

Special Court for Sierra Leone
The Office of the Prosecutor

PRESS RELEASE

Freetown, Sierra Leone, 13 May 2003

Office of the Prosecutor Demands Body for Identification; Calls on Taylor to Arrest and Transfer Koroma Alive to the Court

This afternoon, the Chief of Investigations of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Dr. Alan White, called on Liberian President, Charles Taylor, to transfer the alleged body of indicted war criminal, Sam Bockarie, to the Court.

"It is most unfortunate for the people of Sierra Leone that Taylor has refused to release the body being purported to be Sam Bockarie. This action can only be viewed as an attempt to obstruct the work of the Court. An examination of the body has already been conducted by the Government of Liberia and there is no logical reason for them to retain it. We are calling on Taylor to release the body immediately to Sierra Leonean authorities." said White.

Liberian officials claim Bockarie was killed last week during an arrest attempt by government forces in Nimba County. For the past week, the Court has been calling on them to provide proof. Chief Prosecutor, David M. Crane, has stated repeatedly that he would not be satisfied until an independent forensic examination provided positive identification.

Dr. White also repeated demands for the arrest and transfer of Johnny Paul Koroma. "I continue to receive credible information that he is in Liberia, as previously reported, despite repeated denials by the government. Koroma is still located in the Foya Kamala area, also known as Foya Kamara or Foya Kama - all are the same and located in Liberia."

Koroma, indicted by the Court on March 7, 2003, is wanted for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law.

"The failure to arrest Johnny Paul Koroma and transfer him alive to the Court only highlights Liberia's apparent unwillingness to cooperate with the international community in pursuit of international justice. The world is watching. We hope Taylor will do the right thing," said Dr. White.

The Special Court, created through an international agreement between the United Nations and Sierra Leone, is mandated to try those who bear "the greatest responsibility" for atrocities committed during the country's decade-long civil war.

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