

**SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE**  
**OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTOR**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**4 May 2005**

**Prosecutor Welcomes Resolution on Charles Taylor and Calls for Leadership from U.S. President Bush.**

The Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, David M. Crane, today called for U.S. President George W. Bush to lead the effort to bring former Liberian president Charles Taylor to justice. His comments follow passage today of a resolution in the U.S. House of Representatives calling for Taylor's immediate transfer to the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

The resolution passed 421 - 1.

"Today's resolution expressed the overwhelming sentiment of the U.S. House of Representatives, among Republicans and Democrats, that the time has come for Charles Taylor to be sent to face trial at the Special Court for Sierra Leone," Mr Crane said.

Ahead of Thursday's meeting in Washington between U.S. President George W. Bush and Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, Mr Crane added, "I am hopeful that President Bush will defend the rule of law in West Africa and use his meeting tomorrow to urge President Obasanjo to hand over Charles Taylor to the Special Court for Sierra Leone."

The Prosecutor pointed to indications that Charles Taylor harboured Al Qaeda operatives in neighbouring Liberia before and after the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States. "We know that Taylor did business with Al Qaeda, and we know that unless Taylor is transferred and the rule of law established, West Africa could remain fertile territory for terrorist organisations—another Afghanistan."

The Prosecutor also recently disclosed that he has information linking Taylor to the assassination attempt against President Lansana Conte of Guinea on 19 January 2005. The Office of the Prosecutor has contributed to the growing body of evidence that Taylor remains engaged in Liberian affairs despite his pledge to President Obasanjo in August 2003 to end his political career.

"Clearly Nigeria did the world a favour in August 2003 by agreeing to accept Charles Taylor and allowing the Liberian peace process to begin. Nigeria, the United States, United Kingdom, and others joined to put together that agreement. Taylor has consistently broken his word and continues to menace Liberia and all of West Africa. It is only fitting that Presidents Bush and Obasanjo should revisit the agreement in light of Taylor's obvious breaches, and deliver him to face justice for what he did to the people of Sierra Leone," Mr Crane said.

Charles Taylor faces a 17-count indictment for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the conflict in Sierra Leone. The charges include terrorising the civilian population, unlawful killings, sexual violence, physical violence, forced conscription of child soldiers, abductions, forced labour, looting and burning, and attacks on UN peacekeeping personnel.

The Prosecutor indicted Charles Taylor on 3 March 2003, and unsealed the indictment on 4 June 2003. Official copies of the indictment and warrant of arrest were delivered to the Nigerian government by the Court's Registry on 27 November 2003, and the International Police Organisation (INTERPOL) issued a "Red Notice" for Charles Taylor on 3 December 2003. On 31 May 2004, the Appeals Chamber of the Special Court for Sierra Leone rejected a motion filed by attorneys for Taylor, who sought to have the charges against him thrown out on the grounds that Taylor was a sitting head of state at the time of the indictment.

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. To date, the Prosecutor has indicted eleven persons on various charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law. Nine indictees are currently in the custody of the Court.

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