

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



**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, 2 October 2013

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.  
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Independent Observer  
 Wednesday, 2 October 2013

## Appeals Chamber of the Special Court of Sierra Leone has brought a measure of justice to the people of Sierra Leone, says Kerry

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
 Office of the Spokesperson

For Immediate Release September 26, 2013  
 2013/1294

### STATEMENT BY SECRETARY KERRY

Special Court of Sierra Leone Appeals Chamber Upholds Conviction of Charles Taylor

Today's ruling upholding the conviction of former Liberian President Charles Taylor marks a milestone for the people of Sierra Leone and Liberia, and for international criminal justice. In holding Charles Taylor accountable for war crimes and crimes against humanity, the Appeals Chamber of the Special Court of Sierra Leone has brought a measure of justice to the people of Sierra Leone, and helped to cement the foundation on which reconciliation can proceed.

This fight against impunity for the worst crimes known to humankind is personal for me. The last piece of legislation I helped to pass as a Senator expanded and modernized the State Department's War Crimes Rewards Program. As I was awaiting confirmation to become Secretary of State, the bill came to President

Obama's desk and he signed it into law. We need tools like this to help ensure that criminals like Charles Taylor answer for their crimes. I am proud of the role that the United States played in drafting and negotiating UN Security Council Resolution 1315 (2000), which paved the way for the Special Court that convicted Taylor and

has now brought its trials and appeals to a close. The United States has been a strong supporter of the Court and its work for a simple reason: We refuse to accept a world where those responsible for crimes of this magnitude live in impunity.

# CHARLES TAYLOR

## TRIAL: ANY

### LESSONS TO LEARN?

*charles-taylor-1g1*  
 Charles Taylor, Former Liberian President  
 By Joe Pemagbi, Country head, OSIWA in Sierra Leone

The appellate of the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) will issue a landmark verdict on the appeal of former Liberian President Charles Taylor in The Hague today September 26, 2013. Charles Taylor was tried and convicted on 11 counts of aiding and abetting war crimes, crimes against humanity, rape and other serious violations of international humanitarian law, committed by Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) rebel forces from November 30, 1996 to January 18, 2002 during the course of Sierra Leone's civil war. Judgment was pronounced by the trial chamber of the Court on April 26, 2012 and he was sentenced to 50 years imprisonment on May 30, 2012. It was clear that the defense team was not going to take the verdict lying down.

An appeal by the defense on forty-two grounds followed on July 19, 2012 while the prosecution also challenged the sentence on four grounds. More than a year on, it is judgment time again- however, this time, it is final judgment. Taylor remains the first former President to be convicted by an international criminal tribunal for the crimes committed during Sierra Leone's civil war that started in 1991 and officially ended in 2002. Six years after the Taylor trial began on June 4, 2007, the interest and demand for justice continues to invigorate human rights activities, policy makers and victims of the gruesome crimes. The trial has largely been transparent and has been followed by the general public through direct radio broadcasts and, howbeit slightly delayed, television images of court sessions broadcast from The Hague.

The trial was moved to The Hague due to concerns that holding the trial in Sierra Leone might jeopardize security in the West African sub-region, which might in turn have a negative impact on the work of the Special Court. In Liberia and Sierra Leone, special efforts were made by the Special Court in partnership with various media outlets to reach out to victims as well as residents of the Mano River Union and West Africa throughout the process. Among the issues raised by prosecutors in their appeal brief was the trial chambers' failure to find Taylor guilty on the ordering and instigation of crimes. Prosecutors also appealed the 50 year jail term to which the trial chamber sentenced Taylor. They had originally requested a jail term of 80 years. Enormous resources have gone into the operations of the court to send a strong message to leaders, especially from the African continent, and citizens across the world that the long arm of justice will find and reach those who have committed heinous crimes, no matter how long it takes.

The commencement of the Hussein Habre case after years of reluctance by Senegal's governments to bring him to book for alleged crimes is an opportunity that the courts must not miss. African leaders who cling on to power at all costs, often subjecting their citizens to unimaginable cruelty and abuse in order to do so, must rethink and redirect their focus to people-centered leadership. Immediately before and even during the operations of the SCSL which, coincidentally, functioned concurrently with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), rumors and suspicions rose about the motive and rationale behind its establishment. All major stakeholders - national and international - were at pains to explain to victims about the deterrent value of the hybrid court and remained optimistic about the legacy that the court would leave. Other than a physical structure which could decay in the coming years for lack of maintenance, the jury is still out on the legacy of the court. The expectation was that as obsolete as some of the provisions in the laws of Sierra Leone may be, some of them remained relevant to the trial of those who bear the greatest responsibility for the mayhem that was unleashed in Sierra Leone. As Sierra Leoneans and Liberians, both near and far, move on with their lives over a decade after the war officially ended, Taylor's alleged role in Sierra Leone's civil strife that left millions displaced, thousands killed, maimed or demoralized will be waiting patiently for the final decision of the Special Court for Sierra Leone's appellate to help them bring a closure to their pain and suffering. For victims of the war, they felt short-changed by a system as the millions of dollars went into the operations of the court while they live in abject poverty. On Thursday, Taylor's role in the Sierra Leone war - will receive a final judgment from the appellate of the Special Court for Sierra Leone. As many Sierra Leonean and Liberian survivors heal over a decade after the end of this war, they long for closure so that they can continue with their lives. Hopefully, this judgment can give it to them.

## Charles Ble Goude: ICC Warrant

### For Ivorian Ex-minister

**THE INTERNATIONAL Criminal Court has made public an arrest warrant for Ivorian ex-minister Charles Ble Goude over war crimes allegations.**



**CHARLES BLE Goude has denied leading violent attacks**

He is wanted by the ICC for alleged crimes against humanity during violence which erupted following disputed elections in Ivory Coast in 2010.

Some 3,000 people lost their lives in the crisis after ex-President Laurent Gbagbo refused to accept defeat.

The arrest warrant, issued in December 2011 but only now

made public, describes Mr Ble Goude as a member of Mr Gbagbo's "inner circle".

The ICC said the 40-year-old, currently detained in Ivory Coast, is suspected of murder, rape, persecution and other inhuman acts committed between December 2010 and April 2011. Judges in The Hague said that forces loyal to former President Gbagbo targeted civilians who backed his

opponent, Ivory Coast's current President Alassane Ouattara.

Mr Ble Goude spent more than 18 months in hiding following the violence. He was arrested in January 2013 in Ghana and extradited to Ivory Coast, where he also faces war crimes charges.

Mr Ble Goude, who was put under UN sanctions in 2006 for allegedly inciting attacks against UN personnel, said he was ready to go to the ICC to clear his name.

Mr Gbagbo, 67, was arrested in 2011 and is awaiting trial at The Hague on four charges of crimes against humanity relating to the election violence.

The former president's wife, Simone Gbagbo, has also been indicted by the ICC but Ivory Coast ministers have voted to dismiss the ICC warrant and try her in the country's own courts.

## Associated Press

Wednesday, 2 October 2013

### **Court upholds 50 years for Liberia's Taylor**

MIKE CORDER

LEIDSCHENDAM, Netherlands (AP) — More than a decade after fuelling a murderous campaign of terror in Sierra Leone by supplying rebels with arms, Charles Taylor was definitively convicted and imprisoned Thursday for 50 years, in a ruling that finally delivered justice for victims.

The appeals chamber of the Special Court for Sierra Leone upheld the 65-year-old former Liberian president's conviction on 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including terrorism, murder, rape and using child soldiers.

Taylor is the first former head of state convicted by an international war crimes court since World War II and Thursday's confirmation was welcomed as underscoring a new era of accountability for heads of state.

"This is a historic and momentous day for the people of Sierra Leone and the region," U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in a statement.

"The judgment is a significant milestone in international criminal justice, as it confirms the conviction of a former head of state for aiding, abetting and planning war crimes and crimes against humanity."

Stephen Rapp, the ambassador for war crimes issues at the U.S. Department of State and former prosecutor at the Sierra Leone court, said the ruling "sends a clear message to all the world, that when you commit crimes like this, it may not happen overnight, but there will be a day of reckoning."

However, it also appeared to establish dueling sets of jurisprudence at two international courts on opposite sides of The Hague on the question of when senior officials can support one side in another country's civil war — an issue world leaders must consider if they mull over arming rebels in Syria.

The Sierra Leone appeals panel rejected a controversial February ruling by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), which said that to prove a leader has aided and abetted a crime, the assistance has to be specifically directed at committing a crime. In that case, the former chief of staff of the Yugoslav national army was acquitted of aiding and abetting atrocities by Bosnian Serb forces even though he had sent them arms and other supplies.

Taylor's case appeared to swing the pendulum back toward a lower burden of proof for prosecutors.

His lawyer complained that the two rulings have created "entirely chaotic jurisprudence" at international tribunals.

If Taylor had been prosecuted by the Yugoslav tribunal, "I dare say the outcome would have been different, and that courthouse is less than 10 kilometers (six miles) away from this courthouse," Morris Anyah said.

But international law expert Michael Scharf of Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, said the ruling Thursday "righted the ship" after the Yugoslav court had made prosecuting leaders who support rebels much more difficult.

Anyah also complained that Taylor had been prosecuted because of a lack of friends in high places, again referring to Syria.

"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," he said. "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.

Wearing a black suit and a gold-colored tie, Taylor showed little emotion while Presiding Judge George Gelaga King read the unanimous verdict of the six-judge panel.

Anyah said Taylor was bitterly disappointed by the ruling that will likely see him spend the rest of his life behind bars, but "he has remained stoic and calm."

It remains unclear where he will serve his sentence. Great Britain has offered cell space, but the court also has agreements with Finland, Sweden and Rwanda to house prisoners.

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.

Back in Sierra Leone, Edward Conteh, who lost his lower left arm when rebels chopped it off with an ax, said he was elated with Taylor's conviction.

"Impunity must stop in Africa, so I'm very happy over the decision," he told The Associated Press. "At 65, I don't know whether he will ever breathe the free air that I do breathe."

Conteh, who today leads an organization that aids war amputees, said Taylor's sentence closed a chapter but that some 2,000 people still live with amputations and other serious injuries from the war. Many live in abject poverty with little means to support their families.

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

"We are here. We will always be here; and we will always be loyal to Mr. Taylor no matter what the international community thinks," said Henry Brown, the caretaker of Taylor's palace in the Congotown township of the capital, Monrovia.

Taylor's brother-in-law Arthur Saye said he wasn't 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."

US State Department  
Thursday, 26 September 2013  
Press Statement

### **Special Court of Sierra Leone Appeals Chamber Upholds Conviction of Charles Taylor**

John Kerry  
Secretary of State  
Washington, DC

Today's ruling upholding the conviction of former Liberian President Charles Taylor marks a milestone for the people of Sierra Leone and Liberia, and for international criminal justice.

In holding Charles Taylor accountable for war crimes and crimes against humanity, the Appeals Chamber of the Special Court of Sierra Leone has brought a measure of justice to the people of Sierra Leone, and helped to cement the foundation on which reconciliation can proceed.

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I am proud of the role that the United States played in drafting and negotiating UN Security Council Resolution 1315 (2000), which paved the way for the Special Court that convicted Taylor and has now brought its trials and appeals to a close.

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# Liberia Broadcasting System

Friday, 27 September 2013

## Special War Crimes Court rejects Taylor's appeal

(mylbsonline.com -The United Nations-backed Special War Crimes Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague has rejected an appeal of war crime charges against former Liberian President, Charles Taylor.

The Court ruled that the former Liberian President's conviction had been proven beyond doubt.

Justice George King of the Court said: "The original sentence of 50 years previously passed against Mr. Taylor for aiding rebels of the defunct Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in neighboring Sierra Leone, was fair and reasonable."



The former Liberian Leader appeared impressive in the Court as the Judge upheld his conviction of the 50-year sentence.

The convict's lawyers had argued that there were legal errors during his trial.

Former President Taylor was sentenced in May, 2012 for aiding the RUF rebels who committed atrocities during the Sierra Leonean Civil War.

Taylor was accused of supplying weapons to the then Revolutionary United Front rebels in exchange for a constant flow of "blood diamonds."

He was found guilty of committing crimes against humanity, including terrorism, rape, murder and the use of child soldiers by rebel groups, during that country's civil war that lasted for 12 unbroken years (1991 to 2002).

Mr. Taylor was the 21st Liberian President and former leader of the defunct National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) which launched a full scale war to unseat Liberia's 20th President, Samuel Kanyon Doe regime in 1989.

Prior to his ascendancy to the Liberian presidency, Mr. Taylor, amid unprecedented controversies, served as Director General of the General Services Agency (GSA) during the Doe regime.

## FrontPage Africa (Liberia)

Friday, 27 September 2013

### Liberian Sympathy: Reaction to Taylor's Appeals Verdict in Monrovia



Monrovia - Public reaction to the Special Court for Sierra Leone Appeals Chamber decision unanimously upholding the conviction of former Liberian President Charles Taylor on 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, and affirming the 50- year sentence imposed by the court's Trial Chamber has been mixed in Monrovia.

Some Liberians described the final decision as sad because it puts behind bars a former President of Liberia.

"The final verdict is saddening for me as a Liberian; to see that my former president going to languish in jail for 50 years. I am very sad. '

"Today is a sad day for me. This is the first African president to go in jail for that long," said Joemah Y. Kollie, a resident of Monrovia.

Christopher S. Doe another Liberian expressed disappointment over the verdict adding that the Taylor issue is a political one solely done to keep him out of Liberia.

"My ex-president left my country with our present president knowing about it. And she is happy and going to show her supremacy." he said.

Liberian gathered before television screens across the city watching the Judge of the Special Court as he read the verdict, though many did not expect any considerable difference from the previous verdict handed down by the court, they could not come to accept that the fact that a former president of Liberia could spend lifetime in jail in a foreign land and not for crimes committed in Liberia.

"It is highly discouraging for the court to come with such verdict on our ex-president," said Darlington S. Wiles.

### Court's ruling

On 26 April 2012, the Trial Chamber found Taylor guilty of aiding and abetting crimes committed by RUF and AFRC rebel forces against Sierra Leones civilian population over a five-year period, and of planning, with RUF Battlefield Commander Sam Bockarie, crimes committed by rebel forces during the January 1999 attack on Freetown. The Defense and the Prosecution had each appealed both judgment and sentence.

The Appeals Chamber, consisting of Justice George Gelaga King (presiding), Justice Emmanuel Ayoola, Justice Renate Winter, Justice Jon Kamanda, Justice Shireen Avis Fisher and Alternate Judge Justice Philip Waki, found that the Trial Chamber had properly applied the standard of proof of beyond a reasonable doubt according to a release issued by the special court.

The Judges also dismissed Defense challenges to findings of fact, saying that the findings were reasonable in light of the Trial Chamber's careful and cautious approach to the evaluation of the evidence.

The Judges said the Trial Chamber had relied on a combination of direct, circumstantial and hearsay evidence in reaching its findings, and that none of its findings were based on uncorroborated hearsay evidence, said the court.

The Trial Chamber also found that Mr. Taylor had supplied the rebels with arms and ammunition, military personnel, sustained operational support, encouragement and moral support, knowing that their strategy was to commit crimes against the civilian population.

The Appeals Chamber concurred, saying that Mr. Taylor had a substantial effect on the rebels' capacity to implement its operational strategy and to carry out attacks on civilians.

The Defense according to the judge reading the verdict argued that the Trial Chamber erred in finding the mens rea (intent) of aiding and abetting by applying "knowledge" standard rather than a "purpose" standard.

The Appeals Chamber rejected this argument, holding that under customary international law, knowingly participating in the commission of crimes establishes individual criminal responsibility. The Defense had also argued that the conviction was legally erroneous because Mr. Taylor had not assisted the individual soldiers who committed the crimes.

The Appeals Chamber did not agree, finding that the crimes were committed in furtherance of the RUF/AFRC operational strategy, and that the Trial Chamber had properly found that Mr. Taylor aided and abetted the planning, preparation and execution of that strategy and thus the crimes.

Justice King added that the Appeals Chamber was "not persuaded" by the recent ICTY Appeals Chamber's Perišić judgment, which concluded that "specific direction" is an element of aiding and abetting liability under customary international law.

Justice King noted that the ICTY's jurisprudence did not contain a clear, detailed analysis supporting the conclusion that "specific direction" is an element of aiding and abetting under customary international law.

The Appeals Chamber affirmed Mr. Taylor's conviction for planning the crimes committed during the January 1999 attack on Freetown. The Appeals Chamber recalled that Mr. Taylor instructed Sam Bockarie to make Freetown "fearful" and to use terror tactics against the city's civilian population. Mr. Taylor thus demonstrated his intention that crimes would be committed in Freetown.

The Prosecution had argued that, based on the evidence before the Court, the Trial Chamber should have found that Mr. Taylor had ordered or instigated crimes committed by RUF and AFRC rebel forces.

The Appeals Chamber found, however, that ordering and instigating were “inadequate characterisations of culpable acts and conduct” found by the Trial Chamber, and held that aiding and abetting “fully captures Taylor’s numerous ‘interventions’ over a sustained period of five years.”

The Appeals Chamber agreed with the Prosecution, however, that the Trial Chamber erred in concluding that aiding and abetting liability. Justices Shireen Avis Fisher read out a concurring opinion on behalf of herself and Justice Renate Winter.

She stated “the confirmed findings overwhelmingly establish that Mr. Taylor, over a five year period, individually, and knowingly, and secretly, and substantially assisted the perpetration of horrific crimes against countless civilians in return for diamonds and power, while publicly pretending that he was working for peace.”

Justice Fisher noted that eight independent judges had established Mr. Taylor’s guilt beyond a reasonable doubt, and stressed the importance of judicial independence.

### **UK welcome verdict**

UK Foreign Secretary William Hague in a statement said his government welcomes the judgment against former Liberian leader. He said the court’s decision sends a strong message that those in positions of power who commit atrocities, including former heads of state, can and will be made to answer for their actions.

Hague said the conviction is also a victory in the fight against impunity for sexual violence, as the judges emphasized Taylor’s responsibility for horrific crimes of rape and sexual enslavement used to terrorize the people of Sierra Leone.



Liberians watching the reading of the final appeals verdict

“I pay tribute to the courage of the witnesses, whose testimony was crucial to ensuring justice was served.”

" No verdict can undo the pain and suffering the victims and their families have endured, but I hope they take some comfort in the fact that a line can now be definitively drawn under that period of Sierra Leone’s history," he said.

“This verdict marks the successful conclusion of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, which is the first international court to complete its mandate. ”

"This is a remarkable achievement, and I commend the legal teams and staff of the Court for their tireless and dedicated work over the last 10 years."

"I am proud that the United Kingdom has been the second largest bilateral donor to the Special Court over its lifetime."

The UK foreign secretary then urged other states to consider making voluntary contributions to the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone, which will now take on the essential remaining work, including witness protection and managing the sentences of the convicted.

"The UK will continue to support this vital work, and the people and government of Sierra Leone as they build a peaceful and secure future for their country," he said.

### **Liberty Party 'sad Day'**


One of Liberia's lead opposition political party said it was sad news for all Liberians even though the sentence was based on international best practice.

"It is a sad day for the country when a former president of Liberia has to be incarcerated. I don't think anybody is happy about that and the one thing about Liberians is that we're not used to long prison sentences, so I believe it will send shock waves through the country," said Cllr. J. Fonati Koffa National Chairman of the LP at a news conference in Monrovia.

Cllr. Koffa urged all to respect the decision of the court adding that it was based on international law. "I think it is sad that it has come to that; there are international standards to uphold; maybe at some point, we will tender justice with mercy and Mr. Taylor may one day come home and see his family," he said.

"It is a sad situation, because we can't have our president incarcerated as such but at the same time there are international standards and international norms to uphold and as soon as we align our systems to those, I don't think we will ever see those situations again."


**Homcjef1** 3 Days Ago

 (0) vote  

Darius you are one hundred percent correct!! Let's give a pat on the back of the nation of Sierra Leone for courage so mustered to drag Mr. Taylor to court for justice. The 50 years jail sentence for Mr. Taylor is justified even though that may not be enough to restore the limbs and lives of the people of Sierra Leone destroyed. Let it be a lesson to all ruthless would be Liberian leaders and rebels.

 Reply  Quote




**JD** 3 Days Ago

 (+1) vote  


The constitution did not allow a President, neither as a nation, to make such advances to another nation, without Legislative approval; neither does it allow another nation to come into Liberia's personal affairs. Notwithstanding, we have an institution, the Liberian Legislature to order the Commander in Chief to aid or act against another nation in the case war emerges between. This tyrant, now prisoner of the international court of judgement, is also a prisoner of Liberia, the world. He acted upon his own accord when he left the bounds of Liberian jurisprudence to enter Sierra Leone's. Liberia is not saddened by the court's decision. (1) It prepares Liberians to stay within boundary during crisis, be it war on corruption or any other civil crisis.(2) Liberia's own direction.

 Reply  Quote

**jtd** 3 Days Ago

 (0) vote  

This tyrant did interfere in the internal affairs of another nation when he aided the reboes in Sierra Leone. Liberian leaders should now take care as they view the consequences of entering into the personal space of another nation. Eventhough this tyrant would have been judged by the Supreme Court of the Republic of Liberia for his atrocities, which still awaits him, the Liberian nation should note that Liberia is not excluded from the Universe. He, committed the crime outside the Liberian nation in Sierra Leone and has been served with a verdict of 50 years in a jail decided by the court. A prisoner is one placed in jail. The case is closed.


Taynue 3 Days Ago
 (+5) vote

It is sad to see all of these comments about a former president having to do time for crimes he committed. Justice!


People should not get away with crimes regardless of who they are. What's about the victims? Look all around you in Liberia and the region.


Mr. Taylor is reaping what he sowed.

My only disappointment is that he and others are not answering for their crimes against the people of Liberia. This is what, I think all of us should be saddened by.

For Taylor or his son I have no mercy.


Hide 1 Reply
Reply
Quote


Sam 19 H AGO
 (0) vote
Reply
Quote


Ben 4 Days Ago
 (+4) vote


Liberians,those of you that have empathic towards this moron, are just as moronic as him. This fool had one of the greatest opportunity and blew it, so far as I'm concern, he can rot in jail.

Reply
Quote


Peter Sumo 4 Days Ago
 (+4) vote

Happy at last this monster and reign of terror will now be thing of the past. He sits in the photo like a drown rat. Papay, rest well for the 50 years. I probably will see you on judgement day.

Reply
Quote


Bill Wright 4 Days Ago
 (0) vote

Go, Go pappey go!

Reply
Quote

## The News (Liberia)

Friday, 27 September 2013

Editorial

### Taylor's Sentence Is a Warning

Judges In The Hague have upheld the 50-year jail sentence of former Liberian President Charles Taylor for aiding murderous rebels in Sierra Leone's civil war.

Taylor, 65, Had earlier been found guilty by the Special Court for Sierra Leone on April 26, 2012, of 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity including terrorism, murder, rape and using child soldiers. He was sentenced to 50 years in prison.



Judges At The Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) on Thursday rejected Taylor's appeal against his earlier conviction. There were griefs in some parts of Liberia as the Special court read out the sentence. Supporters of the ex-Liberians president including family members who had a memorial service last week seeking divine intervention were equally disappointed and bamboozled.

The Judgment Gives a clear signal that leaders at the echelon of power can be held accountable for corruption, misrule and war crimes as well as other serious offenses that violate the rights of the very people that they govern. Some of those who misled Mr. Taylor into this miscellany of tragedy [without properly warning of the consequence ahead] are in government and others in the private sector enjoying the plunder yank fraudulently while the once strong man will only rely on the mercy of GOD.

Like Taylor, We believe those who perpetuate evil against the Liberian people, misled their leaders or allowed the CORRUPT to go free while the JUST are plunged into the abyss of poverty will get political freedom through the ballot, not the bullet. For it is written: "those who live by the sword shall die by the sword."

We Regret The way Mr. Taylor's life is ending, but honestly if he had listened to the advice of Rev. Jesse Jackson and Assistant Secretary of State, Tom Pickering as well as other prominent Liberians [who were not in his government] perhaps the situation would have been different today.

The Truth Of matter is some of those who were closed to the ex-Liberian leader prevented others from reaching him. In the process, we presume that he was misled into taking decisions that hunted him to his 50 years jail sentence today. Even now, some of those around President Johnson-Sirleaf are allegedly doing the same thing that was done to Taylor, Samuel Doe and other ex-Presidents.

We Certainly Regret the last days of Mr. Taylor because he was our former President, but let this be seen as a warning to others that those who are unjust to the people they govern, the ALMIGHTY GOD will bring them down. Be warned that Taylor's judgment must be seen as a warning to those in power and also a lesson for them.



## The New Republic (Liberia)

Friday, 27 September 2013

### 'Mission Accomplished' - for the West Over Taylor's Conviction - His Supporters Opine

The upholding of Trial Chambers' conviction of former Liberian President Charles Taylor to 50 years imprisonment by the Appeal Chambers of the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone is said to have met the optimism, cogitation and longing of some members of the International Community; otherwise the West led by the United States, Britain and other strategic nations.

The former President's supporters have come out strong against the verdict, terming it a Mission Accomplished for Western conspiracy.

Chief Cyril Allen, chairman emeritus of the former ruling National Patriotic Party (NPP) and former Security Advisor, John T. Richardson bemoaned the Appeal Chambers' upholding of Mr. Taylor's conviction and described the decision of the Court as accomplishment of western conspiracy.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone in the landmarked ruling Thursday said there are strong and sufficient evidence (documentary and hearsay) against Mr. Taylor that proved his responsibility for the charges levied against him.

"I think that the Court has accomplished its mission. They wanted to silence Mr. Taylor and they did everything possible to get to that. I believe that the court was set aside to disgrace and humiliate African leaders," Mr. Allen told this paper via phone, hours after the court's judgment against Mr. Taylor.

"This is a mission accomplished by the West against not only Taylor but for African Union (AU), ECOWAS, and Mano River Union (MRU). It is intended to subdue and subject African leaders to abide by what they want. Today is Taylor, tomorrow it will be another person. They want to plunder our resources. Now they are going to look for other African leaders."

Far before this time, Mr. Allen and many other supporters of Mr. Taylor had been convinced that the trial had no legal basis, rather it was tied to politics simply because Mr. Taylor refused to dance to the whims and caprices of the West.

As President, Mr. Taylor also made similar conjectures that the West led by the United States and Great Britain were ganging up against him because he refused to play to their cards.

On the day relinquished power to his vice President Moses Blah, Mr. Taylor cautioned African leaders to be mindful because "decisions were not longer made in their capitals but in foreign capitals, a reference to Western bullying of African leaders to play to their orchestra.

Former President Taylor was indicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone in 2003 for crimes he was said to have committed in that country and not Liberia. He went into exile in 2003 after a special arrangement was made by the international community to go into exile in Nigeria.

"The decision by the court is not surprising at all to me. This is a complete international gangsterism. The judges are there to get their pay in fulfillment of what they have decided to do. They only justified what they were paid for."

"Most of the work was done by the Lower Court. The ICC was set up for Africans, to intimidate them and get their resources. Only Africans and Eastern Europeans they take there."

Before his departure to Nigeria, former Nigerian President, Olusegun Obasanjo said his administration would only turn Mr. Taylor over to an elected Government in Liberia base on a request.

Few months after President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf took office, she was said to have written a letter to Nigerian President requesting Mr. Taylor's turnover.

Due to the apparently difficult nature of the decision to turn over as requested by Liberia, Nigeria reportedly set up a scheme by allowing Mr. Taylor leave Calabar where he was for a visit to Niger but was later arrested near the border with Cameroon under the pretext that he was absconding the country, apparently evading arrest and justice.

After series of behind-the-scene arrangements involving the Nigerian Government, the Liberian government and the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone, Mr. Taylor was bundled on a special plane to Liberia via the Roberts International Airport (RIA) where his charges were read to him before being taken to Sierra Leone via A UN helicopter.

The former President was taken to The Hague for what authorities of the court said was security in nature.

The Special Court on Thursday upheld its earlier verdict in 2012 for 50 years jail sentence of Mr. Taylor for war crimes and crimes against humanity. The Presiding judge, George Gelaga King said Mr. Taylor provided advice and encouraged the former rebel group-Revolutionary United Front and Armed Forces Revolutionary Council in that country.

"Their primary purpose was to spread terror. Brutal violence was purposely unleashed against civilians with the purpose of making them afraid, afraid that there would be more violence if they continued to resist," he said. He added during the verdict, "Governments and the international community were also afraid that unless the RUF's and the AFRC's demands were met, thousands more killings, mutilations, abductions and rapes of civilians would follow."

"The appeals chamber... affirms the sentence of 50 years in prison and orders that the sentence be imposed immediately," Judge George King told the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) on Thursday.

For his part, Mr. John T. Richardson, a former security advisor to former President Taylor said, "I was not surprised at the ruling at all. From the onset I knew that they were not going to give Mr. Taylor a fair trial. This is a new form of slavery coming which we need to learn."

"I am glad that this trial is going to bring new evolution of thinking to the minds of Africans. Now, the African Union has taken a stand against the ICC, also the Kenyans have spoken on it. Next door here, Ivory Coast has said that they will not send the wife of former President Laurent Gbagbo to the Hague. We will not be surprised if in the future they request of one day for their former President to be brought back. In Libya, they have said that they will put on trial the son of former Libyan leader in that country.

"I think the trial of Mr. Taylor is bringing a new wave of revolution of the minds in Africa today. The AU has taken a stand on the Ivory Coast has said that they will put on trial former Mrs. Gbagbo, Kenya has taken a stand and Libya has also spoken. But history will judge us. From the onset, I never had trust in that court."

Also, one of Taylor's wives told this paper that they would accept the outcome of the court's ruling and live by it.

"Well, we will trust in God and live with it. "As a Christian, we only look up to God. Anything can happen at any time. He is alive and he has accepted it and we will live with the ruling of the court," she said.

## Radio Netherlands

Monday, 30 September 2013

### What Kenya Can Learn From Charles Taylor

By Victor Otieno Juma, Kisumu

International justice supersedes status, suggests this opinion piece originally published on Thursday by The Hague Trials Kenya, a sister site to that of RNW's Africa Desk. It is a reaction by a Kenya-based journalist to the Special Court of Sierra Leone's decision to uphold its conviction of Charles Taylor. The Liberian ex-president now faces 50-year jail sentence for aiding and abetting war crimes.

26 September 2013 deserves an entry in a book of world records. Today marks one of the most significant events in the world of criminal justice and international law.

Today's verdict in the Charles Taylor case may mean the end of impunity in Africa. The Special Court of Sierra Leone decided to uphold its conviction of the former president of Liberia. He is now facing a half-century in jail for aiding and abetting war crimes.

And this will send an unequivocal message across the continent to people like Omar al-Bashir, Joseph Kony and Laurent Gbagbo: humanity must be respected, devoid of one's status. These cases' common denominator is the accusation of gross violation of human rights.

With the ICC trials of Kenya's current president due to begin in November and that of his current deputy already in progress, the Taylor case remains a relevant topic of discussion in Kenya.

Kenya has not fully recovered

Kenya has not fully recovered from the 2007-2008 post-election violence. Its shockwaves are still being felt.

Pollsters have clearly indicated a growth of faith in the International Criminal Court since it started dealing with the Kenyan situation. But a spate of developments in the trials (witnesses withdrawals and shifting timelines, for example) has caused a dip in confidence in the court.

The Kenyan media have also regularly highlighted the leaders' living conditions in the detention centres. Well-furnished cells described as practically palatial - the stress-free environments offered to Taylor and Gbagbo - have not resonated well with Kenyans.

The common man's understanding of a detention centre is a pathetic, dilapidated structure, full of metal bars. This reality makes everyday Kenyans question why there is VIP treatment in The Hague not just for the accused, but even those convicted.

Strong signals to Africans

Yet the fact that Taylor is now en route to serve his 50-year term somewhere in the UK, no matter how luxurious his prison cell may be, has sent strong signals to Africans.

It has instilled fear in our chest-thumping leaders who have continued branding international legal institutions as puppets of the Western world.

And, yes, Taylor's case is a win for some people. Seventeen years down line, the victims in Sierra Leone have seen the light of the day: those who still bear the scars, those who were recruited as child soldiers and those without limbs. They lost a lot, but they now have justice.

Will the verdict increase confidence in the ICC? African countries are preparing to hold an extraordinary African Union summit next month. One thing is clear: people store much faith in international institutes that levy legal standards, like the AU, because local systems have failed.

Today's landmark ruling will continue to elicit mixed reactions on the continent.

But we'll just have to wait and see about the Kenyan situation. Will we have our 26 September too?

Charlestaylortrial.org

Thursday, 26 September 2013

## **Charles Taylor's Conviction and Sentence Upheld - What Next for Him?**

By Alpha Sesay

Appeals Chamber judges of the Special Court for Sierra Leone today upheld Charles Taylor's conviction that was handed down by the Trial Chamber in April 2012 as well as his 50 year prison sentence. This brings an end to several years of judicial proceedings during which the former Liberian president called himself a peacekeeper who made efforts to end the conflict in Sierra Leone. Taylor also called his trial a conspiracy by western countries, led by the United States and Liberia, to keep him out of Liberia. Today, Appeals Chamber judges said Taylor's categorization of himself and his trial was wrong.

In a jam-packed public gallery full of diplomats, court officials, civil society, journalists, and victims of the conflict in Sierra Leone, Presiding Judge of the Appeals Chamber, Sierra Leonean Justice George Gelaga-King, told Taylor that while he served as President of Liberia, West African leaders put him in a position of trust to promote peace in Sierra Leone. However, he abused that trust by aiding and abetting the commission of crimes by Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) rebels in Sierra Leone.

Taylor himself, dressed in a dark suit with a yellow and white shirt, sat attentively as Justice King told him that his acts and conduct had substantial effect on the commission of crimes and in enhancing the RUF/AFRC's capacity to implement its operational strategy. The Appeals Chamber said that the RUF/AFRC operational strategy involved committing crimes against the people of Sierra Leone and putting them in constant fear.

Taylor had raised more than 40 grounds of appeal, arguing before the Appeals Chamber that the Trial Chamber made several mistakes in assessing the evidence against him and that his 50 year jail sentence was "manifestly unreasonable." He also argued that his fair trial rights were violated and that some aspects of the judicial process were irregular. The Appeals Chamber today disagreed with Taylor, calling his sentence not only fair and reasonable, but also that his allegations of the process being unfair and irregular were "unsupported, ingenious, and ludicrous." Justice King said that the Trial Chamber had "thoroughly evaluated the evidence according to its credibility," that they "properly applied the law according to the rules and statute of the Court," and that Taylor was "fully held liable for his own conduct."

Before today's judgment, there was a lot of anxiety among observers about whether the recent decision of the Appeals Chamber of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in the case of Momčilo Perišić would have an impact on Taylor's case. In the Perišić case, the ICTY Appeals Chamber reversed the Trial Chamber's decision that convicted Perišić for aiding and abetting the commission of serious crimes. The Appeals Chamber in Perišić decided that for a person to be convicted for aiding and abetting, it is not sufficient that his conduct had "substantial impact" on the commission of crimes, but rather, that his conduct was "specifically directed" to the commission of said crimes.

The Trial Chamber in Taylor's case had also dismissed a "specific direction" requirement and had said it was sufficient that Taylor's conduct had a "substantial impact" on RUF/AFRC crimes in Sierra Leone. In today's judgment, the Special Court's Appeals Chamber judges said they were not persuaded by the ICTY's finding that "specific direction" is an element of aiding and abetting.

Morris Anya, who represented Taylor in the appeal process, told journalists at a press briefing after the judgment was announced that Taylor was hopeful that the judges would follow the standard set by the Appeals Chamber at the ICTY. Sadly for him, that was not the case. As said by a member of his defense team, Taylor himself accepted at this point that most of his life will now be spent in jail. As his 50 year jail term was confirmed, his defense team called it a life sentence.

The presiding judge announced that arrangements will now commence to take Taylor to the country where he will serve his 50 year jail term. Britain had originally agreed to provide a prison for him if he is convicted and sentenced. The Prosecutor later told the press that it is for the President of the Court to determine where Taylor will serve such jail sentence. In addition to Britain, the Special Court also has agreements with Sweden, Finland, and Rwanda for imprisonment of persons convicted by the Court. Other persons who have already been convicted and sentenced by the Special Court are serving jail terms in Rwanda. According to Mr. Taylor's defense counsel, the former Liberian president has a preference to serve his jail term in an African country.

The Prosecutor of the Court, Brenda J. Hollis, welcomed the appeal judgment and said she will now travel to Sierra Leone and Liberia where she will take part in outreach activities to explain the judgment to local populations. This is particularly important to the people of Sierra Leone who have been her clients.

Today's judgment brings an end to judicial activities in the Taylor case and for the Special Court for Sierra Leone. The Court's indictment against former AFRC leader Johnny Paul Koroma remains in place. If he is arrested and brought into the custody of the Court, arrangements will be made for his trial.