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 Outreach and Public Affairs Office as at:
Monday 10-Friday 14 March, 2003

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
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Awoko
Monday, 10 March 2003

New Breed of Tribunal

The chief prosecutor of Sierra Leone's war crimes court discusses his quest to find those responsible for the nation's atrocities—and whether the tribunal could serve as a model for charging Saddam Hussein.

From Newsweek magazine, March 4, 2003

The war crime tribunals in Rwanda and Bosnia have been dismissed as a failure, but the Sierra Leone war crimes tribunal, which has just begun operations, is about to make a big effort to prove they can do better. The tribunal is expected to be a model for the future prosecution of Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein and members of his inner circle.

Washington Post writer David Crane, chief prosecutor, says the tribunal is a new breed of international criminal court, and that it is different from the war tribunals that were created after the genocide in Rwanda and Bosnia.

"The idea is that this is going to be a court of law, not a court of war," Crane says. "The aim is to create a fair and impartial court that will be able to deal with war crimes, genocide, and war crimes in a fair and impartial way."
The world's first permanent war crimes tribunal is due to be inaugurated at The Hague on Tuesday with the swearing in of its judges.

Eleven men and seven women will preside over the International Criminal Court (ICC), set up to try individuals accused of heinous atrocities.

They will be sworn in by Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands, in the presence of United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan. But the court still needs to appoint a prosecutor, and it is not expected to try any cases for at least a year.

Numerous countries, including the United States, have refused to endorse the new court, fearing it will be used for politically-motivated prosecutions.

Supporters have praised the ICC as an important step forward for human rights.

"The mere existence of the court and the possibilities of being held accountable will hopefully deter the committing of war crimes and crimes against humanity, genocide and other human rights violations," said Navanethem Pillay, one of the court's new judges.

The court has already received more than 200 complaints waiting to be investigated, although it will be up to a chief prosecutor to decide whether to proceed with any of the cases.

ICC member states are expected to select a chief prosecutor in April, but there will still be a long way to go before the court sees its first suspect.

"It will be many, many months before you might see a trial or even the completion of a major investigation," said William Pace of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC).

The court has already run into difficulties. Almost two-thirds of countries which signed the 1998 Rome Treaty to set the court up have not yet endorsed it.

The United States has withheld support, fearing its citizens might become targets for politically-motivated persecution.

It has signed agreements with 24 other countries guaranteeing immunity for American subjects in those countries.

Russia and China have also refused to ratify the treaty. Despite its wide remit, the ICC will be able to try crimes only committed after 1 July, 2002, and only when states are unwilling to take action against suspected individuals themselves.
Dialogue

David Crane: We’re fully prepared

David Crane faces a unique and enormous task in Sierra Leone. A veteran U.S. Defense Department lawyer with experience in criminal and international law, Crane is now the U.N.-appointed chief prosecutor of a "Special Court" set up to investigate war crimes committed during the latter half of a decade-long civil conflict in which child soldiers were commonly abducted, brainwashed and drugged into perpetrating tens of thousands of rapes, executions, and horrific limb amputations. Crane's brief is to target those behind the terror of the war, which ended last year. But some analysts and U.S. officials believe the Special Court could serve a broader role too - as a model for the future prosecution of Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein and members of his inner circle.

Crane and his staff of 40 have spent recent months traveling around the country to seek out witnesses and evidence, and to explain their mandate in town hall-style meetings. While no indictments have yet been issued, those who may face charges include military, political and business figures. The most sensitive indictment could involve Charles Taylor, the president of neighboring Liberia, who traded guns and shelter in his country to rebels in exchange for uncut diamonds. Liberia remains mired in civil war and faces a potentially tense election later this year.

Crane, who has three years in which to finish his work, spoke to NEWSWEEK's Eric Pape in Freetown. Excerpts:

NEWSWEEK: How do you see your job?

David Crane: My clients are the people of Sierra Leone, the victims who have gone and are still gone. Everybody in this country right now is a victim, a witness or a perpetrator, or a combination really. These are survivors. There isn't one human being who lives in Sierra Leone who wasn't affected by this conflict.

NEWSWEEK: How do you define those with the "greatest responsibility" for the crimes committed in Sierra Leone?

David Crane: It becomes very apparent as you follow the evidence, that this conflict was not local. It is not just about Sierra Leone, it is regional and international and in some instances it is worldwide, and it boils down to diamonds.

We are not just going after military commanders. We're going after the politicians, we're going after those who financed and supplied the conflict through a plan or scheme that was very specific. I had investigations in North America, Europe, West Africa and Sierra Leone. We are dealing with very, very dangerous people who are involved in this. We are finding witnesses in some instances in life and death situations.

NEWSWEEK: For many people in Sierra Leone, the war was personal. How can you bring these people to justice?

David Crane: The Bush administration has refused to join the International Criminal Court and is impatient with the slow pace of the tribunals for Rwanda and the Balkans. Can the Special Court model be seen as an alternative to the ICC for countries with dysfunctional legal systems?

The ICC is an important organization. We don't compare ourselves to it. And I just happen to be an American, but I was appointed by [U.N. Secretary General] Kofi Annan after going through an international selection process. It is coincidental. It has nothing to do with the United States being behind the Special Court. This is not being touted as an alternative to the ICC. And, unlike Rwanda or Yugoslavia where the tribunals were forced on the region and the country under Chapter 7 of the U.N. charter, this tribunal was actually invited in by the Sierra Leone government. Given that some people in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda felt that it was something they didn't get from the UN, can the tribunal be seen as an alternative to the ICC for countries with dysfunctional legal systems?

NEWSWEEK: The Khmer Rouge tribunal in Cambodia, which is now at some point, has been set up as an alternative to the ICC. Is this what you're doing with the Special Court?

David Crane: It is being set up as an alternative to the ICC. And, unlike Rwanda or Yugoslavia where the tribunals were forced on the region and the country under Chapter 7 of the U.N. charter, this tribunal was actually invited in by the Sierra Leone government. Given that some people in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda felt that it was something they didn't get from the UN, can the tribunal be seen as an alternative to the ICC for countries with dysfunctional legal systems?

We are the next generation of those who have helped create the ICC. We have a tribunal that is fair, and we are in the U.N., so there is freedom to have an organization that is flexible, focused. And we are putting the court right in the crime scene so that people can see justice right in front of their eyes because they don't really understand justice. They haven't had a real good example. We were able to learn from the past crimes. I am given flexibility that Carla Del Ponte [head prosecutor at The Hague] is not. Could the example of this court be applied elsewhere?

One could see situations in Iraq maybe, at the end of a potential conflict; in Afghanistan regarding allegations of abuses of prisoners of war, in Cambodia. I hate to list these things, but we are going to have these again, and a special court arrangement can be very efficient and quick in dealing with a problem that we didn't fit itself within the framework of the ICC.

You said that diamond trafficking was behind the war in Sierra Leone. But I'm saying that youth and government corruption also played a role in the conflict. The conflict is endemic in this country. It certainly is a problem for children, but we need to understand that this is the most black and white, good versus evil situation that I have ever seen in 30 years of public service. They didn't start this conflict for ethnic, political, cultural or religious reasons- not that this excuses anything. This was a cynical attempt to take over a country to control the wealth to make money to buy guns and weaponry to keep them in power so they could influence others in the region. The bottom line is, it bores down to the diamonds in eastern Sierra Leone... [Diamond-buyers should remember] that diamonds are a wonderful gift, but some are dirty, too.
Special Court Starts hearing

Sankoh, Issa Sesay

Others Appear

Tomorrow

FOUR Special Court indictees, Foday Saybana Sankoh, Issa Hassan Sesay, Tamba Alex Brima (Gullit) and Morris Kallon will make their initial appearance before Judge Benjamin M. Itoe tomorrow.

According to the court's different times in notice of hearing, hearing accordance with Rule 61 will take place at of the Rule of Procedure and Evidence of the Special Court.

Hearing for erstwhile rebel leader, Foday Sankoh takes place at 10:00 a.m. for Issa Sesay at 12:30, Alex Brima (Gullit) at 2:00 p.m and Morris Kallon 3:30 p.m.

The exact time of the hearing, though, is subject to change, the notice of hearing stated.

The document made no mention of high profile indictees.

Chief Sam Hing Norman, fugitive member of parliament Johnny Paul Koroma and the notorious Sam Maskin are believed to be hibernating in neighbouring Liberia.

The Democrat

Friday, March 14, 2003
Sankoh, 3 Others To Appear As...

Special Court Opens Tomorrow

Saturday 15th March, 2003 before judge Benjamin M. Itoe. The hearing will commence at 10:00 am in accordance with Rule 61 of the Rules of Procedure and Evidence before the court. Issa Sesay with case number SCSL-2003-05-1 would also be appearing before the same judge but at 12:30 pm; Alex Tamba Brima with case number SCSL-2003-07-1, also facing the same judge at 15:30 pm. However, contrary to earlier press reports, the Special Court has confirmed that they have currently only issued warrants of arrest for Kallon, Sam Hing, Foday Saybana Sankoh, Norman, Johnny Pau Issay Hassan Sesay, Alex Koroma and San Tamba Brima, Morris Bockarie.
SPECIAL COURT HEARINGS BEGIN SATURDAY!

Sankoh, Issa Sesay, Gullit and Kallon to plead “not guilty” to war crimes

Friday, 14 March 2003

Foday Sankoh, Issa Sesay, Tamba Brima (aalias Gullit) and Morris Kallon will appear before the Special Court tomorrow for their preliminary hearing. According to a Special Court press release the indictes will appear before Judge Benjamin Itoe.

Trial date

They will be formally charged and their pleas taken. The judge will then instruct the Registrar of the Special Court to set a date for trial.

At this point it is unknown whether the four men have obtained legal counsel to represent them. The Judge Designate at the preliminary hearing must satisfy himself that the accused have lawyers (Rules of Evidence and Procedure Special Court 62 A (d)). The court may appoint defence lawyers for the accused if they don’t have any.

It is not known why Internal Affairs minister Sam Hinga Norman has not been slated to be charged tomorrow.

Norman absent

Sources say Norman is being held outside the country, most likely in Ghana, but will probably appear in court early next week.

The Court has seven days to bring all accused before a designated Judge for formal charges to be laid and pleas taken. So Norman has to be docked before this Tuesday he was arrested on Monday March 10

In a related development, sources close to the Court’s Registry have informed us that an international advertisement of Johnny Paul Koroma and Sam “Maskito” Bockarie’s war-crimes indictments will be made soon.

“The advertisement will call upon the accused to surrender themselves and invite any person with information on their whereabouts to communicate that information to the Special Court.”

If the two men do not surface in the near future, an international arrest warrant will be issued.

Any country still harbouring them may then face sanctions from the U.N Security Council.
Special Court
Impounds Gov’t Documents

By James M. Noah

Detectives and O.S.D. personnel headed by C.P.O. Kalia arrived at the residence of Chief S.S. Hinge Norman at No.14 Spur Road, No. 48, Bathurst Street and Villa 20 at Lape, Sierra Hotel last Monday.

In their search, several documents pertaining to C.D.F. and other official documents in the Internal Affairs Ministry were also confiscated by the squad which included four representatives of the Special Court headed by the former Director of C.D.F., Tambo Gbekie who is currently attached to Special Court.

According to family sources, they pleaded with C.P.O. Sesay who also led the search party that the said cabinet documents which were locked in a safety deposit box were to be handed over to the Government authorities and not the Special Court because they were not state documents, but family documents containing special information about the government’s internal policies, but to their dismay C.P.O. Kalia insisted that the documents be handed over directly to the Special Court.

Even the present Director of C.D.F. Mr. Daba further advised that these documents in connection with Ministry of Internal Affairs should be handed over directly to him and not the Special Court because they were not state documents, but family documents; but family members called the police officers to take the documents to the Special Court.

Even though Hinge Norman’s relatives kept pleading with C.D.F. they cried...