Former FMU Assistant, Electrical Network, Samuel Eyeson died yesterday.

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:

Friday, 27 August 2010

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

(Courtesy: Angela Savaresou
The Hague in the MONITOR)
(PART 2)

BY JESSA M. KAMARA

As the trial of Charles Taylor continues at the Hague, I feel that this is the most opportune time to reflect on what went on during the initial stages of the Special Court proceedings and also to bring to you something close to the minds of many Sierra Leoneans who went through the brutal rebel war and its resultant disastrous consequences as concerns the ongoing trial of Charles Taylor. Read Part 2 of the interview below.

Further, Mr. Taylor is charged with horrific atrocities under international criminal law.

International crimes are an international responsibility. I am proud that the Prosecution has enjoyed the support of lawyers, investigators, and other staff from all over the world, from Uganda to the United Kingdom.

CARL: What do you think the Special Court has achieved to date, both in Sierra Leone and in terms of International Criminal Law?

Kamara: The Special Court has achieved so much for Sierra Leone, and for the sub-region. Let’s start with what it has done to ensure peace.

Without the Special Court, none of the leaders of the rebel groups that tore this country apart would have ever faced justice. They would be free to walk the streets of the country’s cities and towns with impunity. In the

Lome Peace Accord, the former rebel leader Foday Sankoh was made Vice President and the RUF gained control over the country’s diamond mining areas. And we all know the violence that occurred after this accord.

Who can say with confidence there would have been no return to the violence and suffering brought by these leaders?

Further, Charles Taylor would today be a free man if the sub-region, and free to plan as he wished in Liberia and for Sierra Leone, instead of facing justice in a court of law for the crimes he is accused of.

You cannot put a price on peace, and you cannot put a price on justice.

The work of the Court has been one of the reasons Sierra Leone and even Liberia has been able to move forward since the dark days of the war.

The BBC and the Special Court have both conducted public opinion surveys, and the results show that the majority of Sierra Leoneans strongly support the work of the Court. They believe it has made a difference to their lives and to the country.

The Court has also greatly encouraged the respect for the rule of law domestically, and has spread knowledge of the importance of this principle throughout the country. The Outreach department has been key in this regard, spreading the message of the Court’s work and its principles to every city and town in the country.

The Court has also undertaken activities designed to leave behind a
positive legacy. The hope of the SCCL and the OTP is that it has and will achieve something far beyond its mandate and impact skills, legal and non-legal principles and even infrastructure to the country.

One area where this legacy is being ensured is in the trainings the SCCL provides. Hundreds of police officers, lawyers, students and even Parliamentarians and judges have attended seminars or received trainings on a wide variety of topics, from International Humanitarian Law to criminal investigations practices.

As far as International Law, the list of key precedents established by the Court is truly impressive: the world’s first recognitions of the use of child soldiers and of forced marriage as crimes under international humanitar-

ian law, and the first ever convictions on these charges: the first-ever convictions on the charge of Attacks on UN Peacekeepers. These rulings have the potential to help protect civilians and soldiers alike in the conflict zones of the world.

Finally, the example of the Charles Taylor on trial, like Slobodan Milosevic at the Yugoslavia tribunal before him, shows that no man is above the law.

It shows that when it comes to indicted accused war criminals, it’s not a question of if they will face justice, but when.

CARL: What is the Prosecutor’s timeline for the Cross-Examination of Taylor?
Kamara: We are going to try and be as efficient as we can, while still doing justice to our need to effectively challenge Mr. Taylor on the truthfulness of his testimony. We do not intend to take as long as the 13 weeks the Defense took for the direct-examination. How directly or evasively Mr. Taylor chooses to answer our questions will be a significant factor in how quickly we can proceed.

The judges’ 30 November ruling affirmed the Prosecution’s right under the established principles of international law to use new materials to impeach the credibility of the Accused. We have already tested the credibility of Mr. Taylor’s claims on a number of fronts, and our cross has only just begun, he challenged us to bring forth evidence of the wealth he accumulated while in power. We were pleased to do this. And throughout our cross we will confront his claim that he was a peacemaker in Sierra Leone. Our evidence shows just the opposite.

CARL: In what is the proposed use of the Special Court facilities in Freetown following the trial?
Kamara: Discussions are ongoing between the Court, the Government, and the international community, but no final decisions have yet been reached. One aspect of the Court that has already been determined is the former prison facility for the indicts who have now all been transferred to Rwanda.

That facility has been transferred over to the Government for their own use as a prison facility for women and possibly for younger offenders. As for the rest of the Court, one of the possibilities is to use it as a judicial training facility, possibly for the ECOWAS countries. There is also a planned museum and/or memorial of some kind on the Court premises that will be open to the public. This will focus on the civil war and its smaller extent on the history of the world of the Court and the cases.

CARL: Who are you expecting the Defense to call in support of their case?
Kamara: Although they have filed summaries for some 250 witnesses and loudly proclaimed their preference for a public trial during the Prosecution case in chief, the Defense successfully applied to keep the names of those witnesses hidden from the Prosecution until 21 days before each witness testifies.

So, to date, the Prosecution is only aware of the names of few Defense witnesses in addition to the Accused. We hope that however many witnesses they are allowed to call, the Defense proceed with their case in an efficient and responsible manner, as the Prosecution, sought to do during its case.

CARL: In such a high profile case, what is the effect of prejudice on the trial?
Kamara: The Defense likes to say that the public mind has been so “prejudiced” against Mr. Taylor by the Western media that he cannot get a fair trial. This is another ploy to distract from the case against their client. Once again, it is a distortion of the truth. It is also insulting to the professional and independent judges who are hearing the case.

This is a trial before professional judges, chosen for their high moral character, impartiality and integrity. For that reason, prejudice should not be a factor.

But remember, when you are speaking of prejudice, you must look at the potential impact of prejudice against the Accused, the Prosecution and the Court itself. Public statements such as Mr. Griffiths has been prone to make, evoking emotive language to deflect from the evidence and the legitimacy of the trial, is prejudicial not just to the Prosecution but also brings the administration of justice by the Court into disrepute.

Demanding accountability and for an indicted person to stand trial is not prejudice. The fact that in 2006 a coalition of dozens of African NGOs called for Taylor to be handed over to stand trial is not indicative of prejudice, but of the belief that impunity is wrong and accused persons should be brought to trial.

The Prosecution’s position is very simple. Charles Ghankay Taylor is before this Court because of his choices and his conduct.

Let me conclude by emphasizing this point: the trial of Charles Taylor could not be more fair, open and transparent. And no amount of misinformation from the Defense outside the courtroom can distract from the evidence presented in Court against Mr. Taylor.

We will continue to challenge Mr. Taylor and the other Defense witnesses with the full weight of our evidence. And we call upon his lawyers to focus on the case as well, and refrain from spreading further poisonous dialogue in the public realm. The real victims deserve better.
Peace Builders Discuss Transitional Justice

The Taia resort at Lumley Beach Road was yesterday the centre for a round-table discussion on the findings of a research on transitional justice in Africa.

By Augustine Sankoh

According to the West Africa Network for Peace in Sierra Leone (WANEP-SL), who organized the session, the research project, entitled "Transitional Justice Experiences and the Rise of TRC model in Africa; Emerging lessons and Implementations for Post-accord Society," was undertaken in collaboration with the Nairobi Peace Initiative (NPI) in 2008.

Speaking at the opening session, the Executive Chairman of WANEP Sierra Leone, Abdulai Saway, said the round table discussion on transitional justice will go a long way to make way for future research on Sierra Leone.

"Now that we have completed the TRC and the recommendations are gradually being implemented, the discussion will not only facilitate the dissemination of research findings from Ghana, Sierra Leone and South Africa, but also create the opportunity to deepen reflection on the transitional justice journey of Sierra Leone," he said, adding that Sierra Leone is a post-war country.

"An issue of this nature is very important for the country’s democracy, as Sierra Leone will be able to learn best practices and"

Contd. Page 6

Peace Builders Discuss Transitional Justice

From page 4

provide indicators as to how the country should be governed," he said. Saway called for full participant to disseminate the information derived from the discussion.

The Senior Research and Policy Advisor for NPI, George Wachira said NPI-Africa has been engaged with issues of justice, healing and reconciliation in several countries, and that his organization’s experience shows that issues of justice are central to how society moves forward after conflict to build a firm foundation for peace.

"The post accord period is the crucial time for dealing with the painful past of the ending war, and laying the foundation for the coming peace," he said.

"We set up the research to examine people’s perceptions and expectations of TRCs in Africa," Wachira said.

The NPI Policy Advisor said there are major skepticisms about the contribution of TRCs in Africa to the stated goals of truth, justice and reconciliation, noting that the TRCs may have become easy answers to deep problems that require sustained, institutional and policy responses, and may have become obsessed with form and structure at the expense of the consideration of the needs and goals of societies in transition.

The former Chairman of Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in Sierra Leone, Joseph Humper, said in Africa, the concept of 'truth and reconciliation commission,' which addresses impunity by restorative justice.

"It is better considered as bringing about social harmony and has become a popular way of bringing a closure to civil conflicts," he said, adding that the organization of the seminar has produced a document for the operation of truth and reconciliation commissions in Africa. This round-table discussion was chaired by Memunatu Pratt, Head of Peace and Conflict Studies Program at Fourah Bay College and graced by the outgoing Army Chief of Defence Staff, Major-General Nelson Williams, Professor Joe A.D. Ali and heads of transitional justice organizations in Sierra Leone.
Daily Summary

**Issa Sesay Did Not Know Charles Taylor Wanted To Kill Him And He Is Not Relying On Taylor To Free Him From Jail, He Says In Conclusion Of His Cross-Examination**

By Alpha Sesay

As prosecutors concluded his cross-examination today, Issa Hassan Sesay, the convicted former interim leader of Sierra Leone’s main rebel group told Special Court for Sierra Leone judges in The Hague that he did not know and does not believe that Charles Taylor sent men to kill him while he was trying to disarm rebel forces in Sierra Leone. Mr. Sesay also dismissed suggestions that he is testifying for Mr. Taylor because he hopes that the former Liberian president, if acquitted, will help free him from his 52 years jail sentence in Rwanda.

Prosecution counsel Nicholas Koumjian in concluding Mr. Sesay’s cross-examination today put to the witness that it was Mr. Taylor’s practice to execute people with whom he had disagreements and so when Mr. Sesay decided to disarm the RUF in Sierra Leone much to Mr. Taylor’s disagreement, the former Liberian president sent men to kill him inside Sierra Leone. Mr. Sesay dismissed this suggestion as false.

“Charles Taylor was unhappy with your decision to cooperate with the United Nations and at some point he sent men to kill you, did you know that?” Mr. Koumjian asked Mr. Sesay.

“No,” Mr. Sesay said. “I did not know that, i did not hear that and i don’t believe that Charles Taylor wanted to kill me because Charles Taylor was one of those encouraging me to disarm.”

Mr. Koumjian read from a March 12 2008 evidence of former fighter of Mr. Taylor’s National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) rebel group Joseph Zig Zag Marzah who told the court that Mr. Taylor had ordered him to executed Mr. Sesay.

“…I crossed over to Pendembu in the Kailahun District to wait for Issa [Sesay] to execute him under the directive of my leader Charles Taylor. Later he [Taylor] called me and said he had already sent for Issa to go and receive ammos in Buedu and for him to come and pass through me to Buedu and then I will follow him to get him, but Issa never returned. I spent almost two weeks in Kailahun and later he told me that, “The man has gone. He will no longer receive supplies from me.”” Mr. Marzah told the court in March 2008.

“This man is telling lies,” Mr. Sesay responded when confronted with Mr. Marzah’s statement.

Mr. Koumjian put to Mr. Sesay that since Mr. Taylor did not want the RUF to disarm, that was why he suggested that Sam Bockarie, the former RUF commander who had left Sierra Leone for Liberia be made to rejoin the RUF. When Mr. Sesay realised Mr. Taylor’s plot, he never returned to see the former Liberian president again, Mr. Koumjian said.

“If he [Bockarie] would have returned, you would have been killed…you told Charles Taylor you wanted to go and consult your colleagues and never returned to see Charles Taylor again,” Mr. Koumjian put to Mr. Sesay.
In response, Mr. Sesay said that “I told him that the problem was between Sam Bockarie and Mr. Sankoh, that i’ll have to go and consult my colleagues. Since then, he did not call me again and i did not return to see him.”

Mr. Koumjian also pointed to Mr. Sesay that the reason for his testimony on Mr. Taylor’s behalf is because he hopes that an acquitted Mr. Taylor will use political power to get him out of jail, having already started a 52 year jail term after being convicted for his role in the Sierra Leonean conflict. Mr. Sesay denied this suggestion, telling the court that his only hope for getting out of jail rests on God and the people of Sierra Leone.

“You have the hope that if Charles Taylor is released, he’ll help you get political release from prison. If Charles Taylor is released, he’ll help you get out of jail, correct?” Mr. Koumjian asked Mr. Sesay.

“No my Lord. Mr. Taylor is not a Sierra Leonean and so he has no influence in Sierra Leone. It is the people of Sierra Leone who will appeal to the Government of Sierra Leone for my release or the international community who know what i did for peace in Sierra Leone,” Mr. Sesay responded.

When told that he only “disarmed [the RUF] as a matter of survival,” Mr. Sesay said that “that is not true because the people who i worked with for peace in Sierra Leone did not say that.”

“They know that i did not surrender, they know that i worked with them willingly for peace in Sierra Leone.”

As Mr. Koumjian concluded his cross-examination, defense counsel for Mr. Taylor Silas Chikera immediatly commenced the re-examination of Mr. Sesay. In re-examination, Mr. Chikera sought to clarify certain issues that have been covered by prosecutors in Mr. Sesay’s cross-examination.

Mr. Ses’s re-examination continues tomorrow.
Liberia: Issa Sesay Says the RUF Did Not Fight for Charles Taylor in Guinea and Liberia

Alpha Sesay

Returning to the stand after a brief illness, a former Sierra Leonean rebel leader said his group did not fight battles for former Liberian President, Charles Taylor, in neighboring Guinea and Liberia.

In the trial of Mr. Taylor for his alleged role in war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Sierra Leone during the country's brutal 11-year war, prosecutors have alleged that Mr. Taylor had control over Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels. From this position of authority, prosecutors say, Mr. Taylor sent RUF rebels to attack a rebel force in his own country - the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) - which was threatening to unseat his government and helping to dislodge the government of former president, Lansana Conte, in neighboring Guinea. Despite an ongoing disarmament process in Sierra Leone at the time, arms and ammunition for these operations were allegedly given to the RUF by Benjamin Yeaten, Mr. Taylor's Director of Special Security Services (SSS), who was commanding troops against LURD rebels in Lofa County, Liberia. Mr. Taylor has denied these allegations.

"Benjamin Yeaten provided the RUF with ammunition to launch these attacks in Guinea and Lofa in Liberia," prosecution counsel Nicholas Koumjian asserted today. "No, Benjamin Yeaten did not give me ammunition and I did nor send the RUF to fight in Guinea and Liberia," Mr. Sesay responded.

In 2008, prosecution witnesses told Special Court for Sierra Leone judges in The Hague that they were part of the RUF fighting force sent to fight in Guinea and Liberia. Mr. Taylor gave orders to Mr. Sesay for the RUF to attack these countries and Mr. Sesay in turn mobilized RUF fighters to cross the Sierra Leonean border into the two countries, the witnesses told the court in 2008.

"Issa Sesay said Charles Taylor informed him that we should give him ground in Guinea so at the time of the disarmament in Sierra Leone, we'll shift some of the ammunition to Guinea for safe keeping...from there, Issa arranged transportation to Liberia, we met Benjamin Yeaten and he said guys we should get ready for the operation," one of the prosecution witnesses was quoted as having said in 2008.

"You as interim leader of the RUF were battling the enemies of Charles Taylor in both Liberia and Guinea," Mr. Koumjian confronted Mr. Sesay.

"I did not fight the enemies of Charles Taylor," Mr. Sesay said.

Mr. Taylor has maintained that when he cut off dealings with the RUF in 1992, he only had contacts with them again in the late 1990s when he got involved in the peace efforts in Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor has said that his only dealings with the RUF in the early 1990s were to help him fight off a rival Liberian rebel group attacking from Sierra Leonean territory. Today, Mr. Koumjian asked Mr. Sesay whether Mr. Taylor requested help from the RUF in the same way he had sought help from the RUF's leader, Foday Sankoh, in the early 1990s. Mr. Sesay said that was not the case.

"Did Charles Taylor ask you to assist him the same way he had asked Mr. Sankoh?" Mr. Koumjian asked Mr. Sesay.
"No, No. He did not ask me, he could have asked Mr. Sankoh but he did not ask me," Mr. Sesay responded.

"The RUF [fighters] who went there did so on their own accord," Mr. Sesay said, prompting a question from Mr. Koumjian as to whether Mr. Sesay was confirming that RUF fighters did indeed cross into neighboring Liberia.

"What I mean, when I asked them [RUF] to disarm, the Vanguards [original RUF fighters trained in Liberia] who refused, crossed over to Liberia. Even Superman [a Liberian RUF commander] went over to Liberia, but to say that I organized men to go over to Liberia, no," Mr. Sesay said.

On the RUF cross-border attacks in Guinea, Mr. Sesay also insisted that "Mr. Taylor did not give me any operation to attack Guinea." "There were cross-border attacks which the Guineans launched and the RUF was repelling them...The Guineans were launching long range missiles which were landing in RUF controlled territories," he added.

Mr. Sesay also refuted claims that former rebel fighter, Daniel Tamba (otherwise known as "Jungle"), was a member of Mr. Taylor's SSS assigned to the RUF as Mr. Taylor's official representative. Several prosecution witnesses have testified that Jungle was Mr. Taylor's representative to the RUF who moved between Sierra Leone and Liberia with diamonds from RUF rebels to Mr. Taylor, and arms and ammunition from Mr. Taylor to the RUF. Mr. Sesay has dismissed these claims as lies, saying that when Jungle crossed from NPFL territory into Sierra Leone in the early 1990s, he joined the RUF and remained with the Sierra Leonean rebel group until the time of the disarmament in the country.

"As far as I know, Jungle was not an SSS, he was a member of the RUF," Mr. Sesay told the court.

Mr. Koumjian displayed a list containing the names of SSS members who were assigned to the Executive Mansion as part of Mr. Taylor's "Presidential Advance Team" and the 9th name on the said list was that of "Daniel Tamba" (Jungle). Mr. Koumjian also displayed a photograph of persons in military fatigue and Mr. Sesay identified the two visible persons in the photograph as SSS Director Mr. Yeaten and Jungle.

When put to him that "[Jungle] was the liaison between Charles Taylor and the RUF," Mr. Sesay said: "No, Jungle was with the RUF for a long time, he was not a middleman."

Mr. Sesay's testimony continues Thursday.
And what if Taylor walks?

By Bram Posthumus

The Hague, Netherlands
International Justice Desk

Former Liberian president Charles Taylor, is in court to defend himself on 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity he allegedly committed in Liberia’s neighbour to the west, Sierra Leone.

Liberian media cover the trial extensively but Liberians are, to all intents and purposes, mere spectators. This trial is not about them. Liberia lacks a war crimes tribunal. What it does have is a Truth and Reconciliation Commission which has been taking countless statements from war crimes victims and perpetrators and whose report is in the public domain.

The UN and the Sierra Leone government installed the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) in 2002. In June 2003, David Crane, its chief prosecutor, had Taylor indicted for war crimes allegedly committed in Sierra Leone. Two months later, Taylor left Liberia in the midst of chaos and bloody struggle as rebels pounded the capital Monrovia with mortars. His departure was the result of a deal struck principally between himself, the Economic Community for West African States and the African Union, the nub of it being that he would not be arrested and would stay out of Liberian politics. Taylor went to stay in Calabar, Nigeria.

What changed? Anyone’s guess but late March 2006 the world was treated to the bizarre spectacle of Taylor first “disappearing” from his villa, days before Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo was supposed to meet US president George W Bush, and then Nigerian security forces miraculously “finding” Taylor again near the border with Cameroon. (International Justice Tribunal reported on that chain of events here.) A few days later, Taylor was in The Hague and Obasanjo had his meeting with Bush.

The prosecution at the SCSL has been presenting the world with victims: amputated limbs, rape victims, horror stories. No one denies these things happened, but the question is: how hard is it to prove that Charles Taylor is personally responsible for these atrocities?

The spectacle of Ms Campbell at the SCSL gives you the answer: very hard. Current chief prosecutor Brenda Hollis has to work with the legacy left behind by a lawyer who scored a major political point and earned his place in history but did not appear too concerned about the consequences. Given the robust and professional defence Taylor enjoys, Crane’s indictment may, in the end, facilitate the ex-president’s return to Liberia. As he said himself, before he stepped on that plane to Nigeria in August 2003 in the driving rain: ‘God willing...I’ll be back’.

Will people vote for him if he stands? One Liberian banker puts it succinctly: ‘At the end of the day, people don’t care too much about human rights and rule of law. They want to eat!’ Reggae musician and
Bob Marley admirer, Lawrence Kotokpo, says he’ll vote for Taylor if he stands. Why? ‘This one,’ he says while pointing at his stomach, ‘is the boss.’ He is not alone: rice was cheap during Taylor’s reign.

The only thing standing in the way of Taylor’s renewed bid for office is the recommendation from Liberia’s own TRC, which says that anyone involved in the war should not hold public office for 30 years. However, this recommendation has already been royally ignored by the current president Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, who was once a fundraiser for Mr Taylor.

To be fair: she has openly acknowledged this but has also decided this should not have consequences. She is standing for a second turn – which, incidentally, constitutes a broken promise. So what then is to stop Taylor’s return? Only serious political horse-trading at the Special Court for Sierra Leone.
Courtenay Griffiths: Defending Charles Taylor

By Dave Lee and Paddy Maguire BBC World Service

Courtenay Griffiths has no doubt over the morality of defending alleged war criminals.

Courtenay Griffiths has acted for the defence in some of the UK's most controversial cases.

He has defended the IRA following bombing attacks in the UK, as well as representing one of the youths cleared of murder charges relating to the death of Damilola Taylor - the 10-year-old boy who was killed on a London housing estate in 2000.

Most recently, his position as lead defence lawyer for former Liberia President Charles Taylor has seen his cross-examination of supermodel Naomi Campbell and other high-profile witnesses make headlines across the world.

Talking over the phone from The Hague, he discussed his career with the BBC World Service's Matthew Bannister.

He explained that although defending people like Mr Taylor is considered controversial, his conscience remains clear.

"Our system of justice cannot operate unless there is a semblance of equality between prosecution and defence. Otherwise it becomes an inquisition and that would soon lose the confidence of the public.

"It is right and proper that a defendant, however heinous the crime committed, has the right to the best representation."

"Start Quote

One of the first times I went to court in south London, I arrived in court suited and booted, brief in my briefcase - only to be told 'Oh, the defendants sit at the back of the court sir'."

End Quote Courtenay Griffiths

Despite the serious allegations of war crimes levelled against Mr Taylor, Mr Griffiths maintains it is irrelevant to his right to a good defence.
"The morality of Charles Taylor is none of my business.

"That's between him and his God, whichever God he chooses to worship. My job is to present his case in court. I'm certainly not going to be making moral judgements about any of my clients. I've defended, for example, terrorists - but to make a moral judgement about such defendants is to forget that, you know, one man's terrorist is another man's war hero.

It is this strong belief in fair representation for the accused that drives Mr Griffiths, and that his own view on whether his client is innocent or guilty has never had any bearing on how he works.

"My job is to present a case, and it's for the jury or for the judge to decide that issue. Consequently it's not a question that I ask. I may have my own suspicions, but at the end of the day I'm not the person returning the verdict, so consequently my views are totally immaterial."

'Bizarre racism'

Mr Griffiths' determined attitude to his work is a product of a challenging and diverse upbringing.

In 1955, his father moved from Kingston, Jamaica, to Coventry in pursuit of work as a carpenter.

Several years later, in 1961, the rest of the family followed. It was no small relocation - Mr Griffiths was the second youngest of eight brothers and one sister.

"The first time I saw my father was when we got off the boat train from Dover at Charing Cross, a station in London," he remembers.

Almost immediately he was being subjected to, in his words, "bizarre racism". The sight of 11 black people walking through the centre of post-war Coventry was enough to stop most people in their tracks.

"All the white citizens in Coventry would stop my parents and ask: 'Can we touch them? It's good luck.' That was kind of disconcerting.

"It was a completely novel event for them. Constantly we'd virtually stop traffic in Coventry anytime we ventured out."

But the arguably naive racism of passers-by soon made way for more serious attacks which had a lasting impression on a young Courtenay.

"I personally remember one afternoon being in the Precinct - that ugly concrete structure in the middle of Coventry - and must have been about 14 or 15 at the time.

"Something happened, and I was taken by a police officer, a very large chap I remember, to the police box in the centre of town."
"Me with my public education was trying to argue the toss with him. He was having none of it. He grabbed me round the collar, pushed me up the face: 'Listen blackie, you're in police custody now, don't mess around'.

"Whenever there was an incident in Coventry involving black youths, the first port of call would be our house because there was eight boys living in that house."

**'Pint of Guinness'**

Spurred on by these events, he saw law as a way out of the life he and his family were living, a life supported by the sole bread winner in their house, his father.

"He was always talking about the famous barristers in Jamaica, in particular Norman Manley who was a British QC before he later became prime minister of Jamaica.

"He always extolled those virtues to us. I think a major influence was also the church in that some of the best advocacy or oratory I've ever seen in my life was done by uneducated black men who could rouse a congregation of hundreds of people into hysteria, just by their mere presence and delivery."

Media attention erupted after Mr Griffiths cross-examined Naomi Campbell

As one of the few black men in the British judicial system, his early endeavours in the courts were challenging.

"One of the first times I went to court in south London, I arrived in court suited and booted, brief in my briefcase - only to be told: 'Oh, the defendants sit at the back of the court sir'.

"Meaning, because I was black, I had to be awaiting a charge, or had to be up on a charge. I couldn't conceivably be a barrister representing anyone in that court."

He found the best way to deal with such prejudices was to tackle them head on, more often than not with humour.

"Often, I'd open my address to the jury by saying: 'With my white wig and black gown I look like a pint of Guinness, don't I? Good head though...'.

"They would look at me initially, there would be a sense of apprehension, then I would burst into laughter and then they'd feel confident enough to laugh as well."

**Public eye**
Mr Griffiths' early cases would be conducted in front of an audience of few. Now, however, the televised courtroom has seen him thrust into the public eye. It's a distraction that he says does not cross his mind.

"When you're cross-examining, you need to focus on the witness. You need to see the witnesses' reactions to your questions, not merely in terms of the answer, but in terms of their facial expressions, body language and so on.

"Then you need to listen to the answer you're given, to see what opportunities arise out of that answer.

"You're also controlling all the notes you've made and you've got the paper on the lectern in front of you - you tend to be focusing on that.

"What's happening in the public gallery with the television cameras and the rest of the media doesn't really enter into my mind."

However, he does admit that the medium of television does suit what he describes as a "performing art".

"And like every other performing art, you have to prepare well and you have to practise that skill.

"What you see in court today which everybody is lauding, my cross-examination of Carol White and Naomi Campbell, people seem to forget that it took me 30 years to develop those skills. On top of that, people don't see me working in my study until two, three in the morning."
Why is Barrister Griffiths aggressively defending Charles Taylor?

The notable Jamaican born British jurist Barrister Courtenay Griffiths, a Queen's Counsel (QC) in the British legal system, has been explaining his decision to defend former rebel in chief, ex-President of Liberia and war crime indictee Mr. Charles G. Taylor before the U.N backed Special Court for Sierra Leone which is sitting the Hague the Netherlands.

According to the online free encyclopedia Wikipedia, Born in Kingston, Jamaica, the second youngest child of a carpenter father, Griffiths moved to England with his family in 1961 and was raised in Coventry. Educated at Bablake School, he graduated in 1978 with an LLB (Hons) from the London School of Economics. Today, he practices predominantly in criminal defense, most often defending in murder cases, spending a large amount of his time at the Old Bailey. He also sits part time in the Crown Court as a Recorder,[4] chairs the Public Affairs Committee of the Bar Council, and worked for several years as chair of its Race Relations Committee.

In an interview with the BBC monitored in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on Thursday, Barrister Griffiths held that "the morality of Charles Taylor is none of my business."

He continued his defense of representing one of the worlds notorious insurgent leader by saying "That's between him and his God, whichever God he chooses to worship. My job is to present his case in court. I'm certainly not going to be making moral judgments about any of my clients. I've defended, for example, terrorists - but to make a moral judgment about such defendants is to forget that, you know, one man's terrorist is another man's war hero."

The statement often attributed the late Yasser Arafat, Arafat - Palestinian leader, Nobel Peace Prize Winner and President of Palestinian Authority from 1996 - 2004 is viewed by political watchers as a shrewd attempt by the learned defense attorney to equate the morality of his client's actions to that of other notable resistance leaders including George Washington, "father of the US", Jomo Kenyatta, leader of Mau Mau resistance in colonized Kenya or the celebrated South African Nobel laureate and former President Nelson Madiba Mandela of the African National Congress(ANC).

Mr. Taylor is accused by prosecutors of instigating and waging a campaign of murder, rape, mutilation, sexual slavery and conscription of child solders during the wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone which dislocated nearly 1 million people and killed an estimated 250,000 others in the 1990's in West Africa. Mr. Taylor has consistently denied the charges.

Barrister Griffiths told the BBC "My job is to present a case, and it's for the jury or for the judge to decide that issue. Consequently, it's not a question that I ask. I may have my own suspicions, but at the end of the day I'm not the person returning the verdict, so consequently my views are totally immaterial."

In an interview in October, 2008, the lead defense counsel for Mr. Taylor in explaining his reason why Mr. Taylor should be well represented in his trial told the Project of the Open Society for Justice Initiative that..."this whole area of international criminal law has suffered an image problem in the past because all of the international tribunals which have been set up, it is almost as if the defense have been an afterthought and that the concentration and the emphasis has always been on prosecution which gives the impression that these are in effect Kangaroo Courts where the verdict is a foregone conclusion. And often times if you are a Milosevic or you are a Charles Taylor, before you arrive in these Courts, the media at large have already suggested that you are guilty. And it seems to me imperative in those situations that individuals like Milosevic and like Taylor have the best defense available if the whole area of international criminal justice is to gain any kind of credibility worldwide."

The accomplished but tough-talking lawyer who is having his first foray into active international criminal justice with the representation of Mr. Taylor is not one who is given to "niceties" as evident from his recent cross examination of prosecution witness and super model Ms. Naomi Campbell and her former agent Carole White at the trial in the Hague in early August, 2010.

He bluntly told Ms. White that the motive of her evidence for the prosecution was "all a lie; it is all about the money and there aint nothing funny," an apparent attempt to portray Ms White as someone who was favoring a good outcome in a separate lawsuit against her former client and model Naomi Campbell. Ms. White, after a pregnant pause responded that elements of her testimony to Judges of the Special Court which contradicted Ms. Campbell's
prior testimony was "not a lie."

Barrister Griffiths was installed as Taylor's lead defense counsel on August 1, 2007. In preparation for the trial, he visited Liberia and Sierra Leone and has charged that the UN travel ban on some of the potential and important witnesses for Mr. Taylor will have a "chilling effect" especially those sympathetic to his client.

He further defends his current legal exercise by saying that although he is aware that his defense of people like Mr. Taylor is controversial, his conscience remains "clear". "Our system of justice cannot operate unless there is a semblance of equality between prosecution and defense," he said, adding, "otherwise, it becomes an inquisition and that would soon lose the confidence of the public."

Audiences worldwide including the West Africa sub region which bore the brunt of the decade plus conflagration and bloodletting have been captivated by the live media coverage of the trial. Mr. Taylor is the last defendant being tried by the Court. A verdict is expected in early 2011.

Britain has announced that it will provide a jail cell for Mr. Taylor if he were found guilty.

By Emmanuel Abalo in Philadelphia and the BBC World Service
UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary  
26 August 2010

[The media summaries and press clips do not necessarily represent the views of UNMIL.]

UN News in Liberia

GOL, UNDP End National Security Awareness in Voinjama
[FrontPage Africa]

- The Government of Liberia and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have ended a weeklong national security awareness campaign in Lofa County.
- The campaign was held with support from the UN Peace Building and Japanese Funds.
- The awareness held under the theme “The Police: My Friend, My Partner, My Security”, was aimed at informing the public on how they could assist the police and protect their community against crimes.
- Liberia National Police spokesman George Bardue informed the citizens that the work of the police is becoming successful through the community/police partnership.
- He called on the communities to start seeing themselves as partners to the work of the police in curbing crime.
- The campaign was climaxed by a mass cleanup exercise and sporting events in Voinjama, Lofa County.

PPCC, Internal Affairs, UNDP on Regional Procurement Training
[Daily Observer, The Inquirer]

- A nine-day regional procurement capacity building training workshop sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has commenced beginning with the south eastern region.
- According to the Public Procurement and Concession Commission (PPCC), the training workshop is to reinforce local leaders’ capacity in public financial management.
- The workshop is also geared to further enhance the decentralized procurement system and ensure value for money in the overall public financial management system.
- The PPCC workshop is in collaboration with the Internal Affairs Ministry and will begin today in Zwedru, Grand Gedeh County with participants from Sinoe, Grand Kru, River Gee and the host county.
- The workshop will focus on the efficient use of public funds in public procurement and the proper utilization of development funds.
- The 90 targeted participants include development superintendents, chairpersons and members of the project Management Committee, county procurement, budget and finance officers from Liberia’s 15 counties.
- Training workshop for the central region comprising Lofa, Bong, Nimba, River Cess and Grand Bassa counties will take place in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County from 30 August to 1 September 2010.
- Participants from Bomi, Gbarpolu, Grand Cape Mount, Margibi and Montserrado counties will host their training session in Kakata, Margibi County from 2 – 4 September 2010.

Local News on Liberian issues

President Sirleaf Withdraws Two INHRC’s Nominees
[Front Page Africa]

- Reports say President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has withdrawn the nomination of two central figures of the Independent National Human Rights Commission (INHRC).
- According to the reports, the President withdrew the nomination of Cllr. Punchu Leonard Bernard and Cllr. Dempster Brown.
- The President’s withdrawal decision has been transmitted to the Senate with immediate effect.
- Reasons surrounding the President’s decisions remain unclear.
• However, it comes four days after six of the seven INHCR nominees faced a lengthy confirmation hearing at the Senate.

At Legislative Public Hearing, Parties Split Over Dual Citizenship Bill
[National Chronicle, The News]

• Opposing views have again emerged over a draft Act seeking to make dual citizenship legal in Liberia.
• The conflicting views followed the second Legislative public hearing on the bill by a group of stakeholders conducted by the Senate's Judiciary Committee.
• The stakeholders included Press Union of Liberia president Peter Quaqua, former Representative Phillip Tali and former Justice Minister Clarence Simpson.
• Others are Deputy Immigration Commissioner Robert Budy and Assistant Justice Minister for Economic Affairs Odella Cooper.
• Three of the five panellists, Mr. Quaqua, Cllr. Simpson and Ms. Cooper supported the dual citizenship bill while the remaining two objected its passage.

Agriculture Minister Lashes at Maryland Lawmaker
[Daily Observer, The Inquirer]

• The Agriculture Ministry has accused Maryland Representative Bhofal Chambers of creating chaos in Pleebo-Sodoken District.
• The allegation relates to what the Ministry refers to as misleading information being spread by Representative Chambers regarding the operation of SIFCA.
• SIFCA is the company which won the bid to operate the Decoris Oil Palm Plantation in Pleebo-Sodoken District, Maryland County.
• Agriculture Minister Florence Chenoweth said the company has not been able to operate due to continued interference by Representative Chambers.
• She said the lawmaker's action was breeding chaos in that part of Maryland and creating more hardships on the already struggling population.
• Representative Chambers had maintained that SIFCA was inadequate for the people of Pleebo-Sodokan and should vacate the plantation immediately.
• According to him, SIFCA has a total investment of US$5.5 million, far too small to provide basic social services to the people.
• But the Agriculture Minister said contrary to the claim, SIFCA has a total investment package of over US$64 million.

NEC Certificates New UP

• The National Elections Commission (NEC) has officially certificated the newly merged Unity Party as a full fledged political institution in Liberia.
• The merger means the three political parties have lost their individual institutional identities to form one political party.
• NEC chairman James Fromayan said the commission welcomes the merger decision by the parties.
• He said the decision fulfills the requirement of the voting population to reduce the number of existing political parties in the country.

ADB Delegation in Town
[Daily Observer, The News]

• A six-man delegation from the African Development Bank (ADB) has arrived in the country on a four-day official visit.
• The delegation is headed by the vice president of the ADB, Dr. Kamal El Kheshen.
• Dr. El Kheshen said the delegation is in the country to sign a grant agreement and hold consultations with government regarding its assistance to post-war Liberia.
• He did not give detail on the grant agreement, but expressed satisfaction over the level of recovery taking place in the country.
• Dr. Kheshen said the ADB delegation will also identify possible areas of assistance for Liberia.

“Set Aside Special Fund for Former Leaders’ Welfare”, Says Ex-Government Minister
[The News]

- Former Finance Minister Wilson Tarpeh has called on government to set aside a special fund for the welfare of former Liberian Heads of State.
- He said the process was necessary in order to put an end to the age-old abandonment of former Liberian leaders who he said have contributed greatly to the country and its people.
- Mr. Tarpeh wants government give special attention to the former head of the National Transitional Government of Liberia, Mrs. Ruth Sando Perry and former president Moses Blah who have both complained of neglect by government.
- The University of Liberia professor has also called on government to muster the financial will to bring home the remains of the late David Kpomakpor, former transitional government head from the US for a befitting burial.

**Bokay Town - Grand Bassa Highway Nearing Completion**

[The Inquirer]

- Rehabilitation work on the Cotton Tree - Bokay Town road on the Margibi-Grand Bassa highway is nearing completion.
- The 15 kilometres road is being rehabilitated by CHICO a Chinese road construction company.
- Reports say the asphalt road is about three meters thick with two stone-covered drainages.
- CHICO has also replaced the Bokay Town Bailey Bridge with a modern concrete bridge.
- Public Works Minister Samuel Kofi Woods said government will reconstruct an additional 10 kilometres of the road leading to Buchanan.
- Minister Woods believes the reconstruction of the Monrovia-Buchanan highway will increase economic ventures in the south eastern part of Liberia.
- Grand Bassa County Superintendent Julia Duncan Cassell described the road as the beginning of a new dawn for Grand Bassa.

**Two Amputated Human Legs, Intestines Discover in West Point**

[News Vision]

- Two amputated human legs and what appeared to be intestines were on Wednesday morning discovered on the West Point beach in Monrovia.
- The legs along with the intestines were found lying near an old tarpaulin-like material.
- Earlier, it was reported that a Ghanaian fisherman lost at sea when a steamboat that was carrying him and other Ghanaian fishermen capsized due to turbulent sea wave.
- Moments after a man identified as Martin Togba also went missing when he along with others went for scattered fishes from the capsized Ghanaian canoe.
- Meanwhile, police said they have launched an investigation into the two men’s death and the discovery of the human parts on the West Point beach.

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

**President Sirleaf Withdraws Two INHRC’s Nominees**

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

**At Legislative Public Hearing, Parties Split Over Dual Citizenship Bill**

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

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

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**ADB Delegation in Town**

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

**Bokay Town - Grand Bassa Highway Nearing Completion**

**Gbarpolu Lawmaker Apportions Blame for WAEC Failures**

- A Gbarpolu lawmaker says the Education Ministry and the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) should be partially blamed for the mass failure in the 2010 exams.
Senator Theodore Momo believes the students were not adequately prepared for the exams.

He also recalled difficulties in getting test materials to various districts in Gbarpolu and other counties, an act he claims contributed to the mass failure.

Senator Momo said the mass failure means the Education Ministry failed as the exams serve as an assessment of the nation’s education system.

The Gbarpolu Senator wants an investigation to identify the actual cause of the mass failure to avoid a recurrence.

Over 8,000 of the 22,000 plus 12 grader s who sat the WAEC exams failed.

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

Gbarpolu Citizens Want Superintendent Larmie Replaced

- Citizens of Gbapolu County are mounting pressure on President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf for the replacement of their Superintendent, Gertrude Larmie.
- The citizens alleged that superintendent Larmie has failed to transform their county despite the provision of the county development fund.
- A spokesman of the citizens, Buster Cooper further alleged that the county lacks development including bridges to link major communities and towns.
- He alleged that concession companies are damaging the main road leading to the county with heavy duty equipment.
- Meanwhile, superintendent Larmie has termed the citizens’ allegation as an attempt to damage her hard earned reputation.

“Set Aside Special Fund for Former Leaders' Welfare”, Says Ex-Government Minister

YAI, Partners Begin Training of Over 150 Teachers

- Youth Action International (YAI) in collaboration with other partners from the US has begun training over 150 teachers from both public and private institutions in the country.
- A release says the training is focused on the development of early childhood reading and writing.
- The group said development of early childhood reading and writing is crucial because it is the basis for further academic endeavors.
- The group said it will also provide special skills to over 50 Liberian women.

International Clip on Liberia

EU and FAO back plan to revive areas with high agricultural potential www.fao.org

The fertile lowlands that cover one-fifth of Liberia are part of a European Union and FAO-supported plan to cut the nation's dependence on rice imports and improve the livelihood of vulnerable farmer families. The Liberian government has prioritized the rehabilitation of swamps, especially those with damaged or abandoned rice fields, noting that lowland farms have the potential to yield up to 80-90 percent more rice than upland ones. "In using more of our lowlands, not only will we get higher yields, we will also minimize deforestation and soil erosion," said J. Qwelibo Subah, Director-General of Liberia’s Central Agricultural Research Institute, underlining the environmental benefit of his government's plan. "In the swamps, you can grow two, three crops of rice per year, compared to just one per year on upland slopes," said Sheku Kamara, FAO Agricultural Engineer. "With upland rice, instead, you have to move to another area after each harvest. Then you slash and burn to clear brush and trees. Then you move to another area, and you repeat that," Kamara explained. Kamara has provided technical support for a 2 000-hectare swamp and irrigation rehabilitation project funded by the European Union Food Facility (EUFF), the EU's massive response to high food prices in developing countries.

International Clips on West Africa

Guinea

Guinea electoral commission rejects gov't involvement in run-off organization

Xinhua

Guinea's National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) has rejected the proposal by Prime Minister Jean Marie Dore that the government take part in organizing the second round of presidential elections, CENI's director of information Tierno Saidou Bayo said on Wednesday. Bayo termed this as an unnecessary distraction and
insisted that CENI would never allow any amendment to the electoral code. Bayo noted that the Territorial Administration Ministry together with CENI had agreed to correct all anomalies and imperfections that had been witnessed during the first round of voting in order to get a peaceful run-off. For sometime now, news has been spreading across the country indicating that the prime minister had the intention of proposing an amendment to the constitution to allow the government to be involved in the organization of the second round scheduled to be held on September 19. There is a general outcry against Dore's proposal for a government role in the preparation for the elections. This is the first time for an independent body to organize an election in Guinea. The legal provision No. 015 of 4 January 2009 and the new constitution authorize CENI to organize Guinea's presidential elections.

Heavy rain kills 2 in Guinea

Two people were killed and six injured after heavy rain caused their house in the Guinean capital Conakry to collapse, a family member said on Thursday. The house collapsed on Wednesday evening in the Demoudoula district of the Guinean capital while some of the family were asleep, the family member said, asking not to be named. "We saw the walls crack and crumble with unimaginable speed like sand in water," the family member said, adding that one of the victims drowned. Deaths and disappearances are frequent in Guinea during the rainy season, particularly in Conakry, with three people drowning there in late July.

Body of junta leader's son repatriated to Guinea

The body of the son of Guinea's strongman has arrived at the country's international airport, a day after it was taken to neighboring Burkina Faso to allow his father to pray over the casket. Moriba Dadis Camara was found at the bottom of a swimming pool in Montreal, Canada. The 25-year-old was studying in the city. Camara is the son of Capt. Moussa ‘Dadis’ Camara, the head of the junta that ruled Guinea for most of 2009 and who is in exile in Burkina Faso. Soldiers under Camara's control are accused of slaughtering hundreds of protesters that had gathered at the football stadium last Sept. 28 to demand an end to military rule. On a popular news site, angry readers wrote that the son's death is justice for the crimes committed by the father's junta.

Ivory Coast

Ivory Coast final voter list to be posted Oct 10-12

Ivory Coast's electoral commission said on Wednesday it will post a final voter list between October 10 -12 when it unveiled its timetable for an October 31 poll which Ivorians hope will end years of instability. Elections have been halted repeatedly since 2005. Six election dates have been missed due to rows over voter identity and rebel disarmament after a 2002-3 war divided the West African nation in two, leaving the north in rebel hands. But so many polls have been missed that Ivorians doubt whether this one will go ahead. "We have a date fixed for Oct. 31, 2010. We have a timetable and we must stick to it," electoral commission spokesman Bamba Yacouba told a news conference. Disagreements over who is eligible to vote scuppered the last election. President Laurent Gbagbo's nationalist supporters suspected many were foreigners from Burkina Faso and Mali. The court process of dealing with challenges to voter registrations is scheduled to end on Thursday.

Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone replaces police, army chiefs

Sierra Leone's president has replaced the head of his military and police forces ahead of a widely expected government reshuffle. No reasons were given for the changes at the head of the West African state's security forces, but President Ernest Bai Koroma, who came to power in 2007, has previously said he would assess his team after three years in charge. Major General Alfred Claude Nelson Williams will be replaced by his former deputy, Major General Robert Yirra Koroma, a statement from the president's office issued on Tuesday said. Williams had served as armed forces chief for two years, having previously been cleared of accusations he worked with the AFRC rebels during the country's 1991-2002 civil war that killed more than 50,000 people and was depicted in the 2006 film "Blood Diamond". Inspector General of Police Brima Archa Kamara was sacked earlier in the week and replaced by Francis Munu. A Freetown-based diplomat said the changes could be part of a broader reshuffle of Koroma's cabinet, which is expected next month to coincide with the third anniversary of Koroma's presidency.

Sierra Leone H1 diamond exports jump 43 pct
Sierra Leone exported $51.4 million worth of diamonds in the first six months of 2010, up 43 percent on the first half of last year, according to a government document seen by Reuters on Wednesday. A global rebound in diamond prices, augmented by government measures to encourage production, accounts for the increase in value, said Deputy Minister of Mineral Resources Ignosis Koroma. The West African country shipped stones valued at $35.9 million in the first six months of 2009, ending the year at exports worth $78 million. Overall diamond prices are up 8 percent on this time last year, according to independent news provider Polished Prices, after slumping in 2009 when demand for luxury goods fell as a result of the global recession. "In some cases exporters refused to export as the world diamond market dropped tremendously, but now the market has started building up the government has realised an increase in the export (value)," Koroma said.

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Spain Extradites Serbian War Crimes Suspect To Bosnia

(RTTNews) - Thursday, Spain extradited to Bosnia an alleged Serbian war criminal suspected committing war crimes and crimes against humanity while commanding Serb forces during the civil war in Bosnia between 1992 and 1995.

The extradition of Veselin Vlahovic, 41, to Bosnia was overseen by both Spanish and Bosnian police amidst tight security, according to a Spanish interior ministry statement.

Vlahovic was arrested by Spanish authorities near his home in the southeastern tourist resort of Altea in the province of Alicante March 2. His arrest was the result of an ongoing investigation into a wave of armed robberies in Spain. He was reportedly carrying forged Bulgarian identity documents when detained.

The Spanish authorities initially intended to try Vlahovic in Spain on a wide range of charges, including armed robbery, assault with a firearm and burglary. But they later decided to extradite him to Bosnia, although he was also wanted in Montenegro and Serbia on charges ranging from armed robbery to war crimes.

Vlahovic is widely known as "Monster of Grbavica", in reference to a suburb of Sarajevo where he allegedly murdered, raped and or tortured civilians during the 1992-95 civil war in Bosnia. Prosecutors in Bosnia have indicted him in more than 50 cases of alleged war crimes.

Vlahovic, who is also known as "Batko," was jailed for three years in Montenegro in 1998 for armed robbery. One international arrest warrant was issued after he escaped from the Podgorica prison in June 2001.

He is also wanted in Serbia, where he shot and killed a man shortly after his escape from the prison in Montenegro in 2001. One Serbian court sentenced him in absentia to 15 years in jail for that crime, accounting for the third international arrest warrant.

Vlahovic's extradition came amidst the ongoing war crimes trial of former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in the Hague, Netherlands.

Karadzic faces 11 war crimes, including genocide, crimes against humanity and violation of Geneva Conventions during the 1992-95 war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, including the 1995 killing of some 8,000 Muslim boys and men in the eastern town of Srebrenica.

Karadzic was arrested in July 2008 in Belgrade, ending a 13-year-long run from the law after the International Criminal Court indicted him on charges of war crimes in 1996. Karadzic, who faces the maximum sentence of imprisonment for life, has refuted the charges. The case against him is based on evidence and statements provided by survivors of the 1992-95 conflict, and the trial is expected to run until 2012.

by RTT Staff Writer

For comments and feedback: contact editorial@rttnews.com