

**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:**

Tuesday, 29 May 2012

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

**International News**

Liberia: Charles Taylor Gets Sentence Tomorrow / <i>Leadership</i>	Page 3
Liberia: Taylor Begins Jail Sentence May 30 / <i>The New Dawn</i>	Page 4
Western Interests Undermined Integrity of Charles Taylor Trial... / <i>AllAfrica.Com</i>	Pages 5-7
UN Court to Sentence Charles Taylor on Wednesday / <i>Agence France Presse</i>	Pages 8-9
For Africa's Victims, Justice, Even if Selective, Will Always be Welcome / <i>The Guardian</i>	Pages 10-11

## Leadership (Abuja)

Tuesday, 29 May 2012

### **Liberia: Charles Taylor Gets Sentence Tomorrow**

By Oluwaseun Oluwarotimi

Former Liberian President, Mr. Charles Taylor who was in April, 2012 convicted for war crimes by the International Criminal Court sitting in The Hague will tomorrow (Wednesday) be sentenced.

The sentencing judgment in the trial of the convicted former Liberian leader will take place on Wednesday, 30 May 2012 at 11:00 a.m. local time (9:00 a.m. GMT) in the STL courtroom in The Hague.

Mr. Taylor was convicted on April 26, 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.

However, oral arguments on sentencing briefs took place on May 16, 2012.

The chief prosecutor, Brenda Hollis, has recommended a sentence of 80 years. The defence has recommended that any sentence be less than what would effectively be a life sentence.

The judgment proceedings will be streamed online. The media and public in Sierra Leone is invited to watch the proceedings at the Special Court in Freetown beginning at 9:00 a.m. GMT.

In his earlier submission, Mr. Charles Taylor said that he was "saddened" by the guilty verdict passed on him for abetting war crimes in Sierra Leone and said his role in the conflict was much different from how it had been portrayed.

"What I did to bring peace to Sierra Leone was done with honour," Taylor said, as he addressed the international court in the Netherlands that found him guilty last month. "I pushed the peace process hard, contrary to how I have been portrayed in this court."

In a speech that lasted about 30 minutes, Taylor blamed his predicament on the United States several times and compared what he was convicted of to the abuses he said the United States committed during the Iraqi war.

Warning that other African leaders could receive similar unjust fates, Taylor said: "I never stood a chance, only time will tell how many other African heads of state will be destroyed."

## The New Dawn (Liberia)

Tuesday, 29 May 2012

### **Liberia: Taylor Begins Jail Sentence May 30**

By Othello B. Garblah

Former President Charles Taylor is expected to begin his jail sentence tomorrow exactly 34-days after he was convicted by the UN backed Special Court for Sierra Leone on aiding and abetting that country's rebels.

Though prosecutors have recommended a sentence of 80 years, while the defense team requests a minimum sentence less than a life sentence, the exact jail terms is yet unknown.

But the judges of the court are expected to hand down a ruling on the matter just minutes before he is finally send to serve his prison terms in Britain on Wednesday.

The sentencing judgment will start at 11:00 a.m. local time (9:00 a.m. GMT) in The Hague. Taylor is the first former head of state to be sentenced by a war crime court since the Nuremberg trial in 1946.

He 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. Chief Prosecutor Brenda Hollis had argued during the sentencing hearing early this month that 80-year prison sentence for Taylor was justified for the crimes he was convicted of.

"The gravity of the crimes is the litmus test" on how they should determine a sentence, Hollis told judges during the sentencing hearing. 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.

But Taylor's lawyer Courtenay Griffiths told the court that the 80 years sought for 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, as president was instrumental in efforts to bring an end to Sierra Leone's war.

AllAfrica.Com  
Monday, 28 May 2012

## **Sierra Leone: Western Interests Undermined Integrity of Charles Taylor Trial - Interview with Courtenay Griffiths QC**

By Adam Robert Green

### **Special Court for Sierra Leone**

Charles Taylor being transferred to the Hague to be tried for war crimes.  
The defence barrister to Charles Taylor says that the former Liberian leader's trial for war crimes was deeply flawed

On Wednesday 30 May, former Liberian president Charles Taylor will be sentenced to 80 years for 11 counts of murder, rape, conscription of child soldiers, and sexual slavery that took place during Sierra Leone's civil war between 1996 and 2002.

At a cost of \$50 million, the Charles Taylor trial is a landmark case in the fight against impunity for grave crimes. Taylor, aged 64, is the first African leader to be found guilty of war crimes by an international tribunal and his sentence comes weeks before the tenth anniversary of the International Criminal Court (ICC), the first institution of its kind.

Yet the procedural and evidentiary basis of the case was deeply flawed, argues Taylor's defence barrister, Courtenay Griffiths QC. In an interview with This is Africa, Mr Griffiths expresses his dismay. "I am a newcomer to international criminal law," says the Jamaican-born barrister. "Until the Charles Taylor case I had never practiced in that field, I'd never studied it, and I was asked to take on the Charles Taylor case based solely on my background as a criminal defence advocate.

"One of the things that I discovered much to my alarm soon after dipping a toe into this area is that - and I will say it bluntly - international criminal law is not about law at all. It's all about the politics of power. If you examine all the cases before the ICC and indeed the particular case that I was involved in with Charles Taylor, you see - behind the scenes - a hidden hand or hands manipulating the legal process for their own benefit".

Mr Griffiths' worries are shared by others. The Special Court's reserve judge Justice El Hadji Malick Sow from Senegal even interrupted the hearing to voice opposition, but his microphone was cut off as he spoke. Sow warned that the international justice system was "in grave danger of losing all credibility".

### **Meddling**

Mr Griffiths believes geostrategic interests have soiled both ad hoc war crimes tribunals such as the Special Court for Sierra Leone and the now de facto permanent institution for prosecuting such crimes, the International Criminal Court .

"What people do not highlight are the economic and strategic reasons as to why some people are investigated and arrest warrants are issued and not others. Take Darfur, for example. What's never mentioned is that, surprisingly, Darfur just happens to sit on a sea of oil and many Western oil companies would like to exploit that resource, and [there is] concern about Omar al-Bashir's relationship with China. Likewise you look at the Democratic Republic of Congo, perhaps the most minerally rich country on the planet, the sole producer of some of the rarest minerals required by Western industries, and it just so happens that by the indictment of various factional leaders within that country you keep in power a very corrupt government who is then willing to allow you to exploit the valuable resources in that country."

In the context of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Mr Griffiths believes a Western oil corporation indicated it was able to influence the authorities' pursuit of Liberia's former president. "Charles Taylor told me he was playing tennis

at his home in Liberia towards the end of his tenure and he had been negotiating a deal with an oil company for Liberia's offshore oil concessions. [They] weren't offering Liberia what he felt was a fair deal, and Taylor wanted to sell those oil concessions to the Chinese. Taylor tells me he received a telephone call from a very senior executive, who told him bluntly, 'Mr President, if you can't do a deal then I'm sorry, I can't protect you any more'. That's the argument which I've not heard anybody express today. Nobody is expressing how it is that in all these instances you see Western economic and strategic interests at work."

Mr Griffiths does not argue that Charles Taylor should not have been tried. His concerns relate to the manner in which the trial unfolded. "In principle, I would have no difficulty with Charles Taylor being tried for crimes in Liberia. There's no doubt that unlawful killings took place, the pillaging of people's homes and properties took place. Rape was committed. Child soldiers were used. And I think then, he would have direct responsibility. He was the president of the country. He was the leader of the largest warring faction during the civil war."

But, he claims, the West "could not afford to try Taylor in Liberia". US interests were keen to protect current incumbent President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf from being drawn into a Liberia-focused trial for political and commercial reasons, he believes. When pressed for details on how this interference played out, Mr Griffiths seconds Charles Taylor's claims made in the pre-trial hearing about the 'buying' of evidence and coercion.

Money, argued Taylor in his presentation to the court, played a "corrupting, influential, significant and dominant role in this trial. Money in this case cumulatively prejudiced my rights and interests in an irreparable way."

Mr Griffiths elaborates on Taylor's argument. "The prosecution was given a secret fund of millions of dollars by the US government and despite repeated attempts by us, they have never been prepared to disclose who gave it to them, how much it was, or what they used it for. But we know what it was used for. The court [already] has a victim and witness service which is funded to provide travel expenses for witnesses to come to Freetown or wherever. This fund is over and above that. "Taylor made the point that much of the evidence against him was bought. People were paid to give evidence against him. Who was paying that money? The US [was]. They also provided 80 percent of the funding of the court."

In the trial proceedings, the prosecution denied receipt of such funds and the judges did not evidently see fit to discharge evidence on the basis of the bribery allegations, as the case proceeded to its conclusion.

The level of interference seems somewhat far-fetched given Liberia's fairly modest resource base, especially in past years where the oil and gas reserves of the West African coast were not a major draw, I say.

"I'm not sure I agree with you," Mr Griffiths responds. "From the US point of view, given their concerns about Iran, if I was an American president, what would I rather control? The Gulf of Guinea, right across the Atlantic from my oil refineries in Virginia, no atomic nuclear armed Iran to interfere with my supplies, or continued reliance on Middle Eastern oil which have to travel through the Straits of Hormuz? Which would make more economic and strategic sense?"

His claim about US interests wishing to protect Johnson Sirleaf is also debatable since Sirleaf took office in 2006, four years after the court was established and three years after Taylor has been indicted. Secondly, the Special Court for Sierra Leone was set up through an agreement between then-President of Sierra Leone Ahmad Tejan Kabbah and the United Nations, and not the US. Liberia's government, meanwhile, has never sought a special court, says Peter C. Andersen, chief of outreach and public affairs at the Special Court for Sierra Leone, explaining why no trial has been pursued for crimes committed there.

But Mr Griffiths believes the evidence tying Taylor to Sierra Leone was too tenuous for a conviction to be made. "My argument is that he didn't get a fair trial. My argument is he wasn't tried for the right crimes. My argument has never been that he should not be tried. Because it seems to me that during the civil war which began in Liberia and spread over the border into Sierra Leone, so many heinous crimes were committed, it needed to be examined in a court of law. And I think culpability needed to be assigned. I just don't like the way it's been gone about."

Firstly, the prosecution's narrative overstated Taylor's regional power. Prosecutors described Taylor as part of a "joint criminal enterprise" to take over West Africa, including the likes of Muammar Gaddafi, Blaise Compaoré of

Burkina Faso, and Foday Sankoh [leader and founder of the RUF]. The judges rejected that narrative, with the eventual focus being on Taylor's culpability for atrocities committed in Sierra Leone.

Yet even here, Mr Griffiths describes as "extremely disturbing" the quality of evidence used to link Taylor to diamond trading and criminal acts neighbouring Sierra Leone. "The US and Britain deployed a lot of military hardware in and around that part of West Africa yet we didn't have one satellite picture of lorries going over the border carrying missiles. We didn't have one radio intercept even though the technology was available. I find that extremely surprising. In fact, apart from one witness who gave evidence of being in Taylor's presence when Taylor issued an order in relation to Sierra Leone, all the evidence relied on to link Taylor with Sierra Leone was hearsay".

While the prosecution claimed that Taylor was in command and control of the RUF and the FRC, with a guiding hand in their activities, Mr Griffiths argued in court that Taylor aiding rebels, but not leading them. He was, says the barrister, "sending for the most part small amounts of arms and ammunition across the border. He did send two large shipments, one of which was used for the Freetown invasion, but that was the extent of his involvement. He was involved in that raid knowing that atrocities were being committed."

Having acknowledged Taylor's involvement - albeit at a lesser scale than the prosecutor's claimed - Mr Griffiths says that if funding rebel groups in other countries is now established as an international crime, the US ought to be brought into the dock for actions funding 'contras' in Nicaragua, the Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (RENAMO) in Mozambique and the Mujahedeen against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. "I would like to see Taylor's conviction on that basis now being used as a precedent to say to powerful countries like the US: 'You shouldn't be engaging in what is now stated to be an international crime'."

## **The ICC at 10**

In July, the ICC celebrates its tenth birthday. The Hague-based body emerged to consolidate and institutionalise the scattered experiences of ad hoc war crimes tribunals in Yugoslavia and Rwanda. The ICC did not take on the Taylor case, since the events had already occurred before the ICC was formed. However, it is the institution in which future such crimes may well be prosecuted. Yet after ten years in existence, it has been criticised for everything from incompetence and tardiness to racism and neo-colonialism.

"The ICC's biggest flaw is that there is no system of accountability to the people over whom they exercise jurisdiction," says Mr Griffiths. "In a national court system, if you don't like the way the law is being imposed or operated, you can always demonstrate against it - as black people did in the United Kingdom against the SUS [suspected person] laws in the 1970s - and seek change through the political process. The people of Africa really don't have any control in that sense over the ICC. In the absence of that democratic accountability you have the kind of criticisms that people like myself have voiced, that it is being used as a tool for Western neo-colonialism. It leaves itself open to that because there is no democratic way in which people can influence the way in which it operates."

Mr Griffiths speaks positively about earlier ad hoc tribunal models. "They concentrate on one conflict. They tend to be based close to the seat of the conflict, so that those for whom the verdicts are most important are in a position to follow the proceedings and take ownership of the proceedings, whereas the ICC is a bit remote."

The dominance of African defendants in the ICC has also opened it up to criticism of racism, not helped by its distant locale in the Netherlands. "Don't you think it would have been better, given the number of indictees at the ICC from Africa, to try those people somewhere in Africa? What about South Africa? It has got the infrastructure. What about Nigeria? Parts of it have the infrastructure. Nairobi certainly has. There were many ways in which, with a bit of flexibility and imagination, the ICC could have avoided accusations of providing distant 'white man's justice'. And I just don't think enough thought and imagination was applied."

"I do not support the immunity of African leaders. If you go back as far as [Hendrik] Verwoerd in South Africa or [Jean-Bédél] Bokassa of the Central African Republic - I would like to see those people prosecuted. The problem I have got with the contemporary system is that it is unfair. It applies to some and not others. And as far as I am concerned, that is not justice. That is not law".

Agence France Presse

Monday, 28 May 2012

### **UN court to sentence Charles Taylor on Wednesday**

LEIDSCHENDAM, Netherlands (AFP) – 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.

# The Guardian

Monday, 28 May 2012

## For Africa's victims, justice, even if selective, will always be welcome

Africa should not see itself as a target of neo-colonial victimisation - but as the vanguard of a new era of international justice



*A Liberian child soldier. Former president Charles Taylor will be sentenced in The Hague on Wednesday 30 May Photograph: Chris Hondros/Getty Images*

This Wednesday former Liberian president Charles Taylor will be sentenced in The Hague by the special court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) for his part in Sierra Leone's bloody conflict. Chances are, even if judges impose a sentence much less than the prosecution's fanciful request for 80 years imprisonment, Taylor could soon be on his way to the UK to serve out his time. Some - notably Taylor's own lawyer, Courtenay Griffiths QC - have been vocal in identifying Taylor's prosecution as part of an inherently biased and flawed international criminal justice system, in furtherance of a neo-colonial, anti-African, agenda.

It's true that of the seven situations currently before the permanent international criminal court (ICC), all are from the continent of Africa. True also that two other international tribunals, the Rwanda Tribunal and the SCSL, are dedicated to African conflicts. But the foundations of the new system of international criminal justice lay not in Africa, but Europe.

It was the United Nations' decision, back in 1993, to establish the Yugoslavia tribunal that set the precedent for the other international tribunals that followed. But for his untimely passing, Slobodan Milosevic, not Taylor, may well have been the first former head of state to be convicted by an international court. And as the Taylor trial nears its end, the very un-African cases against Mladic and Karadzic carry on in earnest.

Are African perpetrators singled out more than others? Perhaps. But try telling that to their victims. From a man forced to choose which healthy hand to have amputated, to a woman gang raped by 20 men, to a child forced to kill his parents and join a rebel gang, justice, even if selective, will almost always be welcome. It is the victims of the crimes overlooked that have the right to complain, not the defendants in the dock.

Moreover, in the main, it has been African states themselves that have demanded international justice. It would be wrong to think that the SCSL, and the pursuit of lasting peace through justice, was somehow foisted upon the people of Sierra Leone. It was the newly elected government of Sierra Leone itself that entered an agreement with the United Nations to establish the SCSL.

Similarly, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, and Uganda all self-referred themselves to the ICC for investigation. The Kenyan cases, although initiated by the ICC prosecutor, continue to receive support from the Kenyan Human Rights Commission, and at least one of the suspects preferred the ICC to prosecution before a Kenyan court.

Nations opposed to the ICC, such as the United States, show a shortsighted reluctance to cede any sovereignty over their nationals to international institutions, and for this they come in for justifiable criticism. By contrast, those African states that have demonstrated the confidence to open up to international justice should not be seen as the targets of neo-colonial victimisation; they themselves have decided to be at the vanguard and usher in a new era of international justice, and for that we are indebted. As recently observed by the new Gambian prosecutor at the ICC, Fatou Bensouda, these are "principled states ... determined to use the power of the law, not the power of arms, to protect their citizens and their territories."

The UK, thanks in part to efforts of the late Robin Cook, when foreign secretary, played a key role in helping establish the ICC. In so doing, the UK chose to place itself at odds with its US ally and stand with the majority of the international community in laying the foundations for an historic institution (even if it could one day extend its reach over any British citizen). In the fullness of time it may be this, and not the unlawful war in Iraq, nor even the momentous passing of the Human Rights Act, that proves New Labour's lasting legacy to the international legal order.

For sure, there are flaws in our new system of international justice. For one thing, those who choose not to sign up to it - or have a powerful friend on the security council - face little immediate prospect of being brought before an international court. The downside of this is that people claim, as Seumas Milne did recently, that "international law simply doesn't apply to the big powers or their political leaders". But this is only part of the story, precedents are being set, precedents that will no doubt one day be applicable to all.

The fact is, international criminal justice is young. With time it will develop its full potential. Today it is Taylor, tomorrow ... who knows? Taylor's crime, and the basis of his conviction, was providing arms to a group he knew were using them to commit atrocities.

Those who knowingly peddle the hardware of abuse - no matter which continent they are from - should now sit up and take notice. With the Taylor conviction, another new precedent has been set.



*Steven Powles is a barrister at Doughty Street Chambers who specialises in international crime and human rights*