See photos of the Special Court football team’s victory over IMATT in today’s ‘Special Court Supplement’.

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, 26 May 2008

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday. Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact Martin Royston-Wright Ext 7217
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'I had no hands in the assassination of Masquita'

Moses Blah rounding up his testimony at the Special Court

The former Liberian Vice President, Moses Blah on Tuesday, 20 May, ended his testimony at the trial of his former boss, Charles Taylor, at the UN-backed Special Court sitting in The Hague, The Netherlands. On the last day of his testimony, the 27th prosecution witness faced questions relating to his own role in the Liberian civil war and the death of the former Commander of the RUF rebel movement, Sam Bockarie, as Mr. Taylor's lawyers sought to cast doubt over his honesty. It follows damning allegations by Mr. Blah that Mr. Taylor instructed his fighters to kill Mr. Bockaris. Under cross examination, Mr. Blah rejected suggestions from Taylor's lead lawyer, Courtney Griffiths that Blah had a hand in the death of Sam Bockarie. The autopsy report prepared after an examination of Bockarie's body read out in court on Tuesday, revealed the RUF commander had four bullets lodged in his chest, two in his back and one in his pelvis. Mr. Blah said a public notary document signed by one Jusu Momoh, alleging that Mr. Blah had instructed his Chief of Office Staff, Eugene Nagbe to deposit Bockarie's body at the Samuel Stryker Funeral home in Monrovia was "a blinking lie". He also refuted a Monrovia newspaper article quoting a witness who appeared before the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, alleging that he [Blah] had supervised a military mission codenamed "Operation Grass Hopper", in which several dozen civilians were massacred on Duport Road in Monrovia. Blah said both the Analyst newspaper, which published the article, and the person only identified as Debleh, had lied. Blah answered in the negative to questions from Griffiths on whether he commanded a child soldier unit, known as the Small Boys' Unit of the NPFL. He said he had only taken in a 13-year-old child soldier when he was Inspector General of the NPFL, but on humanitarian grounds. He went on to say that the boy, Tambu Allieu, ceased being a fighter thereafter and that he was still under his care. Courtesy: BBC World Service Trust and Search for Common Ground.

Written by Alphonsus Zeon
The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)'s stringer, Umaru Fofanah, will tomorrow declare his intention to contest the presidency of the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ) in the southern city of Bo.

Speaking to Awoko shortly before he departed for Bo, he disclosed that, “my intention has been borne out of my inner feeling to de-link our association from the pockets and dictates of businessmen and politicians, something that is at present having a serious negative impact on the way members of the public see our association”.

He went on, “to achieve this, I want to ensure that there are no special interests in my service to our noble association. In this regard, I want to run a clean and civilized campaign for which I depend on your assistance, both by way of voting and helping with financial contributions”.

The BBC stringer further guaranteed that, “I will keep a correct, concise and detailed account of whatever contributions you make towards achieving this, and a proper account will be kept of every cent spent”.

“After our victory”, he emphasized, “I will publicly give a clean breast of what was expended and how. If there are any leftovers of either cash or kind donated, I assure you that I will pass them on to the SLAJ Secretariat”.

[Umaru Fofana heads the BBC World Service Trust’s coverage of the Taylor Trial]
"I have not seen Charles Taylor eating human flesh"

Reportage

This week one ex-president of Liberia testified against the other. Moses Blah versus Charles Taylor.

By our reporter Natalie Righton

The Hague.

It continues to be surprising how distinguished Charles Taylor (60) looks. The former president of Liberia is wearing a chic dark blue suit with a snow-white shirt. His hair is closely-clipped grey and when he sits at his table and looks over the frame of his spectacles, one could easily take him for a genteel, old college professor.

In reality Charles Taylor is suspected of the most gruesome war crimes and this week he sits in the dock in the Courtroom of the Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague. Quietly and seemingly emotionless he listens to witnesses who tell how their hands have been chopped off, and how their wife and children were put on fire before their very eyes.

Charles Taylor as former Liberian president is suspected of steering a rebel army in neighboring country Sierra Leone during the end of the nineties. There, in a 10-year civil war, about 250.000 people died. Taylor declares to be innocent of murder, rape, torture and kidnapping of child soldiers.

Last week Moses Blah - for a long time the right hand of Taylor and in 2003 briefly his successor as head of state - had the chance to assert differently. Not heartily though, prosecutor Stephen Rapp had to summon Blah - who is afraid of repercussions - to come to The Hague.

In the Courtroom on Monday the two ex-presidents do not look at each other. Taylor is concentrating on his notes, the 61 year old Blah with his cane is walking with difficulty to the witness stand.

"I have never seen Charles Taylor eating human flesh or heard him giving orders to his combatants to eat their enemies", declares Blah shortly after about the most discussed subject since the Taylor case started in January this year.

At the same time he does not exclude that it could have happened. "I did not sleep together with Taylor, did I? I don’t know what he did every minute of the day", he says fretfully to lawyer Courtenay Griffiths. The combatants of his former boss he has seen roasting a few human hands over a little fire, Blah said a week earlier.

The statements of Blah are extra spicy, because mid March witness Joseph ‘Zigzag’ Marzah claimed that once he saw Taylor consume a human liver. According to him Taylor’s combatants in Liberia, apart from having eaten opponents, have also eaten UN personnel. Taylor personally would have given orders to cannibalism.
Taylor's Loyalists Angered at Blah's Evidence

UNMIL forces have moved in to barricade the residence of former president of Liberia, Moses Z. Blah, in Paynesville to avert any attacks on residents. UNMIL's action to seal off Blah's house comes in the wake of concerted plans harbored by some disgruntled ex-militia of the disbanded National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) who are contemplating arson attack on the premises.

Mr. Blah, a founding architect of the NPFL revolution in which he held key ranks, had been testifying at the UN World Crime Court in the Hague where Mr. Charles Taylor is being tried as world crime indemene for his alleged role in the Sierra Leonian civil war.

The NPFL followers, reports say, outrightly lashed out at Mr. Blah for what they claimed stemmed from exposing some key factors of the NPFL revolution which have the propensity to ensnare their former leader and subsequently throw him into prison.

The ex-NPFL vigilantes, the Daily Observer gathered further accused Mr. Blah of what they termed, "international conspiracy.

"He had been offered several million dollars including a house and an asylum in Europe so that he can give false accounts of the war in Sierra Leone so that our former boss goes to prison," some of the former vigilantes claimed.

Upon learning of Blah's testimonies in court, the NPFL leadership who have over the years bestowed their foremost loyalty to their former leader, Charles Ghankay Taylor, further accused witness Blah of deception and remitting false accounts of the war in Sierra Leone.

Some die-hard loyalists of Mr. Taylor, upon hearing the testimonies of principal witness, Moses Blah, also accused him of "total betrayal of the principles, objectives and goals of the spirit in which the NPFL launched its revolution about 19 years ago.

A group of followers of Mr. Taylor who spoke to the Daily Observer on condition of anonymity, pointed out, "We will burn that man's (Blah) house for lying on our people."

Some followers openly stated in public, "We will deal with that man whenever he dare set foot on this soil, because he exposed our revolution secrets to the world."

Taylor's white people for money"

When the Daily Observer visited the residence of former president Moses Z. Blah at the Omega Soul Clinic Community in Paynesville, it was discovered that except the previous personnel assigned to him, the manpower of UNMIL forces guarding his premises had increased tremendously.

The United Nations soldiers who had quickly moved in to seal off the premises declined to be interviewed.
War & Secret Societies
Why Blah Rejected Taylor’s “Poro” Order

Page 6
Former President Moses Blah has revealed that his boss, former President Charles Taylor, ordered him to join a secret society, in which cannibalism, according to various witnesses, was prevalent. But he said based on his Christian beliefs, he eluded Taylor and never belonged. “I dodged him”, he said.

But Christianity can hardly be an excuse, because Mr Taylor, like many members of his inner circle, are self-declared Christians, some giving lavishly to churches as Taylor did.

The specter of cannibalism during the war has featured prominently in the ongoing Taylor trial, but long before this, such stories spread. Some of Mr Taylor’s key allies have admitted membership of a secret society, the Poro, in which they claimed they ate human flesh together with the former President.

Zigzag Marzah, one of the commanders in the National Patriotic of Liberia, stunned the The Hague court when he declared he and Mr Taylor participated in the eating of fellow humans, mainly their enemies. He claimed that a lady called Annie Yenay was the person delegated to cook human parts, which they devoured together in a ritual. Madam Yenay, a former member of the House of Representatives during the Taylor reign, denied the charge, citing Mr Taylor as her witness.

Zigzag Marzah before the court: “I spoke to him (Taylor) so many times, even before he established the poro society where we ate people’s livers. The reason when Taylor trusted me was the poro society law. I started sitting with Taylor during the death of Fia Doe (?) and we ate his liver. The same thing happened with Sam Dokie. This woman Annie Yenay, she cooked the liver and Taylor shared it with us. He trusted me. Even the time he escaped from Ghana and we arrested Moses Blah, he was there in Ben’s veranda, and he said we should control those hearts until he came. When Taylor arrived, we took it and shared it.

Def: Have you got a fascination with eating human flesh?
Wit: Because what I’m saying, he and I passed through so many things that he trusts me. We ate human beings together. If you ask him he will tell you.

Now, Mr Moses Blah, a former President and before that a vice president, has, in a sense, confirmed what Zigzag Marzah story:

“I was invited to join a secret Poro society and I refused. I am a Christian and I don’t join societies. Everybody in government joined the society except me.

Pros: What is a poro society?
Wit: It is a society of men but since I was not a member, I couldn’t know what it was all about. It was a society joined by certain tribes. It is difficult to see what is in there except you join. The only symbol you see is the mark on the back.

Judge Sebutinde: Why did you say you could not join it because you are a Christian?
Wit: It is incompatible with Christianity.
Judge: How is it incompatible?
Wit: It has its own rules, like spilling blood, so I avoided it. I believe in the Bible.
You said you were invited, who invited you?
Wit: Taylor, he instructed me, but I dodged him always.

More than that, former President Blah revealed that the eating of human flesh was a precondition for being recruited in the presidential guard force the Special Security Service.

Further, Blah the outside world that he had seen a man named Nelson Gaye, who was attached to the unit as head of the Marine Unit, eating roasted human hands. In addition to this incident, Blah said he heard of another incident involving Gaye where he had eaten the intestines of a farmer, cooked together with the man’s own cassava harvest. Blah said that Gaye had not been a member of the guard unit at the time, but “at that time you wouldn’t join that unit if you do not eat human beings.” Blah said he was reluctant to complain to Taylor about these reports. When Kapp asked why he was reluctant, Blah responded that it would have been seen as an attack on the Executive Mansion Guard unit.

Another witness, a former member of the Sierra Leone Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (SLAFRC) that seized power in 1998, told the court he heard of human-eating men amongst Taylor’s rebels then operating in Sierra Leone.
The two men have accused one another of committing crimes. One said the other simply gave away the government's Maritime money. The other said he had been accused of having committed some of the most terrible crimes here imaginable, and Mr Blah testifying that Mr Urey duped the country's money on Mr Taylor's lead as he left the country in 2003.

The looming case will be interesting, because there are...
"He Was RUF's Godfather..."

-- New Witness On Diamonds & Contacts

With former President Moses Blah ending his testimony against former President Charles Taylor Thursday, another witness has taken the stand, claiming Mr Taylor was the RUF's Godfather", and that he had urged that country military that seized power in 1998 to work along with the "RUF brothers."

Samuel Kargbo, then a member of Sierra Leone's Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) Supreme Council, said the late junta leader Johnny Paul Koroma informed that Mr Taylor had asked him to consolidate ties with the RUF, and that weapons and other supplies came from Liberia. He said they had diamonds, but no money.

Pros: Did you spend anytime with Johnny Paul Koroma?

Wit: Yes, many times.

Pros: Under what circumstances?

Wit: Well most of the time we were...
his house and we spent time at his office. He was at Pipe Line on Wilkinson road.

Pros: Were you present when he tried to contact anybody out of Sierra Lea
Sankoh?

Wit: We were at the office at Cockeril and he ordered his control officer Banja M
number.

Pros: Who was Banja Marrah?

Wit: He was the control officer. He was a captain in the army.

Pros: can you tell us when this happened?

Wit: This was within two to four weeks after the coup when Gibril Massaquoi h
numbers.

Pros: What happen when Banja made the call?

Wit: He gave the phone to Johnny Paul. He was talking to Taylor from Liberia as
nation. We didn't hear what Taylor was saying. He later told us that Taylor advice
with RUF and that if there were any problems, we should let him know.

Pros: How do you know he was talking to Taylor?

Wit: After the conversation, he explained to us, we the Supreme council memb
t hat he had spoken to Taylor, that Taylor advised him to work with the RUF brotbro
Pros: Do you recall anything else that Taylor said in that conversation?

Wit: That is all I can recall now.

Pros: What do you mean by hiccups that Taylor said you should tell him?

Wit: He said if there are any problems with RUF.

Pros: Do you know if Johnny Paul made any other calls?

Wit: He made a call to presidents of Burkina Faso, Niger and Libya and he told
agreed to assist us. Among all the calls, Taylor's conversation was the longest.

Pros: Who else was present during the phone calls?

Wit: The supreme council members, Banja Marrah and late AK Sesay.

Pros: Do you recall any incident involving the Iranian embassy?

Wit: Yes

Pros: What happened?

Wit: On Jan. 1st 1998, I was at home with radio handset. I heard Gborie calling
enforcement. I intercepted and asked what the problem was. Zaglo asked to go
was my wife's birthday so I went my security to go and get drinks. They did not eat
three hours. I then heard Johnny Paul on radio that all those at the Iranian embassy
rested. I went there and met Capt. Mandereh who told me that my colleagues had co
the place. I returned to Johnny Paul and he said we should arrest Gborie, Issa S
Kallay, etc. I led the team and arrested some of them. I could not get Kallay. We
arrest Sesay and he resisted. That was about to bring infighting among us. So all of
office and met Johnny Paul. He called Taylor and I heard him responding yes sir.
had said they should set an enquiry and whoever was involved so be punished.

Pros: What kind of phone was used?

Wit: It was a land phone at Johnny Paul's house.

Pros: Did they set up the board of enquiry?

Wit: Yes, it was headed by SAJ Musa. I was also the only member from the Suprem
made it on the board.

Pros: Why did Johnny Paul call Taylor?

Wit: Because Issa had resisted arrest and the RUF wanted to take to the streets.

Pros: Why contact Taylor?

Wit: We know he was the Godfather of RUF.

Pros: So you said you guys spoke with Sankoh, did RUF arrive after that?

Wit: Yes, Mingo was the first to come, followed by Issa Sesay. Sam Bockarie cr
commanders came but I can't remember the names now. Some of them were Su
members.

Pros: How long did Sam Bockarie stay in Freetown?

Wit: He was there for one or two months and he left for Kenema. Issa stayed in 

Pros: You have told us about two phone calls to Taylor, do you know if there wet
calls?

Wit: Before the Iranian embassy issue, he had conversations with Taylor that he w
egates to him in Liberia, headed by SYB Rogers. The delegation comprised both SL

Pros: Can you tell us how you knew about these calls?

Wit: The one dealing with the delegations was discussed at a Supreme Council a
Paul made a call even before the delegation left. The delegation was to take a let
recognition and other matters that he did not discuss with us.

Pros: So did the delegation go?

Wit: Yes, they went by road via Kenema and Kailahun and they went to Liberia.

Pros: Did you take note of other calls that the two people exchanged?

Wit: Yes, many calls took place and one had to do with shipment of arms and
Bockarie recommended that Gen. Ibrahim facilitate the shipment of the arms and i

Pros: Do know what Gen. Ibrahim's nationality was?

Wit: No

Pros: Do you recall his second name?

Wit: No. I don't know his nationality but I know he spoke French and had so me c
Blah Worries Over Security

subpoenaed upon request to testify against his former boss in the trial. Blah said among the several threats he has received, one said he will be attacked on the street, while another one apparently from the former Maritime Commissioner has vowed to take legal action against him for lying.

"Right now, there is a writ waiting for me upon my arrival at the airport. Just three days ago, two men attacked and beat my daughter on her way from school," Blah told the court.

The former Vice President said "there are several ways to enter my premises, and there is no light in Liberia, so I needed security. With the threats about me testifying through leaflets, it has become dangerous." Defense lawyers quizzed Blah about his

Blah Worries

visit to the United States Embassy in Monrovia, when Taylor was threatened with arrest in Ghana while attending a peace talk, by the UN Special court.

The lawyers also questioned Blah about a US war ship patrolling Liberian waters, while at the same time US helicopters were dropping ammunition to LURD rebels.

Blah spoke of how he was placed under 10 days house arrest by Taylor for holding discussions with US Embassy officials, and how he had to bribe security officials to have access to him.

He denied prior knowledge of Taylor’s asylum in Nigeria and that he was to replace Taylor following pressure to vacate Liberia.

"It happened but I didn’t know it was going to happen. What happened is that there was the Speaker of the House who was Taylor’s friend who was chosen and the Legislature was angry. Lots of things happened that I can’t get into. He was not will-
WITNESS
MOSES BLAH
says his former
boss Charles G. Taylor
arrested him and
subsequently detained
him in Monrovia when he
(Taylor) returned from
Accra, Ghana where he
gone to attend the
Liberian peace talks.
Witness Blah, who made
the revelation when he
responded to a question
posed to him by the
defense team regarding
disputations he (Blah) had
with officials of the US
embassy in Monrovia while
Taylor was away in Ghana.
Blah stated that during his
detention he was tortured.
Def: And while he was
away, you spoke to officials
at the US embassy? Wit.
They spoke to you? Def: But
you spoke to each other
when Taylor was out of the
country? Wit. yes.
Def: Bearing in mind the
American presence in and
around Liberia at the time,
what would you think if you
were Taylor and you heard
that your vice was talking to
the people besieging the
country, what would you
think? Wit. The best thing
to do was to investigate
why I was speaking to the
Americans.
Def: Please show the
witness MIF-26. Please go
to page 16 of that
document. You’ll see that
article 76 of the Liberian
constitution provides what
constitutes treason. In the
situation in which you were
speaking to the Americans,
would you blame Taylor for
considering it an act of
treason? Wit. I’ll blame him
because he’ll need to check
what I spoke to the
Americans about, I
answered questions to
them.
Def: Did they say to you
that Taylor will not be
coming back to Liberia? Wit.
No Def. Did they say you
should take over the
government? Wit. No
Def: Did they say you will
have American backing if
you took over power? Wit: No
Def. Prior to that time,
did you have any
conversation with them?
Wit. No Def: Do you know
why it was you that they
wanted to talk to? Wit: It
was because I was the
vice president and they
just wanted to ask me
questions. I told them the
president will be returning.
We did not discuss any
coup d’etat
Def: Do you agree that it
was insensitive to be
having such conversations
with people that were bent
on removing your
president from power?
Wit. It don’t have to do wit...
Following Blah’s Testimony:

LIBYA MUST PAY REPARATION TO LIB.

The Libyan government has been called upon to pay reparation to those fallen Liberian victims, as a result of the civil war, Jonathan Savage reports.

The call was made by former Bong County lawmaker, Joseph Cornomia. Former lawmaker Cornomia said that if it is proved that the Libyan government sponsored/financed the war in Liberia, that government should be compelled to compensate those Liberians who were victimized during the civil war, as was done to victims of the Lodzak bomber over Scotland some years ago, where all of the victims of that incident received about US$10 million.

The statement from Cornomia stemmed from a statement made by former President, Moses Z. Blah, during his testimony at The Hague, regarding the role played by the Libyan government in the Liberian civil war.

It can be recalled that Blah, in his testimony, mentioned that some fighters of the disbanded National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) were trained militarily in Libya. He said that Libyan trainers began instructing them on how to use a variety of weapons.

Blah testified that the group spent about a year and a half at the camp in Libya, and also said that...

Con’d on Page 6
Blah Ends Cross Examination

One of prosecution's witnesses in the ongoing trial involving former president Charles Taylor continues to face cross examination from defense counsels in the Hague as he ends his third day on. The following are transcript of the cross examination:

At 9:30 am: Court resumes in open session
"It's dangerous for me", Mr Moses Blah has told the Court trying former President Charles Taylor in The Hague, and has therefore pleaded for security.

Mr Blah, a former President, has become the second witness in Liberia against former President Charles Taylor, and the third witness, to report threats and an attack on family for his testimony. Mr Varmuyan Sheriff, a former SSS officer who testified against Mr. Taylor, and former RUF commander, also reported attacks following their testimonies.

Mr Blah told the Court he has received several threats, including one from Mr Taylor's former Commissioner of Maritime Affairs, Mr. Benoni Urey, who has threatened legal action against the witness for allegations that he (Urey) paid in advance millions of dollars to Mr Taylor as he fled the country in
his daughter attacked

Mr. Johnson, a man he only knew as Johnson, had threatened to attack him and members of his family in the street for his testimony against Mr. Taylor.

In court: "Well we have problems with armed robbers in Liberia, there are several of us who enter my premises, and there is no light in Liberia, so I needed security. With the threats that are coming through leaflets, it has become dangerous for me. As far as that, there are threats from two other persons. One is called Johnson who has said that he will attack me in the streets or my children will be abducted if they go to school. The other person is taking me to court because I said that the Maritime Commission did not report money to me or the minister of finance. Right now, there is a writ waiting for me upon my return to the airport. Just there days ago, two men attacked and beat my daughter on her way to school."
Lawyers Paint Gloomy Media Scenario Under Taylor

Lawyers prosecuting former President Charles Taylor for crimes against humanity, amongst 11 counts, have dismissed claims he was tolerant to press freedom and freedom of speech, citing many media institutions, including this paper, he trampled upon during his reign.

His lawyer, in cross-examining former President Moses Blah, sought to establish that Mr. Taylor embodied press freedom as a rebel leader and as President. Excerpt:

Pros: Did asked you about free speech during Taylor's regime. Do you know Star Radio?

Wit: Yes. They were closed down in 2000 and they are only coming back now. They were active in government and so government decided to close it down.

Pros: Are you familiar with Radio Veritas?

Wit: Yes

Pros: Do you know what happened to them in 2000?

Wit: No

Pros: What about New Democrat?

Wit: No

Pros: Do you know Sheeh Dodo, do you know who he was in Taylor's regime?

Wit: His father had a position in Taylor's government and he was a child soldier behind his father, serving around and causing problems. He was a little boy but his father had a bad reputation.

Pros: Do you know a journalist called Serejima Samura?

Wit: No

Pros: Do you remember a group of journalists coming to Monrovia in 2000, from CNN, RBC, etc.

Wit: Yes, a lot of journalists came when I was VP.

Pros: Do you know a situation of foreign journalist detained in Liberia in 2007?

Wit: Yes, they were held but later released. I don't know the details. I can't tell why they were detained.

Pros: During the time of Taylor's presidency, what bands did radio transmit on?

Wit: They transmitted on FM.

Pros: Price to the Taylor presidency, were there short wave radio?

Wit: Yes, government wanted to close the government radio and replace it with Taylor radio but the people said no.

Pros: Are you familiar with the Liberian communication network?

Wit: Yes, it is ELBC. It is the Liberian Broadcasting Corporation, but we call it EL.
More Reports On Blah’s Cross Examination

Mr. Moses Z. Blah

Mr. George S. Bolay, former LPC Boss

The Informer (Liberia)
Thursday, 22 May 2008

Mr. Moses Z. Blah was being prosecuted at the UN backed Special Court for Sierra Leone sitting in The Hague that was a tribunal and was trying war crimes against humanity for the failed 1997-1999 civil war in Sierra Leone. The tribunal was established to prosecute war criminals such as Blah and others who were responsible for the atrocities committed during the war.

The tribunal was a significant international legal body established to address the deep-seated impunity that had characterized Sierra Leone’s conflict. It brought to justice those responsible for the country’s long civil war, which left over 100,000 dead and hundreds of thousands displaced.

The tribunal’s impact was significant, not only for Sierra Leone but for the broader international community. It set a precedent for the prosecution of war criminals and was a major step forward in the fight against impunity.

The court’s work was carried out in The Hague, Netherlands, and it is one of the international criminal courts that have been established to try cases of widespread human rights abuses.

The Informer (Liberia)
Thursday, 22 May 2008

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The court's work was carried out in The Hague, Netherlands, and it is one of the international criminal courts that have been established to try cases of widespread human rights abuses.
"I Was Tortured..."

The president had been indicted and I refused. I said that was betrayal. Yeaten radio, just an ordinary security person to talk about the president, is it right? If you feel insulted by the fact that it was Yeaten that made that announcement? Was bad for him to go and do that while I was present.

Were arrested and put under house arrest?

Were allowed visitors?

Was just my wife

Our wife was given assurances that the matter will be investigated by Taylor.

It was at a later date. I'd been in jail for 10 days, it was later that my wife told me that. Sebutinde: Did you say that your wife bribed her way to see you?

It was after 10 days, but she was later allowed, but she first bribed her way. Were placed under house arrest under Joe Toh's house.

As consider this thing house arrest, I was tortured.

How could your wife have bribed her way into that house when she will have to pass by?

There are other ways to go to the house. Suggest that your wife was allowed to see you. In any event, Taylor's government became because of the pressure from the US and the rebels. Do you agree?

Don't know how he was feeling at the time. That was the context in which it was agreed that he'll step down. Do you agree?

I will have to say that.
When international justice is feared as colonisation by law

At best, the Rwandan and Ugandan governments fundamentally misunderstand the tenets of basic legal process

Because it will matter most here, African states have to negotiate issues like sovereignty and selectivity with deftness and nuance

The application of global legal accountability is no open and shut case, writes Nicole Fritz

In 2001, outside Freetown in Sierra Leone, some colleagues and I spoke at a demobilisation camp about the soon-to-be-established Special Court for Sierra Leone.

As clichéd as it sounds, I remember the eyes of those assembled as being cold and dead, behind which nothing seemed to penetrate. But something obviously did — because at the break several men scuttled off to their commanders, stationed not far outside the camp.

The commanders promptly let it be known that there would be no more demobilisation and disarmament if there were any further talk of prosecutions.

We were unceremoniously ejected from the camp by a Nigerian contingent of United Nations peacekeepers.

A few weeks later, in the towns of Bo and Kenema, to which peace had only recently come, we attempted to give the same talk to several local communities.

Their agitation was much more evident. “Why upset a still-fragile peace?” “The rebels will simply take up their weapons once more.”

And then: “If you’re so concerned for justice, what about schools, and roads, and clean-drinking water and healthcare?”

As it happens, the Special Court and prosecutions did go ahead and, as yet, there has been no return to warfare — but only the misinformed could believe that an insistence on international accountability and justice alone secured ultimate peace.

This peace/justice dynamic — its interrelationship, tension, balance — has been the central theme of what is called “transitional justice” from the time the field first excited interest.

That law is informed by political considerations is not a new insight, but transitional justice does throw the question into sharper relief.

This month, the US Supreme Court upheld a decision (albeit on a technicality) allowing companies to be sued for aiding and abetting in the commission of the crime of apartheid — a crime against humanity, but nonetheless a crime that happened far outside the US.
In South Africa, the Southern Africa Litigation Centre has asked the National Prosecuting Authority to investigate, with a view to prosecuting, crimes against humanity committed in Zimbabwe — beyond South Africa’s borders.

These are only two examples of what has become an increasing trend: that courts far from the places where the crimes were committed are being asked to secure accountability and redress.

In the May issue of Vanity Fair, eminent international lawyer Philippe Sands — who acted in the court case brought to secure the arrest of General Augusto Pinochet in London for extradition to Spain in order to stand trial for crimes committed in Chile — compellingly argues that senior US government lawyers can and should be prosecuted for war crimes for acts of torture committed in Guantanamo.

“For some of those involved in the Guantanamo decisions, prudence may well dictate a more cautious approach to international travel,” he writes.

“And for some the future may hold a tap on the shoulder.”

This use of national courts and national legal systems to enforce international law seems a variation of a development at the close of the millennium, which saw the proliferation of international criminal tribunals, first for the former Yugoslavia, then for Rwanda, then hybrid courts for Sierra Leone and Cambodia and, most radically, the permanent International Criminal Court.

All of these institutions are premised on the principle of universal jurisdiction — the same principle that allows for prosecutions for international crimes, the most serious human rights crimes, before national courts.

And so it seems a little odd that the most forceful and scathing critique of universal jurisdiction of late has come not from the likes of Henry Kissinger, although he has certainly made his objections known, but from the Rwandan government — a government that asked the UN to set up an international criminal tribunal to prosecute those responsible for the 1994 genocide.

The statement delivered by the Rwandan government to an April 2008 meeting of the African Union ministers of Justice and attorneys general would have been extraordinary for its title alone: “The Issue of ‘Universal Jurisdiction’ Where Foreign Judges Allocate Themselves the Duty and Responsibility to Take Over, Control and Dominate Judicial Process in Independent Sovereign States for the Purpose of Political Gain.”

But the statement was more remarkable still because the accusation that “foreign judges seek to recolonise Africa through a form of ‘judicial coup d’etat’ under the guise of ‘judicial independence’ and ‘universal jurisdiction’” resulted in a declaration of the AU meeting to the effect that “the abuse of the principle of ‘universal jurisdiction’ by some non-African states is a great affront to the sovereignty of states”.

Rwanda is particularly incensed by the indictments issued by Spanish and French judges of key figures in what used to be called the Rwandese Patriotic Army, now the Rwanda Defence Forces.

Uganda’s President Yoweri Museveni is also piqued that the principles of international justice aren’t quite the expedient political tools he had hoped they would be.

Soon after the international criminal court was established, he appealed to it to investigate the crimes committed by the Lord’s Resistance Army, and indictments were issued against LRA leader Joseph Kony and four of his commanders in 2005.
But in the face of domestic pressure and the LRA’s refusal to stop fighting unless the indictments were withdrawn, Museveni recently indicated that doing so should be within his government’s power to demand — because it had requested the court to investigate in the first place.

At best, the Rwandan and Ugandan governments fundamentally misunderstand the tenets of basic legal process.

At worst, they opportunistically seek to uphold its application only in support of their own interests.

But specious and opportunist though their complaints may be, they do nonetheless raise some interesting questions.

It might seem proper for the many organisations concerned about the frightening escalation of atrocities in Zimbabwe to call for prosecutions in South Africa for crimes against humanity committed there, when Zimbabwean courts offer no real prospect of accountability and redress.

But would it still seem appropriate should there be a transition and Zimbabwean processes are in place?

Would it have been appropriate had a British or French court, for instance, sought to indict those given amnesty under South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation process?

Or even those leaders, instrumental in our transition, previously party to some of the worst abuses of apartheid, who had never deigned to apply for amnesty?

That courts the world over have thus far deferred to South Africa’s decision to forego systematic prosecutions suggests that sovereignty still exercises some weight in the application of international justice principles.

And if sovereignty is a reality with which we must contend — albeit a sovereignty that compels respect only for the democratic decisions of democratically elected governments — so too is the selectivity in the application of international justice implicitly urged by Rwanda and Uganda, and at which we may balk.

After all, as positive a development as the recent US ruling is regarding apartheid and the Alien Tort Claims Act, it hardly seems consistent that the direct perpetrators of the crime of apartheid — those who instigated and authorised the policy, those who did the killing, maiming and torturing — have, by and large, not been subjected to any punitive measures while corporations, which had a much less direct hand in the commission of these crimes, now look more likely to pay a price.

At present Africa has the largest number of ratifications of the Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court, and right now all situations under investigation at the International Criminal Court have occurred in Africa.

Because it will matter most here, African states have to negotiate and consider issues like sovereignty and selectivity — factors that complicate the application of international justice principles in ways not suggested by a simple peace/justice dichotomy — with a deftness and nuance that submissions such as the Rwandan government’s and the AU declaration don’t currently allow.

Fritz is director of the Southern Africa Litigation Centre
Newspaper Summary
Swedish Military Delegation Confers With Defense Minister
(The Inquirer)

- A high-powered military delegation from Sweden is in the country as guest of the Ministry of National Defense.
- The delegation, which is headed by Per Brostrom, a former military official in the Swedish army, is in the country to do a follow-up assessment on the discussion the ministry had with the Sweden authority as it relates to the defense support group. The four-man delegation met with the Minister of National Defense as well as the Officer-In-Charge of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL).
- Defense Minister Brownie Samukai said that over the months, the Swedish government had expressed interest to assist the ministry in the area of capacity building of the civilian sector of the ministry as well as the provision of other technical assistance.
- Addressing himself to what specific request was made to the Swedish government in assisting the ministry, Minister Samukai said there is a defense support group, which has specific interest in the security sector reform to include the training of the army and building the capacity of the ministry.

Taylor’s Loyalists Angered at Blah’s Evidence – Plan Arson Attack on Premises
(Daily Observer)

- A significant development only reported in the Daily Observer newspaper suggest that UN peacekeepers have barricaded the residence of former President Moses Blah in Paynesville in an effort to avert any attacks on residents. Daily Observer said the peacekeepers sealed off Blah’s residence following purported plans by some disgruntled former combatants who are contemplating arson attack on the premises. Blah, a key prosecution witness in the war crimes trial of his former boss, Charles Taylor, has repeatedly reported security concerns since his decision to testify in the trial.

Key Management Changes at Liberia’s Main Port
(The News, The Inquirer, Public Agenda, The Informer, Heritage)

- The Board of Directors of the National Port Authority (NPA) has relieved two deputy managing directors (Raymond Bruce, Sr. and Julius J Gooding) of their positions as part of an ongoing reform process at the Port. The decision followed a recent saga involving the auctioning of abandoned containers at the port. According to media reports, an internal investigation conducted by the NPA management showed gross irregularities in the auction process.

Rivercess Citizens Questioned Expenditure of L$1.4M – Recommend Audit Local Officials
(The News)

- [sic:] Incomes generated and expended by officials of Rivercess County have come under scrutiny by citizens of the county for which they are calling for an audit of Senior Senator Jay
Jonathan Banney and Representative Elizabeth Williams. The citizens through their spokesman, who asked not to be named, told The NEWS in Yarkpa Town, Rivercess County Monday that monies collected from pit sawyers were not used for the development of their county. He said a plank committee set up by the Rivercess Legislative Caucus collects L$8,000.00 from each truckload of timber. The citizens’ spokesman pointed out that the plank committee was constituted since 2006 and alleged that Senator Jonathan Banney dictates to the committee as to how the money should be used without the input of citizens. He claimed that citizens have been informed that L$1.4 million was used to renovate the Cestos City Hall. “The money from the plank committee is given to Senator Banney; when the fees are collected from pit sawyers, the committee gives it directly to Senator Banney; he ordered that no money should be used without his approval,” the spokesman for the citizens alleged. He noted that usage of the L$1.4 million was not transparent and nobody has given account of the money. “Only Senator Banney and Elizabeth Williams are signatories to the account of the fees collected in the county. We want the Rivercess Caucus to give account of the money,” he stressed.

Radio Summary

Visiting Nigerian Pastor Arrested for 'Sexual Exploitation'

- Police in Monrovia have charged a visiting Nigerian Pastor with sexually exploitation and terroristic threat. A 21-year old Liberian, Martha Wonah told the Police that Pastor Peter Abuya invited her for prayers because, according to him, the spirit of death hanged over her.
- Martha said Pastor Abuya he took her into his room and undressed her and abused her.
- She said Pastor Abuya used charms to hypnotize her before carrying out the sexual act on two different occasions.
- Pastor Abuya admitted to Star Radio he had sex with the victim on two occasions but argued it was at the consent of Martha.
- Pastor Abuya explained Martha only reported the incident after he threatened her with death for allegedly stealing his mobile phone.
- According to the police, the case would be forwarded to the New Kru Town Magisterial Court on Bushrod Island on Friday.
- The Police also sent the victim to Medicine San Frontier clinic in Clara Town for medical check-up.

Seven Liberians Stranded in Togo

- About seven Liberian refugees are reported stranded in the West African State of Togo. The Liberians fled to Togo from Ghana where they were being chased and allegedly humiliated by Ghanaian security forces.
- Montserrado County Representative Kettehkumuehn Murray said the stranded Liberians have been sending SOS call to him.
- According to him, the stranded Liberians personally called and text him via mobile phone in search of rescue.
- Representative Murray said the Liberians are complaining of extreme hunger and could die if nothing is urgently done to address their plight. He named the head of the stranded Liberians in Togo as Madison Wion.
- The Montserrado lawmaker said the stranded Liberian refugees are appealing for three thousand US dollars to have them transported back home.

Family Members Search for Missing Hand of Victim in a Land Conflict

- A search is underway in Maryland County for the missing hand of one of those killed in a recent land dispute in the county. The land dispute turned violent on May 8 between the people of Rock Town and Wetchoken.
• Residents of Wetchoken are carrying out the search to find the missing hand of the victim who hailed from the town. Maryland County Senator John Ballout said the people of Wetchoken are demanding the missing hand of their son before burying him.

• Senator Ballout said the people of Wetchoken considered the missing hand of their dead son as very significant in the process of reconciliation.

• The Maryland Senator said the people of Wetchoken are suspecting something strange with the missing hand of their dead kinsman. Senator Ballout said Police in Maryland are combing the area where the bloody fight took place.

• He told Star radio two persons from Wetchoken were killed with cutlasses and machetes and that forty-two persons are in detention as prime suspects.

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**Newspaper Summary**

**Blah Claims his Daughter was Attacked While He Testified in The Hague**

(New Democrat, Liberian Express)

- Liberia’s former President Moses Blah said Tuesday his daughter was assaulted on her way home from school while he was testifying for the prosecution at the war crimes trial of his predecessor, Charles Taylor. Blah told judges Tuesday about the attack on his fifth day of testimony.
- "Three or four days ago, my daughter was beaten by two men while coming from school," Blah said. He gave no further details of the attack or of his daughter's condition. He is the most senior former Liberian government official to testify against Taylor since the trial began in January.
- Despite his senior position in Taylor's militia and government, the Defense team during cross-examination sought to downplay the notion that Mr. Blah was an insider and had knowledge on Taylor-RUF links.

**Agriculture Minister Says Liberia Has Enough Food**

(The Inquirer, The News, Daily Observer)

- Amidst rumours that there is food shortage on the Liberian market, Agriculture Minister, Dr. J. Chris Toe has assured that in spite of the unprecedented increases in global food prices, the country still has enough food stocked-piled in its warehouses to ensure that its citizens are fed.
- The Minister has also cautioned Liberians to engage into diversity farming and produce other food crops that would also nourish the body instead of just concentrating on rice, which is the nation's staple food.
- Addressing the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) weekly briefing on Wednesday, Dr. Toe, flanked by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Country Representative in Liberia, Dr. Winfred Hammond, explained that the Liberian Government is doing everything in its power to ensure that food be available and affordable on the market.
- According to him, as a country that imports 100% of its fuel products and over 60% of its major grains, Liberia is vulnerable and its post-conflict stability could be imperilled by these international developments, especially in the continuous increase in global food prices.

**USAID/LCIP Embarks On 150-Mile Road Rehabilitation**

(The News)

- The Liberia Community Infrastructure Program (LCIP) with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has embarked on the rehabilitation of the 150-mile road linking Grand Bassa, Rivercess and Sinoe counties. The project which also includes the renovation of the Greenville Administration Building is valued at US$1.3 million. The Team Leader of LCIP, Mr. Jim Clarke said the services of five firms have been contracted to construct cross drainage system along the road which is currently ongoing. He explained that the contractors are working on various segments along the road at Timbo Bridge, Yarkpa’s Town and Sanquin Bridge in Bassa, Rivercess and Sinoe Counties respectively.
Clarke also disclosed that the Greenville Administration Building is undergoing renovation, and that if the rain does not fall too much, the entire project would be completed by July.

Government Rejects CEMENCO’s Proposal for Price Increment  
(The News)

- The Government of Liberia says it has rejected a request from CEMENCO to increase the price of cement on the market. Deputy Information Minister Cletus A. Sieh told a news conference yesterday that government has turned down a proposal to increase the price of cement. Mr. Sieh said the price of cement would remain the same noting that government will study the CEMENCO’s increment proposal. However, Deputy Minister Sieh disclosed that CEMENCO through the initiative of the Ministry of Commerce has embarked on program to increase its distributors from 40 to 100 by the end of May because the hike in the price of cement has been attributed to the limited number of distributors of cement in Liberia.

Liberian President Signs Book of Condolence at Chinese Embassy  
(The Inquirer)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf says the Government of Liberia is profoundly saddened over the massive destruction and loss of lives resulting from a powerful earthquake which hit central China early this week.
  - The President, who led senior Government officials to the Chinese Embassy to sign a book of condolence, said the people of Liberia join the government and people of China as they endure this difficult moment in the history of their country. The Liberian leader requested Chinese ambassador Zhou Yuxiao to convey the Government’s heartfelt sentiments to President Hu Jintao and the Government and people of China, adding, "Liberia stands with you during these difficult moments." The President expressed the hope that God will grant the people of China the fortitude and courage to endure the losses.
- The Chinese Ambassador thanked the Liberian President for the visit and solidarity demonstrated towards the people of China. He described the disaster in his country as the worst China has ever witnessed. Rescue efforts, the Chinese ambassador said, were being hampered due to the rough terrain, but he added that rescue workers, numbering about 200,000, have been able to open up roads which had been blocked.

Voluntary Repatriation Gains Momentum  
(The Inquirer)

- [sic] The voluntary repatriation of Liberian refugees from the region is gaining momentum with 567 persons assisted to return between 7-18 May bringing to 833 the number of those repatriated since the Agency resumed large-scale organized repatriation of Liberian refugees on 13 April.
- Over the last 11-day period, 371 Liberians returned from Ghana, 41 from Nigeria and 155 from Guinea. An extra 61 return movement has been reported from Sierra Leone while some 200 refugees spontaneously returned by road through the Liberia/Cote d’Ivoire border in Grand Gedeh County. UNHCR and the Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission (LRRRC) have solicited the support of border guards to facilitate these returns as well. UNHCR’s main Government counterpart, LRRRC, is managing a 250-person capacity transit centre on the Monrovia-Robertsfield Highway. The centre is established for the processing of refugees returning home through the Roberts International Airport, most of whom come from Ghana and Nigeria.

Radio Summary
Star Radio (News culled today from website at 8:35 am)
US$3m to Renovate Burnt Executive Mansion
- In an interview, Budget Bureau Director Augustine Ngafuan says US$3 million has been allocated in the draft 2008/2009 National Budget for the renovation of the Executive Mansion.
- Mr. Ngafuan said the allotment forms part of the General Claims and contingent portion of the draft budget and said of the US$3 million, one million is allocated in the base budget while the remaining forms part of the contingent budget.
- The 4th floor of the Executive Mansion was gutted by fire in 2006 during programs making the celebrations of Liberia’s Independence Day.
- Presidents Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, John Kuffour of Ghana, Ivorian President Laurent Gbargbo and former Sierra Leonean President Ahmed Tejan Kaba survived the fire incident.

(Also reported on Truth F.M. and ELBC)

President Sirleaf Says Ban on Food Export is in National Security Interest
- Speaking to journalists in Monrovia, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf acknowledged that the ban placed on the export of rice and livestock by Liberia and Guinea sends a wrong signal for cooperation in the region.
- The President however said the decisions were taken to protect national interest.
- President Sirleaf who chairs the Mano River Union (MRU) said member countries agreed to collaborate in addressing the food crisis but without endangering national interest.

(Also reported on Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Ghanaian Ambassador to Liberia Acknowledges Presence of Illegal Ghanaians
- Ghanaian Ambassador to Liberia Francis Adu Amanfoh says the embassy is aware of the presence of hundreds of Ghanaians illegally residing in the country but attributed the situation to the lack of enforcement of immigration laws.
- Ambassador Amanfoh said Ghanaians have lived along the coast of Liberia for years without documents but encouraged those residing in the country illegally to register with the immigration bureau now that the laws are being enforced.
- The Ghanaian ambassador’s statement comes in the wake of the arrest and detention of Liberians in Ghana for allegedly living in the country illegally.

(Also reported on Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Armed Robbers Raid Telecom Community, Rape Women
- Reports say armed robbers on Wednesday morning raided the Paynesville Telecom Community outside Monrovia, raping two women.
- Correspondents say the eight men armed with machetes and other deadly weapons broke into the home of the victims demanding money and mobile phones before raping their victims.

EPA Alarms over Destruction of National Reserve Forest
- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) said it is worried over the level of destruction at the Sapo National Park.
- The EPA South-eastern Coordinator, Edward Wingba said Liberians living in the park are carrying out illicit mining, fishing, hunting and farming to sustain them.
- Mr. Wingba said pit sawers from Grand Gedeh have also encroached on the virgin forest in the county but that government was working along with some international NGO’s including Conservation International to find alternative livelihood for those involved.
Former Congo Rebel Leader May Face Trial at The Hague

By Howard Lesser
Washington, DC

Former Congolese rebel leader Jean-Pierre Bemba has been arrested in Belgium for serious crimes allegedly committed in the Central African Republic (CAR) six years ago. Bemba, a former Congolese vice president, has been in self-imposed exile from the DRC since April of last year when he fled the country. Although he continued to serve as a senator representing the capital Kinshasa, Bemba remained in Europe after charging that he and his Movement for the Liberation of Congo rebel group (MLC) were being targeted by the government of President Joseph Kabila. DRC Ambassador to the United Nations Christian Ileka says that the International Criminal Court (ICC) charges stem from alleged atrocities committed after former CAR President Ange-Felix Patasse had invited in Bemba’s MLC forces to help put down a coup plot.

“You will remember that some years ago, the MLC was asked by then-President Patasse to help him with his struggle with his own rebellion, and the forces of MLC went to Central Africa, and apparently, they did some gross violations of human rights according to what we have heard and what we have read,” he said.

In addition to the crimes human rights activists accused MLC rebels of committing in the CAR, Bemba and his northern Congolese fighters were singled out by opponents during his 2006 presidential campaign against Joseph Kabila with allegations of cannibalism for having eaten pygmies during the 2002 fighting. He denied the charges. The reasons why it took five years to prosecute him, according to Ambassador Ileka are complex, but stem from the criminal court’s involved process of carrying out the 2000 Rome statute that allowed foreign governments to pursue alleged war criminals living outside their countries and the nations where their alleged crimes were carried out.

“The Rome statute, according to the ICC, just went into force in 2002, I think. Actually, DRC was the sixty-fifth signatory. And then there were also all the procedures in putting in place the international tribunal. So that took a while. And most of the persons who had been arrested by the ICC are Congolese. And this is not beautiful looking for our country, but that is just how it is,” he said.

Pursuit of Bemba in order to send him to trial at the court in the Hague was begun a year ago by ICC chief prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo. His arrest comes after 14 months of self-imposed exile from the DRC, which he left in April, 2007 to travel to Portugal to seek medical treatment for a broken leg. Bemba has not returned home since then, voicing concerns for his personal safety. After insisting that he was being targeted by the Kabila government, Bemba has remained in Europe. Although he continues to hold a Kinshasa Senate seat that he won after losing a 2006 presidential election run-off to Kabila, he holds no immunity from being prosecuted for international crimes. Ambassador Ileka says the DRC is playing no part in the charges filed against Bemba and that the transfer from Belgium to the Netherlands court can be carried out if the charges hold up for prosecution.

“Bemba has been arrested upon request from the CAR, so the president, Bozize, requested the arrest, which the Belgian authorities did. I think that if I read the news correctly, what was presented to the Belgian prosecutor, who confirmed the arrest, and then the Belgian prosecutor has to wait until the ICC sends to Belgium all the needed files in order to know that at least he has to release him or to send him to the Hague,” he noted.
In an apparently separate development, the Kinshasa government has recalled its ambassador from Belgium to protest criticisms of Congo’s reform efforts that were made by Belgian Foreign Minister Karel De Gucht. Belgium reportedly gives its former African colony about 315 million dollars in aid each year. DRC UN Ambassador Ileka says he believes the latest strains between Brussels and Kinshasa should not complicate any aspects of Jean-Pierre Bemba’s detention, prosecution, or transfer. However, the UN envoy says it is possible that Bemba’s case could take on an aura of celebrity equivalent to the attention being given to the ICC prosecution of former Liberian President Charles Taylor.

“In my personal view, as to something like with Charles Taylor, we have some evidence regarding what he did in CAR. But then, all the things which were violations which were done during the rebellion in the DRC – for example, we have this history about eating human flesh of the pygmies and everything – everything will come up at a certain point. I think we will have some Congolese families who are going to file against Bemba for those things,” he pointed out.
Special Court Supplement
Special Court football match against IMATT
Saturday, 24 May 2008