

**SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
OUTREACH AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE**



Stormy clouds overlooking Southridge, Hill Station. Credit: Lawrence Sesay, CITS

PRESS CLIPPINGS

Enclosed are clippings of local and international press on the Special Court and related issues obtained by the Outreach and Public Affairs Office

as at:

Friday, 11 October 2013

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
Martin Royston-Wright
Ext 7217

Local News

Liberia's Charles Taylor to Serve Jail Term in UK / <i>Standard Times</i>	Page 3
Liberia's Charles Taylor to Serve Jail Term in UK / <i>For di People</i>	Page 4
Liberia's Charles Taylor to Serve Jail Term in UK / <i>Premier News</i>	Page 5
Charles Taylor UK Prison / <i>The Parrot</i>	Page 6

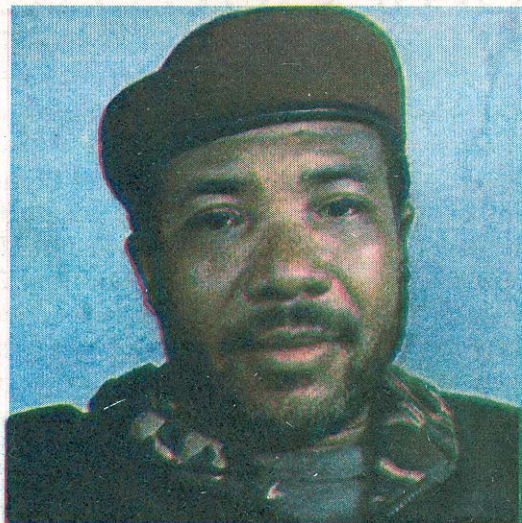
International News

International Prisoner Transfer / <i>Written Ministerial Statement (UK)</i>	Page 7
Charles Taylor to Serve Sentence in Britain / <i>Associated Press</i>	Page 8
To Leave The Hague: Taylor Given 72hr –Ultimatum / <i>The New Dawn</i>	Pages 9-10
Liberian Ex-Leader Taylor to Serve 50-Year Prison Term in U.K. / <i>Bloomberg News</i>	Page 11
Ex-President to Move to UK Jail / <i>Associated Press</i>	Page 12
War Criminal Charles Taylor to Serve 50-year Sentence in British Prison / <i>The Guardian</i>	Pages 13-14
Ex-Liberia Leader Charles Taylor to Serve War Crime Sentence in British Jail / <i>NBC News</i>	Pages 15-16
Liberia's Taylor to Serve War Crimes Sentence in UK / <i>Agence France-Presse</i>	Pages 17-18
Liberian War Criminal Charles Taylor Will Serve Sentence in UK Prison / <i>The Independent</i>	Pages 19-20
Warlord Charles Taylor to Serve 50-year Sentence for Sierra Leone War Crimes... / <i>Mail Online</i>	Pages 21-25
Tutu Calls on African Leaders Not to Kill ICC / <i>Agence France-Presse</i>	Page 26
Tutu Calls on Avaaz to Fight Potential ICC Walkout / <i>BDLive</i>	Pages 27-28

Standard Times
Friday, 11 October 2013

To serve Jail Term in UK

Charles Taylor to be relocated



Liberia's Charles Taylor to serve jail term in UK

Ex-Liberian President Charles Taylor is to serve his 50-year war crimes sentence in the UK, Justice Minister Jeremy Wright has confirmed.

Finland, Rwanda and Sweden were other possibilities following the rejection of his appeal last month by a UN-backed special court in The Hague.

It ruled that his convictions had been proved beyond doubt.

He was sentenced in May 2012 for aiding rebels who committed atrocities in Sierra Leone during its civil war.

Because of fears his trial could spark renewed conflict in West Africa, it was moved from Sierra Leone to The Hague, and the UK at the time offered to jail him if convicted.

Taylor timeline

- o 1989: Launches rebellion in Liberia
- o 1991: RUF rebellion starts in Sierra Leone
- o 1997: Elected president after a 1995 peace deal
- o 1999: Rebels take up arms against Taylor
- o June 2003: Arrest warrant issued; two months later he steps down and goes into exile in Nigeria
- o March 2006: Arrested after a failed escape bid and sent to Sierra Leone
- o June 2007: His trial opens - hosted in The Hague for security reasons
- o April 2012: Convicted of aiding and abetting the commission of war crimes - later sentenced to 50 years in jail

Mr Wright made the announcement in a written statement to Parliament, saying it followed a request from the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL). "Taylor will now be transferred to a prison in the UK to serve that sentence," he said, adding that international justice was central to British foreign policy.



Following the ruling last month, Charles Taylor has no further grounds for appeal

"The United Kingdom's offer to enforce any sentence imposed on former President Taylor by the SCSL was crucial to ensuring that he could be transferred to The Hague to stand trial for his crimes," Mr Wright said.

The SCSL found Taylor, 65, guilty of 11 crimes including terrorism, rape, murder and the use of child soldiers by rebel groups in neighbouring Sierra Leone during the 1991-

Taylor has always insisted he is innocent and his only contact with the rebels was to urge them to stop fighting.

He is the first former head of state convicted by an international war crimes court since World War II.

UK forces intervened in Sierra Leone in 2000, sending 800 paratroopers to protect Freetown as rebel forces were closing in on the capital. They evacuated British citizens and helped secure the airport for beleaguered UN peacekeepers.

The British forces pushed back the rebels, allowing the UN peacekeeping force to operate effectively. British forces then stayed on for another two years to re-train the Sierra Leone army.

An act of parliament was passed in 2007 to allow for Taylor to serve his sentence in the UK at the cost of the government.

"The conviction of Charles Taylor is a landmark moment for international justice," Mr Wright said.

"It clearly demonstrates that those who commit atrocities will be held to account and that no matter their position they will not enjoy impunity."

It is not the first time the UK has imprisoned foreign nationals convicted of war crimes.

Four men convicted of war crimes in the former Yugoslavia served time in British high-security prisons. One former Bosnian-Serb general was stabbed at Wakefield prison in apparent retaliation for the massacre of Muslims in the UN safe haven of Srebrenica in 1995.

The UK also offered to jail the former President of Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milosevic, had he been convicted at his trial in The Hague on charges of war crimes and genocide. But he died in 2006 while on trial.

2002 conflict in which some 50,000 people died.

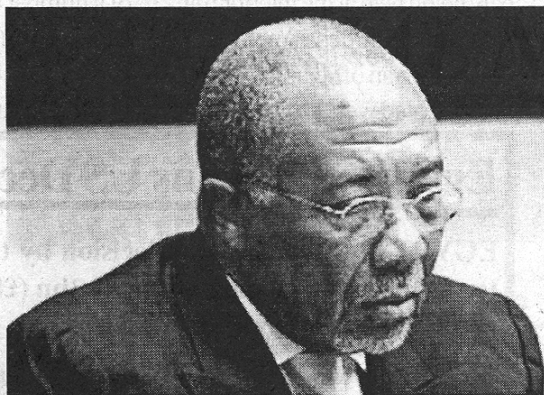
He was found to have supplied weapons to the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels in exchange for a constant flow of so-called blood diamonds.

The rebels were notorious for hacking off the limbs of civilians to terrorise the population.

For di People
Friday, 11 October 2013

Liberia's Charles Taylor To Serve Jail Term In UK

EX-LIBERIAN President Charles Taylor is to serve his 50-year war crimes sentence in the UK, Justice Minister Jeremy Wright has confirmed.



Following the ruling last month, Charles Taylor has no further grounds for appeal

Finland, Rwanda and Sweden were other possibilities following the rejection of his appeal last month by a UN-backed special court in The Hague.

It ruled that his convictions had been proved beyond doubt. He was sentenced in May 2012 for aiding rebels who committed atrocities in Sierra Leone during its civil war.

Because of fears his trial could spark renewed conflict in West Africa, it was moved from Sierra Leone to The Hague, and the UK at the time offered to jail him if convicted.

Mr Wright made the announcement in a written statement to Parliament, saying it followed a request from the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL).

"Taylor will now be transferred to a prison in the UK to serve that sentence," he said, adding that international justice was central to British foreign policy.

"The United Kingdom's offer to enforce any sentence imposed on former President Taylor by the SCSL was crucial to ensuring that he could be transferred to The Hague to stand trial for his crimes," Mr Wright said.

The SCSL found Taylor, 65, guilty of 11 crimes including terrorism, rape, murder and the use of child soldiers by rebel groups in neighbouring Sierra Leone during

the 1991-2002 conflict in which some 50,000 people died. He was found to have supplied weapons to the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels in exchange for a constant flow of so-called blood diamonds.

The rebels were notorious for hacking off the limbs of civilians to terrorise the population.

Taylor has always insisted he is innocent and his only contact with the rebels was to urge them to stop fighting. He is the first former head of state convicted by an international war crimes court since World War II.

UK forces intervened in Sierra Leone in 2000, sending 800 paratroopers to protect Freetown as rebel forces were closing in on the capital. They evacuated British citizens and helped secure the airport for beleaguered UN peacekeepers.

The British forces pushed back the rebels, allowing the UN peacekeeping force to operate effectively. British forces then stayed on for another two years to re-train the Sierra Leone army.

An act of parliament was passed in 2007 to allow for Taylor to serve his sentence in the UK at the cost of the government. "The conviction of Charles Taylor is a landmark moment for international justice," Mr Wright said. "It clearly demonstrates that those who commit atrocities will be held to account and that no matter their position they will not enjoy impunity." It is not the first time the UK has imprisoned foreign nationals convicted of war crimes.

Four men convicted of war crimes in the former Yugoslavia served time in British high-security prisons. One former Bosnian-Serb general was stabbed at Wakefield prison in apparent retaliation for the massacre of Muslims in the UN safe haven of Srebrenica in 1995.

The UK also offered to jail the former President of Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milosevic, had he been convicted at his trial in The Hague on charges of war crimes and genocide. But died in 2006 while on trial.

Liberia's Charles Taylor to serve jail term in UK

Ex-Liberian President Charles Taylor is to serve his 50-year war crimes sentence in the UK, Justice Minister Jeremy Wright has confirmed.

Finland, Rwanda and Sweden were other possibilities following the rejection of his appeal last month by a UN-backed special court in The Hague.

It ruled that his convictions had been proved beyond doubt.

He was sentenced in May 2012 for aiding rebels who committed atrocities in Sierra Leone during its civil war.

Because of fears his trial could spark renewed conflict in West Africa, it was moved from Sierra Leone to The Hague, and the UK at the time offered to jail him if convicted.

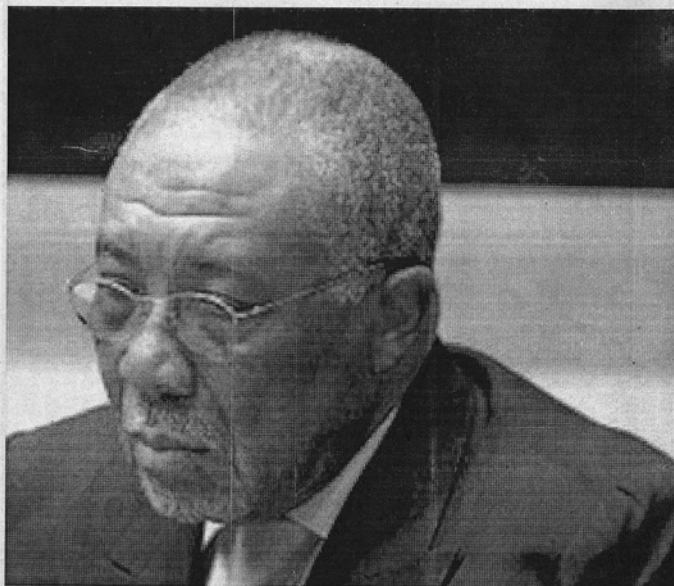
Mr Wright made the announcement in a written statement to Parliament, saying it followed a request from the Special Court for Sierra Leone

(SCSL).

"Taylor will now be transferred to a prison in the UK to serve that sentence," he said, adding that international justice was central to British foreign policy.

"The United Kingdom's offer to enforce any sentence imposed on former President Taylor by the SCSL was crucial to ensuring that he could be transferred to The Hague to stand trial for his crimes," Mr Wright said.

The SCSL found Taylor, 65, guilty of 11 crimes including terrorism, rape, murder and the use of child soldiers by rebel groups in neighbouring Sierra Leone during the 1991-2002 conflict in which some 50,000 people died.



He was found to have supplied weapons to the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels in exchange for a constant flow of so-

called blood diamonds.

The rebels were notorious for hacking off the limbs of civilians to terrorise the population.

Charles Taylor

UK Prison



Ex-Liberian President Charles Taylor is to serve his 50-year war crimes sentence in the UK, Justice Minister Jeremy Wright has confirmed. Sweden and Rwanda had also offered to imprison him following the rejection of his appeal last month by a UN-backed special court in The Hague. It ruled that his convictions had been proved beyond doubt. He

was sentenced in May 2012 for aiding rebels who committed atrocities in Sierra Leone during its civil war. Mr Wright made the announcement in a written statement to Parliament. The Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) found Taylor, 65, guilty of 11 crimes including terrorism, rape, murder and the use of child soldiers by rebel groups in neighbouring Sierra Leone during the

1991-2002 conflict. He was found to have supplied weapons to the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels in exchange for a constant flow of so-called blood diamonds. Taylor has always insisted he is innocent and his only contact with the rebels was to urge them to stop fighting. He is the first former head of state convicted by an international war crimes court since World War II.

Written Ministerial Statement (UK)

Thursday, 10 October 2013

INTERNATIONAL PRISONER TRANSFER

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, the Minister for Prisons and Rehabilitation (Jeremy Wright): On 26th April 2012 the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) convicted Charles Taylor, the former President of Liberia, on 11 counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law, including, murder, forced labour and slavery, recruiting child soldiers and rape. On 30th May 2012, the SCSL sentenced him to 50 years imprisonment. On 26th September 2013, the SCSL dismissed former President Taylor's appeal against that conviction and confirmed the sentence. Following a request from the President of the SCSL to the United Kingdom, former President Taylor will now be transferred to a prison in the UK to serve that sentence.

The United Kingdom's offer to enforce any sentence imposed on former President Taylor by the SCSL was crucial to ensuring that he could be transferred to The Hague to stand trial for his crimes.

The International Tribunals (Sierra Leone) Act 2007, which allows for SCSL sentences to be enforced here, was passed with wide cross-party support in June 2007. During the passage of the Bill it was made clear, and accepted by the House, that former President Taylor could serve his sentence in the UK should it be required, and that Her Majesty's Government would meet the associated costs.

International justice is central to foreign policy. It is essential for securing the rights of individuals and states, and for securing peace and reconciliation. The conviction of Charles Taylor is a landmark moment for international justice. It clearly demonstrates that those who commit atrocities will be held to account and that no matter their position they will not enjoy impunity.

Associated Press

Thursday, 10 October 2013

Charles Taylor to serve sentence in Britain

By MIKE CORDER

Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands -- Former Liberian president Charles Taylor, who was convicted for sponsoring atrocities in Sierra Leone, will serve his 50-year sentence in a British prison, Justice Minister Jeremy Wright announced Thursday in a letter to Parliament.

Taylor, 65, is the first former head of state convicted by an international war crimes court since World War II.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone found him guilty in April 2012 of 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity including terrorism, murder, rape and using child soldiers. His conviction and sentence were upheld at appeal last month.

In his letter to Parliament, Wright called Taylor's conviction, "a landmark moment for international justice." He did not identify the prison where Taylor would be confined.

In the Liberian capital, Monrovia, Taylor's brother-in-law Arthur Saye said Taylor should serve his sentence in Rwanda like other rebels convicted by the Sierra Leone court.

"Mr. Taylor is an African; he's someone who believes in eating his African foods and what have you," Saye said.

"And what happened took place in Africa; yes, they tried him in another country, but why must he be subjected to serve his term in a white man's country?"

Saye expressed fears for the former warlord-turned-president's safety if he is imprisoned in Britain.

The court's president, Judge George Gelaga King, said in a written order dated Oct. 4 and released Thursday that in choosing a British prison he took account of Taylor's family situation and the ability of other possible states to ensure his physical safety.

The New Dawn
Friday, 11 October 2013

To Leave The Hague: Taylor Given 72hr -Ultimatum

Othello B. Garblah



Authorities at the UN backed Special Court for Sierra Leone has given ex-President Charles Taylor 72 hours to be transferred to a British prison, exactly two weeks after judges of the Court Appeal's Chamber upheld the 50 years sentence imposed by the Trial Chamber.

A request by Taylor's defense lawyers that he rather be transferred to Rwanda, where many of the Special Court convicts are serving their prison terms was said to have been turned down by the registrar on Thursday after the decision was reached to send Taylor to the UK.

A Special Court source told this paper Thursday that a similar request was made by Norway for Taylor to serve his sentence in that country but same was denied by the registrar, who indicated that only the judges of the court could grant such request.

This paper further learnt on Thursday evening that Special Court Judges were expected to issue a statement relative to the Taylor transfer last night.

The African Union or AU which is expected to meet in Uganda probably next week to discuss Africans participation at the International Criminal Court or ICC is yet to respond to a letter written by the Taylor family requesting that it plays an influential role in ensuring that Mr. Taylor serves his prison terms on African soil.

A spokesman for the Taylor family last night expressed disappointment in the AU for turning a blind eye on the Taylor prison destination row and its refusal to reply their letter.

Mr. Arthur Saye said the family fear for Taylor's safety in a UK prison is based on the fact that there is a large Sierra Leonean community in London and also the role played by Britain in the Sierra Leonean conflict. He said Taylor's children who numbered 10 would find it very difficult to visit him in UK but would be easier if it were in say Rwanda.

Call upon the AU Ambassador to Liberia last night to verify claims by the Taylor family concerning a

written request for the AU's intervention was unsuccessful as Amb. Tony Solajah MTN mobile rang endlessly.

The Special Court Appeals Chamber on September 26, 2013 unanimously upheld the conviction of Mr. Taylor on 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, and affirmed the 50-year sentence imposed by the Trial Chamber.

The Court ordered at the time that Mr. Taylor's sentence be enforced immediately, and that he will remain in the custody of the Special Court pending finalization of arrangements to serve his sentence.

Great Britain had remained the destination where Mr. Taylor could serve his sentence, but Rwanda was a second destination being considered as well. Under Rule 103(B) of the Court's Rules, Mr. Taylor's place of imprisonment is determined by the Special Court President.

Mr. Taylor is said to have spent 8 years in detention during his trial. If 8 years are subtracted from his 50 years sentence, this means that Mr. Taylor will be doing 42-years in a UK jail.

Bloomberg News

Thursday, 10 October 2013

Liberian Ex-Leader Taylor to Serve 50-Year Prison Term in U.K.

By Kitty Donaldson

Former Liberian President Charles Taylor is to be transferred to a U.K. prison to serve his 50-year sentence for crimes against humanity in Sierra Leone's civil war in the 1990s.

Taylor, 65, was found guilty last year on 11 counts, including terrorism, murder, rape and using child soldiers, by the Special Court for Sierra Leone in the Netherlands. The judge at Taylor's trial said he sold diamonds for and supplied weapons and fighters to the Revolutionary United Front rebels, who hacked off the hands and legs of civilians during the war in Sierra Leone, Liberia's neighbor, in which 50,000 people died.

U.K. Justice Minister Jeremy Wright said in a written statement to Parliament in London today that following a request from the court, Taylor will now be moved to a prison in Britain.

"International justice is central to foreign policy," Wright wrote. "The conviction of Charles Taylor is a landmark moment for international justice. It clearly demonstrates that those who commit atrocities will be held to account and that, no matter their position, they will not enjoy impunity."

Associated Press

Thursday, 10 October 2013

Ex-president to move to UK jail

Former Liberian president Charles Taylor is to be transferred to a British prison to serve his 50-year sentence for crimes against humanity.

Taylor became the first former head of state to be convicted by an international war crimes court since the Second World War when he was found guilty last year of 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including terrorism, murder, rape and using child soldiers.

In a written statement to Parliament, Justice Minister Jeremy Wright said that following a request from the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), former president Taylor will now be transferred to a prison in the UK to serve his sentence.

Mr Wright said: "International justice is central to foreign policy.

"It is essential for securing the rights of individuals and states, and for securing peace and reconciliation.

"The conviction of Charles Taylor is a landmark moment for international justice. It clearly demonstrates that those who commit atrocities will be held to account and that no matter their position they will not enjoy impunity."

Taylor, 65, aided rebels in Sierra Leone during a brutal civil war in the 1990s which left 50,000 people dead.

Thousands more were left mutilated in the conflict that became known for the extreme cruelty of rival rebel groups who hacked off the limbs of their victims and carved their initials into opponents.

Taylor helped to plan attacks in return for "blood diamonds" mined by slave labourers in Sierra Leone and political influence in the volatile West African region.

He was convicted not only of aiding and abetting Sierra Leone rebels from Liberia, but also for actually planning some of the attacks carried out by Sierra Leone rebel groups, the Revolutionary United Front and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council.

It is not the first time Britain has hosted foreign war criminals - four men convicted of war crimes in the former Yugoslavia served time in British jails.

The men spent time in high-security prisons, with one former Bosnian-Serb general stabbed at Wakefield prison, apparently in retaliation for the massacre of Muslims in the UN safe haven of Srebrenica in 1995.

The former president of Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milosevic, would have stayed in a British jail but died in 2006 while he was on trial in the Hague.

The Guardian

Thursday, 10 October 2013

War criminal Charles Taylor to serve 50-year sentence in British prison

Ministry of Justice confirms that former Liberian president will be transferred from Dutch prison to serve his sentence

Owen Bowcott, legal affairs correspondent



Charles Taylor was found guilty of 11 counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international law. Photograph: Koen van Weel/EPA

Charles Taylor, the convicted former Liberian president, will serve his 50-year sentence for war crimes in a British prison, the ministry of justice has confirmed.

The announcement follows a final ruling by the United Nations-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) in The Hague last month. The UK is the only country that has publicly offered to accommodate him.

The offer was made in 2006 by the then foreign secretary, Margaret Beckett, as part of a diplomatic deal to bring the onetime warlord to justice. For the past seven years Taylor, now 65, has been held in a small Dutch jail pending the last appeal stage of the UN tribunal.

Lawyers for Taylor had pressed the court to allow him to serve out his sentence in an African jail nearer home.

Justice minister Jeremy Wright told parliament in a written statement: "Former President Taylor will now be transferred to a prison in the UK to serve [his] sentence."

He added: "The United Kingdom's offer to enforce any sentence imposed on former President Taylor by the SCSL was crucial to ensuring that he could be transferred to The Hague to stand trial for his crimes." He said the decision had wide cross party support when it was passed in June 2007 and that "Her Majesty's government would meet the associated costs".

"International justice is central to foreign policy. It is essential for securing the rights of individuals and states, and for securing peace and reconciliation," he said. "The conviction of Charles Taylor is a landmark moment for international justice. It clearly demonstrates that those who commit atrocities will be held to account and that no matter their position they will not enjoy impunity."

The minister did not identify which prison Taylor will be held in. It is likely, at least initially, to be a high security jail.

The average cost of keeping a prisoner in a British jail is around £40,000 a year. Conditions in a British prison are likely to be more restrictive for Taylor than his experiences in Scheveningen jail in the Netherlands, where he has been detained for the past seven years. A recent biography claimed he had fathered a child with his wife during conjugal visits there.

The Hague court found Taylor guilty of 11 counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law, including murder, forced labour and slavery, recruiting child soldiers and rape.

He had been criminally responsible for "aiding and abetting" the Revolutionary United Front and other factions carrying out atrocities in Sierra Leone between 1996 and 2002.

The court heard that the Liberian leader knew from August 1997 about the campaign of terror being waged against the civilian population in Sierra Leone and about the sale of "blood diamonds" in return for weapons.

Among the atrocities detailed was the beheading of civilians. Victims' heads were often displayed at checkpoints. On one occasion a man was killed, publicly disembowelled and his intestines stretched across a road to form another checkpoint. "The purpose," Judge Richard Lussick said, "was to instil terror."

Taylor was the first former head of state to face judgment in an international court on war crimes charges since judges in Nuremberg convicted Karl Dönitz, the admiral who led Nazi Germany for a brief period following Adolf Hitler's suicide.

The UK's record on holding war crimes inmates is not unblemished. In 2010, the Bosnian Serb general Radislav Krstić, who was serving a 35-year sentence in Wakefield prison, was stabbed in his cell by three Muslim inmates.

NBC News

Thursday, 10 October 2013

Ex-Liberia leader Charles Taylor to serve war crime sentence in British jail



Former Liberian President Charles Ghankay Taylor in the courtroom of the Special Court for Sierra Leone prior to the appeal judgement, in The Hague, The Netherlands on 26 September 2013.

By Henry Austin and Alastair Jamieson, NBC News

LONDON - Charles Taylor, the former Liberian president sentenced to 50 years in prison for crimes against humanity, will serve his jail term in Britain, the U.K. government said on Thursday.

Taylor, 64, was charged with murder, rape, conscripting child soldiers and sexual slavery during intertwined wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. However, the court found him guilty of only some of the charges.

He is the first head of state to be sent to prison by an international court since Nazi leaders were sentenced at Nuremberg after World War II.

Last month, the Special Court for Sierra Leone, based in The Hague, upheld his conviction for using the proceeds of 'blood diamonds' mined in the conflict zone to finance rebels who raped, murdered and mutilated their way across Liberia's northern neighbor during its 11-year civil war.

The tribunal found Taylor guilty of aiding and abetting war crimes and crimes against humanity by supporting notoriously brutal rebels in return for "blood diamonds."

"The conviction of Charles Taylor is a landmark moment for international justice," British justice minister Jeremy Wright wrote in a statement to parliament.



The International Criminal Court at the Hague has found former Liberian President Charles Taylor guilty of aiding and abetting war crimes and crimes against humanity by supporting brutal rebels responsible for countless atrocities in the 1991-2002 Sierra Leone civil war. ITV's Paul Brand reports.

"It clearly demonstrates that those who commit atrocities will be held to account and that no matter their position they will not enjoy impunity," he said.

"The United Kingdom's offer to enforce any sentence imposed on former President Taylor by the SCSL was crucial to ensuring that he could be transferred to The Hague to stand trial for his crimes."

Agence France-Presse

Thursday, 10 October 2013

Liberia's Taylor to serve war crimes sentence in UK



A National Patriotic Front of Liberia fighter loyal to Charles Taylor fires a machine gun at rival fighters in Monrovia on May 4, 1996/AFP

London - Liberia's former president and warlord Charles Taylor is to serve out his 50-year prison sentence for war crimes in a British jail, Britain confirmed on Thursday.

Taylor, 65, is likely to spend the rest of his life behind bars in Britain after the UN backed Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) in The Hague upheld his sentence for arming rebels during Sierra Leone's brutal civil war during the 1990s.

"Former president Taylor will now be transferred to a prison in the UK to serve that sentence," Britain's junior justice minister Jeremy Wright said in a statement to parliament.

The justice ministry refused to disclose which jail would house the former strongman. "We don't comment on individual cases," a ministry spokeswoman told AFP.

Taylor's landmark sentence on 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity was the first handed down by an international court against a former head of state since the Nazi trials at Nuremberg in 1946.

He had been arrested in 2006 and sentenced at The Hague last year for "some of the most heinous crimes in human history".

As Liberia's president from 1997 to 2003, Taylor supplied guns and ammunition to rebels in neighbouring Sierra Leone in a conflict notorious for its mutilations, drugged child soldiers and sex slaves, judges said.

He had maintained his innocence throughout the seven year trial, which had heard evidence from witnesses including actress Mia Farrow and supermodel Naomi Campbell who told of the diamonds she believed she was given by Taylor in 1997.

The British government had offered in 2007 to house Taylor in a British jail if he was convicted, and to cover the costs of his imprisonment.

Sweden, Finland and Rwanda also offered to take in Taylor, and his lawyer had earlier suggested that he would prefer to go to Rwanda to be closer to his family.

“The United Kingdom’s offer to enforce any sentence imposed on former president Taylor by the SCSL was crucial to ensuring that he could be transferred to The Hague to stand trial for his crimes,” Wright said.

“The conviction of Charles Taylor is a landmark moment for international justice.

“It clearly demonstrates that those who commit atrocities will be held to account and that no matter their position they will not enjoy impunity.”

The Independent

Thursday, 10 October 2013

Liberian war criminal Charles Taylor will serve sentence in UK prison

Mr Taylor was responsible for 'some of the most heinous crimes in human history'



Charles Taylor, the former president of Liberia who was convicted of war crimes, is to serve out his 50-year sentence in a UK prison, Justice Minister Jeremy Wright confirmed today.

Mr Taylor, who was convicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), failed in his appeal against war crimes convictions last month.

A UN-backed special court in The Hague ruled that his convictions had been proved beyond doubt.

Mr Taylor, 65, had argued that there were legal errors during his trial.

The former president was convicted of supplying weapons to the Revolutionary United Front rebels in exchange for so-called blood diamonds.

He was also found guilty at his trial of 11 further crimes including rape, murder, terrorism and the use of child soldiers during the horrific civil war in Sierra Leone between 1991-2002.

At the trial the judge said Mr Taylor was responsible for "some of the most heinous crimes in human history".

In a written statement to Parliament, Justice Minister Jeremy Wright said that following a request from the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), former president Taylor will now be transferred to a prison in the UK to serve his sentence. Mr Wright said: "International justice is central to foreign policy.

"It is essential for securing the rights of individuals and states, and for securing peace and reconciliation.

"The conviction of Charles Taylor is a landmark moment for international justice. It clearly demonstrates that those who commit atrocities will be held to account and that no matter their position they will not enjoy impunity."

Mail Online

Thursday, 10 October 2013

Warlord Charles Taylor to serve 50-year sentence for Sierra Leone war crimes in a BRITISH jail

- Former Liberian leaders convicted on 11 counts of war crimes
- Offences include terrorism, murder, rape and using child soldiers
- Special Court of Sierra Leone confirmed 50-year sentence last month
- UK government defended move which will see taxpayer pick up the bill

By Matt Chorley, Mailonline Political Editor

Notorious warlord Charles Taylor is to serve his 50-year jail term in a British prison, ministers announced today.

The former president of Liberia was convicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) on 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including terrorism, murder, rape and using child soldiers.

UK justice minister Jeremy Wright said today: 'The conviction of Charles Taylor is a landmark moment for international justice.'



Convicted: Former Liberian president Charles Taylor, left, at the Special Court for Sierra Leone for his appeal judgment at The Hague today, where judges confirmed his 50-year sentence for crimes against humanity

The controversial decision to send Taylor to Britain could cost the taxpayer up to £80,000-a-year to keep him in in a maximum security prison.

Last month Taylor lost his appeal against his convictions, which made him the first former head of state convicted by an international court since Nuremberg trials of Nazi leaders after the Second World War.

The court's ruling came more than a decade after Taylor helped rebels go on a murderous rampage across war-torn Sierra Leone, raping, murdering and mutilating tens of thousands of innocent victims.

Taylor had aided and abetted crimes committed by Revolutionary United Front and Armed Forces Revolutionary Council rebels, while knowing well the kinds of crimes they were committing.

Presiding Judge George Gelaga King said: 'Their primary purpose was to spread terror. Brutal violence was purposefully unleashed against civilians with the purpose of making them afraid, afraid that there would be more violence if they continued to resist.'

'Governments and the international community were also afraid that unless the RUF and the AFRC demands were met, thousands more killings, mutilations, abductions and rapes of civilians would follow.'

Taylor was sentenced to 50 years in jail in May last year, and the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) dismissed the appeal and confirmed the sentence on September 26 this year.

The head of the SCSL then requested that Taylor now be transferred to a prison in the UK to serve his sentence.

In a statement to MPs today, Justice minister Mr Wright said: 'The United Kingdom's offer to enforce any sentence imposed on former President Taylor by the SCSL was crucial to ensuring that he could be transferred to The Hague to stand trial for his crimes.'

The International Tribunals (Sierra Leone) Act was backed by all parties in 2007 knowing it could mean Taylor would serve his sentence in the UK with the taxpayer picking up the bill, he said.

'International justice is central to foreign policy. It is essential for securing the rights of individuals and states, and for securing peace and reconciliation.

'The conviction of Charles Taylor is a landmark moment for international justice. It clearly demonstrates that those who commit atrocities will be held to account and that no matter their position they will not enjoy impunity.'

During Taylor's four-year initial trial, judges heard accounts from Sierra Leone civilians who had been mutilated by rebels or who had seen their close relatives murdered.

They also heard evidence from supermodel Naomi Campbell, who was questioned about blood diamonds Taylor was accused of having sent to her hotel room.

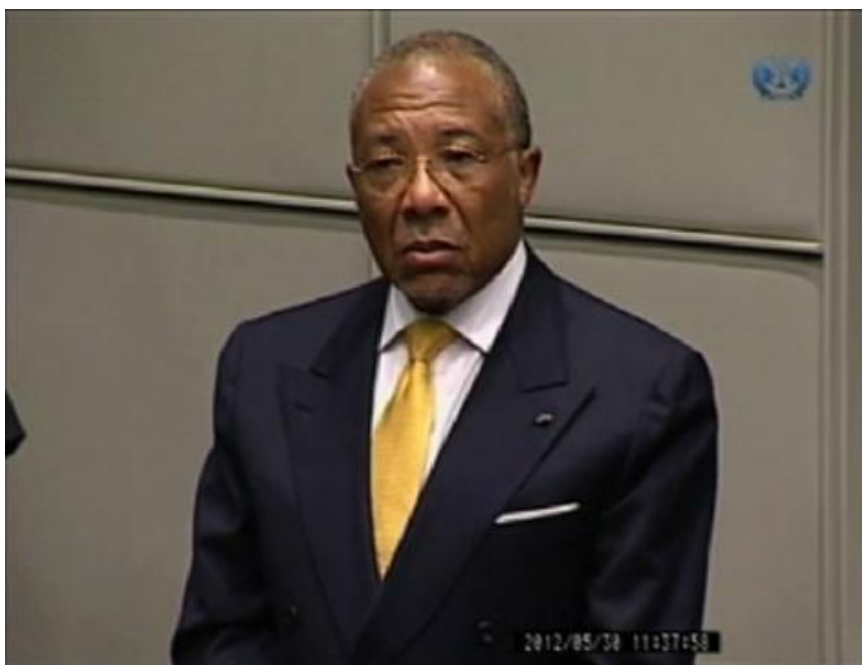
She described the objects she received as looking like 'dirty pebbles.'

The court found Taylor provided crucial aid to rebels in Sierra Leone during that country's 11-year civil war, which left an estimated 50,000 people dead before its conclusion in 2002.

Thousands more were left mutilated in a conflict that became known for its extreme cruelty, as rival rebel groups hacked off the limbs of their victims and carved their groups' initials into opponents.

The rebels developed gruesome terms for the mutilations, offering victims the choice of 'long sleeves' or 'short sleeves' - having their hands hacked off or their arms sliced off above the elbow.

Prosecutors said he used the proceeds from so-called blood diamonds mined in the conflict zone to finance Taylor's activities, which included advising and helping the rebels.



'Dirty pebbles': Naomi Campbell is seen holding the bible being sworn in at the Special Court for Sierra Leone, where she was questioned about blood diamonds Taylor was accused of having sent to her hotel room



Civil war: In this June 10, 1997 file photo, soldiers from the Revolutionary United Front supported by Taylor ride in a pick-up truck at their base on the outskirts of Freetown, Sierra Leone

Morris Anyah, Taylor's lead defence lawyer, complained that Taylor had been prosecuted because of a lack of friends in high places.

Referring to the diplomatic row over action against the regime in Syria, Mr Anyah said: 'But for two powerful nations, two members of the Security Council - Russia and China - Bashar Assad would have been charged and indicted by the International Criminal Court. That is not happening simply because of political reasons.'

'Had Charles Taylor had as friends any of the five permanent members of the Security Council ... this case I dare say would probably not have had the sort of traction it had.'

Because Syria is not a member of the International Criminal Court, only the Security Council asking the court to investigate could trigger jurisdiction there.



The reaction back home: Men gather at a popular downtown Monrovia tea shop known as a hotspot for political debate to watch the announcement of today's appeal verdict

And Taylor's supporters in Liberia remained loyal to the former warlord who was later democratically elected the country's president.

The very idea of international courts has come under fire across Africa. The ICC has been accused of neo-colonial meddling in Kenya as it pursues cases against its president and deputy president.

'This is complete international gangsterism,' said Cyril Allen, former secretary general of Liberia's National Patriotic Party. 'The ICC was set up for Africans, to intimidate them and get their resources.'

Taylor's brother-in-law Arthur Saye said he was not surprised by the verdict.

'From day one my position has been that the trial of Mr Taylor was orchestrated by the powers that be - the Western powers,' he told the Associated Press. 'This was an international conspiracy.'

Several African states are considering withdrawing from the ICC, which has only ever prosecuted Africans.

Agence France-Presse

Wednesday, 9 October 2013

Tutu calls on African leaders not to kill ICC

Cape Town - South African Nobel peace laureate Desmond Tutu warned African leaders against leaving the International Criminal Court on Wednesday, saying it would leave the world a "more dangerous place".

In an online petition titled "Who will stop the next genocide?", the 82-year-old anti-apartheid hero said that in his lifetime he had seen "great gains made that protect the weak from the strong".

He cautioned that "in just two days time, African leaders could kill off a great institution, leaving the world a more dangerous place."

The 54-member African Union will meet on Friday to debate a possible withdrawal from the war crimes court over claims that it targets the continent.

Adding to growing cautions on such a move, Tutu called on continental heavyweights South Africa and Nigeria to back The Hague-based tribunal.

Calling the two countries the "voices of reason at the African Union," he urged them to "speak out and ensure that the persecuted are protected by the ICC".

Tutu said the ICC was the world's first and only court to try crimes against humanity, and accused the leaders of Sudan and Kenya, "who have inflicted terror and fear across their countries" of trying to "drag Africa out of the ICC, allowing them the freedom to kill, rape, and inspire hatred without consequences."

The petition is addressed to South African President Jacob Zuma and his Nigerian counterpart Goodluck Jonathan.

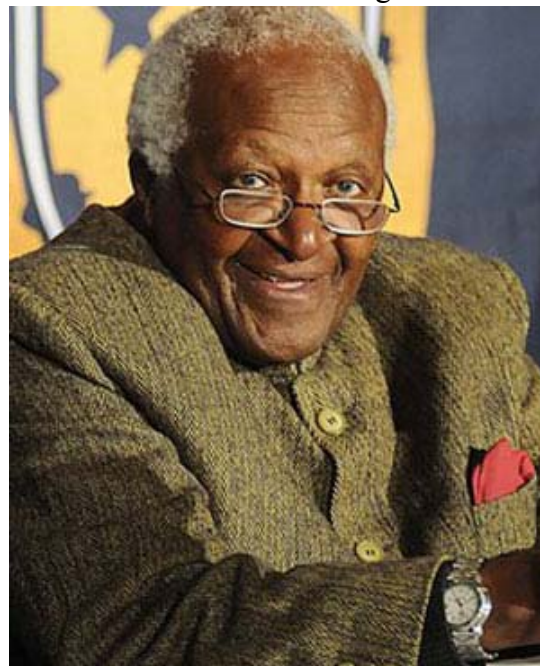
"Without the political leadership of Nigeria and South Africa and other democracies across the continent, justice could be buried and the ICC could be killed off," its text states.

"We call on you to lead the fight against crimes against humanity and keep Africa in the ICC."

Asking people to add their names, Tutu said once the petition had hit one million signatures, it would be delivered to leaders at the AU meeting.

The AU has accused the court of singling out Africans for prosecution and demanded that proceedings against Kenya's leadership linked to 2007-2008 post-election violence be dropped.

Former UN secretary-general Kofi Annan said on Monday it would be a "badge of shame" for Africa if its leaders voted to leave the International Criminal Court, in a lecture marking Tutu's 82nd birthday.



BDLive

Thursday, 10 October 2013

Tutu calls on Avaaz to fight potential ICC walkout

By Khulekani Magubane



SOUTH African Nobel laureate Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu has pleaded with partners of global campaign organisation Avaaz to sign a petition against a possible walkout from the International Criminal Court (ICC) by members of the African Union (AU).

The AU will hold a special summit on Saturday where it is expected to discuss the ICC membership of 34 African states, with calls for these countries to pull out of the Hague court in protest against its prosecution of Kenyan leader Uhuru Kenyatta and his deputy, William Ruto.

In an e-mail to Avaaz associates, Mr Tutu — who turned 82 on Monday — accused nations including Kenya and Sudan of "trying to drag Africa out of the ICC" and "inflict terror across their countries ... without consequences".

He called for Nigeria and South Africa to speak out on behalf of the ICC and its role on the continent, hailing the work done by the court in Darfur, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire and Kenya "in bringing hope to those terrified by the armies, militias and madmen that have waged war against the innocent".

"This threat to the ICC started precisely because the court was doing its job," he said. "It charged Kenya's deputy president for killing people who rallied against him during an election and Sudan's president for murdering women and children in Darfur. Now Kenya and Sudan are lobbying all of Africa to pull out of the court and destroy its chance of success."

Mr Tutu called for associates of Avaaz to add their names to what he hoped would be a petition with a million signatures, which would then be submitted to the AU conference in Addis Ababa. He dismissed leaders who criticised the ICC as a Western witch-hunt, saying 20 African countries had played a role in the ICC's formation.

Last month, at the United Nations General Assembly in New York, President Jacob Zuma urged the ICC to compromise on Kenyan leaders awaiting trial for crimes against humanity, but South Africa has played its cards close to its chest on the possibility of an exit from the ICC for the continent.

International Relations Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane said on Tuesday that she could not predict the outcome of the AU special summit before it sat. The decision by Africa's leaders could, however, have far-reaching implications for any hopes of South Africa gaining a permanent seat in the UN Security Council.

With Nicholas Kotch