



U.C. Berkeley War Crimes Studies Center Sierra Leone Trial Monitoring Program Weekly Report

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Summary Witness Profile at a Glance Evidence at Trial Formation of the Supreme Council Movement from Freetown to Kono after the “Intervention” Occupation at Kono Lines of communication between Kono, Kailahun and Koinadugu Defense objects to treatment of witness as an expert witness Defense counsel forgets his client’s name

Summary

The prosecution began hearing testimony from its key insider witness, TF1-334, in the AFRC trial this week. The witness testified solely in examination-in-chief and is likely to continue doing so for at least one week to come. Given the highly sensitive nature of the witness’s testimony, the witness’s identity was not disclosed to the public. [Witness Profile at a Glance](#)

Witness TF1-334, a key insider witness in the prosecution’s case, disclosed all his personal details in closed session. However, the prosecution established in open session that the witness was a security officer to one of the members of the Supreme Council. In order to protect the witness’s identity, the commander in question was referred to as “A”. The witness gave evidence in Krio, with the use of voice distortion.

Evidence at Trial

Witness TF1-334 is slated to give detailed testimony regarding almost all the alleged atrocities that took place throughout the various periods outlined in the consolidated indictment. This week, the witness testified to the events precipitating the AFRC’s overthrow of the Kabbah government in May 1997, the formation of the Supreme Council (the sole executive and legislative authority within Sierra Leone during the junta period) and the RUF/AFRC movement out of Freetown to Kono after 12 February 1998, when ECOMOG is alleged to have launched an offensive against them known as the “Intervention”.

A large portion of the witness’s testimony centered on the AFRC and the RUF command structures during 1997 and 1998. In particular, the witness was questioned about the military hierarchies in the Kono district, the nature of the relationship between the RUF and the AFRC and the communications between subordinate and superior commanders within these rebel and junta militias. Despite lengthy objections from the defense regarding the speculative nature of the witness’s evidence, the prosecution sought to establish that the witness had knowledge of a distinct structure within the AFRC that placed the second accused, Ibrahim “Bazzy” Kamara, at

the apex of the junta military operations in the Kono district during the early half of 1998. “Bazzy” allegedly appointed the first accused, Tamba Alex Brima (aka “Gullit”) as SLA commander-in-charge upon his arrival in Kono in May of that year, from which point he acted as Gullit’s deputy. The third accused, Santigie Borbor Kanu, is alleged to have worked closely with the Vice Chairman of the Supreme Council, SAJ Musa, allegedly based in Koinadugu at this time. He was later appointed Chief of Staff under Gullit’s command when the AFRC moved to Mansofinia in the Koinadugu district.

Formation of the Supreme Council

The week began with the witness giving detailed testimony relating to the initial overthrow of the Kabbah government and the formation of the Supreme Council. Despite lengthy objections from the defense, the prosecution was allowed to show the witness a series of government proclamations issued by the AFRC in May 1997 that evidenced the formation of the council and the appointment of various individuals.

The witness testified that the seventeen instigators of the coup responsible for the overthrow of the Kabbah government were originally members of an SLA football team. These coup-plotters subsequently formed the Supreme Council, which comprised of a Chairman, Johnny Paul Koroma (aka “JPK”), a Vice Chairman, SAJ Musa, a series of Principal Liaison Officers (or “PLOs”) who were responsible for the supervising the “day-to-day” activities of the newly formed regime and Honourables [1]. The PLOs and the Honourables were allegedly under the command of Johnny Paul Koroma and directly answerable to the Vice Chairman, SAJ Musa. Both the first and the second accused were named as PLOs. While the witness did not name the third accused, Santigie Borbor Kanu, as a member of the Supreme Council, he later recalled that Kanu was one of the men who carried out the coup [2].

Movement from Freetown to Kono after the “Intervention”

After establishing the foundation that the accused held positions of command and control within the Supreme Council, the prosecution’s line of questioning shifted to the events that occurred immediately following the Intervention.

The prosecution alleges that when ECOMOG forces intervened in Freetown in February 1998, AFRC/RUF forces retreated via the Western Area through the districts of Bombali and Koinadugu. The rebels and juntas allegedly re-grouped in the Kono district, where they launched a series of attacks to capture and control the area. This allegation was supported by the testimony of Witness TF1-334 this week, who testified that he and Commander “A” were part of a convoy of approximately one hundred and fifty vehicles that accompanied Johnny Paul Koroma through Kabala (in the Koinadugu district) to Kono.

According to the witness, the AFRC initially moved to Masiaka, where they met with several other senior RUF and SLA commanders, including the three accused and Dennis Mingo (aka “Superman”). Johnny Paul Koroma is alleged to have launched “Operation Pay Yourself”, an operation that gave carte blanche to SLA and RUF combatants to loot property from civilians. The witness said that he saw evidence of this looting throughout Lunsar and Makeni, where the widespread destruction of property is alleged to have taken place. The prosecution did not lead any direct evidence implicating the accused in the looting of property, although they are alleged to have been present when the order was given.

The witness also alleged that women and young girls were abducted at Makeni, although no evidence was led regarding who abducted the women or what subsequently happened to them after they were abducted.

Occupation at Kono

The witness gave extensive evidence relating to the planned RUF and AFRC attacks in the Kono district during 1998. According to the witness, Johnny Paul Koroma held two meetings with members of the RUF and AFRC high command reiterating the importance of establishing Kono as a junta stronghold. Kono was considered strategically important for the RUF/AFRC, due to its rich diamond resources [3].

The RUF/AFRC operations in Kono initially centered in Koidu Town, where they divided forces to defend separate quarters of the city [4]. From there, Johnny Paul Koroma is alleged to have moved to the RUF/AFRC headquarters in the Kailahun district where he remained with Sam Bockarie; SAJ Musa moved to the Koinadugu district; and Superman remained in Gandorhun in Kono.

While Superman was the “overall commander” of Kono at this time, the most senior AFRC commander in charge in the Kono district is alleged to have been the third accused, Ibrahim “Bazzy” Kamara. Bazzy’s direct subordinate was allegedly Commander “A”. According to the witness, the joint forces of the RUF/AFRC deployed battalions of between 80 ? 100 men in the towns of Jagbwema Fama, Tombodu, Bumpe, Sewafe, Yengema, Woama, Kayima and Gandorhun. The commander in charge of Tombodu, Captain Mohamed Savage (aka “Changabulanga”) [5] has been implicated as creating the “Savage Pit” in Tombodu, a mass grave filled with the bodies of civilians he allegedly slaughtered.

In its attempt to show that a clear chain of command existed between the accused and the battalion commanders, the prosecution sought to establish that the battalion commanders at all these locations reported directly to Commander “A”, who reported directly to the third accused. To support this allegation further (and alluding to the existence of a joint criminal enterprise), the prosecution also questioned the witness on the relationship between senior commanders of the RUF and the third accused. The witness testified that the relationship between RUF and AFRC commanders was cordial and that the groups would sometimes undertake joint operations.

Lines of communication between Kono, Kailahun and Koinadugu

The prosecution also sought to establish that the commanders in Kono both received orders and reported to Sam Bockarie (aka “Mosquito”) based at Kailahun. According to the witness, all radio communication in Kono was controlled by the RUF: while members of the AFRC were allowed to monitor communication, control of the radio set resided with Superman in his residence at Gandorhun. The witness was privy to a series of communications between Mosquito and Superman, including a radio communication where Mosquito ordered the troops to take control of Koidu Ngeiya, alleged to be a Kamajor stronghold for much of the early part of 1998.

During the time these radio communications were taking place, the third accused, Santigie Borbor Kanu (aka “Five-five”) was allegedly based in Koinadugu and reported directly to SAJ Musa on the situation in the Kono district. Defense objects to treatment of witness as an expert witness

Defense counsel for each of the first, second and third accused raised several objections during the course of Witness TF1-334’s examination-in-chief, the most strenuous of which related to the prosecution’s treatment of the witness as an expert witness. In particular, counsel for the third accused argued that the witness was being asked questions on substantive elements of the command structure of the AFRC for which the witness did not have the competence to answer. Furthermore, he argued that the witness was being asked to comment on documentary evidence relating to proceedings he had not attended.

The bench cautioned the prosecution to avoid asking the witness to make speculative comments. The Presiding Judge noted that, while some of the evidence given by the witness amounted to hearsay evidence and was admissible in the rules of international jurisprudence, some of the evidence was “hearsay upon hearsay”. The witness was further cautioned to confine himself to the questions asked.

Defense counsel forgets his client's name

During the course of raising an objection to concur with a colleague, counsel for the second accused stated he was raising objections on behalf of the “Brima” defence team. When reminded by the Presiding Judge that he was counsel for Ibrahim “Bazzy” Kamara, he immediately apologized and admitted his mistake: “He is actually Ibrahim Kamara, I guess,” counsel said.

1.) The witness named the original members of the Supreme Council as follows: Johnny Paul Koroma (Chairman), SAJ Musa (Vice Chairman), Colonel Avivavo Kamara (Deputy Defence Minister), Abu Sankoh (Principal Liaison Officer I), Tamba Alex Brima (Principal Liaison Officer II), Ibrahim Bazzy Kamara (Principal Liaison Officer III), Honourable Hassan Papah Bangura, Honourable Rambo, Honourable Hector Bob Lahai, Honourable Woyoh, Honourable Foday Kallay, Honourable Cobra, Honourable Sullay, Honourable Ibrahim Bioh Sesay, Honourable Abdul Sesay, Honourable Sam Bockarie, Honourable Issa Sesay, Colonel Morris Kallon and Colonel Mike Lamin. Other members of the Supreme Council that were appointed later included: Idrissa Kamara aka “Leather Boot”, Coachy Borno and Honourable Kai.

2.) The witness also named resident ministers who were in charge of operations in Sierra Leone's three provinces. These ministers were: Major Kamara aka “Bushfall” (Resident Minister, North), Major AF Kamara aka “Ambush Commander” (Resident Minister, South) and Captain Eddie Kanneh (Resident Minister, East). The resident ministers reported directly to the Chairman, Johnny Paul Koroma, and were supervised by SAJ Musa. AF Kamara has in recent weeks been implicated in the murder of Chief Sandy Demby, a paramount chief from the Bo district.

3.) Senior commanders from both the AFRC and the RUF attended a meeting called by JPK at a village near Tankoro (in the Kono district) where he further reiterated the significance of Kono for the junta operations and declared Kono a “civilian no-go” area. Among the commander the witness named present were: “A”, Honourable Sammy, SLA Rambo and Akim Turay (from the AFRC) and Issa Sesay and Mike Lamin (from the RUF).

4.) The AFRC were based at Masingbi Road, while the RUF set up its operations at Opera and the roads leading to Gandorhun.

5.) According to the witness “Changabulanga” means man who is good at using cutlass.”