

**SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE  
OUTREACH AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE**



**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:**

Monday, 28 May 2012

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.  
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact  
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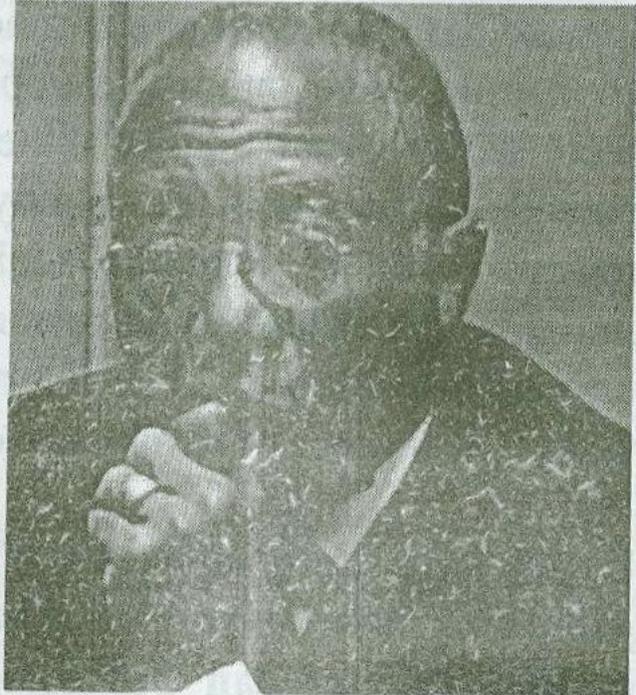
## Taylor sentenced on Wednesday

The sentencing judgement in the trial of convicted former Liberian President Charles Taylor will take place on Wednesday, 30 May 2012 at 11:00 am local time in the STL courtroom in The Hague.

Mr. Taylor was convicted on 26 April 2012 on all 11 counts of an indictment alleging war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law. He was convicted of planning and of aiding and abetting rebel forces in the commission of crimes during the decade-long conflict in Sierra Leone.

Oral arguments on sentencing briefs took place on 16 May 2012.

The prosecution has recommended a sentence of 80 years,



while the defence has recommended that any sentence be less than what would effectively be a life sentence.

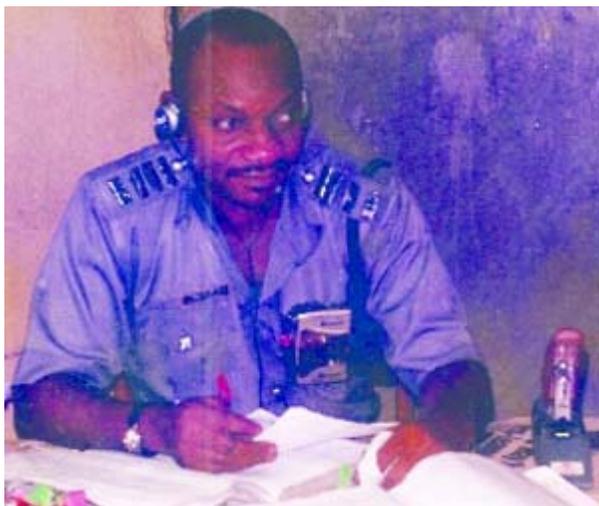
The judgement proceedings will be streamed online.

The Sun

Sunday, 27 May 2012

## I rejected Charles Taylor's \$450,000 bribe –Sacked Customs Officer

By OLUWATOYIN AKINOLA



In other climes he would be a national hero, promoted for his heroism and with various material rewards. Mr Umoh Sunday Etim performed the unusual feat of arresting former Liberian President, Mr Charles Taylor, with his team, and handed him over to the Nigerian government, while the latter was fleeing from the long arms of the law over war crimes he committed. He saved Nigeria the international embarrassment and sanctions that could have been visited on the nation. Taylor was recently sentenced by a United Nations-backed international court at The Hague, Netherlands.

But 12 years after his arrest, Akwa Ibom State-born Etim is not thumping his chest, neither is he happy about his lot. He is an aggrieved man because of a system that refused to reward patriotism and integrity.

Etim recalls the capture of the ex-warlord, a feat that appears to have become his undoing in the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), just as he recounts the sad story of his dismissal on account of an offence he was not culpable of six years after, when others who were implicated alongside him have been reinstated. Excerpts...

When did you join the Customs Service? I joined the Nigeria Customs Service in December 1987, after which I was sent to the training school at Ikeja, Lagos. After the training, my first posting was to Katsina State, later Kaduna and Kano. In 2000, I was transferred to Apapa Area Command in Lagos. I was there till 2004 when I was transferred to Borno-Yobe Area Command. On March 29, 2006, I arrested the fugitive ex-Liberian warlord, Charles Taylor, and handed him over to the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

What was your rank then? I was an Inspector of Customs on Level 07. I wasn't in charge; we were a team. The Borno-Yobe Command is mostly an enforcement area, which means it is an area we patrol border to border in order to curtail smuggling. We came from headquarters in Maiduguri to Gamboru-Ngala; that is the name of that particular border area. While there, we split our team. Some officers would be in the area command, some in the outstation while some patrol other areas where smuggling could possibly be taking place. So, I was one of the officers left at the outstation office. It was while there at 6 a.m. on March 29, 2006, that Mr Charles Taylor tried to escape.

About 5 a.m., because I normally listened to the Voice of America, I learnt that Taylor had escaped from his residence in Calabar since Monday of that week. Also, they said the President at the time, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, was in the United States trying to see President George Bush, but he was not allowed to see him. Bush insisted that Obasanjo should produce Taylor before granting him audience. That news did not go down well with me. I said how can my president be so humiliated? But, thankfully, an hour later, little did I know that Taylor was going to use Gamboru as escape route to Cameroun.

At 0600 hours, an ash-coloured Range Rover jeep tried to cross the border. It tried to meander through the barricade at the gate; whereas the formality is that any vehicle crossing the border must stop at the Customs gate for necessary checking, and then granted passage. But this particular vehicle Taylor was in did not stop for Customs formality. Rather, it headed straight for the outward gate manned by immigration officers. Once it crossed that gate, it would enter Cameroun.

A resident officer named Ekandem was trying to hoist Nigeria's flag that morning when he saw the vehicle trying to pass, so he ran inside to inform me. I ran out immediately and followed it. The vehicle had a diplomatic number from the Liberian Embassy. As I followed it, I instructed the immigration officer not to allow the vehicle to pass because it had not stopped for Customs check. So, the vehicle stopped there and three passengers alighted and came to me - an elderly woman and two men. They said they had been asked to drop the woman at the nearest village in Cameroun and that they were coming back with the vehicle. I told them I would not listen until they bring the vehicle back to our station. They continued pleading, but I refused to budge. I went inside and instructed another officer to ensure the vehicle was brought back to the station. His name was Madaki.

So, when he went there, the people followed him with the vehicle. I ordered the driver to come down and asked him for the papers. He brought out a paper on which was written: "To whom it may concern. The Embassy of Liberia extends its compliments and wishes to inform of its diplomatic mission on tour in and around the Federal Republic of Nigeria." But the two men had told me they wanted to drop the old woman across the border. This aroused my curiosity because the paper said in and around Nigeria. What were they doing at the border? The vehicle had a diplomatic licence plate number 81CD-85.

After collecting the paper, I asked the driver to open the car to see what was inside. He hesitated, but when he saw that I was serious he opened it. I discovered two more occupants, a man and a young lady. Immediately, the lady came out, she took a briefcase from the car and tried to unzip it. I told her to stop and asked her who the man was. She said the man was sick, that they were taking him to a hospital in Cameroun. This was another statement entirely. I said if this man was sick and couldn't use a hospital in Nigeria, let me see him. The man had a veil with a cap like the Arabs and was wearing dark sunglasses. I asked him to remove it.

The lady said because of his sickness, the sun would affect him. But at that time there was no sun as it was harmattan season. I insisted and he removed the veil. Though I had not met Taylor before then, only on television and newspapers, his face registered immediately he removed the veil. I said, "You are Charles Taylor", and he said yes. Then he said the presidency was aware of his movement. I felt that was a gimmick for him to accomplish his mission, because if the presidency was aware, we at the border should also be aware as our Comptroller-General would have been contacted and information passed down to us that a diplomatic mission was going to pass through and we should assist them. But we did not receive any such message. So, I suspected he was trying to escape.

The person in charge of my patrol was not with me at that station. So, I called the immigration officer that assisted me to stop the vehicle and informed them that the man inside the jeep was Charles Taylor. He didn't know what to do; he was just confused as he went to inform his colleagues. I detailed my officers to make sure Taylor does not escape from the vehicle. I went back to remove the key from the ignition, but I wasn't familiar with the vehicle, so I didn't know the key was where the gear is. As I was looking for it, Taylor rushed from the back to remove the key where it was and threw it outside. So, we couldn't find the key afterwards such that it had to be towed from that place. I went to inform my OC who was happy at the news, though initially when I told him he was laughing because he couldn't believe it, until another officer with him asked again and followed me after seeing my seriousness, my OC also followed to see for himself.

By the time we arrived, the whole place had become crowded with officers of various security outfits. The Nigerian Army is always on patrol at that border, the soldiers had come that morning to freshen up when they stumbled on the operation. The police also stumbled on it, then, confusion set in. The immigration officers brought their vehicle to convey Charles Taylor to Maiduguri, so also the State Security Services, who came on hearing the noise. They went to hire a vehicle to convey him. But we said no, that since we had a vehicle available and we (Nigeria Customs Service) arrested him, we were going to convey Charles Taylor to our headquarters in Maiduguri because the incident happened on the outskirts of the town. But we agreed that officers from the other security outfits could escort us to town, so the soldiers and the police delegated two of their officers each to follow us.

However, on our way, there was a Massa Local Government where we were ambushed by the police, because they had been signalled by their colleagues and an Assistant Police Commissioner had been deployed there with other officers to hijack the operation, but we were able to manoeuvre and pass through. Still on getting to the local government, soldiers also came; two patrol teams led by a lieutenant colonel had barricaded the road, so we couldn't pass. We had to stop, and they wanted to transfer Charles Taylor into their vehicle, but our Comptroller General, who was constantly in touch with us, told us that on no account should we hand over the man, but they could lead the way, or follow us, that Charles Taylor should remain in our (Customs) vehicle.

What about other occupants of the vehicle? The woman and the other men escaped during the ensuing confusion. By the time we returned, we didn't see them again. But the young lady, we later learnt was Charles Taylor's niece, was with him. We took her in another vehicle with their luggage to Maiduguri. There was no key to drive their jeep to Maiduguri; it was two days later that it was towed.

So, the soldiers were insisting on taking Charles Taylor, but we refused, and our Comptroller now deployed another unit of command to join us. When they arrived, they reached a compromise, with the soldiers agreeing to lead the way, and the police behind us, followed by immigration. On getting to Maiduguri, soldiers had barricaded the gate to our office, asking us to take Charles Taylor to their barracks. So, our Comptroller now had to come out to instruct that we should take Charles Taylor there, 1 Amphibious Brigade in Maiduguri. We got there and handed him over to the military, then he was transported to Sierra Leone.

Before we handed him over, on our way I noticed that Charles Taylor was trying to put hands in his pockets. The first time, I pretended I didn't see him; he was sitting between me and an officer from immigration. But the second time I cautioned and asked him what he was looking for, and he said, "I want to chew gum." Then, I said, "You want to chew gum in this condition you are?" And it struck me at that point (having watched a lot of James Bond 007 movies), that James Bond could be chewing gum here and a bomb could explode somewhere else. And I thought, maybe this man wants to use one of those James Bond tactics. So, I cautioned and told him that I did not handcuff him because I wanted to respect him as an ex-African leader. But I told him that if he chose to throw the respect away, I would handcuff him like a common criminal. I asked him to hold on to the rail in the vehicle, which he did till we got to Maiduguri.

Later, after we heard security reports, we thanked God, because when they took Mr. Charles Taylor to the airport and searched him (we did not search him because of the tussle between the security forces over who should carry him), they found that he tied a grenade to his scrotum. That meant that at the time he was trying to put his hand into his pocket, he was trying to detonate it. So, I thank God that I noticed and cautioned him otherwise we would all have been killed.

And if that happened, maybe that's when the Federal Government would remember to honour me, and call my wife to give her some money. But I'm alive now, nothing has happened. And like I told you, the lady who brought out a brief case tried to open the brief case, but I told her not to. Given the reputation of Charles Taylor, I didn't trust him; it could be gun or native charm. Then, he told me there was 200,000 US

dollars in the brief case and that I could have everything. At a point I had to slap the lady to close the brief case, then Taylor was holding another one, and he said if that was not enough for me I could have the one he was holding also, which he said contained 250,000 US dollars. He said I could have both suitcases containing 450,000 US dollars altogether, and allow him to go.

But I told him that because of him my president was in the US waiting to see George Bush, but he refused to see him, and if I collect the money and allow him to go, what embarrassment would I cause my country? And again, that the European Union, the United Nations and American government are promising to bombard Nigeria with sanctions. If I collect this money, it would do me well, but what about the rest of the Nigerian masses these sanctions would affect? These were the things I considered at that moment.

But that was so much money, how much were you earning as salary at the time? What I was earning was of no consequence because this is a job I was paid to do. Arresting human beings might not really be my area of duty, but when a situation like that arose, it called for cooperation from all agencies; because, if the man had succeeded in his escape bid, the sanctions that would be slammed on the nation would have affected the common people. The elite may not feel it, neither me, if I had collected the money. My salary then was just a little over N27,000, but I did not consider that.

So, you decided to forego the \$450,000 he promised you? He was not promising me the sum; he was actually giving it to me. He ordered the lady to give me the briefcase, and his own too, to allow them to go, but I said 'no'. Though the money would do a lot for me, what about the rest of Nigerians that would suffer the consequences of the sanctions we were being threatened with?

I wanted to show that though Nigerians are perceived as corrupt, there are still some patriotic ones that are honest.

## Associated Press

Monday, 28 May 2012

### **Charles Taylor faces sentencing**

By Jan Hennop

Liberian warlord Charles Taylor will be sentenced for war crimes by a special UN court on Wednesday, after being found guilty of arming Sierra Leone rebels in return for “blood diamonds”.

The hearing at 0900 GMT before judges of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, situated just outside The Hague, will be the first time a former head of state will be sentenced by a world court since the Nazi trials at Nuremberg in 1946.

Brenda Hollis, the tribunal's chief prosecutor, earlier this month argued for 80-year prison sentence for Taylor, once one of the most powerful men in west Africa and a driving force behind Sierra Leone's brutal 1991-2001 civil war.

The former Liberian president was convicted on April 26 on 11

counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity for aiding and abetting Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels and their allies during the war, in which 120 000 lives were lost.

In return, the court said, Taylor was paid in diamonds mined by slave labour in areas under the control of rebels who murdered, raped and kept sex slaves while hacking off limbs and forcing children under 15 to fight for them.

Should Taylor, 64, get jail time, it will be served in a British prison. The court's judges cannot impose a life sentence, only a specific number of years.

“The gravity of the crimes is the litmus test” on how they should determine a sentence, Hollis told judges two weeks ago as she presented arguments ahead of the sentencing.

Taylor's lawyer Courtenay Griffiths told the court the 80 years sought by the prosecution in effect amounted to a life sentence.

“To sentence a 64-year-old man to 80 years is a guarantee that he will die in prison,” Griffiths said at the same May 16 hearing.

He argued that Taylor, Liberia's president from 1997 to 2003, was instrumental in efforts to bring an end to Sierra Leone's war.

In perhaps his last stand before a world audience, a bespectacled Taylor expressed his “sadness and deepest sympathy for the atrocities and crimes suffered by individuals and families in Sierra Leone.”

But he told judges he was not responsible for the crimes committed by rebel forces and blamed “politics” and the United States for his eventual removal from west Africa to face prosecution.

Both sides will have two weeks after sentencing to file an appeal.

Taylor's trial, which lasted nearly four years, wrapped up in March 2011 at the court, based in the leafy Leidschendam suburb a few kilometres outside the city.

It saw a number of high-profile witnesses testify, including supermodel Naomi Campbell, who told of a gift of “dirty diamonds” she received at a charity ball hosted in 1997 by then-South African president Nelson Mandela.

Handing down the verdict last month, Judge Richard Lussick stressed that although Taylor had substantial influence over the RUF, including its feared leader Foday Sankoh, his role “fell short of command and control” of rebel forces.

Sankoh died in 2003 before he could face trial.

Authorities in Nigeria arrested Taylor in March 2006 as he tried to flee from exile after being forced to quit Liberia three years earlier, under international pressure to end that country's own civil war.

He was transferred to The Hague in mid-2006 amid fears that a trial in Sierra Leone would create a security risk.

Taylor's sentencing comes 66 years after admiral Karl Donitz was sentenced to 10 years in prison by an international military tribunal at Nuremberg for his part in Nazi crimes during World War II.

Adolf Hitler appointed Donitz his successor shortly before committing suicide in Berlin in 1945. - Sapa-AFP

# The Daily

Monday, 28 May 2012

## Life After Charles Taylor: Senator Jewel Howard Taylor Moves On

*As Charles Taylor awaits Sentencing, his ex-wife and Liberia are quietly moving on.*

Sen. Jewel Howard Taylor pulled open her desk drawer and carefully turned the thin pages of her Bible to Psalm 25, of David, who battled and defeated the giant Goliath. The Bible was edged in gold, and the name of her former husband, Dr. Charles Ghankay Taylor, was printed in elegant cursive in the bottom corner of the cover. The desk itself—dark wood and decorated with gilded women’s faces—was Taylor’s personal desk, purchased on a trip to Paris while he was still Liberia’s president.

Dressed in a violet African *lapa* suit and a loosely tied headdress, the senator traced the contours of the prayer, pausing after each line. “Do not let me be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me.” A picture of a fair-skinned Christ with his heart crowned in flames sat behind her. She lingered on the final two lines: “Look upon my affliction and my distress and take away my sins.”

Jewel, a devout Christian, begins every morning with a prayer. As we sat in her office on Monrovia’s Capitol Hill, I asked why she selected this particular psalm. “I chose it because I am in a lot of conflicts at the moment,” she said.

Among Jewel’s troubles was the verdict handed down by The Hague in April in the trial of her ex-husband, who was found guilty on 11 counts of aiding and abetting war crimes and crimes against humanity—including murder, terrorism, rape, sexual slavery, and mutilations committed by rebel forces—during the horrific civil war in neighboring Sierra Leone. The 11-year conflict, which ended in 2002, killed more than 50,000 people. Taylor’s sentence will be handed down May 30; it is expected that he will spend the rest of his life in prison.

For Liberians, Taylor’s legacy continues to loom large. To some, he is the man who once projected a godlike aura and who is being demonized by the international community. To others, he is a warlord who helped tear Liberia apart during its own 14-year civil conflict, which left 250,000 dead and the country in tatters. To Jewel, he is the father of her two children, the man she fell in love with before he was a rebel leader, her husband for almost a decade.

The two met in the early ’80s, when Jewel was a first-year student at the University of Liberia, and soon had a child together. She later traveled to America in search of Taylor, who had fled there after being accused of embezzling \$1 million under the government of Samuel Doe. But by the time she arrived, Taylor—who was being held in a correctional facility in Plymouth, Mass.—had mysteriously escaped from jail.



*Jewel Taylor has risen to become the second-most powerful woman in Liberian politics, behind President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. (Michael Zumstein / Agence Vu for Newsweek)*

Jewel stayed on in the U.S. to attend the American Institute of Banking in New Jersey and later worked in banking in the U.S. until 1996, when she returned to Liberia. The year after, Taylor proposed, and they were married in a “fairy-tale wedding” shortly before he was elected in a landslide.

Before long, the fairy tale started to sour. Jewel said she had a difficult relationship with her husband’s other wife, his ex-wife, and his mistresses. By August 2003, after Taylor had signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Accra, Ghana, and had agreed to step down, the couple was exiled to Calabar, Nigeria. They were soon joined by Taylor’s wife Victoria, a young Liberian whom he’d married in an Islamic ceremony in 2002. Jewel found herself living in a separate house from Taylor and Victoria in Calabar. When Jewel traveled back to Liberia in 2004, she discovered that she had been placed under a U.N. travel ban and was separated from the family. She also found out that Victoria was pregnant. It proved to be the final straw. Jewel filed for divorce in 2005, months before Taylor was arrested to be extradited back to Liberia.

Jewel denied rumors that the split was made to protect Taylor’s assets from sanctions and said she was left without a dime from the divorce. Investigators are still hunting for Taylor’s hidden wealth, which is believed to be anywhere between \$280 million and \$3 billion, according to a report by *The New York Times*. Jewel participated in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s economic-crimes inquiry process, which absolved her of any responsibility for economic and financial crimes. “I didn’t get a thing. I didn’t ask for it,” she said. “My lawyer asked me, ‘Are you sure?’ I said, ‘I didn’t marry him for property, and if he can’t love me, I don’t want anything.’”

Despite the couple’s divorce, the U.N. still has Jewel on Liberia’s travel-ban list and continues to uphold sanctions against her due to “ongoing ties” with Taylor. At the end of my time with Jewel, she was visited by the members of the U.N. sanctions committee, and there are rumors the restrictions could soon be lifted.



*In Liberia, Charles Taylor remains revered by former soldiers and feared by victims. (Michael Zumstein / Agence Vu for Newsweek)*

Jewel admitted that she has been in contact with Taylor over the years, but said her ties to him pose no threat to the country. “I’m a mother of two children to Taylor and a member of the Taylor family. It is to be expected that we talk ... Are we planning on overthrowing the government? No!”

One of the most fascinating questions about the senator—and one that remains unanswered—is precisely how much she knew about Taylor’s crimes in Liberia and Sierra Leone while they were going on. During her time in the U.S., Jewel followed the war through international news outlets, such as CNN. It is difficult to believe she never heard the gruesome tales about Taylor’s commanders, who reportedly forced young boys to kill their parents and then turned them into foot soldiers, doping them up and sending them to rape, murder, and pillage. According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, between 1989 and 1997, some 150,000 Liberians were killed and 26,000 women and girls raped. Many of these atrocities were committed by Taylor’s forces. The grim tales were so well known that one unofficial campaign slogan for Taylor in 1997 ran, “He killed my ma, he killed my pa, but I’ll vote for him.” Jewel was aware of the U.N.’s accusations that Taylor was trading weapons to Sierra Leone rebels in exchange for blood diamonds. In 2001, according to news reports, she marched in the streets along with thousands of others to protest U.N. sanctions against Taylor for his ongoing relationship with Sierra Leone’s Revolutionary United Front (RUF).

I asked her if she questioned whether the allegations were true. She repeated the question and trailed off for a moment. “Mind you, they were talking about Sierra Leone,” she said. “It was not a Liberian issue. I have never been to Sierra Leone before, I don’t know what happened, and the issues were during the war, when I wasn’t here. So it was a little bit difficult for me.”

Some in Taylor’s former inner circle claim Jewel had little influence over the president and say Taylor was capable of deep subterfuge. Peter Jallah, Taylor’s former justice minister, said the man was “cunning” and “secretive” and that Jewel would likely have known very little about the details of the president’s actions. “He was the sort of man who could send people to have one of your family members killed and make you feel like he had done nothing,” Jallah told me. “You would never have thought he had anything to do with it.”

Jallah—who resigned in 1998 over the unsolved murder and mutilation of a former Taylor comrade, Sam Dokie, and his wife, last seen being arrested by security forces—adds that as an African wife, Jewel would have had little power over her husband. “She had to make appointments to see him,” he said. (Jewel also alluded to the fact that their marriage was, for many years, one without affection.)

For her part, Jewel has never outright acknowledged that Taylor committed crimes in Liberia or Sierra Leone. What she has done is admit that she doesn't rule out the possibility that he could have committed war crimes, while carefully distancing herself from the accusations. "People say [the RUF] was in and out of Monrovia," she said. "But as first lady, I never saw them, I never entertained for them, and I never interacted with them." I asked whether she questioned Taylor after the U.N. accused him of trading weapons for blood diamonds. "I had no clue of what they were talking about, and I was confused," she said. "The funny thing was, whenever I would ask him serious questions, he would always just laugh and say, 'Don't worry about it. It doesn't affect you.'"

"I kept on saying, 'You keep saying it doesn't affect me, but I know that it will, because whatever is happening will affect me and the children.'"

Jewel's insistence that she knew little about Taylor's crimes seems to hinge on the fact that she was abroad for most of his rebel years. "I was never involved in the war. I wasn't here for the whole of it," Jewel said. "I came home at the beginning of the presidency."

Still, Jewel admitted to visiting Taylor in rebel-occupied territory for three days in 1992, around the time of a major offensive to capture Monrovia. Jewel recalled seeing fighters, heavily armed and dressed in wigs and women's clothing. These were Taylor's soldiers, in macabre costumes that they believed gave them special powers. "I was appalled," Jewel said.



*After seven years in Liberia's Senate, Jewel Taylor is well liked—and respected—across party lines. (Michael Zumstein / Agence Vu for Newsweek)*

I asked her whether the sight made her question Taylor's activities. "The guys who brought me in, they said, 'They are just security people, and they have to dress like that, because we are not sure if this rebel territory is ours.' I thought maybe this is what happens during the war."

Later, when talking about child soldiers, she told me that Taylor "loved children" and that the rebel's Small Boys Units were made up of children orphaned by government forces. "They were people who did not have access to their parents, because they had been killed," she said. "They saw [Taylor] as a father figure. And if you visit areas of Monrovia and talk to a lot of ex-combatants, they call him papay—'our father'—somebody who came to their aid when there was no one else," she said, underlining the eerie devotion that many former combatants still feel toward Taylor.

At another moment, when talking about the conflict years, she told me: "Things that happen during the war are evil spirits that take control of men."

This rationale—it was war, and chaotic things happened—is one Jewel invoked to talk about Taylor’s time in office, when there were public allegations of torture and extrajudicial killings. Jewel said she questioned her husband about the reports, but was largely shut out. She said she pressed one case in particular—that of Tiawan Gongloe, a human-rights lawyer who was tortured, allegedly by police under Taylor’s orders. “I raised the issue, and he said, ‘Maybe it is security people just overstretching their bounds,’” she told me. “I said, ‘Well, I don’t think it’s right, and you need to find out what is really going on.’” (Jewel is now friends with Gongloe.)

Jewel also said that at the time of the Gongloe case in April 2002, Monrovia had been flooded with citizens driven from the country’s interior by anti-Taylor forces. (According to news reports, the deluge began in 2003.) From 2000 to 2003, Jewel was in charge of the National Humanitarian Task Force, and she said she spent most of her time distributing food, clothing, and aid. “There was a huge outcry for humanitarian support, there were bombings going on, and raids, and things were really crazy,” she said. “There was too much going on at the time.”

Her humanitarian work is well remembered. In the ruins of the old GSA slum, where many ex-combatants live, a 24-year-old prostitute named Teetee talked to me about her time as a child soldier fighting for Taylor. Her eyes were blank, and she spoke in a monotone shout, laughing when discussing the trauma of war. She said she was forced to fight for Taylor in 2000, after her parents were killed. “I feel bad. I was forced to do it to survive,” she said. “I blame Charles Taylor.” But of his ex-wife, Teetee said, “Jewel Howard Taylor is not a bad woman. She good. She take care of children and of people when the war is fighting ... Charles Taylor did bad things, but Jewel Taylor did good things.”

When Taylor’s guilty verdict was announced, Jewel was at home in Congo Town, an affluent suburb of Monrovia. She had gathered her two children and four of Taylor’s adopted children to watch CNN’s live broadcast. “I started talking to them about a week before, with all of what is going on,” Jewel told me with a slight tremor in her voice. “I said that he didn’t seem like he wouldn’t be found guilty, but I thought he would be found guilty on some counts but not all counts.”

“As they went into count one, count two, count three, and four, I was like ‘Oh, God!’ My daughter said, ‘Mommy, didn’t you say that he wasn’t going to be found guilty on all counts?’ I said, ‘Just shut up. Let’s listen,’ because I didn’t know what to say. It was a really difficult day.”

In Monrovia, where crowds had gathered, many expressed sorrow at the verdict—a testament to the complicated relationship Liberians still have with Taylor. During the week I spent with her, Jewel was cautious when talking about the trial, noting that the sentence was yet to be delivered and that an appeal was pending. One day, while out at a tea-shop meeting with her constituents in Bong County—the de facto capitol of the state Taylor created as a rebel leader—she was careful to maintain a neutral position on the verdict, despite that the area remains a stronghold of Taylor support. A young onlooker asked her for her opinion on the trial.

“Let me be frank with you: whatever I say, one group will feel marginalized, so as senator I will stand in the middle,” Jewel told him. “The Charles Taylor issue is not a Liberian issue, it was an issue concerning the international community and Sierra Leone.”

But the following day, after a church service, Jewel told me that the trial was political. “I think from the beginning, we have seen that it is a politically motivated case,” she said. “All of the key things have not been proven, yet he has been found guilty for aiding and abetting on all counts.”

Mostly, when Jewel talked about the verdict, she stressed how tough it has been on her family and how she must move on with her life. But in many ways, she already has. As Taylor’s influence in Liberia begins to wane, his ex-wife has become increasingly powerful. Her road to prominence started in a landslide victory in 2005 Senate elections in Bong County, the county with the third-highest number of registered voters in Liberia. It was a move made out of necessity—Jewel said she was unable to find work, despite that she held two university degrees at the time.

Now, seven years later, Jewel is the second-most-powerful woman in Liberian politics, behind President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf herself, and one of the most consequential members in the Senate. While carrying on a full-time schedule as a mother and senator, she also found the time to complete a graduate degree in law, making her one of

the most educated members of the legislature. Recently, she was almost elected to the Senate's pro tempore position, but lost by one vote.

Jewel and other analysts blame the loss on political pressure from Johnson Sirleaf and Taylor's nephew Sando Johnson, a member of Taylor's former political party. Dan Saryee, who moderated the debate between the contenders for the position (for which only Jewel was present), said there was pressure from the executive mansion to go with a different senator. "There was concern that her winning would reignite the hopes of Charles Taylor's supporters," Saryee said. "She had the best experience and CV of all of the candidates."

According to other members of the National Patriotic Party, Johnson told party members that he was given direct instructions by Taylor not to vote for Jewel and insisted, "I will not vote for an irresponsible woman who abandons her husband." Johnson denied the claim and said he did not vote for Jewel on the basis that she was under U.N. travel sanctions. "We can't have a head of our Senate who cannot leave the country," Johnson told me.

Jewel said she doesn't know whether Taylor issued such an order, but she hasn't spoken to him since the vote, because "I was just so devastated." She also said she was certain the government played a major role in her defeat: "There was a concerted government effort to make sure that I didn't get elected."

The incident exposed strains between Jewel and Johnson Sirleaf. Jewel described her relationship with Johnson Sirleaf—whom she calls "a ferocious person"—as "tense." "I don't think we are enemies per se," Jewel said. "I am grateful that she is the first female president of Liberia, but of course the younger generation always sees things quite differently from the older generation, so we have had some real difficult times."

While Jewel said she backed the president in 2005, she also told me that Taylor's verdict would be "a guilty verdict" for those who played key roles in Liberia's civil war—an implicit reference to Johnson Sirleaf, who admitted to giving Taylor \$10,000 to help overthrow Doe in 1990. "It will reach all the way to the executive mansion," Jewel said. "There are others hiding in their offices under the clothing of government, hoping that it doesn't come to them."

Yet Jewel is opposed to war-crimes prosecutions in Liberia, arguing that the country is too fragmented. "It would only break us apart and further deepen the divide," she said. "We must forgive one another and move forward."

For the present, Jewel seems to be pulling off a successful, if fragile, balancing act. Her senior political adviser, Bong County's chairman of the National Patriotic Party, Marvin Cole, described it this way: she has "a responsibility to satisfy the Charles Taylor constituencies in the Republic of Liberia. And she also has a responsibility to appease the minds of the international community that are watching her, to be dissociated from Mr. Taylor."

Sen. John Ballout, a member of the ruling United Party, told me Jewel is no longer seen simply as Taylor's ex-wife. "After years of working together, we see her less and less as a former first lady," he says. "There is no special political treatment she enjoys. Senator Taylor remains one of the most respected senators and important politicians in the country." She is well liked across party lines and was the first opposition member to recognize Johnson Sirleaf's government after the push to boycott the most recent election, which was marred by violent protests.

There is now speculation that Jewel could even run for president herself one day. Her term expires in 2014. If she wins reelection—the battle is expected to be tough—she would be in a good position to run in the presidential elections in 2017. "In politics, every step forward grows another ambition," said Cole.

Jewel herself remained elusive on the matter. "One day is that possible? I think so," she said. "Anything is possible."

*Clair MacDougall is a journalist based in Monrovia, Liberia.*

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## **Liberia: PYJ Unveils War Architects**

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor



*UN peacekeepers in Monrovia.*

Former leader of the defunct Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL), Senator Prince Y. Johnson has unveiled names of individuals less known for their roles in planning the Liberian civil war.

Addressing a news conference recently in Monrovia, Sen. Johnson named human rights activist Ezekiel Pajibo, former Liberia Petroleum Refinery Company (LPRC) Harry Greaves, among others in addition to president Sirleaf as a few of the architects of what he referred to as the 'senseless Liberian wars', emphasizing they too and others must answer questions before the war crime court.

Sen. Johnson's comments followed calls by the National Human Rights Commission (INHCR) for the submission of a list of those who it said committed the most heinous crimes during the country's civil wars to the International Criminal Court.

Though, Sen. Johnson further described the pronouncement by the INHRC as beyond the constitutional functions of the commission, noting that the commission did not have the power to make such recommendation to the international community, he expressed the belief that it would be a generational hatred among Liberians if those who played active roles in or aided and abetted the civil unrests here were not prosecuted under the law.

He it would be rewarding to Liberia if such prosecution could bring to justice all those who one way or the other participated in the country's protracted wars. According to him, such participants include facilitators, lobbyists for finances, as well as individuals who produced the blue print for the execution of the intermittent wars.

Sen. Johnson also noted that individuals, including him and former President Charles G. Taylor did not have the resources to declared war on a certain government (Samuel Doe Administration), but the efforts and influences of prominent Liberians with international connections. He noted that history will be inaccurate if the planners of the wars, including the National Patriotic Front or NPFL were not prosecuted under the law.

He indicated that Liberia's loss of more than 250,000 lives and millions of dollars worth of properties would not have been possible in the absence of the moral and financial support and international influences of a few well-placed Liberians.

The former INPFL leader has, however, indicated that he will only submit himself to a court that is legally domesticated under the Liberian laws, through legislation.

It could be recalled that former president Taylor during his formal address before judges of the UN backed Special Court for Sierra Leone said he had stood before the Liberian people and apologized and expressed deep regret and contrition for the loss of lives and limbs, and the overall effects of the civil war.

"I stated that no words no matter how polished and sincere could heal the scars and pains all suffered. I was not alone as a leader of a faction that fought during the civil war when I took it upon myself to express those sentiments while aspiring for the presidency; but I did.", he added.

There were many like me who owed an expression of sympathy and regret for what happened to the Liberian people. Indeed, none other than the current president of Liberia, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, was identified in the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report as somebody from whom such an expression of regret and sympathy for what happened in Liberia should have been forthcoming; since she was one of the three principal leaders of the NPFL along with me.