

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



**PRESS CLIPPINGS**

**Enclosed are clippings of local and international press on the Special Court and related issues obtained by the Press and Public Affairs Office as of:**

Wednesday, 29 March 2006

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.  
If you are aware of omissions or have any comments or suggestions please contact  
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Standard Times  
29 March 2006

*Great betrayal and conspiracy at work...*

# Charles Taylor surfaces in South Africa



Taylor... bidding farewell to his host

## ... Western diplomats suggest Burkina Faso

President Tambo Mbeki is one of the African leaders who took part in the deliberations to extradite former Liberian war lord and ex-presi-

dent of Liberia Charles Taylor. It could be recalled that President Tambo Mbeki few weeks back had a dialogue with President Obasanjo of Nigeria (report by the New

Day and Punch newspapers). After the visit of the South African president the Liberian president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf flew to Nigeria and held talks with her coun-

terpart.

As if the strings and sequence of political and diplomatic talks between and among the heads of states of the sub region had continued endlessly without Sierra Leone and the Special Court achieving the desired

objective of bringing Taylor to the Special Court.

Charles Taylor, it would be recalled had been indicted by the court two years back.

Just recently, while the people of Sierra Leone were patiently awaiting the arrival of Charles Taylor, very shocking news about his disappearance in the Nigerian city of Calaba reached the people and rocked the whole world.

Our source in Nigeria have revealed that for the past two days Charles Taylor

has been roving around without any security escort and during the time necessary arrangements for his escape was being put in place.

"Let me tell you, Taylor's disappearance has the blessing of some people in the Nigerian government," he revealed, and went on, "how can Taylor escape without their knowledge?"

However, latest reports from sources at the Court in Sierra Leone have revealed

**CONTINUED PAGE 11**

## Charles Taylor surfaces in South Africa

FROM PAGE 1

that Charles Taylor was seen at a South African airport.

If according to the source, it is true, the question that remains unanswered is how did he find himself in South Africa?

Up to press time, our sources in Nigeria have explained that the former Liberian president allegedly paid a huge sum of money to get his freedom.

It is not known to whom he paid the money, however, since a commission had already been set up to probe Taylor's

disappearance, it is hoped that the truth would come out.

What is however clear is the fact that the international community is gradually losing confidence in Nigeria since the incident took place.

"The issue of Taylor facing the Special Court in Sierra Leone is unacceptable to some African leaders, as it has been perceived as a bad precedent that would affect anyone of them in the future," a diplomat remarked.

Analysing the situation, the diplomat recalled history, saying that if Charles Taylor can

escape from a prison in America where else can he not escape, with the collaboration of some well placed individuals in society?

Meanwhile as the talk about Taylor's escape continues.

It is not known what President Obasanjo would say to President George Bush when he meets with him this week. Diplomats monitoring events globally have indicated that Taylor would prefer going to Burkina Faso than South Africa where it has been alleged he was seen.

# Charles Taylor Back in Liberian Bush!!!



*Picture of the then-Rebel Leader Charles Taylor in the Liberian Bushes during the Liberian War that killed at least 1 million innocent Liberian and Sierra Leonean citizens*

Former Liberian President Charles Taylor is reported to be back in the bushes of Liberia from where he first launched his rebellion. This is according to his spiritual advisor Kilari Anand Paul who yesterday told the BBC News website that Mr Taylor was in the Liberian bush. Mr. Paul also said the former Liberian leader would be happy to face justice in The Hague but not at the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

**See Pages  
2, 3 and 8  
for Full Report**

Page 2

## Charles Taylor goes underground

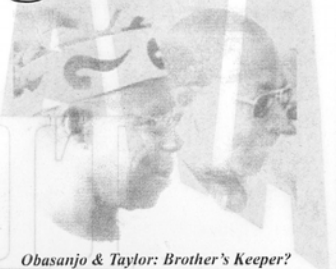
**By Theophilus S. Gbenda**

Reports monitored by this press from the Federal Republic of Nigeria indicate that the exiled former President of Liberia, Mr. Charles Taylor, who also stands accused for crimes against humanity at the UN backed Special Court for Sierra Leone, has gone underground

following moves to turn him over to the court to answer to charges relating to the alleged role he played in fueling the decade long crisis in Sierra Leone. His apparent disappearance came at a time when the Nigeria government which was paying host to him, had already agreed to have him picked up from his residence in Southern Nigeria by the Government of Liberia.

It also came at a time when the Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court had issued a press release, urging the Nigerian government to arrest Taylor. The disappearance therefore of Mr. Taylor came as a surprise to many, and has been viewed as a clear manipulation by the Nigerian authorities to shield him from justice.

**SEE PAGES 3 & 8 FOR MORE!**

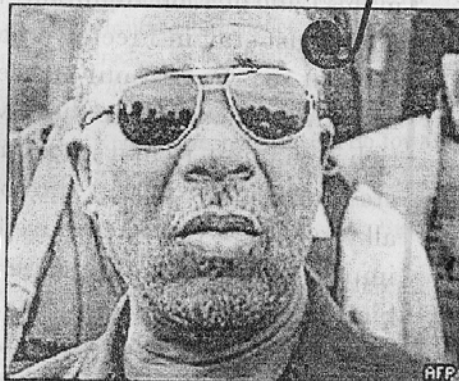


*Obasanjo & Taylor: Brother's Keeper?*

Spectator  
29 March 2006

# As Taylor escapes from Nigeria...

# Norman and others may go free



Charles Taylor: Nigeria sets him free

The news of the escape of the one time Liberian President Charles Taylor from Nigeria was

received by Sierra Leoneans, Liberians and the rest of the world with great shock. It is almost two weeks ago when the Nigeria President Olusungu Obasango held private talks with the former war Lord turn. President, but what they discussed was never

*continued page 2*

## Norman and others may go free

*from front page*

disclosed in public. Speculation gathered, states that the Nigerian Government can squarely be blame for dragging its foot in handing over Charles Taylor to the Special Court in Sierra Leone. Charles Taylor was supposed to face trial for crimes he committed against humanity. The escape of this war Lord click the minds of Sierra Leoneans both at home and abroad that, it is rather unfortunate for Hinga Norman, Moinina Fofanah

and others are still languishing in detection at the Special Court awaiting their final verdict.

However, hearing the news of Charles Taylor escape was receive with mixed feelings, one school of thought noted that it was a welcome news as Taylor's escape is a blessing in disguise for Sierra Leoneans and the threat of war will be wiped off the minds of the people.

Another school of thought opined that the World must search for Taylor and bring him to stand trial otherwise the

trial of the other convicts must be stopped and let them go free. They further stated that Hinga Norman and his colleagues have suffered for far too long whiles those who committed heinous crimes against humanity are still walking free. One man cited that the likes of Johnny Paul Koroma, Charles Taylor etc are still free.

Charles Taylor's escape continues to worry Sierra Leoneans especially when they fear that Taylor will strike again in Liberia and add more misery to Sierra Leoneans

# Charles Taylor Special Court

2  
0

Charles Taylor scored a surprising injury time goal yesterday against the Special Court in Sierra Leone by disappearing from his luxury mansion in Calabar, Nigeria.

Three years ago, he scored the first goal when the court was unable to execute a seal warrant for his arrest while he was in Ghana attending a mini ECOWAS Summit on Liberia.

This was how CNN break the news yesterday.

**LAGOS, Nigeria (CNN) -- War crimes suspect and former Liberian President Charles Taylor is missing from the Nigerian residence where he lived in exile, Nigeria's government said Tuesday.**

Taylor, who is wanted on war crimes charges by a court in Sierra Leone, vanished from the villa Monday night, government spokesman Femi Fani-Kayode said. Nigeria agreed Saturday to turn Taylor over to the Liberia government so he could face a U.N.-backed tribunal in Sierra Leone. **See page 2**

## This Is Charles Ghankay Taylor

Born in 1948, Taylor is the third of 15 children, descendants of freed U.S. slaves who established the Liberian republic in the 19th century. His father sent him to the United States, where he obtained a degree in economics from Bentley Massachusetts.

He became involved in radical Liberian student politics. Influenced by Marxist and Pan-Africanism who advocated for the burning down the Liberian Embassy in Washington.

He earned cash in his spare time working on a production line at a toy factory. He became a part of dictator Samuel Doe's government in 1980 before being exiled to the United States.

In the United States, he was jailed for allegedly stealing \$900,000 in Liberian government money and escaped from a Massachusetts prison, along with four petty criminals, in 1985 after a year in captivity.

In 1989, he returned to West Africa and launched a revolt from the Ivory Coast against Doe, who had taken power in a military coup.

## Taylor defeats Special Court

from front page

Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo ordered the arrest of security personnel who had been guarding Taylor, Fani-Kayode said.

"Our understanding is that he was being closely guarded," Fani-Kayode said. "This is why the security personnel that were guarding him have now been arrested.

"We will get to the bottom of it, and at that point we will know precisely what to tell the world about it."

Still, Fani-Kayode said it was not Nigeria's responsibility to deliver Taylor to the Liberians.

"It was not for us to take him

back," he said. "The onus was on the Liberian government. He was a guest of ours, and you do not pick up your guests and take them anywhere."

Taylor -- who was Liberia's president from 1997 until he was forced out of office in 2003 -- was indicted in 2003 by the court in neighbouring Sierra Leone on charges of war crimes related to his support for rebels in that country who were committing widespread atrocities against civilians.

Liberia's newly installed President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf wants to deliver him to that tribunal.

Liberian Information Minister Johnny McClain de-

**"Where is he?" Annan asked "Has he moved elsewhere? Did he vanish?"**

clined to comment on reports of Taylor's disappearance and the Nigerian government had not contacted Liberia.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan said Taylor's disappearance was "extremely worrying ... and Annan said he intended to speak with Nigerian authorities Tuesday, adding that the facts are not clear. "Where is he?" Annan asked "Has he moved else-

where? Did he vanish?"

Taylor, who had been living in the southeastern Nigerian city of Calabar, retains influence in the Liberia. He was being monitored but was not under Nigerian house arrest.

Taylor's status was to be one of the topics at Obasanjo's Wednesday meeting with President Bush in Washington.

# Independent Observer

29 March 2006  
Opinion

J. B. Jenkins-Johnston  
i. A. (HONS) (DUNELM)  
Barrister-At-Law, Solicitor,  
Commissioner For Oaths,  
and Notary Public

## A Plea To The Government And The Special Court. Please Take Charles Taylor Somewhere Else!! (Don't Disturb Our Peace Again!!)

By J. B. Jenkins-Johnston Esq.,  
(A worried Citizen of Sierra Leone.)

I have no doubt that most Sierra Leoneans were pleased to hear the news from Abuja, Nigeria, that President Obasanjo had agreed to grant the request of the New Liberian Government of Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf for **Charles Taylor**. (The former Warlord turned President) to be handed back to the authorities in Liberia, in keeping with his earlier promise to hand Mr. Taylor over to a democratically elected government in Monrovia, considering what role Mr. Taylor is alleged to have played in our own troubles in Sierra Leone between 1991 and 2002. Indeed we would all like to see him face justice, and if found guilty to be dealt with appropriately according to law.

However, I was filled with great foreboding, when I heard over the BBC that the next issue to be decided was whether Mr. Charles Taylor should be taken to Monrovia, or whether he should be sent straight to Freetown for trial before THE SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE, as he has already been indicted by that Court. I also heard the views of some people in Monrovia that they did not want TAYLOR taken to Monrovia for fear that the fragile peace in Liberia might be disturbed as Mr. Taylor still has a substantial following in that country. But what about Sierra Leone - Do we want Mr. Charles Taylor to be brought here, particularly at this time? I can say, speaking for myself, that my answer is a most EMPHATIC NO!!!!

I say so for the following reasons:-

(1) We are still struggling to maintain the fragile peace obtaining in the country at the moment, and those with eyes to see will confirm (if they want to be honest,) that it will only take a small spark to re-ignite a fire in our country again. WE CANNOT AFFORD TO TAKE THE RISK!

(2) Although the guns have been silent for a few years now, it is my considered view that our government has not tackled, to any appreciable degree, the causes of the war, that is to say, poverty, social injustice, corruption at all levels, youth unemployment, idleness, and the lack of any opportunity to make headway in life; the continued deterioration in the basic utilities, (blackout, lack of water, lousy telephone services,) and a general lack of direction of the country. In such a situation I say, WE CANNOT AFFORD TO TAKE THE RISK!

(3) I do not know whether Charles Taylor has any or any substantial following in Sierra Leone, but I do know that there are several hundreds (maybe thousands) of idle ex-combatants right here in Freetown and all over the Country, and no one can vouch for their loyalty or where their allegiance lies. Added to that, we constantly hear people young and old, saying openly and with feeling, "MAN DEM NOR GLADY OH", whatever that may be taken to mean. As it is said in Krio, Him know im master, cabaslot know im missis! With good

reason, I say again, WE CANNOT AFFORD TO TAKE THE RISK!

(4) My fourth and final reason is that in as much as Mr. Charles Taylor has been indicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone, there is ample provision in the Agreement between the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone on the Establishment of a Special Court for Sierra Leone, that the said Court can sit and try cases somewhere else, other than in Sierra Leone, and given our own circumstances here as aforesaid, I think it is time to make use of that provision. Article 9 of the said Agreement provides....

(a) "..... The Special Court shall have its seat in Sierra Leone. The Court may meet away from its seat if it considers it necessary for the efficient exercise of its functions, and may be relocated outside Sierra Leone, if circumstances so require...."

To this end maybe The Hague in Holland should be considered as a possible venue.

With the bulk of UNAMSIL gone, I do not think we should

take the risk of putting our armed forces to the test so soon, even as we struggle with our fragile peace. It is an unfortunate and sad comment that we in Sierra Leone always seem to allow ourselves to be led like lambs to the slaughter by those whose interests are vastly different from ours even to the extent of causing the death and maiming of several hundreds of thousands of our compatriots, before trying rather belatedly to do damage limitation or damage control. I need not give examples, they are there for those with eyes to see and those with ears to hear. We have cried enough, we have suffered enough; we have died enough! And we are tired of fleeing into exile!

Papa Government, Mama Special Court, PLEASE TAKE  
MR. CHARLES TAYLOR SOMEWHERE ELSE FOR HIM  
TO FACE TRIAL! DO NOT DISTURB OUR PEACE AGAIN!  
LONTA!!!!

**J. B. Jenkins-Johnston Esq.**  
**Legal Practitioner**  
**27/3/06**



## BBC

29 March 2006

### **Charles Taylor caught in Nigeria**

Liberia's exiled former leader Charles Taylor has been caught on the Cameroon border on his way out of Nigeria, a Nigerian police official has said.

Mr Taylor's disappearance on Monday from his villa came just 48 hours after Nigeria had said Liberia was free to "take Taylor into custody".

Mr Taylor was indicted on 17 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity, for backing Sierra Leone's rebels

He resigned in 2003 and went into exile in a deal to end Liberia's civil war.

Nigeria had been sharply criticised for allowing Mr Taylor to escape, with US President George W Bush facing calls to cancel his planned meeting with Nigerian counterpart Olusegun Obasanjo in Washington later on Wednesday.

I was well convinced that Olusegun Obasanjo would never hand Taylor over to the tribunal Cole Ejiofor, Lagos

President Obasanjo had been "very shocked" by Mr Taylor's disappearance, Nigerian Information Minister Frank Nweke told the BBC's Focus on Africa programme.

Nigeria had arrested Mr Taylor's Nigerian guards and set up a panel to investigate the matter, and to establish whether he escaped or was abducted, Mr Nweke said.

### **Escape**

After Nigeria announced it would let Mr Taylor face trial, Desmond de Silva, chief prosecutor of the war crimes court in Sierra Leone, called for Mr Taylor's immediate arrest, warning he could use his vast wealth and contacts to organise his escape.

#### TAYLOR TIMELINE

1989: Launches rebellion

1991: RUF rebellion starts in Sierra Leone

1995: Peace deal signed

1997: Elected president

1999: Lurd starts rebellion to oust Taylor

June 2003: Arrest warrant issued

August 2003: Steps down, goes into exile in Nigeria

He described Mr Taylor as one of the three most important wanted war crimes suspects in the world.

He then condemned his reported escape as "an affront to justice".

Lobby group Human Rights Watch called Mr Taylor's disappearance is a "disgrace", whilst United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan said he was deeply concerned.

He called for countries in the region not to give refuge to Mr Taylor and to comply with a request to hand him over.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said reports of Charles Taylor's escape were a matter of "utmost seriousness".

She stressed to a congressional panel that Nigeria had made a commitment that Mr Taylor would be monitored while in exile.

Ms Rice did not respond to a suggestion by one of the senators that it would be inappropriate to hold the Bush-Obasanjo talks under the circumstances.

Story from BBC NEWS:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/africa/4856120.stm>

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE  
Office of the Prosecutor

## **PRESS RELEASE**

Freetown, 28 March, 2006

### **Urgent Statement by The Prosecutor of the Special Court – Desmond de Silva QC, on reports that the wanted war criminal Charles Taylor has absconded within or from Nigeria**

Responding to reports from the Federal Government of Nigeria that Charles Taylor has disappeared from his place of former asylum in Calabar, Nigeria, the Chief Prosecutor stated:

“Today marks a step back on the road to accountability and justice. Charles Taylor is now an international fugitive. He has been indicted by an international criminal court. The President of Liberia has requested an end to his temporary asylum in Nigeria. The President of Nigeria has agreed to this. For him now to disappear, on the eve of his transfer, is an affront to justice.

As I have always stated, Charles Taylor is a threat to the peace and security of West Africa. His disappearance now from under the eye of a regional superpower only heightens that threat and puts the whole region on the highest alert.

It is now up to the Government of Nigeria, the regional leaders of West Africa and the international community to respond immediately and to take all necessary steps to ensure that Mr Taylor is located, detained and transferred to the Special Court for Sierra Leone forthwith.”

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Visit the Special Court’s website at [www.sc-sl.org](http://www.sc-sl.org)

## BBC Network Africa

29 March 2006

LEAD-IN: Now where is Nigeria's former President Charles Taylor? He appears to have fled his home in exile in Nigeria. The Nigerian government said Liberia could take him and hand him over to the UN-backed Special Court in Sierra Leone for trial on war crimes charges. And, according to his spiritual advisor, Kilari Anand Paul, an Indian-born evangelist based in the United States, he left Nigeria because he felt betrayed.

PAUL: He is no longer gonna go back to Nigeria because Obasanjo betrayed his commitment. He has not agreed to go back to Sierra Leone because it will destabilise the situation. And why send him there to destabilise the situation? Why not send him to Hague? Justice is justice – doesn't matter where he faces the justice. Right now, no one knows one hundred percent where Charles Taylor is. I am suspecting, I'm sorry to say, but I have to say it, he's back in the bushes of Liberia.

Kilari Anand Paul, the spiritual advisor to Charles Taylor

Well, Nigeria is taking a lot of flak for Mr. Taylor's disappearance as you heard there, and President Olusegun Obasanjo will have some answering to do when he meets his American counterpart, President George Bush, later today in Washington. But the Taylor issue appears to have created diplomatic friction between the two countries. So, will the two men actually meet? Here's our Washington reporter, [Abdulrahman Yabaro]

[YABARO] : President Bush and President Obasanjo's meeting was initially scheduled for today around 16 GMT. But after the news that Charles Taylor disappeared came to Washington, that caused a lot of discomfort in the US officials. White House Press Secretary Scott McClellan was asked about the issue, did not reply directly. All he said was, and I quote him, "Right now we are looking for answers from Nigerian government concerning whereabouts of Charles Taylor". All night last night we kept in touch with the State Department and the White House. There were so many meetings. And at some point, there were some suggestions that the meeting could have been cancelled, but as of now it remains on the schedule. Obasanjo has long been admired in Washington as a champion of peace in many parts of Africa, particularly Sudan. But definitely this issue of Charles Taylor's disappearance will create a lot of discomfort among the two governments. And US Secretary of State Dr. Condeleezza Rice warned of "consequences", as she put it, if Taylor was not handed over to international criminal court.

[Abdulrahman Yabaro] in Washington. So how did Charles Taylor manage to flee Liberia? Femi Fani-Kayode is the Nigerian Presidential Spokesman.

FANI-KAYODE: The answer to that question will reside in the conclusions of a panel of inquiry that has been set up by Mr. President. At the end of that exercise, I'm sure I'll be able to give you a very clear answer rather than for me to speculate now.

But according to his spiritual advisor, whom you just heard, you the Nigerian government were actually aware that Mr. Taylor left Nigeria on Saturday.

FANI-KAYODE: I'm not sure where this so-called spiritual advisor, with the greatest respect to him, gets his information. And neither are we in the Nigerian presidency in the business of responding to the personal opinions of spiritual advisors. What I would tell you is that we are not

conversant with the facts of it now. Once we have all the facts we will let you know. Those that need to be held responsible and accountable will be brought to book. All those guarding him have already been detained as you are already aware. And we will get to the bottom of it.

But your critics would say that the people who should be held responsible and accountable are yourselves, the Nigerian government, the presidency, because you were warned that Mr. Taylor is someone who was liable to escape. He'd escaped from the United States before, and you were asked to step up the security around him – and you failed to do that.

FANI-KAYODE: You haven't got it clearly at all, and let me explain it to you, because it needs to be clearly understood. Charles Taylor was not in Nigeria as a prisoner of the Nigerian government, neither was he here under arrest. He was not here under detention. He was here as our guest. This was part and parcel of the peace process that was established and entered into by the African Union, the Liberian government of the day, heads of government of the ECOWAS sub-region, and our own president. Indeed the Americans, the British and European Union was solidly behind this peace agreement, and part of that agreement was that we would keep him here as our guest up until the time that a democratically-elected president had been established and peace had been established in his country Liberia. This was done, the agreement was that once a formal request had been made by that government we were required under the terms of that [gap in radio broadcast] we said, well, come along and get him. You can come and take him back. But it's not our business, it's nothing to do with us to take him to Sierra Leone, to take him to Liberia or anywhere else. He was our guest and he was somebody that was under our care in this country.

Now your boss, President Obasanjo, will be meeting, or is expected to meet, the American president later today in Washington. How is he going to explain this one, because the Americans have already expressed their disappointment?

FANI-KAYODE: Well, the Americans expressed their disappointment, yes indeed. We are also disappointed at the turn of events. And it's understandable that everybody should be disappointed because nobody wanted this. However it's completely beyond our control. What has happened has happened, in the same way that others were disappointed when Charles Taylor somehow managed to escape from an American prison cell and end up in Liberian forest, just in the same way that former Governor Alamiyeseigha of Nigeria jump bail in Britain and end up back in Nigeria. I mean, we are all disappointed at these course of events. But these things have happened, and it is best for us to try to pick up and move forward, and try to ensure that this sort of thing doesn't happen again.

Nigerian Presidential Spokesman Femi Fani-Kayode. So to gain some perspective about Taylor's disappearance, I spoke to Dr. Jibrin Ibrahim, head of the Centre for Democracy and Development in the Nigerian capital Abuja.

IBRAHIM: It wasn't completely a surprise because for the past three days there were speculations that conditions were being created for him to disappear. There were reports about the security situation around his villa in Calabar. And there was the whole ambiguity created by the position of the Nigerian government and Liberian government over who is to take him, who is not to take him, who was to provide the plane. So it wasn't very surprising that he disappeared.

And what's been the reaction in Nigeria to his disappearance?

IBRAHIM: People are extremely concerned, because I think there's a consensus, not just in Nigeria but in Africa, that the type of impunity, leaders who have committed mass crimes enjoy

has to stop. And I think Taylor for everybody was the test case. That was why in Nigeria there has been a campaign by civil society groups that Taylor must face justice. Of course the Nigerian government, and in particular President Obasanjo, have always insisted that he must be protected. But people feel there is a contradiction between that commitment of the government and the call for justice by Nigerians and Africans.

So where does this leave Nigeria and its neighbours, especially countries like Sierra Leone and Liberia, where Nigeria has had to intervene to bring peace?

IBRAHIM: Well, the question of peace is that it has to go with justice. And once people like Charles Taylor, who have played such a role in creating mayhem and mass murders are not made to face justice, then the question of peace will always be on the balance. So we do feel strongly that there must be a strong connection between the question of peace and the question of justice. And that therefore Taylor must be found and taken to face justice.

Dr. Jibrin Ibrahim, head of the Centre for Democracy and Development in Abuja

*Transcribed by the Office of Press and Public Affairs, Special Court for Sierra Leone*

## Associated Press

29 March 2006

### **Ex-Liberian leader's location is unknown**

ABUJA, Nigeria (AP) — Former Liberian warlord Charles Taylor slipped away just after Nigeria reluctantly agreed to transfer him to a war crimes tribunal, and the White House suggested Tuesday that President Bush may cancel a meeting with Nigeria's leader.

The Nigerian government said Taylor vanished Monday night from his villa in the southern city of Calabar, where he had lived in exile since being forced from power under a 2003 peace deal that ended Liberia's civil war.

The announcement came three days after President Olusegun Obasanjo — under pressure from Washington and others — agreed to surrender Taylor to a U.N.-backed tribunal. He would be the first African leader to face trial for crimes against humanity.

"Right now we're looking for answers from the Nigerian government about the whereabouts of Charles Taylor," White House spokesman Scott McClellan said.

He refused to speculate about whether somebody within the government was involved. "It is the responsibility of the Nigerian government to see that he is conveyed to the special court in Sierra Leone," McClellan said. "We expect the government of Nigeria to fulfill this commitment."

The U.S.-educated Taylor has been indicted by the tribunal on charges of committing crimes against humanity while in office by aiding and directing a rebel movement during Sierra Leone's 1991-2001 civil war. He was accused of trading guns and gems with the insurgents, including child fighters, who terrorized victims by chopping off their arms, legs, ears and lips.

The former warlord also plunged Liberia into years of civil war in 1989 when he led a small rebel band that invaded from neighboring Ivory Coast, and he is subject to arrest if he returns to his home country.

Taylor also has been accused of harboring al-Qaeda suicide bombers who attacked the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, killing 12 Americans and more than 200 Africans. The Nigerians promised on Saturday to hand over the 57-year-old ex-Liberian president but made no moves to arrest him.

Information Minister Frank Nweke told the British Broadcasting Corp. that Obasanjo was "shocked" by Taylor's disappearance.

A government statement said Obasanjo was creating a panel to investigate Taylor's disappearance. The statement raised the possibility he might have been abducted, but did not elaborate.

A Nigerian security official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to reporters, said Taylor was in a guarded convoy traveling from Calabar to Port Harcourt, site of the nearest airport, when the cars were stopped.

Diplomats and other Nigerian officials privately offered two different versions of how Taylor could have escaped, saying he was either allowed to flee or gunmen possibly hired by Taylor himself opened fire on the convoy to liberate him. Police said all 22 officers in Taylor's security detail were detained.

Taylor's residence in Calabar, a hillside compound of red-roofed buildings 450 miles southeast of the capital, Abuja, stood nearly deserted on Tuesday. Neighbors said Liberian members of Taylor's coterie, which numbered in the dozens, had begun leaving in recent days.

The U.N. Security Council expressed surprise and concern at Taylor's disappearance and Secretary-General Kofi Annan said he planned to talk to the Nigerian authorities about it. He urged all countries to refuse to give Taylor refuge.

Tribunal prosecutor Desmond de Silva warned that Taylor was "a threat to the peace and security of West Africa."

"His disappearance now from under the eye of a regional superpower ... puts the whole region on the highest alert," de Silva added.

Liberia's Information Minister John McClain told The Associated Press that the government was aware that Taylor's "alleged disappearance" might create anxiety and was "doing all it can to ensure the peace, security and tranquility of our nation."

Obasanjo, who had granted Taylor asylum under an internationally brokered agreement that helped end Liberia's 14-year civil war, initially resisted calls to surrender Taylor. But he relented Saturday after Liberia's new President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf asked that Taylor be handed over for trial.

African leaders have been reluctant to see the continent's former presidents or dictators brought to justice, apparently fearful they would be the next to be accused of human rights abuses or other crimes.

Taylor has many possible places to hide — including Burkina Faso, where his friend Blaise Compaore is president, or Congo, large parts of which are uncontrolled and inhabited by rebels from several countries.

Many of Taylor's loyalist soldiers are believed to be in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Ivory Coast. The Libyan-trained guerrilla fighter also is believed to have considerable resources. U.N. investigators have said he and his allies stole from the Liberian treasury — filled with proceeds from the sales of diamonds, timber and rubber — even from exile.

Taylor lived in the Boston area during the 1970s, earning an economics degree from Bentley College in Waltham, Mass.

Taylor later joined Samuel Doe's government but fled after he was accused in 1983 of embezzling nearly a million dollars. He went to the United States, where he was detained on a Liberian arrest warrant.

He escaped from a Massachusetts jail in 1985 — cutting through bars with a hacksaw and climbing down a knotted sheet — to launch the civil war that ousted Doe.



## New York Times

29 March 2006

### **Nigeria Says Ex-President of Liberia Has Disappeared**

By LYDIA POLGREEN

FREETOWN, Sierra Leone, March 28 — The former president of Liberia, Charles G. Taylor, vanished Monday night, two days after the Nigerian government said it would end his asylum and allow him to face an indictment by an international court here.

Mr. Taylor, the warlord-turned-president who unleashed a series of civil wars that engulfed much of West Africa in the 1990's, killing more than 300,000 people, disappeared from the seaside villa where he had been living in exile, according to a statement released Tuesday by Nigeria's government.

His sudden disappearance was a huge setback for the court, which is trying those suspected of atrocities in Sierra Leone's decade-long civil war, and a major embarrassment for the Nigerian president, Olusegun Obasanjo, just as he left for the United States to meet with President Bush. It was unclear late Tuesday whether Mr. Taylor fled to escape prosecution or had been abducted. "Taylor's disappearance is a disgrace," said Corinne Dufka, head of the West Africa office of Human Rights Watch, "not only for the victims for the brutal war in Sierra Leone, but also for efforts to establish the rule of law in West Africa."

Scott McClellan, the White House spokesman, said during a press briefing on Tuesday that Mr. Taylor's disappearance would not relieve the Nigerian government of its responsibility to turn him over to the special court in Sierra Leone. "We expect the government of Nigeria to fulfill this commitment," he said.

## Nigerian Tribune

29 March 2006

### **Bush angry with OBJ - Over Charles Taylor's escape**

United States President, George Bush, was said to have been angered by the report of the escape and the administration was, yesterday night, considering cancelling the meeting between him and Obasanjo scheduled for today.

A White House spokesman said President Bush was waiting to hear back from Nigeria on the status of Mr Taylor. The spokesman said that this might change and the President may cancel the meeting. Other US officials expressed surprise and dismay that Mr Taylor had been able to vanish after strong messages from Washington that Nigeria was responsible for handing him over for trial by the special UN court in Sierra Leone.

Taylor vanished Monday night from his villa in Calabar, the government said. The presidential statement offered no details on how Taylor's disappearance was discovered or whether he was being hunted. Liberia's information minister, Johnny McClain, said his government would not comment because it had not been formally informed of Taylor's disappearance. A Nigerian government statement said Obasanjo was creating a panel to investigate Taylor's disappearance.

The statement raised the possibility he might have been abducted but did not elaborate. "President Olusegun Obasanjo has approved the constitution of a panel of enquiry to look into the circumstances of the disappearance ... of Mr Charles Taylor from his residence in Calabar," the presidency said in a statement signed by the Senior Special Assistant to the President, Mrs. Remi Oyo. Human Rights Watch, which had urged Nigeria to increase security around Taylor to prevent his escape, blamed Nigeria for his disappearance.

"This is a serious indictment of Nigeria's commitment to peace and security in Liberia, to seeing justice done for victims of the violence in Sierra Leone and to the fight against impunity throughout Africa," Corinne Dufka, head of the group's West Africa office, told Reuters. An international tribunal indictment says Taylor was responsible for the devastation of Liberia and neighbouring Sierra Leone and for the murder, rape, maiming and mutilation of more than a half-million Sierra Leoneans. He allegedly backed Sierra Leone rebels, including child fighters, who terrorised victims by chopping off body parts.

Taylor is also accused of harbouring al-Qaida suicide bombers who attacked the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, killing 12 Americans and more than 200 Africans. Since then, the United States, the United Nations and others have called for Taylor to be handed over to an international war crimes tribunal. Obasanjo initially resisted calls to surrender Taylor. But after the new Liberian President, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, asked that Taylor be handed over for trial, Obasanjo agreed.

On Monday, US State Department spokesman, Sean McCormack, said the United States told Obasanjo it was Nigeria's responsibility to "see that he is able to be conveyed and face justice." African leaders have been reluctant to see the continent's former presidents or dictators brought to justice, apparently fearful they would be the next accused of human rights abuses or other crimes. But despite reports of a purported escape from his residence in Calabar, daughter of Mr. Charles Taylor, Desiree, said yesterday she was with her father on Tuesday.

Nigerian Tribune met Desiree Taylor on the road leading to the Solomon Unoh Lodge of Taylor, taking a walk with a male relative and the following conversation ensued: Nigerian Tribune:

Excuse me please; may I know if you were counted by the census workers in this area?

Desiree: Yes, we were. All of us were.

Including your dad?

Yes.

How about your dad, is he at home?

Yes.

You've seen him today?

Yes. I was with him this morning.

She walked off, foreclosing further questions.

Nigerian Tribune further gathered that Taylor was seen on Monday, 27 March in his Jeep when he drove to Okoi Arikpo Estate where some of the aides and relatives who came with him from Liberia have been staying. On a visit to the Solomon Unoh Lodge, stern-looking mobile policemen with their trucks were seen and they would not answer any question.

The Press Secretary to the Cross River State governor, Mr. Joseph Ushigiale, who spoke on Monday, said that high level security had always been in place around Taylor. As at the time of filing this report on Tuesday evening, there were no indications in and around the former warlord's residence to suggest that he might have escaped as reported.

The aides and relative still went about their business in the city of Calabar.

All the 22 police officers on guard duty at the Calabar residence of the escaped former Liberian leader, have been arrested. According to a statement signed by the Force Public Relations Officer (FPRO), Mr. Haz Iwendi, a Deputy Commissioner of Police, (DCP) and made available to newsmen in Abuja on Tuesday, the arrest of the affected officers was ordered by the Deputy Inspector-General of Police (DIGP) in charge of administration, Mr. Bello Labaran.

The statement disclosed that the officers were arrested for "misconduct, dereliction of duty and offences prejudicial to discipline." A top police officer told the Nigerian Tribune that the arrested 22 police officers had been moved to Abuja for interrogation. The source revealed that a special panel of inquiry to be headed by Deputy Inspector General of Police, DIG O. Onovo, is being raised to unravel how Taylor escaped.

The United States government on Tuesday said it had no comments yet on the reported escape of Taylor. Its embassy in Nigeria stated that the United States would respond to the development when the need arose, saying that events were still being watched. A public affairs officer of the embassy, Sani Mohammed, made this known in a telephone interview with the Nigerian Tribune.

In another development, the Federal Government on Tuesday announced the setting up of a five-member investigative panel to look into circumstances of his disappearance. The announcement came in a press release issued and signed by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Chief Ufot Ekaette. Senior Special Assistant to the President on Public Affairs, Chief Femi Fani-Kayode, who spoke with the Nigerian Tribune in a telephone interview, described the escape as embarrassing and regrettable, saying that was why the government decided to set up the panel to investigate the matter.

Ekaette in the statement stated that the panel chairman is Justice Jean Omoleiri of the Court of Appeal, Calabar, with Mr. Thomas Shodimu, Mr. Shehu Sani, Mr. Alfred Salia Fawundu and Mr. Abba Bello Mohammed as members. According to Ekaette, the panel, which inauguration would

come up Thursday has four terms of reference to work upon. The Justice Omoleiri panel was to examine the circumstances of the disappearance of Mr. Taylor from his residence in Calabar on Monday with a view to identifying those responsible for his disappearance.

It was also to ascertain whether the former warlord escaped or was abducted and recommend appropriate sanctions against those found culpable. The panel is also expected to make any other recommendations that it might consider appropriate in the circumstances. Ekaette said the panel had two weeks after inauguration within which to submit its report.

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The sudden disappearance of the former Liberian President, Charles Taylor from Nigeria has started creating ripples in Liberia following a revelation by a member of the country's parliament, Roosevelt Johnson that Taylor has all along been planning to topple the newly installed government in Liberia. Roosevelt made this disclosure in Liberia during a media briefing, alleging that Taylor has been talking to members of a militia loyal to him about a plot to destabilise the reigning government in the country.

Roosevelt, a member of the upper house in the Liberian Parliament alleged that a member of the Pro Taylor Militia, Roland Doe, had even asked him to support the group in its plot to destabilise the government of Liberia. The news of Taylor's escape from Nigeria has, however, started causing panic among the people of Liberia owing to belief that the former war lord is capable of causing confusion against the peace in Liberia because of his web of connections.

Against this background, the government of Liberia, according to reports monitored on the Internet on Tuesday, has started arresting some former aides and allies of Charles Taylor suspected to be part of the secret meetings allegedly being held in Liberia of recent. Sirleaf had been quoted by the media in Liberia that she specifically requested for the extradition of Charles Taylor from Nigeria because he had been engaged with acts aimed at destabilising Liberia.

Voice of America

28 March 2006

### **Former Special Court Prosecutor Blames Nigerian President for Charles Taylor's Escape**

By Joe De Capua

Washington

28 March 2006

We're still awaiting an official statement from the Special Court in Sierra Leone regarding Charles Taylor's escape. The court had indicted Taylor on war crimes charges stemming from Sierra Leone's civil war.

However, there is reaction today from David Crane, former chief prosecutor for the Special Court in Sierra Leone, who signed the indictment against Taylor. In Washington, Crane gave his reaction to English to Africa reporter Joe De Capua.

"I am disappointed for the victims, the 1.2 million victims of the horror which Charles Taylor perpetrated. But I'm also determined to show that President Obasanjo clearly is responsible for this. He had a legal and a practical and a moral obligation to hold this indicted war criminal as a head of state of a signatory to the Geneva Conventions for another signatory to the Geneva Conventions, Liberia. The fact that he (Obasanjo) looked the other way as Charles Taylor slipped apparently quietly into the night is an outrage to the people of West Africa, Nigeria and mankind. He is accountable for this and he should be pilloried for this."

AFP

28 March 2006

### **Liberian warlord Taylor 'disappears' from Nigerian villa: presidency**

ABUJA, March 28, 2006 (AFP) - Former Liberian leader and war crimes suspect Charles Taylor has disappeared from the villa in which he was living in exile in Nigeria, the Nigerian presidency said in a statement Tuesday.

The statement said Taylor had left his house in Calabar some time on Monday night and President Olusegun Obasanjo, who on Saturday had said that Taylor would be handed back to Liberia, had set up a panel to investigate.

Obasanjo's spokeswoman, Remi Oyo, added: "All the security people who were in charge of looking after Mr Taylor have been arrested."

A five-member panel including a retired police chief and a representative of the United Nations Development Programme would investigate who was responsible for the disappearance and "ascertain whether he escaped or was abducted."

International prosecutors and human rights advocates had warned that if Taylor was able to escape extradition to a UN-backed war crimes court in Sierra Leone, he might once again endanger the stability of west Africa.

The escape will also be an embarrassment to Obasanjo on the eve of a visit to Washington to meet President George W. Bush, whose spokesman this week urged Nigeria to ensure that Taylor would face justice for alleged atrocities.

Journalists who visited Taylor in his villa in the southeastern city of Calabar last week saw no evidence of any Nigerian security on the approach road to the house and were waved through the compound gates without questioning.

Taylor is accused of masterminding a policy of murder, torture, pillage and rape in Liberia and Sierra Leone, where prosecutors have lodged a 17-count indictment alleging crimes against humanity.

In August 2003, in a bid to bring an end to a brutal civil war, Obasanjo invited him to step down as president, leave his besieged capital Monrovia and accept political asylum in Nigeria.

# Voice of America

28 March 2006

## Former Liberian Leader Charles Taylor Vanishes from Nigerian Haven

By VOA News  
28 March 2006



**Charles Taylor (file photo)**

Nigerian government officials say former Liberian leader and war crimes suspect Charles Taylor has disappeared from the house where he was living in exile in Nigeria.

They say Taylor left his villa in the southern town of Calabar Monday night.

His disappearance came just after the Nigerian government said they were willing to allow Liberia to arrest Taylor. The United Nations war crimes tribunal for Sierra Leone had asked for his arrest on charges of rape and torture related to his rule in Liberia and a civil war in neighboring Sierra Leone.

## Associated Press

28 March 2006

### **Ex-Liberian President Taylor Disappears**

By MICHELLE FAUL  
The Associated Press

ABUJA, Nigeria -- Liberian warlord and former President Charles Taylor has disappeared from his haven in Nigeria, just as he was to have been handed over to stand trial on war crimes charges, Nigerian officials said Tuesday.

Taylor vanished Monday night from his villa in the southern town of Calabar, the government said. Last week, Nigeria's government agreed reluctantly to surrender him to stand before a U.N. tribunal on charges related to civil war in his homeland and its neighbor Sierra Leone.

A government statement said that President Olusegun Obasanjo was creating a panel to investigate Taylor's disappearance on Monday night. The statement raised the possibility he might have been abducted, but did not elaborate.

A presidential spokeswoman said members of Taylor's Nigerian security detail had been arrested.

The presidential statement offered no details on how Taylor's disappearance was discovered or whether he was being hunted.

Nigeria's Guardian newspaper reported Tuesday that dozens of people who had been living with Taylor in the villa in a walled government compound had left Monday and were flying to Lagos en route to an unknown destination.

Obasanjo offered Taylor refuge under an agreement that helped end Liberia's civil war in 2003.

Since then, though, the United States, the United Nations and others have called for Taylor to be handed over to an international war crimes tribunal.

Taylor is accused of starting civil wars in Liberia and its neighbor, Sierra Leone, that killed some 3 million people, and of harboring al-Qaida suicide bombers who attacked the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, killing 12 Americans and more than 200 Africans.

Obasanjo initially resisted calls to surrender Taylor. But Saturday, after Liberia's new President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf asked that Taylor be handed over for trial, Obasanjo agreed.

African leaders have been reluctant to see the continent's former presidents or dictators brought to justice, apparently fearful they would be the next to be accused of human rights abuses or other crimes.

Since agreeing Saturday to hand Taylor over, Obasanjo had been under pressure to ensure Taylor was sent to the U.N. tribunal sitting in Sierra Leone. Taylor had escaped from a U.S. penitentiary in Boston to launch Liberia's war.

On Monday, State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said the United States has told Obasanjo that it was Nigeria's responsibility to "see that he is able to be conveyed and face justice."



Reuters

28 March 2006

**Charles Taylor said to have disappeared**

ABUJA (Reuters) - Former Liberian President Charles Taylor, wanted for war crimes by a court in Sierra Leone, has disappeared from his residence in southeastern Nigeria, the presidency said on Tuesday.

A statement said Nigeria would investigate whether Taylor had escaped or been abducted. President Olusegun Obasanjo has ordered the arrest of all security staff attached to Taylor, who has lived in exile in Nigeria since 2003.

AFP

28 March 2006

**Liberian warlord agrees to trial in The Hague: aide**

Agence France Presse

ADDIS ABABA, March 28, 2006 (AFP) --

Fugitive Liberian warlord Charles Taylor has "agreed" to stand trial at the international tribunal in the Hague, but not in Sierra Leone where he faces an indictment for alleged crimes against humanity, his spiritual counsellor said on Tuesday.

Hindu-born, Houston-based evangelist Kilari Anand Paul said he was looking for political asylum for the former Liberian leader, who has disappeared from the Nigerian villa in which he was living in exile.

"Charles Taylor has agreed to go to The Hague to face charges. He has also agreed to go to Liberia, but he has totally refused to go to Sierra Leone and face charges there," Paul, 42, told AFP during a visit to Addis Ababa. "Our first priority is to find political asylum for him to stabilize the situation. I made a big mistake to take him to Nigeria," he added.

Paul said a country, which he refused to name, had agreed to give Taylor political asylum, but four others are yet to state their position.

"I am waiting for the green light from Syria, Libya, Venezuela and Ethiopia to give asylum. A fifth country has completely agreed to give him asylum," said the evangelist, who was in Liberia in 2003 to help persuade Taylor to step down.

"My first choice is to bring him to Ethiopia because it is the second most populous country in (Africa) and it is very stable ... Ethiopia has given positive signs about welcoming Charles Taylor," said Paul, who claimed that he met Ethiopian President Girma Wolde-Giorgis on Sunday.

# Voice of America

28 March 2006

## Taylor Supporters Seek New Asylum Deal

By Joe Bavier  
Abidjan  
27 March 2006



**Compound of the house where former Liberian warlord Charles Taylor lives near the sea side town of Calabar**

*AP Photo* *Supporters close to deposed Liberian leader Charles Taylor say they are seeking a new asylum deal for the former warlord, as pressure mounts for his extradition. Liberia's president says she wants him sent directly to Sierra Leone's special court.*

Charles Taylor has lived in exile in Nigeria since 2003, when he agreed to leave power, an act that ended nearly a decade and a half of on and off civil war in Liberia.

But the Nigerian government recently agreed to hand him over to Liberian authorities, following a request from Liberia's newly elected president, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

A Taylor spiritual adviser, K.A. Paul, says he is trying reach a deal with the government of Ethiopia to grant the deposed Liberian president asylum.

"I have asked him if he would like me to arrange another asylum somewhere else. If Charles Taylor is not allowed to stay in Nigeria, I want him to stay somewhere else until the right time comes for him to face charges. That is why I am in Ethiopia," he said.

Paul says he is in similar negotiations with several other countries, and that at least one of them has already agreed to accept Taylor.

But Taylor's whereabouts are unclear. Paul, who was with Taylor when he negotiated his original asylum deal with Nigeria three years ago, says he has disappeared from his villa in the southern Nigerian city of Calabar.

Various international media also reported Taylor is missing. His spokesman in Nigeria, Sylvester Paasewe, said reports Taylor had fled are false.

If Taylor is extradited from Nigeria, there is confusion over where he will be sent next. The Nigerian government has long refused to honor a request by the U.N.-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone to have him stand trial for war crimes related to his role in that country's civil war. Nigeria says Taylor can only be handed over to Liberian authorities.

But Liberian President Johnson Sirleaf said Taylor should not return to Liberia, which has only recently formed a new democratically elected government. She said he should be sent directly to the special court in Freetown.

U.S.-based Human Rights Watch has warned that security around Taylor's home must be tightened to prevent him from fleeing. Liberian democracy advocate Ezekiel Pajibo says the government of Nigeria must do more to facilitate Taylor's handover.

"Nigeria has abdicated its international responsibilities to have Mr. Taylor delivered to Sierra Leone. So it put the onus on the Liberian government. The Liberian government does not have the means to do that," said Pajibo.

Taylor led a brutal rebel campaign to overthrow Liberia's then-president Samuel Doe in the 1990s, before eventually being elected president himself. He is facing 17 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity for backing rebels in neighboring Sierra Leone.

## Deutsche Presse-Agentur

28 March 2006

### **Fear grips Liberians over reports of Taylor's disappearance**

Monrovia- Fear gripped Liberians Tuesday amidst rumours that former president and indicted war criminal Charles Taylor has escaped from his residence in the southern Nigerian town of Calabar.

'We are afraid because we know what Taylor is capable of doing. Since it was said that he has escaped, I have not eaten or slept well,' said housewife Titi Kandakai, 35.

'I hope Taylor does not surface in one of Liberia's thickest forests,' said accountant Samuel Timothy, 40.

Many Liberians hold Taylor responsible for starting the 1989-2003 civil war that killed an estimated ten per cent of the Liberian population.

State security services in Liberia arrested some of Taylor's former associates after Senator Prince Yormie Johnson, chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Security, disclosed that a plot to destabilize Liberia was in the making.

Prince Johnson told security services that several of Taylor's former allies had approached him to join them in preventing Taylor's extradition to the United Nations Special Court for Sierra Leone.

In an apparent move to assure government that they are not against Taylor's extradition, citizens of northeastern Nimba County, the province from which Taylor drew the bulk of his fighters, staged a march through the principal streets of Monrovia Tuesday.

Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and civic groups have also been drawn into the debate.

Johnson-Sirleaf told officials of the Liberian Council of Churches Monday that her extradition request to Nigeria came after discovering that Taylor was engaged in acts 'aimed at destabilizing the country, and thus abusing the terms of his asylum.'

The religious leaders had called on President Sirleaf to clarify her government's stand on the Taylor issue.

The president also said that immense pressure from the international community had precipitated her move.

President Sirleaf said she would prefer for Taylor to be tried in a neutral country. She added that she considers Sierra Leone a hostile environment, but would prefer for Nigeria to transfer Taylor to Sierra Leone rather than send him to Liberia due to security concerns.

According to Presidential legal adviser Counselor Peter Amos George Jr, there is no extradition treaty between Liberia and Nigeria.

Many Liberians feel that international pressure on the Liberian government to hand Taylor over to the UN court in Sierra Leone could rob the war-ravaged country of much-needed support in its reconstruction drive.

'The extradition of Taylor is untimely. We still have many Taylor loyalists in this country,' said university student Alphonso Nyanti.

'With the economic hardship facing the nation, several former combatants will respond favourably to any attempt to recruit them to fight for Taylor,' he added.

## BBC

28 March 2006

### **Taylor missing from Nigerian home**

Liberia's ex-President Charles Taylor - wanted on war crimes charges - is no longer in his villa, the Nigerian presidency says.

At the weekend, Nigeria said it would let Liberia pick him up to face trial.

However, Liberia and the US say it is Nigeria's responsibility to hand him over to a UN-backed war crimes court in Sierra Leone.

Mr Taylor stepped down as president in 2003 under a deal to end the Liberian civil war, which he started in 1989.

He went into exile in Calabar, in south-eastern Nigeria.

The BBC's Mark Doyle in Freetown says there are powerful political forces at play over Mr Taylor's fate.

### **Incumbent**

"All the security people who were in charge of looking after Mr Taylor have been arrested," said Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo's spokeswoman, Remi Oyo.

Nigeria's President Olusegun Obasanjo is due to meet US President George W Bush in Washington on Wednesday.

Nigeria must urgently take steps to tighten security around Taylor's villa in Calabar and should immediately take him into custody  
Richard Dicker, Human Rights Watch

"It is incumbent upon the Nigerian government now to see that he [Mr Taylor] is conveyed to the international court," State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said.

"Obviously, we have talked to President Obasanjo about this."

But on Monday, Mr Obasanjo's spokeswoman said Nigeria's job was done and Liberia's President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf had been told she "is free to come and take President Taylor into her custody".

Mrs Johnson-Sirleaf said she wanted her predecessor to be sent directly to Sierra Leone, as he had not been indicted by a Liberian court.

### **Custody**

Desmond de Silva, chief prosecutor of the war crimes court in Sierra Leone, had called for Mr Taylor's arrest in Nigeria, saying he was worried that the former Liberian leader may flee.

He described Mr Taylor as one of the three most important wanted war crimes suspects in the world.

#### TAYLOR TIMELINE

1989: Launches rebellion

1991: RUF rebellion starts in Sierra Leone

1995: Peace deal signed

1997: Elected president

1999: Lurd starts rebellion to oust Taylor

June 2003: Arrest warrant issued

August 2003: Steps down, goes into exile in Nigeria

Joseph Ushigiale, spokesman for the Nigerian state where Mr Taylor is living, told the BBC's Focus on Africa programme on Monday that he was "under very good protective custody" and had taken part in the just-ended census in Nigeria.

"We can assure you Mr Taylor will not just walk away."

A number of Mr Taylor's supporters have been detained in Liberia amid fears they may stage an armed uprising.

Tens of thousands of people died in the interlinked conflicts in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

Mr Taylor is accused of selling diamonds and buying weapons for Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front rebels, who were notorious for hacking off the hands and legs of civilians during a 10-year war.

He also started the Liberian civil war in 1989, before being elected president in 1997.

Story from BBC NEWS:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/africa/4853158.stm>

## Times Online

28 March 2006

### **Wanted former leader goes on the run**

By Jonathan Clayton

Liberia fears that Nigeria will allow Charles Taylor to escape extradition to UN war crimes tribunal

CHARLES TAYLOR, the former Liberian President who is one of Africa's most wanted men, has gone into hiding in Nigeria to avoid extradition to a UN war crimes tribunal, raising fears that he may be allowed to slip out of the country.

Mr Taylor, known as "Pappy" to thousands of former child soldiers in West Africa, has not been seen since Saturday, when Nigeria, where he has lived in exile since 2003, said that Liberia was free to take him into custody. However, it gave no details of how that might be done.

Nigeria gave its formal response to an extradition request by Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, the newly elected leader of Liberia, but has made clear that it would give no assistance in detaining him. Mrs Johnson-Sirleaf, the first elected woman leader in Africa, angered President Obasanjo of Nigeria, who prides himself on being West Africa's "Big Man", by bringing the matter up directly with President Bush during a recent visit to Washington.

"Taylor is not a prisoner here . . . our job is done," Remi Oyo, the Nigerian President's spokeswoman, said. She also denied that Nigeria had received requests from war crimes prosecutors for Mr Taylor to be detained. "We read of the request in the papers, but it has not arrived here," she added.

Liberia said yesterday that it was baffled by the Nigerian position. Johnny McClain, the Liberian Information Minister, said: "How do you go and arrest a former president in a foreign country . . . also, there is no extradition treaty between Liberia and Nigeria."

The UN war crimes tribunal in Sierra Leone holds Mr Taylor responsible for about 250,000 deaths. Throughout the 1990s, his armies and supporters, made up of child soldiers orphaned by the conflicts, wreaked havoc through a swath of West Africa. In Sierra Leone he supported the Revolutionary United Front, whose rebel fighters were notorious for hacking off the limbs of civilians.

The issue is further complicated because Liberia does not want him on its territory for fear that it could threaten the country's fragile stability.

"Mr Taylor was not indicted by a Liberian court and, therefore, he is not needed by a Liberian court," Mrs Johnson-Sirleaf said. She emphasised that Liberia wanted him to go directly to the court in Sierra Leone without passing through his native country.

Mr Taylor was given asylum in Nigeria as part of a deal to end Liberia's 14-year civil war. Mr Obasanjo personally persuaded him to step down, and flew with him to Nigeria, where he reportedly assured him that he would be secure. Since then, Mr Taylor has lived in relative luxury in a private villa in the coastal town of Calabar.

Soon after his arrival, however, he was indicted on 17 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity by the UN-backed war crimes tribunal, which issued an international warrant for his arrest.

Mr Taylor, who used the conflicts to gain access to the region's rich diamond and logging areas, has a huge fortune. He used it to win internationally supervised elections under a regional peace deal in the mid-1990s. His slogan, "I killed your Mama, I killed your Papa", was intended to remind waverers of what a return to war could mean.

It worked, but his peacetime rule sparked more rebellions and, by 2003, he had lost control of all but Monrovia, the ruined Liberian capital.



## Amnesty International

28 March 2006

### **Nigeria: 'International fugitive' Charles Taylor must not be allowed to escape trial**

Press release, 03/28/2006

Reacting to today's reports that former Liberian president Charles Taylor has "escaped" from his home in Calabar, Nigeria, Amnesty International said "any country in which he is found has a responsibility to arrest and surrender Charles Taylor immediately to the Special Court in Sierra Leone."

The organization said that the warrant for Charles Taylor's arrest issued by the Special Court, an international court, remains in effect, and that if he has left Nigeria he should now be considered an "international fugitive".

"Any failure by the Nigerian or any other government to ensure that Charles Taylor is successfully extradited to Liberia or surrendered to the Special Court is a failure to fulfil obligations under international law and an obstruction of justice," said Kolawole Olaniyan, Director of Amnesty International's Africa Programme.

Amnesty International also called for an independent and impartial international commission of inquiry to be jointly established by the UN and the African Union to determine the circumstances of Charles Taylor's reported escape, and establish responsibility for the lapse in security.

"It is not enough for the Nigerian government to initiate an investigation. We need an international commission of inquiry that will report directly to the UN Secretary-General and make its findings public," said Kolawole Olaniyan.

"Allowing Charles Taylor to escape trial would be a human rights scandal and a slap in the face for the thousands of victims of crimes against humanity and war crimes, including murders, amputations, rapes, sexual slavery and the use of child soldiers that took place during the conflict in Sierra Leone," said Kolawole Olaniyan. "It would also be inconsistent with the human rights mandate of the African Union."

### **Background**

Amnesty International has documented in numerous reports the crimes against humanity and war crimes that were committed in Sierra Leone during the eleven year war in that country, including killings, amputations, rape, sexual slavery and the use of child soldiers.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone, established jointly by the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone, to "try those bearing the greatest responsibility" for crimes against humanity and war crimes, indicted Charles Taylor on 17 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including terrorising the civilian population, unlawful killings, sexual violence, physical violence, forced conscription of child soldiers, abductions, forced labour, looting and burning, and attacks on UN peacekeeping personnel.

Charles Taylor has been living in Calabar, Nigeria since 2003, when he was offered asylum by the Nigerian government.

CNN

28 March 2006

### **War crimes suspect Taylor missing**

Ex-Liberian leader reportedly disappeared from villa in Nigeria

War crimes suspect and former Liberian President Charles Taylor is missing from the Nigerian residence where he lived in exile, Nigeria's government said Tuesday.

Taylor, who is wanted on war crimes charges by a court in Sierra Leone, vanished from the villa Monday night, government spokesman Femi Fani-Kayode said.

Nigeria agreed Saturday to turn Taylor over to the Liberian government so he could face a U.N.-backed tribunal in Sierra Leone.

Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo ordered the arrest of security personnel who had been guarding Taylor, Fani-Kayode said.

"Our understanding is that he was being closely guarded," Fani-Kayode said. "This is why the security personnel that were guarding him have now been arrested.

"We will get to the bottom of it, and at that point we will know precisely what to tell the world about it."

Still, Fani-Kayode said it was not Nigeria's responsibility to deliver Taylor to the Liberians.

"It was not for us to take him back," he said. "The onus was on the Liberian government. He was a guest of ours, and you do not pick up your guests and take them anywhere."

Taylor -- who was Liberia's president from 1997 until he was forced out of office in 2003 -- was indicted in 2003 by the court in neighboring Sierra Leone on charges of war crimes related to his support for rebels in that country who were committing widespread atrocities against civilians.

Liberia's newly installed President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf wants to deliver him to that tribunal.

Liberian Information Minister Johnny McClain declined to comment on reports of Taylor's disappearance, saying the Nigerian government had not contacted Liberia.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan said Taylor's disappearance was "extremely worrying ... and disappointing." Annan said he intended to speak with Nigerian authorities Tuesday, adding that the facts are not all in.

"Where is he?" Annan asked. "Has he moved elsewhere? Did he vanish?"

Taylor, who had been living in the southeastern Nigerian city of Calabar, retains influence in the region around Liberia. He was being monitored but was not under Nigerian house arrest.

Taylor's status was to be one of the topics at Obasanjo's Wednesday meeting with President Bush in Washington.

Taylor studied in U.S.

Born in 1948, Taylor is the third of 15 children, descendants of freed U.S. slaves who established the Liberian republic in the 19th century.

His father sent him to the United States, where he obtained a degree in economics from Bentley College in Massachusetts.

He became involved in radical Liberian student politics. Influenced by Marxist and Pan-African ideas, he once advocated burning down the Liberian Embassy in Washington.

He earned cash in his spare time working on a production line at a toy factory. He became a teacher and was part of dictator Samuel Doe's government in 1980 before being exiled to the United States.

In the United States, he was jailed for allegedly stealing \$900,000 in Liberian government money -- only to escape from a Massachusetts prison, along with four petty criminals, in 1985 after a year in captivity.

In 1989, he returned to West Africa and launched a revolt from the Ivory Coast against Doe, an ethnic Krahn who had taken power in a military coup.

*CNN's Jeff Koinange and Richard Roth contributed to this report.*

## Press Statement – Ed Royce

28 March 2006

### **Royce Statement on Reports of Charles Taylor Disappearance**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Eric Cullen (202) 225.4111

Royce Statement on Reports of Charles Taylor Disappearance  
Africa Subcommittee Vice-Chair calls on President Bush to Cancel Tomorrow's Meeting with  
Nigerian President Obasanjo

WASHINGTON, DC -- U.S. Representative Ed Royce (CA-40), vice-chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Human Rights, and International Operations, issued the following statement in reaction to recent developments surrounding the status of former Liberian President Charles Taylor:

“According to the Associated Press this morning, former Liberian President Charles Taylor has disappeared from his luxury villa in Calabar, Nigeria. This is the nightmare scenario that many were worried about.

“Yesterday, a State Department spokesman said that the United States told Nigerian President Obasanjo that it was Nigeria’s responsibility to ‘see that [Taylor] is able to be conveyed and face justice.’ Obviously, this was not done, and for that, the Nigerians must be held accountable.”

“Nigeria reportedly has let a mass murderer with alleged links to al-Qaeda slip out the back door. President Bush should cancel tomorrow’s scheduled meeting with President Obasanjo.”

Royce went on to warn countries who might be considering taking in Charles Taylor that such a move would be unwise. “Any country that offers Charles Taylor sanctuary should know that such action will be met with stiff opposition in the U.S. Congress – including serious sanctions.”

Royce chaired the House subcommittee on Africa from 1997-2006. Under his chairmanship, the subcommittee held several Congressional hearings focused on Liberia, Sierra Leone, Charles Taylor and the Special Court for Sierra Leone. In 2005, Royce authored a Congressional resolution that passed the House of Representatives calling on Nigeria to send Taylor to the Special Court.

## United Nations

28 March 2006

### **Statement attributable to the Spokesman for the Secretary-General On Charles Taylor**

The Secretary-General is deeply concerned at reports that Charles Taylor, the former President of Liberia who has been indicted for war crimes by the Special Court for Sierra Leone, has disappeared. The Secretary-General calls on all countries in the region not to give refuge to Mr. Taylor, but to execute the warrant for his arrest issued by the Special Court and comply with the request of the elected President of Liberia, H.E. Ms. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf to transfer him to the Special Court.

New York  
28 March 2006

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### **SECRETARY-GENERAL'S PRESS ENCOUNTER UPON ARRIVAL AT UNHQ**

Q: Have you heard the news from Nigeria today about Charles Taylor having disappeared? What is your reaction to this?

SG: I have heard the news. We are trying to get more facts about it. It would be extremely worrying if indeed he had disappeared, because the Nigerian government had indicated it will cooperate with his transfer to Liberia and to the Court, and so, it will be very disappointing if this is indeed correct. But I don't have the facts, and if he is not where he normally stays, where is he? Has he been moved elsewhere by the government, by the authorities? Did he vanish? These are facts that we need to ascertain.

Q: Do you intend [inaudible] back to the Security Council?

SG: Yes, I intend to talk to the Nigerian authorities about this.

**BBC**

29 March 2006

### **US warning over missing Taylor**

The US has indicated that talks between the US and Nigerian presidents may not go ahead after Liberia's ex-leader disappeared while in exile in Nigeria.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said reports of Charles Taylor's escape were a matter of "utmost seriousness".

US President George W Bush is due to meet his Nigerian counterpart Olusegun Obasanjo in Washington on Wednesday.

The chief prosecutor of the UN-backed war crimes court condemned the reported escape of the alleged war criminal.

Desmond da Silva from the special tribunal in Sierra Leone described it as "an affront to justice".

And United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan has said he is deeply concerned by reports that Mr Taylor has gone missing.

I was well convinced that Olusegun Obasanjo would never hand Taylor over to the tribunal Cole Ejiofor, Lagos

The news of Mr Taylor's disappearance from a villa where he lived came just 48 hours after Nigeria had said that Liberia was free to "take Taylor into custody".

Mr Taylor was indicted on 17 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity, concerning his alleged backing for Sierra Leone's rebels, shortly before stepping down in 2003. He resigned under a deal to end the Liberian civil war, which he started in 1989, going into exile in Calabar, in south-eastern Nigeria.

Rice warning

White House spokesman Scott McLellan refused to say whether the planned meeting between Mr Bush and Mr Obasanjo would go ahead.

#### TAYLOR TIMELINE

1989: Launches rebellion

1991: RUF rebellion starts in Sierra Leone

1995: Peace deal signed

1997: Elected president

1999: Lurd starts rebellion to oust Taylor

June 2003: Arrest warrant issued

August 2003: Steps down, goes into exile in Nigeria

Mr McLellan said that right now Washington was "looking for answers from the Nigerian government about the whereabouts of Charles Taylor".

He added that it was the responsibility of the Nigerian government to see that Mr Taylor was handed over to the tribunal in Sierra Leone.

Ms Rice, meanwhile, told a congressional panel that Washington would take the matter very seriously "if indeed he (Mr Taylor) had fled."

She stressed that Nigeria had made a commitment that Mr Taylor would be monitored while in exile.

Ms Rice did not respond to a suggestion by one of the senators that it would be inappropriate to hold the Bush-Obasanjo talks under the circumstances.

### **Shock**

Mr Taylor's whereabouts are not clear but his spiritual advisor Kilari Anand Paul told the BBC News website that Mr Taylor was in the Liberian bush, from where he first launched his rebellion.

He also said the former Liberian leader would be happy to face justice in The Hague but not in Sierra Leone.

Nigeria's President Olusegun Obasanjo is "very shocked" by Mr Taylor's disappearance on Monday, Information Minister Frank Nweke told the BBC's Focus on Africa programme.

Nigeria has set up a panel to investigate the matter, and to establish whether he escaped or was abducted, Mr Nweke said.

Lobby group Human Rights Watch says Mr Taylor's disappearance is a "disgrace".

Story from BBC NEWS:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/africa/4855300.stm>

## Washington Post

29 March 2006

Editorial

### **A War Criminal Escapes**

The man who let him go is due at the White House this morning.

ON MONDAY one of the world's most dangerous and despicable war criminals, Charles Taylor, escaped just as he was about to be brought to justice for his actions. His crimes include the incitement of wars in four West African countries; the enslavement, rape or dismemberment of thousands of children; and collaboration with al Qaeda. His freedom threatens the fragile stability of Liberia and its democratically elected president, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, as well as of Sierra Leone, Guinea and Ivory Coast.

The man responsible for this catastrophe, Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, has an appointment at the White House today with President Bush. If the meeting goes forward, he deserves the frostiest of receptions. Under the guise of protective custody, Mr. Obasanjo shielded Mr. Taylor from justice and allowed him to continue meddling in West African affairs for more than two years. Now, having run out of excuses for refusing to turn him over to an international tribunal, the Nigerian has allowed Mr. Taylor to flee from the seaside villa where he was being held. Mr. Bush, who hosted Ms. Johnson-Sirleaf just two weeks ago, should tell Mr. Obasanjo that the United States will hold him personally accountable for Mr. Taylor's recapture.

Some prodding is clearly needed. Most governments would declare a national manhunt and consider sealing the borders if someone as dangerous as Charles Taylor were on the loose. Mr. Obasanjo's reaction was to issue a statement yesterday, many hours after the war criminal's escape Monday night, announcing his "disappearance" and the formation of a commission to investigate. It has two weeks to report back; perhaps Mr. Obasanjo believes that during that time any controversy will blow over.

But as long as Mr. Taylor is free, years of efforts by the United Nations, the United States, European governments and Nigeria itself to stabilize West Africa will be at risk. It's not hard to foresee the warlord appearing at the head of yet another ragtag army, composed of drugged or brutalized children, in one of the several countries he has terrorized in the past decade.

Even if Mr. Taylor is soon captured, Mr. Obasanjo will merit some reevaluation. Though democratically elected, the two-term president may be seeking to transform himself into one of Africa's Big Men; he has done nothing to stop allies who are trying to change Nigeria's constitution so that he can remain in office. His offer of refuge to Mr. Taylor in late 2003 may have prevented a bloody end to a rebellion against his criminal regime in Monrovia. But when the Nigerian was asked to turn Mr. Taylor over to the U.N. tribunal in Sierra Leone, he produced a string of increasingly implausible excuses. First he said he would act only at the request of a democratic Liberian government. When Ms. Johnson-Sirleaf courageously made that request, he insisted that Liberians take custody of Mr. Taylor, even though he was to be moved from Nigeria to Sierra Leone.

Over the weekend Liberian and tribunal officials publicly pleaded with Mr. Obasanjo to arrest Mr. Taylor, warning that he would seek to escape. Mr. Obasanjo took no action. Perhaps he can't accept the idea that an African leader, even one as vile as Mr. Taylor, would be held accountable for his crimes. But if Mr. Taylor's escape leads to the murder, rape and dismemberment of more innocent Africans, their blood will be on Mr. Obasanjo's hands.



## New York Times

29 March 2006

Editorial

### **The Least Surprising Jailbreak Ever**

Charles Taylor, the Liberian warlord and former president, has disappeared from his Nigerian haven, just days after President Olusegun Obasanjo agreed to turn him over to a war crimes tribunal. The disappearance is a diplomatic disaster for Mr. Obasanjo, who is scheduled to meet with President Bush today. We hope it doesn't turn into something worse for West Africa.

The conflicts linked to Mr. Taylor from 1989 to 2003 cost an estimated 500,000 lives and spawned a generation of child soldiers. He supported rebels in Sierra Leone and Ivory Coast who hacked off the limbs of civilians; he received diamonds in return, which he used to finance fighting in Liberia. Mr. Obasanjo did West Africa a favor in 2003 when he took in Mr. Taylor, ending Liberia's civil war.

For years, Nigeria had resisted the idea of handing over Mr. Taylor, saying it would give him only to an elected Liberian government. When Liberia's newly elected president, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, requested this month that Mr. Taylor be turned over to a war crimes tribunal in Sierra Leone, Nigeria replied that Liberia was free to take him.

Nigerian security forces let Mr. Taylor slip through their fingers on the same day that a State Department spokesman said it was Nigeria's responsibility to see that Mr. Taylor was arrested and sent to Sierra Leone.

It's hard to believe the Nigerians did much to stop him. A reporter with Agence France-Presse who recently visited Mr. Taylor at his plush villa in the southeastern city of Calabar saw no sign of any Nigerian security on the way in, and only one policeman on the way out.

Once, in an earlier incarnation, Mr. Taylor sawed his way out of a county jail in Boston and used a knotted sheet to climb to freedom. If ever there was a disappearance that could be predicted, this was it. Let's hope that Mr. Obasanjo's carelessness doesn't lead to a return of Taylor-style ethnic fighting in West Africa. That is something no one can afford — including the Nigerian president, whose country has had some sectarian and ethnic clashes of its own lately.



Liberian Times  
28 March 2006

## Liberia: Charles Taylor's Alleged Escape, Is Nigeria's Obasanjo Obstructing Justice?

Mar 28, 2006

by Joseph S. Sherman / Contributing Writer

Reports that war-crime indicted criminal, Ex-president Charles Taylor has mysteriously disappeared from his safe haven in Calabar, Nigeria, leaves many questions for President Obasanjo of Nigeria to answer.

Charles Taylor has been indicted on 17 counts of war crimes against humanity for his role in the armed conflict in Sierra Leone. The crimes include killings, rape, sexual violence, sexual slavery, the recruitment and use of child soldiers, abduction, and the use of forced labor by armed opposition of groups.

President Obasanjo has since resisted surrendering Charles Taylor to the Special Court in Sierra Leone. He has indicated, however, that he would consider returning Charles Taylor to Liberia upon the request of a duly elected government. In a bold step to stand against the culture of impunity practiced by many African leaders, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf made a request to Obasanjo to have Taylor extradited to the Special Court in Sierra Leone.

If President Obasanjo is serious about regional stability and justice for the thousands of people killed and maimed in Sierra Leone, he should have listened to the call of prosecutors of the Special Court and Human Rights organizations to have Taylor arrested and detained in order to face justice in Sierra Leone.

The obligation of all states to cooperate with the Special Court in Sierra Leone which is under the auspices of the International Tribunal is further set forth in Article 29 of the Tribunal's Statute which provides for (1) the general obligation to provide any cooperation that may be required to facilitate investigation or prosecution of alleged perpetrators and (2) the obligation to comply without undue delay with a specific request or order issued by a Trial Chamber, including arrest warrants.

The establishment of the Special Court in Sierra Leone is intended to bring a halt to what the international community rightly believe grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions of 1949. If President Obasanjo does not allow the mandate of the Special Court to be executed, it will set a disturbing precedent, namely the rules governing armed conflict can be disregarded with impunity.

Since independence, injustice and impunity have permeated African governments- killing of political opponents, arbitrary arrests without due process of law, dictatorship and various human rights abuses have become immured in the politics of most African leaders. If Obasanjo allows Charles Taylor to escape Justice, it will send a signal to other rogue African governments that they have nothing to lose by engaging in such criminal acts.

## AND Network

29 March 2006

[http://www.andnetwork.com/app?service=direct/0/Home/\\$StorySummary\\$0.\\$DirectLink\\$1&sp=126889](http://www.andnetwork.com/app?service=direct/0/Home/$StorySummary$0.$DirectLink$1&sp=126889)

### **“I am In Contact With Taylor” - Ex-Wife**

By Andnetwork .com

Monrovia (AND) In the wake of confirmation by Nigeria that the former Liberian leader Charles Taylor has disappeared from his Villa in Nigeria, his ex-wife says she is still in contact with him. Mrs. Jewel Howard Taylor, who is an MP in President Sirleaf’s government, said she believes Mr. Taylor is still in Calabar.

Mrs. Taylor who described the situation of her ex-husband as a matter that is in “God Hands”, said what ever the Almighty God decides will happen in the situation concerning her former husband.

“As a member of a family, you know I will not be praying for him to go to Sierra Leone. My prayer is that some how, we can put the past in the past and this country will be allowed to move forward” She said.

Commenting on whether the former President should be pardoned, Mrs. Taylor suggested the need to look at the Liberian situation holistically adding, “ it is not just one person that is responsible for the war. And if we are talking about freedom and justice and if they want to punish people then every one has to be punished from the beginning to the end. Every one has to be punished if we want to punish people. And if we want to pardon every one then we should pardon every one across the board” she said.

She added, “This is a situation that Liberia has to decide the way forward. And I think the Truth and Reconciliation Commission will have the chance to work and find out what the real story is and then we can move forward from there.”

Asked whether she is still in contact with Mr. Taylor, the former Liberian first lady said, “We have children, we are members of the same family. Of course I am in contact with him. I cannot stand and lie. I am still in contact with him. He is my former husband and we have children and I am a member of his family.”

Pressed to address the issue of Taylor’s disappearance from Calabar, Mrs. Taylor said, “Liberia is noted for lies and rumours. I do not know what the situation is. But I do not think he will run away. Charles Taylor is not a person who runs away. So I do not think it is possible.”

By Charles Wrokpoh

Monrovia (AND)

## AND Network

29 March 2006

[http://www.andnetwork.com/app?service=direct/0/Home/\\$StorySummary.\\$DirectLink\\$2&sp=l26879](http://www.andnetwork.com/app?service=direct/0/Home/$StorySummary.$DirectLink$2&sp=l26879)

### **Taylor back in Liberia?**

Monrovia (AND) A close confidant of former Liberian leader Charles Taylor, has pointed an accusing finger to Liberian leader, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, saying she know the whereabouts of the former Liberian leader.

Mr. Sando Johnson, who was among several Taylor's confidants to be arrested recently by the National Security Agency (NSA), says the former Liberian leader knows exactly where the former Liberian President Chares Taylor is at the moment.

Mr. Johnson's comments come at a time when Nigeria has confirmed reports that the former Liberian leader has disappeared from his Villa in Calabar, Nigeria shortly after that country announced that Liberia may take custody of the former President.

Speaking to AND yesterday, Mr. Johnson described the request by President Sirleaf for the extradition of Mr. Taylor as "a declaration of war on Liberia."

He described the President's action to request the former President as "unilateral" stressing that the action has worsened the situation in Liberia.

"Ellen knows where Taylor is, especially after when Nigeria has said that her government can come and take the former President." Mr. Johnson said.

"Ellen has created a problem for Liberia. She has declared war on the National Patriotic Party (NPP) and as a result of this, Liberia is not safe," Mr. Johnson said during the interview.

"Because of the situation she has created, she too is now in hiding" Mr. Johnson, a lawmaker in former Taylor's government, said.

Quizzed on whether he knew the whereabouts of the former President, Mr. Johnson said, "I do not know where he is. I do know he is here in Liberia as some are saying."

When President Sirleaf's Acting Press Secretary Mr. Charles Nelson was contacted on the matter, he said, "We just do not have any final position on this matter."

Also contacted, was Information Minister Johnny McClain, who said the government cannot comment on the disappearance of the former President because government has not received any formal communication on the issue that Mr. Taylor has disappeared.

He said government cannot comment on what he called "speculation in the media" in the absence of an official communication from Nigeria on the former Presidents whereabouts.

By Patrick Wrokpoh

## Sierra Leone Court Monitoring Programme

29 March 2006

### For Immediate Release

Freetown, 29 March, 2006

### **Lost and Found: Nigeria Should Immediately Transfer Charles Taylor to the Special Court for Sierra Leone**

The Sierra Leone Court Monitoring Programme (SLCMP) wishes to express surprise at and indignation against the Nigerian Government for the manner in which the Charles Taylor issue has been handled. The Nigerian government essentially refused to take requisite measures to prevent Mr. Taylor's escape even though the Prosecutor of the Special Court duly requested them to hold in custody Mr. Taylor until he is transferred to Liberia. The cheap way in which Charles Taylor 'escaped' from under the security and pleasure of President Obasanjo therefore epitomizes Nigeria's lassitude and reluctance to transfer the alleged war criminal to the Special Court for Sierra Leone especially when President Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia had so requested. Now that he has been found, Charles Taylor should be immediately transferred to the Special Court.

The Nigerian Government on several occasions had said that they would only release Mr. Taylor to a democratically elected government of Liberia. On March 5 2006, the newly elected Liberian Government requested the Nigerian government to transfer Mr. Taylor into the custody of the Special Court. Fully aware that the Liberian Government is currently constrained in its ability to arrest and hand over Mr. Taylor to the Special Court, the Nigerian Government on March 26 reluctantly and ill-judiciously announced that Liberia was free to take Mr. Taylor into custody. The SLCMP perceives this action by the Nigeria government as a venture to undermine justice and accountability of those indicted with war crimes and crimes against humanity and subsequently erasing the gains already made in securing the Sub-region after over fifteen years of war.

Nigeria has obligations under international law to arrest and transfer Charles Taylor to the Special Court, but has consistently chosen to renege from these ever since the Special Court issued the seventeen counts indictment against Mr. Taylor on June 4 2003. The Nigerian government has also refused to listen to several calls by the United Nations Security Council, United States government, human rights and other civil society groups from around the world to transfer Charles Taylor to the Special Court. The Nigerian government has also refused to respond despite the fact that various groups have catalogued and made it known to them that Mr. Taylor has kept meddling into Liberian politics, contrary to the condition that granted him leeway into exile.

The SLCMP wants to make it known that the Nigeria government bear responsibility under international law to transfer Charles Taylor to the Special Court and now has the opportunity once again to fully comply by immediately transferring him to the Special Court. The SLCMP therefore recommends that the Nigerian authorities immediately effect this action.

The SLCMP also recommends that the Sub-regional leaders should strengthen their effort to bring Mr. Taylor to justice by way of putting Nigeria under tremendous pressure to expedite the transfer of Mr. Taylor to the Special Court.

Human rights and civil society groups within and without Sierra Leone must coalesce to ensure that the ends of justice are not defeated at the alter of ineptitude. They should therefore galvanize to tell their governments to transfer Charles Taylor to the Special Court.

The United Nations Security Council, the United States, United Kingdom and other countries should continue to support the Special Court for the accomplishment of its mandate.