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, 1 March 2010

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday. Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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### Local News

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Brenda Hollis Named Special Court Prosecutor

The Secretary-General of the United Nations has named Brenda Joyce Hollis of the United States as Prosecutor of the Special Court.

President Charles Taylor. From 2001 to 2007, Brenda Hollis was an Expert Legal Consultant on international law and criminal procedure. During this period she trained judges, prosecutors and investigators at

From page 2

Courts and international tribunals in Indonesia, Iraq and Cambodia. She also assisted victims of international crimes in the Democratic Republic of Congo and in Colombia to prepare submissions requesting investigations by the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

In 2002 and 2003, and again in 2006, Ms. Hollis served as a consultant to the OTP, where she assisted in evidence-gathering missions and provided legal and tactical advice.

Ms. Hollis was Senior Trial Attorney at the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia (ICTY) from 1994 to 2001, where she served as lead counsel in a number of historic prosecutions. She led the case in which rape was charged as torture, and was lead counsel in the preparation of the case against former Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic until her departure from the ICTY in 2001.

Brenda Hollis paid tribute to Deputy Prosecutor Joseph Kamara, who has served as Acting Prosecutor since the departure of Stephen Rapp last September.

“I look forward to working closely in partnership with Deputy Prosecutor Joseph Kamara, for whom I have the greatest personal and professional respect,” she said.
SPECIAL COURT DISAPPOINTS SALONE

The Torchlight
Monday, 1 March 2010

The decision by the UN Secretary General not to make substantive Sierra Leonean-born Joseph Kamara for the position of Prosecutor of the Special Court has been denounced by a majority of Sierra Leoneans, especially so when Kamara has been acting in that position since Stephen Rapp left last September. "It's a racist decision, wherein they always think such plumb jobs should be given to outsiders." This is outright madness. We are being treated with contempt in our own home." These people only created the Special Court to find jobs for their boys and girls. It was never set up in our interest."

These were the themes that ran across the responses we got from members of the public. And the situation has been worsened by revelations that both former Prosecutor of the Special Court in Sierra Leone, and his chief investigator, David Crane and Alan White respectively have been most willing to defend the Guinean military junta against prosecution for crimes against humanity after the massacre of innocent civilians last year. David M. Crane, the former U.N. war crimes prosecutor for the Special Court in Sierra Leone, and his chief investigator, Alan A. White, indicted former Liberian warlord and President, Charles Taylor, in 2003. Three months ago, their new firm CW Group International offered to sell legal services to the murderous military junta in Guinea.

The company's proposal included a Power Point presentation on how to convert a repressive military force into a defender of the people that obeys the laws of armed conflict.... see page 9 for details.
SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE / BRENDA HOLLIS NAMED PROSECUTOR

The Secretary-General of the United Nations has named Brenda Joyce Hollis of the United States as Prosecutor of the Special Court. Since 2007, Ms. Hollis has been a Principal Trial Attorney in the Office of the Prosecutor (OTP), where she is responsible for leading the legal team prosecuting former Liberian President Charles Taylor. From 2001 to 2007, Brenda Hollis was an Expert Legal Consultant on international law and criminal procedure. During this period she trained judges, prosecutors and investigators at courts and international tribunals in Indonesia, Iraq and Cambodia. She also assisted victims of international crimes in the Democratic Republic of Congo and in Colombia to prepare submissions requesting investigations by the International Criminal Court in The Hague. In 2002 and 2003, and again in 2006, Ms. Hollis served as a consultant to the OTP, where she assisted in evidence-gathering missions and provided legal and tactical advice. Ms. Hollis was Senior Trial Attorney at the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia (ICTY) from 1994 to 2001, where she served as lead counsel in a number of historic prosecutions. She led case in which rape was charged as torture, and was lead counsel in the preparation of the case against former Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic until her departure from the ICTY in 2001. Brenda Hollis paid tribute to Deputy Prosecutor Joseph Kamara, who has served as Acting Prosecutor since the departure of Stephen Rapp last September. “I look forward to working closely in partnership with Deputy Prosecutor Joseph Kamara, for whom I have the greatest personal and professional respect,” she said. The Special Court is an independent tribunal established jointly by the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone. It is mandated to bring to justice those who bear the greatest responsibility for atrocities committed in Sierra Leone after 30 November 1996. (SOURCE: PR-CANADA.NET)
Microphones, Computers Upset Charles Taylor’s Trial

The mal-functions of microphones and computers upset the morning session of M. Charles Taylor’s War Crimes Trial on Thursday. Defence Witness, Yanks Smythe concluding his four-day direct examination denied Prosecution claims that Mr Taylor participated in a common plan to invade Sierra Leone with the aim to exploit the country’s resources. John Kollie transcribes reports from The Hague for the BBC World Service Trust...

After the announcement of representations by the parties, defence lawyer, Courtenay Griffiths, informed the judges that Mr Taylor could not access the written testimonies of the defence witness from his computer.

Following Mr Griffith’s inquiry the court manager announced that the passwords to Mr Taylor’s computer had been given to another person. Some of the judges and the prosecutors also complained that their microphones were not working.

Presiding judge, Julia Sebutinde became furious over the technical problems that greeted Mr Taylor’s trial on Thursday. After experiencing intermittent technical problems during the morning hours, the court’s microphones, headphones and computers were finally restored to normality.

During the opening of the prosecution case on June 4, 2007, Prosecutor Stephen Rapp alleged that Mr Taylor and his forces provided support to the RUF for the invasion of Sierra Leone.

Mr Rapp had further said Mr Taylor provided military training, arms and ammunition as well as fighting forces for the invasion of Sierra Leone.

But Mr Smythe, testifying in Mr Taylor’s defence, told the court he was of aware that Mr Taylor participated in the invasion of neighbouring Sierra Leone. But defence lawyer Morris Anyah pressed the witness about the prosecution’s allegation.

The prosecution in its indictment alleged that Mr Taylor’s sole intention for invading Sierra Leone was to exploit the resources of that country.

The prosecution alleged that the former Liberian leader was compensated with diamonds for aiding Foday Sankoh to wage war in Sierra Leone. But Mr Smythe concluding his direct examination denied the receipt of Sierra Leone’s diamonds by Mr Taylor.

The cross-examination of Defence Witness, Nyanks Smythe began on Friday.
The Torchlight
Monday, 1 March 2010

Guinea’s Junta Hires Ex-War Crimes Prosecutors – and Gets a Favourable Report

Two former war-crimes specialists were recently hired as consultants for Guinea’s military junta after it was accused of massacring civilians — and produced a secret report downplaying the violence, Foreign Policy has confirmed. **David M. Crane**, the former U.N. prosecutor for the Special Court in Sierra Leone, and his chief investigator, **Alan W. White**, were once on the front lines of the international effort to hold war criminals accountable for their misdeeds, securing an indictment in 2003 against the former Liberian warlord and president **Charles Taylor**.

The two American war-crimes specialists, who now run a consulting firm called CW Group International, LLC, recently used their expertise on behalf of the government of Guinea’s former military leader, **Moussa Dadis Camara** (above left), who stands accused by a U.N. commission of inquiry of responsibility for the Sept. 28, 2009, murder and disappearances of more than 156 civilian protesters in the country’s national soccer stadium. CW Group signed an agreement with Guinea’s military junta on Oct. 15, three weeks after the massacre, to “conduct a confidential investigation into recent allegations of shootings and sexual assaults, including gang rapes, that occurred on September 28, at the national stadium.” The findings of the investigation were first published early this week by the newsletter **Africa Confidential**, but Turtle Bay has independently obtained a copy of the secret report and secured the first interviews with Crane and White.

The report confirms that an elite Guinean presidential guard — known by their red berets — opened fire on opposition demonstrators at the national soccer stadium, and sexually assaulted women inside and outside of the stadium. But the death toll — 59 — and the scale of the violence described by Crane and White, is lower than that described by international human rights investigators. The report also downplays the role of the Guinean leadership in the killings or the abduction of scores of civilians and makes no mention of a cover-up of the crimes, which has been claimed by the U.N. commission and Human Rights Watch. “Simply stated it appears from the facts extant that a crime against humanity was not committed by government forces on September 28th,” the report states.

On the contrary, CW cites the efforts of key military commanders to defuse the standoff and to protect the opposition leaders who had gathered in the national stadium to protest Camara’s efforts to run for president in 2010. CW places some of its greatest emphasis on criticizing the country’s opposition movement, **Le Forum Des Forces Vives**, for carrying out its demonstration in defiance of President Camara’s wishes.

“The report places most responsibility on the unit’s commander, Lt. **Aboubacar Cherif Diakite** (a.k.a. Lt. Toumba), noting that President Camara had instructed the military to stay out of the stadium. “Those military personnel who responded to the stadium were in violation of a direct order issued by President Camara,” the report stated. Lt. Toumba later told **Radio France International** that he shot President Camara in retaliation for seeking to place the blame for the killings on him. Toumba
is in hiding and Camara is receiving medical treatment in Burkina Faso.

"The CW report is a dishonest and misleading report, and it is shameful that persons formerly associated with the Sierra Leone Special Tribunal authored it," according to an international human rights researcher who investigated the massacre. "It is absolutely clear that they ignored evidence that was widely available to them, both in terms of the scale of the atrocities and the responsibility for the massacre. Their motives in writing a white-wash report for the Guinean authorities have to be questioned."

Crane and White deny that their report was a white wash. But it stands in stark contrast to the U.N.'s investigation, which is based on nearly 700 interviews with witnesses and government officials and concluded that forces under the command of President Camara launched a "widespread and systematic attack" against the demonstrators, killing more than 100 civilians in the stadium, including 40 whose bodies have never been recovered. The U.N. report — which said the assault constituted crimes against humanity — says at least 109 women were sexually assaulted, including several who were held for days by soldiers in sexual slavery, and hundreds of others were tortured. The U.N. commission found that "there is a prima facie case that President Camara incurred direct criminal responsibility in the perpetration of crimes."

An investigation by Human Rights Watch echoed those findings, concluding that Guinea's military rulers unleashed a premeditated massacre of more than 150 people in an attempt to silence the political opposition. It also documented an effort by the Guinean military authorities to cover up the crimes.

Crane acknowledged in an interview with Turtle Bay that his firm carried out the investigation in order to assess what had taken place in the national stadium, but that the intent was not to clear Camara of responsibility. He also said that his firm's report was merely a preliminary assessment of events that could change as further evidence came to light, including that provided by the U.N. and Human Rights Watch. He noted that the report called on Guinean authorities to set up a 15-member task force to conduct a more extensive investigation, and to interview the more than 1,350 people his report claimed were treated for injuries.

"There were no punches pulled," Crane said. "It was clear to us that crimes were committed against the Guinean people and had to be dealt with under domestic law and possibly international law. We certainly want to see justice for the Guinean people and particularly the victims."

While the report does not hold Camara personally responsible for the killings, Crane and White both insisted that the firm privately warned Camara that he bore ultimate responsibility for the crimes and had to prosecute those responsible for them. "Even though there's no direct evidence in the preliminary assessment that links you directly as commander and chief you are ultimately responsible," White recalled telling Camara. "We told him to his face if you do not take appropriate action and hold those responsible for what happened you could be held criminally responsible: plain and simple."

The two war-crimes experts first appeared on the international justice scene in 2002, when they were appointed to lead the U.N.-backed investigation against Charles Taylor on charges that he provided financial and political support to a ruthless rebel movement, the Revolutionary United Front, that was known for mutilating its victims.

The two men had previously served in the U.S. government for more than 30 years. Crane, now a professor at Syracuse University College of Law, rose within the Pentagon to become a senior inspector general in the Defense Department, and an assistant general counsel of the Defense Intelligence Agency. White served as the director of investigative operations for the Defense Criminal Investigative Services before joining the U.N. court.

Crane and White said their firm is committed to the same principles that drove its two founders to champion the cause of human rights in Sierra Leone. Their consultancy work in Guinea focuses on promoting human rights and the rule of law. In Guinea, the company proposed a plan in December to provide Guinean troops training in the laws of armed conflict, and to promote a series of good governance policies that would lead the county toward "free and fair elections," Crane said. The proposal was dropped after the assassination attempt against Camara. "We were pursuing international justice to ensure that impunity did not continue in Guinea."

Crane and White were paid for their confidential report, but wouldn't reveal how much. White said the amount was "inconsequential."

The two men also insisted that their work on behalf of the Guinean military junta did not constitute lobbying, which would require that they register as agents of a foreign government. "We are not lobbyists," said White. "They try to prop you up publicly. We didn't do that.... At the end of the day, our integrity and ethics and moral standards will never be compromised. We do believe in Africa and know they lack capacity." (SOURCE: TURTLEBAY.FOREIGNPOLICY.COM)
By Abu Kalokoh

The newly refurbished juvenile court was past week handed over to the Chief Justice, Umu Hawa Tejan Jalloh.

The court is an extension of magistrate court No.1 A and would commence sittings in March this year.

Handing over the building, Justice Sector Program Manager (JSDP), Peter Viana, stated that juvenile justice is one of the 17 programs being undertaken by JSDP revealing that other juvenile courts would be established in various parts of the country. Minister of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs, Dr. Soccoh Kabia, reiterated that the objective of the court is to ensure a fair, effective and efficient juvenile justice system as well as prevent them from going into conflict with the law again and articulated that the procedure manual is in line with international best practices, developed for the daily management of both the Remand Home and Approved School adding that effective documentation and routines have been agreed with staff, essential services established, staff accountability, reporting and capacity enhanced.

According to the Social Welfare Minister, a short term JSDP consultant is working with staff of Approved School and Remand Home to enhance their capacity for effective operations of both institutions.

Chief Justice, Umu Hawa Tejan Jalloh, pointed out that the reform process of the justice system requires a holistic approach underscoring that recent history has taught the country that children must be protected from crime as they are the future leaders. She went on to affirm that the court is comfortable, less intimidating and not easily accessible to the public to make certain that children are not exposed during trials assuring that such a project would be replicated in the provinces.

Consultant Master and Registrar, Julia Sekondi Mensah, emphasized that the court is part of government’s policy to transform the justice system.
The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) has sentenced the former head of legal affairs at the Ministry of Defence to 25 years in prison.

Lieut-Col Epren Setako was found guilty of genocide and crimes against humanity. He was convicted of ordering the killing of at least 30 people at a military camp in 1994. Hutu extremists killed some 800,000 ethnic Tutsis and moderate Hutus during the 100-day genocide.

"The Chamber found that Setako ordered the killings on 25 April 1994 of 30 to 40 Tutsis at Mukamira military camp in Ruhengeri prefecture and around 10 other Tutsis there on 11 May 1994," said a statement posted on the ICTR's website.

Setako, 60, was acquitted of other charges of complicity to commit genocide, murder as a crime against humanity and pillage as a war crime.

He was arrested in the Netherlands in 2004 before being transferred to a UN facility in Arusha, Tanzania, to face the charges.

Prosecutors said he had armed and trained militiamen and ordered them to kill Tutsis in several areas.
Charles Taylortrial.org  
Saturday, 27 February 2010

Charles Taylor’s First Witnesses Starts His Testimony, Says Prosecution Witness Lied Against The Former Liberian President

By Alpha Sesay

The first witness for Charles Taylor started his testimony this week, telling Special Court for Sierra Leone judges that prosecution witnesses lied against the former Liberian president.

On Monday, Yanks Smythe, a Gambian national who was a member of Mr. Taylor’s National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) rebel group and who later acquired Liberian citizenship and was appointed by Mr. Taylor as Liberian ambassador to Libya and Tunisia, started his testimony, telling the judges that Mr. Taylor was never part of a common plan to destabilize West Africa as alleged by prosecutors.

Mr. Smythe said that he was part of the Gambian dissident group which underwent revolutionary training at a Libyan military training camp called Tajura along with Sierra Leonian and Mr. Taylor’s Liberian rebel groups. But while leaders of the Liberian, Sierra Leonian and Gambian rebel groups all stayed at the same guesthouse during this time, and their fighters trained in the same camp, they did not have any plans to collaborate in attacking their respective countries, Mr. Smythe said.

Prosecutors have alleged that Mr. Taylor met Revolutionary United Front (RUF) leader, Foday Sankoh, and Gambian dissident Kukua Sambasanja (known as Dr. Mani) in Libya in the 1980s. The three men, Mr. Smythe said, formulated a common plan to destabilize the West African sub-region, starting with Liberia. Mr. Taylor has denied these allegations, saying he never met Mr. Sankoh in Libya – only Dr. Mani and Allie Kabbah, a Sierra Leonian student leader who led a Sierra Leonian rebel group that was undertaking revolutionary training in Libya at the same time. On Monday, Mr. Smythe corroborated Mr. Taylor’s evidence that the former president did not meet RUF leader Mr. Sankoh in Libya.

Asked by Mr. Taylor’s defense counsel, Morris Anyah, whether he “knew of any meeting that took place at the Mataba where there was a discussion amongst these three leaders [Mr. Taylor, Mr. Kabbah and Dr. Mani], regarding an invasion of Liberia,” the witness said “no, no, no.”

“Do you know of any meetings that were held during the time you were at Tajura — I’m referring to meetings held at the Mataba or at Tajura — between Foday Sankoh and Charles Taylor during which they discussed the invasion of Liberia?” Mr. Anyah asked the witness.

“No,” the witness responded.

Mr. Anyah further asked the witness whether he knew ”of any such meetings held between Foday Sankoh and Charles Taylor either at the Mataba or Camp Tajura during the period when you were there when they discussed the invasion of Sierra Leone?”

The witness responded with another resounding “No.”

“Do you know whether Mr. Taylor held such meetings at either location with Allie Kabbah discussing the invasion of Sierra Leone?” Mr. Anyah asked again.

For the fourth time, the witness said “no.”

The witness also refuted claims by a previous prosecution witness that Mr. Taylor had sent two Gambian fighters to assist the RUF in their attack on Sierra Leone in March 1991.
Prosecution witness and fellow Gambian, Suwandi Camara, had told the Special Court for Sierra Leone in 2008 that Mr. Taylor sent two Gambian rebel fighters, Lamine Campaore and Ibrahim Bah to support RUF rebels in their attack on Sierra Leone in March 1991.

Asked by Mr. Anyah, whether he was “aware of Ibrahim Bah and Lamine Campaore being assigned by Charles Taylor to join Foday Sankoh in Sierra Leone in 1991,” the witness responded that “no, I’m not aware of that.”

The witness said that the Gambians stayed exclusively within the areas controlled by Mr. Taylor’s NPFL rebel group.

Talking specifically about Mr. Campaore, the witness told the court that “Lamine never received any assignment out of the NPFL assignment in Gbangha.”

He added that if Mr. Campaore had received any such assignment, he would have known because he (the witness) was the deputy leader of the Gambians in Liberia.

“I would have known because I was the deputy leader so anything that has to do with assignment I am always aware of it,” the witness said.

Asked whether the second Gambian, Mr. Bah, would have gone to Sierra Leone, the witness explained that “Ibrahim Bah was not always stationed in Gbangha. He was in Buchanan. He was asked by the then defense minister, Tom Worweiyu, to be assigned to a company called BMB to provide security for them, deter the soldiers from harassing the members of the company or their properties.”

On Wednesday, Mr. Smythe told judges that Mr. Taylor took disciplinary actions against the director of the Special Security Services (SSS) Benjamin Yeaten for the arrest and subsequent execution of Samuel Dokie and his family.

During his February 2009 cross-examination by prosecutors, Mr. Taylor told the judges that the arrest and execution of Mr. Dokie and his family was not ordered by Mr. Yeaten as alleged by prosecutors. The former president said that those responsible for the arrest and execution of the Dokie family did so without the orders of Mr. Yeaten and that those responsible were indeed punished, but no action was taken against Mr. Yeaten because he did not bear any responsibility for such actions. In his testimony on Wednesday, Mr. Taylor’s own witness, Mr. Smythe contradicted the former president’s account. According to Mr. Smythe, Mr. Yeaten was indeed suspended by Mr. Taylor for ordering the arrest of Mr. Dokie and his family, which subsequently led to their execution.

“Benjamin was suspended by the president, President Taylor,” the witness said.

Asked by Mr. Taylor’s defense counsel whether he knew why Mr. Yeaten was suspended by Mr. Taylor, the witness said that “he was suspended because he ordered the arrest of Dokie, and that was not an instruction from Mr. Taylor.”

In response to whether he knew how long the suspension lasted, the witness said that “no, I don’t know how long but it took some time, when the investigation was on.”

Also in his testimony on Wednesday, Mr. Smythe told the judges that former prosecution witness, Joseph “Zig Zag” Marzah, was not a member of the SSS but a mere bodyguard to the SSS director Mr. Yeaten. The witness said that Mr. Marzah did not have any access to Mr. Taylor. The witness’s account corroborates Mr. Taylor’s testimony that Mr. Marzah was an ordinary orderly to Mr. Yeaten, with whom he could not have interacted. In his 2008 testimony for the prosecution, Mr. Marzah told the judges that he was an SSS officer who had unhindered access to Mr. Taylor and that on numerous occasions he acted on direct instructions from the former president to take arms and ammunitions to RUF rebels in Sierra Leone. Mr. Marzah also said that he sat in the company of Mr. Taylor and together, they feasted on human intestines. Mr. Taylor in his testimony dismissed the witness’s accounts as lies. Mr. Smythe said the same thing on Wednesday.
“No he was not a member of the SSS…I only knew him to be bodyguard to Mr. Yeaten, that’s all,” Mr. Smythe said.

Mr. Smythe added that Mr. Marzah did not have any position within the Liberian government’s security forces but was rather independently employed by Mr. Yeaten.

On Thursday, Mr. Smythe in concluding his direct-examination said that Mr. Taylor did not form or contribute to any plan to commit crimes in neighboring Sierra Leone, nor did he receive any diamonds from Sierra Leonean rebel forces as alleged by prosecutors.

Prosecutors have alleged that without stepping foot in his neighboring country, Mr. Taylor provided support to the RUF rebels through the supply of weapons in exchange for diamonds.

Asked whether he was “aware of Mr. Taylor during that period of time being part of some sort of criminal enterprise or conspiracy the purpose of which was to commit a crime in Sierra Leone,” the witness responded that “no I was never aware of Mr. Taylor being part of any of that, to commit crimes in Sierra Leone.”

Mr. Smythe also refuted prosecution allegations that Mr. Taylor received huge supplies of diamonds from RUF rebels while he served as president of Liberia. During the presentation of the prosecution’s case, several witnesses testified that Mr. Taylor received diamonds from RUF commanders including Issa Sesay and Sam Bockarie. Some witnesses told the judges that members of Mr. Taylor’s security forces travelled to Sierra Leone to collect diamonds from RUF rebels for onward transmission to Mr. Taylor.

“I have never seen Mr. Taylor with diamonds, never heard of Mr. Taylor receiving diamonds from anyone during those periods,” Mr. Smythe said.

On Friday, as prosecutors started his cross-examination, Mr. Smythe told the judges that prosecution witnesses lied when they testified that the former Liberian president recruited and used children for combat purposes in Liberia.

In seeking to prove that Mr. Taylor established control over rebel forces in both Liberia and Sierra Leone, prosecutors have led evidence to show that the modes of operation by Mr. Taylor’s rebel forces in Liberia were reflective of how RUF rebels conducted themselves in Sierra Leone. One such area that prosecutors have focused on is the recruitment of child soldiers, trying to prove that just as the former president used child soldiers in Liberia, he similarly encouraged RUF rebels to do same in Sierra Leone.

During the presentation of the prosecution’s case, several witnesses, including Mr. Taylor’s former vice president Moses Blah, testified that child soldiers were used by the NPFL and that some served as bodyguards to the former president and other NPFL commanders. Mr. Taylor’s witness on Friday said otherwise.

“There were never child soldiers as part of the security of Charles Taylor,” Mr. Smythe said.

Prosecution counsel Nicholas Koumjian who conducted the cross-examination of the witness pressed further.

“Mr. Witness, I’ve read to you the testimony of Moses Blah, Stephen Smith the journalist and Vamunya Sherif, is it your testimony that all of these sources talking about child soldiers were lying and you are telling the truth?” Mr. Koumjian asked the witness.

“As far as I am concerned, they are lying and I am telling the truth,” the witness responded.

Friday’s cross-examination saw some heated exchanges between Mr. Koumjian and the witness as the prosecutor sought to know the witness’ sources of income in Liberia. On some occasions, the witness refused to answer the prosecutor’s question but the intervention of the presiding judge Justice Julia Sebutinde obliged the witness to answer.
Mr. Taylor, who is on trial for his alleged support to RUF rebels in neighboring Sierra Leone, concluded his testimony as a witness in his own defense last week. The former president’s lawyers are now leading his witnesses in his defense.

Mr. Smythe’s cross-examination continues on Monday.
Defence Witnesss, Yanks Smythe has begun his cross-examination with a heated exchange between and him the Prosecution Lawyer, Nicholas Kumjian. Mr. Smythe has again denied the Prosecution allegation that Taylor’s National Patriotic Front of Liberia, NPFL used child soldier in a unit called SBU. John Kollie transcribes reports from The Hague on the trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor....

Yanks Smythe’s cross-examination started with a robust exchange between him and Prosecution Lawyer, Nicholas Kumjian. In some instances, Mr. Smythe refused to answer some questions regarding his income.

It took the intervention of Presiding Judge Julia Sebutinde for Mr. Smythe to respond to the Prosecution Lawyer’s questions. Mr. Kumjian questioned the Defence Witness about his ownership of a commercial vehicle in Monrovia.

The Defence Witness denied that Mr. Taylor’s rebel faction, the NPFL used child soldiers. The Prosecution Lawyer drew the attention of the witness to the testimonies of Former Liberian President, Moses Blah about child soldiers in Mr. Taylor’s rebel faction.

Mr. Blah had said there was a unit in the NPFL called Small Boys Unit. But Mr. Smythe said Former President Blah’s testimonies regarding child soldiers in the NPFL were not true. The Prosecution Lawyer alleged that enlisting Gambians into the NPFL was part of Mr. Taylor’s plan to later assist the Gambians with the destabilization of their country. Mr. Smythe disagreed and said the Gambians joined the NPFL to protect Mr. Taylor.

But Prosecuting Attorney, Nicholas Kumjian pressed the witness about why the Gambians joined the NPFL. The cross-examination of Defence Witness, Yanks Smythe continues on Monday.
Defence Witness, Yanks Smythe told the court Wednesday that Liberia’s Former Director of Special Security Services, SSS, Benjamin Yeaten was disciplined for ordering the arrest of Former Liberian Politician Samuel Dokie and his family. Mr. Taylor during cross-examination early February said no action was taken against Mr. Yeaten in relation to the arrest and subsequent death of the Dokies. Mr. Smythe also said Prosecution Insider Witness, Zigzag Marzah was not a member of the presidential security services. John Kollie has this transcribed report...

The witness said Benjamin Yeaten was punished by Former President, Charles Taylor for ordering the arrest of Mr. Samuel Dokie and three members of his family. Mr. Yanks Smythe told the court the arrest led to the death of Mr. Dokie and three family members.

The accused Former Liberian President early this month said on cross-examination that no disciplinary action was taken against the Former SSS Director for the arrest and subsequent death of the Dokies.

Mr. Taylor said Mr. Yeaten ordered the arrest of the Dokies, but those who effected the arrest were prosecuted because they went beyond the SSS Director’s orders. But Mr. Smythe told the Judges that Mr. Taylor indeed punished Benjamin Yeaten.

Mr. Smythe also said Prosecution Insider Witness, Zigzag Marzah was not a member of the Liberian Presidential Special Security Services, the SSS. Zigzag Marzah testified for the Prosecution in 2008, and said he was a member of the SSS assigned to Former SSS Director Yeaten.

Zigzag further said he and Mr. Taylor were members of a human eating Poro Society in Liberia. Zigzag had said he was an SSS Officer with unhindered access to Mr. Taylor. But Mr. Smythe, the Defence Witness disagreed. Mr. Smythe’s direct examination continues on Thursday.
Ethnic Fighting Erupts in Lofa County, Liberia

Ethnic fighting has erupted in Voinjama, Lofa County, Liberia. According to our sources, scores of civilians have been killed. "Details are scanty but many are being affected by what is emerging as a potential religious conflict", our source added. In a release issued to The Liberian Journal (TLJ), United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) wrote:” When made aware of the situation, UNMIL Formed Police Unit and military components were sent on the ground in assistance to the Liberia National Police (LNP) in Voinjama where the incident took place”. UNMIL said it is in close coordination with the local county authorities and the security apparatus on the ground to keep the situation under control. Meanwhile, UNMIL is calling on all “peace and local security committees to take the appropriate measures to contain the situation and act according to their designated objectives”.

UN Special Representative: Liberians Should Decide How to Implement TRC Recommendations
Kate Thomas | Dakar 26 February 2010

VOA News

A top United Nations representative for Liberia says Liberians should decide how to approach its mandate to promote and protect human rights in post-conflict Liberia. Ellen Margaret Løj, the United Nations' Special Representative for Liberia, says there is an urgent need for balancing peace and justice in Liberia. And, one of those ways, she says, is for the Liberian people to debate the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which released its final report in December. "How do you balance the urgent need for maintaining the peace in Liberia and on the other hand, ensuring that impunity is not accepted? You balance that by ensuring that the recommendations by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission have Liberian ownership," she said. Løj said U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is asking Liberians to discuss the issues, including the controversial recommendation that President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf be barred from holding public office for 30 years. "That is why you will see, in the recent report by the Secretary General, that he is strongly urging the Liberian people to debate these recommendations, to arrive at conclusions as to how they want to follow them up," she said. She said delays in establishing Liberia's Independent Human Rights Commission were impeding the process.

Liberia-focused Equatorial Palm Oil lists on AIM

http://proactiveinvestors.co.uk/companies/news/13756/liberia-focused-equatorial-palm-oil-lists-on-aim-13756.html
Equatorial Palm Oil (AIM: PAL) (EPO) joined London’s AIM market this morning following a £6.5m IPO. The newly listed, £14.3m market-cap company is developing sustainable palm oil plantations and a crude palm oil (CPO) processing operation in Liberia. According to EPO, palm oil is the most important and widely produced edible oil in the world, and demand is projected to grow at 5-6% per annum over the next five years. “EPO offers a fantastic opportunity to enter into the fast growing and highly lucrative palm oil market. Our aim is to be a sustainable, low-cost producer of crude palm oil in Africa through the reactivation and development of existing plantations and our agricultural land bank in Liberia”, EPO chairman Michael Frayne said. “We have a fantastic land holding and a management with large scale oil palm plantation development experience, having worked with the likes of New Britain Palm Oil and Harrisons & Crosfields”. The company issued 37.1m ordinary shares at 17.5 pence each through a placing. The money will be used to develop sustainable palm oil plantations and a CPO processing operation in Liberia, where the company controls approximately 169,000 hectares of land.

Liberia to Generate $260 Million in Tax From Iron Ore Mines

Feb. 25 (Bloomberg) -- Liberia’s government aims to generate $260 million a year in tax revenue from iron ore mines by 2014, equivalent to 17 percent of gross domestic product, the Ministry of Finance said in an e-mailed statement today. ArcelorMittal, the world’s largest steelmaker, is expected to ship its first ore from Liberia in 2011, after slowing development last year due to the global slump. Its project will cost more than $1.5 billion. China Union also has a $2.6 billion iron ore project in the West African nation. Elenilto, a unit of Israel’s Engelinvest Group, will spend $2.4 billion developing Liberia’s Western Cluster iron ore deposit, the Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy said on Feb. 15. Liberia is recovering from a 14 years civil war that ended in 2003.

International Clips on West Africa

Ivory Coast

Ivory Coast agrees on new electoral commission
BBC News

Ivory Coast authorities have announced a new election commission, key to ending disputes that have threatened the country's peace process. The crisis began two weeks ago, when President Laurent Gbagbo dissolved the previous body, accusing it of fraud and being controlled by the opposition. Mr Gbagbo's decision led to deadly protests across the country. The new commission's leadership team remains dominated by the opposition. Elections have again been postponed. No new date has been set, although officials hope they can be held in April or May. Polls to end the crisis sparked by the 2002 civil war have now been put back six times. The new head of the independent electoral commission was selected after late night discussions between the opposition, ex-rebels and allies of the president. The consensus comes two days after a new unity government was announced - the previous one had been sacked along with commission. Voter registration has been at the heart of the dispute. The presidential camp accused the previous electoral commission head, Robert Mambe, of fraudulently trying to add 429,000 names to the electoral roll. The opposition, meanwhile, said court cases brought by the presidential camp to eliminate thousands of names from the electoral roll, was a deliberate targeting of northerners, less likely to vote for Mr Gbagbo.

Ivorian opposition signals end to protests

ABIDJAN (Reuters) – Ivory Coast's opposition will call off violent protests that have rocked the West African nation since President Laurent Gbagbo dissolved the government and electoral commission on February 12, a spokesman said on Friday. The country, the world's top producer of cocoa, announced the formation of a new electoral commission after having named a replacement
government, key steps toward setting long-delayed elections and ending the demonstrations in which at least seven people have been killed. "We will meet with the RDHP and PIT (opposition parties) to announce word of ending the demonstrations," said spokesman for the opposition groups Alphonse Djedje Mady, without specifying when the meeting or announcement would take place. The opposition had vowed to continue protests against Gbagbo until he reinstated the commission and the government. The new electoral commission told a news conference earlier on Friday its president was Youssouf Bakayoko, an opposition PDCI party member. The members of the commission were chosen in a deal cut between Ivory Coast's political parties and the commission then elected Bakayoko to lead it. "The result will be to organize elections that are just, transparent and have results acceptable to everyone," Bakayoko, a former foreign affairs minister, said in a brief statement after his election.

18th meeting of heads of peace missions

...Y. J. Choi highlights achievements and challenges facing Ivorian process

SOURCE: Mission of UN in Côte d’Ivoire

ABIDJAN, Côte d’Ivoire, February 26, 2010/African Press Organization (APO)/ — The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Côte d’Ivoire, Y. J. Choi, participated in the 18th Conference of the heads of UN peace missions in West Africa on Thursday. Mr. Choi presented the achievements made in the Ivorian peace process as well as the challenges facing the electoral process. In this regard he highlighted the ongoing efforts to decrease the recent political tension. The Special Representative said that in this regard, the United Nations Operation in Côte d’Ivoire (UNOCI) had initiated consultations in an effort to establish calm and ensure that the achievements of the electoral process are preserved. The chiefs of the UN peace missions in Liberia, Guinea Bissau, and Sierra Leone also attended this 18th meeting which was hosted by their counterpart in the UN Office in West Africa (UNOWA).

Local Media – Newspaper

UN Deputy Envoy Wants Strong Justice System In Liberia

- UN Deputy Envoy Henrietta Mensa-Bonsu has stressed the importance of infrastructural improvements as “an essential component” in the reform and strengthening of the justice system in Liberia.
- Ms. Mensa-Bonsu was speaking at a ground-breaking ceremony for the construction of a prison facility, and the hand-over of a Police station and a Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization (BIN) office in River Gee County.
- Ms. Mensa-Bonsu attributed the success of the three projects in Fishtown to funding made available through the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) programme.
- The UNMIL QIPs scheme, she pointed out, has prioritized rule of law infrastructure to accelerate progress in strengthening the justice system.
- The DSRSG revealed that the United Nations has been collaborating with the Liberian government to identify priority projects for construction or rehabilitation of new courthouses, police stations, prison facilities and immigration offices.
- In 2009, UNMIL QIPs funded the construction and rehabilitation of 39 such rule of law projects.
- The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General for Rule of Law stated that the United Nations “recognizes that a strong justice system is an essential component in the peace building process, the re-establishment of the rule of law and the future sound development of Liberia.”

Rights Groups Want Lawmakers Pass Child Rights Protection Bill
[ The Inquirer, Heritage]
• The Catholic child welfare institution, Don Bosco Homes and the child rights media advocacy group, Media in Advocacy for Children (MAC) have issued separate statements, asking the national Legislature to urgently pass into law the Child Rights Protection Bill.
• Don Bosco Homes and MAC, in their statements, said unless the Child Rights Bill is passed into law, more adopted Liberian children and others are at risk for abuse and trafficking.
• The child rights campaigners have expressed disappointment over what they said is the lawmakers’ delay in the passage of the bill.

Defense Witness Contradicts Taylor’s Testimony

• Charles Taylor’s first witness who is presently testifying in his defense has contradicted the former president’s testimony about disciplinary actions taken against the former director of Mr. Taylor’s Special Security Service.
• Yanks Smythe, who has been testifying for Mr. Taylor over the past three days, told the Special Court that Mr. Taylor took disciplinary actions against former SSS director, Benjamin Yeaten, for the arrest and subsequent execution of Mr. Samuel Dokie and his family.
• Former President Taylor has earlier told the court during his cross-examination that the arrest and execution of Mr. Dokie and his family was not ordered by Mr. Yeaten as alleged by the prosecutors.

Senate Summons Finance Minister
[Front Page Africa, Heritage, National Chronicle, Daily Observer]

• The Senate has summoned Finance Minister Augustine Ngafuan to show cause why he should not be held in Legislative Contempt following his refusal to appear before it Thursday despite being invited.
• The Presiding Officer of the Senate, Daniel Naatehn said the failure of Minister Ngafuan to appear before the body impeded its functions.
• Senator Naatehn said the decision of the Finance Minister to send two of his deputies to brief the Senate on financial matters was an affront.
• He spoke following a close-door session with Central Bank Governor Mills Jones who briefed the Senate on the status of the 2009/2010 budget.
• Minister Ngafuan who failed to honor the request of the Senate without any formal reason is to now appear Tuesday, March 2nd.

Child Trafficking Evident In Liberia, Says UNICEF
[Front Page Africa, Daily Observer]

• The Country Representative of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), Ms. Isabel Crowley says evidence was now glaring that child trafficking was taking place in Liberia.
• Ms. Crowley said a situational analysis report on the trafficking of persons shows about seventy-five cases of children have been affected.
• The UNICEF boss said it has been established that every year children and their families are fooled by people to take the concerned children abroad in search of better lives.
• She said a comprehensive study in Liberia has identified the prevalence, scope and type of human trafficking existing in the Country.
• Ms. Crowley said UNICEF will support the efforts of the Secretariat of the National Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force to develop and implement a national action plan, which will help prevent the trafficking of persons in Liberia.
• For his part, Labour Minister Tiawon Gongloe said criminals were using foster care, adoption and other normal processes to abuse the rights of children.
• Minister Gongloe said the result of the research will be a useful tool in ensuring that children are protected under international norms.
• They spoke Thursday at programmes marking the official launch of the National Research Report on Human Trafficking in Liberia.

Liberian VPA Holds Video Conference Today
The Liberian Technical Secretariat of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) has announced the holding of a third video conference today.

The video conference which will be held between Liberia and the European Union (EU) will center on Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade.

The pronouncement was contained in a release issued by the Secretariat of the Liberian VPA and signed by its Coordinator Amos Kofa.

The release said the video conference which will be held at the offices of EU in Monrovia is in preparation for the first negotiation session of the VPA process and would discuss the critical issues that will set the basis for the Brussels meeting in early March.

President Sirleaf Leaves For Southeastern Liberia This Weekend

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and her cabinet are expected to start a week long visit to southeastern Liberia.
- The President and team will make a stopover in Harper, Maryland County Saturday.
- The President and delegation will arrive in the county’s capital Harper to participate in a special convocation marking the inauguration of Dr. Elizabeth Davis-Russell as the first President of the William V. S. Tubman University, formerly the Tubman College where she will also dedicate the university.
- While in Maryland County, President Sirleaf will dedicate and inspect a number of development projects.
- The President and her cabinet will hold the first session of their Retreat in Fish Town, River Gee County Monday, March 1 from where several projects will be dedicated.

President Sirleaf Declares Today Africa Healthy Lifestyles Day
[National Chronicle]

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has issued a proclamation declaring today Friday, February 26 Africa Healthy Lifestyles Day to be observed throughout the country as a working holiday.
- President Sirleaf has ordered the Ministries of Agriculture, Youth and Sports, Planning and Commerce to join and cooperate with the Ministry of health to organize and execute programmes befitting the occasion and raise awareness and sustain efforts to promote healthy lifestyles for all persons.
- According to a Foreign Ministry release, the observance of the day is aimed at promoting the health of Liberia.
- The day was adopted in the framework of the World Health Organization strategy for the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases which are posing increasing challenge to the already overburdened health sector in Africa.

Star Radio (News monitored today at 09:00 am)
House Reacts Sharply To Grand Gedeh Senator’s ‘unkindly’ Remarks
- The House of Representatives has angrily reacted to a statement by Grand Gedeh Senator Isaac Nyenabo for openly declaring he would provide lecture series for its members, which the House described as reckless and rubbish.
- House spokesman Isaac Redd said Senator Nyenabo has a limited understanding of the Legislature so the House would not give him any credence.
- Senator Nyenabo Wednesday said he was working with the House Chief Clerk, Attorney James Kaba to provide free lecture series on the functions of the Legislature.
- The former Senate Pro-tempore’s free lecture offer came following the decision of the House to detain five local government officials Tuesday.
- Meanwhile, the Chief Clerk of the House, Attorney James Kaba has clarified that at no time did he discuss with Senator Nyenabo to lecture members of the House.

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

Senate Summons Finance Minister
(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Truth FM, Sky FM, and ELBC)
Child Trafficking Evident In Liberia, Says UNICEF

LEC Announces US$18 Million EU Assistance
- Authorities of the Liberia Electricity Corporation (LEC) have announced eighteen million US dollar grant assistance by the European Union.
- An official of the LEC, Henry Lewis said the amount is intended to replace old poles and acquire electrical lines to provide electricity to Monrovia and its environs.
- Mr. Lewis said the funds would go towards the purchase of materials and payment of contractor, Eltel Networks AB.
- He said the contractor was finding it difficult to implement the project due to the illegal construction of structures under LEC light poles.

(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Sky FM, and ELBC)

Liberian VPA Holds Video Conference Today
(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Truth FM, Sky FM, and ELBC)

Former Soldiers Pledge Commitment To Peace In Liberia
- Leaders of demobilized Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) soldiers Wednesday met with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf pledging their commitment to peace and stability in the Country.
- An Executive Mansion release says the ex-soldiers assured the President they will never be a party to any act that would jeopardize the fragile peace in the Country.
- According to the release, the ex-soldiers also apologized to the President for their attempt to introduce a petition calling for her impeachment and then presented to her a list of challenges they are faced with as they try to re-integrate into civilian life including need for vocational training, financial support and pension scheme.
- Responding, President Johnson Sirleaf said she would ask the Minister of Defense to meet with them to come up with a workable plan.
- President Sirleaf also assured the former soldiers that their arrears would be paid in lump-sum in the next budget calendar.

Radio Veritas (News monitored today at 10:00 am)

Angry Students Demonstrate Over The Death Of Colleague, Demand Justice
- Reports from Zorzor District in Lofa County say hundreds of angry students have staged a violent demonstration demanding justice in the death of a 20-year old female student.
- The violent sparked out following the death of Korpo Kamara whose body was discovered with parts missing.
- According to the reports, the incident occurred in the town of Konia in the Zorzor District area.
- The student demonstrators are disrupting school activities in the area and are now heading for Zorzor.

President Sirleaf Leaves For Southeastern Liberia This Weekend
(Also reported on Truth FM, Sky FM, and ELBC)

President Sirleaf Declares Today Africa Healthy Lifestyles Day

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International Clips on Liberia

George Boley denies war crimes
Democrat and Chronicle.com
February 25, 2010

BATAVIA — Kathryn Boley said she was overcome with a surprising wave of joy when she recently met with her husband at a federal detention center where he is being held on immigration charges. Clarkson resident George Boley Sr. has long maintained that he is innocent of war crimes in Liberia, despite claims by the contrary by human rights organizations, the U.S. Department of State, and Liberia's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Now, facing deportation to his homeland, Boley, 60, may get the chance to answer the accusations in an immigration court in Batavia, Genesee County. "This is the time when he's finally going to have his opportunity," Kathryn Boley said in an interview after a brief hearing for her husband Wednesday in immigration court. Federal immigration officials claim that Boley does not have legal documentation to be in the United States, and that he is responsible for extrajudicial killings in Liberia. He is being detained at the Buffalo Federal Detention Facility in Batavia. Boley, who once failed in a bid to be president of Liberia, founded the Liberia Peace Council, or LPC, during the country's brutal civil war. Boley said the LPC's goal was to bring peace to the fractured country, but activists contend that the LPC, under Boley's direction, slaughtered innocent people during the 1990s.

Liberian leader urges MPs to back action against vulture funds
The Guardian, Thursday 25 February 2010

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the president of Liberia, is urging MPs to back a bill banning vulture funds from using British courts to prey on poor countries when it comes to a vote on Friday. Liberia lost a $20m (£13m) case in London last year against two so-called vultures. Such funds buy up the loans of poor governments, wait for them to win debt relief from the international community, and then use courts to pursue the countries for assets. Sirleaf said: "We've been waiting for a parliament or an assembly to take this kind of hard decision. I hope the US Congress and maybe some others in Europe will pick up this gauntlet and will follow the example of Britain." An investigation for BBC's Newsnight, to be broadcast tonight, has uncovered allegations that speculators subverted the international debt relief process for Liberia, in an attempt to gain more money from its government and international donors than 97% of its other creditors accepted.

International Clips on West Africa

Guinea

Amnesty International Says Guinea Security Forces Need
24 February 2010
Britain-based Amnesty International says Guinea's security forces need reform. An Amnesty report strongly criticizes foreign countries for providing military equipment and training to Guinea without safeguards. The Amnesty International report looks at the causes and aftermath of the bloody repression of an opposition rally four months ago in Guinea's capital, Conakry. It says the perpetrators of the violence have not been brought to justice and Guinea's security forces need serious reform. The Amnesty International report also highlights the role played by foreign countries in Guinea's security affairs. Mike Lewis is Amnesty's expert on military and security issues. "That massacre was partly made possible by systemic failure of states all around the world to stop the supplies of arms and operational training to those forces persistently violating human rights. So in some senses they provided the tools to make this massacre possible," he said.

Ivory Coast

France 24 ‘banned’ in Cote d’Ivoire
Rapid TV News
Thursday, 25 February 2010

French TV news channel France 24 has been taken off the air in the Ivory Coast. Paris-based Reporters without Borders says it is extremely concerned "about the current tension in Côte d'Ivoire and the fact that local retransmission of the French TV news station France 24 has been "suspended" until further notice by the Ivory Coast’s National Council for Communication (CNCA). Serious threats have also reportedly been made against several opposition newspapers. "The CNCA should act with the utmost care and not take arbitrary decisions because the current situation is extremely sensitive and the danger of exacerbating tension is great,” Reporters Without Borders said. “We also urge the authorities to guarantee the safety of the opposition media and we call on all parties to act calmly and rationally.” CNCA chairman Franck Anderson Kouassi said France 24 had been suspended as a “precautionary measure” because it had “reported the news in a biased way, violating journalistic ethics.” An extraordinary meeting of the CNCA is to be held soon to take a more definitive decision about the TV station's fate.

Local Media – Newspaper
Detained Local Officials Released on Court’s Order

• The Superintendents of Montserrado and Bomi Counties have been released from further detention.
• The House ordered the release of Superintendents Beauty Barcon and Mohammed Massaley along with their deputies Momolu Bass and Rebecca Benson.
• Also released by the House is the Coordinator of the County Development Funds at the Internal Affairs Ministry, Michael George.
• In its vote at a special session Wednesday, the House said it released the five officials on health, gender and humanitarian grounds.
• However, reports say they were released by the Supreme Court of Liberia.
• Meanwhile, House Speaker Alex Tyler has justified the House’s action saying the decision to jail the officials was based on Legislative Contempt but several Legislators have denounced the judgment of the Representative saying it amounts to “Legislative tyranny”.

President Sirleaf Makes New Appointment At The Ministry Of Information
(The Analyst)

• President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has made new appointments in government, affecting the Ministry of Information.
• President Sirleaf appointed Cletus Sieh as Information Minister; Norris Tweah, Deputy Minister for Administration and Elizabeth Hoff, Deputy Minister for Technical Affairs.
• Others appointed are Jerelimick Piah, Deputy Minister for Public Affairs; Lynn George Cassell, Assistant Minister for Administration; Scholastica Doe, Assistant Minister for Tourism; Isaac
Jackson, Assistant Minister for Information Services; and Jacqueline Capehart, Assistant Minister for Culture.

- An Executive Mansion release says the appointments are subject to confirmation by the Liberian Senate.

**Defendants Suffer Major Setback In former PPCC Chairman’s Murder Trial**
*(The Inquirer, Front Page and Daily Observer)*

- The nine suspects in the Keith Jubah murder trial pleaded not guilty yesterday, to charges levied against them by the State at Criminal Court ‘A’ at the Temple of Justice in Monrovia.
- The indictment said the nine suspects had admitted to the commission of the crimes during preliminary police investigation.
- The suspects are charged and indicted for murder, criminal conspiracy and criminal mischief.
- At the same time, the Court has denied the defense motion for suppression of evidence filed before it by the lead counsel of the suspects, Atty. Anthony Johnson.
- On Monday, the defendants filed a motion of suppression of evidence on grounds that they had been coerced and tortured by officers of the Liberia National Police (LNP) to obtain confessions after their arrest.
- But the counsel for prosecution, Montserrado County Attorney Daku Mulbah, in his resistance, prayed the court to deny the defense motion on grounds that their claims of torture and coercion as a means of obtaining confession were void of proof.

**Labour Ministry, ILO Begin Seminar on Decent Work Country Programme**
*(Daily Observer and In Profile Daily)*

- The Labour Ministry in collaboration with the International Labour Organization has embarked on a two-day seminar with stakeholders in the country’s labour sector to finalize the draft document of the Decent Work Country Programme.
- Labour Minister Tiawon Gongloe said the programme when carried out will create more jobs for Liberians and decentralize the Ministry’s activities across the country.
- Minister Gongloe noted that job creation remains a major challenge to government especially the implementation of the Poverty reduction Strategy.
- The ILO Regional Director for English Speaking West African Countries, Ms. Sina Chuma-Mkandawire pledged the ILO commitment in supporting Liberia's recovery programme.

**Public Land Deeds Screening Committee Set Up**
*(Daily Observer)*

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has constituted a ten-member Screening Committee to vet all Public Land Deeds in the country.
- Those appointed include Dr. Cecil Brandy, Chairman, and James Yarsiah, Co-Chairman, representing Civil Society.
- Others named members on the Screening Committee are Lands, Mines and Energy Minister Eugene Shannon, Justice Minister Christiana Tah, Agriculture Minister Florence Chenoweth, Public Works Minister Kofi Woods and Acting Internal Affairs Minister Peter Kamei.
- Also appointed members on the Screening Committee is the Chairman of the National Investment Commission Dr. Richard Tolbert, the Executive Director of the Environmental Protection Agency Dr. Alfred Amah and the Managing Director of Forestry Development Authority Moses Wogbeh.

**High-profiled Philanthropists Due In The Country**
*(Heritage, In Profile Daily)*

- Twenty high profiled international philanthropists and foundations are expected in Liberia as guests of the Liberia Philanthropy Secretariat housed within the Office of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.
- The philanthropists include Dr. Wiebe Boer of the Rockefeller Foundation, David Cohn of Google Labs and Elliott Donnelley of White Sand Investor Group.
• The visit by the philanthropists will be structured around the theme of women empowerment.
• They will tour several sites in Monrovia including markets established under the Sirleaf Market Women’s Fund and the Made in Liberia Initiative, and review progress and challenges under the country’s Poverty Reduction Strategy.
• An Executive Mansion release says President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf will host the international guests on Thursday.

**Vice President Boakai Satisfied With Work At NPA**
(The Analyst, In Profile Daily, National Chronicle, Heritage)

• Vice President Joseph Boakai says he is impressed with the level of reforms being carried out so far at the National Port Authority (NPA).
• Vice President Boakai said government appreciates the NPA management for deploying monitoring devices in strategic parts of the Port, which would help Port securities combat crimes and monitor redundant areas.
• He said even the Free Port Collectorate which is being referred to as One Stop Shop was a big help in expediting government’s operations.
• For her part, NPA Managing Director Matilda Parker said the Free Port of Monrovia would remain ISPS compliant while the Port of Buchanan would also be ISPS compliant for the first time since 2004.
• She disclosed the port would aggressively deploy cameras capable of monitoring both the Port and places referred to as redundant areas.
• They spoke Wednesday when Vice President Boakai toured facilities of the Freeport of Monrovia.

**Star Radio** *(News monitored today at 09:00 am)*

**President Sirleaf Makes New Appointment At The Ministry Of Information**
(Also reported on Truth FM, Sky FM, and ELBC)

**High-profiled Philanthropists Due In The Country**

**Public Land Deeds Screening Committee Set Up**

**Vice President Boakai Satisfied With Work At NPA**

**House Order All five Detained Officials Released**
(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Truth FM, Sky FM, and ELBC)

**UNDP To Assist Sea Erosion Victims In Three Counties**
• The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has agreed to re-integrate people badly affected by sea erosion in three coastal counties including Grand Cape Mount, Montserrado and Grand Bassa.
• UNDP Deputy Representative for Programme Maria Keating said each county will receive one million US dollars for the re-integration programme.
• Under the programme, victims of sea erosion will be trained in marketable skills to become useful citizens in society.
• Madam Keating made the disclosure Tuesday in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County at the start of a two-day working visit where she held talks with Superintendent Julia Duncan-Cassell and visited the Baconi Elementary School constructed by UNDP.

**In The Keith Jubah Murder Case, Indictees Plead Not Guilty**
(Also reported on Truth FM, Sky FM, and ELBC)

**Acres of Hope Expresses Regrets Over Adopted Child’s Death**
• The Orphanage that processed the adoption of the Liberian child who died in the United States has issued a statement expressing deep regrets over the incident.
• Acres of Hope described the incident as shocking.
• The agency said throughout the adoption process, there was no indication that the adoptive parents had any child abuse record.
• The group said throughout the child’s stay in the United States, periodic reports accompanied
by photos from the adoptive parents confirmed the wellbeing of all the children.
• Acres of Hope said with such positive development, it did not anticipate that such incident
would have taken place.

Truth FM (News monitored today at 10:00 am)
Labor Ministry, ILO Begin Seminar On Decent Work Country Programme
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Guinea’s junta hires ex-war crimes prosecutors -- and gets a favorable report

Posted By Colum Lynch

Two former war-crimes specialists were recently hired as consultants for Guinea's military junta after it was accused of massacring civilians -- and produced a secret report downplaying the violence, Foreign Policy has confirmed.

David M. Crane, the former U.N. prosecutor for the Special Court in Sierra Leone, and his chief investigator, Alan W. White, were once on the front lines of the international effort to hold war criminals accountable for their misdeeds, securing an indictment in 2003 against the former Liberian warlord and president Charles Taylor.

The two American war-crimes specialists, who now run a consulting firm called CW Group International, LLC, recently used their expertise on behalf of the government of Guinea's former military leader, Moussa Dadis Camara (above left), who stands accused by a U.N. commission of inquiry of responsibility for the Sept. 28, 2009, murder and disappearances of more than 156 civilian protesters in the country's national soccer stadium.

CW Group signed an agreement with Guinea's military junta on Oct. 15, three weeks after the massacre, to "conduct a confidential investigation into recent allegations of shootings and sexual assaults, including gang rapes, that occurred on September 28, at the national stadium." The findings of the investigation were first published early this week by the newsletter Africa Confidential, but Turtle Bay has independently obtained a copy of the secret report and secured the first interviews with Crane and White.

The report confirms that an elite Guinean presidential guard -- known by their red berets -- opened fire on opposition demonstrators at the national soccer stadium, and sexually assaulted women inside and outside of the stadium. But the death toll -- 59 -- and the scale of the violence described by Crane and White, is lower than that described by international human rights investigators. The report also downplays the role of the Guinean leadership in the killings or the abduction of scores of civilians and makes no mention of a coverup of the crimes, which has been claimed by the U.N. commission and Human Rights Watch. "Simply stated it appears from the facts extant that a crime against humanity was not committed by government forces on September 28th," the report states.
On the contrary, CW cites the efforts of key military commanders to defuse the standoff and to protect the opposition leaders who had gathered in the national stadium to protest Camara's effort to run for president in 2010. CW places some of its greatest emphasis on criticizing the country's opposition movement, Le Forum Des Forces Vives, for carrying out its demonstration in defiance of President Camara's wishes.

The report places most responsibility on the unit's commander, Lt. Aboubacar Cherif Diakite (a.k.a. Lt. Toumba), noting that President Camara had instructed the military to stay out of the stadium. "Those military personnel who responded to the stadium were in violation of a direct order issued by President Camara," the report stated. Lt. Toumba later told Radio France International that he shot President Camara in retaliation for seeking to place the blame for the killings on him. Toumba is in hiding and Camara is receiving medical treatment in Burkina Faso.

"The CW report is a dishonest and misleading report, and it is shameful that persons formerly associated with the Sierra Leone Special Tribunal authored it," according to an international human rights researcher who investigated the massacre. "It is absolutely clear that they ignored evidence that was widely available to them, both in terms of the scale of the atrocities and the responsibility for the massacre. Their motives in writing a white-wash report for the Guinean authorities have to be questioned."

Crane and White deny that their report was a white wash. But it stands in stark contrast to the U.N.'s investigation, which is based on nearly 700 interviews with witnesses and government officials and concluded that forces under the command of President Camara launched a "widespread and systematic attack" against the demonstrators, killing more than 100 civilians in the stadium, including 40 whose bodies have never been recovered. The U.N. report -- which said the assault constituted crimes against humanity -- says at least 109 women were sexually assaulted, including several who were held for days by soldiers in sexual slavery, and hundreds of others were tortured. The U.N. commission found that "there is a prima facie case that President Camara incurred direct criminal responsibility in the perpetration of crimes."

An investigation by Human Rights Watch echoed those findings, concluding that Guinea's military rulers unleashed a premeditated massacre of more than 150 people in an attempt to silence the political opposition. It also documented an effort by the Guinean military authorities to cover up the crimes.

Crane acknowledged in an interview with Turtle Bay that his firm carried out the investigation in order to assess what had taken place in the national stadium, but that the intent was not to clear Camara of responsibility. He also said that his firm's report was merely a preliminary assessment of events that could change as further evidence came to light, including that provided by the U.N. and Human Rights Watch. He noted that the report called on Guinean authorities to set up a 15-member task force to conduct a more extensive investigation, and to interview the more than 1,350 people his report claimed were treated for injuries.

"There were no punches pulled," Crane said. "It was clear to us that crimes were committed against the Guinean people and had to be dealt with under domestic law and possibly international law. We certainly want to see justice for the Guinean people and particularly the victims."

While the report does not hold Camara personally responsible for the killings, Crane and White both insisted that the firm privately warned Camara that he bore ultimate responsibility for the crimes and had to prosecute those responsible for them. "Even though there's no direct evidence in the preliminary assessment that links you directly as commander and chief you are ultimately responsible," White recalled telling Camara. "We told him to his face if you do not take appropriate action and hold those responsible for what happened you could be held criminally responsible; plain and simple."
The two war-crimes experts first appeared on the international justice scene in 2002, when they were appointed to lead the U.N.-backed investigation against Charles Taylor on charges that he provided financial and political support to a ruthless rebel movement, the Revolutionary United Front, that was known for mutilating its victims.

The two men had previously served in the U.S. government for more than 30 years. Crane, now a professor at Syracuse University College of Law, rose within the Pentagon to become a senior inspector general in the Defense Department, and an assistant general counsel of the Defense Intelligence Agency. White served as the director of investigative operations for the Defense Criminal Investigative Services before joining the U.N. court.

Crane and White said their firm is committed to the same principles that drove its two founders to champion the cause of human rights in Sierra Leone. Their consultancy work in Guinea focuses on promoting human rights and the rule of law. In Guinea, the company proposed a plan in December to provide Guinean troops training in the laws of armed conflict, and to promote a series of good governance policies that would lead the country toward "free and fair elections," Crane said. The proposal was dropped after the assassination attempt against Camara. "We were pursuing international justice to ensure that impunity did not continue in Guinea."

Crane and White were paid for their confidential report, but wouldn't reveal how much. White said the amount was "inconsequential."

The two men also insisted that their work on behalf of the Guinean military junta did not constitute lobbying, which would require that they register as agents of a foreign government. "We are not lobbyists," said White. "They try to prop you up publicly. We didn't do that... At the end of the day, our integrity and ethics and moral standards will never be compromised. We do believe in Africa and know they lack capacity."
Tanzania: Ambassador Mwakawago Dies in Dar

Sadick Mtulya

A veteran politician and diplomat who was among the people who fought for Tanzania's independence ambassador Daudi Mwakawago is dead.

Information reaching The Citizen yesterday had it that Mr Mwakawago succumbed to malaria bout after suffering for nine days.

According to the information, which was also confirmed by CCM officials, ambassador Mwakawago met his death at the early hours of yesterday morning while admitted at the Aga Khan hospital.

The CCM deputy chairman Pius Msekwa told this paper that he officially received the news of ambassador Mwakawago's demise yesterday morning from Mr Mwakawago's son, Yassin Mwakawago who visited him at his office to deliver the news.

"It is true that ambassador Mwakawago died today (yesterday) morning at the Aga Khan Hospital where he was admitted suffering from Malaria," said Msekwa.

Ambassador Mwakawago will be remembered as a senior politician and diplomat who held various top positions within TANU, and later on CCM in the first, second and third phase governments.

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In the first phase government, ambassador Mwakawago served as the Minister for Education, Information and Culture, while in the second phase he was the Minister for Industry and Commerce and in the third phase government he worked as the Minister for Labor and Development.

Ambassador Mwakawago also held the positions of the publicity secretary within TANU as well as the second secretary general of the ruling party CCM.

He was also the Tanzanian ambassador to Italy before being nominated the Tanzanian permanent ambassador to the United Nations in the 90s.

Before resigning he was also nominated by the former United Nations secretary general, Koffi Annan to be the mediator for the Sierra Leonean conflict.

The burial ceremony and the wake is being kept at his residence in Msasani and is expected to be laid to rest tomorrow.