**PRESS CLIPPINGS**

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

Tuesday, 22 May 2012

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday. Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact Martin Royston-Wright Ext 7217
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A Tale of “Two Taylors”: Like Father Son, Like Son

By Dr. Hassan B. Sisay, Portsmouth, Ohio

On April 21, 1999, Charles Taylor was arrested by United Nations (UN) forces at the Joseph Embobut Forest in northern Liberia. He was charged with war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other offenses committed during his presidency. The indictment against him was based on evidence collected by international investigators. According torowser evidence, Taylor was responsible for numerous atrocities, including the murder of thousands of civilians and the kidnapping of hundreds of political opponents. The trial proceedings were held in a UN-backed court in The Hague, and Taylor was found guilty on all counts.

Another victim of ATU forces was University of Monrovia student Varman Dulleh, who belonged to the Mandingo ethnic group. He was accused of being a supporter of the Charles Taylor presidency. At the direction of Emmanuel, Benjamin Yeaten head of Liberia’s Special Security Service, savagely brutalized Dulleh and ordered soldiers to put a dirty rag in his mouth and burn him with a heated clothes iron on his arm, back, stomach, and foot. Further, Emmanuel is said to have “shocked Dulleh’s neck, back, and genitals with a cattle prod,” causing severe pain and suffering to his body. Based on all of the above documented acts of torture and atrocities cited in the indictment, Emmanuel was found guilty in Florida and sentenced to 97 years in prison. He appealed his case to the 11th Circuit on many grounds including the fact that the enumerated acts of atrocities were committed outside of United States. The judges rejected his appeal and affirmed his conviction and sentence in full.

In foreign affairs, Taylor’s foreign policy was characterized by a combination of isolationism and aggression. He was accused of seeking to expand his influence at the expense of his neighbors. Taylor’s government was also accused of human rights abuses, including summary executions, torture, and arbitrary detention. The United Nations Security Council imposed sanctions against Liberia, and Taylor was eventually pressured into stepping down.

Conclusion

Taylor’s reign was marked by violence, corruption, and authoritarianism. His government was implicated in human rights abuses, including summary executions, torture, and arbitrary detention. The United Nations Security Council imposed sanctions against Liberia, and Taylor was eventually pressured into stepping down. Taylor’s foreign policy was characterized by a combination of isolationism and aggression, and he was accused of seeking to expand his influence at the expense of his neighbors. The trial proceedings were held in a UN-backed court in The Hague, and Taylor was found guilty on all counts.

The verdicts in the Charles Taylor case were a significant milestone for international justice. The trial demonstrated that even the most powerful leaders could be held accountable for their crimes, and it sent a clear message to other leaders that they would face the consequences of their actions. The verdicts in the Charles Taylor case were a significant milestone for international justice. The trial demonstrated that even the most powerful leaders could be held accountable for their crimes, and it sent a clear message to other leaders that they would face the consequences of their actions.
Why Charles Taylor Deserves his 80 years in Prison

On 16 May, convicted war criminal, Charles Taylor, delivered a 30-minute speech -- part plea for clemency, part lurid defense of his actions, and part grandstanding -- before his trial judges at The Hague as he awaits sentencing on 30 May. Because the address has been seized upon by crypto pro-Revolutionary United Front’s (RUF) activists and supporters to discredit the carefully-deliberated ruling against Taylor, it is important to respond to the key claims made therein. I will be quoting in this article from the summary judgment; the final judgment will be far more detailed, and for that reason far more devastating.

So I'll begin by reminding readers of the main legal finding against Taylor. The Trial Chamber in its judgment on 26 April found Taylor "beyond reasonable doubt" to be "criminally responsible" for aiding and abetting the commission of war crimes and crimes against humanity. The judges wrote that they were satisfied that "as of August 1997" Taylor "knew of the atrocities being committed against civilians in Sierra Leone by the RUF/AFRC forces and of their propensity to commit crimes." Notwithstanding this knowledge, Taylor "continued to provide support to the RUF and RUF/AFRC forces during the period that crimes were being committed in Sierra Leone. The Trial Chamber therefore finds beyond reasonable doubt that [Taylor] knew that his support to the RUF/AFRC would provide practical assistance, encouragement or moral support to them in the commission of crimes during the course of their military operations in Sierra Leone. The judges found that "in addition to planning and advising" the RUF and rogue soldiers of the so-called Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC) on the Kono-Freetown operation" including with respect to the gruesome invasion of Freetown in January 1999, Taylor "provided military and other support" to make the attacks and subsequent atrocities possible. Taylor "facilitated the purchase and transport of a large shipment of arms and ammunition from Burkina Faso in around November 1998 which was used in the attacks on Kono and Kenema in December 1998, where further arms and ammunition were captured.

These arms and ammunition were in turn sent to the troops in Freetown in January 1999 and also used by the RUF and AFRC in joint attacks on the outskirts of Freetown." In addition to this crucial support, Taylor "also sent personnel in the form of at least four former Sierra Leone Army (SLA) fighters who participated in the attack on Kono, as well as 20 former NPFL fighters who were part of the forces under the command of Gullit that entered Freetown, and a group of 150 fighters with Abu Keita (a former ULIMO member), known as the Scorpion Unit, who participated in the attack on Kenema." During the mass atrocities Freetown in January 1999, Taylor's "subordinates in Liberia also transmitted 448 messages to RUF forces to warn them of impending ECOMOG jet attacks. These messages originated in both Sierra Leone and Liberia." Taylor, the judges wrote, "held a position of authority amongst the RUF and RUF/AFRC."

There are other devastating findings by the judges, but these alone from any reasonable point justify the severest of punishments. Those who affect to continue a hierarchy of guilt wherein 'aiding and abetting' is somewhat venial should note that the attacks on Freetown in January 1999 alone led to the murder of about 6,000 people, the crude amputation of hundreds of people (including babies), and the burning down of a large part of the city by the rebels. The verdict in this case concludes that Taylor made that attack happen.

Now to Taylor's rapid last speech before the judges on 16 May. He said, "What I did to bring peace to Sierra Leone was done with honour," noting that his involvement in Sierra Leone's war was aimed at bringing peace. This outrageous claim fails even the irony test: at least the hangman in the old morality tale wasn't speaking to save himself when he told Don Carlos: "I shall assassinate you but for your own good!"

Taylor was apparently referring to the events of May 2000, when the RUF abducted hundreds of freshly-arrived Zambian UN troops in northern Sierra Leone and ferried them into Liberia, from where -- now posing as a statesman after no doubt helping to orchestrate the kidnapping -- Taylor had the Zambians released and flown back to
On the atrocities themselves, Taylor was rather dismissive to the judges. Atrocities necessarily happen in war, he said, and then he added an idiosyncratic take on the concept of "just war." He invoked the Roman statesman and orator Cicero, noting that Cicero lost the just war "card," but Cicero, like all writers in the classical world, never worried much about the problem — just as he never worried about the massive institution of slavery of which he gleefully partook — and his understanding of the concept fundamentally differs from ours. For Cicero, the nature of the enemy — if "barbarian" or "civilised" — determined the conduct of war against that enemy. "Barbarians" may be wiped out and their towns and cities razed (as the Roman legions did against rebellious tribes in Gaul and against Carthage), but the Romans should weigh carefully the extent of destruction to be wrought on their "civilised" neighbours, like the ancient Greeks. Over the past few centuries, a just war tradition has developed into natural law which, for example, protects non-combatants, especially women and children. Can Taylor claim ignorance of this development? Let the judges ponder such a claim. Clearly, Isaas says — n — to mention Allieu Kosiewa and Mohanu Fatuma, the completely illiterate and honourable leaders of the Civil Defence Forces — were not given the benefit of the doubt.

I have reserved the most potent — but also most ridiculous — claim of Taylor for the last response: it is his argument that his prosecution and the verdict against him are the result of an American conspiracy to dispose of an awkward African leader. In the very active mouth of his brass-buckling lawyer, Courtney Griffiths, the claim merited listening to. But from Taylor? This is a man who was a paid agent of the CIA for many years — and the CIA is a core institution of American imperial power. Here again — as in his claim that he was pursuing peace in Sierra Leone while arming the RUF — Taylor would want to have it both ways. You cannot claim to be reviled by American imperialism while being an enabler for it.

In any case, Taylor's own peers concluded long before the Americans publicly did that Taylor was supporting the RUF to commit atrocities in Sierra Leone. On 28 December 1998, the leaders of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) met on the crisis in Sierra Leone and issued a communiqué accusing Taylor of supporting the RUF and AFRC rebels destroying Sierra Leone. The judges, in other words, merely confirmed what has been well known by people in West Africa.

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Why Charles Taylor Deserves his 80 years in Prison

But from this claim, Taylor made by inference the more seductive point: surely both George W. Bush and Tony Blair were also guilty of similar crimes in Iraq for which he has been convicted yet no court has preferred charges against them. Why, he asked, is international humanitarian justice focused only on African leaders that have fallen out of favour with major Western leaders? It is a good and troubling point, to which my friend Abdul Tejan-Cole, the distinguished Sierra Leonean human rights lawyer, has offered a good response in another context. While it is curiously true that mostly African leaders face international justice, Tejan-Cole has argued, it is also decisively true that all those African leaders very much deserve to face that justice. One has to choose one’s side carefully in this emotionally charged debate, and my side is with the many African victims of the depredations of ghastly African leaders who have so far been indicted for such heinous crimes. Indeed, there should be more of such indictments and trials.

On diamonds, I’ll quote the summary judgment without comment. It says (read Taylor for ‘Accused’): “The Trial Chamber finds that there was a continuous supply by the AFRC/RUF of diamonds mined from areas in Sierra Leone to the Accused, often in exchange for arms and ammunition... Following the ECOMOG Intervention, from February 1998 to July 1999, the diamonds delivered to the Accused by Sam Bockarie directly, as well as indirectly through intermediaries such as Eddie Kanneh and Daniel Tamba, were given to him in order to get arms and ammunition from him, or sometimes for ‘safekeeping’ on behalf of the RUF... From February 1998 to July 1999, diamonds were delivered to the Accused by Sam Bockarie directly. These diamonds were delivered to the Accused for the purpose of obtaining arms and ammunitions from him. During this period, diamonds were also delivered through intermediaries such as Eddie Kanneh and Daniel Tamba... From July 1999 to May 2000, Foday Sankoh delivered diamonds to the Accused, and diamonds were delivered to the Accused on his behalf in or before 1999 while he was in detention.

In March 2000, Foday Sankoh visited South Africa and travelled through Monrovia on his way back to Sierra Leone, meeting with the Accused in Monrovia. According to one witness, among the diamonds delivered to the Accused during this meeting were a 45 carat diamond and two 25 carat diamonds... From June 2000 until the end of hostilities in 2002, Issa Sesay delivered diamonds to the Accused, including on one occasion a 36 carat diamond. Eddie Kanneh also delivered diamonds to the Accused on Sesay’s behalf. Sometimes the diamonds were delivered to the Accused supposedly for “safekeeping” until Sankoh’s release from detention and, at other times, in exchange for supplies and/or arms and ammunition.”

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Note: The above article appears in other newspaper
Why Charles Taylor Deserves his 80 years in Prison

By Lansana Gberie, PHD

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DR. LANSANA GBERIE

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The judges found that “in addition to planning and advising” the RUF and rogue soldiers of the so-called Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC) “on the Kono-Freetown operation” including with respect to the gruesome invasion of Freetown in January 1999, Taylor “provided military and other support” to make the attacks and
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Now to Taylor’s vapid last speech before the judges on 16 May. He said. “What I did to bring peace to Sierra Leone was done with honour,” noting that his involvement in Sierra Leone’s war was aimed at bringing peace. This outrageous claim fails even the irony test: at least the hangman in the old morality tale wasn’t speaking to save himself when he told Don Carlos: “I shall assassinate you but for your own good!” Taylor was apparently referring to the events of May 2000, when the RUF abducted hundreds of freshly-arrived Zambian UN troops in northern Sierra Leone and ferried them into Liberia, from where – now posing as a statesman after no doubt helping to orchestrate the kidnapping – Taylor had the Zambians released and flown back to Sierra Leone. Against that public drama let us place the court’s findings around the barbarous attacks against defenceless civilians. “In November/December 1998,” the court found, Taylor met with the psychotic RUF commander Sam Bacokarie. The two men “jointly designed” – here the judges used the heavily-loaded phrase – the “two-pronged attack on Kono, Kenema and Freetown.” That was the beginning of the road to the January 1999 atrocities in Freetown. Taylor “emphasised to Bockarie the need to first attack Kono District and told Bockarie to make the operation “fearful” in order to pressure the Government of Sierra Leone into negotiations on the release of Foday Sankoh from prison, as well as to use “all means” to get to Freetown. Subsequently, Bockarie named the operation ‘Operation No Living Thing’, implying that anything that stood in their way should be eliminated.” This is what the judges found. If this is Taylor’s idea of peacemaking, then he really should be removed from the rest of humanity for the rest of his baneful life.
On the atrocities themselves, Taylor was rather dismissive to the judges. Atrocities necessarily happen in war, he said, and then he added an idiosyncratic take on the concept of ‘just war’. He invoked the Roman statesman and orator Cicero, noting that Cicero lost the just war “card.” But Cicero, like all writers in the classical world, never worried much about the problem – just as he never worried about the massive institution of slavery of which he gleefully partook – and his understanding of the concept fundamentally differs from ours. For Cicero, the nature of the enemy – if ‘barbarian’ or ‘civilised’ – determined the conduct of war against that enemy. ‘Barbarians’ may be wiped out and their towns and cities razed (as the Roman legions did against rebellious tribes in Gaul and against Carthage), but the Romans should weigh carefully the extent of destruction to be wrought on their ‘civilised’ neighbours, like the ancient Greeks. Over the past few centuries, a just war tradition has developed into natural law which, for example, protects non-combatants, especially women and children. Can Taylor claim ignorance of this development? Let the judges ponder such a claim. Clearly, Issasesay – not to mention Allieu Kondewa and Moinina Fofana, the completely illiterate and honourable leaders of the Civil Defence Forces – were not given the benefit of the doubt.

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Opinion & Analysis: Taylor deserves harsh sentence

The argument that, like those responsible for the mass killings in Biafra, Nigeria, in the late 1960s, Charles Taylor should be “smothered with the kindness that he denied his victims”, is hardly a strong defence for clemency for this butcher of Liberia.

Nigeria, after Biafra, is hardly anywhere near what leaders that had proposed that amnesty would have hoped it to be, – corrupt; plagued by ethnic strife between Christians and Muslims; and rebels in the Delta seeking secession.

Hence, the proposal that for the sake of reconciliation and future development of Liberia Taylor be granted a lesser sentence seems to be very weak.

Taylor’s limbless victims who survived can hardly get back to proper civilian lives and any concession to Taylor, would be a gross betrayal of them.

The “tempered justice” that his defence team so ardently proposed at The Hague will create more monsters – some of whom still “predisde” over ethnic elimination in Chechnya, Kashmir, Palestine, Syria and Sri Lanka.

AR Modak
Johannesburg
The 3-minute interview: mark Vlasic

Vlasic is a senior fellow and adjunct professor of law at Georgetown University and a principal at Madison Law & Strategy Group. Vlasic served as a White House Fellow/special assistant to the Secretary of Defense and served on the Slobodan Milosevic and Srebrenica genocide prosecution trial teams at the United Nations war crimes tribunal.

Does last month's conviction of former Liberian President Charles Taylor set precedence for other war criminals? Yes! Taylor is the first major head of state to be convicted by an international tribunal. From this point forward, prosecutors and judges at future head of state trials will look to this case for jurisprudence -- and hopefully -- current and potential future war criminals will take notice that the impunity so often associated with such crimes is slowly coming to an end.

What are the biggest obstacles encountered when trying to track and retrieve stolen funds? Asset recovery cases are often multi-jurisdictional and complex. Experts employed to work on such matters confront bank secrecy issues. But what is often the greatest challenge to many cases is the sustained political will to see such cases to completion.

Are you optimistic that countries can recover funds from past dictators? Years ago, when 'Baby Doc' Duvalier of Haiti fled to France, he left with a plane for him and his family and another, reportedly, for much of the excess loot he allegedly acquired while in power. [Now] the world has a new international organization -- the joint United Nations and World Bank's Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative -- that is mandated to help countries with their efforts to recover stolen assets. And that the world's leaders have supported StAR leads me to believe that we are building the international political will necessary for countries to think "out of the box" in order to find creative solutions to helping recover stolen assets.

-- Sara A. Carter
Khmer Rouge war trial suspended

Judges at Cambodia's Khmer Rouge war crimes tribunal suspended proceedings on Monday as the oldest of the three former regime leaders on trial remained in hospital suffering from bronchitis.

Ieng Sary, 86, was rushed to hospital with breathing difficulties on Thursday afternoon. The hearing continued without him until the court, which does not sit on Fridays, adjourned for the weekend.

Ieng Sary is the most frail of the trio in the dock for their roles in the deaths of up to two million people in the late 1970s.

He will be discharged on Tuesday at the earliest, according to a doctor's report read out in court Monday which said the regime's former foreign minister had “strong bronchitis, which comes on top of existing cardiovascular issues”.

The UN-backed court will reconvene on Wednesday when judges will assess his condition, presiding judge Nil Nonn said.

Health fears have long hung over the tribunal with the octogenarian defendants all suffering from varying ailments, but this marks the first time one of them has been taken ill since their trial opened in November.

Lawyers for Ieng Sary told the court their client had not waived his right to be present at the trial and said proceedings should not continue without him.

“It's regrettable that Mr Ieng Sary is ill,” said defence lawyer Michael Karnavas, adding that his client is entitled to help with his own defence case.

“We cannot get instructions from Mr Ieng Sary if he is not present or at least following the proceedings by videolink,” he said. “We will have to wait until Mr Ieng Sary's health is better.”
Ieng Sary and his co-defendants - “Brother Number Two” Nuon Chea and former head of state Khieu Samphan - deny charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

Known as one of the few international faces of the secretive Khmer Rouge regime, Ieng Sary has exercised his right to remain silent during the trial.

The 1975-1979 regime oversaw one of the worst horrors of the 20th century, wiping out nearly a quarter of the population through starvation, overwork and execution in a bid to forge a communist utopia. - Sapa-AFP
STL Trial Chamber Sets June 13 Hearing for Arguments on Legality of Tribunal’s Creation

By Naharnet Newsdesk

The Special Tribunal for Lebanon Trial Chamber has scheduled a hearing on June 13 to hear arguments on the jurisdiction of the STL and the legality of its creation, announced the tribunal in statement on Monday.

“The defense counsel representing the four accused - Salim Ayyash, Mustafa Badreddine, Hussein Oneissi, and Assad Sabra - filed motions recently challenging the legality and jurisdiction of the tribunal,” it said.

In their motions, the Defense argued that the STL was established unlawfully and applies justice selectively.

It is common practice in international tribunals for the Defense to challenge the jurisdiction of the courts, explained the statement.

The Prosecution has until June 6 to file a response to the Defense motions, it revealed.

It added: “The landmark hearing will be another step towards trial in the case of Ayyash et al.”

The Trial Chamber ruled in February that the four accused would be tried in their absence.

The STL is the only existing international tribunal that can hold trials in absentia, since its statute includes elements of both Lebanese and international law.

Lawyers for the victims of the February 14, 2005 attack have been invited by the Trial Chamber to file observations on the challenges to the STL’s jurisdiction.

The tribunal's Registrar appointed legal representatives for the victims participating in proceedings last week.

Hizbullah members Ayyash, Badreddine, Oneissi, and Sabra are wanted for the February 2005 suicide car bomb attack in Beirut that killed former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and 22 others, including the suicide bomber.
The double standards of international justice

By Reed Brody

The sentencing of Charles Taylor and the trial of Ratko Mladic show how far international justice has come – but there is some way to go before powerful countries such as the US are held to account.

Opening night on May 16 for the movie The Dictator was also a landmark day for international justice. In one court in The Hague, Charles Taylor, the former Liberian president, had a sentencing hearing following his conviction for aiding wartime atrocities in Sierra Leone. In another, the war crimes trial opened for Bosnian Serb army chief Ratko Mladic, accused of the massacre of more than 7,000 Muslim men and boys at Srebrenica.

Both trials are evidence of the growing international trend to hold those responsible for serious international crimes to account, no matter how senior their position. Taylor's conviction was the first time since the post-Second World War Nuremberg trials that a former head of state has been found guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity by an international-backed tribunal. The Mladic trial is a salient reminder that justice catches up with those accused of mass atrocities. His arrest after years on the lam shows what can be achieved when states use their diplomatic muscle to enforce international justice.

To somewhat less notice the same day, in Strasbourg, the European Court of Human Rights heard a civil lawsuit against the Republic of Macedonia by Khaled el-Masri for what he says was his abduction, detention and mistreatment by the Central Intelligence Agency. His case, by comparison, shows how far we still have to go before international justice catches up to crimes allegedly committed by the most powerful countries.

El-Masri, a German citizen, says that in 2003 he was abducted while vacationing in Macedonia after local authorities stopped him because his name was similar to that of an al-Qaeda member. He claims he was beaten, stripped naked, given an enema and a diaper, and kept at the notorious "salt pit", the CIA's secret interrogation facility in Afghanistan. Nearly two months after determining they were holding the wrong man, and five months after his abduction, American officials arranged to have el-Masri dumped on a remote road in Albania.

Since then, el-Masri has sought redress from those responsible for his mistreatment, but has been thwarted at every turn. In 2005, he filed a civil suit in United States courts against George Tenet, then director of the CIA, but that case was dismissed on the ground that "the very subject of the litigation is itself a state secret." The US Supreme Court declined to review the case in 2007. The same year, a German prosecutor issued an arrest warrant for 13 CIA agents for their alleged role in his abduction. According to documents revealed by Wikileaks, a US diplomat in 2007 warned Berlin to "weigh carefully at every step of the way the implications for relations with the US," while another cautioned that seeking the extradition of the CIA agents involved in the abduction "would have a negative impact" on US-German relations. Germany did not seek the agents' extradition.

With no recourse against the US, el-Masri has been left to seek redress from Macedonia, a country that played only a secondary role in his ordeal. His petition against the US before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights is also pending. Human Rights Watch found solid grounds to investigate...
President George W. Bush and Tenet, as well as Bush's vice president Dick Cheney, and defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld, for authorising crimes such as "waterboarding" and the rendition of detainees to countries like Syria, Egypt and Libya where they were likely to be tortured. Yet President Barack Obama has rejected investigations of these officials.

The abuses at the CIA's secret prisons and Guantanamo do not reach the scale of killings by Mladic's forces at Srebrenica, nor the widespread brutality of the hacked off arms and legs by the Taylor-backed rebels, but international justice should admit of no double standards. At his sentencing hearing, Charles Taylor did not fail to make the point: "President George W. Bush not too long ago ordered torture and admitted to doing so," he said. "The US has refused to prosecute him. Is he above the law? Where is the fairness?"

The implication that Taylor should get off because other leaders remain protected from prosecution stands logic on its head, of course. No atrocity victim should be denied justice because others have not achieved it. When the US government shields its own officials from investigation and prosecution, however, it makes it easier for others to dismiss global efforts to bring the perpetrators of serious crimes to justice.

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