

Special Court for Sierra Leone
The Office of the Prosecutor

PRESS RELEASE

Freetown, Sierra Leone, 23 June 2003

Swiss have blocked Taylor's accounts, says Prosecutor

The Federal Office of Justice of the Government of Switzerland on Monday announced that various and related personal and business accounts of Charles Taylor be blocked or frozen.

The Office of the Prosecutor requested the Swiss authorities to block Taylor's accounts last week and, in compliance with their laws, they publicly announced this morning that those accounts were blocked as of Friday, June 20th of 2003.

"The money may be evidence of the joint criminal enterprise that we allege Taylor, with several other indictees, conducted in Sierra Leone over a period of years. In conjunction with the Swiss, we will work to disentangle Taylor's finances and identify the profits he reaped from his criminal activity here," said David M. Crane, Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

The request to block assets was made pursuant to the original arrest warrant issued against Mr. Taylor on 7 March 2003 which requests states "to identify and to locate assets owned by the Accused located within the territory of any State and adopt provisional measures to freeze such assets."

"I would like to thank the Swiss authorities for their rapid and decisive support of the Special Court on this important matter," said Mr. Crane.

Legal processes and the investigation relating to the blocking of assets are expected to take some time to complete. At this point, the net worth of the frozen accounts is unknown.

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.

Also see press release issued by Swiss Government's Federal Office of Justice
<http://www.bj.admin.ch/themen/presscom/2003/20030623-1-e.htm>

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