A seaman naps at sea on a narrow plank in a rocking pampa (wooden boat)

PRESS CLIPPINGS

Enclosed are clippings of local and international press on the Special Court and related issues obtained by the Outreach and Public Affairs Office as at:
Friday, 21 June 2013

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

The Sierra Leone Police at long last have arrested Ibrahima Bah, the alleged Senegalese arms and diamond merchant for both the imprisoned former Liberia leader Charles Taylor, as well as for the late Sierra Leone rebel leader Foday Sankoh; thanks to the Africa Confidential magazine and the Sierra Leone media. Ibrahima Bah is reported to have allegedly supplied and traded arms and diamonds for the two rebel leaders throughout the civil conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone that lasted for 13 years and 11 years respectively.

While Ibrahima Bah was placed under the United Nations travelling ban, he has been living conspicuously in Sierra Leone since 2008 as to suggest that government knew about his residence in the country but doing nothing about it; only when the press raised the red flag about his presence in the country that the police finally moved to have him arrested for investigation.

It is a strange phenomenon that a man of the criminality of Ibrahima Bah also known as Ibrehima Balde who had struck stinking rich on blood money on account of the mayhem, murder, rape, mutilation, torture, forced labour and abduction that were brought to bear on innocent Sierra Leoneans could have been living among the same people without hindrance; yea without the state security doing nothing about it.

How secure are we when this man had continued to live among us in opulence and flagrant display of wealth probably with the knowledge of state security about his character? Does the state security network want to tell Sierra Leoneans and our development partners that had the press not raised the alarm Ibrahima Bah would have continued to live with us with no idea what his next plans are? We must be living dangerously in this country with such lax of our state security. It may suffice to suggest then that some people may have been on Bah’s payroll in order to keep quiet.

So far so good about Ibrahima Bah’s case; but what about the alleged 850 mercenaries that are also reportedly allegedly living among us in the country with their alleged office in the centre of Freetown? The people cannot wait for the police to also come out with some information on this especially when this same Ibrahima Bah has connexion with Burkina Faso where he lived for sometimes. Burkina Faso was one of the conduits through where arms and ammunitions were channeled to Charles Taylor and Foday Sankoh during the conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone; the country is a haven for hired mercenaries.

When it comes to state security matter it should be no half-way house affair. Therefore, the people also want to know the truth or not, about the alleged 850 mercenaries.
The New Storm
Friday, 21 June 2013

ON THE HUNT FOR GEN. IBRAHIM BA

The UN Security Council has him on its Travel Ban, but he travels with several names and aliases, most prominent being IBRAHIM BA, or Ibrahim Ba. He is a Senegalese, but considers himself a Pan-Africanist, having been involved in civil conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Ivory Coast, among others. He even had a brief stint with the MUJAHIDEEN in Afghanistan, who were fighting against Soviet occupation. What a "revolutionary" guy!

Yes, Gen. Ibrahim Ba was a close associate of the late Libyan dictator, Col. Gaddafi and aided former Liberian leader Charles Taylor. He served as a conduit or middleman, between the two men and Salone's RUF rebels, trading "blood" diamonds, for lethal weapons.

Now he is wanted by the UN and Interpol, for alleged crimes against humanity. What is strange though, is that Gen. Ibrahim Ba, is said to be in the custody of the Sierra Leonean authorities, but allegedly "protected" by the powers-that-be. We don't want to delve into this, for now. But, let's look at other players in the bawdy SIERRA LEONE conflict, on the run, and who might be of interest to JUSTICE-SEEKERS, like NAZI war criminals.

1. BASSAM SHINDANI: he goes by the alias MUSTAFA BASEL, and travels on both names, and more. He is Lebanese, an ex-Hezbollah fighter who joined the RUF and was a colonel in the rebel outfit. Col BASSAM Shindani was working directly with Gen. Ibrahim Ba. Gen. Ndala Scary and Gen. Moskita, facilitating the trade in RUF "blood" diamonds for lethal weapons, to fuel the war machinery... Go search for him.

2. MAJOR POPE JOHN POUL: He served in the Salone army and gave an exemplary performance, both as a fighter and commander. He also travels with various NAMES such as Johnny Paul, JPK, the Savior and Johnny Paul Koroma. The man lost his SENSES and pitched tents with a gang.

3. FATOU MBAYE: She is the Senegalese-American lawyer, who abandoned her lucrative practice in New Jersey, came and married Foday.

Foday Sankoh, Gen. Ba's buddy of misfits and anarchists, in the Sierra Leone army, in a stupid coup, that ended the war, and discovered the country and dismembering tens of thousands of souls. Why not go look out for him?

4. COL. MIKE LAMIN: He was one of the most powerful RUF commanders and even held a cabinet position, in the post-war COALITION government of president Kabbah that brought RUF people into government. But, Mike has been missing in action, for far too long and needs to come and give ACCOUNT of how diamonds were traded for weapons, and the countless RUF massacres in the NINETIES. And finally....

5. COL. SAVAGE: What more evidence do you need than the SAVAGE PIT and the Slaughter House at Tombodu, in KONO? Hundreds of the savage animal's victims were dismembered there, and the guy is still on the LOOSE. Why not just go get the mass MURDERER and put him on trial?
Unfinished business in Sierra Leone - justice must be done

By Elise Keppler

Sierra Leone's international partners – including European governments – have an important role to play in encouraging the country to move forward with an investigation into alleged war crimes – writes campaigner

Late last month, a seemingly technical United Nations report contained a major revelation: Ibrahim Bah has been living in Freetown, Sierra Leone, since 2008 and even his street address is known. The name Ibrahim Bah is far from a household name but his alleged role in the civil war that ravaged Sierra Leone from 1991 to 2002 and devastated the lives of so many is very significant.

Bah is a Senegalese national alleged to have provided arms and supplies to the rebel Revolutionary United Front, according to UN sources and findings by the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone. The rebel group was known for its signature crime of traumatic amputation, among other horrific abuses. Bah is said to have been a close associate of former President Charles Taylor of Liberia, who was indicted by the Special Court in 2003 for his role in crimes committed in Sierra Leone's conflict.

After three years of safe haven in Nigeria Taylor was apprehended, then tried and convicted by the Special Court for fueling rebel crimes by providing arms and other military assistance. He was sentenced to more than 50 years in prison. The judgment was issued in 2012 and is on appeal. So what to do with Bah? Sierra Leone authorities have important reasons for using their domestic authority to open a criminal investigation into Bah's role in fueling atrocities committed during the conflict.

After completing trials between 2002 and 2009 of eight former leaders of the warring factions in Sierra Leone for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the war, the UN-backed Special Court is winding down operations. A domestic investigation would provide a measure of redress to
victims of those crimes. It would also send a clear signal that the country is committed to fully ensuring justice for the gravest crimes committed during the conflict and making the most of international support provided to the country to promote accountability through the Special Court's work.

The Netherlands and United Kingdom – along with the United States and Canada – have been major donors among a number of other European funders to the Special Court. One of the hoped-for legacies of the Special Court is that it would help build domestic capacity to try the gravest crimes. Sierra Leone investigators, prosecutors and defense counsel have all worked at the special court and had the opportunity to learn from its practice.

While Sierra Leone's domestic law lacks some definitions of international crimes, people can be charged with ordinary crimes that underlie them - such as murder and rape. Moreover, although the country granted an amnesty to the rebels in 1999 that was terminated after the rebels carried out new atrocities. In any event, such amnesties run counter to fundamental international legal principles that mandate prosecution for widespread atrocities.

Meanwhile, Sierra Leone's international partners – including European governments – have an important role to play in encouraging the country to move forward with a criminal investigation of Bah. The special court's work made a vital contribution but it also was only able to hold a handful of people who committed the gravest crimes during the conflict to account.

Its work should not be the end of the road and Sierra Leone authorities should help ensure justice for the victims by taking up domestic cases involving the gravest crimes. By signaling the importance of the country taking action, international partners moreover can help Sierra Leone pave the way for greater respect for human rights and rule of law in the country.

*Elise Keppler is senior international justice counsel at the Human Rights Watch campaign group*
Human Rights Groups Call for arrest of Ibrahim Bah

LEAD-IN: The campaign group Human Rights Watch has called on the Government of Sierra Leone to open criminal investigations against a suspected Senegalese arms supplier who it says is currently being held by police. Ibrahim Bah is believed to be a former aide to the former Liberian President and convicted war criminal Charles Taylor. He’s on a United Nations travel ban list, and is alleged to have supplied arms in Sierra Leone during the 1990s. As Umaru Fofana reports from Freetown, there are concerns as to how a man believed to pose a great risk to the region has been living and undetected in the country for many years.

FOFANA: His name is Ibrahim Bah, aka Ibrahim Balde, He's a Senegalese national who is wanted by the international police force INTERPOL. The United Nations says he was a key figure in the sale of arms to the RUF rebels and was involved in the illicit sale of Sierra Leonean diamonds and guns in exchange. In 2004 he was placed on the UN travel ban which is still in force. There is confusion over the identity of a man being held by police in Freetown. After pressure from Human Rights Watch and the local campaign group The Centre for Accountability and the Rule of Law (CARL), police have now confirmed that they are holding a certain Ibrahim Balde. The police director of Com Services, Assistant Inspector of Police Morie Lengor, told me by phone that he could not tell whether the man being held [words indistinct] was the same man being sought by INTERPOL or on the UN travel ban list. This despite his photo and his name being on the INTERPOL website. Neither the police nor the Minister of Internal Affairs, or even the Attorney-General to whom they all referred me, will answer any questions about the man or the manner of his arrest.

CARL’s Executive-Director Ibrahim Tommy is in no doubt that the man being held is the man being sought by INTERPOL.

TOMMY: It’s a shame that Ibrahim Bah/Balde, who has been on the UN travel ban and assets freeze list for a long time, entered this country since 2008 and has been living here, apparently comfortably – it speaks volumes for the capacity of our intelligence-gathering infrastructure.

FOFANA: A report presented in May to the UN Security Council by the Panel of Experts said the Ibrahim who had been living in the west of Freetown for five years and now in police custody is the same man on their watch list, and that they interviewed him on telephone and he confirmed his identity but refused to answer any further questions. Tommy said there is sufficient ground to charge Ibrahim Balde to court.

TOMMY: We think the Sierra Leone Police, or indeed government, is under obligation to launch an investigation, and based on our interaction with some of the victims of Bah’s activities, we think that there is sufficient evidence for the Sierra Leone government to bring him to justice here in Sierra Leone.

FOFANA: Masood Khan, the Pakistani foreign representative of the United Nations (sic.), told the Security Council last week that Ibrahim Balde and his Liberian counterpart Benoni Urey, both on the UN travel ban, commanded considerable resources with the capacity to [word indistinct] peace and security in the sub-region. An inside source told me that government is embarrassed over the whole episode and is not sure how to respond to it.
Voice of America
Thursday, 20 June 2013

Trusted Ally of Charles Taylor Located in Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone's rebel leader Foday Sankoh (2nd R) is flanked by senior aides at the formal opening in Lome, Togo of talks. Others (from left) are Sankoh's military adviser General Ibrahim Bah, Solomon "Pa" Rogers and Omrie Golley, (File photo).

Robbie Corey-Boulet

DAKAR — A man suspected of heavy involvement in the transfer of arms and “blood diamonds” during Sierra Leone’s brutal civil war has been found living in the capital city, Freetown. Rights groups are calling for a criminal investigation of Ibrahim Bah, who was a top associate of former Liberian president Charles Taylor during the conflict.

Senegalese national, Ibrahim Bah, has been under a U.N. travel ban since 2004 for his alleged role in helping former Liberian president Charles Taylor support Sierra Leone’s Revolutionary United Front rebel group. That support helped destabilize the country, while granting Taylor access to Sierra Leone's diamonds.

Last year, the U.N.-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone found Taylor guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity, sentencing him to 50 years in prison. In their ruling against the former Liberian president, judges said Bah was a “trusted emissary” between Taylor and the rebels, who killed and maimed thousands of people during the war.
Bah’s whereabouts were unknown until last month, when a U.N. expert panel placed him in Freetown, saying he had been living there since 2008.

The executive director of the Center for Accountability and Rule of Law in Sierra Leone, Ibrahim Tommy, said it is important that all main perpetrators be tried for their actions during the civil war, even if they were not as famous as Taylor.

"Ibrahim Bah was one of the key supporters, one of the key aides to former Liberian president Charles Taylor and the RUF, who helped him pillage Sierra Leone’s diamonds and even allegedly committed forced labor and enslavement against the people of Sierra Leone," Tommy said. "We think that bringing him to justice will help combat the impunity gap that currently exists in the country, particularly for mid-level commanders who participated in the conflict, but also for foreign nationals whose only interest in the conflict in this country was to loot our resources."

The report detailing Bah’s whereabouts was published on May 31. According to a U.N. statement, Sierra Leonean authorities arrested Bah less than a week later.

A Sierra Leone police official said Wednesday that someone going by the name Ibrahim Bah had been arrested, but then released on bail after he denied being the same person accused of associating with Taylor during the war. The official, Morie Lengor, said police are working with Interpol to confirm Bah’s identity.

Tommy said it would be important to have Bah tried in Sierra Leone. Because of security concerns, Taylor was tried in The Hague, far removed from the region he destabilized for years.

"The most important significance, I would think, is that it would certainly demonstrate the government’s commitment to promoting accountability and to even strengthening our national accountability mechanisms," said Tommy.

Human Rights Watch has also joined the call for Bah to be investigated and possibly prosecuted.

In a statement Wednesday, the New York-based watchdog noted the case would be the “first purely domestic prosecution” concerning international crimes committed during Sierra Leone’s 11-year conflict, which ended in 2002.
A notorious arms supplier and top associate of former Liberian President Charles Taylor has been living freely in Sierra Leone's capital city, according to United Nations experts.

A Sierra Leone police official said Wednesday that a man going by the same name as the suspect, Ibrahim Bah, was detained after the U.N. experts' allegations were published on May 31. But the official, Morie Lengor, said the man was released on bail after denying he was the same man fingered in the report.

Human Rights Watch on Wednesday urged the government to launch criminal proceedings against Bah, a Senegalese national accused of supporting rebel groups involved in killings and amputations during Sierra Leone's 11-year civil war that ended in 2002.

"Sierra Leone has taken major steps over the past decade to promote justice for serious crimes committed during its horrific civil war and to build respect for the rule of law," said Corinne Dufka, senior West Africa researcher for HRW. "Investigating Bah for possible criminal prosecution would be an important way to build on this progress."

Taylor received a 50-year sentence in May 2012 for supporting the rebels in Sierra Leone in exchange for "blood diamonds." Defense lawyers disputed the allegations, pointing out that Taylor did not physically travel to Sierra Leone. But judges at the Special Court for Sierra Leone found there was enough evidence to link Taylor to the crimes, and identified Bah as a "trusted emissary" who served as a liaison between Taylor and the rebels.

"He was a businessman who helped arrange arms and diamond transactions," the judges said of Bah in their verdict against Taylor.

Bah, 62, met Taylor in Benghazi, Libya in 1988 while working as a trainer in military camps, according to the report from U.N. experts. He spent four years training in special warfare in Libya in the 1980s, and also served as a bodyguard to former Libya dictator Moammar Gadhafi.

He was believed to be in Burkina Faso when he was placed on a U.N. travel ban in 2004.

But the May 31 report from U.N. experts said Bah had been living in Freetown since 2008 with a Senegalese passport under the name Ibrahima Balde. The report also says Bah tried to recruit mercenaries for Ivory Coast's 2010-11 postelection conflict.

Although Bah was not put on trial by the Special Court for Sierra Leone, a joint court set up by the West African nation's government and the United Nations, HRW's Dufka said that in no way precluded a local trial.

"The Special Court has made a vital contribution, but its work should not be the end of the road," Dufka said. "Domestic cases are also needed to more fully ensure justice for the graves crimes committed during Sierra Leone's war."
Top gun runner for Charles Taylor arrested in Freetown

by Michael Petrou

Ibrahim Bah, who acted as a liaison between former Liberian dictator Charles Taylor and a rebel army of child soldiers in neighbouring Sierra Leone, has been arrested in Freetown, according to a reliable and well-placed source.

For years, Bah managed the pipeline that fed weapons and other materiel such as satellite phones to the Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone in exchange for diamonds sent back to Liberia.

Child soldiers filled the RUF’s ranks. Enslaved Sierra Leonean civilians mined the diamonds.

Last year the United Nations-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone found Charles Taylor guilty of aiding and abetting war crimes and crimes against humanity, including murder, terrorism, and conscripting child soldiers.

The Special Court concluded that Bah was a “trusted emissary” for both Taylor and the RUF.

Bah has been the subject of a United Nations travel ban since 2004, accused of being an arms dealer in contravention of a UN Security Council resolution demanding that Liberia cease its support for rebels in Sierra Leone.

Originally from Senegal, Bah fought with the mujahideen in Afghanistan during the 1980s, and briefly with Hezbollah in southern Lebanon, according to Douglas Farah, author of Blood From Stones: The Secret Financial Network of Terror. He also trained in terror camps run by former Libyan dictator Muammar Gadhafi — for whom he served as bodyguard.

Charles Taylor first met Bah in Libya in 1988. The following year, with Gadhafi’s support and fighters from his camps, Taylor launched a rebellion against the Liberian government of Samuel Doe. The subsequent civil war lasted seven years and killed some 200,000 people. There was a brief lull during which Taylor was elected president, and then another four-year phase of the war began in 1999, killing tens of thousands more.

Shortly after beginning the Liberian civil war, Taylor helped create the RUF, which triggered a bloody civil war in Sierra Leone that lasted until 2002.
Ibrahim Bah’s role running diamonds and weapons made him rich. Farah says Taylor pocketed about a third of what international dealers paid for the RUF-mined diamonds. Bah got half of that. The weapons they sent in exchange were worth far less than the diamonds.

Bah disappeared about a decade ago and was thought to be in Burkina Faso. This year a UN panel of experts report placed him in Sierra Leone. Today Human Rights Watch urged Sierra Leone to open an investigation into Bah’s alleged crimes.

There are conflicting reports out of Sierra Leone concerning Bah’s status. Today a police official said a man sharing Bah’s name had been arrested but was released after he claimed he was a victim of mistaken identity. The Maclean’s source says the Ibrahim Bah who was arrested is in fact Taylor’s former associate, and he suspects the man is still in custody.
South African Press Agency (SAPA)
Wednesday, 19 June 2013

Top Taylor ally found in Sierra Leone

File - Former Liberian President Charles Taylor appears in court at the Special Court for Sierra Leone in Leidschendam, western Netherlands. REUTERS/Peter Dejong/Pool

Freetown, Sierra Leone - United Nations experts say a notorious arms supplier and top associate of former Liberian President Charles Taylor has been living freely in Sierra Leone's capital city.

A Sierra Leone police official said Wednesday that a man going by the same name as the suspect, Ibrahim Bah, was detained after the U.N. experts' allegations were published on May 31.

But the official, Morie Lengor, said the man was released on bail after denying he was the same man fingered in the report.

Human Rights Watch on Wednesday urged the government to launch criminal proceedings against Bah, accused of supporting rebel groups involved in killings and amputations during Sierra Leone's 11-year civil war that ended in 2002.

U.N. experts say Bah also tried to organize mercenaries for Ivory Coast's 2010-11 postelection conflict. - Sapa-AP
NAIROBI, Kenya, June 19 (UPI) -- Human Rights Watch called on the government of Sierra Leone to open a criminal investigation into an associate of former Liberian President Charles Taylor.

At least 50,000 people were killed during Sierra Leone's civil war, which ended in 2002. Taylor was sentenced last year by a U.N. special court to 50 years in prison for aiding and abetting crimes against humanity committed by rebel forces in the country during the conflict.

Human Rights Watch said Taylor's associate, Ibrahim Bah, was seen in Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone. The rights group said he's suspected of arming rebels during the 11-year civil war.

"Now that Bah has been located in Freetown, Sierra Leone authorities should promptly open a criminal investigation," lead West Africa researcher Corinne Dufka said in a statement from Nairobi.

Bah was the target of a travel ban imposed by the U.N. Security Council in 2004. He was allegedly living in neighboring Burkina Faso, but may have been in Sierra Leone for several years.

Taylor is appealing his 2012 conviction. There have been eight convictions for crimes committed during Sierra Leone's civil war.

"Investigating Bah for possible criminal prosecution would be an important way to build on this progress," Dufka said.
Rwandan genocide: Sweden jails Stanislas Mbanenande

A Swedish court has sentenced a man of Rwandan origin to life in jail for his part in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda in which some 800,000 people were killed.

Stanislas Mbanenande, now a Swedish citizen, was found guilty of taking part in several massacres of mainly ethnic Tutsis in the 100-day genocide.

The court in the Swedish capital, Stockholm, agreed he had played a leading role among Hutu extremists.

He is the first person in Sweden to be found guilty of genocide.

Mbanenande, who was a civil engineer and lecturer in Rwanda and was granted Swedish citizenship in 2008, had denied the charges.

During his trial, Swedish judges flew to Rwanda to hear from some witnesses, with the defendant participating via video link.

Mbanenande not only recruited young men to take part in the killings but was also involved in those that occurred in a school, a Catholic church, a hotel and a stadium in Kibuye, a city in western Rwanda, the court said.

"The accused had an informal role as a leader and himself fired at the crowd with an automatic weapon," Swedish newspaper The Local quotes the district court verdict as saying.

Rwanda had asked Sweden to extradite Mbanenande to face genocide charges, but Stockholm refused as he was a Swedish citizen.
A Rwandan community "gacaca" court then sentenced him to life in prison in absentia in 2009.

Mbanenande's lawyer, Tomas Nilsson, said his client would appeal.

"We are of the opinion that we must make an appeal because the judgement isn't clear and safe enough," he said.

"He [Mbanenande] totally denies all the accusations and he has done from the first time that he was confronted with them."
Uhuru Kenyatta trial moved to November

The International Criminal Court (ICC) has pushed back the trial of Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta to 12 November.

The decision was taken to give Mr Kenyatta's defence enough time to prepare for his trial, the ICC said.

Mr Kenyatta is accused of orchestrating violence after the 2007 election, an allegation he denies.

The African Union has called for the trial to be halted, saying the ICC was "hunting" Africans.

'Murder charge'

The ICC has refused to drop the charges, saying it pursues justice impartially.

It had rescheduled Mr Kenyatta's trial from 9 July to 12 November after judges ruled that defence lawyers should be given more time to prepare for his trial "due to the delays by the prosecution in disclosing its evidence", the ICC said in a statement.

Mr Kenyatta is charged with crimes against humanity, including murder and rape.

The ICC accuses him of being an "indirect co-perpetrator" in the violence that killed about 1,200 people and left more than 500,000 homeless after the disputed 2007 election.

Mr Kenyatta was elected president in March, beating then-Prime Minister Raila Odinga by 50.07% to 43.28%.

He used the charges to bolster his campaign, accusing the ICC of interfering in Kenya's internal affairs.
Kenya's Deputy President William Ruto is due to go on trial in September on similar charges.

On Tuesday, the ICC agreed that Mr Ruto only needs to be "physically present" at key sessions of his trial.

He had requested to participate in the trial via video link.

Mr Ruto and Mr Kenyatta were on opposite sides of the 2007 election, but formed an alliance for this year's election.

Mr Kenyatta backed his predecessor, Mwai Kibaki, in the 2007 election, while Mr Ruto supported Mr Odinga.

The names of key suspects involved in violence after the 2007 poll were handed over to the ICC by Kofi Annan, who brokered a power-sharing deal.

He did so after Kenyan politicians failed to set up a tribunal as promised to try those accused of instigating the violence.