

Special Court for Sierra Leone
The Office of the Prosecutor

PRESS RELEASE

Freetown, Sierra Leone, 6 May 2004

Prosecutor Encouraged by New Call for Charles Taylor to Face Justice

Special Court for Sierra Leone Chief Prosecutor David M. Crane is encouraged by Saturday's statement of the Presidents of Guinea and Ivory Coast, in which they declared support for the legal proceedings against Charles Taylor at the Court in Freetown.

"The Special Court is an international and West African institution. The support of West African leaders is important to its ability to successfully meet its mandate in seeking justice for all West Africans," Mr Crane said. "I have consistently heard from the citizens of West Africa about their desire for Charles Taylor to face the charges against him at the Special Court. I am pleased that this sentiment is now gaining political voice."

Charles Taylor, currently sheltered in Calabar, Nigeria, 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 peacekeeping personnel.

"Sierra Leone, by working with the United Nations to set up the Special Court, acted on the desire of West Africans to hold individuals accountable for these international crimes," Mr Crane said. "The people of West Africa understand that peace and prosperity depend on realisation of the principle that no one can be above the law."

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