



Special Court for Sierra Leone
Outreach and Public Affairs Office

PRESS RELEASE

Freetown, Sierra Leone, 30 October 2013

Appeals Chamber Overturns Contempt Conviction of Former Defence Investigator Prince Taylor

A three-judge panel of the Appeals Chamber, by a majority, today overturned the contempt conviction of former Special Court defence investigator Prince Taylor.



The panel, consisting of Justice Emmanuel Ayoola (presiding), Justice Renate Winter, and Justice Jon Kamanda, delivered their judgement in The Hague. Prince Taylor and his counsel participated in Freetown by video link.

In their judgement, read out by Justice Ayoola, the majority of Judges (Justice Winter dissenting) overturned Prince Taylor's conviction on the grounds that it relied heavily on testimony by Eric Koi Senessie, who had admitted giving false testimony in his own contempt trial. The Judges found that the evidence used to

corroborate Senessie's testimony was either circumstantial and could be subject to another interpretation, or did not in fact corroborate Senessie's evidence.

The Court, by a majority, found that no reasonable trier of fact could have placed decisive weight on Senessie's evidence to convict Prince Taylor, and therefore acquitted Taylor on the five counts for which he had been convicted. Four of those related to "otherwise interfering" with Prosecution witnesses who had testified against former Liberian President Charles Taylor, and the other was for "otherwise interfering" with Senessie, at the time he was about to give evidence in contempt proceedings before a Chamber.

Justice Winter read out a dissent which would have upheld Prince Taylor's conviction on all counts.

On 14 May 2013, the three-judge panel of the Appeals Chamber had dismissed Prince Taylor's appeal for being filed out of time, and for failing to either apply for additional time or to file with a deficient filing form, meaning that the appeal was not properly before the Chamber. On 4 June 2013 the Judges accepted a re-filed appeal which included an application for additional time.

This was the last judicial proceeding before the Special Court, which will formally close later this year.

#END

The Special Court is an independent tribunal established jointly by the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone. It is mandated to bring to justice those who bear the greatest responsibility for atrocities committed in Sierra Leone after 30 November 1996.

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