

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



Charles Taylor at his appeals hearing yesterday

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, 23 January 2013

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Awoko
Wednesday,

In the Taylor trial... Prosecution, Defence argue on six issues

By Betty Milton

In the Appeal Chamber of the former President of Liberia, Charles Taylor, both the Prosecution and Defence team yesterday submitted six issues during their oral argument.

These six issues include whether the Trial Chamber correctly articulated the actus reus elements of aiding and abetting liability under customary, international law.

The differences and similarities between aiding and abetting, instigating and ordering, as forms of liability under Article 6(1) of the

Statute. Whether customary international law recognizes that certain forms of liability set forth in Article 6(1) of the Statute are more or less serious than other forms of liability for sentencing or other purposes.

The second issue is whether the Trial Chamber's findings meet the mens rea standard of purpose, the third issue is that of whether acts of assistance not "specifically directed" to the perpetration of a crime can substantially contribute to

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In the Taylor trial... Prosecution, Defence argue on six issues

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the commission of a crime for aiding and abetting liability.

And that whether the acts of assistance not to the crime "as such" can substantially contribute to the commission of the crime, for aiding and abetting liability.

Whether the Trial Chamber's findings, meet the "as such" standard.

In their submission, Nicolas Koumjianon behalf of the Prosecution said that by providing monies to an organization for war, he [Taylor] was committing crimes against humanity, and that the act of Charles Taylor was intentional.

He stated that in the area of specific direction, the lawyer defined Joint Criminal Enterprises (JCE) and aiding and abetting.

He said JCE deals with a group of people who commit crimes while aiding and

abetting is that the contribution made by the accused to the commissioning of the crime.

Adding that if there is evidence like in this case, wherein his action contributed to the commissioning of 11 counts and his action was specifically directed to the crimes.

The prosecuting lawyer said there were lots of evidence before the court as one witness said Taylor in a radio broadcast said that Sierra Leone will taste the bitterness of war which he accompanied.

Lawyer Nicolas Koumjianon said that there is interest in harmonizing the evidence but the primary interest is truth.

The defence counsel will also submit their oral argument based on the six issues highlighted by the Appeals Chamber.

Premier News

Wednesday, 23 January 2013

Liberia's Charles Taylor appeals at The Hague

Liberia's jailed ex-President Charles Taylor has started his appeal at a UN-backed special court in The Hague.

Last May, the court sentenced him to 50 years in prison for aiding and abetting rebels in neighbouring Sierra Leone during the 1991-2002 civil war. Defence lawyers have called the verdict a "miscarriage of justice" and want the conviction to be quashed.

The prosecution, however, wants the sentence extended to 80 years, saying he also gave orders to the rebels.

In the court's original judgement, he was acquitted on these charges, with the judge finding that the prosecution had failed to prove its claims.

Taylor became the first former head of state to be convicted of war crimes by an international court since the Nuremberg trials of Nazis after World War II.

Throughout his trial, the former Liberian leader, who was arrested in 2006, maintained his innocence.

Last week Taylor, 64, reportedly wrote to MPs demanding a presidential pension of \$25,000 (£15,600) in Liberia. Describing the withholding of his state presidential pension as a "mammoth injustice", Taylor was

quoted in the letter as saying that he was entitled to consular access and diplomatic services at The Hague, but he had been "denied that right".

The prosecution addressed the court first on Tuesday, reports the AFP news agency.

The court should "hold responsible not only those who perpetrate the crimes but also those who promote them", said prosecutor Nicholas Koumjian.

Taylor's lawyers have filed more than 40 grounds of appeal, arguing that the trial chamber's findings were based on "uncorroborated hearsay evidence".

"The colossal judgment, over 2,500 pages in length, is plagued throughout by internal inconsistencies, misstatements of evidence and conflicting findings," his lawyer Morris Anyah said in court papers quoted by AFP.

Prosecutors, meanwhile, are expected to argue that the court made a mistake by convicting Taylor only of aiding and abetting the Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels and their allies, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council.

"The Trial Chamber erred in law and in fact by failing to convict Mr Taylor for



ordering crimes committed by RUF/AFRC forces who were implementing his instructions," the prosecution said in court papers.

The court was set up in 2002 to try those who bore the greatest responsibility for the war in Sierra Leone in which some 50,000 people were killed.

It found Taylor guilty on 11 counts of war crimes, relating to atrocities that included rape and murder, and described by one of the judges as "some of the most heinous crimes in human history". In return for so-called blood diamonds, Taylor provided arms and

both logistical and moral support to Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels - prolonging the conflict and the suffering of the people of Sierra Leone.

Taylor started Liberia's civil war as a warlord in 1989, and was elected president in 1997. He governed for six years before being forced into exile in southern Nigeria. He was arrested in 2006 while trying to flee Nigeria.

The trial was moved to the Netherlands due to concerns that the case might spark fresh instability in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

INT'L NEWS

Liberia's jailed ex-President Charles Taylor has started his appeal at a UN-backed special court in The Hague. Last May, the court sentenced him to 50 years in prison for aiding and abetting rebels in neighbouring Sierra Leone during the 1991-2002 civil war. Defence lawyers have called the verdict a "miscarriage of justice" and ask for the conviction to be quashed. Last week Taylor, 64, reportedly wrote to MPs demanding a presidential pension of \$25,000 (£15,600) in Liberia. Describing the withholding of his state presidential pension as a "mammoth injustice", Taylor is quoted in the letter as saying that he is entitled to consular access and diplomatic services at The Hague, but he has been "denied that right".

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Taylor Begins Appeal

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In return for so-called blood diamonds, Taylor provided arms and both logistical and moral support to Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels - prolonging the conflict and the suffering of the people of Sierra Leone. His lawyers have filed 42 grounds of appeal, arguing that the trial chamber's findings were based on "uncorroborated hearsay evidence".

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Prosecutors, meanwhile, are expected to argue that the court made a mistake by only convicting Taylor of aiding and abetting the RUF and its allies, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council.

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Charles Taylor has always maintained his innocence

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Liberia's Charles Taylor begins appeal at The Hague



Charles Taylor has always maintained his innocence

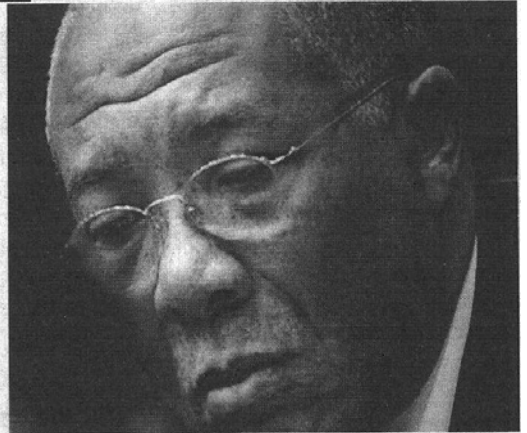
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Prosecutors, meanwhile, are expected to argue that the court made a mistake by only convicting Taylor of aiding and abetting the RUF and its allies, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council. "The Trial Chamber erred in law and in fact by failing to convict Mr Taylor for ordering crimes committed by RUF/AFRC forces who were implementing his instructions," the prosecution said in court papers. Taylor started Liberia's civil war as a warlord in 1989, and was elected president in 1997. He governed for six years before being forced into exile in southern Nigeria. He was arrested in 2006 while trying to flee Nigeria. The trial was moved to the Netherlands due to concerns that the case might spark fresh instability in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

Prosecutors Seek Tougher Warcrimes Term For Taylor



Former Liberian President Charles Taylor appears in court at the Special Court for Sierra Leone in Leidschendam, western Netherlands, to appeal

Prosecutors called for a stiffer sentence for former Liberian president Charles Taylor on Tuesday, telling war crimes judges he played a direct role in crimes against humanity during the civil war in Sierra Leone. ***Contd. page 9***

warcrimes term for Liberia's Taylor



Judges, (left to right) Alternate Judge Justice Philip Waki, Justice Jon Kamanda, Justice Emmanuel Ayoola, Justice Shireen Avis Fisher (presiding), Justice George Gelaga King, and Justice Renate Winter. In the lower row, seated second from the right is Registrar Binta Mansaray

From front page

But Taylor's defense, which wants his conviction overturned, told the court hearing appeals from both sides that judges had erred in convicting Taylor last year because they failed to link him to criminal acts committed during the war and that crucial evidence against Taylor was no more than hearsay.

"There is nothing in the trial chamber's findings that would have allowed it to find that Charles Taylor knew that specific weapons or ammunition he had some role in providing would be used in a crime as opposed to a lawful purpose," Christopher Gosnell, a lawyer on Taylor's defense team, said on Tuesday.

Noting that there was no way of determining how the bullets would later be used, Gosnell said: "This was not a case of shipping a million machetes to Rwanda."

Taylor, 64, was sentenced to 50 years in prison last year on a conviction of aiding and abetting war crimes and crimes against humanity during the 11-year war in neighboring Sierra Leone, in which an estimated 50,000 people died by 2002.

The first head of state to be convicted by an international court since the trials of Nazis after World War Two, Taylor was nonetheless acquitted of either ordering or planning atrocities.

Prosecutors disagree. They told Tuesday's appeal hearing that Taylor's involvement went beyond helping the commission of crimes, saying that he should be convicted for the direct commission of war crimes and for instigating them.

They also asked for his prison sentence be raised to 80 years, which they had originally demanded in May 2012.

"He was aware of the crimes (being committed in Sierra Leone) through his own sources, as president of Liberia, and through media reports," Brenda Hollis, head prosecutor at the Special Court for Sierra Leone, said at the hearing.

ATTENTIVE

Dressed in a dark suit and bright red tie, Taylor leaned forward with hands clasped together, listening attentively in a windowless former basketball court in a

suburb of The Hague.

The defense team, presenting their appeal in the afternoon, argued that supplies Taylor had sent to rebels in Sierra Leone were lawful in the context of a bloody civil war.

Over more than a decade of brutal conflict, Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels murdered, raped and mutilated their way across Sierra Leone.

In return for providing arms and ammunition for the conflict, Taylor received "blood diamonds", as the stones from Sierra Leone's conflict zones were known, including a 45-carat diamond and two 25-carat diamonds.

The prosecution argues the relationship was even closer, and that Taylor was in direct charge of the rebels as they terrorized a civilian population.

"What was Charles Taylor's reaction to all these reports of atrocities?" asked Nicholas Koumjian, a member of the prosecution. "To send more ammunition."

But Taylor's defense lawyer said supplying ammunition to rebels fighting in a bloody civil war was not the same as facilitating the commission of crimes.

"If (for example) you give a bullet to the Syrian opposition today, then you can say that there is a possibility or even a likelihood, that one or more of those bullets will be used in the commission of a crime," Gosnell said.

"Is the prosecution saying that the suppliers will be aiding and abetting in the commission of those crimes?"

But Koumjian said Taylor's actions were themselves evidence of his direct involvement in the crimes.

Taylor instructed Sam Bockarie, an RUF commander, to make the attack on the Sierra Leone capital Freetown "fearful", Koumjian said, and knew brutality might ensue. The defense said the evidence Taylor had said this was no more than hearsay.

"He was saying this to the RUF, not to a boy scouts' troop," Koumjian said. "Putting people's heads on sticks. That's what 'make it fearful' meant."

The appeals hearing will continue on Wednesday. - (Reuters)

Global Post

Tuesday, 22 January 2013

Charles Taylor begins appeal of war crimes case

Former Liberian president Charles Taylor is appealing his war crimes conviction and the 50-year sentence he received during Sierra Leone's civil war.

Last April, a UN-backed special court in The Hague convicted Taylor for aiding and abetting rebels in Sierra Leone in return for blood diamonds.. He was also convicted for acts of terrorism, murder, rape and recruiting child soldiers during the 1991-2002 civil war.

Today, the court began hearing two days of oral arguments.

According to the Guardian, Taylor was the first former head of state since WWII to be convicted by an international war crimes court.

However, Taylor's defense lawyers have called the verdict a "miscarriage of justice," asking that the "lords of war" should be held responsible for the atrocities during the war, BBC reported. They have filed 42 counts of appeal.

Prosecutors, on the other hand, will argue that trial judges made a mistake by only convicting Taylor of aiding and abetting the Revolutionary United Front and other rebel groups. They would like to see his sentence raised from 50 years to 80 years to reflect his culpability.

<http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/africa/130122/charles-taylor-begins-appeal-war-crimes-case>

The New Dawn

Wednesday, 23 January 2013

Prosecutors Want Taylor Prison Term Extended

Prosecutors at the ongoing appeal hearing of ex-president Charles Taylor have asked judges of the UN backed Special Court for Sierra Leone to rather extend his sentence by 30 more years.

The request came at the start of Taylor's appeal hearing Tuesday. The court sentenced Taylor to 50 years in prison last May for aiding and abetting the brutal Sierra Leonean civil war. But lawyers representing called the verdict a "miscarriage of justice" and want the conviction to be quashed.



Mr. Taylor's lawyers had earlier filed a motion seeking to present additional evidence pursuant to Rule 115 and paragraph 23 of the Court's practice and Direction for Grounds of Appeals.

Rule 115 (A) provides among others that a party may apply by motion to the Pre-hearing Judge to present before the Appeal Chamber additional evidence which was not available to it at the trial.

Article 23 of the Practice and Direction on the structure of Grounds of Appeal before the Special

Court provides that a party applying to present additional evidence must do so by way of motion, in accordance with the Rules-starting with among others, the specific rule by which the application is made.

That request was denied by the judges on Friday January 18, 2013. The prosecution, however, wants the sentence extended to 80 years, saying Taylor also gave orders to the rebels. In the court's original judgment, Taylor was acquitted on these charges, with the judge finding that the prosecution had failed to prove its claims.

Ex-president Taylor became the first former head of state to be convicted of war crimes by an international court since the Nuremberg trials of Nazis after World War II. The AFP reported Tuesday that the prosecution was the first to address the court.

The court should "hold responsible not only those who perpetrate the crimes but also those who promote them", said prosecutor Nicholas Koumjian. Taylor's lawyers have filed more than 40 grounds of appeal, arguing that the trial chamber's findings were based on "uncorroborated hearsay evidence".

"The colossal judgment, over 2,500 pages in length, is plagued throughout by internal inconsistencies, misstatements of evidence and conflicting findings," his lawyer Morris Anyah said in court papers quoted by AFP.

In court, defense lawyer Christopher Gosnell said: "There is nothing in the trial chamber's findings that would have allowed it to find that Charles Taylor knew that specific weapons or ammunition he had some role in providing would be used in a crime as opposed to a lawful purpose."

CharlesTaylorTrial.org (The Hague)

Tuesday, 22 January 2013

By Jennifer Easterday

Parties in Taylor Trial Make Appeal Submission

On April 26, 2012, Trial Chamber II of the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) convicted Taylor of aiding and abetting the commission of serious crimes including rape, murder, and destruction of civilian property committed by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) forces in Sierra Leone from November 30, 1996 to January 18, 2002.

The judges further found that Taylor planned an attack on Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone. On May 30, 2012, the judges sentenced Taylor to a jail term of 50 years for these crimes.

Today, the parties made oral submissions to the Appeals Chamber. Most of the submissions were about the limits of criminal liability for aiding and abetting a crime. In particular, the parties debated the required mental state: whether Taylor was guilty if he knew there was a substantial likelihood his assistance would result in the commission of a crime, or whether he intended to assist the commission of a crime. The parties also debated whether assistance had to be given to a crime "as such," or whether he could be convicted for giving other types of assistance that facilitated crimes. In addition, the parties gave submissions on the Trial Chamber's reasoning behind Taylor's sentence. Their submissions are summarized below.

Did Taylor have to Assist a Crime "As Such" to be Convicted?

Much of the debate was about the exact nature of Taylor's assistance. In particular, the parties debated whether his assistance was to crimes "as such" or for other purposes and whether Taylor intended to assist in the commission of crimes.

The prosecution argued that for a conviction of aiding and abetting, the accused has to provide practical assistance, moral support, or encouragement to the crimes and that the accused's assistance had a substantial effect on the commission of the crime. Moreover, the prosecution said that for a finding of aiding and abetting, SCSL jurisprudence requires a finding that Taylor's assistance was intentional and that he was aware of the substantial likelihood that his acts would assist the commission of the crimes. The assistance does not need to be carried out with the purpose to commit the crime. Therefore, according to the prosecution, whether he intended to assist crimes "as such" is irrelevant.

The defense submitted that for aiding and abetting, the reference point is always the crime, "as such." The defense submissions suggested that acts of assistance that are not directed to crimes "as such" cannot be considered a substantial contribution to the crime necessary for an aiding and abetting conviction. The defense argued that Taylor's assistance was inherently geared toward combat: it was ammunition to support a military campaign. Even when a bloody civil war is going on, the defense argued, this is not inherently criminal assistance.

Did Taylor have to Intend to Assist Crimes to be Convicted?

The defense suggested that customary international law requires a "purpose" element for proving aiding and abetting. It argued that "purpose" meant that an accused intended to assist another person or group, not that he intended the crimes committed. In other words, the defense argued that the act of assistance

must have been done with the purpose of assisting, but this is separate from intending that assistance to facilitate crimes.

According to the prosecution, this argument is incorrect. Under this approach, the prosecution suggested, if a person assists someone knowing that a crime will be committed, but they do it for greed, political advantage or another purpose, they cannot be held responsible for aiding and abetting. This "purpose" element is not an element of aiding and abetting under international criminal law, the prosecution submitted, nor was it a part of customary international law.

The prosecution argued that Taylor intended the crimes committed by the RUF and their campaign of terror. However, knowledge was all that is required to prove aiding and abetting. The prosecution submitted that Taylor's actions show his intent: although Taylor admitted he knew about the RUF's atrocities, the Trial Chamber found he continued to send them arms and ammunition. This indicates his intention for the RUF's crimes to be committed, the prosecution argued, meaning the Trial Chamber's findings would meet a "purpose" mens rea standard.

The defense argued that the Trial Chamber's findings would not meet a "purpose" standard. The Trial Chamber found that Taylor knew his support would provide practical assistance, encouragement, or moral support to RUF/AFRC in the commission of crimes during the course of military operations in Sierra Leone, the defense noted. However, the defense submitted, the Trial Chamber did not address whether Taylor knew that a crime would occur or that there was a possibility that the crime might occur because of his assistance. This reasoning does not meet a "knowledge" standard and certainly does not meet a "purpose" standard, the defense argued.

Furthermore, the defense noted, the Trial Chamber's findings on Taylor's mental state were insufficient. In the Sierra Leone conflict, there were periods that were more violent than others and there periods with more efforts of reconciliation than others. However, the Defense argued, the Trial Chamber failed to make any findings about Taylor's mental state at different stages of the conflict. This suggests the Trial Chamber did not consider this, the defense argued, noting that the prosecution has argued that Taylor had the same mental state for the entire duration of the war. This is not likely true, given the complexity of events, the defense argued.

If Taylor's Assistance was not Directed at a Crime, Can the Assistance be Considered Substantial?

The parties also addressed whether acts of assistance not "specifically directed" to the commission of a crime could meet the requirement for aiding and abetting that assistance substantially contributes to the commission of the crime.

The prosecution contended that to be convicted of aiding and abetting a crime, an accused has to contribute to the crime, not an enterprise. According to the Prosecution, a contribution that is not "specifically directed" at a crime cannot be substantial, which is a requirement of aiding and abetting.

According to the defense, the Trial Chamber findings did not make an analysis of "substantial" or "specifically directed" sufficient for an aiding and abetting conviction. In fact, the defense argued, the Trial Chamber took the opposite approach, finding that if you do anything to perpetuate the existence of an organization that you know engages in criminal actions, then that alone is sufficient to find you guilty of assisting any and all crimes committed by that group. This is an inappropriate standard for aiding and abetting convictions, the defense argued.

Bullets can be used criminally or lawfully, the defense contended. Yet, the defense noted, even given the context of a bloody civil war, the Trial Chamber made no finding about which percentage of which bullets were used lawfully or unlawfully and made no finding that bullets provided by Taylor were used in any crime. The Trial Chamber's reasoning did not find any links between Taylor's assistance and the

commission of the crimes: the assistance was remote in time from the commission of the crimes, there was no finding on a causal link, and there was no temporal proximity, the defense argued.

Should a Sentence for Aiding and Abetting be Lower than for Direct Participation?

The parties also made submissions about the Trial Chamber's reasoning in sentencing Taylor to 50 years of imprisonment. This sentence is similar in length to previous SCSL sentences for those convicted of direct participation in serious crimes. The Appeals Chamber requested submissions on whether some forms of liability should be considered less serious than others when it comes to sentencing.

The prosecution argued that there is no hierarchy between the different modes of liability according to the SCSL Statute or in customary international law. If the legal characterization of a crime is anything at all, it is but one minor factor to be considered in sentencing, the prosecution contended.

According to the prosecution, sentences must reflect the totality of criminal conduct and the gravity of crimes, a principle firmly supported in case law of international criminal tribunals. The tribunal should consider the totality of crimes committed, the conduct of accused, and the consequences of crimes, the prosecution argued. The category of crimes should not be considered in determining a sentence, and to determine a sentence based on a hierarchy of crimes would be contrary to a fundamental principle that sentences must be individualized to the circumstances of the case, the prosecution argued.

The defense argued that aiding and abetting warrants a lower sentence than conviction for direct forms of perpetration. The Trial Chamber should weigh the gravity of the offense and the conduct of accused and that generally an aiding and abetting conviction warrants a lower sentence than more direct forms of participation. The defense acknowledged that there is no absolute requirement that a person convicted of aiding and abetting receive a lower sentence but argued that this is generally the case. This general principle should have been applied by the Trial Chamber, the defense argued, but it was not. Moreover, the defense said, the Trial Chamber gave no valid reason for departing from this general principle, resulting in a manifestly unfair sentence for Taylor.

Tomorrow the parties will have an opportunity to make responses to the arguments submitted today. After the oral submissions have concluded, the Appeals Chamber will retire to consider their verdict.

UPI

Tuesday, 22 January 2013

War crimes tribunal hears Taylor's appeal

THE HAGUE, Netherlands, A U.N.-backed tribunal is hearing the appeal of Charles Taylor, who is contesting his war crimes convictions arising from Sierra Leone's lengthy civil war.

Taylor, a former president of Liberia, was convicted and sentenced to 50 years in prison last year for acts of terrorism, murder, rape and child-soldier recruitment during Sierra Leone's decade-long civil war.

The Special Court of Sierra Leone, which originally sat in Freetown, Sierra Leone, began hearing two days of oral arguments Tuesday at The Hague, Netherlands.

Taylor's lawyers are seeking a reduction or elimination of his sentence while prosecutors were urging the court to impose a harsher punishment, Voice of America reported.

The court convicted Taylor, 64, in April 2012 on 11 counts, saying that even though he did not command and control the rebels who committed the atrocities, he knew of their activities and supplied weapons and other resources to them.

Taylor's attorneys said their client's actions were "done with honor" to bring peace to neighboring Sierra Leone.

Prosecutors have asked the court to impose an 80-year sentence on Taylor, the first former head of state since World War II to be convicted by an international war crimes tribunal.

Read more: http://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2013/01/22/War-crimes-tribunal-hears-Taylor's-appeal/UPI-29921358867588/#ixzz2ImvuN2tS

Reuters

Tuesday, 22 January 2013

Stiffer jail term sought for Taylor

By Thomas Escritt

Former Liberian President Charles Taylor appears in court at the Special Court for Sierra Leone in Leidschendam, western Netherlands.

The Hague - Prosecutors called for a stiffer sentence for former Liberian president Charles Taylor on Tuesday, telling war crimes judges in the Hague he played a direct role in crimes against humanity during the civil war in Sierra Leone.

Meanwhile, Taylor's defence, which wants his conviction overturned, wrote in filings to the court hearing both appeals that the conviction was "plagued with internal inconsistencies, misstatements of evidence and conflicting findings".

Taylor, 64, was sentenced to 50 years last year after being found guilty of aiding and abetting war crimes and crimes against humanity during the 11-year war in neighbouring Sierra Leone, in which an estimated 50,000 people had died by 2002.

He was found not guilty of either ordering or planning the atrocities.

But prosecutors told Tuesday's appeal hearing that Taylor's involvement went beyond helping the commission of crimes, saying that he should be convicted for the direct commission of war crimes and for instigating them.

They also asked for his prison sentence be raised to 80 years, which they had originally demanded in May 2012.

"He was aware of the crimes (being committed in Sierra Leone) through his own sources, as president of Liberia, and through media reports," Brenda Hollis, head prosecutor at the Special Court for Sierra Leone, said at the hearing on Tuesday.

Dressed in a dark suit and a bright red tie, Taylor leaned forward with his hands clasped together, listening attentively in a windowless former basketball court in a suburb of The Hague.

Prosecutors put their appeal case in the morning, with the defence team taking over in the afternoon.

Over more than a decade of brutal conflict, Revolutionary United Front rebels murdered, raped and mutilated their way across Sierra Leone.

In return for providing arms and ammunition for the conflict, Taylor received "blood diamonds", as the stones from Sierra Leone's conflict zones were known, including a 45-carat diamond and two 25-carat diamonds.

The prosecution argues the relationship was even closer, and that Taylor was in direct charge of the rebels as they terrorised a civilian population.

“What was Charles Taylor's reaction to all these reports of atrocities?” asked Nicholas Koumjian, a member of the prosecution. “To send more ammunition.”

His actions were evidence of his direct involvement in the crimes, Koumjian added. When Taylor instructed Sam Bockarie, an RUF commander, to make the attack on the Sierra Leonean capital Freetown “fearful”, he had known that brutality might ensue, Koumjian said.

“He was saying this to the RUF, not to a boy scouts' troop,” Koumjian said. “Putting people's heads on sticks. That's what 'make it fearful' meant.”

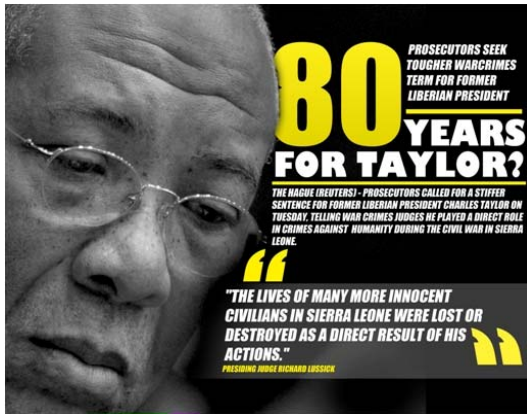
The appeals hearing will continue on Wednesday. – Reuters

80 Years? Prosecutors Seek Tougher War Crimes Term For Ex-Liberian President

"There is nothing in the trial chamber's findings that would have allowed it to find that Charles Taylor knew that specific weapons or ammunition he had some role in providing would be used in a crime as opposed to a lawful purpose," Christopher Gosnell, a lawyer on Taylor's defense team, said on Tuesday.

The Hague (Reuters) - Prosecutors called for a stiffer sentence for former Liberian president Charles Taylor on Tuesday, telling war crimes judges he played a direct role in crimes against humanity during the civil war in Sierra Leone.

But Taylor's defense, which wants his conviction overturned, told the court hearing appeals from both sides that judges had erred in convicting Taylor last year because they failed to link him to criminal acts committed during the war and that crucial evidence against Taylor was no more than hearsay.



"There is nothing in the trial chamber's findings that would have allowed it to find that Charles Taylor knew that specific weapons or ammunition he had some role in providing would be used in a crime as opposed to a lawful purpose," Christopher Gosnell, a lawyer on Taylor's defense team, said on Tuesday.

Noting that there was no way of determining how the bullets would later be used, Gosnell said: "This was not a case of shipping a million machetes to Rwanda."

Taylor, 64, was sentenced to 50 years in prison last year on a conviction of aiding and abetting war crimes and crimes against humanity during the 11-year war in neighboring Sierra Leone, in which an estimated 50,000 people died by 2002.

The first head of state to be convicted by an international court since the trials of Nazis after World War Two, Taylor was nonetheless acquitted of either ordering or planning atrocities.

Prosecutors disagree. They told Tuesday's appeal hearing that Taylor's involvement went beyond helping the commission of crimes, saying that he should be convicted for the direct commission of war crimes and for instigating them. They also asked for his prison sentence be raised to 80 years, which they had originally demanded in May 2012.

"He was aware of the crimes (being committed in Sierra Leone) through his own sources, as President of Liberia, and through media reports," Brenda Hollis, head prosecutor at the Special Court for Sierra Leone, said at the hearing.



The prosecution argues the relationship was even closer, and that Taylor was in direct charge of the rebels as they terrorized a civilian population.

Dressed in a dark suit and bright red tie, Taylor leaned forward with hands clasped together, listening attentively in a windowless former basketball court in a suburb of The Hague.

The defense team, presenting their appeal in the afternoon, argued that supplies Taylor had sent to rebels in Sierra Leone were lawful in the context of a bloody civil war.

Over more than a decade of brutal conflict, Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels murdered, raped and mutilated their way across Sierra Leone.

In return for providing arms and ammunition for the conflict, Taylor received "blood diamonds", as the stones from Sierra Leone's conflict zones were known, including a 45-carat diamond and two 25-carat diamonds.

The prosecution argues the relationship was even closer, and that Taylor was in direct charge of the rebels as they terrorized a civilian population.

"What was Charles Taylor's reaction to all these reports of atrocities?" asked Nicholas Koumjian, a member of the prosecution. "To send more ammunition."

But Taylor's defense lawyer said supplying ammunition to rebels fighting in a bloody civil war was not the same as facilitating the commission of crimes.

"If (for example) you give a bullet to the Syrian opposition today, then you can say that there is a possibility or even a likelihood, that one or more of those bullets will be used in the commission of a crime," Gosnell said.

"Is the prosecution saying that the suppliers will be aiding and abetting in the commission of those crimes?" But Koumjian said Taylor's actions were themselves evidence of his direct involvement in the crimes.

Taylor instructed Sam Bockarie, an RUF commander, to make the attack on the Sierra Leone capital Freetown "fearful", Koumjian said, and knew brutality might ensue. The defense said the evidence Taylor had said this was no more than hearsay.

"He was saying this to the RUF, not to a boy scouts' troop," Koumjian said. "Putting people's heads on sticks. That's what 'make it fearful' meant." The appeals hearing will continue on today.