SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
OUTREACH AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

Melie River bridge, near Kameindor linking Sierra Leone and Guinea

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:
Tuesday, 3 February 2009

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday. Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact Martin Royston-Wright Ext 7217
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International News</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who Killed Sam Bockarie? / New Vision (Liberia)</td>
<td>Pages 3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moses Gbla Participated in Sam Bockarie’s Killing / Heritage (Liberia)</td>
<td>Pages 5-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moses Blah Linked to Sam Bockarie’s Death / Public Agenda (Liberia)</td>
<td>Page 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence Against Taylor Ends / The Liberian Express (Liberia)</td>
<td>Page 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosecution’s Lasts Witness Ends Testimony / The Monitor</td>
<td>Page 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia: Prosecutor Presents Final Witness At UN-Backed Trial of Taylor / UN News</td>
<td>Page 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Witness Appears in UN-backed Trial of Liberia’s Taylor / Chinaview</td>
<td>Page 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Prosecutor for Special Court in Sierra Leone talks War Crimes / Talk Radio News Service</td>
<td>Page 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal Threatens to Hand Chad Dictator to AU / Agence France Presses</td>
<td>Pages 13-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher in US Accused of Genocide / BBC Online</td>
<td>Page 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AU Summit Hails New Somali Leader; Calls on ICC to Suspend Bashir Warrants / VOA</td>
<td>Pages 16-17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Who Killed Sam Bockarie?

Eyewitness Accounts Link Top NPFL Ex-Generals

With accounts emerging from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), it is becoming clearer that the events leading up to the killing of Sam Bockarie, the former vice president of the NPFL, were far more complicated than what was initially reported.

Bockarie was killed in Nimba County, Liberia, in June 2009. The TRC hearing into his death revealed that he had been targeted by a group of NPFL officers who were seeking revenge for a previous incident.

Bockarie had been accused of working with the government to disarm the NPFL, and this led to a series of clashes between the NPFL and government forces. In the aftermath of these clashes, Bockarie was killed.

The TRC heard testimony from several witnesses who claimed that Bockarie had been involved in corruption and human rights abuses during his time in office. These allegations were dismissed by Bockarie's supporters, who claimed that he had been killed in a political vendetta.

Taylor Witnesses Afraid To Testify

The trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor has been marred by reports of witnesses disappearing or being refused protection by the government. The situation has led to concerns about the reliability of evidence presented during the trial.

The government has denied reports that witnesses have been subjected to intimidation or blackmail. However, some witnesses have claimed that they have been threatened with death if they testify against Taylor.

The trial is set to resume on 2 February 2009, with Taylor facing charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

US$2.6 Billion Contract Questioned

A contract worth US$2.6 billion to develop the Dukem gold mine in Liberia has been the subject of controversy, with allegations of corruption and abuse of power.

The contract was awarded to a Chinese company, China AMC, in 2008, but has been the subject of numerous investigations and legal challenges. Liberian officials have been accused of awarding the contract to friends and relatives of politicians.

The contract has now been referred to the United Nations for review, but critics have called for a more thorough investigation into the matter.
Who Killed

together with Sam Bockarie and his families. An order was given for us to be tied and Sam Bockarie was called upon to go and eat together with the Vice President Moses Bleh, Gen. Yeaten and Joe Tuah.

After eating, Sheriff explained, Yeaten told Bockarie to escort them to an unknown destination somewhere in the forest, where he was swept down by group of Yeaten and Bleh bodyguards and beaten to death. He said the Sierra Leonean rebel commander was later shot to prove that he was killed in an exchange of gunfire.

He said following the death of Bockarie, Yeaten ordered his (Bockarie's) senior bodyguard, Gen. Salami "to sex his wife" to death. He said Yeaten's bodyguards then killed the RUF commander's mother and children. "He was beaten to death and fired; Gen. Salami sexed his wife (Nama Hauna) to death; killed his mother (Mama Fatu) and his son, Corporal."

Sheriff said they were then released and Bockarie's body was transported to Monrovia "in order to create a camouflage that he was ambushed."

"They then left men down to Tlapay to execute men loyal to the late Gen. Sam Bockarie. They were even over 700 men that were killed on that day," he said.

He explained also that in Monrovia, wounded fighters loyal to Bockarie who were hospitalized were loaded into three trucks and executed somewhere along the Boni Highway to conceal evidence after the agitated for remuneration to return to Sierra Leone.

Sheriff said the government also hunted and eliminated other Sierra Leonean fighters that were residing in other parts of Monrovia as part of its campaign to "destroy evidence."

During his appearance before the TRC last year, Mr. Bhah said that he only knew about Bockarie's death when Gen. Yeaten stopped over in his town while enroute to Monrovia and showed him his corpse.

Bhah: "Yeaten was passing through the town one day when he came and told me they had just come from an operation. Yeaten told me chief we just came from an operation so come and see. When I looked in the pickup I saw the body of Bockarie lying down in a pool of blood."

Meanwhile, Public hearing of Liberia's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) continues Monday with the appearance of a se-

Taylor Witnesses

cause a number of important wit-
nesses that the prosecution has been not called upon to tes-
tify.

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He cited examples of the various accounts in different accounts at all the roles he had appeared in and the

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Moses Blah Participated in Sam Bockarie’s Killing

Ex-ATU commander testifies at TRC

FORMER VICE PRESIDENT Moses Blah took part in the murder of RUF commander Sam Bockarie, a witness told commissioners of Liberia’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

Mohammed Sheriff, a senior commander of the defunct Anti-Terrorist Unit (ATU) of exiled President Charles Taylor said Blah conspired and participated in the killing of Bockarie in the town of Tiplay in Nimba County.

Sheriff said the late Sierra Leonean rebel commander was murdered upon the orders of then President Taylor who was informed that Bockarie was conspiring against him.

He said an order was passed to General Benjamin Yeaten to recall Bockarie who was fighting alongside dissident forces fighting the Government of La Côte D’Ivoire.

“Bockarie and his men came across the border into Liberia based on the order and when he reached the Town of Tiplay, Yeaten invited him to have meal with him and Moses Blah, the former vice president,” he explained.

Mr. Sheriff was testifying recently at the ongoing public hearings of the TRC at the Centennial Memorial Pavilion in Monrovia.

“After an order came to Ivory Coast by the President Charles Taylor through General Yeaten, everybody was surprised at the order to retreat. We all were taken to Tiplay in a town called Bloh together with Sam Bockarie and his families. An order was given for us to be bid and Sam Bockarie was called upon to go and eat together with the Vice President Moses Blah, Gen. Yeaten and Joe Tuah.”

After eating, Sheriff explained, Yeaten told Bockarie to escort them to an unknown destination somewhere in the forest, where he was swept down by group of Yeaten and Blah bodyguards and beaten to death. He said the Sierra Leonean rebel
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Liberia is recovering from years of conflict that was characterized by horrific human rights violations, including arbitrary killings, use of child combatants, rape and sexual violence, separation of families; and looting and destruction of properties. Out of a population of 3 million, an estimated 300,000 Liberians were killed, with as many as 1.5 million displaced.

Under the theme: "Understanding the Conflict Through its Principal Events and Actors," the ongoing hearings are addressing the root causes of the

The hearings are focused on events between 1979 and 2003 and the national and external actors that helped to shape those events.

The TRC was agreed upon in the August 2003 peace agreement and created by the TRC Act of 2005. The TRC was established to "promote national peace, security, unity and reconciliation," and at the same time make it possible to hold perpetrators accountable for gross human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law that occurred in Liberia between January 1979 and October 2003.
Moses Blah Linked To Sam Bockarie's Death

As Taylor Sanctions Killing

said Blah conspired and participated in the killing of Bockarie in the Town of Tiplay in Nimba County. Sheriff told the late Sierra Leonean rebel commander was murdered upon the orders of then President Taylor who was informed that Bockarie was conspiring against him. He said an order was passed to

African Social Forum Unsure of Brazil

Africa’s representatives at a meeting between the International Council of the World Social Forum and the President of Brazil, Luis Inacio Lula da Silva, have come out feeling unconvinced about Brazilian support for African interests on world trade issues.

The African group had hoped that on the merit of South-South solidarity Brazil could argue Africa’s case against the Economic Partnership Agreements with the European Union and agriculture protection measures in World Trade Organization talks.

The encounter left Walla Umaru of the Kenya Debt Relief Network “concerned about the future of Africa”. This member of the Council of the African Social Forum said “Africa” lacks men and women of vision and courage to assert the vision of Africans at the Global

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EVIDENCE AGAINST TAYLOR ENDS

The prosecution in the war crimes court sitting in The Hague has ended the production of evidence against the former Liberian leader Charles Taylor.

The last and final prosecution witness Ntiali Karmoh continued asking questions about the witness's experience during the January 1999 rebel invasion of Freetown.

Counsel asked the witness about an individual he mentioned as having seen at Shell Gas Station when rebels entered Freetown in January 1999.

The man's name according to the witness was "High Way". He explained that the man had been imprisoned at Pademba Road Prison for murder and he was released by rebels when they released all the prisoners upon entering the capital.

Asked how he knew that the man's name was High Way, the witness said that everyone in Freetown knew about High Way as he had murdered a former Bank Governor as well as a medical doctor.

He said that High Way was very notorious. He also informed the court that High Way was armed when he saw him. Explaining further about his experience, the witness said that at FALCON Street, the rebels asked all residents to move outside and dance for peace with white cloth. He said that the rebels harassed civilians after some time. Some of them were beaten and others were killed.

When asked whether this experience has had any impact on him, the witness explained that because of this experience, he can no longer work and now lives as a beggar. He said it was now.

Defence counsel Courtney Giddings QC cross-examined the witness. Counsel's cross-examination was very short as he just asked the witness about the various names of the conflicts. Counsel asked the witness whether he was when the war started in Sierra Leone. The witness responded that he was in Freetown at that time. He said he heard people say that the war had started around Koidu and Freetown. He said he was not following the trend of the war as much on radio at this time.

When asked about the NPJC group that supplied Joseph Monroe in 1998, the witness said he was in Freetown at that time. He said he was never in Freetown when the ABSCD worked for Yemane Kabbah in 1997. According to the witness, he knew that the RUF joined the ABSCD in 1997. He said he was in Freetown, when ECOMOG dealt with the RUF in 1998. He further noted his experience during the January 1999 invasion of Freetown.

Providing Judge Richard Lassick thanked all parties for their cooperation during this phase of the trial. Court was adjourned on February 6, 2009 when the Chamber will hold a Status Conference to determine how to proceed with the defense case.
Prosecution’s last witness ends testimony

Court adjourns

The Prosecution in the ongoing war crimes trial of former Liberian leader has ended its evidence with testimony of the last witness against Charles Taylor.

On Friday, January 30, the prosecution concluded its evidence with 91 witnesses in total who testified against Mr. Taylor and the court adjourned and will resume with a “Status Conference” on February 9. The last prosecution witness TF1-278, who commenced his testimony on Thursday, 29 concluded his evidence against Charles Taylor though he was absent in court but he consented to the continuation of proceedings in his absence.

Prosecution counsel Mr. Nicholas Koumjian continued the cross-examination of the witness.
Liberia: Prosecutor Presents Final Witness At UN-Backed Trial of Taylor

The prosecution has presented its 91st and final witness in the United Nations-backed trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor on charges of war crimes committed in the civil war in Sierra Leone, completing a graphic litany of alleged atrocities ranging from thousands of murders to mutilation, rape and sexual slavery.

The Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), Stephen Rapp, who built his case with 31 insider witnesses testifying to Mr. Taylor's links to the crimes, and more than 50 others, including amputees, rape victims and former child soldiers, cited the harrowing case of witness 91 - a father who had his hands chopped off to save his four-year-old son.

"I am in awe of their courage and grateful for their willingness to travel thousands of miles to bear witness," he told a news conference in New York. "The contrast between these victims and the accused could not be more stark and this was brought home in particular by the last witness, a man whose left hand was amputated by the rebels who are alleged to have been controlled or aided by Taylor.

"When his four-year-old son protested the injury to his Pappa, and the rebels then threatened the boy with amputation, the witness then offered his own right hand to save his son, which the rebels then proceeded to chop off. Here we saw a man who sacrificed his own hands for the future of his son bearing witness against a man alleged to have sacrificed the lives, the hands and the futures of thousands of human beings in pursuit of his own wealth and power."

Mr. Taylor has pleaded not guilty to the 11 counts of counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity and other violations of international humanitarian law, which also include pillage, slavery for forced marriage purposes, collective punishment and recruitment and use of children under the age of 15 in active hostilities. He is expected to testify in his own defence, according to his lawyers.

None of the charges relate to atrocities Mr. Taylor is alleged to have committed in Liberia, but to his aid to two Sierra Leonean rebel groups, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) during the civil war from 1996 to 2002.

Mr. Rapp said he expected the defence to start after Easter in April, after possible procedural defence motions to dismiss the case, and to last four to six months, with all evidence and arguments concluding this year. If Mr. Taylor is convicted, sentencing should follow three to four weeks after that. An appeal could then take up to six months and the whole process should be concluded by the end of 2010.

The SCSL, established in January 2002 by an agreement between Sierra Leone's Government and the UN, cannot impose a life sentence, but it has already sentenced two defendants in another case to 50 years in jail. Britain has said it would be willing to imprison Mr. Taylor if he is found guilty. In 2006, the UN Security Council authorized Mr. Taylor's trial to be held in The Hague, Netherlands, instead of its usual venue in Sierra Leone's capital, Freetown, citing security reasons.

Of the 91 prosecution witnesses, only four testified entirely in closed session, though some were protected by partial face or voice distortion.

"It's been demonstrated that it's possible to prosecute a former chief of State in a trial that is fair and efficient even when the indictment covers wide-ranging crimes," Mr. Rapp said. "We've seen international justice operating in accordance with the highest standards."
Final witness appears in UN-backed trial of Liberia's Taylor

UNITED NATIONS, Feb. 2 (Xinhua) -- The prosecution has presented its 91st and final witness in the United Nations-backed trial of former Liberian president Charles Taylor on 11 criminal counts related to the civil war in Sierra Leone, according to a UN press release Monday.

"I am in awe of their courage and grateful for their willingness to travel thousands of miles to bear witness," the chief prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), Stephen Rapp, told a news conference in New York.

Rapp said the harrowing case of the 91st witness, a father who had his hands chopped off by rebels linked to Taylor in order to save his four-year-old son, has fully demonstrated the stark contrast between the victims and the accused.

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Chief Prosecutor for Special Court in Sierra Leone talks war crimes

Tala Dowlatshahi

Stephen Rapp, Chief Prosecutor for the Special Court for Sierra Leone, on the war crimes trial of former Liberian president Charles Taylor briefed reporters this morning on the high level case.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone was set up jointly by the Government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations. It is mandated to try those who bear the greatest responsibility for serious violations of international humanitarian law and Sierra Leonean law committed in the territory of Sierra Leone since 30 November 1996.

Currently, two cases have been completed, including appeals. Testimony in the RUF case is complete, and a Trial Judgement is expected later this year.

The trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor is in the Prosecution phase at The Hague.
Agence France Presses
Tuesday, 3 February 2009

Senegal threatens to hand Chad dictator to AU

ADDIS ABABA (AFP) — Senegal's President Abdoulaye Wade said Tuesday his government may hand former Chad dictator Hissene Habre over to the African Union because he is so angry with the lack of international support to bring Habre to trial.

"Finally the story of Hissene Habre is going to turn against Senegal. Some accuse us of not wanting to bring him to trial, but they understand that we have not been given the means to judge him," Wade told AFP on the sidelines of an African Union summit.

Habre was toppled from power in 1990 and fled to Senegal after an eight-year reign marked by widespread allegations of rights abuses.

An official truth commission report in 1992 accused Habre's regime of committing some 40,000 political murders.

The African Union asked Senegal to prosecute Habre on war crimes and crimes against humanity charges, but no progress has been made.

Wade said that if resources are not provided for his country to stage the trial, then he could send Habre either back to Chad or hand him over the head of the African Union.

"There is a precedent," Wade said, noting that former Liberian leader Charles Taylor was sent to Nigeria when its former president Olusegun Obasanjo was leading the continental bloc.

Taylor is now awaiting a judgement before the global war crimes court in The Hague.

Wade strongly denied that he was trying to bury the case.

"I agreed to do this firstly because I know that no other country would agree... and because I am against impunity," he said.

"Secondly I do not want an African head of state judge outside the continent. It's better that he be judged here in Africa," Wade said.

Human rights groups reject this theory.

"Senegal has an obligation to put Habre on trial or to extradite him. That's not based on the AU mandate, but on its ratification of the convention against torture," said Reed Brody, a campaigner with Human Rights Watch.

"Senegal cannot extradite Habre to the AU, which is not a state and does not have the ability to try him. But we are not opposed to an extradition to a country where he would be judged, like Belgium, which has sought him," Brody added.

"Habre used millions stolen from Chad's Treasury to bring a protective veil around him in Senegal," he said.

But Wade insisted that his country struggled to find the financing needed for a trial.
"I have said from the start that Senegal will not pay the costs of this trial," Wade said.

"Everyone makes promises, including the European Union and Human Rights Watch," he said.

"President (Nicolas) Sarkozy announced that France would participate, but we have not seen this participation," he said, adding that Sarkozy had recently written to him urging Senegal not to abandon the case.

France's foreign ministry on Monday confirmed the letter, saying that France places "great importance" on the trial.

"It's important that this trial enters an operational phase, including the creation of a timetable and a credible budget, as well as the start of judicial investigations," ministry spokesman Frederic Desagneaux said.

"Senegal has done a draft and revised it with the partners who should finance the project. But after all that, if it takes too long, I said that I refuse for Senegal to manage the trial budget," Wade said.

"As soon as we have all the money and the people to manage it, the trial will take place, there is no doubt," he said.

"Now this money needs to be actually and totally available before Senegal begins this trial, because we could very well begin and after we are left with the case, and that would be a catastrophe," he added.
Teacher in US accused of genocide

A college near the US city of Baltimore has suspended a Rwandan professor over accusations he participated in the African country's genocide.

Leopold Munyakazi had been working at Goucher College near Baltimore under a programme for academics whose lives are threatened at home.

He has denied any involvement in Rwanda's genocide.

Some 800,000 minority Tutsis and moderate Hutus were slaughtered by Hutu militias in just 100 days in 1994.

Mr Munyakazi, a Hutu, told the Associated Press news agency that he had been persecuted by Rwanda's government.

He said he had been held without trial in Rwanda from 1994 to 1999 on accusations of genocide.

"I'm not hiding; I was never involved in genocide," he said.

Sanford Ungar, president of Goucher College, said in a letter to students and faculty that he became aware of charges against Mr Munyakazi when a journalist and a Rwandan prosecutor came to the college in December.

They told him of witnesses testimonies that Mr Munyakazi, 59, had "participated directly" in the genocide.

Charges had been prepared in 2006 after Mr Munyakazi had given a "controversial talk" in the US questioning the Rwandan government's version of the genocide, Mr Ungar said.

"Dr Munyakazi vehemently denies any involvement in committing genocide, and in fact has presented evidence that he assisted numerous Tutsis in fleeing Hutu killers," the letter said.

Mr Ungar said the Rwandan, who started teaching French at the college in September, would be suspended from his job pending further investigation.

An official at Rwanda's embassy in Washington said Rwanda had asked for Mr Munyakazi and five others to be returned to the country.
AU Summit Hails New Somali Leader; Calls on ICC to Suspend Bashir Warrants

Somalia's newly-elected President Sheik Sharif Sheik Ahmed has been hailed at the opening ceremonies of a summit of African leaders in Addis Ababa. The session was dominated by Libya's leader Moammar Gadhafi, who vowed to push ahead with his idea of a continental government, a day after it was declared effectively dead.

A Continent Ravaged By War

The summit's business meeting opened Monday with AU Commission Chairman Jean Ping painting a harsh picture of a continent split by wars, military coups, and on the brink of a disastrous recession.

Speaking in French, the continent's top diplomat warned Africans they are about to feel what he called the 'sweeping blow' of a 'systemic global economic crisis'. And with Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir in the audience, he said the continental body is working to delay the pending International Criminal Court warrants charging Mr. Bashir with genocide.

He said efforts are underway to persuade the ICC to place a 12-month moratorium on any move to hand down indictments against Mr. Bashir. The Sudanese leader sat quietly at the front of the hall.

Chairman Ping also deplored Africa's apparent return to the bad old days of military coups, as evidenced by Guinea and Mauritania, the unsuccessful coup in Guinea Bissau, and the current unrest in Madagascar.

Progress Made

On the bright side, he pointed to the recent arrest of renegade Congolese General Laurent Nkunda, efforts to achieve peace in places from Burundi and the Comoros, the Central African Republic and countries of the West Africa zone.

Ping also hailed the election three days earlier of Somalia's President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, and asked Africa's newest head of state to stand, as the packed hall erupted in applause.

He said shades of hope are appearing in Somalia with the United Nations Security Council expressing its intention to take over the AU Somalia peacekeeping force, as well as the peace accords signed in Djibouti that led to election of Sheikh Sharif.

The Somali president's presence in the Ethiopian capital was ironic, coming two years after Ethiopian troops poured into Somalia to force him and his Islamic Courts Union from power.
Questions Surround Libya's-AU Role

The summit session was marked by contradictions. Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi was sworn in as AU Chairman for the coming year by the outgoing chairman, Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete. A day earlier, Mr. Kikwete had pronounced the Libyan leader's concept of a union government a "non-starter.

But in his acceptance speech, delivered in Arabic through an interpreter, the golden-robed Mr. Gaddafi appeared to reject the death sentence imposed on his unity government idea. He said he would consider the idea accepted unless a majority of the heads of states speak out against it. Gadhafi speaks thru an interpreter.

"We want it to be ratified, either rejected or accepted, at the next summit. If we don't have a quorum for rejection, then this means we have accepted it," he said.

Human rights groups said Mr. Gadhafi's election raised questions about the African Union's commitment to democratic principles. Reed Brody of the group Human Rights Watch said this breaks a string of three consecutive democratically-elected leaders at the helm of the continental body.

"The question is whether he sets a good example in terms of human rights and democracy. For the African continent. Let's remember that despite Libya's re-engagement with the international community, it's still a country that doesn't have political freedoms," he said.

Outgoing chairman Kikwete interrupted summit business Monday to pay tribute to the new U.S. President Barack Obama. As his last act in the chair, Mr. Kikwete said the African Union attaches great importance to what most people here feel will be a new chapter for U.S. Africa relations during the Obama administration.