

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



See more photos from Friday's send-off for the Mongolian Guard Force in today's 'Special Court Supplement'.

**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:**

**Monday, 14 March 2011**

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.  
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact  
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# Taylor's wife wants to be President of Liberia



She has little or no time for what Mr. Charles Taylor is going through in The Hague where his trial for war crimes is

drawing to an end. Jewel Howard Taylor, the estranged wife of the former Liberian President is looking beyond her

status as a Senator representing Bong County and is now eyeing the Executive Mansion. She has declared her

intention to challenge incumbent Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf for the presidency under the ticket of the National

Patriotic Party (NPP) an offshoot of the defunct rebel outfit, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia which Charles Taylor led

until it was transformed into the NPP. Turn to page 4 for more on Jewel Howard Taylor

# Independent Observer

Monday, 14 March 2011

## About Jewel Howard Taylor

### An Interpretation Of Senator Jewel Howard-Taylor's Disappointment

By: Ekena Wesley  
The Perspective  
Atlanta, Georgia  
March 25, 2006

In an interview on BBC's 'Weekend Network Africa' carried on Saturday, March 11, 2006, Bong County senator Jewel Howard-Taylor and former First Lady of Liberia categorically expressed her disappointment over a so-called revelation as a result of a telephone conversation with her diplomatically-imprisoned husband Charles Taylor to the effect that the government of Liberia had formally requested his extradition from Nigeria. Shortly after the BBC interview, a couple of text messages poured in from across the continent with the majority emerging from Liberia. Over 90% of the opinions expressed called for justice although one Nigeria text-in and pleaded with Liberians to let by-gone be by-gone apparently in the name of reconciliation and peace. Importantly, Liberians are not the ones demanding justice in this instance but the people of Sierra Leone. The sentiments contained in the texts to the BBC may not be as scientific and/or of empirical basis in the mindset of divided opinions but clearly epitomize an expression of a collective concern that in the eyes of the law, no one is above the law as such.

Senator Howard-Taylor noted her disappointment at the decision of a letter to the Nigerians about Taylor's extradition and pointed out that the letter and spirit of the communication was a total contradiction of a commitment she received from President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf.

Senator Taylor intimated that when she put the issue of the exiled president's extradition to candidate Johnson-Sirleaf prior to the run-off elections, Mrs. Johnson-Sirleaf assured her that since the matter was a negotiated truce, all stakeholders would be consulted to determine Mr. Taylor's fate. Senator Howard-Taylor further told the BBC that such a sensitive issue should have been brought to the Liberian people through their able representatives as well as regional and international interlocutors. Regarding Mrs. Jewel Howard-Taylor's disappointment, it is fundamentally crucial to systematically deal with this issue in context, with reference to the specifics, its implications for any responsible government, the entering into a pre-run-off undocumented understanding, the role of justice systems versus human rights violation, and impunity over systematic abuse, torture and heinous crimes.

It is no secret in Liberia that former First Lady Jewel-Howard-Taylor provided her unqualified support to the candidature of candidate Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf during the November run-off elections in which football legend George Weah suffered a traumatic political thrashing at the hands of his rival. Irrespective of what the close-door bickering might have been, on account of principle, Mrs. Howard-Taylor supported Mrs. Johnson-Sirleaf in the collective interest of our body polity, which could have stood the risk of further retrogression and disintegration. If the former First Lady's support for Mrs. Johnson-Sirleaf was simply to overturn a purported decision pursuant to her exiled husband's extradition, she was unquestionable treading a dangerous terrain. What appeared trickery and manipulative venture was one entered into by the former First Lady in making serious political overtures about Liberia most notorious warlord turned civilian president. Firstly, it is the UN-backed Special Court in Sierra Leone that has ordered Charles Taylor's arrest on 17-count of crimes against humanity. As a member state of the United Nations, Liberia is under obligation to respect and adhere to

international law. Secondly, the tenets of globalization and its attendant consequences cannot excuse Liberia. Imperatively, we need not loose sight of the fact that our socio-economic survival continues to play in the hands

or some western capitals. Barely 72 hours after President Johnson-Sirleaf's inauguration, a powerful strategic development partner, the EU, conditioned economic aid to Liberia on Charles Taylor's extradition to Sierra Leone.

As a democratically elected leader, the president owes it to the entire citizenry. Charles Taylor as a factor if expressed over the constituency called Liberia should and must not be allowed to hold a whole country to ransom. Liberia needs enormous foreign capital inflow to resuscitate a nation Taylor used thugs to destroy with absolutely no recourse and a sense of civility. The EU does not have any personal scores to settle with Taylor but is determined to ensure that acts of atrocities and wanton human rights abuses carried out at the behest of Taylor vis-à-vis his Sierra Leonean subterfuge cannot be allowed to go unnoticed. That is the crux of the matter.

Critically worth noting, Mrs. Johnson-Sirleaf like any politician in her situation would be prepared to stretch her arms to as many willing to pledge their support to increase her leverage over her rival in such a nail-biting run-off. The compromises would be multiple; some genuine while others merely intended for the periphery or as it were superficial. The bottom-line was of course the capture of state power. Once power is won what had originally formed the basis of bargains, house-trading and political centers of convergence could on the account of obtaining permutations be of no relevance any longer.

Assuredly, Mrs. Jewel Howard-Taylor pledged her unqualified support to president Johnson-Sirleaf as a result of her competence and because she is well placed to appreciate the issues appertaining the big office as against Mr. Weah who lack even a rudimentary understanding of the underpinnings of the presidency. Therefore, senator

Howard-Taylor's support for candidate Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf must be seen beyond the any partisan, elitist or parochial lens. Senator Howard-Taylor's support was above every individual consideration and proved realistically patriotic. There should be no reasons or iota of speculation about the decision being a miscalculation. The Bong County senator action was justified and the right step in the right direction.

Moreover, the electorate had a choice to make irrespective of the input or better still influence of senator Howard-Taylor as to whom to vote for in the run-off. Every qualified voter went to the polls unaccompanied or without any form of coercion whatever and had the right to choose either Ellen or George although we cannot negate the



role of Mrs. Howard-Taylor as an influential factor. Momentarily, the search for justice should not be compromised when deep reflections are to assist us recount the horrors, agony, faceless barbarism and misery visited on innocent and defenseless Sierra Leonean men, women and children who witnessed the vicious mutilation of their limbs by mainly a marooning band of rag-tagged, drug-infested child-soldiers.

The testimonies from victims gruesomely victimized in Sierra Leone's tragic experience are harrowing and emotionally humiliating. This is an opportunity for Mr. Taylor to answer his day in court and prove his innocence. Along the landscape of due process, no one is pronounced guilty unless proven to beyond all reasonable doubts based on circumstantial evidence.

Interestingly in spite of senator Howard-Taylor's firm belief in her husband's confession, the Liberian government has refuted the claims made by the Bong County senator. Ironically, the quick reaction of the government of Liberia became twisted when President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf acknowledged a letter to the effect was submitted to the Nigerians.

Now that the president has let out of the bag what appeared a jinx, it behooves interested parties to reckon the matter from the perspective a pursuit of justice. This is not the case of summary execution as administered by Taylor's NPFL rebel army during the reign of terror. The former president shall be entitled to appropriate legal counsel during the period of litigation and shall exercise the right to state his innocence without fear or favor. Let justice be done to all of humankind.

It can be recalled that few weeks ago President Obasanjo had a private meeting with Charles Taylor at the presidential lounge at the Muttala Mohammed's Airport. Details of the meeting remained sketchy to date. Similarly, the outcome of President Johnson-Sirleaf recent visit to Abuja seemed closed to the chests to the two West African leaders. Despite the behind the scene maneuvers, one thing will remain clear; "Whatever travels by night will one day see the light of day".

## Charles Taylor divorced by wife

- Mapitsi Phukubje

( Thursday, January 12, 2006 )

"Jewel Howard-Taylor, the official wife of notorious former Liberian leader Charles Taylor, has had her application for divorce granted, according to court records."

Jewel Howard-Taylor, the official wife of notorious former Liberian leader Charles Taylor, has had her application for divorce granted, according to court documents obtained by IRIN.

A Liberian Circuit Court document revealed Howard-Taylor, the former first lady who was elected as senator in the recent parliamentary elections, had cited UN sanctions and her husband's limitless exile in Nigeria as reasons for the divorce.

"The prevailing circumstances including the imposition of a travel ban, banishment of Taylor from Liberia and his confinement ad infinitum, have deprived her of the conjugal benefit, consortium and companionship of their marriage to the extent that marital life between them had become impossible," the divorce document said. "It is legally prudent to decree the dissolution of said marriage."

Howard-Taylor filed for divorce in July 2005, but the court only ruled last week, finally dissolving her marriage with the warlord-turned-president, who is widely accused of fomenting civil strife across West African and is wanted on 17 counts of crimes against humanity by the UN-backed Special Court in Sierra Leone.

The pair married in January 1997, when Taylor was still waging his rebel campaign and was six months away from being elected president. They have one son.

When, with the rebels baying for blood at the gates of Monrovia, Taylor was finally pressured into stepping down from power and taking asylum in Nigeria in August 2003, his wife went with him.

Howard-Taylor spent some nine months in his heavily-guarded and luxurious compound in Calabar, before returning to Liberia in mid 2004, and was then stopped from further travel by the UN ban.

More recently the travel ban - imposed by the UN Security Council for "on-going ties with Charles Taylor - has proved a frustration to Howard-Taylor, who was elected as senator for Bong County in the landmark elections last October.

Earlier this week, she was barred along with three other newly-elected parliamentarians from travelling to Ghana on a week-long World Bank training program for Liberia's new assembly.

# Taylor 'controlled Sierra Leone rebels' - Prosecutors

Prosecutors accused Liberian ex-president Charles Taylor on Friday of directing Sierra Leone rebels who maimed and murdered civilians as judges prepared to consider their verdict in his warcrimes trial.

"He controlled the RUF", Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front, prosecutor Nicholas Koumjian told Special Court for Sierra Leone judges of Africa's first head of state to face an international tribunal.

"Charles Taylor, as all in the RUF knew, was the sponsor of that organisation. He was directing the RUF not only militarily but also politically."

Taylor's trial on charges of arming RUF rebels in exchange for illegally mined so-called blood diamonds, is set to adjourn later Friday after a trial of more than three years for the judges to consider their verdict.

Judgment is expected to be delivered in the European summer.

"He is an intelligent man and can be very charismatic," Koumjian told the judges.

"Intelligent and charismatic people, can fool some of the people some of the time but they can't fool all of the people all of

the time. He is counting on the fact that he can fool you, and I don't think that he can."

The court has previously heard that Taylor fuelled war in West Africa out of greed and a lust for power.

"Charles Taylor bears the greatest responsibility for the horrific crimes committed against the people of Sierra Leone through the campaign of terror inflicted on them," co-prosecutor Brenda Hollis told the court in February.

He "was in charge of, put in place, directed, nurtured and supported the campaign of terror," she said, "to forcibly control the people and territory of Sierra Leone... and to pillage the resources, in particular the diamonds."

Prosecutors say the RUF was Taylor's "surrogate army".

The Sierra Leone civil war claimed some 120,000 lives in the 10 years to 2001, with RUF rebels mutilating thousands of civilians by hacking off their limbs.

Judges trying Taylor have heard gruesome testimony from victims of the conflict, including a witness who said he pleaded with RUF rebels to cut off his remaining hand so they

would spare his toddler son.

Others said Taylor's fighters strung human intestines across roads, removed fetuses from the wombs of women and practiced cannibalism.

In exchange for his support, prosecutors claim, Taylor received "mayonnaise jars" of illegally mined so-called blood diamonds from the RUF, a handful of which he presented to supermodel Naomi Campbell at a charity dinner hosted by South Africa's then-president Nelson Mandela in 1997.

One witness said he was present when the Liberian leader ate human liver.

"Lies," 62-year-old Taylor told the court in July 2009 of 11 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity that include murder, rape, conscripting child soldiers, enslavement and pillaging.

"This whole case is a case of deceit, deception, lies," he said. "I am not guilty of all of these charges, not even a minute part of the charges."

Taylor, who has previously boycotted sessions of the trial, was in court on Friday.

Dressed in a dark grey suit, crisp white shirt and gold cufflinks, he listened attentively from the dock, making occasional notes.

## Network Africa

Friday, 11 March 2011

Now earlier this week we heard from Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, the first and only female head of state in Africa, speaking about her coming presidential campaign. But Mrs. Johnson-Sirleaf will not be the only female candidate on the campaign trail this time around. Jewel Taylor, estranged wife of former President Charles Taylor, will also be standing for election on the ticket of the National Patriotic Party. Mr. Taylor's trial at The Hague is coming to a close. Well, on the line to Monrovia I first asked Jewel Taylor if she had spoken to Charles Taylor recently about her presidential aspiration.

TAYLOR: We have not discussed anything like that.

Why not?

TAYLOR: He's involved with his trial, and he's not involved with the political activities happening in Monrovia. I think his primary focus is trying his best to finish his case.

So he's not interested in your own aspirations?

TAYLOR: Not at this point. I think he has enough on his own plate.

On his trial, have you spoken to him recently?

TAYLOR: We do have children, so we do speak.

About the trial?

TAYLOR: Well I have to follow up what's going on, how the trial's progressing. Yes, we do speak about it.

How does he feel going into the final days of his case at The Hague?

TAYLOR: Anyone going through such a difficult period will have good days and bad days. I think our hope is that in the justice system that the trial will be free and fair and whatever the result of the trial will be – we'll just have to see what happens. I'm not a judge in the court. I live thousands and thousands of miles away. Our hope is in God.

Is he worried?

TAYLOR: Wouldn't you be in that situation? Of course he is. This is something that deals with someone's life, or their future. Anyone would be worried. I think he is. But still, I think the lawyers have done the best they could do under the circumstances. The rest is left with the judges.

Do you worry about him?

TAYLOR: Of course I do. But as Christians, our hope is in God, and whatever comes out of the trial, we'll continue to move on.

Do you fear that a guilty verdict for your husband would affect your own political aspirations?

TAYLOR: Hm, that's a difficult question and I really don't know the answers. I believe Liberians are smart, they've lived with the realities of war for so long, they've lived with the realities of unemployment,

they've lived with the reality of abuse, especially women, and they will continue to look at those leaders who will now be coming on the stage, and hopefully they will find one person that they can place their hopes in, and we will just stand out as a part of the coalition and all those other political parties that will be involved in the 2011 elections, and I think Liberians will choose that which is in their favour to produce a peaceful, productive, equitable Liberia, and I think that is their focus at this point.

Jewel Taylor is the wife of former President Charles Taylor.



## Agence France-Presse

Friday, 11 March 2011

### **Taylor awaits war crimes verdict after trial ends**

By Mariette le Roux (AFP)

LEIDSCHENDAM, Netherlands — Liberian ex-president Charles Taylor's trial for arming Sierra Leone rebels who paid him in blood diamonds closed on Friday with prosecutors urging a guilty verdict for "horrific crimes".

"We ask you to enter convictions on all of the counts of the indictment," prosecutor Brenda Hollis said on the last day of the trial that started more than three years ago before the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

"The evidence in this case... proves this accused guilty beyond reasonable doubt on each and every count of this indictment," she said.

Taylor, the first African head of state to face an international tribunal, pleaded not guilty to 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity on claims that he armed Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in exchange for illegally mined so-called "blood diamonds".

"He was at the very centre of the web of the crimes in Sierra Leone," Hollis insisted. "He was the one who had control over the leaders of these groups perpetuating such horrific crimes."

The Sierra Leone civil war claimed some 120,000 lives in the 10 years to 2001, with RUF rebels, described by the prosecution as Taylor's "surrogate army", mutilating thousands of civilians by hacking off their limbs.

"He controlled the RUF," co-prosecutor Nicholas Koumjian told judges of Taylor, president of Liberia from 1997 to 2003.

"Charles Taylor, as all in the RUF knew, was the sponsor of that organisation. He was directing the RUF not only militarily but also politically."

The prosecution claims Taylor was driven by greed and power lust, to "forcibly control the people and territory of Sierra Leone... and to pillage the resources, in particular the diamonds."

The 62-year-old has dismissed the claims as "lies", saying he was the victim of a political plot by "powerful countries".

Judge Teresa Doherty declared the hearing closed on Friday, saying the judges will now deliberate in private. Judgment is expected during the European summer.

Taylor's lead counsel, Courtenay Griffiths, told journalists at the court he was confident of an acquittal, citing "the inadequacy of the evidence put before the court by the prosecution and the strength of the defence evidence, which proves Taylor's role in Sierra Leone was entirely peaceful."

"Mr Taylor feels a great sense of relief," at the closure of the case, he added.

Taylor was arrested and transferred to the court in 2006, and is held at the UN Detention Unit in The Hague. His trial was transferred to the Netherlands for fear that his presence in Freetown would destabilise the region.

Judges have heard gruesome testimony from victims of the Sierra Leone conflict, including a witness who said he pleaded with RUF rebels to cut off his remaining hand so they would spare his toddler son.

Others said Taylor's fighters strung human intestines across roads, removed foetuses from the wombs of women and practiced cannibalism.

In exchange for his support, prosecutors claim, Taylor received "mayonnaise jars" of illegally mined so-called blood diamonds from the RUF, a handful of which he presented to supermodel Naomi Campbell at a charity dinner hosted by South Africa's then-president Nelson Mandela in 1997.

One witness said he was present when the Liberian leader ate human liver.

Koumjian described Taylor as "an intelligent man and (he) can be very charismatic".

"He is counting on the fact that he can fool you, and I don't think that he can," he told the judges.

Taylor, who has boycotted sessions of the trial, was present in court on Friday, but did not address the judges.

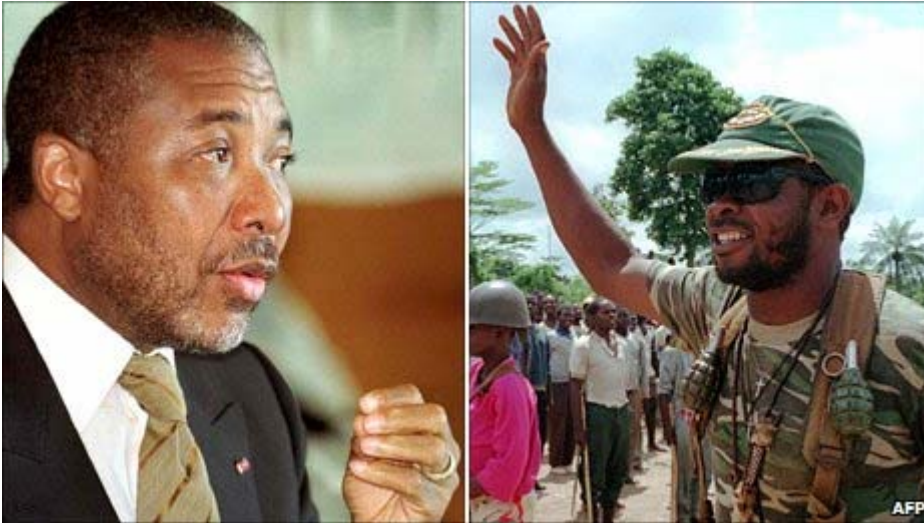
Dressed in a dark grey suit, crisp white shirt and gold cufflinks, he listened attentively from the dock, making occasional notes.

**BBC**

Friday, 11 March 2011

**Charles Taylor: Godfather or peacemaker?**

By Peter Biles BBC News, The Hague



As the judges in the war crimes trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor consider their verdict, two conflicting pictures have been drawn.

One is of a warlord who was "The Godfather" in Sierra Leone's brutal civil war.

The other is of a peacemaker who was the victim of an international political conspiracy.

For more than three years, Mr Taylor has been on trial in The Netherlands, the first former African head of state to face an international tribunal.

Inside the Special Court for Sierra Leone at Leidschendam, Mr Taylor's face has been utterly expressionless.

Why is Colonel Muammar Gaddafi not in the dock?"

End Quote Courtenay Griffiths Defence lawyer  
Liberian cufflinks

He has been seated behind his team of defence lawyers, occasionally scribbling notes in a leather-bound booklet.

As his trial drew to a close this week, Mr Taylor was favouring a pair of cufflinks bearing the Liberian flag.

The case has had added significance in light of the crisis in Libya, and the recent decision of the International Criminal Court to investigate Colonel Muammar Gaddafi and his inner circle.

The clear message is that impunity will no longer be tolerated.

Mr Taylor's defence lawyer, Courtenay Griffiths, fully supports that ideal.

He has said this trial was "of importance to Africa and to this evolving concept of international justice".

Nonetheless, Mr Griffiths believes his client was unfairly targeted, and that the prosecution of Mr Taylor has been selective.



The defence has tried to show the late rebel leader Foday Sankoh secured weapons

"Why is Colonel Muammar Gaddafi not in the dock?" Mr Griffiths asked.

Prosecutors allege that Mr Taylor was the key figure during the conflict in Sierra Leone, and that he was directly responsible for the attacks carried out on the civilian population.

In closing arguments, the prosecution said there was evidence to show that the former leader of Sierra Leone's RUF rebels, Foday Sankoh, had been "a subordinate" to Mr Taylor, not "an equal", as claimed by the defence.

'Witnesses paid'

Mr Taylor faces 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, but denies all the charges.

The defence has alleged the prosecution of Mr Taylor has been politically motivated.

Mr Griffiths has said the publication of leaked US diplomatic cables last December confirm that the United States wanted Mr Taylor "put away for a long time".



Sierra Leone is rich in diamonds which it is alleged the rebels traded for arms

As far back as 2002, the then-president of Liberia believed that "some powerful countries were out to get him".

The defence has also accused prosecutors of paying some witnesses generously for their co-operation.

The court was told that in 2008, one potential witness apparently received more than \$3,000 (about £1,900) from prosecution funds.

"This money has been used to pollute the pure waters of justice," a defence lawyer argued.

Contradictory testimony

The judges will have to review more than three years of evidence as they try to reach a decision on whether Mr Taylor is guilty.

That includes the often contradictory testimony provided last year by supermodel Naomi Campbell, Hollywood actress Mia Farrow and Ms Campbell's former agent, Carole White.

### Taylor Timeline

- **1989:** Launches rebellion in Liberia
- **1991:** RUF rebellion starts in Sierra Leone
- **1995:** Peace deal signed
- **1997:** Elected president
- **1999:** Liberia's Lurd rebels start insurrection to oust Mr Taylor
- **June 2003:** Arrest warrant issued
- **August 2003:** Steps down, flees to Nigeria
- **March 2006:** Arrested, sent to Sierra Leone
- **June 2007:** Trial opens in The Hague

They were all called to give evidence about the gift of diamonds which Ms Campbell received in South Africa in 1997, hours after she met Mr Taylor at a dinner hosted by Nelson Mandela, when he was South Africa's president.

However, the alleged involvement of Libya in the Sierra Leone narrative has been an intriguing and topical element in this final phase of the trial.

It has been claimed that Mr Taylor received military training in Libya in the late 1980s before he launched his armed invasion of his homeland in 1990.

In later years, there were allegations of arms shipments from Libya, destined for Sierra Leone.

The court also heard how Sankoh had written a letter to a Libyan diplomat in Ghana in 1996, thanking him for the sum of \$500,000 for military materials.

In the style of a 411 scam letter, Sankoh also made a plaintive plea for a further \$1.5m.

The defence used this evidence to try to show that it was Sankoh, not Mr Taylor who was involved in securing weapons for use in Sierra Leone.

For that remains the central question.

Was Mr Taylor the man bearing the greatest responsibility for the Sierra Leone conflict?

Pajamas Media  
Sunday, 13 March 2011

### **Liberia awaits verdict in Charles Taylor trial**

It's one of the more forgotten chapters in the Bush presidency now, but in 2003, the United States helped remove thug Charles Taylor from power in Liberia. Taylor was eventually tried for war crimes, specifically, supporting rebels in neighboring Sierra Leone in exchange for blood diamonds, and other heinous actions.

Taylor was indicted in 2003 while still president of Liberia. He has pleaded not guilty to 11 counts of murder, rape, pillaging, and deploying child soldiers in Sierra Leone.

That trial ended Friday, but reaching a verdict may take a while.

The three-year war-crimes trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor, once among West Africa's most powerful leaders, ended Friday with judges likely to take months to reach a verdict on whether he can be tied to murders and amputations in Sierra Leone's 1991-2002 civil war.

In their final remarks, prosecutors cautioned the judges against being taken in by Taylor, a man they described as "intelligent and charismatic," who portrayed himself during the trial as a statesman and peacemaker, rather than a warlord who used a surrogate army to pillage a nation.

President Bush intervened in Liberia on behalf of democracy in 2003, by deploying US Marines and Navy warships to oversee the transition from Taylor to democracy, while US forces were already engaged in both Afghanistan and Iraq. Liberia =/= Libya for a host of reasons, but Bush's leadership there came at a time when he had a very full plate elsewhere (though, sadly, Bush didn't host a WH conference on bullying during that time). Today, Liberia has a democratically elected president, Ellen Sirleaf Johnson, Africa's first elected female president. Congratulations, and thank you, to Harvard for having her speak at their graduation ceremonies this year.

News.com.au  
Friday, 11 March 2011

## War crimes trial of Taylor closes



*Former Liberian president Charles Taylor's trial for arming rebels who paid him in blood diamonds has closed.*

As the case closed prosecutors urged a guilty verdict for "horrific crimes."

"We ask you to enter convictions on all of the counts of the indictment," prosecutor Brenda Hollis said on the last day of the trial that started more than three years ago before the Special Court for Sierra Leone. "The evidence in this case ... proves this accused guilty beyond reasonable doubt on each and every count of this indictment."

Taylor, the first African head of state to face an international tribunal, pleaded not guilty to 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, on claims that he armed Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in exchange for illegally-mined 'blood diamonds'.

The Sierra Leone civil war claimed some 120,000 lives in the 10 years to 2001, with RUF rebels described by the prosecution as Taylor's "surrogate army," mutilating thousands of civilians by hacking off their limbs.

The prosecution claimed Taylor was driven by greed and power to "forcibly control the people and territory of Sierra Leone ... and to pillage the resources - in particular, the diamonds."

The 62 year old dismissed the claims as "lies," saying he was the victim of a political plot by "powerful countries."

Supermodel, Naomi Campbell, was a high profile witness in the trial.

Judge Teresa Doherty declared the hearing closed, saying the judges would now deliberate in private.

A judgment is expected during the next few months.



## Radio Netherlands

Friday, 11 March 2011

### **Charles Taylor trial concluded**

The Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague on Friday concluded the trial of former Liberian president Charles Taylor who is indicted for war crimes. This is the first time an international court has concluded the trial of a former head of state.

The court is expected to present its ruling either in the summer or autumn. The three judges from Northern Ireland, Uganda and Samoa are faced with the daunting task of evaluating the enormous amount of evidence which has been presented since the trial first started in June 2007.

SCSL chief prosecutor Brenda Hollis says there is sufficient evidence to prove Charles Taylor, who was president of Liberia from 1997 until 2003, was complicit in war crimes committed in neighbouring Sierra Leone. Mr Taylor says he is innocent and claims he is the victim of a political trial.



France24

Friday, 11 March 2011

### **After three years, Charles Taylor trial nears end**



The trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor enters its final stretch at The Hague's Special Court for Sierra Leone, with the defence set to close their arguments Friday. FRANCE 24 takes a look back at the highlights of the trial.

After more than three years, the trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor is heading into its final stretch at the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone, with the defence set to complete closing arguments on Friday.

The 63-year-old Taylor, who was head of his country from 1997 until his resignation in 2003, is the first African ex-ruler to stand trial for war crime charges. He has pleaded not guilty to all charges.

FRANCE 24 takes a look back at the circumstances and highlights of the trial.

#### **The charges**

Prosecutors allege that Taylor tried to monopolise neighbouring Sierra Leone's diamond mines and to subvert the country's government in order to strengthen his role in the region. Taylor is specifically accused of inciting and arming rebels from Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front to carry out a campaign of terror against civilians, which included murder, rape, and dismemberment of victims.

The 11 charges Taylor is facing include counts of terrorism, murder, rape, using child soldiers, and sexual slavery. The prosecution has said Taylor was motivated by "an insatiable greed for wealth and power".

The trial was transferred to The Hague in June 2006 to avoid triggering any turmoil in Sierra Leone or Liberia. If Taylor is convicted, he will serve out his sentence in Britain.

#### **The trial**

The prosecution called on 91 witnesses before closing its arguments on February 27, 2009. Many of those who took to the stand delivered harrowing testimonies about violence committed by Taylor's fighters: claims of cannibalism, allegations of human intestines being strewn along roads and fetuses removed from women's wombs.

Since then, Taylor's defence has argued that there is no concrete evidence that he is behind the violence in Sierra Leone, and has called on the court to acquit him.

Taylor testified in July 2009, saying that the prosecution's case was discredited by lies and factual errors.

One of the key witnesses of the trial was international supermodel Naomi Campbell, who was said to have accepted a "blood diamond" (a diamond mined in regions of conflict and then sold to give money to warring factions) from Taylor at a dinner in South Africa in 1997. Campbell has denied any knowledge of where the gift came from.

But the fashion icon's testimony was contradicted by another witness, US actress Mia Farrow, who testified that she had overheard Campbell talking about a "huge diamond" she had been offered by Taylor.

In January, Taylor's defence alleged that US embassy cables published by WikiLeaks raised questions "about the independence and impartiality" of the court's prosecution of Taylor. But the challenge was dismissed by the court.

### **'A 21st century form of neocolonialism'**

One of the main arguments of the defence is indeed that the trial is politically motivated, and that the accusations are based on assumptions and hearsay. "When this indictment is approached in (an) independent, reasonable, unemotional way, there can only be one verdict on all these counts ... and those are verdicts of not guilty," a Taylor lawyer told the court on Wednesday, reminding the judges: "We are not asking this court to like Charles Taylor."

The lawyer, Courtenay Griffiths, called the case "a 21st-century form of neocolonialism" and wondered aloud in front of the judges: "Why is Colonel Muammar Gaddafi not in the dock?" the lawyer asked. "What about [Burkina Faso's president] Blaise Compaore?" Both leaders have been accused of supporting the Revolutionary United Front.

Though he boycotted earlier hearings, Taylor was present in court Wednesday. After the trial ends this week, judges will retire to deliberate, with a decision expected in mid-2011.

# International Justice Tribune

Monday, 14 March 2011

## Case closed - Charles Taylor awaits judgment

*“Throw it in the bin. That is what we submit the court should do with this body of evidence: Get rid of it. We submit it’s garbage.” That was the message of Charles Taylor’s lawyers during closing arguments speeches the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL). And besides, they said, “why is Colonel Muammer Gaddafi not in the dock?”*

*By Thijs Bouwknecht, Leidschendam*

“Most definitely, Your Honour, I did not and could not have committed these acts against the sister Republic of Sierra Leone.” It is April 3rd, 2006 and Charles Taylor appeared for the first time in the dock in Freetown. “[...] so most definitely I am not guilty.” That same message was echoed in the courtroom last week.

Friday was his last trial day. He pours some water into his glass. The former Liberian president listens to the last words of Chief Prosecutor Brenda Hollis. He scribbles notes on yellow post-its but appears a bit nervous. He folds a paper aircraft.

Taylor’s defence team last week summed up their arguments that Taylor had nothing to do with a campaign of terror in Sierra Leone. On the contrary, they say, Taylor is not a war criminal and his "role in Sierra Leone was entirely peaceful."

“This Prosecution has been selective,” said Courtenay Griffiths on Wednesday. He pointed to the empty seats behind him. “So why is Colonel Muammer Gaddafi not in the dock?” stressing that the tribunal was “set up to try those who bear the greatest responsibility.”

Hollis, in February, took the court back to the forgotten brutalities of the Sierra Leonean civil war. She reminded the judges of the drugged child soldiers of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), the chopped-off arms and legs and so-called ‘blood diamonds.’ Taylor was at “the very centre of the web of these crimes,” Hollis repeated on Friday. “He was the one who had control over the leaders of these groups perpetuating such horrific crimes.”

The golden thread in this case: Taylor forged a plan with RUF leader Foday Sankoh in Libya in the late eighties to conquer west Africa to enrich themselves with diamonds from Sierra Leone. Their means; a campaign of terror. Hollis stresses that she and her team have proved “beyond any reasonable doubt” Taylor was personally responsible for the orgy of murder, threat and mutilation. “We ask you to enter convictions on all of the counts of the indictment,” Hollis concluded.

Sankoh died before going on trial in Freetown and Griffiths feels that Taylor has become the scapegoat for the Sierra Leone war. And that while Gaddafi had trained him in Libya and sent him money and also, that the presidents of Sierra Leone and Burkina Faso had no clean hands as well.

Griffiths gave his best on Wednesday. Now and then he wiped drops of sweat from his forehead. The crux of his argument: “This Prosecution is politically motivated.” He went on saying, “whether you are princess or prostitute, whether you are the President of the United States or the President of Liberia, the law is above you. That is the essence of the rule of law. Whether that currently is the case is a matter of debate.”

The lawyer referred to two recently leaked US code cables from the embassies in Monrovia and The Hague. He suggests that Washington wants Taylor to disappear behind bars forever. He sneered that the prosecutors had “besmirched the lofty ideals of international criminal law by turning this case into a 21st century form of neo-colonialism.”

“A perverse logic,” said Hollis, who on her turn claimed that the defence “has tried to transform the trial into a political and propaganda platform for Charles Taylor.” And indeed, Taylor himself starred in the show for seven months as a witness in his very own trial. The prosecutor remains confident about her case. From January 2008, Hollis and her team flew 94 witnesses to the Netherlands to support their case, among them a number of severely mutilated victims, but also experts and direct evidence of Taylor’s actions.

But Taylor’s lawyers said the insider witness accounts were inconsistent and tainted. Terry Munyard on Thursday said “money has been used to pollute the pure waters of justice,” and asked the court not to turn “a blind eye” to the effects on the evidence. It is up to the judges to decide on that evidence.

Closing the hearing, Presiding Judge Teresa Doherty said the judges will now deliberate in private. In the coming five to six months, Taylor will await judgement. “He will be reading no doubt,” says Griffiths, adding he is looking after ‘his welfare, does his own cooking and speaks a lot with the other African and Yugoslav detainees in Scheveningen.”

## United Press International

Friday, 11 March 2011

### **Taylor war crimes case goes to judges**

THE HAGUE, Netherlands, March 11 (UPI) -- The trial of Liberian ex-President Charles Taylor for war crimes in Sierra Leone wrapped up in The Hague Friday.

The 11 charges, including murder, rape and using child soldiers, now go to the judges of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, the BBC reported.

The verdict is expected in about four months. If convicted, Taylor will be imprisoned in Britain.

Taylor, the first former African leader to face an international tribunal, is accused of arming and controlling the Revolutionary United Front, who terrorized Sierra Leone for a decade with murder, rape and chopping off victims' limbs.

Closing his case Friday, prosecutor Nicholas Koumjian said Taylor, 62, is an intelligent and charismatic man who is trying to fool his judges. A defense rebuttal followed.

On Thursday, defense attorneys said prosecution witnesses had been paid and that Taylor had tried to arrange a peace in Sierra Leone.

Taylor is accused of selling "blood diamonds" for the rebels. During testimony, supermodel Naomi Campbell denied knowing that he gave her jewels in South Africa in 1997, but actress Mia Farrow contradicted her.

Special Court Supplement  
Send-Off for the Mongolian Guard Force  
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