

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



Charles Taylor was transferred to the UK yesterday, where he will serve the remainder of his 50-year sentence.

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:

Wednesday, 16 October 2013

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Special Court for Sierra Leone
Outreach and Public Affairs Office

PRESS RELEASE

Freetown, Sierra Leone, 15 October 2013

Charles Taylor Transferred to the UK for the Enforcement of his Sentence

Charles Ghankay Taylor, the convicted former President of Liberia, was transferred today from the Netherlands and the custody of the Special Court to the United Kingdom, where he will serve the remainder of his 50-year sentence for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Mr. Taylor departed the Netherlands in a chartered plane at 10:54 a.m. local time (8:54 GMT), and arrived in the UK at 12:00 p.m. (10:00 GMT) where he was handed over to representatives of Her Majesty's Prison Service. He was accompanied by Special Court detention and security officials.

On 4 October, pursuant to Rule 22 of the SCSL Statute and Rule 103(B) of the Rules of Procedure and Evidence, Special Court President Justice George Gelaga King signed a confidential order designating the UK as the State in which Mr. Taylor would serve his sentence. That order was made public on 10 October 2013.

Mr. Taylor's transfer was made in furtherance of the President's order, and in accordance with the terms set down in the Enforcement of Sentences Agreement concluded between the Court and the UK on 10 July 2007. No other country had offered or accepted to enforce the remainder of Mr. Taylor's sentence.

Mr. Taylor was convicted by Trial Chamber II on 26 April 2012 for 11 counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law. On 30 May 2012 the Trial Chamber sentenced him to a term of 50 years in prison. On 26 September 2013, the Appeals Chamber upheld both his conviction and his sentence, clearing the way for today's transfer.

Mr. Taylor will be given credit for the time he served in detention since his arrest on 26 March 2006.

#END

was the main day of Hajj....Allan protect our people as they are going for Arafat!!!!

FULL DETAILS IN PAGE 2

Letter from Charles Taylor... Jail me in Rwanda, not the UK



"In short, incarceration in the United Kingdom will likely - and very soon - lead to me being seriously injured or killed." PAGE 2

Charles Taylor prefers Rwandan jail to UK

Ex-Liberian President Charles Taylor has asked to serve his 50-year sentence for war crimes in Rwanda, rather than the UK.

In a letter sent to the court that convicted him, he says it would be easier - and less expensive - for his family to visit him in Africa.

He also said he feared being attacked in a British prison.

Taylor was convicted of aiding rebels who committed atrocities in Sierra Leone during its civil war.

Last week, a UK minister confirmed that Taylor would be transferred to a British prison.

He was convicted by the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), but his trial was held in The Hague in case it sparked renewed unrest in West Africa.

The Netherlands only agreed to host the trial if he was imprisoned elsewhere.

'OWN BRAND OF JUSTICE'

In a letter seen by the BBC, Taylor wrote: "My position is that serving my sentence in Rwanda, in my home continent of Africa, would be substantially more humane not only on my own account, but also on account of the impact on my family."

He noted that the court's statutes said access for

prisoners' relatives should be taken into account when deciding where they should serve their sentence.

He said that it would be cheaper and easier to travel to Rwanda - and that Liberian national could obtain visas at the airport, unlike in the UK.

Taylor, 65, was convicted on 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 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.

In his three-page letter, dated 10 October, Taylor continued: "My name is now associated with horrendous atrocities. Prison inmates, whether from the region or not, are likely to be inclined to inflict their own brand of justice by attacking me."

He pointed out that "a significant number of individuals

from Sierra Leonean background are in detention in prisons in the UK" and noted that in 2011, Bosnian war criminal Radislav Krstic was attacked in a British jail by three Muslim men, apparently in revenge for his role in the Bosnian conflict.

Taylor argued that the UK authorities "may also simply be unaware of the groups that might be particularly motivated to attack me in prison".

"In short, incarceration in the United Kingdom will likely - and very soon - lead to me being seriously injured or killed."

Some other people convicted by the SCSL are already serving their sentences in Rwanda.

Last week, UK Justice Minister Jeremy Wright noted that the British offer to host Taylor had enabled his trial to proceed in The Hague.

He told parliament: "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's appeal against his conviction was rejected last month and he remains in The Hague, awaiting transfer.

Liberia's Charles Taylor prefers Rwandan jail to UK



Charles Taylor is the first former head of state to be convicted of war crimes since World War II

Ex-Liberian President Charles Taylor has asked to serve his 50-year sentence for war crimes in Rwanda, rather than the UK. In a letter sent to the court that convicted him, he says it would be easier - and less expensive - for his family to visit him in Africa. He also said he feared being attacked in a British prison. Taylor was convicted of aiding rebels who committed atrocities in Sierra Leone during its civil war. Last week, a UK minister confirmed that Taylor would be transferred to a British prison. He was convicted by the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), but his trial was held in The Hague in case it sparked renewed unrest in West Africa. The Netherlands only agreed to host the trial if he was imprisoned elsewhere.

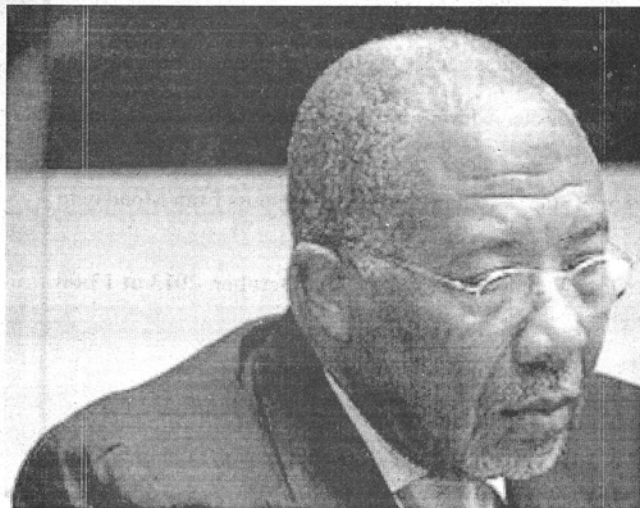
Own brand of justice

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substantially more humane not only on my own account, but also on account of the impact on my family." He noted that the court's statutes said access for prisoners' relatives should be taken into account when deciding where they should serve their sentence. He said that it would be cheaper and easier to travel to Rwanda - and that Liberian nationals could obtain visas at the airport, unlike in the UK. Taylor, 65, was convicted on 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 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.

Liberia's Charles Taylor prefers Rwandan jail to UK

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Taylor was convicted of aiding rebels who committed atrocities in Sierra Leone during its civil war. Incarceration in the United Kingdom will likely... lead to me being seriously injured or killed"

Charles Taylor

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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

He said that it would be cheaper and easier to travel to Rwanda - and that Liberian nationals could obtain visas at the airport, unlike in the UK.

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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.

In his three-page letter, dated 10 October, Taylor continued: "My name is now associated with horrendous atrocities.

Voice of America

Tuesday, 15 October 2013

Liberia's Charles Taylor Transferred to Britain



Former Liberian President Charles Taylor appears in court at the Special Court for Sierra Leone for his appeal judgment at The Hague in the Netherlands, Sep. 26, 2013.

Former Liberian President Charles Taylor has been transferred to a prison in Britain where he will serve a 50-year sentence for war crimes.

The U.N. -backed Special Court for Sierra Leone says Taylor was transferred from The Hague, in the Netherlands, to the United Kingdom on Tuesday. He was handed over to British prison officials.

Last year, the special court found Taylor guilty on 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity for aiding rebels during Sierra Leone's 11-year civil war that ended in 2002.

Prosecutors say he received so-called "blood diamonds" in exchange for arming rebels, who were notorious for raping, killing and mutilating civilians.

Taylor is the first former head of state to be convicted by an international court since Nazi leaders were sentenced after World War Two. The 65-year-old former leader has always maintained he was innocent.

Britain had offered to house Taylor if he was convicted.

Taylor had asked to serve his prison sentence in Rwanda instead of Britain so that he would be closer to his family.

Some information for this report was provided by AP and AFP.

Guardian (Nigeria)

Tuesday, 15 October 2013

Liberia's Charles Taylor arrives UK to serve 50-year prison sentence

EX-LIBERIAN President Charles Taylor has arrived in the UK to serve the remainder of his 50-year prison sentence for war crimes.

He had asked the UN-backed special court in The Hague to serve his jail term in Rwanda instead.

Taylor was handed over to UK prison service representatives after his plane landed at 11:00 BST (10:00 GMT).

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



The former president, 65, was convicted by the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), but his trial was held in The Hague in case it sparked renewed unrest in West Africa.

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BBC

Tuesday, 15 October 2013

Liberia's Charles Taylor transferred to UK



Charles Taylor is the first former head of state to be convicted of war crimes since World War II

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The former president, 65, was convicted by the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), but his trial was held in The Hague in case it sparked renewed unrest in West Africa.

The Netherlands only agreed to host the trial if he was imprisoned elsewhere.

In a statement, the SCSL said Taylor left the Netherlands on a chartered flight on Tuesday morning, "accompanied by Special Court detention and security officials".

He would be given credit for the time he had served in detention since his arrest on 26 March 2006, the statement said.

Last month, Taylor's appeal was rejected, with the court that ruling his guilt had been proved beyond doubt.

He was convicted on 11 charges 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.

The former Liberian leader was found to have supplied weapons to the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels in exchange for 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.



Many victims of Sierra Leone's civil war had limbs hacked off by rebels

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

'Attack fears'

Earlier this month, Taylor sent a letter sent to the court saying he wanted to serve his sentence in Rwanda as it would be easier - and less expensive - for his family to visit him in Africa.

He also said he feared being attacked in a British prison.

In his three-page letter, seen by the BBC, Taylor said: "My name is now associated with horrendous atrocities. Prison inmates, whether from the region or not, are likely to be inclined to inflict their own brand of justice by attacking me."

But the court said on Tuesday that "no other country had offered or accepted to enforce the remainder of Mr Taylor's sentence".

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 New Dawn (Liberia)

Wednesday, 16 October 2013

Charles Taylor Arrives in Britain



Despite Mr. Charles Taylor's protest against being sent to a British jail for fear that he could be attacked and killed by fellow inmates serving jail terms there, the former Liberian President was transferred from The Hague to the United Kingdom early Tuesday morning to serve the remainder of his 50 year-sentence.

A Special Court release said Mr. Taylor departed the Netherlands in a chartered plane at 10:54 a.m. local time (8:54 GMT), and arrived in the UK at 12:00 p.m. (10:00 GMT) where he was handed over to representatives of Her Majesty's Prison Service. He was accompanied by Special Court detention and security officials.

The release detailed that on 4 October, pursuant to Rule 22 of the SCSL Statute and Rule 103(B) of the Rules of Procedure and Evidence, Special Court President, Justice George Gelaga King, signed a confidential order, designating the UK as the State in which Mr. Taylor would serve his sentence.

That order was made public on 10 October 2013. Taylor's transfer was made in furtherance of the President's order, and in accordance with the terms set down in the Enforcement of Sentences Agreement concluded between the Court and the UK on 10 July 2007.

Taylor had written the Special Court of Sierra Leone, protesting being sent to a British jail for fear that he could be attacked and killed by fellow inmates serving jail terms there. His family members had also argued that Taylor be preferably jailed in Rwanda, which they said would be less expensive for visits unlike the United Kingdom.

But Special Court Spokesman Peter Andersen said the concerns raised by the Taylor family is a non issue because such concerns are considered in the court's Statue, Rules and Practice Direction, including measurers to ensure Taylor's physical safety, the availability of vocational and educational programs, religious accommodations and medical services, among others.

“The Special Court can only send prisoners to countries with which we have enforcement agreements. We have no such agreement with Rwanda in respect of Mr. Taylor, and we have no enforcement agreement at all with Norway,” Andersen clarified.

In his letter to the Special Court of Sierra Leone, Taylor wrote among other things: “Most of my close relations, including my wife, ex-wife, and most of my children, reside in Liberia. Travel for them to Rwanda is much less costly easier than travel to the UK for several reasons.

First, Liberians wishing to visit the UK must first obtain a visa in Accra, Ghana- which itself is prohibitively costly and time consuming journey. Liberia visitors to Rwanda, in contrast, can obtain a visa at Kigali airport.

Second, the cost of staying in Rwanda is much less than would be required to stay in the United Kingdom. Accommodation can be secured for dollars a day, whereas the hotel anywhere in the United Kingdom costs many times that amount, to say nothing of the cost of having to travel within the United Kingdom.”

Taylor was convicted by Trial Chamber II on 26 April 2012 for 11 counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity, including serious violations of international humanitarian law.

The Trial Chamber sentenced him on 30 May 2012 to a term of 50 years in prison, and on 26 September 2013, the Appeals Chamber upheld both his conviction and his sentence, clearing the way for Tuesday’s transfer.

Mr. Taylor will be given credit for the time he served in detention since his arrest on 26 March 2006, meaning he would serve 42 years in the UK, having already served eight years at the Special Court in The Hague while facing trial.

Daily Mail (UK)

Tuesday, 15 October 2013

Warlord Charles Taylor arrives in Britain to serve 50-year sentence for Sierra Leone war crimes

- Former Liberian leader 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
- Taylor, 65, arrived in Britain today to begin his decades-long sentence

Former Liberian President Charles Taylor has been flown to Britain to serve his 50-year sentence for sponsoring atrocities in Sierra Leone's brutal civil war.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone announced that the 65-year-old warlord-turned-president was put on a chartered plane to Britain on Tuesday, where he was turned over to prison officials.

Britain's offer to enforce any jail sentence, which could cost tax-payers up to £80,000 a year, was crucial for his trial to go ahead in the Hague, justice minister Jeremy Wright said when it was announced the UK would impose his sentence.



Taylor was convicted in April last year of 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including terrorism, murder, rape and using child soldiers. He aided murderous rebels in Sierra Leone's 11-year civil

war that ended in 2002. His conviction and sentence were upheld on appeal last month. Taylor always maintained he was innocent.

The controversial decision to send Taylor to Britain was announced earlier this month following his failed 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.

After the announcement, Mr Wright said: 'The conviction of Charles Taylor is a landmark moment for international justice.'

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.

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.

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.

Legalbrief Today (South Africa)

Wednesday, 16 October 2013

Kigali open to addressing Taylor's prison request

The Rwandan government has acknowledged that former warlord Charles Taylor has asked to serve his 50-year prison sentence for war crimes in a local jail rather than in Britain.

However, a report on the News24 site notes that the country's justice ministry said it would only address the matter after an official request has been brought before it. Several Sierra Leone prisoners convicted by the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone court are already incarcerated in a special Rwandan jail that meets international standards. Minister of Justice Johnston Busingye said Kigali is 'ready to make appropriate deliberations' on whether Taylor can serve his sentence in a Rwanda jail.

Full report on the News24 site

Agence France-Presse

Tuesday, 15 October 2013

Kigali to deliberate on Taylor's jail term

Kigali - Liberia's ex-warlord Charles Taylor has asked to serve his 50-year prison sentence for war crimes in a Rwandan jail rather than in Britain, Kigali said on Tuesday.

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

London said last week that Taylor would serve his time in a British jail, but Taylor has since appealed to be sent to Rwanda.

Rwanda's justice ministry said in a statement that the SCSL court has "contacted government on the matter, but that the Kigali administration would only make the next step after an official request has been brought before it".

However, Kigali is "ready to make appropriate deliberations" on whether Taylor can serve his sentence in a Rwanda jail, Minister of Justice Johnston Busingye said in a statement.

Taylor's lawyer Morris Anyah had suggested after his appeal was turned down last month, that the former west African strongman would prefer to go to Rwanda to be closer to his family.

Several Sierra Leone prisoners convicted by the SCSL court are already incarcerated in a special Rwandan jail that meets international standards.

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.



The Telegraph

Tuesday, 15 October 2013

Liberian Charles Taylor moved to British prison to serve war crimes conviction

Liberia's former president Charles Taylor has been transferred to a British prison to serve his 50-year sentence for war crimes



The former warlord was moved on Tuesday morning to an unspecified British prison after being guilty of war crimes committed in Sierra Leone.

He had asked the UN-backed special court in The Hague to serve his jail term in Rwanda instead, which he said would be easier for his family.

The plea fell on deaf ears and Taylor, the first head of state to be convicted since the Nuremberg trials, was handed over to representatives of Her Majesty's Prison Service after his plane landed at 11am, the Hague court said.

"Charles Ghankay Taylor... was transferred today from the Netherlands and the custody of the Special Court to the United Kingdom, where he will serve the remainder of his 50-year sentence for war crimes and crimes against humanity," the

Taylor is likely to serve the rest of his sentence in a British jail, according to a confidential deal made in 2007 shortly after Taylor's arrest.

There has been speculation that he will be sent to Belmarsh high security prison.

A Ministry of Justice official declined to confirm that Taylor was in Britain or say in which prison he would serve his time.

"We do not comment on individual cases," said a spokesman.

The former president, 65, is likely to spend the rest of his life behind bars after the UN-backed special court last month upheld his sentence for arming rebels during Sierra Leone's brutal civil war during the 1990s.

Several Sierra Leone prisoners convicted by the SCSL court are already incarcerated in a special Rwandan jail that meets international standards.

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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.

Taylor will be given credit for the time he served in detention since his arrest in March 2006, the court said.

ITV

Tuesday, 15 October 2013

Liberian war criminal Charles Taylor 'arrives in the UK'

Former president of Liberia Charles Taylor has arrived in the UK to serve the remainder of his 50-year-sentence for war crimes, the BBC reports.



Ex-Liberian president Charles Taylor, convicted of war crimes in the Hague in 2012. *Credit: PA Wire*

Taylor has been convicted of supplying weapons to the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels in exchange for diamonds, which became known as "blood diamonds."

Taylor has also been convicted of terrorism, rape, murder and the use of child soldiers by rebel groups in neighbouring Sierra Leone during the 1991-2002 conflict, during which 50,000 people died.

Radio Australia

Wednesday, 16 October 2013

War criminal and ex-Liberian president Charles Taylor transferred to UK prison

By Europe correspondent Barbara Miller, wires

War criminal Charles Taylor has been transferred under tight security from The Hague to a British prison, where the former Liberian president will serve out the remainder of a 50-year sentence.

Charles Taylor was convicted of war crimes and crimes against humanity. (Credit: AFP)

War criminal Charles Taylor has been transferred under tight security from The Hague to a British prison, where the former Liberian president will serve out the remainder of a 50-year sentence.



He was sentenced in The Hague by a special United Nations court for aiding and abetting atrocities during Sierra Leone's civil war.

The UK offered to accommodate the former Liberian president as part of a diplomatic deal to bring him to justice.

Taylor has requested that he be moved to Rwanda to see out his sentence, saying it would be easier for his family to visit him.

He has also said he fears being attacked in a British prison.

"Charles Ghankay Taylor... was transferred today from the Netherlands and the custody of the Special Court to the United Kingdom, where he will serve the remainder of his 50-year sentence," the Special Court for Sierra Leone's (SCSL) Freetown office said in a statement after the transfer was completed.

A chartered plane flew Taylor, accompanied by guards, to Britain and he "was handed over to representatives of Her Majesty's Prison Service", the court said.

A justice ministry official in London declined to confirm that Taylor was in Britain or say in which prison he would serve his time.

"We do not comment on individual cases," a justice ministry spokeswoman said.
Taylor likely to die behind bars

Taylor's historic 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.

The former president, 65, is likely to die behind bars after the UN-backed SCSL last month upheld his sentence for arming rebels during Sierra Leone's brutal civil war during the 1990s.

Several Sierra Leone prisoners convicted by the SCSL court are already incarcerated in a special Rwandan jail which meets international standards.

Taylor was 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.

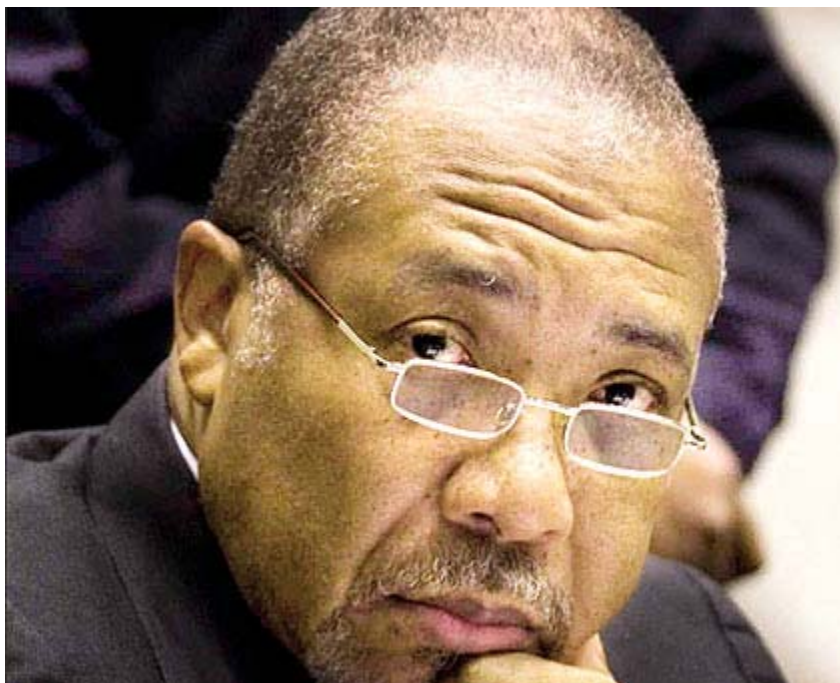
Taylor was found guilty of supporting the rebels during a civil war which claimed 120,000 lives between 1991 and 2002, in exchange for blood diamonds mined by slave labour.

However the man who started a violent rebellion in Liberia in 1989, and was among the first to force children to carry guns, has never been prosecuted for atrocities committed in his own country.

New Times (Rwanda)

Tuesday, 15 October 2013

UN Court ‘approached’ Rwanda on Charles Taylor prison options



The Government is ready to make appropriate deliberations and decide on whether to let former Liberian President Charles Taylor serve his sentence in a Rwandan jail, Justice minister Johnston Busingye said yesterday.

Busingye said some officials from The Hague-based Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) have already contacted government on the matter, but that the Kigali administration would only make the next step after an official request has been brought before it.

Considerations

Taylor, 65, was convicted for 11 war crimes committed in Sierra Leone during the 1991-2002 conflict, in which some 50,000 people died. He was handed a 50-year prison sentence.

Busingye said the official request to have Taylor jailed in the country can be sent to Government of Rwanda by the Registrar of the UN-backed court.

“Rwanda would then consult all the line institutions and take a decision,” the minister said.

He said government officials and other relevant partners would consider several factors such as the country’s foreign policies and other international considerations before taking in the convict.

Taylor, the first former head of state to be convicted of war crimes since World War II—has asked to serve his sentence in Rwanda, instead of the UK where he said he is afraid he would be attacked by other inmates and his family would find it expensive to visit him.

Conviction

The former president was convicted of aiding rebels who committed atrocities in Sierra Leone during its civil war.

Busingye said officials from The Hague-based SCSL have already contacted Rwandan officials asking about how the process to officially request Rwanda to host the inmate would work.

“Our decision would be a government decision,” he said, also explaining that Rwanda is yet to receive the official request.

If brought to Rwanda to serve his jail term, Taylor would join eight other foreign convicts brought to the country to serve their terms after the SCSL found them guilty.

The UN court convicts are currently serving their sentences in the ultra-modern Mpanga Prison in Southern Province, where a special holding facility for convicts of international nature has been set up.

New York Times

Wednesday, 16 October 2013

Britain: Former Liberian President Is Transferred to British Prison

By MARLISE SIMONS

Former President Charles Taylor of Liberia arrived in Britain on Tuesday to serve the remainder of his 50-year sentence in an unspecified prison. After a four-year trial by the Special Court for Sierra Leone, temporarily based in The Hague, an appeals court recently upheld his conviction for aiding and abetting war crimes and crimes against humanity in Sierra Leone. The 65-year-old former leader had tried in vain to be sent to Rwanda. In a recent letter to the court he said it would be easier for his family to visit him in Africa. He also said he feared being attacked in a British prison by people from West Africa, where he had long operated as a warlord.

New Democrat (Liberia)

Tuesday, 15 October 2013

Taylor Fears British Jail Prefers Rwandan Prison

New documents released by lawyers of former Liberian President Charles Taylor indicate that the convicted war criminal enjoys playing tennis with fellow inmates at The Hague and is fearful of his pending transfer to the United Kingdom.

The documents describe Taylor as a well-behaved inmate who nevertheless "does like to speak his mind" and challenge prison officials. They also say he pays "particular attention to his deportment and appearance."

One letter written by Taylor himself and sent to the court that convicted him asked to serve his 50-year sentence for war crimes in Rwanda, rather than the UK. He describes his concerns over his safety and the distance from his family once he is transferred to a British facility. United Kingdom Justice Minister Jeremy Wright confirmed the pending transfer last Thursday despite Taylor's request to serve out his sentence in Rwanda.

Taylor received a 50-year sentence last year for sponsoring atrocities in Sierra Leone.

In the letter, he said it would be easier - and less expensive - for his family to visit him in Africa.

He also said he feared being attacked in a British prison.

He was convicted by the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), but his trial was held in The Hague in case it sparked renewed unrest in West Africa.

The Netherlands only agreed to host the trial if he was imprisoned elsewhere.

'Own brand of justice' In the letter seen by the BBC, Taylor wrote: "My position is that serving my sentence in Rwanda, in my home continent of Africa, would be substantially more humane not only on my own account, but also on account of the impact on my family." He noted that the court's statutes said access for prisoners' relatives should be taken into account when deciding where they should serve their sentence.

He said that it would be cheaper and easier to travel to Rwanda - and that Liberian nationals could obtain visas at the airport, unlike in the UK.

Taylor, 65, was convicted on 11 crimes including terrorism, rape, murder and the use of child soldiers by rebel groups in neighboring 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 so-called blood diamonds.

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

In his three-page letter, dated 10 October, Taylor continued: "My name is now associated with horrendous atrocities. Prison inmates, whether from the region or not, are likely to be inclined to inflict their own brand of justice by attacking me."

He pointed out that "a significant number of individuals from Sierra Leonean background are in detention in prisons in the UK" and noted that in 2011, Bosnian war criminal Radislav Krstic was attacked in a British jail by three Muslim men, apparently in revenge for his role in the Bosnian conflict.

Taylor argued that the UK authorities "may also simply be unaware of the groups that might be particularly motivated to attack me in prison".

"In short, incarceration in the United Kingdom will likely - and very soon - lead to me being seriously injured or killed."

Some other people convicted by the SCSL are already serving their sentences in Rwanda.

Last week, UK Justice Minister Jeremy Wright noted that the British offer to host Taylor had enabled his trial to proceed in The Hague.

He told parliament: "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's appeal against his conviction was rejected last month and he remains in The Hague, awaiting transfer.

Agence France-Presse

Wednesday, 16 October 2013

War criminal Charles Taylor secretly sent to UK jail

by Charles Onians, Agence France-Presse

THE HAGUE, Netherlands – Liberian ex-warlord Charles Taylor was on Tuesday, October 15 transferred under tight security from The Hague to a British prison where the convicted war criminal is likely to spend the rest of his life.

Britain made a deal to take Taylor long before he lost his appeal against a 50-year sentence for war crimes and crimes against humanity before the UN's Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) in The Hague last week.

"Charles Ghankay Taylor... was transferred today from the Netherlands and the custody of the Special Court to the United Kingdom, where he will serve the remainder of his 50-year sentence," the SCSL's Freetown office said in a statement after the transfer was completed.

A chartered plane flew Taylor, accompanied by guards, to Britain where he arrived at 1000 GMT and "was handed over to representatives of Her Majesty's Prison Service," the court said.

A justice ministry official in London declined to confirm that Taylor was in Britain or say in which prison he would serve his time.

"We do not comment on individual cases," a justice ministry spokeswoman told Agence France-Presse.

London said last week that Taylor would serve the rest of his sentence in a British jail, according to the confidential deal made in 2007 shortly after Taylor's arrest.

His historic 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.

Taylor had asked to serve his sentence in a Rwandan prison rather than in Britain in order to be closer to his family, and Kigali had said on Tuesday that it was ready to consider the request.

The court said however that no other country had offered or accepted to enforce the remainder of Taylor's sentence.

The former president, 65, is likely to die behind bars after the UN-backed SCSL last month upheld his sentence for arming rebels during Sierra Leone's brutal civil war during the 1990s.

Several Sierra Leone prisoners convicted by the SCSL court are already incarcerated in a special Rwandan jail that meets international standards.

Taylor was 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 neighboring Sierra Leone in a conflict notorious for its mutilations, drugged child soldiers and sex slaves, judges said.

Taylor was found guilty of supporting the rebels during a civil war that claimed 120,000 lives between 1991 and 2002, in exchange for "blood diamonds" mined by slave labor.

However the man who started a violent rebellion in Liberia in 1989, and was among the first to force children to carry guns, has never been prosecuted for atrocities committed in his own country.

In 2003 he was forced to quit Liberia under international pressure which brought an end to a second brutal civil war in his home country.

Arrested in Nigeria, he was transferred to The Hague in mid-2006 where his case was moved for fear of stirring up divisions at home where he is still popular.

A number of headline-grabbing witnesses took the stand during Taylor's trial including actress Mia Farrow and former supermodel Naomi Campbell, who told of a gift of "dirty" diamonds she received from him in 1997 after a charity ball hosted by then South African president Nelson Mandela.

United Press International

Tuesday, 15 October 2013

Former Liberian president to serve rest of 50-year sentence in Britain

LONDON, Oct. 15 (UPI) -- Former Liberian President Charles Taylor arrived in Britain Tuesday to serve out the rest of his 50-year sentence for war crimes, officials say.

Taylor, 65, had asked earlier this month to be imprisoned in Rwanda so it would be easier and cheaper for his family to visit him, the BBC reported.

In rejecting his request Tuesday, the U.N.-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone said no other country "had offered or accepted to enforce the remainder of Mr. Taylor's sentence."

He was sentenced in May 2012 after being convicted of aiding rebels who committed atrocities during Sierra Leone's 1991-92 civil war in which 50,000 people died.

Taylor was convicted of 11 charges including terrorism, rape, murder and the use of child soldiers.

Taylor has continued to maintain he is innocent of the charges.

Britain sent 800 paratroopers to Sierra Leone in 2000 to protect the capital, which was threatened by rebel forces. After conflict eased, British troops spent two years retraining Sierra Leone's military.

Associated Press

Monday, 14 October 2013

Documents detail Charles Taylor's life behind bars

MONROVIA, Liberia — Former Liberian President Charles Taylor enjoys playing tennis with fellow inmates in The Hague and is worried about his personal safety once he is transferred to Britain to serve out his sentence for war crimes and crimes against humanity, according to new documents released by his lawyers.

Taylor has been on good behavior since his transfer to The Hague seven years ago, though he has spoken his mind to prison officials to object to changes in his living conditions, according to the documents given to The Associated Press. He also has a reputation for paying "particular attention to his deportment and appearance."

Taylor, 65, was arrested by the Special Court for Sierra Leone and transferred to The Hague in 2006. He received a 50-year sentence last year for sponsoring atrocities committed by the Revolutionary United Front rebels in Sierra Leone in exchange for "blood diamonds." The rebels became notorious for widespread killings and amputations during an 11-year civil war that ended in 2002.

Last Thursday, United Kingdom Justice Minister Jeremy Wright announced that Taylor would serve out his sentence in a British detention facility, despite Taylor's request that he be transferred to Rwanda.

In a letter dated that same day and included in the documents released by Taylor's defense team, the convicted war criminal detailed his fears for his personal safety and the distance from his family should he not be permitted to return to Africa.

He said there were "a significant number of individuals of Sierra Leonean background" in British prisons who might attack him because his name is "now associated with horrendous atrocities."

He referred specifically to the case of Radislav Krstic, a Bosnian Serb war criminal who was assaulted by three inmates at a high-security prison in northern England in May 2010.

"In short, incarceration in the United Kingdom will likely — and very soon — lead to me being seriously injured or killed," Taylor said.

Taylor also expressed concern about his family's inability to visit him, citing the higher costs and visa complications facing Liberians traveling to the U.K.

"The consequence of these factors is that if I am incarcerated in the United Kingdom some family members will see me much less than if I were to serve my sentence in Rwanda. Many of my children would not be able to see me at all," Taylor said.

A separate document states that Taylor has 15 children from various marriages, five of whom are younger than 10. He also has four grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

A prison behavior profile sheds light on Taylor's life in The Hague, saying he has maintained good relations with guards and his fellow inmates, though he "does like to speak his mind" when he believes his living conditions are being adversely affected.

"Mr. Taylor does not take part in creative lessons, but takes the opportunity to regularly enjoy fresh air and tries to keep himself as fit as the regime will allow," reads the May 2012 profile prepared by Paddy Craig, the chief custody officer at the International Criminal Court detention center.

One of the sports he enjoys playing with his fellow detainees is tennis, an apparent holdover from his days in power. Among the features of his old mansion in Monrovia, White Flower, is a rundown tennis court where Taylor once played.

Agence France-Presse

Tuesday, 15 October 2013

Charles Taylor: from lay preacher to war criminal

Liberian ex-president Charles Taylor, the first former head of state to be sentenced in a war crimes trial by a global court since 1946, was once one of Africa's most feared warlords.

The 65-year-old who once notoriously compared himself to Jesus was transferred from The Hague to London Tuesday to serve the rest of his 50-year sentence.

He lost an appeal last month over a catalogue of gruesome acts committed by the Sierra Leonean rebels he aided and abetted during that country's 1991-2001 civil war, one of the most brutal in modern history.

Testifying during his initial trial at the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone in 2009, Taylor called the 11 charges of murder, rape, conscripting child soldiers, enslavement and pillaging against him "lies".

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

With his close-cropped salt and pepper beard, tailored suits and gold cufflinks, the former rebel cut an elegant figure in court as he listened impassively to witnesses recounting the atrocities of which he was accused.

The trial followed a life marked by deep involvement in conflicts that blighted several African countries, driven according to prosecutor Brenda Hollis by Taylor's "greed and lust for power".

He is widely seen as the most powerful figure behind a series of civil conflicts in Liberia and its eastern neighbour Sierra Leone between 1989 and 2003, which left some 400,000 people dead.

It was not enough for Taylor to plunder his own west African state of Liberia, encourage rebellion in neighbouring Ivory Coast and make Guinea anxious about its own potential for revolution.

The "intelligent, charismatic manipulator", in the words of the prosecution, also chose to arm and assist the notorious Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone.

He did so in exchange for illegally-mined "blood diamonds", fuelling a deadly decade-long conflict, where the RUF spread terror by killing, raping and chopping off the limbs of thousands.

Reputation for extreme violence

A thrice-married lay preacher with an economics degree from Bentley College in the US state of Massachusetts, Charles Ghankay Taylor rose to power on the back of the rebellion he launched in 1989 against Liberia's then-military ruler Samuel Doe.

He had joined the Liberian civil service under Doe -- who himself seized power in 1980 and presided over an authoritarian regime -- but was sacked in 1983 for embezzling nearly one million dollars in government funds.

He skipped the country, returning to the United States where he was jailed on an extradition warrant. But he escaped 16 months later and disappeared, resurfacing in December 1989 at the head of a rebellion backed by Libya and reportedly Burkina Faso.

His National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) earned a reputation for extreme violence and was among the first to force children, some as young as 10, to carry guns.

"Jesus Christ was accused of being a murderer in his time," he once told the BBC in an interview.

Seven grim years of war wearied the Liberian people, who in 1997 elected Taylor president. One of his campaign slogans was: "He killed my Ma, he killed my Pa, but I will vote for him."

His overwhelming victory was largely attributed to widespread fears among Liberians that he would resume the civil conflict if he lost but his win at the polls brought little relief to the country of 3.3 million people.

Two years later, a second rebellion took place, this time against Taylor. Fighting -- with the capital Monrovia encircled -- ended when Taylor fled to Nigeria in 2003.

He kept a low profile, living in a seaside villa and having a luxury car with diplomatic plates, until Nigeria in March 2006 bowed to international calls to extradite him.

burs-cjo/jmm

The New Republic (Liberia)

Wednesday, 16 October 2013

Taylor Reaches 'Final Resting Place'

Last minutes remonstrance mounted by former President Charles Taylor to avoid serving his 50-year jail sentence in the United Kingdom (UK) was not enough to sway the gusto and determination of the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone to land him listening ears or grant him his wish.

Taylor had opted serving his sentence in Africa, particularly in a Rwandan jail.

Yesterday, the story about where he serves his jail term came to extremity when he was finally transferred to the United Kingdom (UK) to begin the journey of spending about 43 years in close confinements.

With his transfer yesterday, the 65 years old former Liberian leader who left power in 2003 for what he called "the sake of the people" has reached his final resting place on earth, spending his first night in the cell and the place far from his choice.

The BBC reported yesterday that the ex-Liberian President had arrived in the UK to serve the remainder of his 50-year prison sentence for war crimes.

According to the report, Taylor was handed over to UK prison service representatives after his plane landed at 11:00 BST (10:00 GMT).

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

He was convicted by the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), but his trial was held in The Hague in case it sparked renewed unrest in West Africa.

The Netherlands only agreed to host the trial if he was imprisoned elsewhere.

In a statement, the SCSL said Taylor left the Netherlands on a chartered flight on Tuesday morning, "accompanied by Special Court detention and security officials".

He would be given credit for the time he had served in detention since his arrest on 26 March 2006, the statement said.

It may be recalled that Taylor's appeal was rejected last month, with the court that ruling his guilt had been proved beyond doubt.

Mr. Taylor who became President in 1997 following his victory in the landmark elections was convicted on 11 charges including terrorism, rape, murder and the use of child soldiers by rebel groups in neighboring Sierra Leone during the 1991-2002 conflict, in which some 50,000 people died.

The former Liberian leader was found to have supplied weapons to the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels in exchange for 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.

Efforts To Go To Rwanda

On Monday, the BBC reported that Mr. Taylor wrote the court and expressed his desire to serve his 50- year jail sentence in Rwanda.

He was in the letter as saying it would be easier - and less expensive - for his family to visit him in Africa, than the Britain where he also feared being attacked.

"My position is that serving my sentence in Rwanda, in my home continent of Africa, would be substantially more humane not only on my own account, but also on account of the impact on my family," he said in his letter.

The former Liberian leader said the court's statutes said access for prisoners' relatives should be taken into account when deciding where they should serve their sentence.

He said it would be cheaper and easier to travel to Rwanda - and that Liberian nationals could obtain visas at the airport, unlike in the UK.

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In his three-page letter, dated 10 October, Taylor continued: "My name is now associated with horrendous atrocities. Prison inmates, whether from the region or not, are likely to be inclined to inflict their own brand of justice by attacking me."

He pointed out that "a significant number of individuals from Sierra Leonean background are in detention in prisons in the UK" and noted that in 2011, Bosnian war criminal Radislav Krstic was attacked in a British jail by three Muslim men, apparently in revenge for his role in the Bosnian conflict.

Taylor argued that the UK authorities "may also simply be unaware of the groups that might be particularly motivated to attack me in prison".

"In short, incarceration in the United Kingdom will likely - and very soon - lead to me being seriously injured or killed."

Some other people convicted by the SCSL are already serving their sentences in Rwanda.

Last week, UK Justice Minister Jeremy Wright noted that the British offer to host Taylor had enabled his trial to proceed in The Hague.

He told parliament: "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."

LBS Online (Liberia)

Tuesday, 15 October 2013

Former President Taylor finally transferred to UK's Prison

By Jonathan Grigsby

Liberia former President, Charles Taylor being taken to a British prison where he will serve his fifty years.



Liberia former President, Charles Taylor being taken to a British prison where he will serve his fifty years.

Liberia former President, Charles Taylor being taken to a British prison where he will serve his fifty years.

(mylbsonline.com/Liberia/Oct.15/2013) Former Liberian President, Charles Taylor, has finally been transferred to the United Kingdom to serve the rest of his 50-year prison sentence for war crimes.

Taylor had earlier asked the United Nations-backed Special Sierra Leone Court in The Hague to serve his jail term in Rwanda instead.

Reports say Mr. Taylor was handed over to representatives of the United Kingdom Prison Service after his plane landed in that European country from The Hague, the Netherlands.

The former Liberian Leader was sentenced in May, 2012 for aiding rebels of the defunct Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in neighboring Sierra Leone.

Mr. Taylor served as former Leader of the main rebels of the defunct National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) which launched a full-scale war on the Samuel Kanyon Doe-regime, Liberia's 20th President on December 24, 1989.

Following a 14-year of civil conflict which left the Liberia devastated, coupled with the loss of thousands of lives, Mr. Taylor became Liberia's 21st President in 1997 in a highly contested Presidential Election.

Charles Taylor relinquished power and he was succeeded by his then Vice President, Moses Z. Blah in 2003.

Prior to his ascendancy to the nation's highest office, Mr. Taylor also served as former Director-General of the General Services Agency (GSA).