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:
Thursday, 23 April 2009

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
Martin Royston-Wright
Ext 7217
## Local News

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## International News

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Three women currently sit on death row at Pademba Road Prisons, Sierra Leone’s maximum security prison in Freetown are seeking presidential pardon as Independence celebration draws closer.

Behind the prison walls these women’s struggles remain largely unknown. After years of torturous waiting, a Presidential pardon is now perhaps their only hope. ADVOCACID an international female prisoners advocacy group, therefore appeals to President Koroma to grant these women a pardon to remedy the injustice of the mandatory death penalty which operates in a severely under-resourced legal system in a society recovering from years of conflict.

Until recently, Mankaprie alone occupied the cell in Pademba reserved for condemned female prisoners. It was in this cell over a period of months that she began to tell her story, bit by bit, emboldened by the education received in prison and by the fact that people now have time to listen to her. Mankaprie’s story begins on a night in early 2003 when her sickly step-child took a turn for the worse. The family immediately sought help from the local “peppuh” doctor, but by the following afternoon, the child was dead. Mankaprie, her husband and the child’s mother were first taken to the Paramount Chief and then to the nearest Police Station for questioning. It was eventually determined that the baby was murdered. Of the three taken in, only Mankaprie was charged with the child’s murder.

From arrest until shortly before trial, Mankaprie received no legal advice or assistance. Instead, a barely literate woman, trying to find her way out of a terrifying and confusing situation, she trustingly listened to those she thought were trying to help her. This included her husband, himself a suspect. At the police station, Mankaprie was entirely without support, frightened, and under pressure from her husband to say yes to everything the police asked her. She was pregnant and subsequently suffered a miscarriage while in detention. In the end, Mankaprie signed the confession which was later used against her at trial. Mankaprie’s husband and other wife were released.

It was at this point in 2003 that Mankaprie was cast adrift in the Sierra Leone legal system. Her family abandoned her. She had no friends to plead for her and no counsel to speak for her. In the gloom of her condemned cell, Mankaprie states now that she truly had no idea what was happening. It was not until 2005, when she appeared before the High Court, that the State appointed a lawyer to defend her. This overworked lawyer who agreed to take the case on for free was only able to meet with Mankaprie three times, with each meeting lasting approximately 15 minutes. Unsurprisingly, Mankaprie’s defence failed. Despite denying the contents of her confession, she was found guilty of murder and sentenced to death, as required by law. It was only later, when her lawyer explained the outcome that Mankaprie fully understood the verdict and the enormity of what had just happened. After 2 years adrift, her limbo was now at an end.

After the trial, the myriad problems that besiege the Sierra Leonean legal system meant Mankaprie had no lawyer to file a timely appeal. The charitable legal assistance she received months later became bogged down by delays caused by failures in the system. Only in recent months has Mankaprie been given some hope. London-based barristers who agreed to review Mankaprie’s case file pro-bono have highlighted serious problems with the evidence admitted at trial. These problems could give Mankaprie good grounds for contesting her conviction but only if she were to be granted leave to appeal.

Mankaprie’s story is not unique. A lack of education,
SLBS was championed by cultural entertainment.

3 women on death row cry for Presidential pardon

From Page 2

resources and time meant that none of the three women on death row were ultimately able to mount a proper defence in a barely functioning legal system against a murder charge, which on conviction carries the mandatory sentence of death in Sierra Leone.

Since the Sierra Leonean Truth and Reconciliation Commission found the continued existence of the death penalty on the country’s statute books to be an affront to civilised society, the death penalty has been a topic of popular debate in Sierra Leone. Coupled with the moral arguments for its abolition are the practical ones: internationally, the death penalty has not been found to act as a deterrent to serious crime. Further, the mental stress experienced by those on death row for several years is considered inhumane in other jurisdictions and a breach of a person’s constitutional rights. The Sierra Leonean Constitution is supposed to protect individuals from inhuman punishment, yet Mankaprie has been on death row for 4 years.

Notwithstanding the ten year de facto moratorium on executions, people are still being sentenced to death in Sierra Leone. And there is no guarantee that executions will not resume in future. In a system which seriously lacks physical capacity, can Sierra Leone with good conscience continue to condemn to death those whose proper legal representation it cannot guarantee?

The three condemned women are now pleading to the President for mercy. Deprived and exhausted of almost all legal avenues by a broken system, these three women are left only with hope. They hope that the President will grant them a pardon on Independence Day. If granted, the pardons will in some measure remedy the injustices suffered by these three women. However, Sierra Leone needs to think beyond Independence Day, to its own story and struggle, one which it is hoped will have the courage to include an end to the death penalty and the beginning of a functioning legal aid system.
3 Cocaine Convicts Airlifted To USA

Events unfolded speedily and dramatically within hours following Justice Nicolas Colin Brown-Marke’s landmark cocaine judgement on Tuesday. Immediately the sentences were handed down, President Koroma signed an expulsion order for three of the convicted accused.

Harvey Stevers Perez, Gerado Quintano Perez and Alex Rompio are also wanted in New York, USA on drugs charges.

On Tuesday night American drug enforcement agents were handed the three after they were said to have been forcefully removed from their cells at the Pademba Road Prison.

Force had to be used because they attempted putting up resistance when security personnel went to get them to have the Presidential order served on them by officers from the Immigration Department who were waiting at the heliport.

They were driven from the Prison in handcuffs, and also had their feet chained, to the Aberdeen Heliport where they were passed on the American drug enforcement agents. After the official protocol and formalities, they were ushered into the helicopter for the seven minutes flight across the Atlantic Ocean to the Freetown International airport at Lungi where again an aircraft that has been seated on the tarmac for two days, was waiting to airlift them to the USA.

The US embassy here made no mention of this in a press statement issued yesterday. Instead, the statement was a congratulatory pat on the back for President Koroma and the judiciary.

Full text below.

The United States Embassy in Freetown congratulates President Koroma on his courageous leadership and the Sierra Leonean Judiciary for the conclusion of this high profile cocaine case. We compliment the Government of Sierra Leone for its interest in protecting its citizens from the scourge of narcotics especially as the future of Sierra Leonean youth could be at risk. We en-
JUSTICE NICHOLAS Browne-Marke who jailed the 15 accused persons for prison terms ranging from five to 15 with various fines, has said the issue whether some of the accused should be extradited to face trial in the USA is left with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Justice Browne-Marke’s statement comes in the wake of concerns raised by one of the defence lawyers, Fio Edwards in which he said there are rumours that the non-Sierra Leoneans would be taken to the USA.

He said taking them to the US would violate their human rights which is an affront to the sovereignty of Sierra Leone.

But Justice Browne-Marke said he has passed the sentence and it is left with the Foreign ministry to handle the matter.

It should be recalled that on Tuesday, the Judge sentenced George Archillo, Victor Manuel Araujo Lastuto,
Burundi rebels starting to disarm

African Union troops are physically disarming 21,000 fighters from Burundi's last active rebel group, the Forces for National Liberation (FNLF).

It follows a weekend ceremony where FNLF leader Agathon Rwasa symbolically surrendered his own weapons to the AU.

A grenade attack killed six people but the BBC's Prime Minister says it was not linked to the rebels.

But he says it shows how many weapons are circulating in Burundi following more than 10 years of ethnic conflict.

According to the AFP news agency, estimates put the number of weapons owned illegally at between 100,000 and 300,000.

National radio reported a mother and her five children were killed on Monday night when a grenade was thrown into a house in Bururi Province, south of the capital Bujumbura.

Officials say it is not known who the attackers were.

Our correspondent says the AU forces have deployed to five assembly points to collect the weapons.

The FNLF was officially declared a political party at 11:00 GMT, but the disarmament is not an easy task. Several areas remain under rebel control and are still waiting to receive a report from the AU to proceed.

Some 3,500 fighters are due to be integrated into the army and police.

Another 5,000 are to receive demobilisation packages - including a week's course to help them integrate into civilian life - 18 months' salary and $600 (€410) to start a business.

The rest - some 12,500 men - are being sent back to civilian life with an estimated $80 (€55).

Our reporter says at one of the assembly points, 50km north-west of the capital, he saw more than 60 weapons - mainly AK-47s - being handed in.

But the rebels being sent home, some of whom have been fighting with the FNLF for about 10 years, were complaining that $80 was not enough to help them rebuild their lives.

And there is concern amongst villagers around the capital that so many fighters are going home without receiving substantial support, he says.

But FNLF leader Mr Rwasa told the BBC's Africa Network in November that the country relied on donor funding and only had enough money to help so many fighters.

He also said ex-rebels would be considered first when it came to employing people for development projects.

Asked if he would ever take up arms again, he replied: "No."

"This decade of fighting is enough to teach every Burundian we have to refrain from whatever has been the cause of violence in the country."

The ethnic Tutsi minority has long held power in Burundi.

More than 300,000 people were killed in the civil war sparked in 1993 by the assassination of Burundi's first Hutu head of state and democratically elected president, Melchior Ndadaye.

In the power struggle that followed, former Hutu rebel leader Pierre Nkurunziza became president in 2005 - and posts in the previously Tutsi-dominated army have been split equally between Tutsis and Hutus.
Drug Smugglers Expelled from Sierra Leone to Face US Charges

By Scott Stearns
Dakar

Three drug smugglers convicted in Sierra Leone will face charges in the United States, after the government in Freetown expelled them.

Officers from the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency have taken custody of Harvey Steven Perez, Geraldo Qintana-Perez, and Armando Alonso-Romero after they were convicted in Sierra Leone of trying to smuggle nearly 700 kilograms of cocaine through the airport.

The three men are facing indictments on drug related charges in the Southern District of New York.

Perez is a Colombian-American who is the only U.S. passport holder of the 15 men found guilty in Sierra Leone. Qintana-Perez is a Mexican and Alonso-Romero is a Cuban who holds a Togolese passport.

The men were expelled from Sierra Leone under provisions of the country's Non-Citizen Registration, Immigration, and Expulsion Act of 1965 which allows the president to expel any non-citizen on the recommendation of a trial judge if the president determines that is conducive to the public good.

Counsel for the convicted men object to the expulsion. Defense lawyer and Bar Association President Crispin Fio Edwards says it is an insult to the dignity of the high court.

"It is their human right that is being abused," said Crispin Fio Edwards. "Because if you are convicted in Sierra Leone, it is your option to serve your sentence in Sierra Leone or [be] taken away."

Edwards says his clients have always made clear they did not want to be expelled.

"Even at the time when we were making visits to them in the prisons, they have always said to us that they do not want anything to do with the Americans," he said.

Sierra Leone security officials say the men barricaded themselves in their cells before being turned over to the U.S. agents. They were taken to the airport in shackles, where witnesses say Alonso-Romero shouted, "I am a Cuban. I am not American." He and his co-conspirators were loaded onto a white DEA plane for their trip to the United States.

In written statement, U.S. Ambassador to Sierra Leone June Carter Perry congratulated the government on the conclusion of the case. She said the United States works closely with countries in West Africa on the threat of illegal drugs which could hinder progress in security sector reform and the rule of law.

In addition to the three men expelled, those convicted in Sierra Leone include Colombians, a Venezuelan, a resident of Guinea Bissau, and several Sierra Leoneans including two police officers, a national security officer, and two air traffic controllers.

The four-month trial heard evidence that smugglers used a Caracas-registered Cessna Conquest to take on their cocaine cargo near the border between Colombia and Venezuela before making an unauthorized landing at Freetown's Lungi International Airport last July.
The two-man crew taxied the plane with a fake Red Cross emblem to a remote part of the tarmac and drove off in a waiting jeep, breaking through a locked gate on the airport's northern perimeter. Security personnel surrounded the plane and discovered several automatic weapons and nearly 700 kilograms of cocaine.

The drugs seized in Sierra Leone's largest cocaine bust have an estimated value of $100 million. Judge Nicolas Browne-Marke has ordered the cocaine destroyed and the smugglers' aircraft sold off to the highest bidder.
Newspaper Summary
Lawmakers under Pressure to Pass Electoral Bill
(The Liberia Journal, The Informer, Daily Observer)

- Citizens of four counties, namely, Grand Gedeh, Maryland, River Gee and Grand Kru have signed a resolution calling on the National Legislature to pass into law four elections-related bills that are tied up in the first branch of government.

- The four south-eastern counties made the call at a two-day regional consultative meeting held in Fish Town, River Gee County in April 17-18, 2009.

- The passage of the electoral bill has been an issue of public concern with most personalities including the Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ms. Ellen Margrethe Løj warning that any delay in the passage of the population Threshold Bill will affect the timetable of the 2011 elections in the country. Her warning was on the basis that the forthcoming elections were crucial to the maintenance of peace in the country.

Tubman College Gets Full-Fledge University Status
(Daily Observer)

- William V.S. Tubman College of Technology (TC) in the South-eastern Liberian County of Maryland has now become a full-fledge university. This was announced Tuesday after a high-level planning retreat held over the weekend at Wulki Farm in Careysburg, Montserrado County. The College has consequently changed its name from William V.S. Tubman College of Technology (TC) to William V.S. Tubman University (TU).

Radio Summary
Star Radio (News monitored today at 9:00 am)

Liberian Educator Challenges Opposition Parties to Ensure Transparency

- A U.S.-based Liberian educator has called on opposition politicians in Liberia to help ensure government become transparent and accountable.

- Dr. Syrulwa Somah told a gathering of Liberians in Maryland, the USA that positive and mature criticisms would always put government on its feet.

- Dr. Somah observed opposition politicians in Liberia are only visible and critical during elections period.

- The Liberian Professor cautioned Liberian opposition politicians against becoming what he called seasonal mushrooms.

- Dr. Somah wants Liberian opposition politicians to help educate the public on the use of state resources by government and those holding public offices.
• He maintained opposition in any democratic society is critical to the attainment of check and balance system.
• Dr. Somah spoke at the first inaugural ceremonies of the Maryland Chapter of the United Bassa Organization in the Americas.
• He spoke on the topic "Loyal Opposition and Social Change in Liberia: A Historical Perspective.

**EITI International Delegation visits Liberia**

• A high level delegation from the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative international secretariat, African Development Bank and World Bank arrived in Liberia Tuesday.
• The mission will hold discussions with the Liberia-EITI and officials of government on how to deepen and sustain the work of the LEITI.
• The mission will also pay a courtesy call on Vice President Joseph Boakai and meet both houses of the Legislature separately.
• The visit follows Liberia’s winning of the EITI Implementing Country Award in Doha, Qatar.
• Members of the mission include Eddie Rich of the EITI International Secretariat, Dorain Vasse of the World Bank and Tove Straus of the African Development Bank.

(Also reported on Truth FM, Sky FM, and ELBC)

**VP Boakai Addresses Media Reports Regarding his fate in 2011 Elections**

• Vice President Joseph Boakai has cautiously reacted to reports that he was the direct target of the Unity Party merger.
• Addressing a team of Journalist on Wednesday, Mr. Boakai dismissed the reports, saying he was not searching for job.
• The reaction by VP Boakai comes amidst reports that the Unity Party will not risk him for the Presidency or Vice Presidency posts in the elections.
• Meanwhile, VP Boakai has welcomed the merger of the Unity Party, Liberia Action Party and Liberia Unification.
• He said it meant well to reduce the number of parties in Liberia with similar platforms.
• Public sentiments have been mounting on politicians to minimize Liberia’s crowded political electoral field.
• More than twenty political parties contested the 2005 presidential elections with no ideological difference.

(Also reported on Truth FM, Sky FM, and ELBC)

**Former Thai Prime Minister Explores Investment Opportunities in Liberia**

• The former Prime Minister of Thailand has held talks with Vice President Joseph Boakai aimed at exploring avenues for a huge investment in Liberia.
• Mr. Thaksin Shinawatra told VP Boakai Tuesday it is his strong intention for Thailand to have good relations with African Countries.
• According to him, Thailand would like to share its success and failure in the areas of agriculture and poverty eradication.
• Mr. Shinawatra said his group is interested in oil and mineral exploration and extraction, agriculture, telecommunication license and Lottery.
• The Thai billionaire arrived in Liberia early Tuesday and was due to continue his journey to Ivory Coast and other African Countries on Wednesday.
• Making remarks, VP Boakai welcomed Mr. Shinawatra and delegation and urged the Thais to investment in Liberia as the country has all of the minerals.
(Also reported on Truth FM, Sky FM, and ELBC)

**Truth FM** *(News monitored today at 10:00 am)*

**South-easterners raised concerns over Electoral Bill**

**UN Report shows more Women Dying in Childbirth in Liberia**

- A recent UN report says the number of women dying in childbirth in Liberia has nearly doubled since the 1980s, calling policymakers for urgent attention to reproductive healthcare.

- While the report shows encouraging trends in infant and child survival, it puts maternal mortality at 994 women per 100,000 live births in 2007 compared to 578 in 1987.

- John Agbor, head of child survival for the UN Children’s Fund stressed the need to do something immediately and urgently about maternal mortality.

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Seeking a peace dividend in Liberia

Christina Holder

Liberia's slow but steady recovery from more than a decade of civil war has raised the prospect of developing a tourist industry in this nation with historic ties to the United States.

Moreover, a recent $38 million deal brokered by the World Bank, United States, Britain, Germany and Norway allowed Liberia to retire $1.2 billion of its debt, freeing up government resources that could be used to draw visitors from wealthy countries.

"Danger lovers and people who have to get information come to Liberia," entrepreneur Menipakei Dumoe said.

Mr. Dumoe, 23, founded Wow Liberia Tours last year with the help of American investor Seanan Denizot, who manages marketing for the new company.

Catering mostly to expatriates and people in Liberia on official business, Mr. Dumoe and his staff arrange tours of the capital, Monrovia, and day trips outside the city to forests and beaches.

Along the way, tourists learn of Liberia's tumultuous past and see the hidden beauty of a country that is often overshadowed by its many problems.

Liberia was established in the 1820s, when black Americans sailed to West Africa as part of an experiment arranged by abolitionists and slave owners in the United States.

But in recent decades, poverty, tribal rivalries and economic instability have produced a succession of civil wars that ended in 2003, when warlord Charles Taylor, then the nation's president, was driven into exile. Mr. Taylor is being tried in The Hague on 11 counts of war crimes.

An estimated 200,000 Liberians died in civil wars that began in the late 1980s.

The election of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf in 2005, the first democratically elected female leader in Africa, plus the presence of nearly 10,000 U.N. peacekeepers, have brought a measure of stability.

The U.S. State Department warns visitors to "exercise caution" when traveling to Liberia "especially at night" and to be aware that U.N. peacekeepers won't necessarily be able to protect visitors.

In other words, Liberia remains a dangerous place, mainly because of crime. Its near-term appeal is likely limited to adventure seekers.

But some investors are looking ahead.

Robert L. Johnson, the founder of the BET entertainment network in the United States is the main investor in an $8 million resort on the outskirts of Monrovia.

Kendeja Resort & Villas, slated to open in early June, offers visitors a protected oasis of swimming pools with sculpted waterfalls and Western-style accommodations.
Liberians have high hopes that the resort will attract more foreign investors and create jobs.

New restaurants also are setting a foundation for tourism.

A fusion cuisine cafe called Ro-Zi's N'yla Cafe - "n'yla" means "watering hole" in a local tribal language called Kpelle - opened in February.

Owner Rosemarie Tolbert, the niece of late President William Tolbert, moved from Rockville, Md., to Monrovia in 2004. She hosts "Tapas Thursdays" and "Fondue Fridays" at the small, modern cafe behind a steel gate in a poor neighborhood of Monrovia.

When U.N. peacekeepers, whose presence now helps support upscale eateries, leave Liberia, she hopes that tourists will take their place.

"It's really my hope that we don't give up, even though things may be rough and some days may be worse than others," Miss Tolbert said. "Keep thinking of where we could possibly be and then keep on trucking."

Before the war, Liberia had several upscale restaurants and hotels. The Ducor Palace Hotel, managed by the Intercontinental chain, boasted a large swimming pool, tennis courts and a French restaurant. Hotel Africa was another luxury hotel. It was built during Mr. Tolbert's administration in the 1970s, with a casino and chalets on the beach.

"All of these places were world class," Minister of Tourism Scholastica Doe said. "But unfortunately for us, the war brought everything down."

Dreams for ecotourism also are big.

Before the war, Liberia's largest protected rain forest, Sapo National Park, had an annual canoe tour. Staffers from embassies piled into the wooden boats and drifted down the murky green Sinoe River like a scene out of "Huckleberry Finn." The park also had a camping site and a game-viewing area.

Today, that's all gone and one enters the forest at his own risk.

Illegal mining and game poaching camps, with names like "Iraq" and "Afghanistan," lie deep within the forest. Campers who want to hike just a few hours first must take a bumpy, 10-hour drive along dirt roads to reach the park's outskirts. They must bring their own tents, food, water. A life jacket also is advised because they must also cross the Sinoe River in a canoe.

But a few visitors come every year with the hopes of getting a glimpse of rare species such as a small deer called the zebra dyker or the colobus monkey.

Morris Kamara, Sapo's manager for protected area management wants to see more tourists.

He said the forestry ministry is planning a new national tourism program that includes carving out trails under the forest's thick canopy.

On the Atlantic coast, domestic tourism is already blooming at an oceanfront tent lodge at Robertsport, a sleepy town on the edge of Sierra Leone, where 10-foot swells lure surfing enthusiasts.

At Nana's Lodge, visitors can stay in large tents with double beds, a mini-fridge and an attached deck for $100 a night.
Alfred Lomax, a Liberian surfer featured in the 2008 documentary "Sliding Liberia," has a dream to run a surfing business at Robertsport. He found a body board during the war while scavenging Monrovia's port for rice and he taught himself to surf.

On his Web site, www.surfingliberia.com, he offers to show surfers the waves in Monrovia and Robertsport.

His dream is big, but business is slow right now.

"Like most everything in Liberia, this site is currently under construction," he wrote on his Web site.

It may take years before Liberia has the capacity to support a large-scale tourism industry - or can persuade visitors to come.

But informing people about new developments is a start. Entrepreneur Hester Pearce, who moved to Liberia from Texas a few years ago, publishes a quarterly tourism magazine, Liberia Travel & Life.

The glossy, $7 magazine, she said, is expected to reach racks in Books-A-Million and Barnes & Noble in the United States later this year.

"I was always frustrated with the portrayal that Africa always got," Mrs. Pearce said. "You begin to lose the image of your own country. I began buying into the fact that Africa was war, starving children."

Inside the latest issue, the glossy photos don't capture the poverty, insecurity and destruction that continues to haunt much of Liberia.

Instead, fashion models pose on green hill tops, among church ruins and along blue waterways. Past issues tell visitors where to find a Sunday gospel brunch, where to find a love nest and where to shop.
Guatemala: UN-backed probe of illegal armed groups extended by two years

Carlos Castresana, head of the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala

The mandate of the independent body set up with United Nations help to investigate the activities of illegal armed groups in Guatemala will be extended for two years, it was announced today.

In agreeing to extend the mandate of the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) after a request by the Government of the Latin American nation, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon underscored the importance of ensuring continuity for efforts already underway and supporting efforts to address impunity.

The current mandate of the Commission, which officially began its work last January, expires in September.

The CICIG seeks to bolster the rule of law in Guatemala and is permitted by its mandate to conduct independent investigations and help authorities bring representative cases to trial in national courts.

It differs in that regard from international tribunals and is thus an “innovative” effort, Carlos Castresana, who heads the Commission, told reporters in New York in February.

After more than three decades of armed conflict came to an end in 1996, illegal security organizations, which used to prevent the courts from acting in cases of human rights abuses, “have basically been reduced to organized crime” groups, he noted.

The year 2008 saw the expulsion of 1,700 people – including 50 senior officials – from the police force, within which there is “a lot of endemic dysfunction and corruption is rife,” Mr. Castresana said.

The CICIG is funded entirely by voluntary contributions from the international community, receiving over $20 million in donations or secondments of personnel through the end of last year.

Based in the capital Guatemala City, it currently has approximately 150 international Guatemalan national staff, most of whom are criminal justice experts with experience in organized crime.
The International Criminal Court Targets Africa

By A. Akbar Muhammad

The Illegal and Unjustified Arrest Warrant against President Omar Al-Bashir

While the world watches and listens, the International Criminal Court has targeted Omar Al-Bashir and issued an arrest warrant. Most of the international organizations from the third world nations or the nations of the south have protested this arrest warrant which is not only unjustified, but illegal. One hundred and eight nations have signed on to the International Criminal Court (ICC). Two of the nations who have been pushing the ICC to issue this arrest warrant—Israel and America—are not members. What hypocrisy!!

The Special Court in Sierra Leone double crossed Charles Taylor and now has him on trial in The Hague. We see similarities in the attempt to arrest President Bashir. Those who have any political knowledge or savvy and are sensitive to the nature of leadership in Africa will know that the arrest and detainment of President Bashir of The Sudan will create chaos in his country as well as a civil war with various groups vying for leadership.

If you remember what happened in Somalia with Said Barre who was overthrown by outside forces in 1991, the country fell into chaos and 18 years later it is still in chaos. If you are Sudanese and truly love your people and country you would not want to see it fall into chaos and become a mirror of what happened in Somalia.

The fact that Somalia has oil is rarely mentioned, but there is plenty of oil in Somalia. It was Chevron that discovered the oil and then capped the wells. For those who know the history, the Sudanese store of oil discovery is similar.

Though Luis Marenco-Campo, the ICC Chief Prosecutor, pushed for President Bashir to be charged with genocide—he could not make it stick because he knew this wasn't true.

Furthermore, it's shameful that a Zionist-led and backed organization called “Save Darfur” has made an impact on how people in the western world view The Sudan. This organization is similar to another organization called the Anti-Slavery Organization, also Zionist, that began pushing the idea around the world that the Sudanese government led by President Bashir was condoning and backing slavery in the early 1990s.

They used the technique utilized by the Nazis called “the big lie.” The technique and philosophy is to tell a lie and repeat the lie until the lie becomes believable. An example of this in Sudan's case was the manipulation of Black churches and later various churches to raise money to free southern Sudanese slaves.

The Zionists, in particular, had an anti-Arab/Islam agenda and a vendetta against the government of Sudan for its support of Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

Today we see a repeat performance with the propaganda of genocide. The new ingredient is Arab on African murder. I have traveled to Darfur five times with delegations to investigate the stories that were told in the media.
If the statement was true that 450,000 to 500,000 people were killed or died in Darfur, then there must be mass graves. We must challenge those who accuse the Sudanese government with being responsible for these deaths to locate the mass graves. As former President Clinton used a technique with airplanes to find the mass graves in Bosnia, the same should be done in Darfur.

The organization “Save Darfur” and “Enough” that emerged out of a split in the Save Darfur Organization have spent millions of dollars advertising in newspapers across the world, pushing the idea that a race war has taken place in Darfur. None of the money they raised went to help eliminate the suffering in the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps or the refugee camps in Chad.

The American Anti-Slavery Organization began with Mauritania and The Sudan while their real focus was The Sudan. It was exposed by the Swiss press that the slavery issue was a scam and people were making millions of dollars, buying homes in Kenya with the money raised from unsuspecting school children and churches across America, under the guise of helping to buy back Christian slaves from Muslim slave holders.

There is much suffering that happens in warfare, most of it many don't want to remember. I find it interesting how the scholars who watch history unfold, practice the selective use of words to describe similar circumstances.

In Uganda the description given for children who were abducted into war is “child soldiers,” not slaves, even though they were slaves. However, when it came to the war in southern Sudan this term slavery was used over and over again. These same Zionists have access and control of the international media, are now publishing books attacking The Sudan. There appears to be an ongoing attack as if there is nothing progressive or good happening in the largest country on the African continent. Every country has its internal struggle and contradictions.

Case in point is the United States which now has a Black president: The struggle for equality and justice for Black people is still an issue. It is how you engage in the struggle that can make a difference. If you think that the only way you can receive justice is to get a gun and shoot your way into power or create chaos in your country, then the world and Africa is in great trouble.

What is the difference between America arming the tribal leaders to help them fight against their perceived enemy Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, and the Sudanese training a militia to help them to fight the rebels who have attacked the government? We have to be clear and frank that the rebels started this conflict and the government of Khartoum had no choice but to defend the integrity of its territory against those who were rebelling. The world has witnessed that the leaders of the Sudan have gone to all ends in their desire to strike a peace accord with all elements fighting against their own government.

The anti-Islam/Arab media campaign against The Sudan is a part of what the Bush administration put in affect since they knew The Sudan had vast amounts of oil and other mineral riches, which were not flowing in their desired direction.

As The Sudan happens to be a very important bridge country in Africa, being the largest land area on the Continent—there are those who desire for the Sudan what America did to Iraq. That is accuse the head of state of a war crime, send in soldiers, create a no-fly zone and arrest the President. They will use this as an excuse to use Africom to establish a military base and as a result civil war breaks out and thousands of people are killed.

As they wanted to do in Iraq, dividing the country into three parts—the north would be the Kurds, the central region would be the Sunnis and south would be the Shiites. In the case of The Sudan, the west would be Darfur, the center would be the Sunnis and the south would be the southerners. While the chaos is going on, the West would be busy robbing the Sudan of its oil and other natural resources.
The neo-cons who devised the plan for Iraq which resulted in the death of over 2 million Iraqis are the same people who are devising the plan against The Sudan. The world watched the illegal hanging of Saddam Hussein who was accused of ordering over 142 people killed in a village where there was a plot to assassinate him. What took place in Iraq is what they would like to see happen in The Sudan. This is why the international community must stand up against the plots and schemes against this African nation and its leader.

We saw the double cross when Charles Taylor was asked to step down to avoid a blood bath in Liberia. Five African leaders made a commitment that he would be allowed to go into exile and left alone. However he was doubled crossed and turned over to the authorities and is now on trial in The Hague. This is why it is ridiculous for anyone to ask his Excellency to turn himself over to the ICC for them to have sham trial and create chaos in The Sudan.

We have an obligation as Muslims and humans beings to do what is just and right to stand up for the leader of the Sudan. There are elections, parties and internal contradictions in the Sudan, but let not the trouble makers in the Darfur who have sought out and received support from the West, including Zionist entities, think they can shoot their way into power and plunder the country into warfare. This is not the way that you move forward.

The hypocrisy of the West to preach democracy and when the people vote their choice and the choice is not pleasing to the West, the West condemns it. We saw this in Algeria with the Islamic Salvation Party, with Hamas in occupied Palestine, and in Venezuela in the election of Hugo Chavez.

If there are parties in the Sudan and the Sudanese people have elections, then organize your party and show desire for change at your polling booth. But you should not get a gun supplied by the enemies of your country in order to continue chaos and cause bloodshed of millions of your people.

May Allah bless President Omar Al-Bashir and the people of The Sudan. We offer up our prayers to protect him. The Holy Qur'an says that “he who Allah befriends is not disgraced.”