Enclosed are clippings of local and international press on the Special Court and related issues obtained by the Outreach and Public Affairs Office as at:

Tuesday, 24 April 2012

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taylor, Guilty or Not Guilty / The Exclusive</td>
<td></td>
<td>3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Taylor Trial: Judgment Day for the Master Manipulator / The Exclusive</td>
<td></td>
<td>5-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48 Hours to Charles Taylor’s Judgment / The Satellite</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahead of the Taylor Verdict…/ CARL</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloud hangs over Taylor’s Verdict / Sierra Express</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### International News

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Judges Poised to Deliver Verdicts in Taylor Trial / Associated Press</td>
<td></td>
<td>13-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia's Taylor Awaits 'Blood Diamond' Verdict / Agence France-Presse</td>
<td></td>
<td>15-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone's Gruesome 10-year Civil War / Agence France-Presse</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verdict Imminent for Charles Taylor / Diamond News</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verdict Due in Charles Taylor’s War Crimes Trial / Zimbabwe Independent</td>
<td></td>
<td>19-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Taylor trial: Judgment Day for the Master Manipulator / The Telegraph</td>
<td></td>
<td>21-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heads of State Pursued by International Courts / Expatica.com</td>
<td></td>
<td>25-26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judges to Deliver Verdict in Charles Taylor War Crimes Trial / Rapaport News</td>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verdict in Charles Taylor Trial to Be Delivered this Week / Diamond Intelligence</td>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone on Edge as War Crimes Verdict Nears / Calgary Herald</td>
<td></td>
<td>29-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCSL Debate at the UK House of Lords / UK House of Lords</td>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia, S/Leone To Conduct Survey on ICC / The New Dawn</td>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Proposed Criminal Law Regime for Africa / AFLA Reporter</td>
<td></td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Taylor, Guilty or Not Guilty

Begging outside a supermarket in Sierra Leone’s capital Freetown, Tammba Ngaujah has little doubt who was behind the Revolutionary United Front rebels who, 20 years ago, gave him ‘short sleeves’. “They put my arms on the sticks, took machetes, and cut them... The only thing I can tell you about Charles Taylor: I heard from the RUF who amputated my hands that they were supported by Charles Taylor,” 46-year-old Ngaujah said. On Thursday, the Special Court in The Hague will give its verdict on just what level of responsibility former Liberian President Taylor had in these war atrocities. Taylor himself denies any responsibility. In an 11-year conflict which by 2002 left over 50 000 dead and become a byword for gratuitous violence, “short sleeves” was the macabre tag used to distinguish amputations like Ngaujah’s at the elbow from less drastic “long sleeve” cuts at the wrist. Prosecutors alleged Taylor, from his base in neighbouring Liberia, directed and armed the Sierra Leonean rebels and bears responsibility on 11 counts including murder, mutilation, rape, enslavement, and recruitment of child soldiers.

Whether Taylor is found guilty or not, the verdict will be the first in a court of this kind against a former head of state on serious violations of international law. Yugoslav ex-leader Slobodan Milosevic died in 2006 before the judgment was due in the Yugoslavia war crimes tribunal, also in The Hague. In 2009, Sudan’s President Omar Hassan al-Bashir became the first sitting head of state to be indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC), which has ordered his arrest on charges of crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide related to the conflict in Darfur. Bashir rejects the charges. “The Sierra Leone conflict was brutal, and Charles Taylor was seen as a ‘Big Man’ in the region,” said Elise Keppler, senior counsel at Human Rights Watch of the slowly dwindling club of those ruling with impunity in Africa. “Regardless of the verdict, this will send a clear signal that people implicated in the worst crimes will face justice no matter how important or powerful they are,” she said.

Since Taylor’s indictment in 2003, the Special Court for Sierra Leone - a so-called “hybrid” court staffed by both international and Sierra Leonian personnel - has produced testimony ranging from the horrific to the titillating. As prosecutors sought to link Taylor to the locally-mined “blood diamonds” which helped fuel the war, the court heard the bafflement of supermodel Naomi Campbell at the uncut diamonds - or “dirty little pebbles” in her words - delivered during the night to her hotel room after a 1997 charity dinner with Taylor.

It also featured victims of amputation who displayed remains of mutilated limbs, and graphic accounts of massacres, torture and cannibalism as the prosecution called 91 witnesses whose accounts are included in almost 50 000 pages of transcripts. Typical is the description by one such witness of the mutilation and execution of his brother by rebels. “They cut off all his 10 fingers,” Patrick Sheriff said. “They put them on a cup, then they shot him.” Another witness described fighters betting on the sex of a pregnant woman’s child. According to the prosecution: “The rebels shot the woman dead, opened her belly, took out the baby... The baby cried and then died.” For prosecutors, the challenge is to show a link between Taylor and such crimes. Much depends on the evidence of seven radio operators who allegedly kept him in touch with rebel groups. Taylor does not deny atrocities, but does deny any role. “We did hear of certain actions that were going on in Sierra Leone that... were a little strange to us, because these things were not happening in Liberia,” he said at the trial. Former Special Court of Sierra Leone lawyer Saretta Ashraph argued that even if a link between Taylor and RUF rebels is demonstrated, it would be harder to show he had a clear planning or command role in the late-1990s period covered by the court. “It difficult to see the motivation for putting himself in charge...
of the RUF,” said Ashraph, who is writing a history of the Sierra Leone war. “He was already president of Liberia, was making money off them and would have realized the best the RUF were going to do is force the government into a stalemate.”

Rebels and government signed a 1999 peace deal but fighting continued for nearly three years until the RUF was defeated with military help from ex-colonial power Britain and UN forces. While Taylor, 64, was deemed enough of a menace to West Africa’s stability that his trial was moved to The Hague after his March 2006 arrest during exile in Nigeria, his present-day influence is harder to define. The region is still plagued by mercenaries like those who created havoc two decades ago. But militant Islamists such as Nigeria’s Boko Haram or al-Qaeda agents in the Sahel zone are now the bigger threat, alongside the growing narcotics trade.

Nonetheless, acquittal for Taylor would be an uncomfortable prospect for Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf who became his arch-enemy after withdrawing support for him early in the Liberian civil war of the 1990s that brought him to power. “I never speak about Charles Taylor,” Johnson-Sirleaf said during her successful re-election campaign last year. Yet while he is abhorred by many of Liberians, Taylor remains a local hero and symbol of national pride for some. “The best president I have seen in my time is Charles Ghankay Taylor. He is better than Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf,” 40-year-old farmer Kahrn Dayplay said. “Taylor must come back here to rule this nation. We are waiting for him,” said the resident of Kamplay, one of the Nimba County towns from which Taylor launched his 1989 rebellion to unseat the then President Samuel Doe. A man used to giving orders, Taylor has wanted to be closely involved in shaping his defence, taking the witness stand for seven months with confident, forthright performances.

As he awaits the verdict, he has immersed himself in study of the Jewish faith to which he converted before arriving in The Hague. He has regular visits from a rabbi and does not receive his lawyers on the Sabbath.

His library - now put in storage - had occupied an entire room at the seaside detention facilities used by the tribunal and the International Criminal Court, where he is said to maintain cordial relations with old enemy Laurent Gbagbo, the former Ivory Coast leader transferred there last year to face charges of crimes against humanity. His defence team reports that he is reading “Strategic Vision,” the latest book by former US National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, and that Taylor followed last year’s upheavals in North Africa with avid interest. He has benefited from the company of other African detainees including Congolese warlord Thomas Lubanga Dyilo to go through legal briefs and cook home favourites together - one domestic option he may lack in the British maximum security prison due to house him if found guilty. While some Africans see the long list of countrymen due to be tried in The Hague as evidence of bias in the international legal system, others see the Taylor verdict as one step towards breaking down the impunity many of its biggest criminals enjoy.

Liberia itself has made little progress in prosecuting those responsible for crimes in its war, while abuses committed by northern rebels who backed Ivorian President Alassane Ouattara in last year’s conflict have yet to be fully investigated. “This is part of a global process of increasing accountability for the worst crimes,” said HRW’s Keppeler.

“In the world of justice versus impunity, justice is still young.”
The Exclusive
Tuesday, April 24, 2012

Charles Taylor Trial: Judgment Day for the Master Manipulator

The historic trial of Charles Taylor reaches a climax at The Hague this week, writes Harriet Alexander. In a modern court building, more than 3,000 miles from the tropical West African country of Sierra Leone, three judges have for more than 12 months been painstakingly weighing up five years of court proceedings, 50,000 pages of transcripts, and the testimony of almost 120 witnesses. But for one man there is no such agonising.

Unisa Dizo-Conteh is in no doubt as to what should happen to Charles Taylor, the former president of Liberia, who is accused of fuelling a hideous civil war in neighbouring Sierra Leone. “The right place for him is hell,” said Mr Dizo-Conteh, who, as a teenager, was standing beside his brother, cousin and aunt when they were killed by a bomb at their home in the capital, Freetown. Now aged 29 and living in exile in Britain, he holds Mr Taylor personally responsible for his loss.

“Even the worst place in Sierra Leone is too good for him,” he said, still rigid with anger over his family’s deaths 13 years ago. “The damage he did will last for generations.” On Thursday the three judges presiding over the Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague will deliver their long-awaited verdict. Mr Taylor, 64, is charged with 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including rape, terrorism, murder and using child soldiers. He denies all charges, calling them “diabolical lies”. Although he never set foot in Sierra Leone during the 1991-2002 civil war, which killed over 50,000 people, he is accused of providing the rebel factions with arms and cash in return for access to the country’s diamond fields.

He will become the first ever head of state to have been indicted, tried
Speaking to The Sunday Telegraph from his home in Freetown, the 73-year-old lawyer said he was proud of the part he had played. "If he is convicted, as we hope, there will be huge jubilation," he said. "The war which he sponsored caused huge havoc in this country. We will feel justice has been done." Mr Taylor had been an influential and magnetic figure for many decades. Born to a powerful family of American Liberians - descended from freed

"The war which he sponsored caused huge havoc in this country. We will feel justice has been done." Mr Taylor had been an influential and magnetic figure for many decades. 

send in troops, bringing about a rapid end to the war, is widely seen as a high point in his interventionist foreign policy. His government agreed to house Charles Taylor if he is convicted - making it likely that the former president will end his days in a British high-security prison. And there is certainly the sense that Thursday's verdict will close a painful chapter in Sierra Leonean history. "We have been through so much trauma that the chance to bring someone to justice is something we are all looking forward to," said Solomon Berwa, minister of justice at the time of Mr Taylor's detention who sought the UN's assistance with trying him outside the country.

Mr Taylor worked in government procurement under a previous president, Samuel Doe, before fleeing to America where he was eventually imprisoned for fraud. Later he made his way to Libya, where under the tutelage of Colonel Gaddafi he trained in guerrilla warfare and learnt how to launch a civil war. In 1989 he returned to overthrow the Doe regime, launching the country into bloody convulsions that killed 200,000 people, and becoming one of Africa's most notorious warlords.

He was known as "Pappy" by a generation of drugged child soldiers, who were led by self-appointed generals with names like Peanut Butter, Bad Boy and Butt Naked.

Following a peace deal that ended the war, he was elected president in 1997, terrorising the people into voting him with the unofficial slogan: "You killed my ma, you killed my pa, but I will vote for you." A Ghanaian journalist who interviewed Mr Taylor at the time and mentioned the macabre chants recalled him asking: "Have you heard them? They mean it, you know, and they love me." He relished the role of president. A natural showman, he was equally at home brandishing an AK47, sporting dazzling African tribal dreads or in a sharply-cut three piece suit.

When he faced accusations from the UN that he was a gun runner and diamond smuggler, he addressed a mass prayer meeting clad head to toe in flowing, Biblical white robes. In 1997, he attended a now-infamous dinner party in South Africa, hosted by Nelson Mandela. Among the guests were Naomi Campbell. "When I was sleeping, I had a knock on my door, I opened and two men gave me a pouch and said: 'A gift for you,'" Miss Campbell told the court in August 2010, when she was reluctantly summoned to testify by the prosecution. "The next morning, I opened the pouch... I saw a few stones in there, and they were very small, dirty-looking stones."

The prosecution claim that the "small dirty stones" were blood diamonds - gems extracted from the ground and given to Mr Taylor by Sierra Leonean rebels in exchange for funding and arms. "He was a very charismatic man - one that..."
could turn black into white,” said Emmanuel Tommy, who worked at the
time for the Red Cross in southern Sierra Leone, on the border with Liberia.
“He is so dangerous because he could lead good people into trouble. From
the outset of the war we knew he was behind it - some of the displaced
people even said they were attacked by fighters speaking Liberian dia-
lects.”

Married three times, his former wife Jewel - a feisty woman with a pen-
chant for bright clothes and plain speaking - divorced him when he left
Liberia. She is now a senator in the country. Mr Taylor remarried and his
new wife Victoria, who moved with him to The Netherlands, bore him a
daughter in February 2010. He is thought to have more than 15 children in
total. Mr Kounjian, the prosecution lawyer, added: “Many were naive about
what Taylor was capable of, but I think in the end, Taylor was a victim of his
own arrogance. He overestimated what he could get away with when he sent
proxies to invade Guinea and Ivory Coast, destabilising the entire region.”

Mr Taylor’s lawyer, Courtenay Griffiths QC, disagrees. He maintains that
the trial is politically motivated, and that there is little to prove that Mr Taylor
ordered or even knew what his allies were doing. “The essence of the
case against Taylor is that he funded and supported a rebel group in a
neighbouring country,” he said. “The US and other countries have been
doing that for years. The Contras’ committed atrocities in Nicaragua and
everybody knows they were supported by the CIA. Yet Taylor is being
prosecuted for his foreign policy. And I think that sets a very unwelcome
precedent for weaker countries around the world.” As part of the agree-
ment with the UN, the Special Court in The Hague has relayed events back
to Sierra Leone via radio, print and online. But many point out that, for all
the well-meaning efforts to document and explain the trial, so few people in
Sierra Leone have access to internet that it makes little difference.

While there have been improvements since the end of the civil war, most
citizens still face a daily struggle for survival: average life expectancy is
just 47 years, and the per capita GDP is $300 a year. Only a handful of
countries can be considered more impoverished. Ade Daramy, president of
the Sierra Leonean Diaspora Association, said the country’s major towns
were having their roads rehabilitated - often by Chinese construction work-
ers. “That’s very visible,” he said. “But there’s a long way to go.” For a lot
of Sierra Leoneans, the fact that none of the money for this trial has come
from our coffers means that we can concentrate on the important things:
improving our hospitals, education, water supply, electricity, roads. “There
is a Sierra Leonian mindset that says if only the world out there would
open its eyes, it would see what there is. There is so much potential - not
diamonds and more, but iron ore, and human capital.

“We wouldn’t need aid. We just need assistance to build and develop
our own industries.” And as Sierra Leone prepares for Thursday’s verdict,
the psychological impact of the conflict is yet again coming into focus.
“What many cannot comprehend is how fragile this region remains,” said
Mr Kounjian. “There are a lot of these ex fighters with little or no employ-
ment opportunities, who must surely miss the days when they could do
anything. “The forced recruitment of young boys and especially girls into
rebel armies has left scars that will take generations to heal. These child
soldiers who killed or amputated were simply victims of sexual slavery for
the rebel armies are now often ostracized or disowned from their communi-
ties and even their own families. “These girls who were ‘rebel wives’ and
their children are now cut off from the traditional support networks of ex-
tended family, village and tribe. Many have turned to prostitution to survive.
So the damage from these wars will continue to cast a shadow on these
societies for generations.” Unisa Dizo-Conteh, remembering the three
family members he lost in the conflict, is steeling himself for the painful
memories Thursday’s verdict will bring back. His brother Morlai would have
been 31 now, perhaps having fulfilled his dream of becoming a lawyer. Mr
Dizo-Conteh has named his seven-year-old son after him. “In my dreams,
we are playing together in the yard of our house,” he said. “We were so
close - we had a secret language and could talk to each other without
adults knowing. “Sometimes in the mornings I wake up and I think he is
alive. It still hurts so much. “We need some form of justice to get on with
our lives.”
Charles Taylor is widely seen as the most powerful figure behind a series of civil conflicts in Liberia and its eastern neighbour Sierra Leone, between 1989 and 2003, which left some 400,000 people dead.

Charles Taylor, the former Liberian president, was one of Africa’s most feared warlords who once compared himself to Jesus. The 62-year-old has been charged with a gruesome list of acts allegedly ordered during Sierra Leone’s 1991-2001 civil war, one of the most brutal in modern history. Testifying at the UN-backed Special Tribunal for Sierra Leone in July 2009, he called the 11 charges of murder, rape, conscripting child soldiers, enslavement and pillaging against him "lies". "This whole case is a case of deceit, deception, lies," Taylor said. "I am not guilty of all of these charges, not even a minute part of the charges." The trial tops a life marked by deep involvement in conflicts that blighted several African countries, driven according to prosecutor Brenda Hollis by Taylor’s "greed and lust for power".

He is widely seen as the most powerful figure behind a series of civil conflicts in Liberia and its eastern neighbour Sierra Leone, between 1989 and 2003, which left some 400,000 people dead. It was not enough, if the accusations are true, for Taylor to plunder his own west African state of Liberia, encourage rebellion in neighbouring Ivory Coast and make Guinea anxious about its own potential for revolution.
According to prosecutor, the "intelligent, charismatic manipulator" also chose to arm and train the notorious Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone. He is accused of doing so in exchange for "blood diamonds", fuelling a 10-year conflict that left scores of thousands dead and thousands more with missing limb.

Taylor finally yielded to international pressure and stepped down in 2003 from the presidency he claimed in 1997 after a rebellion, then went into exile in Nigeria. A thrice-married lay preacher with an economics degree from Bentley College in the US state of Massachusetts, Taylor rose to power on the backs of thousands who died during the rebellion he launched in 1989 against Liberia's military ruler Samuel Doe. After graduation from college in 1977, Taylor joined the Liberian civil service under Doe, who himself seized power in 1980 and opted for an authoritarian regime.

Taylor was sacked in 1983 for embezzling nearly one million dollars in government funds and skipped the country, returning to the United States where he was jailed on an extradition warrant. He escaped 16 months later and disappeared, surfacing in December 1989 at the head of a rebellion backed by Libya and reportedly by Burkina Faso.

His National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) earned a reputation for extreme violence and was among the first to force children, some as young as 10, to carry guns. Seven years of war wearied the Liberian people, who in 1997 elected Taylor president, but his rise to power brought little relief to the country of 3.3 million. In an interview with the BBC, he once said: "Jesus Christ was accused of being a murderer in his time."

Two years later, a second rebellion took place, this time against Taylor. Fighting ended when Taylor fled to Nigeria in 2003. He remained out of reach there until Nigeria in March 2006 bowed to international calls to extradite him.
Judgement in the trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor will be delivered at 11:00 a.m. Hague time (9:00 a.m. GMT) on Thursday, 26 April 2012.

Thursday's judgement will be delivered by Trial Chamber II, consisting of Justice Richard Lussick of Samoa (presiding), Justice Teresa Doherty of Northern Ireland, Justice Julia Sebutinde of Uganda, and Alternate Judge Justice El Hadji Malick Sow of Senegal. Prior to the Taylor trial, Trial Chamber II sat on the trial of three former leaders of Sierra Leone's Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC).

Charles Taylor is charged with 11 counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious-violations of international humanitarian law. He has pleaded not guilty to all of the charges. Mr. Taylor is the first head of state to face judgement before an international tribunal.

Although the judgement will be delivered in The Hague, the proceedings will be streamed live to the Special Court compound in Freetown, where local and international journalists, diplomats, members of government and the judiciary, victims, civil society members, and members of the public are expected to watch the proceedings. Throughout the country Outreach field officers will hold meetings with local communities at crimes scenes and the sites of mass graves, and will play the proceedings by radio.
Press release

Contact: Ibrahim Tommy, Executive Director, CARL
076 365 499
April 24, 2012

Ahead of the Taylor Verdict: CARL Urges the Sierra Leone Government to Advance Accountability for Grave Social and Politically-Motivated Crimes.

Freetown, Sierra Leone - The Centre for Accountability and Rule of Law (CARL) today said the Sierra Leone Government must reflect on the lessons of the Taylor trial and step up efforts at fostering accountability for serious social and politically-motivated crimes in Sierra Leone, two days before the verdict in the Taylor trial is scheduled to come down.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone indicted Taylor nearly ten years ago on 11 counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international law for his role in supporting rebel groups during Sierra Leone’s armed conflict. The Taylor trial – and the verdict – would help bring closure to the most brutal chapter in the country’s history. Beyond the trial, the people of Sierra Leone, including the most affected victims of the conflict, will need to get on with their lives. They will continue to depend on the government to protect their rights as well as provide an enabling environment for them to achieve their individual and collective aspirations.

“Regardless of the outcome of the trial, the indictment, arrest and trial of Charles Taylor have clearly shown that the law is truly powerful,” Ibrahim Tommy, Executive Director of CARL said today, adding that “Justice for crimes of international nature can only make an enduring impact on the lives of victims when such efforts are reinforced by truly independent and well-functioning national institutions of justice.”

When the Government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations agreed to establish the Special Court to ‘try those who bear the greatest responsibility’ for the egregious crimes that took place during the country’s civil conflict, they did so as part of efforts to combat impunity and deliver justice to the victims of the conflict. The Special Court proceedings have certainly helped to send a clear message about the international community’s resolve to combat impunity for war crimes and crimes against humanity. This message needs to be reinforced at the national level by a government that is truly committed to combating impunity for crimes of all nature. A truly independent judicial system is also critical to such efforts. At the moment, serious gaps exist. Some of the challenges that confront the national justice system include inordinate delays in trials, unequal access to justice, lack of effective witness protection mechanisms particularly victims of sexual offences, paucity of trained police prosecutors, and a judicial system that is still struggling to regain public confidence.

“The Government of Sierra Leone must remain committed to its constitutional obligation to uphold the rule of law and deliver justice to all, regardless of their social or political connections. A government that is truly dedicated to enforcing accountability for economic, social and politically-motivated crimes represents the best hope for Sierra Leoneans,” said Joseph Sesay, CARL’s Senior Court Monitor who followed the Taylor trial since its commencement.

The trial of Charles Taylor – which was moved to The Hague for ‘security reasons’ – lasted for five years. The judges spent more than 12 months reviewing 50,000 pages of transcripts, and the testimony of almost 120 witnesses. If convicted, Mr. Taylor will serve his sentence in a British high security prison.

- The end -
Cloud hangs over Taylor’s verdict

By: Abu Bakarr S Tarawally

Thursday April 26th is the date the Special Court for Sierra Leone has set aside to deliver judgment on Charles Gangay Taylor, the former Liberian war lord.

The ex-Liberian president was standing trial at the Special Court for Sierra Leone for the heinous war crimes where he allegedly caused a great number of innocent people to suffer.

His legal Counsel Courtney Griffiths played a lead role in reducing his first indictment charges from 26 to 11 and spearheaded a vigorous defense throughout the trial scenes. Ahead of Thursday’s ruling, apprehensions are mounted as Sierra Express Media closely monitors the situation here in Sierra Leone.

The masses are still having reflections in mind regarding what the eleven years war bequeathed them as a legacy. A divided spirit is judging the outcome of Taylor’s trial.

On one hand those with shades of opinion that the past is history are agitating that the sleeping dogs must be let lying in Taylor’s case, while on the other hand, bitter memories are lingering in the minds of those who suffered maiming, loss of parents and family, and public scars as a result of the war are praying that the fugitive should be made to rot in the jail of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

To give prominence to this all important ruling, the outreach team of the Special Court for Sierra Leone is screening the end of the trial scene live in Freetown to give make information accessible to local journalists and state officials on how it all went and the outcome.
Judges poised to deliver verdicts in Taylor trial

By MIKE CORDER Associated Press

LEIDSCHENDAM, Netherlands—Rebel fighters hacked off Jabati Mambu's right hand more than 13 years ago in Sierra Leone.

This week, Mambu says his wounds may finally be healed.

On Thursday, judges at an international war crimes court will pass judgment on warlord-turned-Liberian president Charles Taylor, who is accused of sponsoring rebels responsible for untold atrocities during Sierra Leone's brutal civil war in return for so-called blood diamonds.

The historic verdicts at the Special Court for Sierra Leone will mark the first time an international tribunal has reached judgment in the trial of a former head of state since judges in Nuremberg convicted Karl Doenitz, a naval officer who briefly led Germany after Adolf Hitler's suicide.

For Mambu, the Taylor verdicts promise closure 10 years since the end of Sierra Leone's civil war, which cost some 50,000 lives.

"The trial is very important to all victims because it will help to heal our wounds," he told The Associated Press in Freetown, the Sierra Leone capital where he lost his hand. He said the tribunal is a landmark in efforts to end impunity for leaders who sponsor rebellion.

While Taylor will be the first ex-president since Nuremberg to receive judgment in an international tribunal, meting out justice to national leaders is on the rise as international law has developed in the last 20 years from ad hoc United Nations tribunals to the permanent International Criminal Court.

Ex-Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic was tried for fomenting the Balkan wars of the 1990s, but he died before the case reached a conclusion. Prosecutors at the same court, the Yugoslav war crimes tribunal, are close to wrapping up their case against former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic, accused of masterminding atrocities including genocide during Bosnia's 1992-95 war.

At the International Criminal Court, former Ivory Coast President Laurent Gbagbo is in jail awaiting trial for crimes he allegedly committed while clinging to power in his country.

The same court has indicted Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir of genocide in Darfur and last year charged Libyan dictator Moammar Gadhafi with crimes against humanity as he resorted to murdering and persecuting civilians to put down protests against his regime.
"The Special Court's judgment in the Taylor trial will be a watershed moment regardless of the verdict," said Elise Keppler, international justice senior counsel at Human Rights Watch. "Those implicated in the gravest crimes, even at the highest echelons of power, are being held to account."

Prosecutors cast Taylor, 64, as a ruthless leader who as president of neighboring Liberia funneled weapons, ammunition and other equipment to Sierra Leone rebels in return for diamonds mined by slave laborers in Sierra Leone.

The rebels from the Revolutionary United Front and Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, groups notorious for hacking off limbs, noses and lips of their enemies. Most of their surviving leaders already have been convicted and imprisoned by the court.

In seven months on the witness stand testifying in his own defense, Taylor portrayed himself as a statesman and regional peacemaker.

Attempts to link Taylor to blood diamonds generated the trial's most publicized witness—supermodel Naomi Campbell, who testified she had been given diamonds at a party in South Africa, but did not directly link them to Taylor as prosecutors had hoped.

The verdict will end another chapter in the checkered life of Taylor who was born in Liberia, studied economics in the United States, escaped from a Massachusetts jail after being charged with embezzlement, formed a notorious Liberian rebel group and later was elected president in his homeland.

He was indicted in 2003 on charges including murder, terrorizing civilians, rape, sexual slavery, and recruiting and using child soldiers during the Sierra Leone war that ended in 2002. After initially living in exile in Nigeria, he was arrested in 2006 and flown to The Hague for trial. If convicted, he will serve his sentence in Britain.

Taylor was urbane and well-mannered throughout much of his time on trial in The Hague, dressing impeccably in tailored suits, though he occasionally showed flashes of anger under questioning from prosecutors.

The man who indicted Taylor, U.S. lawyer David Crane, believes prosecutors did enough to convict Taylor even though the former president left no paper trial to tie him to crimes.

"One doesn't indict a sitting head of state, who was probably the most powerful warlord in the region at the time, on probable cause," he said. "I'm sure justice will be done and he will be found guilty."

Taylor's British lawyer, Courtenay Griffiths, has repeatedly said the trial is politically motivated, aimed at keeping Taylor out of power in volatile West Africa.

He also dismissed prosecutors' evidence as "hearsay" that would not have been admissible in a British court.

Taylor, meanwhile, awaits the verdicts in his cell in a special international wing of a Dutch jail.

"As with any defendant facing a major verdict in a criminal trial, he is very anxious," Griffiths told The Associated Press in a telephone interview. "He is extremely anxious but at the same time he appreciates the political realities of his situation."
Liberia's Taylor awaits 'blood diamond' verdict

Liberian former leader Charles Taylor awaits a verdict Thursday on charges of arming Sierra Leone's rebels in return for "blood diamonds" in the 1990s.

A three-judge bench will read the historic decision -- the first verdict against a former head of state by an international court -- at 11:00 am (0900 GMT) at the Special Court for Sierra Leone in Leidschendam outside The Hague.

Taylor, 64, is accused of helping Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels wage a terror campaign during a civil war that claimed 120,000 lives between 1991 and 2001.

The trial, which saw model Naomi Campbell testify she had received diamonds from the flamboyant Taylor, wrapped up in March 2011.

Prosecutors alleged that the RUF paid Taylor with illegally mined so-called blood diamonds worth millions, stuffed into mayonnaise jars.

"He (Taylor) was really key in people's minds as to who was accountable for what happened," Elise Keppler, who monitored the trial for Human Rights Watch, told AFP this week.

She added: "He is a former head of state, the first to hear a judgment against himself: it is unprecedented, it is a historic moment."

During the trial, prosecutor Brenda Hollis told the court: "Charles Taylor created, armed, supported and controlled the RUF in a 10-year campaign of terror against the civil population of Sierra Leone."

As president of neighbouring Liberia, he acted as "chief, father and godfather to his proxy rebel forces in Sierra Leone," prosecutors added, saying the RUF was a "terrorist army created, supported and directed by Taylor."

The former warlord has pleaded not guilty, dismissing the allegations as "lies" and claiming to be the victim of a plot by "powerful countries."

The rebels, often high on drugs, murdered, raped and maimed their victims, notably amputating hands and arms with machetes.

SCSL spokesman Solomon Moriba told AFP that if Taylor is convicted his sentencing will take place four to six weeks later, but Moriba declined to say how many years behind bars he might face, saying only that the judges would decide "based on the severity of the crimes."
The court, set up jointly by the Sierra Leone government and the United Nations, has already convicted eight Sierra Leoneans of war crimes and jailed them for between 15 and 52 years after trials in the west African country's capital Freetown, Moriba noted.

During Taylor's three-and-a-half-year trial here, some 94 witnesses took the stand for the prosecution and 21 for the defence. Taylor himself testified for 81 hours.

British supermodel Naomi Campbell and actress Mia Farrow gave headline-grabbing evidence in August 2010 about a gift of "dirty" diamonds Taylor gave to Campbell at a charity dinner hosted by then South African president Nelson Mandela in 1997.

Judges heard gruesome testimony from victims of the Sierra Leone conflict, including a witness who said he pleaded with RUF rebels to cut off his remaining hand so they would spare his toddler son.

Others said Taylor's fighters strung human intestines across roads, removed foetuses from women's wombs and practised cannibalism, while children younger than 15 were enlisted to fight.

One witness said he was present when the Liberian leader ate human liver.

During his own testimony, which began in July 2009, Taylor called the trial a "sham" and denied allegations he ever ate human flesh.

He did however say he saw no problem with the fact that human skulls were being displayed at military checkpoints in Sierra Leone.

Nigerian authorities arrested Taylor in March 2006 when he tried to flee from exile in Nigeria after stepping down as Liberian president three years earlier in a negotiated end to a civil war in his own country.

He was transferred to the SCSL in Freetown, but in June 2006 a UN Security Council resolution cleared the way for him to be transferred to The Hague, saying his presence in west Africa was an "impediment to stability and a threat to the peace."
Sierra Leone's gruesome 10-year civil war

FREETOWN, April 24, 2012 (AFP) - The civil war in Sierra Leone from 1991 to 2001, unleashed by rebels from the notorious Revolutionary United Front (RUF), was one of the most atrocious in Africa's recent history, leaving 120,000 dead and thousands of civilians mutilated.

The judgment in the trial of former Liberian president Charles Taylor, accused by the United Nations of funding and supporting the rebels, is set to be handed down on Thursday in The Hague. The rebels have been accused of the worst violence, but all the parties to the conflict have been implicated.

The war was marked by atrocities by drug-fueled combatants and child soldiers against the civilian population and remains associated with gruesome images of adults and children who had their limbs hacked off.

The rebels gained notoriety for murders, systematic rapes, abductions, the amputations, from which most victims did not recover due to lack of health care, and the kidnapping of thousands of children who were then forced to fight among their ranks.

The civil war was an emanation of that in neighbouring Liberia started by Taylor on Christmas eve 1989. Taylor is accused by the UN of providing financial support, military training, personnel, ammunition and other support to the RUF in order to obtain access to the mineral wealth - especially diamonds - of Sierra Leone.

On Mar.23, 1991 the RUF, led by former army officer Foday Sankoh, crossed the border from Liberia and captured several villagers.

Hundreds of thousands of civilians fled their homes in terror as the rebels shot, looted and raped their way through the diamond rich southern and eastern parts of the country. The government accused Taylor, at the time the chief rebel of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), of being behind the attacks.

In 1993 the rebels withdrew to the far east and the south. In 1994 they launched lightning raids -- ambushes, looting and attacks on industrial and agricultural installations -- and started to abduct foreigners.

In January 1999 the RUF and its allies from a former military junta launched an assault on the capital Freetown, called 'Operation No Living Thing', which it occupied for more than three weeks at the cost of 6,000 lives.

Human Rights Watch said that the rebels systematically carried out all sorts of atrocities against civilians there.

“The practice of mutilation and in particular the amputation of hands, arms and legs was widespread. The rebels used axes, machetes and knives...”, it said.

In January 2002, the end of the war was officially declared. The government and the UN signed an agreement to set up a special tribunal to try perpetrators of atrocities against civilians, which included, according to Human Rights Watch, “some of the worst violations of human rights in the world”.

Since 2004 the Special Court for Sierra Leone has tried individuals from the three different factions from the war: the pro-government militia, the paramilitary Civil Defense Forces (CDF), and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) made up of members of the former military junta and the RUF.
Verdict Imminent for Charles Taylor

The first verdict by an international court to a former head of state will be handed down this week in the Hague when three presiding judges will determine whether Charles Taylor, former leader of Liberia, is guilty of arming the rebels of Sierra Leone in exchange for conflict diamonds, according to South African News24.

Taylor is said to have provided military weaponry to Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front group, during the country's civil war, which lasted for the final decade of the twentieth century, costing the lives of approximately 120,000 people. The West African country became independent from British colonial rule in 1961, but has undergone several military coups in the intervening half-century.

Over the course of Taylor's trial, British supermodel Naomi Campbell testified before the court that Taylor gave her diamonds in 1997. American actress Mia Farrow corroborated this testimony in court. Other witnesses said that Taylor's proxy forces tortured civilians and that Taylor ate the body parts of some of the victims of the violence he is alleged to have been responsible for.
Verdict due in Charles Taylor’s war crimes trial

Geoffrey Robertson

THE verdict on Charles Taylor, former president of Liberia, will be announced on April 26 by the Special Court for Sierra Leone. It has sat for over three years in the Hague to hear accusations that in order to gain a share of Sierra Leone’s diamonds, he conspired with Foday Sankoh’s Revolutionary United Front to wage Africa’s most brutal war against a democratically elected government.

Taylor and Sankoh (who died in 2003) are alleged to have trained in Libya at the invitation of Col. Muammar Gaddafi (an “unindicted co-conspirator”). During the war, it is said that Taylor, posing as a peacemaker, presented some of his ill-gotten uncut diamonds to supermodel Naomi Campbell, after dinner chez Nelson Mandela. He is charged with murder, rape, terrorism, pillage, sexual enslavement, and recruiting children.

Much of the evidence has been stomach-turning. The RUF fighters lopped off the hands of anyone who had voted in the UN-sponsored elections and engaged in widespread mutilation and murder of civilians as part of Operation No Living Thing in Freetown. There is no doubt that they recruited children as soldiers and sex slaves, and killed prisoners of war to eat their hearts out in the juju belief that they would gain their enemies’ strength. But was Charles Taylor in any way responsible for these atrocities?

He never set foot in Sierra Leone and the prosecution had to rely on evidence that he was in communication with rebel leaders. That contact was necessary, so Taylor testified, to perform his UN-accredited role as peacemaker. The prosecution claimed he was directing his RUF proxies, and in return for diamonds was arranging to supply them with weapons, military personnel, and safe haven on the Liberia–Sierra Leone border. It will be for the court — a judge from Northern Ireland, a judge from Uganda, and a judge from Samoa (trained in Australia) to determine where the truth lies. Instead of defying the court like Milosevic or trying to disrupt it by defending himself, Taylor retained a British Queen’s Counsel (a senior Old Bailey advocate) to represent him throughout the trial. This made it a true adversarial proceeding and enhanced his prospects of acquittal by independent judges on prosecution evidence that has been mainly circumstantial — no witnesses testified to receiving orders from him to fight the war.

The judges must be satisfied of his guilt beyond reasonable doubt, so his conviction on all or any of the charges is not a foregone conclusion. One disquieting feature of the case is the time the court has taken to deliver this judgment—13 months, no less, since the final speeches finished. The trial itself lasted over three years, during which time the judges should have been working on their assessments — the issues are complicated but it should not take over a year to give reasons for a verdict. While it is not necessary to follow the lead of the German judges who convicted one of the last Nazis — John Demjanjuk — only two days after the end of his two-year trial, it remains true that justice delayed is justice denied, especially in a court whose first president promised that “our justice, whilst it may not be exquisite, will never be rough”.

At any event, it can be predicted that the judgment will be lengthy. It has been touted as the first international-court decision on the guilt of a head of state (Milosevic having died mid-trial and Jean Kambanda, president of Rwanda, having pleaded guilty before the tribunal in Arusha established to deal with the Rwandan genocide), although purists will note that Admiral Dönitz, briefly head of Germany after Hitler’s death, was convicted at Nuremberg.
Media interest will doubtless centre on the findings in respect to Naomi Campbell’s “blood diamonds”. The prosecution alleges they were a gift from Taylor (he denies it) — an example of his gains ill gotten from the war. Some light may also be shed on how Taylor ever became a guarantor, with the US and the UN, of the Lomé Accord — the infamous peace agreement that put the fox in charge of the henhouse by making RUF leader Sankoh the deputy prime minister of Sierra Leone and minister in charge of the diamond mines. It was Jesse Jackson as President Clinton’s emissary who had secured Sankoh’s release from prison (hailing him as “West Africa’s Nelson Mandela”) and who joined in sponsoring the worst peace deal since the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact.

“The Lomé Accord stank,” says David Scheffer in his recent autobiography: as Clinton’s war-crimes ambassador, he should have brokered it but says he was shut out. Taylor relies on Lomé as evidence that he only met Sankoh at the request of the US and the UN: they wanted him to act as a peacemaker in the region. The prosecution, claiming he was the “godfather” of the RUF, suggests that he exploited this role to deliver the spoils of war into the hands of his proxies. These are some of the disputed issues on which the court must make findings of fact.

His case has already made a contribution to war-crimes jurisprudence. He was indicted at a time when he was president of Liberia, and the right of an international court to override the traditional immunity of a head of state was in some legal doubt. His challenge to the indictment enabled the court to rule that sitting presidents no longer have impunity: they can be arrested by UN courts for crimes against humanity. On this precedent, the international-criminal-court prosecutor had no legal compunction in indicting Gaddafi when he was ruler of Libya or Laurent Gbagbo while he was still claiming the presidency of Ivory Coast.

Geoffrey Robertson was president of the UN’s war crimes court in Sierra Leone and is author of Crimes Against Humanity: The Struggle for Global Justice. — Newsweek.
Charles Taylor trial: judgment day for the master manipulator

The historic trial of Charles Taylor reaches a climax at The Hague this week, writes Harriet Alexander.

By Harriet Alexander

In a modern court building, more than 3,000 miles from the tropical West African country of Sierra Leone, three judges have for more than 12 months been painstakingly weighing up five years of court proceedings, 50,000 pages of transcripts, and the testimony of almost 120 witnesses.

But for one man there is no such agonising.

Unisa Dizo-Conteh is in no doubt as to what should happen to Charles Taylor, the former president of Liberia, who is accused of fuelling a hideous civil war in neighbouring Sierra Leone.

“The right place for him is hell,” said Mr Dizo-Conteh, who, as a teenager, was standing beside his brother, cousin and aunt when they were killed by a bomb at their home in the capital, Freetown. Now aged 29 and living in exile in Britain, he holds Mr Taylor personally responsible for his loss.

“Even the worst place in Sierra Leone is too good for him,” he said, still rigid with anger over his family’s deaths 13 years ago. “The damage he did will last for generations.”

On Thursday the three judges presiding over the Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague will deliver their long-awaited verdict.

Mr Taylor, 64, is charged with 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including rape, terrorism, murder and using child soldiers. He denies all charges, calling them “diabolical lies”.

Although he never set foot in Sierra Leone during the 1991-2002 civil war, which killed over 50,000 people, he is accused of providing the rebel factions with arms and cash in return for access to the country’s diamond fields.
He will become the first ever head of state to have been indicted, tried and had verdict pronounced on him in an international court.

“In the Nuremberg Trials after the Second World War, neither Hitler nor the Emperor of Japan were ever brought to justice,” said Nicholas Koumjian, a lawyer at the court. “Slobodan Milosevic, accused of war crimes in the Balkans, died before his trial could finish. This is a historic moment.”

It will also be closely watched in London. Tony Blair’s decision to send in troops, bringing about a rapid end to the war, is widely seen as a high point in his interventionist foreign policy. His government agreed to house Charles Taylor if he is convicted - making it likely that the former president will end his days in a British high-security prison.

And there is certainly the sense that Thursday’s verdict will close a painful chapter in Sierra Leonean history.

“We have been through so much trauma that the chance to bring someone to justice is something we are all looking forward to,” said Solomon Berewa, minister of justice at the time of Mr Taylor’s detention who sought the UN’s assistance with trying him outside the country.

Speaking to The Sunday Telegraph from his home in Freetown, the 73-year-old lawyer said he was proud of the part he had played.

“If he is convicted, as we hope, there will be huge jubilation,” he said. “The war which he sponsored caused huge havoc in this country. We will feel justice has been done.”

Mr Taylor had been an influential and magnetic figure for many decades. Born to a powerful family of America-Liberians – descended from freed slaves who founded Liberia in the 19th Century – he studied in the US, picking up a distinctive American twang.

“He is charismatic and articulate, and, unlike other accused in international cases, he is so fluent in English he can sound just like an American politician,” said Mr Koumjian, who took part in Taylor’s cross-examination.

“He is a master of manipulating people and had the ability to win 'friendships' with all kinds of people from Pat Robertson to Jesse Jackson, who surely could not believe the charming man speaking to them was capable of the kind of violence he has long been accused of.”

Mr Taylor worked in government procurement under a previous president, Samuel Doe, before fleeing to America where he was eventually imprisoned for fraud. Later he made his way to Libya, where under the tutelage of Colonel Gaddafi he trained in guerrilla warfare and learnt how to launch a civil war.

In 1989 he returned to overthrow the Doe regime, launching the country into bloody convulsions that killed 200,000 people, and becoming one of Africa’s most notorious warlords. He was known as “Pappy” by a generation of drugged child soldiers, who were led by self-appointed generals with names like Peanut Butter, Bad Boy and Butt Naked.

Following a peace deal that ended the war, he was elected president in 1997, terrorising the people into voting him with the unofficial slogan: “You killed my ma, you killed my pa, but I will vote for you.”

A Ghanaian journalist who interviewed Mr Taylor at the time and mentioned the macabre chants recalled him asking: “Have you heard them? They mean it, you know, and they love me.”
He relished the role of president. A natural showman, he was equally at home brandishing an AK47, sporting dazzling African tribal dress or in a sharply-cut three piece suit.

When he faced accusations from the UN that he was a gun runner and diamond smuggler, he addressed a mass prayer meeting clad head to toe in flowing, Biblical white robes.

In 1997, he attended a now-infamous dinner party in South Africa, hosted by Nelson Mandela. Among the guests were Naomi Campbell.

“When I was sleeping, I had a knock on my door, I opened and two men gave me a pouch and said: ’A gift for you’, ” Miss Campbell told the court in August 2010, when she was reluctantly summoned to testify by the prosecution. “The next morning, I opened the pouch… I saw a few stones in there, and they were very small, dirty-looking stones.”

The prosecution claim that the “small dirty stones” were blood diamonds – gems extracted from the ground and given to Mr Taylor by Sierra Leonean rebels in exchange for funding and arms.

“He was a very charismatic man – one that could turn black into white,” said Emmanuel Tommy, who worked at the time for the Red Cross in southern Sierra Leone, on the border with Liberia.

“He is so dangerous because he could lead good people into trouble. From the outset of the war we knew he was behind it – some of the displaced people even said they were attacked by fighters speaking Liberian dialects.”

Married three times, his former wife Jewel – a feisty woman with a penchant for bright clothes and plain speaking – divorced him when he left Liberia. She is now a senator in the country. Mr Taylor remarried and his new wife Victoria, who moved with him to The Netherlands, bore him a daughter in February 2010. He is thought to have more than 15 children in total.

Mr Koumjian, the prosecution lawyer, added: “Many were naïve about what Taylor was capable of, but I think in the end, Taylor was a victim of his own arrogance. He overestimated what he could get away when he sent proxies to invade Guinea and Ivory Coast, destabilising the entire region.”

Mr Taylor’s lawyer, Courtenay Griffiths QC, disagrees. He maintains that the trial is politically motivated, and that there is little to prove that Mr Taylor ordered or even knew what his allies were doing.

“The essence of the case against Taylor is that he funded and supported a rebel group in a neighbouring country,” he said. “The US and other countries have been doing that for years. The Contras committed atrocities in Nicaragua and everybody knows they were supported by the CIA.

“Yet Taylor is being prosecuted for his foreign policy. And I think that sets a very unwelcome precedent for weaker countries around the world.”

As part of the agreement with the UN, the Special Court in The Hague has relayed events back to Sierra Leone via radio, print and online. But many point out that, for all the well-meaning efforts to document and explain the trial, so few people in Sierra Leone have access to internet that it makes little difference.

While there have been improvements since the end of the civil war, most citizens still face a daily struggle for survival: average life expectancy is just 47 years, and the per capita GDP is $300 a year. Only a handful of countries can be considered more impoverished.

Ade Daramy, president of the Sierra Leonean Diaspora Association, said the country’s major towns were having their roads rehabilitated – often by Chinese construction workers.
“That’s very visible,” he said. “But there’s a long way to go.

"For a lot of Sierra Leoneans, the fact that none of the money for this trial has come from our coffers means that we can concentrate on the important things; improving our hospitals, education, water supply, electricity, roads.

"There is a Sierra Leonean mindset that says if only the world out there would open its eyes, it would see what there is. There is so much potential - not diamonds and more, but iron ore, and human capital.

"We wouldn’t need aid. We just need assistance to build and develop our own industries."

And as Sierra Leone prepares for Thursday’s verdict, the psychological impact of the conflict is yet again coming into focus.

“What many cannot comprehend is how fragile this region remains,” said Mr Koumjian. “There are a lot of these ex fighters with little or no employment opportunities, who must surely miss the days when they could do anything.

"The forced recruitment of young boys and especially girls into rebel armies has left scars that will take generations to heal. These child soldiers who killed or amputated or were simply victims of sexual slavery for the rebel armies are now often ostracized or disowned from their communities and even their own families.

"These girls who were 'rebel wives' and their children are now cut off from the traditional support networks of extended family, village and tribe. Many have turned to prostitution to survive. So the damage from these wars will continue to cast a shadow on these societies for generations.”

Unisa Dizo-Conteh, remembering the three family members he lost in the conflict, is steeling himself for the painful memories Thursday’s verdict will bring back. His brother Morlai would have been 31 now, perhaps having fulfilled his dream of becoming a lawyer. Mr Dizo-Conteh has named his seven-year-old son after him.

“In my dreams we are playing together in the yard of our house,” he said. “We were so close – we had a secret language and could talk to each other without adults knowing.

“Sometimes in the mornings I wake up and I think he is alive. It still hurts so much.

“We need some form of justice to get on with our lives.”
Heads of state pursued by international courts

Liberian former leader Charles Taylor awaits a verdict Thursday on charges of arming Sierra Leone's rebels in return for "blood diamonds" in the 1990s.

Below is a list of heads of state around the world facing the international justice system.

- CHARLES TAYLOR: The former Liberian president, who ruled from 1997-2003, was charged in March 2003 with war crimes and crimes against humanity stemming from the 1991-2001 civil war in neighbouring Sierra Leone. Taylor stands accused of arming, training and controlling Sierra Leone's notorious Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels.

Elected president in 1997, Taylor resigned in August 2003 and went into exile in Nigeria where he was arrested in March 2006.

Hearings on his case started in June 2007 before the Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague, and ran until March 2011.

- LAURENT GBAGBO: The former Ivory Coast president was arrested in April 2011, and was transferred to the International Criminal Court's (ICC's) detention unit in The Hague on November 30 last year under an arrest warrant issued by the court. He is currently facing charges of crimes against humanity following the unrest which rocked the country between December 2010 and April 2011, after he refused to concede defeat in elections to current president Alassane Ouattara. Some 3,000 died in the unrest.

- OMAR AL-BASHIR: The ICC issued an arrest warrant for Bashir, the current president of Sudan, in March 2009. The charges relate to alleged crimes against humanity and war crimes committed in Darfur, the country's western region. In July 2010 the court added genocide to the charges.

The conflict in Darfur, which started in 2003, has left 300,000 dead, according to the UN, 10,000 according to the Sudanese government, which Bashir continues to lead.

- MOAMER KADHAFI: The former Libyan leader, killed by rebels on October 20, 2011, had been sought by the ICC under a warrant issued in June 2011.

Kadhafi was wanted for crimes against humanity committed on his behalf by the country's security forces as they put down a popular revolt, which turned into a civil war and ended with his ousting.

- SLOBODAN MILOSEVIC: Elected president of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in July 1997, Slobodan Milosevic was indicted in May 1999 by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Kosovo, Croatia and Bosnia between 1991 and 1999.

He resigned the presidency in October 2000 following an election defeat, and was arrested in April 2001.

A long-running trial was brought to a sudden end in March 2006 by Milosevic's death in his cell in The Hague.
- MILAN MILUTINOVIC: The president of Serbia from December 1997 to December 2002, Milutinovic was indicted by the ICTY in May 1999 and surrendered to the tribunal in January 2003. He was acquitted in February 2009 of war crimes committed in Kosovo following a trial that started in July 2006.

- KHIEU SAMPHAN: Former Cambodian head of state Khieu Samphan was arrested in 2007 and charged with genocide by a UN court in December 2009. He had already been charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity as a key member of the central committee of the Khmer Rouge regime that oversaw the deaths of up to two million people by starvation, overwork, torture and execution. He went on trial in November 2011 at Cambodia's UN-backed court.
Judges to Deliver Verdict in Charles Taylor War Crimes Trial

By Deena Taylor

RAPAPORT... Judges will deliver their verdict in the war crimes trial of former Liberia President Charles Taylor on Thursday, the Special Court for Sierra Leone has announced.

Taylor is charged with 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity for backing rebels who were responsible for committing atrocities during a civil war in Sierra Leone. He denies the charges and he has pleaded not guilty to all charges against him.

The trial opened on June 4, 2007 in The Hague and was delayed immediately after the prosecution’s opening statement when Taylor dismissed his defense team and requested new representation. Witness testimony began on January 7, 2008 and ended on November 12, 2010. Closing arguments in the case took place in February and March of 2011.

Prosecutors alleged that during Taylor's term as Liberia's president between 1997 and 2003, he "created, armed, supported and controlled" rebel groups in Sierra Leone in exchange for diamonds delivered to him.

During the trial, the court heard live testimony from 94 prosecution witnesses and received written statements from four additional witnesses. Model Naomi Campbell testified in the trial and confirmed she was given a rough diamond gift from Taylor in South Africa in 1997 but she was unsure of its origin. The defense presented 21 witnesses including Taylor himself.

Special Court Registrar Binta Mansaray explained that it has taken a long time to deliver judgment due largely to the complexity of the case. She noted that judges had to read more than 50,000 pages of witness testimony and examine 1,520 exhibits given as evidence. She said the time-frame was consistent with similar high-profile cases at other international tribunals. Mansaray added that the judgment is the last trial that stems from Sierra Leone's 10 year civil war and will be the last major trial to be held at the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Both the defense and the prosecution have the right to appeal the verdict, the court explained. If Taylor is acquitted on all charges, the appeals process will begin right away. If he is found guilty on any of the 11 counts, the court will schedule sentencing proceedings.

The judgment will be delivered at 11 a.m. on Thursday, July 26, 2012 with a live video streaming of the verdict on the court’s website.
Verdict in Charles Taylor trial to be delivered this week

A verdict in the trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor will be delivered on Thursday, April 26, 2012, at 11:00 am Hague time (9:00 a.m. GMT), according to the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague, where the trial has taken place. Taylor was tried in a courtroom in The Hague rather than in Freetown, Sierra Leone, where the court is based, to prevent renewed violence there.

Taylor, who is accused of arming Sierra Leone's RUF rebels in exchange for diamonds, is charged with 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including murder, torture, rape, sexual slavery, using child soldiers and spreading terror during Sierra Leone's extended civil war. He has pleaded not guilty to all of the charges throughout the prolonged trial.

During Sierra Leone's civil war, which lasted from 1991 to 2002, sources estimate that 500,000 people were killed and/or mutilated while millions more were displaced. A former warlord, Taylor was elected president of Liberia in 1997. He is the first African head of state to be tried by an international tribunal.

Taylor was arrested in 2003 and flown to the Netherlands in 2006. While he first appeared in the court in April of that year, lawyers for Taylor presented their closing arguments at the end of March 2011, followed by a last chance for the defense and prosecution to make final statements.

During the trial, the prosecution presented more than 90 witnesses. Sources note that judges also heard testimony from 21 witnesses for the defense. The trial transcript is reportedly more than 49,000 pages long.

Although the judgment will be delivered in The Hague, the proceedings will be streamed live to the Special Court compound in Freetown where local and international journalists, diplomats, members of government and the judiciary, victims, civil society members, and members of the public are expected to watch the proceedings, according to the court.

Additionally, throughout the country, outreach field officers will reportedly hold meetings with local communities at crimes scenes and the sites of mass graves, and will play the proceedings by radio.

Thursday's judgment will be delivered by Trial Chamber II, consisting of Justice Richard Lussick of Samoa (presiding), Justice Teresa Doherty of Northern Ireland, Justice Julia Sebutinde of Uganda, and Alternate Judge Justice El Hadji Malick Sow of Senegal, reports the court.

For more background and details of this case, click here: http://tinyurl.com/2w2489s
"At least they killed you in Rwanda," the woman said to us, her voice laced with bitterness. As she spoke, she held up her arms. Where her hands should have been were instead two mutilated stumps.

It was 2003, and we were in Freetown, the capital city of Sierra Leone. The woman was one of many survivors we have met from that country's bloody civil war that raged for 11 years until 2002.

Chopping off the hands and feet of civilians was one of the signatures of Sierra Leone's rebel army, the Revolutionary United Front - armed, financed and directed by the brutal president of Liberia, Charles Taylor.

The 64-year-old Taylor is a Libyan-trained guerrilla, who in 1989 launched a civil war to become one of the most powerful warlords in his home country of Liberia. Then, from 1991 on, he used his soldiers and resources to spread civil war in neighbouring Sierra Leone.

In 2003, after Sierra Leone's war ended, the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone indicted Taylor for war crimes. Taylor resigned his presidency and fled into exile in Nigeria until he was handed over in 2006 to Liberian and UN authorities. When Taylor was flown to The Hague, he became only the second head of state to be tried for war crimes since the Second World War.

This week, the Special Court for Sierra Leone will announce its verdict on Taylor.

But most of the world's eyes have been focused on another pocket of Africa and another brutal dictator, Joseph Kony, a warlord in Uganda. We've heard how he recruited child soldiers and made them commit barbarities. Everything Kony did, Taylor's puppet army mirrored in Sierra Leone. But the Kony story is still getting headlines, while past atrocities in Sierra Leone might get a paragraph in the back of the news section.

In the Sierra Leone city of Makeni, one of Taylor's former soldiers described to us the indoctrination ceremony he and other boys were put through when they were forcibly recruited.

Taylor's men dragged out a corpse, hacked it into four pieces, then made the boys walk through the gore. Then they were forced to eat parts of the body. Taylor's men told the new recruits it was ancient tribal magic that would make them invincible to bullets.

An estimated 10,000 children, mostly boys, were turned into fighters during Sierra Leone's civil war. Thousands more girls were taken and forced into sexual slavery.

The war's death toll stands at approximately 50,000. Many more survived, but with terrible scars.

In our seven visits to the region since the war ended, we have seen few improvements for survivors.

Sierra Leone remains one of the least developed countries in the world. It shares with Afghanistan the dubious distinction of having the world's highest maternal and child mortality rates.
Thousands of child soldiers have spent the past decade trying to reintegrate into normal life without much success. At more than 45 per cent, Sierra Leone has the highest youth unemployment rate in West Africa.

Western nations bear a burden of responsibility for the plight of Sierra Leone. Our lust for the country's rich diamond resources fuelled the carnage. Taylor was the funnel for millions of dollars worth of blood diamonds from Sierra Leone to the world market, using the money to enrich himself and supply the rebel fighters. In a bloody, vicious circle, much of the fighting in the civil war was focused on controlling the diamond fields, and the profits from diamonds provided the funding to keep the fighting going.

Sierra Leone is dependent on foreign aid from countries such as the United States and Europe, but not Canada. Aside from some funding for the UN World Food Program, we have dumped Sierra Leone from our aid and development budget.

However, even that aid is paltry compared to what other underdeveloped countries are receiving. According to the World Bank, in 2010, Sierra Leone received $81 per person in foreign aid, while neighbouring Liberia received $356 per person - more than four times the assistance.

It's as if the world declared "mission accomplished" with the arrest of Taylor and moved on, leaving Sierra Leone to try to heal its own wounds.

Try to remember the last time you saw a news story about Sierra Leone. Supermodel Naomi Campbell got more news coverage in 2010 when it was revealed she had accepted blood diamonds from Taylor, than the people of Sierra Leone have received in years for the suffering they have endured because of those diamonds.

It is a mark of the disconnect of the West from Sierra Leone that the UN court trying Taylor has chosen to release its verdict on Thursday - the day before Sierra Leone marks its independence day. Perhaps the court felt there was some sort of poetic justice in choosing this date. However, issuing the announcement at a time when emotions will already be running high in Sierra Leone will almost certainly provoke riots, bringing further suffering to people there.

We certainly hope Taylor lives out the rest of his life in prison for his crimes. However, for Sierra Leone, true justice will not be served until development occurs.

CRAIG AND MARC KIELBURGER CO-FOUNDED FREE THE CHILDREN AND WROTE THE NEW BOOK, LIVING ME TO WE: THE GUIDE FOR SOCIA LCONSCIOUS CANADIANS.
WWW.METOWE.COM/LIVING
© Copyright (c) The Calgary Herald
UK House of Lords
Monday, 23 April 2012

SCSL Debate at the UK House of Lords

Lord Marlesford (Conservative)
To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will provide a breakdown, by date and purpose of payment, of the £27.6 million given to the Special Court of Sierra Leone since 2002; what arrangements are in place to audit the proper use of this money; and whether they plan to make any further payments.

Hansard source (Citation: HL Deb, 23 April 2012, c373W)

Lord Howell of Guildford (Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office; Conservative)
The Special Court for Sierra Leone was established in 2002 by an agreement between the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone. It is mandated to try those who bear the greatest responsibility for serious violations of international humanitarian law and Sierra Leonean law committed in the territory of Sierra Leone since 30 November 1996. It is the first international criminal tribunal funded entirely from voluntary contributions from Governments. The total UK Government contribution to the Special Court for Sierra Leone from 2002 until the end of the financial year 2010-11 was £27,503,283.11, which is approximately 20% of the court's overall costs. The table below shows the payments in as much detail as possible. Payments were made in US dollars and the totals were therefore subject to different conversion rates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UK Financial Year</th>
<th>Discretionary Spend</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>£2,600,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>£2,000,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>£2,002,941.11</td>
<td>£2m on 19 Apr 2004, and £2941.11 on 20 Jul 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>£2,000,898</td>
<td>Total amount in Jan 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>£1,040,000</td>
<td>£1m in Oct 2006, and £40k in Dec 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>£5,000,000</td>
<td>£2m in Apr 2007, and £3m Mar 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>£7,000,000</td>
<td>£3m in March 2008, £3m in Jan 2009, £1m in March 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>£2,459,444</td>
<td>£760,000 in Aug 09, £1,000,556 in Feb 10, £699,444 in March 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>£3,400,000</td>
<td>£400,000 in Jan 2010, £1m in Feb 2011, £2m in March 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td></td>
<td>£27,503,283.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>£600,000</td>
<td>£600,000 in March 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total to date</td>
<td></td>
<td>£28,103,283.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The main purpose of these payments was to support the investigation and prosecution of Charles Taylor (former President of Liberia) and the eight individuals who bore the greatest responsibility for serious violations of international humanitarian law and Sierra Leonean law committed during the civil war in Sierra Leone. Charles Taylor is the first former head of state to be brought to trial on charges of war crimes for actions he took while in office. Payments and costs in 2007-08 and 2008-09 were greater to facilitate the transfer of Charles Taylor to The Hague and the commencement of his trial.

The Government's most recent contributions helped the Special Court to complete the trial of Charles Taylor. The additional payment of £600,000 in March 2012, taking the total contribution to date to £28,103,283.11, covered a shortfall in funding for trial and contempt proceedings.

The Special Court's Management Committee, on which the UK is represented, provides a rolling audit on the court's activities and the overall budget. An independent external auditor also carries out an audit on an annual basis.

The Government look forward to a verdict in the Charles Taylor trial on 26 April. Once any appeals are completed, only minimal residual functions will be required to ensure that key functions (such as witness protection and sentence enforcement) are maintained effectively. The Government will then consider whether any further contributions are necessary.
Liberia, S/Leone To Conduct Survey on ICC

In the wake of final verdict of the trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor in The Hague slated for Wednesday April 26, 2012, a civil society organization here with support from a Belgium based group “No Peace Without Justice” has announced a 15-day survey, beginning April 30th on the activities of the International Criminal Court both in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

The intent of the survey is to establish the impact and legacy of the Special Court of Sierra Leone on both countries. Since the establishment of the Special Court in 2002, there has been series of surveys, but the actual impact has not been felt. With the upcoming verdict, the planned survey is expected to produce full reflection of the impact on both countries and the legacies to learn from there for the entire continent.

The survey for Sierra Leone is expected to be headed by the Sierra Leonean Law Institute along with other credible civil society organizations. Basically, the questionnaires are the same and a special training will be provided for the two organizations to ensure uniformity.

Speaking to the New Dawn Saturday in Monrovia, the National Chairman of the Liberia Non-Government Organizations Network, Atty. John Jukon said the survey will engage various communities, civil society organizations, opinion leaders, close associates of detained President Charles Taylor, local media, religious leaders, Armed Forces of Liberia, Liberia National Police, the Liberian Legislature and cabinet ministers, among others.

Attorney Jukon noted that the objective is to create an environment for stakeholders to give their views of the trial to the international community and citizens of the two countries.

He said the surveys will also establish whether the prosecution of the alleged perpetrators, including Charles Taylor and other key stakeholders in the Sierra Leonean civil conflict will reduce the culture of impunity, mayhems caused during the wars and whether the prosecution of former State leaders has any negative reflection on the African political climate.

Jukon noted that several people are of the view that the millions of dollars spent on the trial should have been used on poverty reduction in the victimized country, while others think that the victims of the war should have been attractively catered to by both government and the international community than wasting money on lawyers and prosecution.

“Still, others are of the view that the prosecution will to some extent serve as deterrent to the rest of the citizenry of Africa and the rest of the world”, he added.

Jukon said the survey in Liberia will sample views of about 2,000 persons, from five counties, including Montserrado, Nimba, Bong, Lofa and Grand Bassa 700 interviewers steering the affairs of the survey.
The proposed criminal law regime for Africa

From 7-15 May 2012, the Ministers of Justice of the member states of the African Union (AU) will meet to discuss *inter alia* a Draft Protocol on Amendments to the Protocol on the Statute of the African Court of Justice and Human Rights, which confers upon the Court international criminal jurisdiction. Please click here for the Draft Protocol.

The AU envisages the creation of a Prosecutor and a new Chamber of the African Court, which will hold jurisdiction over the classic international crimes of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. In addition, the draft provides jurisdiction over other crimes, including the unconstitutional change of government, piracy, terrorism, mercenary, corruption, money laundering, trafficking in persons, drugs and hazardous wastes, illicit exploitation of natural resources, aggression and inchoate offences.

While the draft text nowhere states so, it is plain that the proposed criminal law regime finds its roots in the severe critique that the AU has expressed on the International Criminal Court (ICC). The critique is well known. All cases currently before the ICC are African cases and this has created the perception that The Hague based ICC is targeting Africans rather than contributing to justice in and for Africa. Over and over again, the AU, and its Assembly in particular, have expressed dissatisfaction with the ICC as well as the ‘abuse’ of universal jurisdiction by national courts, especially in Europe. Africa, so ICC critics assert, should take matters in its own hands and develop an African response to Africa’s justice problems. By devising a proposed criminal law regime for Africa, the AU now seems to act upon its own words. The draft text provides for an independent African Prosecutor, a court that has jurisdiction over crimes that are of particular significance for Africa and does not recognize immunities, even for Heads of State. Leaving aside technical issues for the moment, the text of the draft protocol may be judged positively as it seems to reflect the will to actually work towards criminal justice on the African continent.

Yet there is also cause for concern. Firstly, the process and discussion leading to the draft text were done in secrecy. NGOs and Civil Society have not played a role. They have not debated the pros and cons of such a regime. Why, one may ask, is this the case? It is of significance to note that NGOs played an important role in development of both the African human rights system, and the ICC. Secondly, the proposed criminal law section of the Draft Protocol is said to be complementary to the jurisdiction of national courts and courts of Africa’s regional communities. Yet, the text seems to deliberately omit any reference to the ICC, although some 33 of the 54 AU member states are parties to the ICC Statute. How will the proposed African criminal law section of the Court relate to the ICC when no mention is made of the ICC at all? But perhaps most importantly, how does the AU intend to fund a criminal law regime within the African Court. A beautiful text is one thing, effective criminal justice quite another.

Africa has a history of adopting impressive legal texts for supranational institutions, but practice demonstrates that words on paper do not always translate into success in practice. Civil society has a duty to critically follow the debates on the proposed criminal law regime for the African Court. Civil society has a right to be actively involved in these debates. The creation of an African criminal court is as such not a bad idea. Justice done closer to home has better guarantee for legitimacy. But does the AU have the political will and the resources to ensure the efficacy and legitimacy of the proposed criminal law regime or is this a smokescreen as many suggest? Is Africa ready to ensure justice for its own?