

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



Aerial view of parts of Lokomasama, Port Loko District

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:

Monday, 9 November 2009

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Special Court for Sierra Leone
Outreach and Public Affairs Office

PRESS RELEASE

Freetown, Sierra Leone, 6 November 2009

Special Court Launches Witness Protection Training Programme



The Special Court for Sierra Leone this week launched a month-long witness training programme for Sierra Leone police officers which, it is hoped, will lead to a national witness protection programme in the country.

The training, which was opened by Acting Registrar Binta Mansaray, is being conducted by Administration of Justice World Wide (AOJWW), in which four former Scotland Yard witness experts are participating.

The 36 police officers taking part in the training were selected from more than 180 applicants. They will receive instruction in witness

protection and handling issues, including witness documentation and assessment, witness sensitization, threat assessment and relocation options.

The Court, as part of its residual mechanism, is committed to continuing protection for witnesses who testified in Special Court trials for a period of five years. During that time, officials will provide support for the national witness protection and assistance programme as part of the Special Court's Legacy.

"We are not walking away," said Witness and Victims Section Deputy Chief Naeem Ahmed. "We are doing our own work and at the same time building the capacity of the national institution."

#END

The Special Court is an independent tribunal established jointly by the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone. It is mandated to bring to justice those who bear the greatest responsibility for atrocities committed in Sierra Leone after 30 November 1996.

INFORMATION FOR MEDIA - NOT FOR ADVERTISING

Produced by the
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Awoko

Monday, 9 November 2009

Si Leone Judges at Special Court accused of bias

By Betty Milton

Si Leonean judges making the panel of judges both at the Trial and Appeal Chamber of the Special Court of Sierra Leone have been accused by people that since they were victims of the war in the country, they have prejudice against the convicts.

One such person that made this accusation was the leader of the Revolutionary United Front Party (RUF) leader Eldred Collins who said that the Sierra Leonean Judges were also victims of the war and therefore should not have served in the court either as a prosecutor or judge.

"Because of what happened in the country they have a preconceived notion and therefore they should not have been in the panel" the RUF leader complained.

The Judges who were in the panel included Justice George Gelaga -King and Jon Kamanda of the Appeal Chamber while Justice Bankole Thompson was sitting at the Trial Chamber.

Questioned about this accusation the prosecutor of the Special Court Joseph Kamara who is also a Sierra Leonean said "that is an unfortunate remark which is brewed out of a lack of understanding of the process."

The prosecutor disclosed "this is an hybrid court and the purpose of getting Sierra Leoneans involved is so that we can capture that national and cultural expertise that Sierra Leoneans have and also to show ownership of the process for it not to be deemed a Western kind of court transplanted

to operate in Sierra Leone."

He further revealed that because of the hybrid nature of the court people could feel the presence and that part of them contributed to process of justice.

"That is why Sierra Leoneans are part of the Trial and Appeal chambers and we also have Sierra Leoneans as part of the prosecution team. Because at the end of the day as Sierra Leoneans are also part of the defence team they will know that these people can feel and resonate with you and that you can bank on them if it is not for everything but fairness.

"Yes indeed I can say the trials have been totally free and transparent, this is one such occasion wherein the

defence were given the utmost opportunity to present an effective case which they did. But the fact will always remain the same no matter how good the lawyer is; the facts are the facts and the lawyer is as good as his case, the prosecution case was strong, the evidence was there it has been proven and it was supported".

The lawyer who had been representing Issa Sesay the RUF convict Wayne Jordash also said: "the Sierra Leonean Judges whether at the CDF trial or this trial or at the appeal stage have been the Judges who have most ruled against the rebels and for the government forces I leave that fact for other people to consider whether there is a problem with victims being Judges in a mixed tribunal like this."

President Commissions Bumbuna

By Saidu Bah

President Ernest Koroma has officially commissioned the long awaited first phase of the Bumbuna hydro power plant of 50 megawatts and also unveiled a plaque at the Project site in Northern Sierra Leone after 30 years of construction.

He said the APC Government will not relent in spending every penny to make the Bumbuna project a reality and Bumbuna Phase II will soon commence for rapid economic growth and sustainable development and in the country.

The Director of Bumbuna Project Implementation Unit Abdulai Jalloh expressed thanks and appreciation to the Government, donors and the contractors for making the

The Spark

Monday, 9 November 2009

Taylor Accuses Britain of Transporting Arms to Sierra Leone

War crime accused person, Charles Taylor has accused Britain of transporting arms to Sierra Leone in violation of a

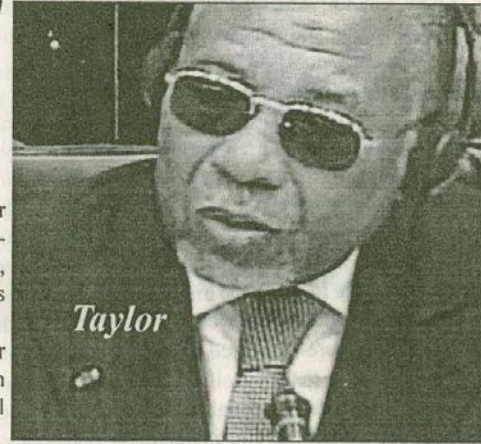
United Nations arms embargo on the country, and of using him as a scapegoat by falsely accusing him of responsibility for

the flow of arms into the country. Mr. Taylor also denied widespread press and investigative reports that the terrorist group, Al Qaeda, traded diamonds with Sierra Leonean rebels under his supervision in Liberia.

In his testimony, the accused former Liberian president told the judges that when the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council

Continued page 7

Africell boosts



Taylor

Taylor Accuses Britain of Transporting Arms to Sierra Leone

From front page

(AFRC) overthrew the elected government of Sierra Leone in 1997, the country's ousted president, Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, engaged a British mercenary group, Sandline, to dislodge the illegal AFRC junta regime from the country's capital Freetown. He explained that the arrangement was facilitated by then British High Commissioner to Sierra Leone Peter Penfold, whom he said already had links with Sandline prior to his assignment to Sierra Leone in March 1997. Sandline, Mr. Taylor said, provided training and arms for Sierra Leonean civil militia, the Kamajors, as well as Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) peacekeepers. Mr. Taylor said that the British naval ship HMS Conway was also in the high seas supplying arms and ammunition to forces loyal to President Kabbah. According to Mr. Taylor, the British - who had drafted a United Nations resolution imposing an arms embargo on Sierra Leone - were the ones violating the sanctions. "The British government was breaking the United Nations resolution," Mr. Taylor alleged.

According to Mr. Taylor, when it became clear that the British were the ones violating the UN sanctions on Sierra Leone, they decided to use him as a scapegoat, alleging that he was the one supplying arms to rebel forces in his neighboring country. "The explanation as to how arms are flowing into Sierra Leone is that they are coming from Liberia. They will bring in these arms and build this lie that arms are coming from Liberia," he said.

"They were aware but they put the blame on Taylor and I say to the world that how can I supply arms to Sierra Leone when I do not have arms in Liberia?" the former president asked. Mr. Taylor further alleged that Sandline also had an association with

another company which had diamond interest in Sierra Leone, an interest he said that Sandline was keen to protect.

"One of the companies associated with Sandline had diamond interest in Sierra Leone. Sandline is protecting that interest," he said. The accused former president reiterated a familiar position that these allegations are part of a conspiracy theory to destroy him.

"All of this is an orchestration for my destruction," he maintained. Mr. Taylor also made attempts to discredit international press reports that he was involved in a diamond trade with Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels. Referring to a June 2000 Washington Post and an August 2000 Wall Street Journal reports which both accused him of being involved in a diamond trade with the RUF, Mr. Taylor told the judges today that these were "deliberate attempts to spread disinformation to destroy me."

Also in his testimony, Mr. Taylor discussed in detail a report by a Washington Post reporter Douglas Farah, which linked him with the terrorist group Al Qaeda. The report, published in October 2003 and titled "The Role of Conflict Diamonds in Failed States" alleged that Al Qaeda operatives made regular visits to Liberia during which they purchased diamonds from Sierra Leone's RUF rebels. According to the report, Ibrahim Bah, an alleged agent of Mr. Taylor, had close ties with an Islamic fundamentalist group in Afghanistan.

The report further alleged that armed guards associated with Mr. Taylor escorted Al Qaeda operatives into Liberia to purchase conflict diamonds. Mr. Taylor denied the contents of the report, saying that if he had any knowledge that Ibrahim Bah was involved in such actions, he would not have entered Liberia.

"Bah would not have stayed in Liberia if we had known," he said. The former

president told the judges that "there are no armed guards escorting Al Qaeda into Liberia." Mr. Taylor also refuted contents of the Mr. Farah's report which alleged that by the end of 2001, Al Qaeda dispatched two operatives to Liberia offering to buy all diamonds the RUF could produce.

"That is so not true," Mr. Taylor told the judges. Mr. Taylor explained that when these allegations were made, his government cooperated with the United States authorities. After a thorough investigation, it was revealed that there were no Al Qaeda operatives in Liberia, he said. He explained that by the time Mr. Farah wrote his report in October 2003, "the matter was already properly investigated and dismissed."

Mr. Taylor further challenged the contents of a report by Belgian Federal Criminal Investigators, which alleged that Al Qaeda had a relationship with RUF rebels in Sierra Leone, through Liberia, under Mr. Taylor's supervision. "It is totally untrue. The report does not contain any factual evidence of the conclusion reached in that statement," Mr. Taylor responded.

Mr. Taylor said he was not aware of any meetings between RUF and Al Qaeda operatives in the Hotel Boulevard in Monrovia, as alleged in the Belgian report. Dismissing the report, Mr. Taylor told the judges that "this gives all the signs of a well orchestrated set of lies. How can professional people behave like this? This is a very amateurish report here destined to destroy people."

Mr. Taylor is responding to allegations that he provided support to RUF rebels in Sierra Leone through the supply of arms and ammunition in return for the country's diamonds. Mr. Taylor has denied the allegations against him and he is testifying as a witness in his own defense.

Concord Times
Monday, 09 November 2009

Special Court on witness protection training

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A cross section of participants

assessment, witness sensitization, threat assessment and relocation options.

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will provide support for the national witness protection and assistance programme as part of the Court's legacy.

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New Vision

Monday, 9 November 2009

Former RUF Adjutant Asks for Forgiveness

Former RUF Adjutant

"I'm asking anyone that I wronged during the war to feel free and come out and testify against me". I'm saying this because I don't want people to say anything negative against me after this ceremony". These were the words of former Revolutionary United Front mission adjutant, Sahr B, as he stepped forward during Fambul Tok reconciliation ceremony in Woafeh village, Tankoro chiefdom to ask for forgiveness.

Immediately after his speech, there was complete silence as the audience patiently waited to hear testimonies against Sahr. The first to testify was Madam Bondu.

Giving her testimony, Bondu alleged that Sahr slapped her during the war and now that they live in the same community she always see him as a threat to her life. She explained that Sahr is her step son but they are not on speaking terms since they returned to their village.

Responding to Bondu's allegation, Sahr said she respects women and denied slapping her stepmother. He however asked for forgiveness and both parties reconciled amidst dancing.

Another villager, Sahr Kemoh in his testimony said the former RUF mission adjutant saved the lives of hundreds of people in Tankoro chiefdom, adding that he always informed them

about the movement of the rebels.

Explaining as a victim too, the former RUF adjutant said he also suffered during the conflict. He said he was captured together with his wife and four children. Sahr explained that he would have escaped but thinking of his wife and children he decided to stay.

He went on to state that he saved the lives of his people as his colleagues wanted to kill poor villagers that were captured. The audience responded positively as many people nodded their heads in confirmation.

"When RUF fighters entered my community, they asked if they should kill all those captured but I stood firmly and asked villagers to go" I saved many people that were tied and about to be killed"

Sahr continued, "I did not join RUF to cause havoc and I did not commit any atrocities. "that is why I invited everyone to come forward and testify against me so that we could resolve our differences and reconcile"

He regretted to state that he lost his four children in the war and his wife is now seriously sick. He told his audience that he was incarcerated at the Pademba road prisons for eight years and was sacked twice when his bosses were told that he was former RUF.

However Sahr asked for forgiveness

asks for forgiveness

and the Reconciliation Committee, charged with the responsibility to reconcile aggrieved parties intervened. Madam Bondu and

others declared that they had no more bitterness for his step son. They now live as one family.

The Torchlight
Friday, 6 November 2009

AMPUTEE WRITES BOOK

In a book, *The Bite of the Mango*, a 23-year-old woman, recounts horrific tales of Sierra Leone's brutal civil war. After being raped at 12 by an older man in her village, Mariatu Kamara was captured by rebel soldier boys who brutally chopped both her hands off.

I didn't feel any pain. But my legs gave way. I sank to the ground as the boy wiped the blood off the machete and walked away. As my eyelids closed, I saw the rebel boys giving each other high fives. I could hear them laughing.'

While she was recovering in a hospital Mariatu was told that she was pregnant:

'You're pregnant.' I didn't understand what the female doctor in the white coat was saying. 'You are going to have a baby. Do you understand?'

'But there must be a mistake,' I said. 'Only women have babies, not girls.'



Mariatu was taken to Canada where she was schooled. She is a Unicef Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflicts.

The Exclusive

Monday, 9 November 2009

Special Court Leading in Zain's Football Tournament

The race for the Zain Corporate Football Tournament 2009 continues unabatedly, as the first round stage reached its climactic phase last Saturday at the Saint Edwards Secondary School May Park, Kingtom. It was a deciding moment packed full of high expectation, anxiety and uncertainty for a couple of teams whose feet are standing on a greasy soil.

It was referee Abdulai Cole, whose whistle sounded the commencement of the first match between defending champions, the Special Court for Sierra Leone and First International Bank. It was a glaringly assuring match for tournament's favourite, Special Court Sierra Leone who were able to bag their last three points summing it up to a hundred percent clean sheet, at the expense of a rather goal deficient FIBank side. First International Bank failed on a myriad of chances they got to have secured three points, which could have placed them on a more contented position for a qualification to the semi-finals. Their hope for a possible victory over Special Court was blighted in the 13th minutes of play, when Ibrahim Koroma sent home an electrifying shot that cruelly slipped out of goalkeeper John Conteh's hand. It was not just a solitary goal credit for the Special Court players and fans, but also without doubt a special goal that left them untainted.

Special Court are currently through to the semi-finals stage with an unbeaten record. However FIBank still have a chance of making it to the semi-finals if they win their next match against UNIPSIL. UNIPSIL at the moment have bagged 3 points which could earn them a ticket to join Special Court in the semis if they finished up in a draw or a win against FIBank.

The second match saw organizations of two aged old allies, the British High Commission and the United States Embassy battling for a sail through to the semi-finals. Both teams showcased a sensational style of play with excellent dribbling skills, much to the pleasure of the cheering crowd.

British High Commission looked to be heading for their first victory, when Eddie Carew in number 15 jersey headed a right-wing cross for striker Sheku Mansaray, who wasted

no time in placing the leather at the back of the net 28 minutes into play. British High Commission looking unperturbed and ever determined to create an upset maintained their lone goal credit up to the end of first half.

Then came the second half, the excitement and flare reached a crescendo, the euphoria grew intense mixed with applause and booing as both teams fought tooth and nail, but skillfully and decently to out-play the other. The British mid-field department was acutely ravaged and left focus-less for a moment, which finally brought about the turn-around for the Americans, who leveled the goal margin in the 57th minutes by Thomas Jusu.

The Americans did not relent in their pursuit for a successful sail to the semis, when they capitalized on a red card that was brandished at Tamba Sesay for a vicious foul played against his opponent. It was in the 75 minutes when striker Philip Bockarie slipped and past through a crowded British defense netting their second goal. It was a vital win for the Americans who badly needed a win to assure themselves for a qualification to the semi-finals. The British were left deflated by a 2-1 defeat, which will see them out of the tournament even if they sealed a win against the shattered Standard Chartered Bank who have so far banked nothing- no goal no points. Over all, it was a game of quality with two teams who really went for it.

Also read this story on www.exclusivepress.net

BBC WORLD SERVICE TRUST

Thursday, 5 November 2009

Report from The Hague

John Kollie

NEWS ITEM

Charles Taylor Thursday responded to series of international Press reports linking him to the RUF war in Sierra Leone. He said the reports, like the ones written by Former Washington Post Correspondent, Douglas Farah and the BBC World Affairs Correspondent, Mark Doyle are part of western ploy to destroy him. BBCWST Producer and reporter John Kollie transcribes reports from The Hague on the trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor...

Mr. Taylor said the initial Washington Post article written by Douglas Farah of receiving 90 percent from the profit of the diamond loots in Sierra Leone was a deliberate lie to implicate him.

In the article, the Washington Post Correspondent quoted a letter seized from the home of Foday Sankoh making reference to one Charles as a business partner of Sankoh in the diamond deal in Kono. Mr. Taylor said the Charles being referenced in the letter was not him.

He said the Farah Washington Post article triggered a barrage of accusations of his role in the war in Sierra Leone. One example, he said was a letter Former Sierra Leone President Tejan Kaba wrote, accusing him of supplying weapons across the border into Sierra Leone.

Regarding Mark Doyle, Mr. Taylor said a report by Mark Doyle quoting Sierra Leonean police intelligence of his connections to the RUF rebels was just another fabrication

BBC WORLD SERVICE TRUST

BBC Focus on Africa

Friday, 6 November 2009

LEAD-IN: To Europe now with former Liberian President Charles Taylor is being tried for war crimes for the UN-backed court for Sierra Leone in The Hague. He's facing cross-examination by the Prosecution next week. He denies the charges and has been presenting his defence since July. His lawyer Courtenay Griffiths told me why his evidence has lasted this long.

GRIFFITHS: His evidence-in-chief I anticipate will be concluded on Monday the 9th and then the Prosecution will begin their cross-examination of him. Now we began his evidence-in-chief on the 15th of July, and one of the reasons why his case and evidence has taken so long is because, firstly, he's got to cover such a long period in the history of Liberia, Sierra Leone and indeed West Africa. And secondly, contrary to the way in which the Prosecution was conducted, we based our case firmly on the solid foundation of a lot of documentation, in particular documentation which Mr. Taylor had in his possession which paints a completely different picture to the picture the Prosecution sought to paint.

So what is the main thrust of the evidence that you are presenting then?

GRIFFITHS: Well the main thrust is there was a completely different complexion on the facts as presented by the Prosecution. Quite frankly, I take the view that on a number of very important issues, the Prosecution quite deliberately sought to mislead this court. By way of example, in December of 1999 Sam Bockarie was extracted from Sierra Leone and went to live in Monrovia. The world media painted the picture of the only reason why he went to Monrovia was because he was in effect Charles Taylor's boy and that he was merely following Charles Taylor's bidding in going to Monrovia.

Sam Bockarie the rebel leader you're talking about.

GRIFFITHS: Yes. The empanelled United Nations documents show that the UN, ECOWAS and indeed President Tejan Kabbah knew that Bockarie was being extracted because he was threatening to derail the Lome peace agreement in Sierra Leone. And with the agreement an agreement of all parties, Mr. Taylor took him out of Sierra Leone in order to preserve the peace process in Sierra Leone. Two completely different pictures. We have provided very powerful proof to disprove much of what the Prosecution have misleadingly placed in front of the public.

What happens next? I mean, what witness are you going to be calling after Mr. Taylor?

GRIFFITHS: Well, we have a fairly clear idea of who we will be calling, and contrary to what many people think, we're not going to be calling hundreds of witnesses. We personally don't think that we need to. We feel that much of the Prosecution case has already been undermined by the testimony of Mr. Taylor. And consequently, we will be only calling witnesses that deal with particular aspects where we feel additional information might be of assistance to the court.

So how many will that be?

GRIFFITHS: Difficult to say.

What about Mr. Taylor himself? He's been on the stand for some time now and this requires quite a bit of energy. How is he bearing up, and do you think he'll be able to cope with the cross-examination from the Prosecution?

GRIFFITHS: Oh, I have no doubt he'll be able to cope with the cross-examination by the Prosecution. Mr. Taylor is full of enthusiasm because he is firmly of the view that right is on his side. And that gives you a certain confidence and indeed energy. The man's fighting for his life at the end of the day, because if convicted, you know as well as I do he'll be dying in prison.

Courtenay Griffiths, lawyer to former Liberian President Charles Taylor.

Charlestaylortrial.org

Friday, 6 November 2009

Taylor Accuses Prosecution Of “Misleading” The Special Court for Sierra Leone; Says Almost All Of Moses Blah’s Testimony Is True.

By Alpha Sesay

Charles Taylor this week accused the prosecution of “misleading the court” by introducing evidence that as Liberian president, Mr. Taylor acted to resolve conflicts between Sierra Leone’s rebel commanders, appointed a chief rebel leader in his warring neighboring country, and then independently offered safe haven in Liberia to a top Sierra Leonean rebel on the run. Mr. Taylor also reinforced the truthfulness of his former vice president Moses Blah’s testimony against him last year, but pointed out three areas where he disagreed with Mr. Blah. Also in his testimony this week, Mr. Taylor accused Britain of transporting arms to Sierra Leone in violation of a United Nations arms embargo and then using him as a scapegoat by falsely accusing him of being responsible for the flow of arms into Sierra Leone.

On Monday, Mr. Taylor told the judges that “the prosecution misled the court” when he responded to the testimony of Vamunya Sherif, a previous prosecution witness and former Deputy Director of Operations in the Liberian Secret Service during Mr. Taylor’s presidency. Mr. Sherif, in his January 2008 testimony, told Special Court judges that Mr. Taylor served as mediator between two senior rebel commanders of Sierra Leone’s Revolutionary United Front (RUF), Issa Sesay and Sam Bockarie. According to Mr. Sherif, Mr. Taylor invited the two RUF commanders to Liberia in order to resolve a conflict between them, during which time Mr. Taylor changed the leadership of the RUF, making Mr. Sesay the RUF’s frontline commander in place of Mr. Bockarie. The witness said that Mr. Bockarie eventually departed for Liberia where he sought a safe haven. Mr. Taylor on Monday dismissed the witness’s account as “lies.”

“No such situation occurred where I sent for Sam Bockarie and Issa Sesay to discuss a conflict between them that will lead to the departure of Bockarie,” Mr. Taylor said.

“The prosecution knows that no such meeting took place because they have gone through major documents that tell how Bockarie left Sierra Leone, so for them to ask that question when they know that no such meeting took place is sinister, and the prosecution misled the court,” the accused former Liberian president added.

Mr. Taylor also explained that there is no “correlation” in the time at which Mr. Bockarie left Sierra Leone in 1999 and the time at which Mr. Sesay became interim leader of the RUF in 2000.

“We are talking about seven months beginning in December 1999 when Bockarie left Sierra Leone and August 2000 when Issa Sesay took over the leadership of the RUF, so there is no correlation between the two,” he said.

Mr. Taylor further denied the witness’ claims that RUF commander Mr. Bockarie transported arms and ammunition from Liberia for use by RUF rebels in Sierra Leone and that in 1998, Mr. Bockarie travelled to Burkina Faso and returned with arms and ammunition via Liberia for RUF rebels in Sierra Leone.

“I think that this witness is confused or is deliberately mistating the evidence as he is told to do,” Mr. Taylor said.

Also on Monday, Mr. Taylor refuted the testimony of a previous prosecution witness Samuel Kargbo, a former member of Sierra Leone’s illegal Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) junta, which overthrew the elected government of President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah in May 1997. The witness in his testimony told the court that Mr. Taylor gave his support to the illegal junta in Sierra Leone and the AFRC’s leader Johnny Paul Koroma was in constant communication with Mr. Taylor. Mr. Taylor denied the witness’s claims on Monday.

“That is totally not true,” Mr. Taylor said. “He tells several lies here. I never spoke to Johnny Paul Koroma even before my presidency, and during my presidency, except in August 1999,” he added.

Mr. Taylor asserted that Liberia, like other West African states did not recognize the illegal AFRC junta in Sierra Leone.

On Tuesday, Mr. Taylor, in a surprising move, told the court that a huge portion of his former vice president Mr. Blah's May 2008 testimony against him was true.

"To a great extent, Moses [Blah] told the court the truth," Mr. Taylor said when asked by his defense counsel to give his view on his former vice president's testimony. "There were three areas where unfortunately, he was wrong but 90-95 percent of what he said is true."

Mr. Taylor's analysis of Mr. Blah's testimony came as part of his ongoing effort to respond to evidence provided by several prosecution witnesses, disputing their claims that he provided support for RUF rebels in Sierra Leone after November 1996, amid the country's 11-years conflict. In May 2008, Mr. Taylor's former vice president Moses Blah, had testified for the prosecution against his former boss (Taylor), a testimony which covered Mr. Taylor's activities from the late 1980s when the two men were together in Libya and planning to invade Liberia, up to 2003 when Mr. Taylor handed the presidency of Liberia to Mr. Blah and sought asylum in Nigeria.

Mr. Taylor went through some aspects of Mr. Blah's testimony and agreed with him that as vice president, he had no knowledge that arms and ammunition were transported from Liberia to Sierra Leone for use by RUF rebels. Mr. Taylor also agreed with his former vice president's testimony that when the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) attacked Liberia in 1989, current Liberian president Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf was responsible for the NPFL's fund raising issues in the United States.

Mr. Taylor did disagree with his former vice-president on specific issues arising in his testimony.

"I can specify three areas where he lied," Mr. Taylor told the Special Court for Sierra Leone judges. "One is how he spoke about the Sam Bockarie issue was wrong. He was sent to handle the Sam Bockarie situation, he took the body to Monrovia and delivered it at the funeral home. Unfortunately, I don't know why he lied."

"The second thing is he said he did not know he'd become vice president. The third area he could have been more forthcoming was about the activities of Sam Lato. He knows that Sam Lato was tried by court martial before he was executed. Other than that, for whatever reason he came here, he was as factual as he could," he said.

Mr. Taylor also insisted that he did not order the execution of Mr. Bockarie as alleged by several prosecution witnesses, but rather sent Mr. Blah to arrest him on the Liberian border with Ivory Coast.

"Moses lied to this court when he said that he was just going to his farm. I dispatched him to go and effect Bockarie's arrest," Mr. Taylor told the judges on Wednesday.

In his May 2008 testimony, Mr. Blah told the judges that he was in his village in Nimba on the night of May 5, 2002 when Mr. Taylor's Director of Special Security Service (SSS), Benjamin Yeaten, stopped by his house and greeted him in the company Mr. Bockarie, his wife and other Sierra Leoneans. At about 2-2:30AM, Mr. Blah said, he was woken up and told that fighting had erupted at the Liberian-Ivorian border. The following day, on his way back to Monrovia, he said he bumped into Mr. Yeaten who invited him to a Saw Mill Camp and told him they had gone on a special operation the previous night. He said that Mr. Yeaten then showed him the corpse of Mr. Bockarie, which he said was still dressed like he had seen him the previous night.

In response, Mr. Taylor disputed his former vice president's account, insisting that Mr. Bockarie's corpse was driven to Monrovia and delivered to the funeral home by Mr. Blah himself.

"Sam Bockarie's body, on anything under the sun, was taken to Monrovia by Blah. Nobody under this planet took the body to Monrovia other than Moses Blah. I don't know why he lied," Mr. Taylor said.

Mr. Taylor also disputed Mr. Blah's account that when he saw Mr. Bockarie's corpse at the Saw Mill Camp on the way to Monrovia, Mr. Yeaten had told him that Mr. Bockarie was executed because they wanted to "destroy

evidence,” not wanting “anything exposed.” Mr. Blah told the court in May 2008 that he believed that if Mr. Bockarie had not been killed, the NPFL and Mr. Taylor’s secret support to the RUF would have been exposed.

Mr. Taylor on Wednesday dismissed Mr. Blah’s account, insisting that there was no secret he feared to be exposed.

“There was no such thing. Expose what? What is about Sam Bockarie to be exposed? Bockarie to my understanding was not indicted. I didn’t lure Bockarie to Liberia to kill him because I didn’t want to be exposed,” Mr. Taylor said.

Mr. Taylor also dismissed Mr. Blah’s account that when he arrived in Monrovia following Mr. Bockarie’s death, he asked Mr. Taylor why Mr. Bockarie had been killed. According to Mr. Blah, Mr. Taylor dismissed his inquiry into the matter, saying that “that is not your business, it is a military operation.”

“He is a military man and how will I not discuss that with him? Mr. Taylor asked.

“Blah was sent to that operation. I swear to my life, he took the body to the funeral home. He is lying. The fact of the matter is that Bockarie is killed by Liberian forces. I liked Bockarie as a son and Moses knows how hurt I was to hear of Bockarie’s death. Blah was negligent, I sent him to save this boy but he failed,” Mr. Taylor told the judges.

Mr. Taylor also told the judges that while he was attending peace talks in Ghana in 2003 and during which time the Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone unsealed the indictment against him, United States officials convinced his former vice president Mr. Blah to stage a coup and unseat him. Mr. Taylor said that on his return, he ordered the arrest of Mr. Blah, after which, the former vice president admitted that he had indeed been encouraged by the US officials to unseat Mr. Taylor.

Also on Wednesday, Mr. Taylor declared the prosecution’s expert witness, Dr. Stephen Ellis, as biased. Mr. Ellis had testified in 2008 about Mr. Taylor’s activities in the West African sub-region. According to Mr. Taylor, Dr. Ellis has had a long standing association with certain Liberians, including current Liberian president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who he said have made all efforts to bring Mr. Taylor down. Mr. Taylor’s defense team produced transcripts of a telephone conversation that Dr. Ellis had with Madam Johnson Sirleaf several years ago for a book he was writing about developments in the sub-region.

On Thursday, Mr. Taylor accused Britain of transporting arms to Sierra Leone and falsely accusing him of sending arms to rebel forces in the war-ravaged country. The accused former Liberian president told the judges that when the AFRC overthrew the elected government of Sierra Leone in 1997, the country’s ousted president, Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, engaged a British mercenary group, Sandline, to dislodge the illegal AFRC junta regime from the country’s capital Freetown. He explained that the arrangement was facilitated by then British High Commissioner to Sierra Leone Peter Penfold, whom he said already had links with Sandline prior to his assignment to Sierra Leone in March 1997. Sandline, Mr. Taylor said, provided training and arms for Sierra Leonean civil militia, the Kamajors, as well as Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) peacekeepers. Mr. Taylor said that the British navel ship HMS Conway was also in the high seas supplying arms and ammunition to forces loyal to President Kabbah. According to Mr. Taylor, the British — who had drafted a United Nations resolution imposing an arms embargo on Sierra Leone — were the ones violating the sanctions.

“The British government was breaking the United Nations resolution,” Mr. Taylor alleged.

According to Mr. Taylor, when it became clear that the British were the ones violating the UN sanctions on Sierra Leone, they decided to use him as a scapegoat, alleging that he was the one supplying arms to rebel forces in his neighboring country.

“The explanation as to how arms are flowing into Sierra Leone is that they are coming from Liberia. They will bring in these arms and build this lie that arms are coming from Liberia,” he said.

“They were aware but they put the blame on Taylor and I say to the world that how can I supply arms to Sierra Leone when I do not have arms in Liberia?” the former president asked.

The accused former president reiterated a familiar position that these allegations are part of a conspiracy theory to destroy him.

“All of this is an orchestration for my destruction,” he maintained.

Mr. Taylor also made attempts to discredit international press reports that he was involved in a diamond trade with Sierra Leone’s RUF rebels. Referring to a June 2000 Washington Post and an August 2000 Wall Street Journal reports which both accused him of being involved in a diamond trade with the RUF, Mr. Taylor told the judges on Thursday that these were “deliberate attempts to spread disinformation to destroy me.”

Also in his testimony on Thursday, Mr. Taylor discussed in detail a report by a Washington Post reporter Douglas Farah, which linked him with the terrorist group Al Qaeda. The report, published in October 2003 and titled “The Role of Conflict Diamonds in Failed States” alleged that Al Qaeda operatives made regular visits to Liberia during which they purchased diamonds from Sierra Leone’s RUF rebels. According to the report, Ibrahim Bah, an alleged agent of Mr. Taylor, had close ties with an Islamic fundamentalist group in Afghanistan. The report further alleged that armed guards associated with Mr. Taylor escorted Al Qaeda operatives into Liberia to purchase conflict diamonds. Mr. Taylor denied the contents of the report, saying that if he had any knowledge that Ibrahim Bah was involved in such actions, he would not have entered Liberia.

“Bah would not have stayed in Liberia if we had known,” he said. The former president told the judges that “there are no armed guards escorting Al Qaeda into Liberia.”

Mr. Taylor also refuted contents of the Mr. Farah’s report which alleged that by the end of 2001, Al Qaeda dispatched two operatives to Liberia offering to buy all diamonds the RUF could produce.

“That is so not true,” Mr. Taylor told the judges.

Mr. Taylor explained that when these allegations were made, his government cooperated with the United States authorities. After a thorough investigation, it was revealed that there were no Al Qaeda operatives in Liberia, he said. He explained that by the time Mr. Farah wrote his report in October 2003, “the matter was already properly investigated and dismissed.”

Mr. Taylor further challenged the contents of a report by Belgian Federal Criminal Investigators, which alleged that Al Qaeda had a relationship with RUF rebels in Sierra Leone, through Liberia, under Mr. Taylor’s supervision.

“It is totally untrue. The report does not contain any factual evidence of the conclusion reached in that statement,” Mr. Taylor responded.

Mr. Taylor said he was not aware of any meetings between RUF and Al Qaeda operatives in the Hotel Boulevard in Monrovia, as alleged in the Belgian report.

Dismissing the report, Mr. Taylor told the judges that “this gives all the signs of a well orchestrated set of lies. How can professional people behave like this? This is a very amateurish report here destined to destroy people.”

Mr. Taylor is on trial for 11 counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity and other serious violations of international humanitarian law. He is responding to allegations that he was involved in a joint criminal enterprise with RUF rebels to wage war in Sierra Leone, and had control over RUF activities, including the crimes the group committed. The prosecution also alleges that Mr. Taylor provided aid and support to RUF rebels in Sierra Leone through the supply of arms and ammunition in return for the country’s diamonds. Mr. Taylor has denied these allegations. He is testifying as a witness in his own defense.

BBC Online

Friday, 6 November 2009

Did Sierra Leone get war crimes justice?



As Sierra Leonean war crimes convicts begin their sentences this week in Rwanda, the BBC's Umaru Fofana considers the achievement of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, which has now finished its work in Freetown.

Kadiatu, who had one of her legs chopped off in January 1999 by rebels, sat in her wheelchair at her makeshift shelter in Grafton outside the capital, Freetown, on the day the Special Court for Sierra Leone handed down judgement and sentences on Revolutionary United Front rebels.

Of the thousands of people estimated to have had their arms and limbs amputated during the country's brutal civil war, only Jabaty Mambu was in the court compound last week.

He was excited - it was the last in-court activity on Sierra Leonean soil.

"I am happy that justice has finally been done," he told the BBC.

"I feel like my right hand which was chopped off some 10 years ago has been replaced."

But Kadiatu, like many of her fellow victims of the war, could not care less.

“ I feel like my right hand which was chopped off some 10 years ago has been replaced ”

Amputee Jabaty Mambu

Scorn

For them, the daily survival "which has not been addressed by the world or our government" is what matters.

Most of them beg on the streets to feed. Society scorns them. They have been used as a tourist attraction but they say they have not been given enough assistance to help them rebuild their lives since the 11-year war officially ended in 2002.

It is fair to say that the Special Court's Outreach Unit did its best while the trials lasted to get the people to feel and see justice being done.

But for the scarred victims of the war struggling to feed or educate their children, the many millions of dollars that has been spent on bringing about that justice could have been better spent.

This is the tightrope the UN-backed hybrid court has had to grapple with since it was set up in 2002.

Many have been asking about the use of the court when RUF leader Foday Sankoh did not get justice - dying as he did in the court's custody in 2003.



Amputee victims find it hard to survive seven years after the war ended

Megalomania halted

But for Binta Mansaray, the court's Sierra Leonean-born acting registrar, the money was worth it. She says the money spent on the court does not come anywhere near the lives and resources that would have been wasted if the war had continued.

The Special Court indicted 13 people, including the then-sitting Liberian President Charles Taylor. The others came from the RUF, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council military junta which ruled the country for nine months in 1997/8, and the pro-government civil militia group known as the Kamajors.



From left to right: Of the 13 people indicted Foday Sankoh, Sam Hinga Norman, Sam Bockarie and Johnny Paul Koroma never made it to trial

However, only nine got to trial following the death, also in custody, of former deputy defence minister and Kamajor leader Sam Hinga Norman, and the killing in Liberia of the notorious rebel battlefield commander, Sam Bockarie alias Mosquito.

For a court that does not impose life sentences, the Appeals Court upheld very stiff jail terms against most of the men from all three factions.

Rebel sympathy

Issa Sesay, who was persuaded by West African leaders to lead the RUF after Sankoh became unco-operative in ending the war is to serve 52 years in prison. Two other rebel commanders, Morris Kallon and Augustine Gbao, are to serve 40 years and 25 years respectively.

Although RUF waged a war that cost the lives of an estimated 200,000 people and displaced hundreds of thousands of others, there is some sympathy for its former interim leader.

Sesay was a victim of a war sparked off by injustice, poverty and disillusionment and was hoodwinked into the ranks of the RUF after he had left the country for Ivory Coast.

When he was made interim leader of the rebel movement he had given his childhood to, he was very co-operative in ending the war as was admitted even by former President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah.

Sankoh did not seem to want to end the war. Not once, but twice he reneged on peace pacts.

On several occasions I flew on the same helicopter with him as we criss-crossed the country to meet and talk to his fighters to disarm.

In the diamond-rich town of Tongo Fields, he told them to lay down their arms.

Double-crossing

For a man who rarely smiled, he laughed as if he was auditioning to advertise toothpaste.

But after that open-air meeting, he said he wanted to meet his men in private. Somehow I managed to eavesdrop as he made a 360 degree about-turn and warned his men against disarming.

He was erratic. He was unreliable. His megalomania combined with what many believed was schizophrenia, annoyed West African leaders.

Unlike Sankoh, Sesay was meek and almost subservient.

Such was his respectful nature that you would ask yourself if he was capable of leading men to commit the atrocities he has been convicted for.

After a meeting in his rebel-held territory with West African leaders including Nigeria's Olusegun Obasanjo and Mali's Alpha Omar Konare, Sesay came up to me.

He wanted assurances that he would not be prosecuted if he helped end the war.



“ Sesay snatched a glance at me before bowing his head - probably thinking of those assurances he once sought ”

WAR CRIME SENTENCES

AFRC:

Johnny Paul Koroma - missing, presumed dead

Alex Tamba Brima - 50 years

Brima Bazzy Kamara - 45 years

Santigie Borbor Kanu - 50 years

Kamajors:

Sam Hinga Norman - died in custody

Alie Kondewa - 20 years

Moinina Fofana - 15 years

RUF:

Foday Sankoh - died in custody

Sam Bockarie - died before capture

Issa Sesay - 52 years

Morris Kallon - 40 years

Augustine Gbao - 25 years

In pictures: [Amputee's struggle](#)

"No idea," I said. "I am just a journalist."

He looked unsure, but determined to bring peace back to the country.

As he stood in the dock last week there was a thick protective screen between us, Sesay snatched a glance at me before bowing his head - probably thinking of those assurances he once sought from me.

Lesson learned?

Earlier, the Appeals Court had sentenced the Kamajor chief initiator and priest Alie Kondewa and Moinina Fofana, who are to serve 20 and 15 years respectively.

Their relatively lenient jail terms have hardly surprised anyone here because of the role they played in resisting the rebels.

With the disappearance and presumed death of Major Johnny Paul Koroma, the former leader of the Armed Forces Ruling Council military junta, three members of the junta are to serve lengthy jail terms.

Alex Tamba Brima, Brima Bazzy Kamara and Santigie Borbor Kanu are to serve 50, 45 and 50 years behind bars.

What remains now is the trial of Mr Taylor whose direct cross-examination has begun at The Hague, where it had to be moved because of security concerns.

While the eight other men will serve their jail terms in Rwanda, Mr Taylor, if convicted, will be lodged in a British jail.

While many believe the trials will serve as a deterrent for future warlords, others wonder why they have not served as a continental deterrent to Darfur, Somalia and Zimbabwe.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 6 November 2009

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

International Clips on Liberia

China mulls new measures in cooperation with Africa amid global downturn

MONROVIA, Nov. 6 (Xinhua) -- China may come up with new measures to help African countries at the upcoming Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), the Chinese Ambassador to Liberia has disclosed. With the view of fostering closer ties with the African continent and facilitating common development, China would unveil some new measures to assist Africa during the summit, which is set for Nov.8-9 in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, Ambassador Zhou Yuxiao announced. The Chinese envoy addressing senior Liberian government officials here, as well as foreign diplomats at a special ceremony to mark the achievements of the 2006 Beijing summit of FOCAC and the Convention of the 4th FOCAC Ministerial Conference. This year's FOCAC session is expected to discuss how to deepen China-Africa cooperation against the backdrop of the global economic downturn.

Liberia, Qatar established diplomatic ties

MONROVIA, Nov. 6 (Xinhua) -- For the first time in the history of the two countries, the West Africa state of Liberia and Qatar have established diplomatic ties, the Liberian Foreign Ministry has said. According to the Liberian Foreign Ministry, the two nations reached the decision to establish diplomatic ties at the ambassadorial level, when they signed a joint communiqué earlier this week in Paris, France. The decision of the two countries was reached after their respective leaders President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia and the leadership of that country met and held talks earlier this year, during a visit to Qatar by the Liberian leader at which time, she met with his Royal Highness, Shiekh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, Emir of Qatar. Liberian Foreign Ministry's spokesman Moses Gray told Xinhua that this is the first time that the two nations have established diplomatic ties. He said the foundation to sign the agreement was laid as a result of the visit of President Sirleaf to that country and the discussion she held with the leadership.

International Clips on West Africa

Sierra Leone

Taylor Accuses Britain Of Transporting Arms To Sierra Leone; Says He Had No

Nov 06, 2009 (CharlesTaylorTrial.org/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- Charles Taylor today accused Britain of transporting arms to Sierra Leone in violation of a United Nations arms embargo on the country, and of using him as a scapegoat by falsely accusing him of responsibility for the flow of arms into the country. Mr. Taylor also denied widespread press and investigative reports that the terrorist group, Al Qaeda, traded diamonds with Sierra Leonean rebels under his supervision in Liberia. In his testimony today, the accused former Liberian president told the judges that when the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) overthrew the elected government of Sierra Leone in

1997, the country's ousted president, Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, engaged a British mercenary group, Sandline, to dislodge the illegal AFRC junta regime from the country's capital Freetown. He explained that the arrangement was facilitated by then British High Commissioner to Sierra Leone Peter Penfold, whom he said already had links with Sandline prior to his assignment to Sierra Leone in March 1997.

Cote d'Ivoire

Cote d'Ivoire says close to 900,000 new voters well identified

ABIDJAN, Nov. 6 (Xinhua) -- A total of 877,245 people were positively identified in the identification operation of the population after crosschecking with electoral registers, Cote d'Ivoire's electoral commission announced on Thursday. The newly unveiled result marked a step forward to the scheduled presidential elections on Nov. 29, which is highly anticipated by the international community to bring the West African country out of the crisis since the 2002 attempted coup d'etat. "Out of a total of 1,911,230 people who had not been identified, 877,245 were identified by the technical operators," the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) said in a statement. Out of the 6.3 million applicants who were registered during the preparation of the electoral list, about 2.7 million did not appear neither in the 2000 electoral list, nor in any other historical registration after the first round of data analysis. The discovery of these people "without status" triggered political controversy about possible fraud, forcing the government to adopt "other complementary modalities of crosschecking", so that they could find all the voters for the elections.

Local Media – Newspaper

Police says "Killers" of PPCC Chairman Still Unknown

(The Inquirer, Liberian Express)

- The Liberia National Police (LNP) says no suspect has been arrested in connection with the gruesome murder of the former Chairman of the Public Procurement Concessions Commission (PPCC), Keith Jubah.
- Earlier, the Executive Mansion disclosed that two former employees of Morris's farm near Kakata, Margibi County were arrested as suspects.
- However, police sources said people are still being questioned in relation to the crime but no suspect has been identified.
- Meanwhile, family members of the slain PPCC Chairman have dismissed claims by those taking responsibility for the death of their relative.
- The family said the callers including Prince Jubah, the man claiming to be the son of the late PPCC Boss were con artists paid to detract the investigation being conducted by state security.

Liberia To Drill First Oil Well by 2010

(Liberia Express)

- The Senior Vice President for Administration and Finance of the National Oil Company of Liberia (NOCAL), Marie Leigh-Parker says Liberia may have oil resources of over a billion barrels with the first well expected to be drilled next year by Anadrako Petroleum.
- Madam Parker said Liberia is also expects to conclude the bidding process for off-shore oil exploration blocks 1 to 5 by the end of this year, with some 11 companies.

Central Banks of Liberia, Nigeria Sign MOU To Share Supervisory Information

(Daily Observer, The News, The Inquirer)

- The Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) and the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in Monrovia covering the sharing of supervisory information and enhanced co-operation in the area of banking supervision.
- CBN Governor, Sanusi Lamido Sanusi and CBL Executive Governor, Dr. J. Mills Jones signed for their respective institutions.
- During the signing ceremony, Governor Sanusi cautioned subsidiaries of Nigerians banks operating in Liberia against capital flight.
- He urged them to invest in the local economy, create jobs, train Liberians and stimulate the country's economy.
- CBL Executive Governor Jones said the agreement would further strengthen exiting supervisory and information sharing regarding new applications between the two central banks.

Stakeholders Push For Sustainable Logging, Wants EU Law Enforced

(The Inquirer, Daily Observer)

- Stakeholders and other actors within Liberia's forestry industry have underscored the need for enforcement of the European Union-Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (EU-FLEGT) action plan, which are aimed at combating illegal logging and related trade in timber products.
- The law also requires that logging activities be carried out in a legal and sustainable manner.
- The stakeholders made the call during a one-day workshop organized by the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) Secretariat.
- The objective of the workshop was to discuss what Liberia will define as legal timber in the VPA.
- A VPA is a binding agreement between the EU and a partner country by which the EU and that partner country undertake to work together to support the aim of the EU-FLEGT action plan and to implement a timber licensing scheme.

China To Announce New Measures For Assistance

(The Inquirer, Daily Observer, The Informer, Liberian Express, National Chronicle, Heritage)

- China Ambassador to Liberia, Ambassador Zhou Yuxiao has promised that his country will shortly announce new measures for assistance to Africa.
- Ambassador Zhou Yuxiao said the new measures would be announced at the up-coming Forum on China-Africa Conference (FOCAC), slated for November 8-9, 2009 in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt.
- The Chinese diplomat made the assertion in Monrovia at a reception to mark the achievements of Beijing Forum on China-Africa Cooperation and the Convocation of the 4th FOCAC Ministerial Conference.

Liberia, Qatar Establish Diplomatic Ties...Sign Joint Communiqué in France

(The Informer)

- The Governments of the Republic of Liberia and the State of Qatar have formally established diplomatic relations at the Ambassadorial level.
- A Foreign Ministry release said the signing of a Joint Communiqué between the two countries calls for mutual interest, cooperation between the two states in the political, economic, social humanitarian and other fields.
- According to the Communiqué, the two countries agreed and decided to establish diplomatic relations at the highest level as of the date of the signing of the Joint Communiqué.
- Qatar Ambassador to France, Mohamed Jaham Al-Kuwari and Liberia's Ambassador to France and Special Envoy to Qatar Dudley McKinley Thomas signed for their respective countries.

Local Media – Star Radio (*culled from website today at 09:00 am*)

President Sirleaf Assures Transparency In Sinoe Resources

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has assured the people of Sinoe County they would benefit from their natural resources.
- President Sirleaf named the Sarpo National Park, Sinoe Rubber Corporation and the gold rich Bokongeleh as resources from which the people should benefit.
- The President told the people of Sinoe she would consult with relevant stakeholders to ensure the rubber corporation is managed by a responsible entity and stressed that the involvement of the people was critical to having the right system in place.

Nigeria Central Bank Signs MOU With CBL

- The Governor of Nigeria's Central Bank wants Nigerian banks operating in Liberia focus on providing funding for infrastructural development and use their profits for the benefit of the Liberian economy.
- Governor Sanusi Sanusi said Nigerian banks should see themselves as active players in the Liberian economy through the provision of jobs for Liberians.
- He spoke recently following the signing of a memorandum of understanding with the Central Bank of Liberia covering the sharing of enhanced banking supervisory information cooperation.
- Governor Sanusi described the agreement as another step in regional integration as contained in the Consultative Act of the African Union.
- Liberia's Central Bank Governor Mills Jones said Liberia was committed to partnering with Nigeria in ensuring the soundness of the banking sector in both countries.

"National Disservice" JPC On Handling Of TRC Final Report

- The Executive Director of the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (JPC) has termed as a national disservice, government's approach toward the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Final Report.
- According to Cllr. Augustine Toe, the entire report is being disregarded simply based on two cardinal recommendations that are part of over 30 others including prosecution and political ban for 30 years.
- Cllr. Toe who spoke Wednesday at the University of Pennsylvania Law School in Philadelphia, USA at a panel discussion on the TRC report said huge financial and human resources were committed to the TRC process for over two years to facilitate the work of the commission.
- Cllr. Toe said policy makers and warlords who are campaigning against the report are basing their argument mainly on what he called politics of fear.

Health Ministry Launches Anti-Malaria Campaign Today

- The Health Ministry and partners are expected to launch a one-year National Malaria Communication and Social Mobilization Campaign under the theme: Take Cover under the Net to Prevent Malaria this Friday.
- A Health Ministry statement says the campaign which will take place in Sanniquellie, Nimba County is part of efforts to increase the regular use of insecticide treated mosquito bed nets and reduce malaria burden in the country.
- Current data according to the Health Ministry statement shows low use of insecticide treated mosquito bed nets in the country despite mass distribution of the item.

UNHCR Sponsored Project Gets Setback

- The expansion of a UNHCR sponsored project is said to be facing serious problems in Voinjama, Lofa County.
- The project head, Ben Fredericks says the lack of vehicle is hindering the expansion of the project to other districts including Foya, Vahun and Kolahun.
- Mr. Fredericks said as a result, only people in Voinjama and its environs are benefiting from the training contrary to the terms of the project.
- Mr. Fredericks said the Liberia Opportunities Industrialization Center (LOIC) which is implementing the project have already trained nearly 300 youths in various skills.

Roads In South-eastern Liberia Collapse...Several Vehicles Stuck

- A Human rights group, Action for Community and Human Development has called on government to fast-track the fulfilment of road rehabilitation in South-eastern Liberia.

- The group said deplorable road condition was making life difficult for south easterners.
- They observed light vehicles were unable to ply major roads including the Fish Town-Harper road and the Barclayville-Pleebo road while several trucks have been stuck in heavy mud for more than two weeks.

Confucius Institute Celebrates 'China Day'

- The Confucius Institute at the University of Liberia today commemorated the 68th anniversary of the People's Republic of China.
- The Director of the Institute, Dr Alpha Bah said Friday's celebration is also intended to familiarize the University with the status of the Confucius Institute.
- The Chinese Language has been formally accepted as an alternate international language to French at the University of Liberia.

Radio Veritas *(News monitored today at 09:45 am)*

President Sirleaf Accepts Woods' Resignation

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has accepted the resignation of the Managing Director of the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) John Woods.
- Mr. Woods tendered in his resignation due to ill health but he has been asked to hold on until a possible replacement is found.

Kimmie Weeks Dismisses 2011 Presidential Bid

- A Liberian child rights advocate, Kimmie Weeks has clarified that he has no affiliation with any political party in the country.
- Addressing journalists in Monrovia, Mr. Weeks said the clarification was necessary to set the record straight.
- He said his work in Liberia is purely humanitarian and not political as it is been perceived in the society.
- Mr. Weeks also denied speculation that he would contest during the 2011 presidential elections, noting that the well-being and developments of children are his sole priorities.

PR Newswire

Monday, 9 November 2009

<http://au.sys-con.com/node/1177137>

International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda: Independent Conference on its Legacy from the Defence Perspective

The Coordinating committee is pleased to announce the conference to be held in The Hague on 14 and 15 November 2009.

Speakers include:

- Ramsay Clark, New York, "International Criminal Courts for the 21st century: Equal Justice Under International Law, or War by Other Means?",

Former Attorney General of the United States, Defense attorney for Slobodan Milosevic and Saddam Hussein and Elizaphan Ntakirutimana at the ICTR.

- Pierre Péan, Paris, "The ICTR as an instrument legitimizing the actions of the Great Powers (USA' Great Britain and Israel in the Great Lakes Region after the collapse of the Berlin Wall. Le TPIR comme instrument de légitimation des actions des grandes puissances (USA, Grande-Bretagne et Israël) dans l'Afrique des Grands Lacs après la chute du Mur de Berlin ", Writer, author of "Noires fureurs, blancs menteurs"

- Jordi Palou Loverdos, Barcelona, " Impunity, international courts and universal jurisdiction: last law changes in Spain and debate at UN " Mr. Loverdos has piloted the indictment in Spain before the Audiencia Nacional of Rwandan leaders for war crimes.

- Jean-Marie Vianney Ndagijimana, Orléans << Apartheid mémoriel et judiciaire: le cas des Gacaca et du TPIR >>, former Rwandan Ambassador to France and former Minister in the RPF Government

- Dr John Laughland, Paris "Undermining the Rule of Law: Joint Criminal Enterprise and Command Responsibility in International Criminal Justice"

- Professor Lennox Hinds, New York "The Presumption of guilt at the Ictr"

- Wilfred Nderitu, Nairobi, Kenya "The Issue of Perjury/Evidence Gathering at the ICTR and Its Impact on the Administration of Justice"

- Chief Charles Taku, Cameroun "ICTR: Eternalizing the 'Judicial Genocide' of the Hutu", Cameroun

- Ville Hoikkala, Finnish attorney , "Legal Issues: Trial of François Bazaramba in Finland"

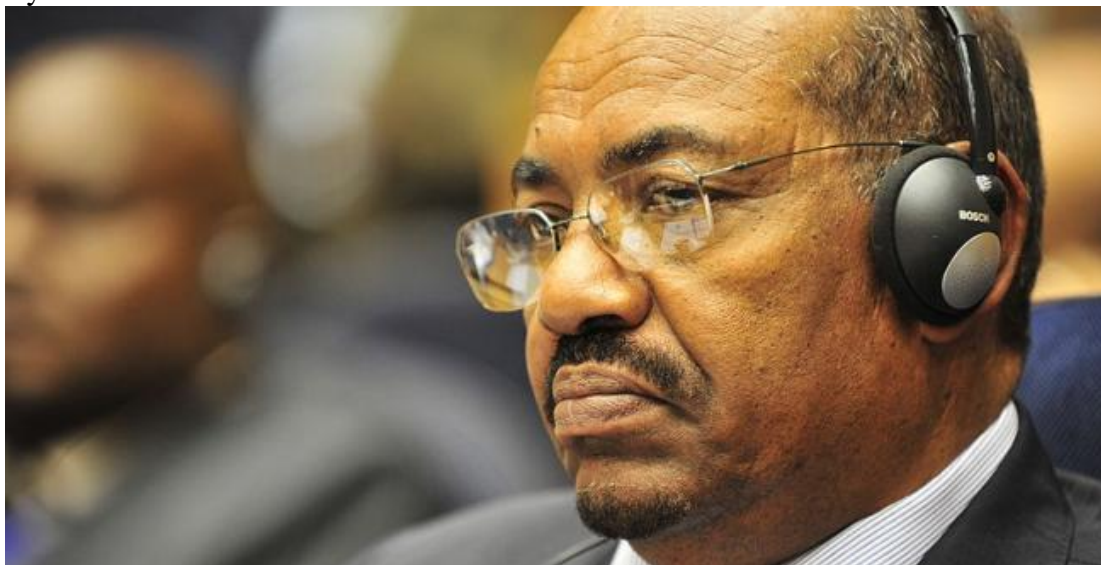
- Ken Ogetto, Nairobi, Kenya "The challenges of defending international crime suspects " Defence counsel at the ICTR and in the RUF trial- Special Court for Sierra Leone

International Justice Tribune

Monday, 09 November 2009

Sudan President cancels Turkey visit

By International Justice Desk



Khartoum, Sudan

Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir, the target of an international arrest warrant, has scrapped a visit to Turkey to join key

political negotiations in Khartoum, official SUNA news agency said on Sunday.

Bashir rang Turkish President Abdullah Gul to say he cannot spare the time to attend a meeting on Monday of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in Istanbul, SUNA news agency said.

The cancellation followed mounting speculation over Bashir's attendance at the economic summit of the Islamic grouping after the European Union, which Turkey hopes to join, told the Ankara government it should bar or arrest him.

Sudan's leader is wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for trial on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity in the western region of Darfur.

Turkey has pointed out it is not a signatory to the treaty which set up the Hague-based ICC, and that Bashir was invited to the meeting by the OIC and not Ankara.

"The Sudanese see and understand well the difficulties," a high-ranking Turkish diplomat who requested anonymity told AFP ahead of the cancellation.

"No Muslim could perpetrate a genocide"

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, head of the Islamist-rooted ruling AKP party, questioned the charges against Bashir and said that "no Muslim could perpetrate a genocide," according to Turkey's Anatolia news agency.

"If there was such a thing (a genocide), we could talk about it face to face with President Bashir," the first sitting national leader the ICC has indicted, said Erdogan.

Bashir was in Egypt on Sunday, taking part in a China-Africa summit in the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh.

Aides said last week that the president intended to travel to Turkey but no final decision had been taken.

SUNA said Bashir has to return to Khartoum to "find a solution" to a dispute between his ruling National Congress Party and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, the former rebel party from south Sudan.

The two sides signed a Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005 after 22 years of north-south civil war that saw largely Christian and animist rebels pitted against the Khartoum government.

Talks over general election

The parties held talks on Sunday in Khartoum on disputes over plans for a general election in April 2010 and a referendum in January 2011 on independence for the south, political sources said.

"Because of the need to consult the president in coming days on these issues, [he] has put off his journey to Turkey," SUNA said,

China as well as several African and Arab countries criticised the ICC when it announced the arrest warrant, and Bashir promptly received an invitation to Cairo from Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

Last year, Turkey came under fire for hosting Bashir twice, before the warrant was issued: a bilateral visit in January and then at multilateral cooperation talks with African leaders in August.

The United Nations says up to 300,000 people have died and 2.7 million fled their homes since ethnic minority rebels in Darfur first rose up against the Arab-dominated government in Khartoum in February 2003.

The Sudanese government disputes the death toll, saying 10,000 people died.

Summit on trade and poverty

The OIC summit, set to address issues of trade and poverty, is expected to draw other Muslim leaders, including Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, Palestinian premier Salam Fayyad and newly re-elected Afghan President Hamid Karzai.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is in Istanbul for the OIC summit after Erdogan visited Tehran last month when the two countries signed partnerships on trade and energy.

Ankara's efforts to build closer ties in the Muslim world -- including Iran, Sudan and Syria -- that are at odds with the West have raised concerns in the West that Turkey, a NATO member, is turning toward the East.

Source: AFA

Photo: Omar al-Bashir (Wikipedia/US Government)

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Karadzic wins small victory at war crimes trial: analysts

By International Justice Desk



*The Hague,
Netherlands*

Bosnian Serb
wartime leader
Radovan Karadzic
won a small victory
in a battle of wills
with UN court
judges when they

adjourned his genocide trial to March next year, legal analysts said Sunday.

While the judges opted to impose a lawyer on Karadzic, who has boycotted his trial since it started on 26 October, they did not strip him of the right to conduct his own defence and effectively gave him more time to prepare -- exactly what he was after.

"This is an indirect way of giving Karadzic a bit more time to prepare his case," while trying to minimise further interruptions, Willem van Genugten, international law professor at the Netherlands' Tilburg University, told AFP.

The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) on Thursday ordered the imposition of a defence lawyer on Karadzic and adjourned his genocide trial to 1 March.

Karadzic, 64, has refused to attend his trial since it opened in The Hague nearly two weeks ago, insisting on more time to prepare his defence, which he is conducting himself with the backing of about 20 legal advisers, many of them volunteers.

He had asked the court in September for an extra 10 months to study 1.3 million pages of prosecution evidence and hundreds of witness statements.

Genocide

Karadzic stands charged with 11 counts of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity for his role in the 1992-95 Bosnian war in which some 100,000 people died and 2.2 million were forced to flee their homes.

The judges warned that Karadzic would lose his right to self-representation should he continue his boycott when the trial resumes, in which case the court-assigned lawyer would take over.

"After several warnings the tribunal had to send out a serious message if it didn't want to lose credibility," said Van Genugten.

In Thursday's decision, the judges said Karadzic had "substantially and persistently obstructed" the proceedings and "effectively brought the trial to a halt."

There have only been two days of trial hearings to date, both used for the opening statement of the prosecutor who urged the court not to allow Karadzic's antics to dictate the trial schedule.

"The judges were looking for a compromise to end the impasse," said Harmen van der Wilt, international law professor at the University of Amsterdam.

"They had to show that they retain the control, that they won't be held hostage, all the while trying to cooperate with the accused," he said.

“Won the battle but not the war”

According to Xavier Tracol, a former ICTY prosecutor, Karadzic "has won a battle but not the war."

"His objective is to hold the tribunal hostage. Winning time is one way of achieving that."

Karadzic, who denies all charges, risks life in jail on accusations that he orchestrated the mass killing of Muslims and Croats in pursuit of a "Greater Serbia" that was to include 60 percent of Bosnia's territory.

Marko Sladojevic, one of Karadzic's legal advisers, said that his client had not yet decided whether he would appeal, but would "take a constructive approach and will try to find a compromise that will satisfy all sides involved".

Arrested on a Belgrade bus in July last year after 13 years on the run, Karadzic faces charges over the massacre of 7,000 Muslims at Srebrenica and the 44-month siege of Sarajevo that killed some 10,000 people.

"I am glad that they imposed a lawyer, on him, I hope it will prevent him to manipulate the trial," Srebrenica survivor Munira Subasic told AFP.

"It is painful for us to see how his every wish is granted, almost as if they fear not to hurt his feelings. But we will continue to fight for justice, we will testify against him, we will pursue justice with all available means."

Karadzic's trial is expected to continue until 2012, while any appeals have to be finalised by 2013.

Source: AFA