The Office of the Prosecutor trained police prosecutors in Kingtom on Friday and Saturday.

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, 21 May 2013

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

Freetown, 20 May 2013

Office of the Prosecutor Trains Police Prosecutors in Kingtom

The Office of the Prosecutor (OTP) concluded a two-day training of fifty police prosecutors at Kingtom Police Barracks on Saturday, held as part of the OTP’s ongoing effort to build capacity in Sierra Leone’s judicial sector.

The training was led by Special Court trial lawyer Mohamed Bangura, who recently returned home to Freetown after participating in the prosecution of former Liberian President Charles Taylor in The Hague.

The OTP had previously conducted trainings of police prosecutors in the Northern, Eastern and Southern Provinces and in the Western Area of Sierra Leone as part of a legacy programme which first started in 2009.

Mr. Bangura noted that criminal prosecutions in the Magistrates Courts are normally conducted by police officers, not lawyers, and that a failure to follow the proper procedures might result in cases being dismissed from court.

“In our trainings we generally target police officers who are new to police prosecutions, since the longer-serving police prosecutors often have learnt the proper procedure through experience over the years,” he said.

Topics covered in the training included the conducting of summary trials, preliminary investigations and tips in conducting proper investigations, case management and witness management. The training also looked at the application of the Larceny Act, 1916; the Domestic Violence Act, 2007; the Offences Against Persons Act, 1861; and the Sexual Offences Act, 2012.

#END
Office of the Prosecutor Trains Police Prosecutors in Kingtom Sierra Leone

By: SEM Contributor

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Outreach and Public Affairs Office, Special Court for Sierra Leone
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The Death of Africa’s Most Feared Rebel General

But is Sam ‘Maskita’ Bockarie actually dead?

“Mr Sam Bockarie (i.e. Mosquito) reportedly died in a shootout, Sunday night (4th May, 2003) with government security forces who got orders to arrest him for possible prosecution in Sierra Leone.

“Reports said when government security forces, who spotted Mr Bockarie, tried to arrest him, he refused to submit to the arrest and instead chose to engage them in a gun battle.

“During the fight that ensued, according to the report, Mr Bockarie’s bodyguards fired and killed a Liberian government soldier before he was himself shot and killed along with his backers.

“Mr Bockarie’s remains was brought to Monrovia and deposited at the Samuel Stryker Funeral Home in Sinkor, awaiting identification.”

Rudolph M. Mulbah, News Editor of the Monrovia Guardian

While Attempting To Evade Arrest- Sam Bockarie Finally Quenched!

(Alex Dunn, Guest Writer Monrovia Guardian Wednesday 7th May, 2003)

“Sam Bockarie has reportedly being killed by Liberian government troops while trying to forcefully re-enter Liberia from Cote d’Ivoire, where he had been involved in mercenary activities.”

Maskita and wife in Zambia

(Teacher Lemp Lemp in Concord Times
14th May, 2004)

Supposedly dead Sam Maskita Bockarie is in Zambia with his wife Hawa where the couple plans to settle until the dust over them settles, we have authoritatively learnt.

Our international investigations have confirmed that the corpse of Maskita, which is currently lying in our mortuary, is in fact the corpse of an Ivorian rebel who resembled the famous bush General.

The Ivorian rebel, whose name we have not yet been able to confirm, was amongst the company of men who accompanied Maskita from Ivory Coast to Liberia, reportedly with over five trucks full of ammunition that the General had planned to sell to President Charles Taylor.

Sources say, Maskita and his men were given a 72-hour ultimatum to leave Ivory Coast, when the Ivorian rebels decided he was getting too popular and “too big for his shoes.”

On arrival in Liberia, our source disclosed that Maskita disappeared, leaving his men at the mercy of the Liberian government.

“Most of these men have been hunted down by the ATU (Anti Terrorist Unit) in a desperate attempt to locate the whereabouts of Maskita,” our source in Liberia said.

Our source denied any shootout between Taylor’s forces and Maskita’s leading to the gunning down of the General. “That was one of Taylor’s many games. It never happened,” he said.

Meanwhile, the so-called corpse of Maskita has undergone post-mortem examination and is awaiting forensic operation to determine its authenticity.
Madam Bockarie denies son's corpse

Mada Bockarie has said that the corpse which the Liberian government has claimed to be Mosquito's could not be her son's.

The frail-looking mother was invited to the Samuel Stryker Funeral home in Sinkor, Monrovia, where the alleged remains of her son were laid awaiting identification.

But mother Bockarie emphatically said that the over-swollen corpse was not her dear son Sahr (not Sum) Bockarie.

"Please don't kill my son before his time. Sahr has a long way to go in this life, and he's all I've got," she said weeping.

Also present at the funeral parlour was Sierra Leone's Ambassador to Liberia, Mr Patrick James Foya, who also could not confirm that the body belonged to Mosquito. However, he promised to contact his government back home for advice on the matter.

General Sam Bockarie was allegedly killed less than a week after the Liberian government promised to co-operate with the Government of Sierra Leone and the Special Court for Sierra Leone in apprehending and extraditing both he and fugitive AFRC leader, Johnny Paul Koroma, to Sierra Leone once they were spotted on Liberian soil.

Mosquito and Johnny Paul were amongst several persons, including RUF boss Foday Saybana Sankoh and Kamajor Chief Sam Hinga Norman, indicted by the UN backed court for bearing the 'greatest responsibility' for heinous crimes committed against innocent civilians during Sierra Leone's civil war.
Human Rights Watch
Tuesday, 21 May 2013
Press Release

Côte d’Ivoire: 2 Years in, Uneven Progress

Root Causes of Politico-Military Violence Largely Unaddressed

(Nairobi, May 21, 2013) – Côte d’Ivoire’s government has made little progress in addressing root causes of the country’s decade of politico-military violence in the two years since President Alassane Ouattara’s inauguration on May 21, 2011, Human Rights Watch said today. These problems threaten the country’s long-term stability despite a strong economic rebound, Human Rights Watch said.

In the coming year, the Ivorian government should prioritize addressing these issues, including the lack of accountability among the security forces, the need for disarmament and security sector reform, and land conflict, Human Rights Watch said. The government should also build on its efforts to ensure that economic growth leads to improved protection of economic, social, and cultural rights, as well as civil and political rights.

“The Ouattara government may have made meaningful progress in rebuilding the economy and infrastructure after years of devastation by conflict and mismanagement,” said Matt Wells, West Africa researcher at Human Rights Watch. “But the lack of impartial justice as well as the failure to address other issues that underpin a decade of abuse could undermine longer-term prospects for stability and development.”

Internationally recognized results proclaimed Ouattara the winner of the November 2010 election, but Laurent Gbagbo, his opponent, refused to step down as president. That caused a five-month crisis during which at least 3,000 people were killed and 150 women raped, with forces on both sides often carrying out attacks along political, ethnic, and religious lines. Gbagbo was arrested on April 11, 2011, and ultimately transferred to the International Criminal Court (ICC), where he remains in custody while judges decide if there is enough evidence to try him for four counts of crimes against humanity.

Despite the destruction during the war and more recent security threats, the Ouattara government has made notable progress in a number of areas. The International Monetary Fund has reported nearly 10 percent economic growth in Côte d’Ivoire for 2012. The government is widely praised for improving the road system. Large infrastructure projects that aim to increase access to electricity and clean water have been announced. The government has increased the judiciary’s budget and become a state party to the ICC. And President Ouattara has made strong commitments to fight corruption. He has also been the chairman of the West African bloc ECOWAS since February 2012, helping lead the region’s response to the Malian crisis, among other initiatives.

But serious challenges remain, Human Rights Watch said. It is vitally important for economic growth, as well as increased government support for efforts such as improving the justice system and developing water and power resources, to lead to demonstrable improvements for Ivorians’ rights. These include key rights to justice, water, and security.

President Ouattara has repeatedly promised that all those responsible on both sides for serious international crimes during the post-election crisis will be brought to account, regardless of political affiliation. Prosecutors have charged more than 150 people from the Gbagbo camp with such crimes, including at least 55 with violent crimes like genocide, crimes against the civilian population, and murder. But no member of the pro-Ouattara forces has been charged for crimes committed during the crisis.
On May 18, Ivorian authorities detained Amadé Ouérémi, a Burkinabé cocoa planter and militia leader. Human Rights Watch implicated him in a command role in the March 2011 Duékoué massacre, in which several hundred people from typically pro-Gbagbo ethnic groups were summarily executed. His forces fought alongside President Ouattara’s Republican Forces during the offensive to remove Gbagbo from power. It was not clear whether Ouérémi’s detention was linked to possible grave crimes during the crisis or a result of his refusal to leave the protected forest region of Mont Peko, despite repeated demands by the government.

“People suspected of serious international crimes shouldn’t get a free pass just because they are linked to the government in power,” Wells said. “What happens next with Amadé Ouérémi will be telling. A credible investigation and, evidence permitting, prosecution would help heal the deep communal divisions in western Côte d’Ivoire and show that justice may finally be available to victims on both sides.”

The Ivorian authorities’ decision to investigate the serious crimes committed by Gbagbo’s forces and to reject the Gbagbo party’s frequent calls for a general amnesty has been a positive move, Human Rights Watch said. But many of those charged from the Gbagbo camp have been in pre-trial detention for more than two years. Ivorian authorities should move these cases to trial quickly, ensuring that the full rights of the accused are protected, Human Rights Watch said.

The Ivorian government should also cooperate fully with the ICC. On November 22, 2012, the ICC unsealed a February 2012 arrest warrant against Simone Gbagbo, the former president’s wife, who remains in Ivorian custody facing domestic charges of genocide, among other crimes.

Ivorian authorities have yet to respond formally to the ICC arrest warrant. At a news conference on April 29, Justice Minister Gnénéma Coulibaly said: “When we have finished reflecting [on the transfer request], we will tell the ICC what we plan to do. The more we take our time, the more our reflection improves.”

However, the failure to respond breaches the government’s obligation either to transfer her to ICC custody or to formally challenge the admissibility of her case before the ICC on the grounds that Côte d’Ivoire has ongoing proceedings for substantially the same crimes.

“Over a year after Ivorian authorities were probably informed of the warrant, they’ve had ample time to decide where they think Simone Gbagbo should be tried,” Wells said. “Côte d’Ivoire’s failure to comply with its legal obligation to cooperate with the ICC in this case is all the more startling given the government’s positive decision to become an ICC state party.”

Since President Ouattara’s inauguration, Côte d’Ivoire has faced regular security threats, marked by a series of attacks on military installations and civilians carried out by militants still loyal to Gbagbo. An April 2013 report by the UN Group of Experts on Côte d’Ivoire reinforced previous findings by Human Rights Watch and the International Crisis Group in showing links between financiers in Ghana, pro-Gbagbo militiamen and mercenaries along the Liberian-Ivorian border waging attacks, and other militants within Côte d’Ivoire.

However, in response to the security threats, members of the military have often engaged in serious human rights abuses, including widespread illegal detentions, inhuman treatment, torture, and, in at least few cases, extrajudicial killings. Some of the commanders implicated in these abuses were previously implicated by Human Rights Watch in a command role for serious crimes committed during the post-election crisis. The Ivorian government’s inadequate efforts to address ongoing rights abuses makes it more likely that some soldiers will continue resorting to such abuses during moments of tension, Human Rights Watch said.

The impunity for the security forces has also manifested itself in their involvement in criminal activity that often targets civilians. The UN Group of Experts found in its April report that, in consolidating their
power in response to the security threats, military commanders had created a “military-economic network” throughout the country marked by parallel taxation, extortion, and smuggling worth millions of dollars. Since 2002, many former rebel commanders who now occupy key military positions have overseen similarly lucrative taxation and smuggling in northern Côte d’Ivoire, as documented by Human Rights Watch and the UN.

The human rights abuses and illegal profiteering by the military shows the urgent need to accelerate disarmament and security sector reform, Human Rights Watch said. President Ouattara has notably taken a direct role in addressing these issues since naming himself defense minister in March 2012. But scant progress has been made in disarming and returning to civilian life the tens of thousands of youth who took up arms during the crisis. Ivorian civil society leaders, former combatants, and civilians who suffer violence and extortion at the hands of armed former fighters have all expressed frustration over the lack of disarmament progress.

The Ivorian government should also swiftly follow through on President Ouattara’s statement during a visit to western Côte d’Ivoire in early May that land reform would be a government priority in 2013. For more than a decade, conflict over land has led to bloody inter-communal clashes. Several attacks along the Liberian-Ivorian border in March appear directly related to land conflict, including the illegal dispossession or sale of land belonging to people who fled the region during the post-election conflict.

“The proliferation of small arms, continued weaknesses within the judiciary, politico-ethnic division, and land conflict have proven an explosive cocktail in Côte d’Ivoire for over a decade, with civilians suffering the most,” Wells said. “There is a pressing need to tackle these issues if the Ouattara government is to fulfill its promise of making the country a rights-respecting pillar of the region.”
Guatemala exhales!

The central American nation of Guatemala deserves congratulations for setting a historic precedent in the annals of justice. A local court there recently convicted a former military dictator, Gen. Rios Montt, for genocide and crimes against humanity and sentenced him to 80 years in jail.

The only two previous instances of ex-rulers being found guilty of the gravest of crimes were in international, not domestic, courts. Karl Dönitz, a Nazi who momentarily became President of the Third Reich after Adolf Hitler committed suicide at the end of World War II, was sentenced by the International Military Tribunal constituted by foreign powers at Nuremberg. In 2012, the former President of Liberia, Charles Taylor, was ruled guilty by a court in the Netherlands for involvement in war crimes in Sierra Leone and handed down a 50-year prison sentence.

What Guatemala has achieved by holding Gen. Montt to account for his horrific acts in front of his own people, in his own country, and at the hands of Guatemalan judges is a staggering step to heal the still festering wounds of a brutal civil war that lasted from 1960 to 1996 and claimed 200,000 lives.

Systematic killing, torture, forced displacement and rape was deployed under Gen. Montt’s “scorched earth” policy, which logged an average of 3,000 deaths and disappearances per month.

The roots of this genocide lay in a confluence of inherited colonial racism and Cold War anti-Communist frenzy propagated by the United States. Throughout Latin America, the social hierarchy of the post-colonial state was a continuation and reproduction of what the European conquerors had left in place. At the top of the order as ruling elites were the Criollos (descendants of white Europeans born in the so-called “New World”), followed by the Mestizos (people of mixed European and native origin who were prominent in the anti-colonial nationalist movements). At the bottom were persons of African descent and the “Indians” (i.e. native tribes known as the first nation people).

Gen. Montt’s Spanish-vintage beliefs about the “immaturity” and racial inferiority of the indigenous tribes (who happened to be the majority in Guatemala) made the state terror against them particularly vicious in the early 1980s. The great Uruguayan thinker, Eduardo Galeano, summarised the racism in post-colonial Guatemala as: “Nothing has changed in a century. Indians suffer the internal colonialism of the whites and Mestizos, blessed ideologically by the dominant culture (i.e. the colonial mindset).”

For a repressed society whose institutions replicated the Spanish caste system (a racial order to perpetuate social control over the poor and the indigenous people) to finally emerge on the side of justice against a military tyrant is a moment of catharsis. It was made possible by patient mass mobilisation and social activism of the tribals who have
been denied equality in Latin America for half a millennium. Guate-ma-lan aboriginals’ quest for dignity, immortalised by the efforts of Nobel Peace laureate Rigoberta Menchu, has culminated in the jailing of Gen. Montt.

It is no mean achievement, given that the current President of Guatemala, Otto Perez Molina, is himself a former military officer who oversaw the counter-insurgency operations in the Mayan ethnic territories during Gen. Montt’s authoritarian tenure. President Molina refuses to this day to accept that genocide ever occurred in the early 1980s, and the entire Right-wing establishment in Guatemala remains guiltless about the state’s violent past, which is justified for halting the spread of Communism.

Yet, to cite Reverend Martin Luther King, the “arc of the universe” did finally “bend toward justice” due to the political awakening and consciousness of indigenous people.

The former Chilean diplomat and scholar, Jorge Heine, has labelled the last decade “the most successful in Latin America’s history”—marked by sea changes in its domestic politics (the rise of previously marginalised masses via democratic revolutions like that of the late Hugo Chavez of Venezuela), economic fortunes (robust and resilient growth), regional structure (much stronger hemispheric unity and consensus among the area’s member states) and foreign relations (autonomous and largely free of Washington’s hegemony). The victory of the Mayan tribes in Guatemala’s courts is a testimony to the spirit of this new, self-confident Latin America, where the ghosts of military domination and heavy-handed US interference are being exorcised.

The presiding judge in Gen. Montt’s case has instructed prosecutors to immediately launch an investigation of “all others” who conspired in the crimes against humanity during the early 1980s. Genocide is such a gargantuan crime in scale that it can never be purely internal or domestic in terms of planning and execution.

Gen. Montt was a close ally of the US government of President Ronald Reagan. The extermination campaigns of his military took place with inputs and cooperation from Washington, which had installed military rule in Guatemala in 1954 for the sake of maintaining a stranglehold over its natural resources.

Like all coup-makers and mass killers who lorded over Latin America in the Cold War era, Gen. Montt was a trainee from the notorious US military training academy, School of the Americas. No international institution has coached more autocrats to butcher their peoples in coordinated fashion than this school, located in the state of Georgia.

The US government did apologise during Bill Clinton’s presidency for the “wrong” role it played in the Guate-malan civil war. But so close was the integration of Gen. Montt’s killing machine with the CIA and the White House that one should ask why President Reagan got away without a trial.

How long will the crimes of the mighty remain unaddressed? In 1980, when Western-backed dictatorships were bleeding Latin America, Galeano made a profound remark: “Our devices for mincing human flesh are part of an international machinery.”

Guatemala has moved towards closure of a dark chapter, but it is time a united Latin America demands full acknowledgement and repentance for the crimes of imperialism that emanated from Washington from the 1940s until 1991 in the disguise of containing communism.

The author is dean at the Jindal School of International Affairs