

Special Court for Sierra Leone  
The Office of the Prosecutor

PRESS RELEASE

Freetown, Sierra Leone, 23 July 2003

**2 Million of Taylor's Assets Frozen**

The Federal Office of Justice of the Government of Switzerland announced today that around 2 million Swiss francs, equivalent to approximately 1.5 million US dollars, has been frozen in accounts held by two persons associated with the Liberian president, Charles Taylor.

On June 19, 2003, the Office of the Prosecutor filed a request for assistance to the Swiss authorities to block the accounts of Taylor, his relatives, members of his regime and his company accounts. 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". Mr. Taylor is accused of war crimes in connection with civil war in Sierra Leone.

The Office of the Prosecutor is pleased with the assistance received from the Swiss authorities and acknowledges that the legal process and investigation into Taylor's financial affairs are expected to take some time to complete.

Desmond de Silva, QC, the British Deputy Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, which indicted the embattled President Charles Taylor of Liberia for war crimes, announces that, in taking the first step to freeze Taylor's assets in Swiss banks, two million Swiss francs have been located and frozen. He added "We have got to penetrate the walls of concealment that this indicted war criminal has thrown around his looted wealth."

The investigation by the Special Court into Taylor's assets is ongoing and not limited to Switzerland. 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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