring Guinea or Liberia when they were carrying loads for RUF Commanders. Any attempt by civilians to leave their towns

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would lead to killing.

TF1-108 further stated that one of such occasions was when a man together with his wife and two other people were caught attempting to cross the river to Guinea when they were caught by the rebels who were guarding the border. These people, the witness said, were taken back to Kailahun in the Court Barray and killed in the presence of Augustine

Gbao, Martin George, Sam Koroma and Tom Sandy.

The prosecution witness narrated that Mosquito had a total of hundred civilians who were mining diamonds for him in various chiefdoms in the district around 1998.

This mining, he stressed, was done forcefully and the rebels never provided food for the civilians.

At the mining site, Mosquito was in command later

Momoh Rogers, Dennis Lansana and Augustine Gbao were also commanders of the mining site.

Talking about the training base at Gbayama, the witness said he was aware that there was a training ground there where rebels used to take civilians to be trained in fighting. "A Law was passed by the rebels that if any civilian was caught around that end, he/she would be recruited for training. Children between

the ages of 8-9 years were also captured and were trained," he said.

Continuing, the witness said he was married with four wives one was raped by eight rebels. He stressed that he left his town New York

for Kailahun and when he returned he was informed that his wife had been raped and she could not make it and died later. The witness said he reported the matter to Mr. Gbao who told him that if he was not bothered

with the people dying in the bush. The three indictees Issa Sesay, Morris Kallon and Augustine Gbao are being charged with 18 counts for crimes against humanity and other serious violations of international humanitarian law.

Spectator
9 March 2006

Mining in Kailahun was by force witness reveals at special court

By Joseph Turay

The 59th prosecution witness in the ongoing RUF trial at the Special Court has yesterday testified in court that civilians who had been captured by RUF rebels in the Kailahun District were forcefully taken to mine diamonds in various diamond pits which the rebels had in the District.

The witness who was making his testimony yesterday identified himself as a Former Civilian Commander for the RUF rebels which he had carried out many assignments. The witness

whose code name was TF1-108 disclosed to the court that civilians who had been captured by the rebels under the General Command of Sam Bockarie (maskita) were taken to different RUF mining pits in villages like yandowahun, Jojoima and Mofindor a village closed to the Guinean border where civilians were mining in the streets.

These mining sites the witness revealed were being monitored by senior RUF commanders including the third accused Augustine Gbao. The witness also revealed to the court that children who

had been captured from their homes were also taken for military training to places like Bayama in the same District and later to Kono where the RUF had their training base.

The witness said children, both boys and girls, between the ages of 6 to 9 were also trained as child soldiers.

“My 6yrs old younger sister who was captured by the rebels was also taken for training and was raped by the commanders” the witness told the court.

He added that his wife was also raped by eight RUF commanders and that his wife

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later died that same week after that rape trauma.

TF1 – 108 narrated that after his wife’s death, he reported the matter to the third accused Gbao, who did not give him any word of encouragement.

The witness testified that his child was also shot dead by a rebel commander,

noting that civilians who had wanted to cross over to the Guinea border were arrested by the rebels who were later brought back to Kailahun town where they were later shot dead in a court Barry, in the presence of the third accused as he was the most Senior Commander, amongst the others that was present at that time.

Spectator
9 March 2006

Special court donors arrive this month

By Joseph Turay

Representatives of the different donor countries and Agencies for the Special Court of Sierra Leone are expected in Freetown this month. This was confirmed to this press by participants at the Special Court.

This delegation which is also referred

to as management committee of the Special Court is expected to arrive in Freetown on the 27th this month.

Official sources of the court say the delegation will be looking at the budget procedure of the court and also access the proceedings of the court to determine when it will finally end the trials.

Exclusive
9 March 2006

New York Sponsored RUF

By Mohamed Kai

A civilian commander who was the Liaison Officer between the revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the civilian population has testified that members of the RUF received funding from a New York village located in Kailahun.

Testifying in a closed session, the witness recalled that during the

decade long civil conflict, a village in Kailahun called New York used to provide consignment of coffee and other locally produced food stuff which were sold and the proceeds used to finance their armed struggle.

He went on to state that all the ten sections in Luawa chiefdom used to provide all kinds of local

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New York Sponsored RUF

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food stuff for the RUF which were handed over to Augustine Gbao.

According to him, in 1996, he traveled to Buedu in Kailahun District where late General Sam Bockarie (alias) Maskita, Johnny Paul Koroma, Issa Sesay, Dennis Mingo officially commissioned a radio station called Freedom, to sensitise captives and their fighters about their objectives and that the station was located in Kortuma village

The witness informed the Trial Chamber that the launching ceremony of the radio station was also witnessed by RUF commander Edward Kanneh, Benjamin Yeitay a Liberian national and other RUF commanders. He recalled that during at one point, himself and a large number of civilians were arrested on the orders of Augustine Gbao and detained in Kailahun, adding that after their release, they were forced to off load a truck loaded with a cache of arms and other logistics which they trafficked to the RUF base in Pendembu on foot.

"During our twenty five miles journey to Pendembu on foot, one civilian friend of mine got tired and was shot dead and his remains abandoned to decay along the road side," the witness lamented

Most of the civilians in New York village, the witness disclosed, used to survive on bush yams, raw banana, pumpkins and other wild fruits. He further told the court that civilians numbering over one hundred were abducted and whisked to Yamdawa and Mofindoh village where extensive mining was being done by the RUF. He concluded that his wife was raped and later died of severe pains and that the mining activities in two villages were supervised by Patrick Bangura and Stanley Jusu.

The trial continues today.

Editor's Note: The article inaccurately states that the testimony quoted in the article was given by the witness in closed session. The session was open.

Xinhua news agency

7 March 2006

Nigeria, Liberia open discussions on Charles Taylor's fate

LAGOS, March 8 (Xinhuanet) -- Nigeria and Liberia have begun discussions on the fate of former Liberian president Charles Taylor, who has been two and a half years in exile in Nigeria, Information Minister Frank Nweke said on Wednesday.

"Nigeria and Liberia are working jointly to arrive at a decision on the Charles Taylor issue," Nweke told reporters after cabinet's weekly meeting in the capital Abuja, refusing to elaborate.

Nigeria granted Taylor asylum in August 2003 following agreements reached between it and the international community and the African Union (AU) to pave way for stability and peaceful conduct of fresh elections in Liberia after 14 years of civil war.

But shortly after, both the U.S. government and the UN-backed special court in Sierra Leone mounted pressure on Nigeria to release Taylor so that he could face alleged indictments at the court.

President Olusegun Obasanjo had insisted that his country will only release the former president if there was a request from an elected Liberian government.

During her visit to Nigeria early this month, Taylor's successor, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf did not make any public comments on the Taylor question, but unconfirmed reports claimed that she had written formally to ask for his release to her administration.

The Analyst (Monrovia)

7 March 2006

Rights Activists Renew Call For Taylor's Turnover

There has been renewed call for the Federal Government of Nigeria to surrender former Liberian President Charles G. Taylor to the government of Liberia for onward turnover to the United Nations backed War Crimes Court in neighboring Sierra Leone to face trial.

Mr. Taylor has been residing in Calabar, Nigeria since August 2003 through an ECOWAS brokered deal.

Mr. Taylor is accused of crimes against humanity, gun running and diamond smuggling.

The renewed call for the former Liberian dictator to be turned over to face trial for crimes he allegedly committed in that country was made by two Liberian human rights activists, Mohammed B. Kallon and E. Derrick Nyenpan. Their call comes amidst widespread media reports that Nigeria is about to turn him over to the Liberian government.

Both men are serving in the capacities as Youth Spokesman and National Program Coordinator of Liberia New Vision, a human rights organization respectively.

Kallon and Nyenpan, in a dispatch from Australia where they currently reside, appealed to the conscience of the Nigerian Government to listen to the unremitting calls of the international community and turn over Mr. Taylor for trial in Sierra Leone.

The two rights activists asserted that it is politically and morally expedient for Nigeria to see reason in surrounding the "brutal and fearless" former rebel leader to face trial so that he can exonerate himself of the multiple charges.

The two rights activists, who expressed indignation and repugnance over the apparent delay by the Nigerian Government to turn the former president over to face trial, pointed out in the dispatch that the action of the Nigerian government has the potential to stall the global campaign by human rights and pro-democracy groups against culture of impunity in the sub region.

They noted that the continued provision of safe haven for Mr. Taylor by the Nigerian Government could encourage other alleged rights abusers to continue their campaign of terror and mayhem against innocent people, something the two men said does not augur well for the promotion of equal justice and genuine reconciliation for victims of the armed conflict in the sub region.

"The Culture of impunity in the country needs to stop. During the Taylor regime many innocent Liberians were tortured, maimed and illegally detained against their will. Nothing was done by the government to punish perpetrators of the crimes most of whom were security men.

"There were persistent calls from human rights and pro-democracy institutions for the former Liberian Leader to address the growing wave impunity but those calls fell on deaf ears," the rights activists noted in the dispatch.

According to them, they are victims of impunity, "like many other Liberians." "On December 24, 2005, when some men described by the Liberia National Police (LNP) as terrorists carried out a grenade attack on the D and C Filling Station in the Bernard Farm, Paynesville Community, we were among those victimized," they noted.

The men claimed that several persons got wounded and were admitted at a local hospital while other victims including themselves (Mohammed B. Kallon and E. Derrick Nyenpan) escaped the country for fear.

According to them, the turn over of Mr. Taylor to Sierra Leone to face trial will encourage many Liberians seeking sanctuary as the result of the over decade bloody armed conflict to return home rapidly.

The Liberia New Vision officials, who accused Mr. Taylor of meddling in the politics of Liberia, emphasized that his continued stay in that country could also undermine the fragile peace which is being currently enjoyed by the Liberian people.

Messrs Kallon and Nyenpan in their dispatch called on other human rights organizations and pro-democracy organizations world wide to join its campaign aimed at ensuring that the Nigerian Government turns Mr. Taylor over to face trial in Sierra Leone.