

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



The plane carrying Charles Taylor from Rotterdam Airport to The UK

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:

Thursday, 17 October 2013

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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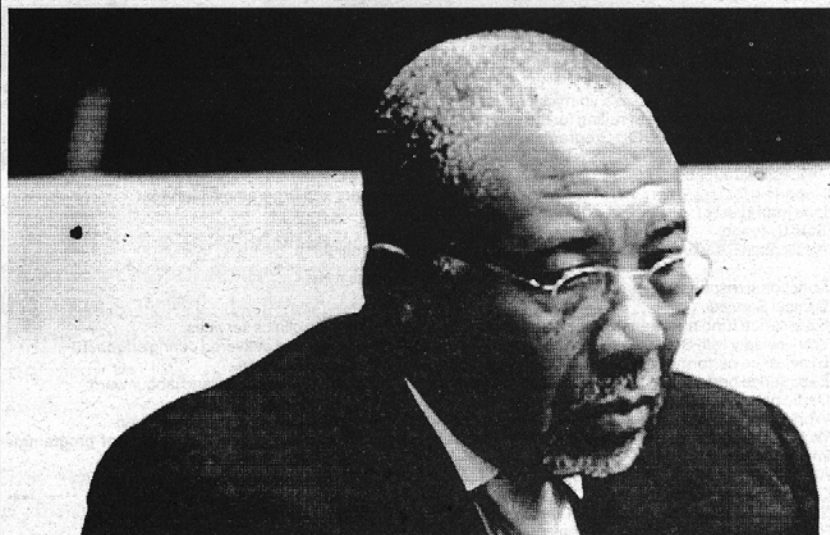
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Liberia's Charles Taylor transferred to UK



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.

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.

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

The Torchlight
Thursday, 17 October 2013

Why Charles Taylor Should Not Serve His Sentence In Africa?

Former President of Liberia, Charles Taylor, who recently lost his appeal case and was sentenced to 50 years imprisonment, will now serve his jail term in a British prison instead of in Africa where he preferred as stated in a letter he wrote to the Special Court for Sierra Leone in which he pointed out how he wants to serve his sentence in Rwanda as it would be easier - and less expensive - for his family to visit him in Africa. Taylor is said to have 15 children from various marriages, five of whom are younger than 10. He also has four grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Rwanda has a well secured United Nations detention facility, Mpanga prison, where Issa Sesay, Morris Kallon, Augustine Gbao and others of the erstwhile Revolutionary United Front rebel movement are currently serving their jail sentences after conviction by the same court for war related offences.

In as much as there is no potential threat to peace and tranquillity if Taylor, who 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, is imprisoned in Africa then it makes no sense for him to be taken all the way to Britain.

It is the view of this medium that no matter how horrendous a crime someone might have committed for which he or she is convicted the human rights of the individual must be respected. It is within such a context that The Torchlight believes Taylor's wish must have been granted especially so as he has convincing arguments of easily contacted by family members and for his safety.

This medium fervently believes that jailing a high profiled convict like Taylor in Africa will reinforce the message that African leaders must not become so power drunk to rule their subjects tyrannically and aid or abet any form of instability. The point at issue is that the closer they are kept the more often they are thought of especially by other leaders who may be tempted to shed innocent blood.

It is documented that Taylor has been on good behaviour 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. He also has a reputation for paying "particular attention to his deportment and appearance."

Taylor has maintained that there are "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.

Of course the guilty verdict which implicated Taylor as one of the catalysts for Sierra Leone's conflict, as well as one of its chief planners and financiers, granted many Sierra Leoneans a measure of justice. Though it was lengthy and expensive the final outcome of his trial—a substantial prison sentence—did provide a modicum of closure and hope for the future.

However, in as much as he is paying the prize so dearly at least his plea must have been taken into consideration because the United Nations detention centre is a standard prison with all the requisite facilities suitable to detain high profiled convicts like Charles Taylor.

It is documented that Taylor has been on good behaviour 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. He also has a reputation for paying "particular attention to his deportment and appearance."

Though it is plausible to argue that it was the British who offered to jail him the mere fact that he is taken all the way to Britain creates the impression that Africans are unable to handle certain issues when in actual fact that should not be the case. This idea of dependency on the West to take care of certain things can be seen here in the imprisonment of Taylor in Britain. An African country, preferably Rwanda must have volunteered to have him.

Now that he has been taken all the way to Britain and it is remotely possible for him to be brought back to Africa to serve his jail sentence, however, as Africans we must take this as a lesson and try in the future to handle certain issues by ourselves.

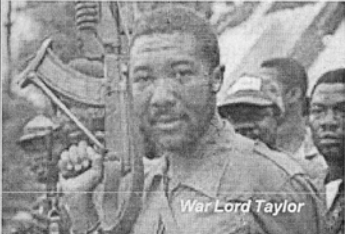
Taylor Prevented From Joining Allies In Rwanda



To the last moment of his freedom, Charles Ghankay Taylor's megalomania remained on full display for the world to see. The authorities overseeing the former Liberian rebel war lord turned President's incarceration just refused his latest request to join his RUF buddies Issa Sesay and others in a special prison in Rwanda.

Charles Taylor who just a few weeks ago had his fifty year conviction for war crimes in Sierra Leone upheld by an appellate branch of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, has been making more demands since his arrest and transfer to the Hague than the queen of England herself.

A former Liberian criminal fugitive, Charles Ghankay Taylor mysteriously escaped detention in USA in the 1980s, came to Africa and was able to use the support of former Libyan tyrant Muammar Gaddafi and Burkina Faso despot Blaise Compaore to launch a popular rebellion against the murderous regime of Samuel Kenyon Doe in the small West African country of Liberia.



War Lord Taylor

After years of terrible rebel strife, Charles Taylor was elected President by the war weary people of his country in democratic elections that was supposed to end the bloody conflict. Many people voted for him because of the fear of what he would have done, had he not won, as he still had thousands of armed murderous youths in the countryside. Furthermore his depravity, cruelty and absolute disregard for human life had been put on full display during the horrible years of civil war in his country. Upon assuming power, Taylor, instead of behaving like a national leader, decided to use his position to humiliate, intimidate and payback his political adversaries and use his control of state resources to enrich himself. He became the grand chief patron of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), a rebel group in diamond rich neighboring Sierra Leone that was an offshoot of his National Patriotic Front for Liberia. (NPFL)

As President Taylor used his influence and resources to provide arms, ammunition and manpower to his RUF allies in exchange for the country's diamonds and used his presidency as leverage to thwart every effort at achieving lasting peace in Sierra Leone. He was famously reported to have given international super model Naomi

Campbell a small bag of uncut diamonds on a trip to South Africa, just to express his admiration. His disrespect for Sierra President Ahmed Tejan Kabba was no secret, a grave error that would one day come back to hunt him.



Taylor's Biggest
Sierra Leone Fan
Olayinka Blyden

Eventually, Taylor's sins caught up with him, as his adversaries launched a counter rebellion that gave him no other option but to exit Liberia to save his skin. He was exiled to Nigeria with a promise to lay low. With growing clamor for him to face justice, he attempted as always to escape Nigeria, but was caught, bound, brought to Sierra Leone and sent to the Hague in Netherlands, from where he was tried and sentenced to fifty years in jail for crimes against the people of Sierra Leone. Unfortunately for Taylor, his crimes against his own people had made him flee, but it was crimes against his next door neighbors that would ultimately brought his downfall.

Taylor Asks
to use Toilet



Taylor's stint in jail did nothing to lessen his monumental arrogance, as he and his team set out to minimize the impact of his influence in Sierra Leone and portray him as a friendly and benevolent neighbor whose sole interest had been to bring an end to the Sierra Leone conflict, and he had had no influence over his RUF allies. The special court of course did not buy Taylor's claims of innocence and sentenced him to fifty years in jail, an effective life sentence as he was now way past his prime after years of running around in the bush, chasing after power. After his sentence, Taylor decided to do one last Houdini act and appeal his conviction, but unfortunately for him, the court found his appeal to be without merit and reaffirmed his conviction.

In Hague, Taylor has been a constant irritation to the prison authorities in the European metropolis. His main complaint has been the poor nature of the food. Who can blame him? From eating food fit for a president to eating mass produced mashed potato, gravy and Dutch cheese, I can't help but sympathize. No more bush meat from Kakata.

In his blind arrogance, Taylor fails to envision the thousands of his amputated and maimed victims who would give the world to eat the three meals a day that he is complaining about. He may have thought that

prison was a hotel trip involving a spa treatment and my only regret was that he was not sent to New York's Riker's Island, but he may be sent to some comfortable over regulated British prison, where he will be pampered, spoiled and allowed to grow fat until he one day dies from a massive myocardial infarction.



Mrs. Ghankay Taylor
"My Husband is
Innocent"

Taylor is truly incorrigible, demanding where he was to be jailed, so that he will be "close to his family," while the bones of thousands of his victims lie in forests and unknown graves. Of course what he truly wants is to join his RUF allies in Rwanda so that they may make a break for it if Rwanda descends into conflict.

He states that he fears being attacked if he is jailed in Britain. I wish Sierra Leone had a good relationship with Russia, so that he could be shipped to Siberia and see the difference between the Russian winter and Her Majesty's prison.

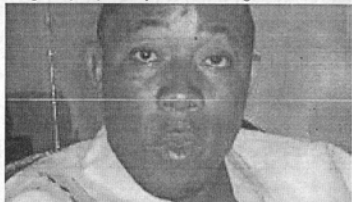
Of course Taylor has staunch supporters in the Sierra Leone government, notably the President's Special Executive Assistant Blyden who publicly grieved when Taylor was initially jailed in April 2012, blaming the people of Sierra Leone for the conflict. To compensate her she was made special assistant, in the sick tragedy that is the politics of Sierra Leone.



RUF Ally
Issa Sesay-Rwanda

Charles Taylor's son Charles Chucky Taylor Jr. an American citizen was tried some years ago in USA for war crimes committed in Liberia while his father was president and he was head of a notorious security unit. He was ordered to pay millions of dollars to five of the victims that he tortured and sentenced to 97 years in jail.

As Mark Anthony famously said, "the evil that men do live after them." Taylor has joined the ranks of Hitler, Amin, Bokassa, Mengistu and the rest of the world's tyrants who we will remember long after the good people they killed are forgotten.



Charles Taylor transferred to UK

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.

British diplomats will hail the jailing of Charles Taylor in the UK as the successful culmination of a long-term development strategy in Sierra Leone. Many people in West Africa will agree with them. Taylor was convicted of backing Sierra Leonean rebels in the civil war, during which the UK was the main international supporter on the side of the government.

After British troops helped defeat the rebels



backed by Mr Taylor in 2000, the British army embarked on a long-term retraining programme for the Sierra Leone armed forces. British aid workers meanwhile ran long-term development programmes and mentored the government. So the jailing of Taylor - and the British role in facilitating it - will be seen by the British as another part of the same strategy. Sierra Leone is still very poor and corruption is a major issue. But it is peaceful and democratic. It is a far, far better place than it was during the war years. 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 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.

'Attack fears'

Earlier this month, Taylor sent a letter 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.

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

'Why Taylor will be jailed in UK'

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 retrain 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.

Stand Firm

Thursday, 17 October 2013

Startling revelations Part one

HOW AND WHY JOHNNY PAUL KOROMA WAS ARRESTED IN 1996

By: Lt. Col. Salifu Lawrence Conteh [Rtd]

Johnny Paul Koroma joined the Sierra Leone Army in 1985. He did three years of basic advance training at Depot Daru Barracks. In his Basic and Advanced Recruit Training, he emerged as the Best recruit in training winning the Baton of Honor in the Army.

He was then attached to Lungi an Infantry sub unit where he did six months of intensive training and on completion of the six months, he was posted to the First Battalion, Wilberforce Barracks.

Because of his hard work in the Battalion, he was selected to take the Officer Cadet Examination. He successfully passed the exams and was decorated with the post of Officer Cadet in training.

After his six months in the First Battalion in 1987, he was recommended to pursue his Cadet training at the Royal Military Academy in England. He travelled to the United Kingdom to join other officer cadets from different countries.

At the Royal military College, he was also awarded the second prize in the group whilst a student from Botswana Mukokomani won the First. He graduated in 1989 and on his return was attached to the Army Camp Headquarters at Murray Town Barracks awaiting posting.

Within six months, he was again posted to Moa Barracks, Daru where he was in charge to train recruits. He was hard in training. The first set of recruits with Lt Ben Harsh in 1989 - 90. After this group, other groups followed. By then symptoms of the rebel was already eminent.

On the 23rd March, 1991, there was an attack at Bomaru. This was a surprise attack. This attack was not the beginning of the rebel war. The main reason for this attack was that the NPFL rebels were on a business venture. The story is thus. A group of NPFL rebels had handed the following to some SLA personnels 1 brown car Datsun 120Y, 1 Blue Toyota Van and a yellow Elemax Generator. This transaction was to be completed within the shortest time. Three NPFL rebels came to Benguema Barracks to collect proceeds from those sales. Unfortunately the items were nowhere to be found neither the SLA personnels with whom they did business with. The NPFL rebels were actually looking for money to feed the other members of the NPFL group. When those articles disappeared, the NPFL rebels resorted to attack. This attack was only carried on on that day. Johnny Paul Koroma was thus sent to capture the NPFL rebels. Johnny Paul Koroma was the first officer sent alongside twenty three other soldiers with few semi-automatic rifles.

He took the bold initiative to go and on his arrival, he recovered the bodies of two officers who were killed by the NPFL rebels. They were Major Foday and Lieutenant Kargbo. These two gallant officers were buried right there. Lt. Ben Harsh played an important role in the recovery of one SLA Landover which was being carried by the NPFL rebels but somersaulted on the way to their deployment areas.

Johnny Paul Koroma was again posted to fight in various locations in the East and South of the country. In one of the numerous attacks, he was wounded in action at Bundama village in Daru and was brought to Bo for medical treatment. On examination it was realized that the wound was serious and was referred to Freetown for advance treatment.

He underwent an operation to remove dangerous elements which were then very close to his heart. The authorities of the Sierra Leone Army refused to honor the bills. When his family realized that his life was in danger, they took him to a private hospital at East Street, in Freetown. Dr. Kargbo performed the operation which was successful though difficult. The SLA again refused to honor the bills but a kind hearted

lady helped in settling that particular bill.

On recovery, he was again posted to Lungi Garrison to train three Battalion of recruits. Whilst there, he was requested by the Chairman of NPRC Captain Stasser to be his Operational Commander. This was short lived. Because of numerous demands, he was again posted to the First BN this time as an Adjutant. A position he held for about a year. He was again selected to man a new Battalion at Goderich 7th Battalion. He went there, but later survived an assassination attempt at the 7th Battalion.



lady helped in settling that particular bill.

After this ugly situation, as fate would have it he was selected to attend a Junior Staff College in Ghana. He came back after some months and was posted to the war front region. He was specifically sent to Daru to act in the capacity of Pay Master - a very difficult and dangerous task. As a Paymaster, every soldier by then was anxious to get rich and every soldier as well was carrying a weapon so any mistake on the part of the Paymaster is fatal.

In 1995 he was recalled to Freetown as by then the rebels were almost approaching Newton. The Defense Secretary by then was Komba Kambo. Johnny Paul was seen as the only officer who could push the rebels back and that task he performed well. The people around those areas were very happy and nicked named him "the stopper". There was a time when the Chief of Staff Brigadier Kelly Conteh under the NPRC regime visited his location at Newton. According to eye witnesses, it was around 11pm. He instructed Johnny Paul Koroma to move the bulk of his troops forward and leave few men behind. It was then that Johnny Paul Koroma knew that he was the Commander on ground and also knew who the rebels were. How can somebody who is not aware of what was happening in the front tell him to move his troops to Masiaka and leave few men behind? Johnny Paul answered "yes sir". Johnny Paul instead sent few men to Masiaka and leave the bulk behind knowing fully well that the rebels wanted to bypass Newton to Waterloo. The rebels were chased away since they met with a very strict resistance from his troops, the majority whom he Johnny Paul had decided to leave behind.

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To be continued.



CHARLES TAYLOR FLIES ON CHARTERED PLANE TO BRITAIN

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

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CHARLES TAYLOR FLIES ON CHARTERED PLANE TO BRITAIN

FROM PAGE 1

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.

The Special Court is an independent tribunal established jointly by the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone. It is mandated to bring to justice those who bear the greatest responsibility for atrocities committed in Sierra Leone after 30 November 1996.

Agence France Presse
Wednesday, 16 October 2013

Taylor secretly sent to UK jail

Liberian ex-warlord Charles Taylor was on Tuesday 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 10.00 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 AFP.

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 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 that 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.

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.

Charles Taylor Goes to Jail in Britain: The Backstory

By John Bellinger

Charles Taylor, the former President of Liberia who was convicted of war crimes in 2012 by the Special Court for Sierra Leone, arrived in Britain yesterday to begin a 50-year prison term in a British jail. In June 2006, after Taylor was expelled from Nigeria under U.S. pressure and turned over to the SCSL, Tony Blair agreed that Britain would imprison him if he were convicted, after other European countries refused to help. The Taylor saga was a small example of how the Bush Administration did more to support international justice and tribunals than it received credit for at the time, and how, in contrast, many European countries paid lip service to international justice but did not step up when actually called upon to help.

Here's the short version of what happened: in March 2006, after years of U.S. pressure, Nigerian President Obasanjo announced that Taylor would be repatriated to Liberia from his exile in Nigeria. Taylor then promptly disappeared. However, after senior Bush Administration officials made clear that there would be no Oval Office visit for Obasanjo while Taylor was on the lam, Taylor miraculously reappeared, was detained by Nigerian police, and was transferred to Liberia, where he was turned over to the SCSL, which was then sitting in Freetown. Then newly-elected Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, however, was concerned that a trial of Taylor in Liberia could destabilize her new government. So, it was arranged that the SCSL would try Taylor in the Hague, using the then as-yet unused facilities of the International Criminal Court. To the surprise of many European governments, who had convinced themselves that the Bush Administration was implacably hostile to the ICC, the Bush Administration supported the use of the ICC for this purpose. I personally called the ICC President to tell him of our support. As I told NPR at the time, "We don't have a general allergy to the ICC. We are concerned about the ICC's potential coverage of the United States government. But we see a role for the ICC and international criminal justice in the world."

But agreeing to allow the SCSL to prosecute Taylor in the Hague was only one piece of the puzzle. The Dutch Government agreed to host the trial in the Hague but — understandably — did not also want to have to detain Taylor if he was convicted. U.S. and U.N. officials canvassed numerous European countries, including Sweden and Austria, but they all refused, citing the expense and security concerns. Ironically, the refusal of European governments to assist came at the height of their criticism of the U.S. Government over its lack of support for the ICC. Finally, after it appeared that the prosecution of Taylor might not go forward if a solution could not be found, Tony Blair volunteered Britain to house Taylor if convicted. The British Parliament — in contrast to other European parliaments — then passed special legislation to allow for Taylor's imprisonment.

The Bush Administration's support of ICC facilities for the trial of Charles Taylor was part of a broader effort in its second term to adopt a pragmatic approach towards the ICC, which included agreeing to the U.N. Security Council referral of the Darfur situation to the ICC for investigation in March 2005. Many European governments, which had blamed the anti-ICC American Servicemembers Protection Act of 2002 and its jingoistic Hague-invasion provision on President Bush (even though it was actually drafted by Republicans in the House and supported by Hillary Clinton and John Kerry in the Senate), failed to recognize the evolution in the U.S. position at the time. The beginning of the incarceration of Charles

Taylor should now serve as a reminder both to European governments of the efforts made by the Bush Administration to support international tribunals and to our own Congress of the important role that international tribunals (however imperfect) can play in the system of international justice. As I recommended last year, if and when Congress can return to the business of governing, it should review the American Servicemembers Protection Act and consider whether some of its restrictions on U.S. support to the ICC should be modified.

Irish Independent

Wednesday, 16 October 2013

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

London said last week that Taylor would 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.

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.

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

In Sierra Leone, Victims Celebrate Taylor's Conviction

By Alpha Sesay

It is not every day that victims of crimes committed during Sierra Leone's 11 year brutal conflict express positive emotions when they share their experiences but granted the opportunity to do so, they will not hide their feelings. The recent decision by the Appeals Chamber of the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) in upholding Taylor's conviction and 50 year jail sentence provided that opportunity. Throughout Sierra Leone, this decision has been received with joy, especially among victims of atrocities that Taylor was convicted of having aided and abetted.



Savage Pit

In various places in Sierra Leone, where the scars of the country's bloody conflict are still visible, hundreds of people came out to share their elation with the Court's Chief Prosecutor Brenda Hollis as she traveled around the country, sometimes through rough terrain and almost undrivable roads, to explain the judgment to Sierra Leoneans. In the diamond mining town of Tombodu, in the Kono district, the infamous "Savage Pit," named after the notorious rebel commander known as "Savage," is still visible. Hundreds of civilians killed by Commander Savage were dumped in the said "Savage Pit." With painful recollection, the residents of the town show the pit to visitors, explaining the massacres they witnessed as well as the family members and friends that remain buried under what looks like a swamp. They did not follow every day of the proceedings in Taylor's case, but when judges announced their final decision in late September, they listened. And for what they heard, they are happy.

"We are happy," a man told me in Tombodu, raising his hands and showing exuberant body movement. "Many of our brothers and sisters did not live to witness this and while we can't bring them back to life, their souls know that people heard their cry, and for that, we will celebrate," he added.

Another man, explaining how he narrowly escaped death from rebels in Tombodu said "we are poor but free, Taylor is rich but will never have freedom."

In Tongo Field, another diamond mining town, civilians were killed and subjected to forced labor for diamonds, many of which judges say were taken to Taylor who in turn supplied the rebels with arms and ammunition. Here, more than 500 residents came to the town-center to listen to the prosecutor. Speaker after speaker expressed their joy over the judgment. Many asked questions about the kind of punishment that Taylor will receive for his crimes. A resident took the microphone and suggested that Taylor must be shown on TV during the course of his sentence so that victims of his crimes will see. Some asked whether

he will be subjected to forced labor. The prosecutor took time to explain the international imprisonment standards and how they will apply to Taylor.



Participants at Outreach Event

A woman in Tongo asked if Taylor's sentence could be transferred to his son in case he dies before completing his 50 year jail term. Prosecutor Hollis informed her audience that Taylor's son, Chuckie is already serving a more than 90 year jail term in a US prison for crimes of torture committed in Liberia. There was applause from the crowd.

In Kailahun, home to the Revolutionary United Front's (RUF's) headquarters for many years, the residents have moved on but have not forgotten their experiences. Kailahun is the location of the infamous "slaughter house," which is still painted with blood stains. Like in Tombodu, the residents here are never shy to point this site of unimaginable horror to visitors. They too now share the joy of Taylor's conviction and sentence.

A woman broke down as she expressed her views on Taylor's conviction and sentence. She called it tears of joy. "My life will never be the same again, but my heart is satisfied that a man as powerful as Taylor has been made to answer for what the rebels did to me," she said.

In the country's capital Freetown, home to the infamous January 1999 rebel invasion, one which judges said Taylor had helped to plan, some people expected a jail term of more than 50 years. Some raised concerns about the comfort of the prison in which Taylor will serve his sentence. SCSL staff have been explaining that prisoners also have rights and that prison facilities must meet specific UN standards. The people listened, but for some, they wish Taylor and the rebels he supported had allowed Sierra Leoneans to enjoy their own rights. A religious leader, acknowledging the importance of the judgment was more concerned about life beyond Taylor's prison. "We can't get back what he took from us. Some of us forgave him a long time ago," she said. "His 50 year jail term is temporary, his real judgment and punishment will come when he faces his maker in the life beyond this world," she added.

Around the country, views will differ about what everybody expected from this process and the punishment that Taylor deserves. What they all agree on is Taylor's guilt. In their minds, they have no doubt about Taylor's involvement in the commission of crimes in Sierra Leone and for which he will now almost possibly spend the rest of his life in jail.

In April 2012, Trial Chamber judges convicted Taylor of aiding and abetting crimes, as well as planning attacks by RUF and Armed Forces Revolutionary Forces (AFRC) rebels in Sierra Leone. He was sentenced to a 50 year jail sentence. On September 26 this year, Appeals Chamber judges upheld both Taylor's conviction and sentence. He will serve his jail sentence in a British prison.

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International Criminal Court witness tells of ‘bad blood’ before poll

BY FELIX OLICK

Members of the Kikuyu and Kalenjin communities used derogatory language while referring to each other ahead of the 2007 polls.

The fourth prosecution witness against Deputy President William Ruto yesterday narrated how the bad blood between the two ethnic communities started.

According to the witness, members of the two communities traded derogatory terms as they battled over land ownership which he maintained is still in existence.

“The Kalenjin people used to refer to Kikuyus as madoadoa (stains). The Kikuyu people used to refer to Kalenjins as ‘gachurie’ (derived from the hanging ear lobes of some members of the community) the witness said during his testimony in chief.

The prosecution has framed its case on the premise that Ruto declared directly or through use of parables that PNU supporters should be evicted from the Rift Valley, saying for instance that they were ‘weeds’ which needed to be removed.



Deputy President William Ruto’s lawyers Karim Khan (right) and Shyamala Alagendra leave the courtroom after Wednesday’s proceedings. Ruto and journalist Joshua Sang are fighting crimes against humanity charges against them at The Netherlands-based court. [PHOTO: PIUS CHERUIYOT/STANDARD]

“Witnesses will also testify how Ruto consistently referred to Kikuyus using derogatory terms like madoadoa, spots that needed be removed,” Prosecution Counsel Anton Steynberg said as the case started.

ON Wednesday, the witness only identified as 376 said the bad blood in Langas between the two communities began a few months to the General Elections.

Prior to that, he said, the atmosphere was calm and the two communities enjoyed good relations.

“There were allegations and counter allegations from both sides, especially those supporting PNU and those supporting the ODM party, each accusing the other of irregularities,” the witness told the three-judge bench.

The witness also explained that the Kalenjins were bitter with the Kikuyu who had come to own most of the land in Langas.

Langas, he said, was previously owned by a European who sold it to Kalenjins in the early and mid-1960s.

He, however, insisted that Kalenjins subdivided the land and sold the majority to Kikuyus, who became the largest occupants of the estate.

“When the initial owners sub-divided the land among themselves, each member started selling his or her portion on the basis of willing-buyer-willing-seller. Then different communities bought land in Langas,” the witness said.

Apart from members of the Kikuyu community, the witness said the land in Langas was also occupied by members of other ethnic communities including Luhyias and a few Luos.

“The main issue was ownership. The Kalenjins who sold their portions did not and have not given them title deeds,” the witness said.

The witness will continue with his testimony today.

Meanwhile, a group claiming to represent Cherangany residents condemned Foreign Affairs Cabinet Secretary Amina Mohammed for her statement on Monday terming Joshua Sang’s trial at the International Criminal Court his personal problem.

In a press conference held at the Comfort Hotel in Nairobi yesterday, they accused Amina of downplaying the need for the Government to get involved in Sang’s case.

“We want to condemn the approach taken by the Foreign Affairs Cabinet Secretary as she is down playing the need for the Government to get involved in the case of our fellow constituent Mr Joshua Arap Sang,” they said.

They said that Sang is a Kenyan citizen just like President Uhuru Kenyatta and his Deputy William Ruto, hence he should also be accorded consideration in the bid to defer the cases.

“Mr Sang is equally a Kenyan citizen therefore he also commands the government’s support just like his co accused,” they said.