

**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:**

Friday, 31 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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**Special Court for Sierra Leone**  
Press and Public Affairs Office

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**Freetown, Sierra Leone, 30 March 2006**

### **Special Court President Requests Charles Taylor be Tried in The Hague**

The President of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Justice A. Raja N. Fernando, yesterday made a request to the Government of The Netherlands and the President of the International Criminal Court (ICC) to facilitate the conduct of the trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor by the Special Court in The Hague.

Under Rule 4 of the Special Court's Rules of Procedure and Evidence, the President of the Special Court is empowered to authorise a Trial Chamber to exercise its functions away from the seat of the Court in Freetown.

The trial would thus be held by a Trial Chamber of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, sitting in the Hague.

Justice Fernando's letter referred to concerns about the stability in the region should Taylor be tried in Freetown.

A Headquarters Agreement would need to be secured to allow a chamber of the Special Court to sit outside of Freetown. A United Nations Security Council Resolution would also be required by the Government of the Netherlands to provide the legal basis for the Court to sit within its national jurisdiction.

#END

The Special Court is an independent tribunal established jointly by the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone. It is mandated to bring to justice those who bear the greatest responsibility for atrocities committed in Sierra Leone after 30 November 1996. To date, the Prosecutor has indicted eleven persons on various charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law. Ten indictees are currently in the custody of the Court.

INFORMATION FOR MEDIA - NOT FOR ADVERTISING

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Awareness Times  
31 March 2006

*Over concerns of regional stability...*

# Taylor trial goes to The Hague

*By Sayoh Kamara*

The President of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Justice A. Raja N. Fernando, has made a formal request to

the Government of the Netherlands and the President of the International Criminal

Court (ICC), to facilitate the conduct of the trial of Charles Taylor in The Hague.



*Taylor under arrest*

This announcement came yesterday, barely 24 hours

*Contd: page 2*

# Taylor trial goes to The Hague

*From front page*

Following the incarceration of the former rebel leader by the UN backed court in Freetown.

According to the Special Court, Justice Fernando referred to concerns about stability in the region should Taylor be tried in Freetown.

This however contravenes the Special Court's earlier confidence reposed in its security mechanism which had been beefed up in recent times by the United Nations.

Under Rule 4 of the Special Court's Rules of Procedure and Evidence, the President of the court, Justice N. Fernando is empowered to authorise a Trial Chamber to exercise its

functions away from the seat of the court in Freetown.

A headquarters agreement would be needed however, to allow a chamber of the court to sit outside Freetown.

Also, a United Nations Security Council resolution would be required by the government of the Netherlands in order to provide the legal basis for the court to sit within its national jurisdiction.

It is not known how long these processes will take, that will finally see Charles Taylor being transferred to The Hague to answer for his actions against the state and people of Sierra Leone during the country's war years.

Concord Times

31 March 2006

**As Liberians cry for Taylor...**

# No lawyer to defend Taylor

**Story: Tanu Jalloh & Sahr Musa  
Yamba**

There is currently no lawyer to defend deposed Liberian President, Charles Gankay Taylor, at the Special Court, Peter Andersen,

Deputy Chief of Public Affairs told Concord Times late Wednesday. Taylor's erstwhile counsel, Terrence Terry died after he briefly tried to challenge the legality of the Special Court vis-à-vis Taylor's indictment as a sit-

ting President.

Andersen says the court will look for a defence counsel for Charles Taylor from among the team at the Special Court or elsewhere.

Taylor's trial is expected to start in earnest in about six months. But he is however to make his preliminary appearance "soon," Desmond De Silver, Chief Prosecutor says.

Taylor, Indicted on 3<sup>rd</sup> Mach 2003 on 17-count charges, Wednesday finally arrived at the Special Court

*Cont. page 3*

# No lawyer to defend Taylor

*From page 1*

detention facility about 7:00pm aboard a UN helicopter. Another UN helicopter hovered around in surveillance as Taylor was offloaded at the Court precincts.

Very dejected and subdued, Taylor alighted amidst robust security presence with handcuffs. He wore a brown jacket with bulletproof camouflage but never commented.

The Court's Prosecutor, Desmond de Silver, described the day as a momentous occasion and a plus for international justice.

"Today is a momentous occasion and an important

day for international justice, international community and the people of Sierra Leone. The indictee Charles Taylor has today been safely secured and is now in the detention facility of this international criminal tribunal here in Freetown," said Mr. De Silver in a press briefing following Taylor's arrival. He expressed satisfaction over state cooperation saying Taylor's presence in the court sends out a clear message that no matter how rich, powerful or feared people may be – the law is above all.

The Prosecutor told a battery of journalists that Taylor, under the amended indictment, is charged with

11 counts to ensure a more focused trial for crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law, including sexual slavery and mutilation.

Charles Taylor was captured with huge cash in foreign currency along the Nigerian border with Cameroon while trying to flee from justice. He was immediately transferred to Liberia.

Taylor arrived in Liberia under heavy security at the Roberts International Airport and handed over to the Liberian authorities in a brief ceremony.

Reports from Liberia say there was heavy down-pour at the time of

Taylor's arrival.

He landed in Liberia at about 4:14 PM and was escorted aboard a UN helicopter to the Special Court in Sierra Leone almost immediately at 5:17 PM.

Reports monitored from Liberia say Charles Taylor's political party members held meetings in the Liberian capital Wednesday night to issue a statement about his arrest and transfer to the Special Court.

Other reports say some Taylor loyalists were in tears upon receiving the news of his transfer to the Special Court.

"They have taken our 'Papay' away," they cried.

Awoko

31 March 2006

## European Commission welcomes Taylor's arrest

**L**ouis Michel, the European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, has expressed his "deep satisfaction and relief" on the capture in Nigeria and further transfer to the Special Court for Sierra Leone of Liberian former leader and war crimes suspect Charles Taylor.

"I welcome the arrest and extradition of Charles

Taylor. This is a very welcome event that will contribute to turning the page on one of the darkest episodes of Africa's recent history. There cannot be reconciliation and long lasting peace if there is impunity and immunity for those who committed heinous war crimes", said Mr Michel.

He expressed his appreciation for the prompt and successful action by the Nigerian authorities and the

UN Peacekeeping Force in Liberia (UNMIL). He also praised the determination and firm commitment to democracy and the rule of law of Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. "This important event sets an outstanding example for Africa and the rest of the world. Putting democracy and the rule of Law at the centre of their priorities will enable Africa's leaders to bring peace, stability and prosperity to their nations", said Mr. Michel.



Exclusive  
31 March 2006

## ***At Special Court...***

### **Kenyan Gen. Confirms RUF Atrocities**

*By Mohamed Kai*  
Major General Lionel Ngondi of the Kenyan army has disclosed that members of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), injured seven Kenyan soldiers at Makoth Village in Tonkolili District. General Ngondi told the Trial Chamber that three Kenyan soldiers who were deployed in Magburaka

*Contd. page 2*

### **Kenyan Gen. Confirms RUF Atrocities**

*From front page*

Town suffered serious injuries at the hands of the RUF.

The Special Court witness disclosed that the RUF abducted several Kenyan troops and inflicted multiple injuries on his men. He said he immediately contacted millop officers who airlifted the injured soldiers from Magburaka and Makeni to Mile 91 for medical treatment.

He said RUF fighters opened fire on the helicopter soon after it was air borne to evacuate the wounded soldiers adding that, the pilot managed to crash land in the forest where the wounded were later transferred to another helicopter.

Following these events he said, some of his men withdrew to Bumbuna, Mile 91 and Kabala but that some Kenyan soldier who were abducted by the RUF were later released.

Gen Ngondi also mentioned about trenches that were dug by the RUF along the Magburaka -Makeni highway and also confirmed the abduction of Indians troops by the RUF.

The trial continues today.

Exclusive  
31 March 2006

## *Taylor's Detention Concerns...*

# 5000 British Troops To Strike If...

*By Foday Fofana*

The Exclusive has been assured that Sierra Leoneans have nothing to fear about the presence of

Charles Taylor in this country, who is here to answer to a seventeen count indictment of war crimes and crimes

against humanity.

A top British military source in Freetown, in trying to allay fears that Taylor's pres-

*Contd. page 2*

## 5000 British Troops To Strike If...

*From front page*

ence in the country might spark of renewed hostilities, told The Exclusive that about Five thousand British Troops ( Rapid Deployment Force ) are on high alert to respond to any situation of unrest that has the propensity to derail the country's peace.

"These British men and women in arms would make a swift landing in Freetown or anywhere else in the country on short notice, to robustly deal with any situation...We are here to make the Sierra Leone Army the best in Africa," Lt. Gen. David Julian Richards once told the press in Freetown.

### RSLAF, SLP ON RED ALERT

Both Major General Edwin Sam Mboma the Military Chief of Defence Staff and the Inspector General of Police Brima Acha Kamara have also confirmed that they were on Triple Red Alert right now.

### RSLAF SLP JOINT EXERCISE

"We told you that the joint military/police simulation exercise which we have been doing all along were geared towards preparing for any eventuality like the detention of Charles Taylor in Freetown...I assure your numerous readers that they can go to bed and sleep peacefully," an aide to Sam Mbomah said.

### EX-COMBATANTS WATCHED

He said all ex-combatants who went through the Disarmament Programme are all listed down in RSLAF and police computers; so as to track them down on short notice.

"Have no fear... the SLP is organised and well prepared for the arrival of Charles Taylor and for whatever eventuality...Foday; you see, we plan ahead of situations now so that we are not overtaken by events," one senior military officer further assured.

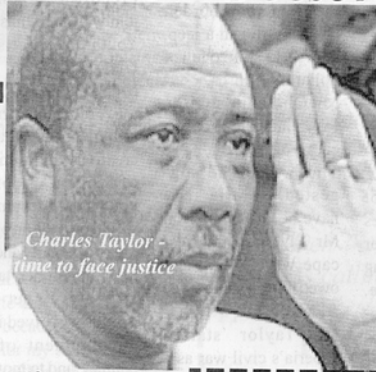
News  
31 March 2006

# "Taylor should not be tried in Si Leone" - FOC Director

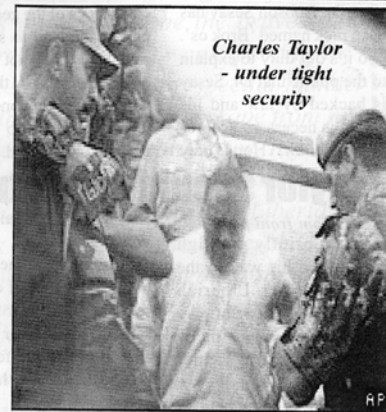
*By Solomon Yarjoh*

**H**uman rights activist and Executive Director of Forum of Conscience (FOC) yesterday in Freetown told this press that the arrival of former president of Liberia, Charles Taylor to face Special Court is a step in a right direction but suggested the former warlord should be tried outside Sierra Leone.

John Caulker said civil society organizations in the country welcomed the arrival of Charles Taylor but added that most of them have suggested for him to



*Charles Taylor -  
time to face justice*



*Charles Taylor  
- under tight  
security*

be tried in the Hague or any other war crime tribunal outside Sierra Leone

Caulker said "in the interest of peace and reconciliation between Sierra Leone and Liberia, Taylor should be tried in another place not very close to his home country".

Charles Taylor arrived in Sierra Leone Wednesday evening

and is presently detained at the detention facility of the Special Court for Sierra Leone. He is charged with 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity. He is alleged to have supported the Revolutionary United Front movement that devastated Sierra Leone for nearly 12 years. Charles Taylor

*Cont. page 2*

## "Taylor should not be tried in Salone"

*From front page*

passed briefly through Liberia on his way to the court. Former Liberian leader Charles Taylor may not go on trial for many months, the case's chief prosecutor says.

Mr Taylor is being held by the war crimes tribunal in Sierra Leone, after he was captured trying to flee Nigeria on Wednesday.

He faces charges of crimes against humanity, including responsibility for murder, rape and mutilation.

US President George Bush welcomed his arrest, but suggested his trial move to The Hague for security reasons.

Mr Bush, meeting Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo at the White House, said he believed a UN Security Council resolution authorising the move could be passed "relatively quickly".

Desmond de Silva, chief prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, set up to prosecute those responsible for the country's brutal civil war, said Mr Taylor would make his first court appearance by the end of this week, but that the trial was "many months away".

"Today is a momentous occasion, an important day for international justice, the international community, and above all the people of Si-

erra Leone," he said on Wednesday.

"His presence in the custody of the special court sends out the clear message that no matter how rich, powerful or feared people may be, the law is above them."

Sacks of cash

British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said the crimes of which Mr Taylor is accused "are some of the gravest imaginable".

He faces 11 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity, over his alleged role fomenting war in Sierra Leone. Prosecutors have discarded six charges for a more "focused" trial.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said his transfer to the tribunal "sends a powerful message to the region that impunity will not be allowed to stand and would-be warlords will pay a price".

Mr Taylor was flown to the court after being taken into UN custody in the Liberian capital, Monrovia.

He was repatriated from Nigeria on Wednesday, where he had been in exile for nearly three years, under a deal ending Liberia's civil war.

After Liberia's new President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf said she wanted

him to go on trial, and Mr Obasanjo said the Liberians were free to come and collect him, Mr Taylor fled.

He was captured on Wednesday morning by security forces close to the Cameroon border, trying to flee in a jeep, with sacks stuffed full of dollars and euros.

Mr Obasanjo said he felt "vindicated" by the capture.

Those who had suggested Nigeria may have been complicit in Mr Taylor's initial escape were wrong and owed him an apology, he added.

Mr Taylor started Liberia's civil war as a warlord in 1989, before being elected president in 1997.

He 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, ears and lips of civilians during their decade-long war.

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

Instability also spread into neighbouring parts of Ivory Coast and Guinea

Exclusive  
31 March 2006  
Opinion

COMMENTARY

By Foday Fofana

We had learnt of the mysterious disappearance and arrest of fugitive former Liberian leader Charles Gangay Taylor while trying to cross the Cameroon border with Nigeria, yesterday.

The Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo who is in Washington to meet President George Bush, suddenly came under intense pressure from world leaders like George Bush and Kofi Annan to explain Taylor's disappearance or responsibility for what the White House described an affront to justice; on getting news of Taylor's arrest, order that Taylor be put on board a special flight and flown to Monrovia.

**TAYLOR IS NOT WELCOME**

So far so good. When Taylor gets to Monrovia, he will be handed over to UN troops of UNMIL to escort him to Freetown where he is wanted by the UN backed Special Court to answer for war crimes. But what we Sierra Leoneans say is this: We want to enjoy our hard earned but still fragile peace; even though we don't have enough on our plates to eat.

For the security implications of Taylor's presence here, we are calling on Government, the Special Court and the international community at large including the African Union, ECOWAS, the Commonwealth, the OIC etc. to please take the former Liberian warlord elsewhere in the globe, except Sierra Leone.

**TAYLOR STILL POWERFUL**

Listening to Taylor's Regional Adviser, an Arab national; he recalled that before Taylor left Liberia, he promised to be back.

And the adviser when interviewed, said Taylor may

March 31, 2006

# For Security Reason: Taylor Not Welcome

be in the bushes of Liberia. Taylor is very bitter against Sierra Leone firstly for using this country as a launching pad for ECOMOG troops striking NPFL positions in Liberia, secondly for our refusal to allow him use this country as a launching pad to invade

***"Taylor is now pushed to the wall like a wild cat; he has no escape route now, no room for maneuvering so his only reaction is to hit back.***

***He is prepared to use his last dollar- has a whole lot of dollars and his influence in the subregion and beyond to destabilize this country.***

Liberia. He was even arrested, detained at Pademba Road and deported and thirdly because, it is in Sierra Leone that he will be put in jail for war crimes.

**INSTABILITY**

"Taylor is now pushed to the wall like a wild cat; he has no escape route now, no room for maneuvering so his only reactor. is to hit back. He is prepared to use his last dollar- has a whole lot of dollars and his influence in the subregion and beyond to destabilize this country.

**EX-COMBATANTS THREAT**

It is no secret however that there are thousands of ex-combatants who because of idleness, joblessness and bitterness, are ready to take the guns again if anyone - not even Taylor - takes the lead.

So for God's sake, we don't want Taylor here please. Take him anywhere but not Sierra Leone. The people of Sierra Leone don't want any compromise on this issue and already people are planning mass demonstrations all over the country no sooner Taylor lands here.

**MASS DEMONSTRATIONS**

"We will demonstrate and sit-in at the Special Court door steps and make so much noise until Taylor is taken elsewhere...We leave our case with Taylor to the Almighty God for action...What we want is peace even with all the hardship", a Trade Unionist stated.

## News

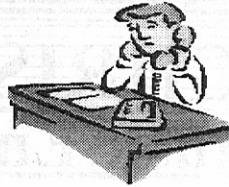
31 March 2006

Opinion

LWS

Friday March 31st 2006

# MOTUBA'S CORNER



## No place to hide

*Octogenarian Motuba was overwhelmed with joy when he catches a glimpse on one of Africa's most feared former warlords Charles Taylor on handcuffs being ushered into one of the detention cells of the Special Court for Sierra Leone last Wednesday. This is because his apparent disappearance from Calaba in Nigeria on the eve of being handed over to the court via Liberia government was a security threat to the West Africa sub-region.*

*The octogenarian was not impressed when he received news of his attempted escape giving the fact that Charles Taylor has presumed to be the bravest and fearless in the sub region. Motuba was expecting Taylor to have presented himself in a respectful manner to the court rather than attempting to escape from justice. Motuba knows there is no place for Taylor to hide considering what he inflicted on the sub region.*

*Motuba says bravo to the government of Liberia for handing over this evil man to the Special Court.*

*Memories of atrocities committed against the people of Sierra Leone are still fresh in the minds of all.*

*Motuba believes justice must surpass impunity.*

*Solomon was a journalist*

Independent Observer

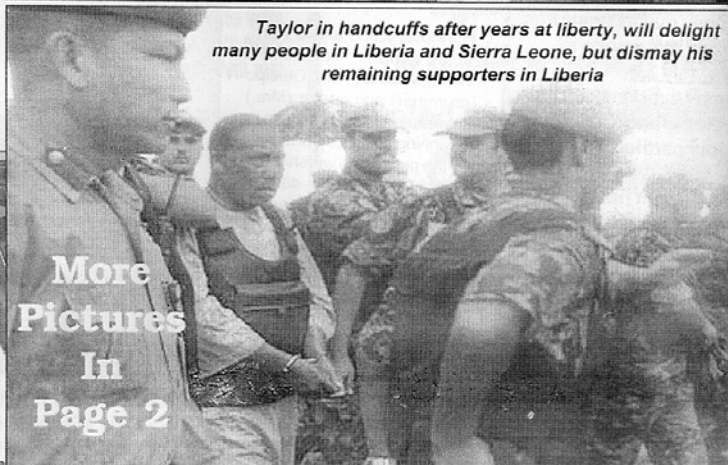
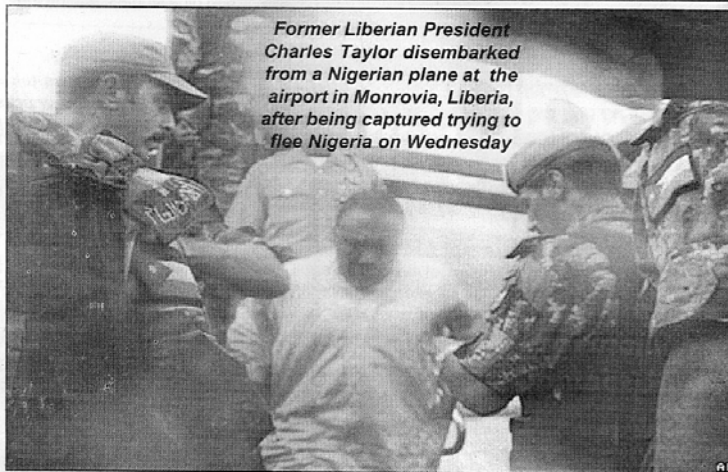
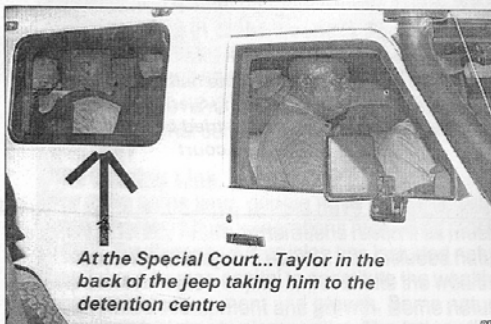
31 March 2006

Opinion

# Charles Ghankay Taylor: The Sad End Of A Monster

After years of shadow-boxing with the UN backed Special Court for Sierra Leone to face trials for war crimes, crimes against humanity and other serious violation of international humanitarian laws, former Liberian President Charles Taylor has finally landed in the Court's net. We present pictures, showing his journey from neighbouring Liberia to Sierra Leone. As people in literary circles would say: Poetic justice!

Pictures are by courtesy of  
Cocorioko Website



More  
Pictures  
In  
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Spectator  
31 March 2006  
Opinion

## SPECTA-TORIAL

### Taylor to be tried in The Hague!

**T**he news of Taylor's arrival to the Special Court two days ago was received by Sierra Leoneans with great joy but underneath there was fear. When a good number of Sierra Leoneans who have access to witness Taylor's arrival live at the Special Court and those who watched it over the ABC Television of which we must commend the ABC, then you may want to ask, what shall it profit anybody whose greatest desire is to kill, main and violate the rights of your fellow human being because of power, wealth and prestige?.

Charles Taylor is now brought so low to the point of a mere prisoner but for him to be tried here is still contested by a good number of Sierra Leonean.

We believe Taylor being the third most wanted man in the World would possibly be tried in The Hague few months from now. Taylor, from what gathered will not only be tried for the crimes against humanity but his case will probably be presented by the United States of America for jumping the prison bars in the USA.

If only people can remember that day when Foday Sankoh was finally arrested after his escape, there was a heavy down pour of rain in the capital of Freetown. We all saw similar occurrence on the day Taylor landed in Liberian on board a Nigerian Presidential jet enroute to Sierra Leone.

There was also a heavy down pour of rain in the Liberian capital which delayed the flight that is to travel with Taylor to the Special Court. His first day and night at Special Court saw rain pouring down after almost over nine months with out rain.

He would be there asking himself a lot of questions that is too late to answer but as the Special Court Chief Prosecutor Desmond De Silva stated that "No how rich you are, you are not above the law".



## Charles Taylor: No Where To Hide

*It is quite commendable that the ex-President of Liberia and ex-Warlord, Charles Ghankay Taylor has been arrested by the Nigerian security forces. He was apparently handcuffed while heading towards the Cameroon and the Chad border crossing points.*

*The arrest of Taylor who has been declared wanted by the Special Court in Sierra Leone and Interpol marks a complete turning point, as it paves the way for extradition to the Special Court in Freetown, where he should defend himself for his role in fueling the decade long Sierra Leonean civil conflict.*

*By last Saturday, President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria had reiterated his support for Taylor to be extradited to Liberia after consultations with other members of the African Union. He declared that it was his wish that Charles Taylor be handed over to a democratically elected government in Liberia, rather than to the Special Court in Sierra Leone.*

*A few days earlier, the new President of Liberia, Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf forwarded a formal request to Nigeria to hand over Taylor to the Special Court, after being pressurized by the International Community.*

*But hopes faded when it was announced on Tuesday that the exiled ex-President of Liberia had escaped from his residence in Calaba, and the security guards assigned to him were being arrested for questioning. The escape of Taylor became a complete embarrassment to the International Community-especially the officials of the Special Court in Freetown, President Obasanjo-the host and the US Government.*

*Taylor's escape was greeted around the world with mixed feelings.*

*This is because the ex-Liberian warlord has a history of having successfully escaped from custody at many instances. Taylor was able to escape from a maximum US jail in Boston, Massachusetts, at a time the Liberia government issued an extradition warrant against him to the US government.*

*He was wanted in Liberia to face embezzlement charges. He was able to avoid being arrested in Accra, Ghana during an ECOWAS summit meeting on the Liberian crisis. It was during this time that he negotiated with ECOWAS leaders to be granted asylum in Nigeria, as guest of President Obasanjo.*

*The arrest of Taylor is thus considered as a victory for the rule of law and the fight against impunity that is waged by human rights organizations all over the world. What is certain is that Taylor has been accused of atrocities, vandalism and crimes against humanity. It is thus left with him to defend himself rather than dodging the due process of the law. All men are considered equal before the law and nobody is above the law.*

AFP

will then go to Sierra Leone, where he is wanted by the war crimes tribunal for his alleged role in the civil war.

Tribunal officials say extra troops are due to arrive in Sierra Leone to reinforce security at the UN-backed court - where a cell is waiting for him, reports the BBC's Mark Doyle in Monrovia. Mr Taylor faces 17 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity over his alleged role in the brutal civil war in Sierra Leone, where he is accused of backing rebels notorious for mutilating civilians.

The tribunal's top prosecutor Desmond de Silva told the BBC he was delighted he had been arrested at the border check point. Mr Taylor had been in exile in Nigeria since 2003 after a deal ending Liberia's civil war.

He went missing on Monday from his southern villa after the country announced Liberia was free to detain him. The departure of the jet from Nigeria was confirmed by a police source and officials, as well as eyewitnesses.

Mr Taylor was detained earlier by security forces in the town of Gamboru-Ngala, close to the Cameroon border in the north-eastern Nigerian state of Borno.

The former Liberian leader had arrived at the frontier in a Range Rover jeep with diplomatic corps number plates, a trader working at the Gamboru-Ngala border post told AFP news agency. "He was wearing a white flowing robe," said Babagana Alhaji Kata.

"He passed through immigration but when he reached customs they were suspicious and they insisted on searching the jeep, where they found a large amount of US dollars. "After a further search they discovered he was Charles Taylor"

Nigeria has arrested Mr Taylor's Nigerian guards and has launched an investigation. 'Vindicated' News of Mr Taylor's capture came just before Mr Obasanjo left for a visit to the US for talks with President George W Bush.

Mr Bush welcomed the capture and said he appreciated Nigeria's work to apprehend him, during their meeting. For his part, Mr Obasanjo denied Nigeria had been "negligent" in its handling of the suspect, and said earlier he felt "vindicated" by the capture. Those who had suggested Nigeria may have been complicit in Mr. Taylor's initial escape were wrong and owed him an apology, he added.

#### *Culled from BBC*

Latest reports say Mr. Taylor has already arrived in Freetown.

Meanwhile a statement issued by Amnesty International yesterday says 'justice has been fulfilled' with the capture of Mr. Taylor by the Nigerian security.

The statement added that the fear expressed by many about security threat with regards Taylor 's trial at the Special Court could even be worst if he is at large. Peace is not when the guns are silent but when there is justice, the statement added.

According to the statement, the people of Sierra Leone who were promised the bitterness of war have waited for far too long for justice.

Justice should not be jeopardized, because one man is considered powerful than others.

"We finally want to maintain that Charles Taylor should be presumed innocent and treated with international standards of prompt and fair trial" the statement concluded.

Awoko  
31 March 2006

# You said it



**Peter Gbongo**  
Law Reform



**Abdul Rahman Jalloh**  
Business Man



**Paulina Kai**  
Student



**Mohamed Khanu**  
Human Rights Activist



**Oriah Bah**  
Student FBC



**Prince Kargbo**  
Unemployed

## Are you comfortable with Taylor's presence in Salone? **?**

Former President of Liberia, Charles Taylor who was indicted on an 11-count indictment by the Special Court has been brought to Sierra Leone to face justice. What do the people think of this issue? Is it the right time? Are they comfortable? These are the voices of people we met in various sectors of our society. *Compiled by Betty Milton*

**Peter Gbongo:** *Worker Law Reform, 17 Sir Samuel Lewis Road.* "This is a big score for the Special Court. If Charles Taylor had managed to escape, this would have been a threat to the people and since peace has returned to the nation, justice must take its course. I hope that justice would be done."

**Mohamed A. Khanu:** *Human Rights Activist, 61 Regent Road.* "I am comfortable in the sense that Taylor has been indicted since 2003 and he is to face the charge of the Special Court. I am also comfortable because the people of Sierra Leone have suffered for too long because of the decade old war which resulted into some of them becoming destitute. Because of that justice has to be done, as Charles Taylor is not the only person that would be facing trial. The people of Sierra Leone should not be afraid of the security in the country as our security personnel are trained and professional soldiers capable of manning our borders."

**Paulina Isata Kai:** *Student, 13 Spur Road.* "As for me, I am happy for the brave step taken by the international community. But my worry now is the security situation in the country. There are not enough security personnel in the country and if Charles had escaped from an American cell and went to Liberia and started a war, I don't think it's a good idea having him here."

**Joshua Wright:** *Student IPAM 41 Byrne Lane.* "Can't say I am "I can't say whether I'm comfortable or not as we have a fragile peace in the country. One important

thing the international community should focus on is to fight poverty instead of bringing people to book when the causes of the war are still seen around. These are marginalization, poverty and the porous borders. I have also learnt that they will only secure the court what about the borders."

**Abdul Rahman Jalloh:** *Junks Seller, 7 Savage Street Wellington.* "I am very comfortable that Charles Taylor has been brought to justice as there are other indictees at the Special Court facing trial. This is a sign that anyone who commits crimes would face justice. I am strongly convinced that there is enough security in the country so there is nothing to be afraid of."

**Prince Kargbo:** *Unemployed Youth.* "I am not comfortable with the presence of Charles Taylor here. The best thing they should do is to take him back to Liberia because our peace is still fragile."

**Oriah Bah:** *Student-FBC.* "I am not comfortable with the presence of Charles Taylor in Sierra Leone. Let them take him to the International Criminal Court at The Hague. We are not safe here. If Taylor is tried here foreign investors may think twice before coming to Sierra Leone."

**Kadie Turay:** *Business Woman-14 Pyke Street.* "I feel very happy that Charles Taylor has been brought to Sierra Leone to face trial at the Special Court. He was the man who told innocent Sierra Leoneans that they would test the bitterness of war. So I want the court to ask Mr Taylor what he meant by that particular statement. Because of his words hundreds of people suffered in this country."

**Rokie Deen:** *Businesswoman Dan Street.* "As for me I feel very comfortable because of the atrocities that were committed during the war. 60 houses were burnt down at the community I was living at Fourah Bay. People suffered a lot in this country and therefore those that are responsible should be brought to justice."

UNMIL statement on former Liberian president Charles Taylor  
30 March 2006

Acting in accordance with its mandate under United Nations Security Council resolution 1638, on 29 March 2006 UNMIL apprehended and detained former Liberian President Charles Taylor. This took place at Roberts International Airport upon Mr. Taylor's return from Nigeria.

Shortly afterwards, Mr. Taylor was transferred by UNMIL to Freetown where he was placed in the custody of the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

\* \* \* \* \*

## United Nations

30 March 2006

### **DAILY PRESS BRIEFING BY THE OFFICE OF THE SPOKESMAN FOR THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (Excerpts)**

The following is a near-verbatim transcript of today's noon briefing by Marie Okabe, Deputy Spokesman for the Secretary-General.

-SNIP-

**\*\*Charles Taylor**

Turning to former Liberian President Charles Taylor, he spent the night in a detention facility in the custody of the Special Court for Sierra Leone in Freetown.

The Court, meanwhile, announced that the President of the Special Court made a request to the Government of the Netherlands and the President of the International Criminal Court to facilitate the holding of the trial of Charles Taylor by the Special Court in The Hague.

The Court President's letter refers to concerns about the stability in the region should Taylor be tried in Freetown.

We have the Court's press release available in the Spokesman's Office.

-SNIP-

Question: Do you have any news, and I have two questions, the first one is do you have any news on when the Security Council will adopt a resolution on Taylor's transfer to The Hague?

Deputy Spokesman: That would be up to the Security Council. I just --

Correspondent: [Inaudible].

Deputy Spokesman: You'd have to ask the Security Council President. The Court just announced a short while ago that it had sent a letter to The Hague and to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Correspondent: No, but it has already done that yesterday, because the ICC announced it also.

-SNIP-

## BBC

30 March 2006

### **Taylor trial 'may move to Hague'**

Sierra Leone's war crimes tribunal has asked the International Criminal Court (ICC) to host the trial of ex-Liberian leader Charles Taylor.

The ICC said Sierra Leone's request to use The Hague as a venue was being considered, but stressed the African tribunal would still control the case.

The request has been backed by Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf.

Mr Taylor, who was captured on Wednesday in Nigeria, faces charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The 11 counts, including responsibility for murder, rape and mutilation, relate to his alleged role fomenting war in Sierra Leone.

The former president's spiritual adviser, Kilarri Anand Paul, has said Mr Taylor would be happy to face a trial in The Hague.

### **Instability fear**

ICC spokesman Ernest Sagaga told the BBC News website that the ICC was examining the request from the Sierra Leone war crimes tribunal to hold proceedings on its premises.

"It would be still under the jurisdiction of the Special Court for Sierra Leone," he said.

We still expect a resolution from the Security Council that will allow a change in venue to a more conducive environment, such as the international court at The Hague  
Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf

### **Liberian president**

Dutch Foreign Ministry spokesman Dirk-Jan Vermeij said the Sierra Leone tribunal was concerned that if Mr Taylor's trial was held in the capital, Freetown, it could lead to instability in the region.

The Netherlands was willing to co-operate with a trial at The Hague provided certain conditions were met, Mr Vermeij said.

US President George Bush said on Wednesday that he was keen for the trial to be moved, but to do so would require a UN Security Council resolution.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice believed it could be passed "relatively quickly", he added.

### **Guerrilla support**

In a radio address to the nation, President Johnson-Sirleaf supported the moves to hold Mr Taylor's trial outside neighbouring Sierra Leone.

"We still expect a resolution from the Security Council that will allow a change in venue to a more conducive environment, such as the international court at The Hague," she said. Mrs Johnson-Sirleaf said she had stressed that the UN had to ensure Mr Taylor was allowed "the right of a vigorous self-defence".

Others alleged to have committed war crimes in Sierra Leone are already on trial in Freetown.

However, observers fear Mr Taylor may still be able to mobilise a guerrilla army, capable of attacking the court in Freetown from the surrounding hills.

His supporters argue that a trial in Freetown could not be fair, even if the judges were international, because of the hatred felt by many Sierra Leoneans towards the man accused of starting their country's decade-long civil war.

Story from BBC NEWS:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/africa/4860976.stm>

## BBC

30 March 2006

### **Taylor trial may be out of Africa**

By Joseph Winter

Liberia's former President Charles Taylor is finally in a detention centre in Sierra Leone, three years after a warrant for his arrest was first issued by a UN-backed war crimes court.

However, for security reasons, the trial might in fact take place in The Hague, rather than in the Sierra Leone capital, Freetown.

US President George W Bush supports a change of venue and the Dutch foreign ministry says it has received a formal request from the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Human rights groups accuse Mr Taylor of being responsible for wars and instability across West Africa in the 1990s.

They say he retains the ability to mobilise a fighting force of armed young men, as he has in the past, which could threaten the new-found peace in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

His presence in Freetown could prove a magnet for such a guerrilla army, which would have little chance of reaching The Hague.

The suggestion that Mr Taylor be tried in The Hague, though still under the jurisdiction of the Sierra Leone court, was first mentioned by the court's chief prosecutor Desmond de Silva to the BBC News website last year.

From the evidence we have, he used our diamonds to fuel the war and cause untold hardship to our nation

Frederick Carew

Sierra Leone justice minister

"Mr Taylor undoubtedly still controls forces which could destabilise the region," said the British lawyer.

"A number of countries - both Western and African - take the view that perhaps the interests of peace and security could best be served by a trial outside the region."

Mr de Silva now, however, says he is satisfied with the new security arrangements in place - a contingent of UN peacekeepers is guarding the court, even though the UN peacekeeping force has officially pulled out of Sierra Leone.

A trial in The Hague might also placate the fears of some Liberians who fear Mr Taylor would not receive a fair trial in Freetown, even if the judges were international.

The former Liberian leader's spiritual advisor, Kilari Anand Paul, says Mr Taylor would be happy to face a trial in The Hague.

### **Controlling forces**

The Sierra Leonean Revolutionary United Front rebel group, which Mr Taylor is accused of arming in exchange for diamonds, was guilty of horrendous atrocities: murder, rape and the systematic mutilation of tens of thousands of civilians by hacking off their feet or hands with machetes and axes.



Lamin Jusu-Jarka, chairman of Sierra Leone's War Affected Amputee Association, had both his arms hacked off during the conflict.

He says he would be happy as long as Mr Taylor faces justice, wherever that may be.

"That man is a great enemy to our country. If people see him here, they will want to kill him," said Freetown taxi-driver Gibrilla.

Sierra Leonean Justice Minister Frederick Carew is more diplomatic, but just as keen to see Mr Taylor face justice.

"From the evidence we have, he used our diamonds to fuel the war and cause untold hardship to our nation," he said.

And yet he retains considerable popularity in his home country.

James Bleetan, editor of the New Standard newspaper, says if Mr Taylor had contested the Liberian polls, he would have won easily - as he did in the previous elections in 1997.

## **Support**

None of the 22 candidates to replace Mr Taylor was eager to mention him during the campaign, not wanting to commit themselves either way for fear of alienating either the international community or potential voters.

Even the leader of what was once Mr Taylor's ruling National Patriotic Party, Roland Massaquoi, tried to keep quiet.

But his party members showed their true feelings during their rally, chanting: "Our pappy, dat dey carry, dey go bring back" - Liberian English for "Our leader, who they took away, will be brought back".

But seeing him arrested as soon as he set foot on Liberia soil and sent off to Sierra Leone in handcuffs is not what they had in mind.

After taking office in January, Liberia's President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf said reconstruction and development were her priority, not Mr Taylor.

Yet only two months later, it emerged that she had formally asked Nigeria, where Mr Taylor had gone into exile, to extradite him.

Some suspect that she came under strong pressure from the international community, particularly the US, to answer the Taylor question once and for all.

Turning him over for trial in The Hague just might be acceptable to all concerned, and allow both Liberia and Sierra Leone to concentrate on the huge task of rebuilding their shattered nations.

Story from BBC NEWS:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/africa/4345120.stm>

## Reuters

31 March 2006

### **Sierra Leone court wants to try Taylor in Hague**

By Victoria Averill and Christo Johnson

FREETOWN, March 30 (Reuters) - A U.N.-backed war crimes court wants to shift the trial of ex-Liberian President and feared warlord Charles Taylor to the Netherlands because of security concerns, it said on Thursday.

Taylor, 58, was flown in handcuffs to Sierra Leone on Wednesday to face 11 counts of war crimes at the U.N.-backed court stemming from Sierra Leone's 1991-2002 civil war.

Charges against him include mutilations and sexual slavery. He is also accused of receiving diamonds to support Sierra Leone rebels who often hacked off limbs or raped their victims.

Taylor will be the first former African president to appear before an international court when his initial hearing is held in Freetown on Monday or Tuesday, a court official said. It was earlier announced for Friday but was later put back.

Taylor will be asked how he pleads to the charges.

Court President Justice A. Raja N. Fernando wants the trial switched to the Hague, where it could use the modern facilities of the new International Criminal Court (ICC).

The request cited fears the trial of Taylor, who still has supporters in neighbouring Liberia, could provoke unrest in both of the small and war-ravaged west African states.

Court chief prosecutor Desmond de Silva stressed it was just a change of venue and it would "be the Special Court for Sierra Leone sitting in The Hague".

The Dutch Foreign Ministry and the ICC were considering the request made on Wednesday, the day Taylor was delivered by U.N. forces to Freetown after being deported from Nigeria.

Newly elected Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, who has said Taylor should not face justice in a "hostile" venue, on Thursday also backed a move "to a more conducive environment such as ... The Hague".

### **FAMILY OPPOSES**

Taylor's family said it opposed the transfer of his trial to The Hague and were worried about his safety in Freetown.

"The family ... doubts the ability of the Special Court to protect him," said a statement issued in Accra, Ghana, by his sister, Thelma Taylor Saye.

A Dutch foreign ministry spokesman said there would have to be a legal basis for the Sierra Leone court to sit in The Hague, such as a U.N. Security Council resolution. Taylor would have to leave the Netherlands after a verdict.

In 1998, the Council endorsed a U.S.-British plan to put two Libyans on trial in the Netherlands, before Scottish judges, for the 1988 bombing of Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland.

Taylor made a run for freedom on Monday from his temporary exile in Nigeria, only to be captured on Wednesday and whisked to the Sierra Leone special court.

Earlier, de Silva said if convicted Taylor faced a possible life term, but not the death penalty, which was forbidden under international criminal law.

Taylor's exile in Nigeria was part of a 2003 peace deal to end a civil war in Liberia.

Established in 2002, the ICC is investigating war crimes in Uganda, Sudan's Darfur region and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Its first trial is expected to start later this year.

Taylor's trial in an ICC court room would help to raise the profile of an organisation still firmly opposed by the United States, which fears it will be used for politically motivated cases against its troops or citizens.

*(Additional reporting by Niclas Mika and Emma Thomasson in Amsterdam, Alphonso Toweh in Monrovia)*

## Ireland Online

31 March 2006

<http://breakingnews.iol.ie/news/story.asp?j=177801158&p=y778xy864>

### **Charles Taylor trial in Africa 'too risky'**

Trial in Africa is too risky for a man accused of fomenting bloodshed across West Africa, international prosecutors said in requesting that Charles Taylor's trial for crimes against humanity be moved to The Hague in the Netherlands.

The former Liberian president is set to become the first African head of state tried for war crimes before an international court. He has been indicted on 11 counts for allegedly supporting a brutal rebel movement in Sierra Leone, Liberia's neighbour to the north.

He helped pioneer the use of child soldiers, often kidnapped from their parents and drugged, and his fighters are still believed to roam Guinea, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast and Liberia.

"(Taylor's) mere physical presence back in the region could be disruptive and destabilising and we've heard reports that Sierra Leoneans are worried that his trial in particular could cause security problems," said Edgar Chen, a lawyer with the Coalition for International Justice, yesterday.

His first court appearance, expected to be at the UN-backed Special Court in Sierra Leone, won't be before Monday, said Peter Andersen, a spokesman for the tribunal, which was convened to try those held most responsible for the horrors of Sierra Leone's civil war.

Andersen said court officials had requested the trial be moved. "But I wish to stress that it would be the Special Court of Sierra Leone sitting in The Hague," he said.

In the Netherlands, Dutch Foreign Ministry spokesman Dirk-Jan Vermeij said the Sierra Leone court's request that the Hague-based International Criminal Court host the trial "says that holding Taylor's trial outside Sierra Leone could help stability and peace in the region".

Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf also raised concerns about stability yesterday, saying in an address to her nation that The Hague would be a "more conducive environment" for Taylor's trial than so close to Liberia, where many still support him.

"The government wishes to make it abundantly clear that those who would try to use these circumstances as an excuse for insurrection to undermine the stability of the nation will be dealt with harshly, without mercy," Sirleaf said.

David Crane, the former chief prosecutor of the Sierra Leone court, said in an interview yesterday that security in Freetown was ample.

But "Charles Taylor is the first sitting head of state ever to be indicted for war crimes (in Africa), and is second only behind Slobodan Milosevic, so people are a little bit nervous," said Crane, who drew up the original indictment against Taylor. "Prudence is always an important part of justice, but justice will be done. So it's not anything that is going to skew the results."

African leaders have been brought before international tribunals before: Jean Kambanda, prime minister of Rwanda at the beginning of that country's 1994 genocide, pleaded guilty to genocide before a UN tribunal. He was Rwanda's head of government.

United Nations



Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

## UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 30 March 2006

*[The media summaries and press clips do not necessarily represent the views of UNMIL.]*

### **International Clips on Liberia**

03/30/2006 06:55:45

#### **Liberian leader wants change of venue for Taylor's trial**

MONROVIA, March 30, 2006 (AFP) - Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf Thursday said she would like that her predecessor, who is facing prosecution for crimes against humanity, be tried outside the fragile West African region. "We still expect a resolution from the UN Security Council that will allow for a change in venue to a more conducive environment such as the international court in the Hague," Sirleaf said in an address to the nation. The United States is pressing for the high profile crimes against humanity trial to be switched to The Netherlands. US President George W Bush said Wednesday moving the trial to The Hague would require a UN Security Council resolution, but added that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice believed it could be passed "relatively quickly".

**EDITORIAL** 03/30/2006 08:49:52

#### **A warlord brought to justice**

Source: Chicago Tribune (KRT)

Mar. 30--When United Nations officials took Liberia's former president Charles Taylor into custody Wednesday in Nigeria; it marked a good day for the rule of law in a part of the world that has been all too familiar with the rule of despots. Taylor will make history--as the first former leader of an African state to face international justice on charges of crimes against humanity.

03/30/2006 06:08:09

#### **Ex-Liberian President Charles Taylor's first court appearance may be Friday**

By CLARENCE ROY-MACAULAY  
Associated Press Writer

FREETOWN, Sierra Leone - The image of Liberia's one-time President Charles Taylor in handcuffs dominated Thursday's front pages in Sierra Leone, where he is to be tried for crimes against humanity stemming from his alleged support for rebels who raped and maimed during a civil war here. Prosecutors at the tribunal called the Special Court convened to try those held responsible for Sierra Leone's civil war said Taylor's first appearance, during which he would hear the charges against him and be asked to plea, could be as early as Friday. He is set to become the first-ever African head of state tried on war crimes charges by an international court.

## Kenyan daily hails arrest of Liberia's Charles Taylor

*Text of editorial entitled "Let the Taylors of Africa face Justice" published by Kenyan newspaper The People on 30 March*

Nigerian authorities deserve congratulations for their swift action in apprehending former Liberian President Charles Taylor, who had attempted to escape his extradition to face a war tribunal in Sierra Leone. The former president, who has been in exile in Nigeria, was seized on Tuesday [28 March] night by security forces on the border with Cameroon, about 600 kilometers from where he has been living since 2003, under an agreement that helped to end Liberia's 14-year civil war.

The Economist (UK) 29 March 2006

### **Pappy pinched**

[Editorial]

HE IS West Africa's answer to Slobodan Milosevic. Just as the late Serbian leader was largely responsible for a series of dreadful wars that gripped the Balkans for a decade, Charles Taylor, the former president of Liberia, is blamed for civil wars in West Africa that killed hundreds of thousands of people. On Wednesday March 29th Nigerian police finally detained him as he attempted to flee over a border. Nigeria's government now promises to deport him, almost certainly to Liberia. Mr Taylor, who is also a Baptist preacher and is known to many Liberians simply as "Pappy", had lived in exile in a luxurious villa in the southern Nigerian town of Calabar, though not under official custody, since 2003. That year he left office in Liberia as a rebel army prepared to oust him, and as international pressure grew for him to be brought before a war-crimes tribunal for his part in fostering conflict next door in Sierra Leone

### **International Clips on West Africa**

03/30/2006 06:32:43

### **Netherlands says it received request to host Charles Taylor's war crimes trial**

Source: AP DataStream

THE HAGUE, Netherlands - The special tribunal for Sierra Leone has asked the Netherlands to host Charles Taylor's war crimes trial, the Foreign Ministry said Thursday, a day after the former Liberian president was arrested. Foreign Ministry spokesman Dirk-Jan Vermeij said the Sierra Leone court had asked the International Criminal Court to make its facilities available for the trial. ICC officials were not immediately available for comment.

03/30/2006 07:27:29

### **Victims of Sierra Leone war rejoice at Taylor's arrest**

FREETOWN, March 30, 2006 (AFP) - Victims of Sierra Leone's gruesome rebel war Thursday hailed the arrest of Liberia's former president Charles Taylor, who is in UN custody in Freetown to face charges of crimes against humanity. Taylor was arrested Wednesday at the Nigerian border and taken to a detention center of the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone, nearly three years after it indicted him for his alleged role in the 1990s rebel war against the government of Sierra Leonean President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah.

## **Local Media – Newspapers**

### **Taylor in Special Court's Custody**

*(Daily Observer, The Inquirer, The News, The Analyst, New Vision, Liberian Express, The Informer and The Evidence)*

- The Special Court for Sierra Leone yesterday took into custody former President Charles Taylor after he was arrested in Nigeria, returned to Liberia and was re-arrested by UNMIL and sent to Freetown. Announcing Mr. Taylor's arrival, Special Court Chief Prosecutor Desmond de Silva said it was a momentous occasion and an important day for international justice, the international community, and above all, the people of Sierra Leone.

### **Taylor Loyalist Says Government Has Declared War**

*(The Evidence)*

- Former National Patriotic Party Representative in the House Sando Johnson said in a Star Radio interview recently that the government's request for the handover of former President Taylor to the Special Court for Sierra Leone meant that it had declared a war. He said that at the time that Liberia needed peace and security most it was not necessary to deal with the Taylor issue, which has the propensity to reverse gains made in the peace process.

### **Nimba County Citizens Pledge Loyalty to Government**

*(Daily Observer and The Informer)*

- Reading a statement of support to President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf in Monrovia recently, Nimba County Superintendent Harrison Kanwea said that the people of Nimba denounced all forms of violence and any acts that could cause instability in the country. He said that the relationship that exists between former President Taylor and some citizens of Nimba County does not represent the vision and aspirations of the entire citizenry of the county.

### **Government Reaffirms Commitment to Small Arms Commission**

*(The News and The Analyst)*

- Foreign Minister George Wallace has reaffirmed government's commitment to the creation of the Liberia National Commission on Small Arms, a Foreign Ministry press release said in Monrovia yesterday.

## **Local Media – Radio Veritas** *(News monitored yesterday at 18:45 pm)*

### **President Makes New Appointments in Government**

- President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf yesterday appointed Pennoh Bestman as Roberts International Airport Deputy Managing Director for Administration, Richmond Anderson as Deputy Information Minister for Administration, Joseph Bowier as Liberia Produce and Marketing Corporation Deputy Managing Director and John Martin as National Housing Authority Board of Directors Chairman, an Executive Mansion press statement said.

*(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)*

### **UNMIL Security on High Alert to Apprehend Taylor**

- According to journalists that covered the event, the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) yesterday beefed up security around the Roberts International Airport in preparation for the arrival and transfer of Charles Taylor to the Special Court in Sierra Leone.

*(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)*

**Former Liberian Leader Handed Over to Special Court for Sierra Leone**

*(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)*

**Special Court for Sierra Leone Slashes Indictment Counts against Taylor**

- Speaking at a press conference in Freetown, Sierra Leone, yesterday, the Special Court for Sierra Leone Chief Prosecutor Desmond de Silva announced that the Court was reducing from 17 to 11 counts of the indictment against former President Charles Taylor. He did not specify the reason.

*(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)*

**Nigerian Leader Dismisses Alleged Conspiracy for Taylor's Escape**

- Addressing a news conference in Washington, DC yesterday, Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo said that the arrest of former President Charles Taylor proved he had conspired with former President Charles Taylor to ensure his escape. President Obasanjo added that he had risked himself politically by hosting the former Liberian leader.

*(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)*

**ELBS RADIO** *(News monitored yesterday at 19:00 pm)***House of Representatives Speaker Warns against Subversive Activities**

- House of Representatives Speaker Edwin Snowe has warned Liberians against subversive activities following the transfer of former President Charles Taylor to the Special Court for Sierra Leone. He noted that Mr. Taylor's issue was an international one which the former Liberian leader must settle through the Court.

*Complete versions of the UNMIL International Press Clips, UNMIL Daily Liberian Radio Summary and UNMIL Liberian Newspapers Summary are posted each day on the UNMIL Bulletin Board. If you are unable to access the UNMIL Bulletin Board or would like further information on the content of the summaries, please contact Mr. Jeddi Armah at [armahj@un.org](mailto:armahj@un.org).*



## Cocorioko website

31 March 2006

<http://www.cocorioko.com/>

### **TAYLOR'S TRIAL WILL OPEN A CAN OF WORMS THAT WILL STINK**

Captured Liberian rebel chieftain, Charles Taylor, will definitely open a can of worms in his testimony when his war crimes trials begin in the Hague where he will likely be tried after the request yesterday by the Special Court of Sierra Leone for the trial to be held there. During the rebel wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone, it had always been suspected that the successes of both Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia ( NPFL) and Foday Sankoh's Revolutionary United Front ( RUF ) hinged on a intricate, delicate and well-coordinated web of both local and international conspirators.

Both the NPFL and the RUF could not have made the astonishing headway the world saw without the help of people in high places. It is suspected that ministers of government, other highly-placed individuals like Paramount Chiefs and foreign business moguls and their agents within helped both rebel organizations conquer their respective countries.

Sierra Leone was cheated of what could have been the most sensational trials ever in the country's history when her own rebel kingpins Foday Sankoh and Sam Bockarie ( Mosquito) died suddenly while junta leader Johnny Paul Koroma vanished into thin air. In the case of Liberia, Taylor is still alive and so are his former Chief Lieutenants like Prince Yormie Johnson, who later broke away , Tom Woewiyou, Issac Musa, Col. Butt Naked ( who now claims to be a born-again Christian ), Edwin Snowe and others. Taylor and these men ( If they too get indicted or called as witnesses ) will definitely deliver bombshells because it is a known fact that Taylor's and Sankoh's millions greased many palms in the most unlikely places.

Our reporter in Monrovia , Jlateh Doe, said that news was rife that lots of Taylor's protégés in Liberia had not been sleeping well since the capture of their boss. Taylor's supporters hold key positions in government and the Senate , public corporations and other government agencies. It is not possible for the now disgraced and humbled rebel chieftain to shield any of them who might have played such a leading role in the invasion of Sierra Leone that they deserve to be indicted too.

Taylor is also expected to implicate foreign countries with or without embassies in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Taylor and Sankoh turned their struggles into fantastic money enterprises and it is suspected that their stunning achievements in gaining access to the rich diamond fields of Liberia and Sierra Leone could not have happened without the collaboration of people in high places.

As some Liberians were joking yesterday, it is hoped that the LIBERIAN PAPAY does not die unceremoniously like his counterpart in Sierra Leone , because the world needs to know the truth about the wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

## Cocorioko website

30 March 2006

<http://www.cocorioko.com/>

### **LIBERIANS, SIERRA LEONEANS REJOICE AT TAYLOR'S ARREST**

Two nations and their West African neighbours who had tottered under the violence and carnage of Charles Taylor rejoiced yesterday when the former Liberian rebel kingpin and President was arrested and transferred to the Special Court in Freetown, Sierra Leone to face trial for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity.

News from both Liberia and Sierra Leone said that Taylor's arrest formed the main topic at street corners, bars, night clubs, in taxis and buses , everywhere after the anxiety in which he plunged both nations after his Monday escape from Calabar, Nigeria where he was enjoying his asylum from the Nigerian President, Olusegun Obasanjo.

Taylor escaped after Nigeria's President Obasanjo caved in to international pressure and granted the request of Liberia's President , Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf for him to be turned over to her government as she too was asked to do by the U.S. government.

## Cocorioko website

31 March 2006

[http://www.cocorioko.com/news\\_plus](http://www.cocorioko.com/news_plus)

### **TAYLOR'S RUN-AWAY SHOW WAS SCUTTLED BY HIS MONEY**

Charles Taylor disguised himself so well that he could have shown a clean pair of heels, probably into Burkina Faso, through impoverished Chad without any hindrance. Nigerian territory could have been his only obstacle. Wearing a long, white gown and disguised as a Hausa Mallam, Taylor successfully went through Immigration without being suspected. But "Ah, money.....", as the Liberian Comic Drama OUR PEOPLE, ONE PEOPLE would say: Money dah devil, Oh, my people. Money dah devil". Taylor's run-away show was scuttled by his own money.

Throughout his life, nothing mattered to the former Liberian rebel leader and President than money. He escaped from Liberia while he was Dictator Samuel K. Doe's Director-General of the General Service Agency (GSA) with millions of dollars, meant for purchase of essential government supplies or secret safe-keeping for Doe, according to various sources. Taylor was so cunning Doe never succeeded in having him extradited from the U.S. nor did the dictator get his money back.

As rebel leader, Taylor turned what was originally a worthy venture to displace a dictator into a money-making business, siphoning millions of dollars from foreign companies he made to trade in Liberia's diamonds, gold and logging enterprises in the territories he had captured. After that, he cast his eyes on the diamonds of neighbouring Sierra Leone and used Foday Sankoh and his satanic RUF to rip the country of millions more dollars. Taylor had so many millions that money was his security. Well, not at the Nigeria/Cameroon border where he was sensationally captured at dawn on Wednesday, after escaping from asylum in Calabar, Nigeria.

Travelling in a brand-new SUV he had just bought and with diplomatic licence plates, Taylor and his escaping party consisting of his driver and a young lady, described as one of his wives, arrived at the sleepy town of Gamboru-Ngalla in Borno State, which is a border hamlet close to Cameroon. He was so remarkably disguised the Immigration officers did not discover a thing that he was the international rebel chieftain and con man who had escaped from Calabar and plunged their country into a huge diplomatic mess that could have cost Nigeria dear in economic sanctions and other cutbacks from the international community.

Once out of Nigeria, it would have been difficult to capture Taylor. The other African nations he had to go through to get to his mentor, President Blaise Campaore in Burkina Faso, had nothing to lose and Taylor could have bribed his way through these desperately impoverished countries. But Taylor did not contend with the advice of the crying crookish Madingo businessman portrayed in the radio drama mentioned above that "MONEY DAH DEVIL".

One of the Customs officers suspected that something was not right and decided, against all pleas, for the van to be searched. During the search, millions of dollars were allegedly found in the jeep, in sacks stacked in the boots. The discovery sparked serious suspicions and more investigations and Taylor was called in and grilled during which it was discovered that he was in disguise and was no Hausa Mallam but the escaped war crimes suspect TAYLOR HIMSELF.

What happened to the money has not been disclosed. An earlier report that the driver and the lady pulled off after Taylor was taken in for questioning proved false. They were all nabbed. **THUS ENDED THE ESCAPE ODYSSEY OF THE MAN WHO THOUGHT MONEY WAS EVERYTHING. HE WAS GULLOTINED BY HIS OWN MONEY.**

Nationwide Address by Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf  
30 March 2006

## **Nation-wide Address**

**By**

**Her Excellency Ellen Johnson Sirleaf**

**President of the Republic of Liberia**

**The Executive Mansion**

**Monrovia, Liberia**

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**Thursday, March 30, 2006**

## **My Fellow Liberians,**

I wish to inform you formally on that which you already know - former President Charles Taylor is in the custody of the United Nations and has been taken to Sierra Leone. We still expect a resolution from the Security Council that will allow for a change of venue to a more conducive environment such as the International Court at the Hague. We have said and will continue to stress that in any proceedings, the United Nations must ensure that Mr. Taylor is allowed to maintain his dignity and the right to a vigorous self defence. This is consistent with principle that a person is deemed innocent until proven guilty. We would also like to reiterate what has already been announced by the Prosecutor - that no other Liberian has been indicted by the Special Court of Sierra Leone, and no one needs to fear for his safety or freedom.

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I also want to tell all of those who accompanied or lived in Nigeria with Mr. Taylor that, as citizens of Liberia against whom there is no charge, they are free to return home and will be given the same protection and opportunities as any other citizen so long as they remain law abiding.

Nevertheless, the Government wishes to make it abundantly clear that those who try to use these circumstances as an excuse for insurrection to undermine the stability of the nation will be dealt with harshly and without mercy, as prescribed by law. While the Government will respect their rights as provided for in Articles 15 and 17 of the Constitution, they should be mindful of the provision of Article 76 of the Constitution.

Fellow Citizens, as you know this Government inherited the matter relating to Mr. Taylor and try as we did to avoid it, in the end I had no option but to accept the responsibility of leadership, by taking the hard decision which ensures the long term safety of the Liberian people and the security of the state. This is what I pledged to do when I took the oath of office on January 16.

Today, we can just thank God that with his blessings, this saga for Liberia has come to an end and the government can now pursue what it was elected to do – bring development and prosperity to the Liberian people.

**Fellow Citizens**, we have reported to you before on the constrictive financial situation which this Government inherited.

Government revenue, estimated in this fiscal year at US\$ 80 million, represents less than one-fifth of what it was in previous years, due in large measure to fiscal indiscipline and corruption.

Outstanding obligations and arrears are monumental - US\$ 3.5 billion in external debt; US\$ 66 million in domestic debt; US \$24 million arrears to civil servants, including successive Legislatures; approximately US\$9.3 million arrears to security forces; US\$37, 389, 500.00 estimated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as outstanding to our diplomatic missions abroad including \$3.2 million to the African Union.

Institutions have become dysfunctional and infrastructure in a state of total disrepair.

**Fellow Citizens:**

As you know, it is less than three since our government was inaugurated. Despite the mountain of challenges we inherited a new political dispensation, we have moved as rapidly as we possibly could, to put in place the mechanisms designed to lay the basis for our economic reconstruction and national renewal.

A first step in this direction was the formation of the cabinet which is now complete. We tried as much as is possible to put a cabinet together that largely reflects an all-inclusive government but one that meets our core appointment criteria—namely: Competence, Integrity and Respect for Human Rights and Dignity. We are pleased that twelve of the fifteen counties are represented in the cabinet; five women hold strategic economic and security portfolios. Beyond the cabinet, all counties, ethnic groups and religions are represented.

We may not have met everyone's expectations and aspirations, but we have tried and will continue to try to do more as other positions in the Government are filled.

Let me take this time to thank the Ministers for accepting their respective nominations, and congratulate them on their confirmation by the Senate.

It is my expectation that all cabinet Ministers and Government officials in general, will conduct themselves in ways that will bring respect and credibility to our country.

I also hope that, for as long as they serve under my leadership, all concerned will reflect the principles of transparency and accountability in all their activities.

Let me use this opportunity to also thank the honorable members of the Legislature for the cooperation which we have received in this regard. We thank the Senate, in particular, for their cooperation and understanding during the ongoing confirmation process, thus making it possible for the Executive branch to timely assume its responsibilities under the constitution in a timely manner.

~~We are also pleased to note that the Judicial Branch of government is now in place and gearing up to dispense the kind of transparent justice long yearned for by our people.~~

Thus, it is gratified to report that all three branches of government are now in place—thanks to the collaborative efforts involving all three branches.

This shows how much can be achieved in a relatively short period, when the national interest is placed above parochial considerations, and where the three branches of government manifest their constitutional



separation of powers without unnecessary and undesirable flexing of muscles as to who is in charge.

As regards our security forces, particularly those who have willingly demobilized to allow restructuring and training, we express once again our thanks and appreciation for the honorable service to our nation. We commit and have advanced plans to establish the Veterans Office to which we committed. A few of you will be recruited soon to start the process. We also propose that the honoring program that has been discussed take place in July during the events of our Independence Day. By that time, we should, within the context of the new fiscal year budget, be in a position to start the payment of pensions to which you are entitled.

Arrears to civil servants other groups will be handled similarly, although it may take us several years to settle with everyone.

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Nevertheless, we are proud to note that with the appropriate mechanisms being put in place at the Ministry of Finance, and with prudent fiscal management, revenue collection in these three months has increased by some 30 percent.

Even though more needs to be done, graft is being minimized and corrupt customs officials are being identified and weeded out of the system. Individuals and businesses accustomed to avoiding or evading tax obligations are now responding to our no-nonsense approach in resource management, realizing that the allocation of resources to

economic reconstruction and to investment opportunities will result in economic upturn that means more business and profits for them.

Several other areas show positive trends. We have formulated a 150 day deliverable program in four major thematic areas – Enhancing Security, Revitalizing the Economy, Rebuilding Infrastructure and provisions of Social Services; Strengthening Governance and the Rule of Law. We expect that by the end of June this will result in the completion or start up of a wide range of activities under these areas, the details of which will be published for your information.

Toward the achievement of this objective, the Government will allocate from the recast budget an amount of US\$ 2.5 million to supplement the aggregate US\$ 70 million which our partners have committed to the these programs. More importantly, I wish to announce that the Government will allocate, in recognition of our good revenue performance, a total amount of US\$1 million so that \$10,000.00 can be made available to 100 Districts around the country to support the development priority of their own choosing.

We extend to the National Legislature our gratitude for their understanding and efficiency in endorsing the recast budget before they recess today for the Easter holidays. This will enable us to embark upon these activities before the rains begin.

Fellow citizens, as you know the Government has reactivated or reconstituted those public corporations or state enterprises deemed to be still viable and/or significant in terms of the social service they

provide to the public. In some cases, we have established a provisional body to undertake an assessment that would inform the action which Government should take. In doing so, we have complied with the laws and statutes upon which these entities were established and we have ensured conformity with international policies and practices. We will thus resist any attempt, on the part of those not sufficiently enlightened, to introduce legislation which undermines the principle of the operation of state enterprises or the constitutional authority of the Executive Branch of Government. While fully committed to the principle of private sector efficiency in the management of these enterprises, we will resist equally the pressure from our partners to transfer the assets of these enterprises, without proper evaluation and in an untimely manner thereby limiting the potential benefit to the people.

Recounting progress, we also believe that it is noteworthy that under the Ministry of Public Work's Emergency Road Repair program, our road network is undergoing some limited facelift.

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Community access roads are being opened and graded throughout Monrovia and its environs. Indeed, the Ministry of Work is doing a good job of it on the Caldwell road, which is now 90% complete, as well as on the Old road and Smythe road, Gaye town and Matadi estate roads.

Pot road patching is also ongoing on a limited basis, so too is the nation wide side brushing which has been launched using the Monrovia to Gbarnga highway as the pilot project. Labour for this project is drawn from the communities living along this highway.

As promised by my government, repair work on electricity facilities is ongoing in various parts of Monrovia. Although not as visible as work being done on the roads, substations and related infrastructure are being gradually repaired as resources become available.

I also want to reassure the nation that we remain committed and plans are well advanced to ensure that by the time we celebrate our next July 26, a good portion of Monrovia will enjoy a level of electricity supply.

There are plans also for repairs to be carried out on Public Buildings—as part of our program of infrastructural rehabilitation and development. We intend to rehabilitate all existing unfinished public buildings, which would certainly cut down on our expenditure on private structures being used for government offices.

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**Fellow Citizens**, as you are aware, three weeks ago, I led a government delegation to Europe, where we visited and held pertinent discussions with the Governments and officials of Belgium, Switzerland, and France.

A high point of this visit was a meeting with the President of the European Commission aimed at soliciting support for the country within the framework of the Government's 150 days deliverables.

In particular, we sought confirmation of support for our Electricity Project, infrastructure rehabilitation and support for small and medium

sized industries.

In Switzerland, we held series of discussions with officials of Government, including the Foreign Minister, who is soon to assume the rotational presidency of the European Union.

Already the results of that visit are evident. Technicians from Switzerland have already visited and the Director General of Development Cooperation, Ambassador Fust, is scheduled to visit Liberia shortly to identify programs that can be supported by the Swiss Government.

Meanwhile, the Swiss Government has promised to assist Liberia in tracing any Liberian accounts holding illegal wealth stashed away in Swiss banks.

~~We continued our European visit by responding to the invitation of the President of France. Confidence in our Government was affirmed by the French Government's commitment to reactivate its diplomatic mission at the highest level by the end of this year. We were also promised technical assistance for training of our nurses and doctors, teacher training assistance and the reopening of Alliance Francais to provide opportunities for learning the French language. Moreover, we look forward to positive responses on our request for a few ambulances and fire trucks.~~

Following our European tour, we returned home and almost immediately

thereafter embarked on the United States visit – where we were accorded the singular honor of addressing a Joint Meeting of the United States Congress.

That occasion afforded us the much needed platform to enhance the American people's understanding of the historical bonds between our two countries and peoples, while at the same time promoting global awareness about the huge post-conflict reconstruction agenda facing our country.

The high-spirited response to our address generated among the Congress men and women left no doubt in our mind of the tremendous goodwill our government now enjoys in that great country.

We subsequently met and held fruitful discussions with President George W. Bush and senior members of his administration. Paramount among the issues discussed was the ongoing security sector reform in the country.

We discussed concrete means by which the U.S. and the rest of the international community could help to consolidate the peace in Liberia and explored potential US assistance in the area of HIV AIDS, a national teacher training program, and a lunch program for elementary schools.

Our discussions with several ranking senators, congressmen and women yielded tangible dividends. A supplemental appropriation of between \$50 -100 Million US Dollars is now being actively considered for our country

to support programs dealing with Infrastructure Development, Security Sector Reform and the training and reintegration of ex-combatants.

We should note that this appropriation is in addition to support already approved by the U.S. Congress for Fiscal Year 2006, which total approximately \$120 Million US Dollars. We also look forward to a continuation of the same level of funding in 2007 which is now being proposed. The challenge in this regard is to get these funds disbursed for the purposes included.

Other areas of additional US assistance to Liberia include:

- Collaboration between the US Congress and our National Legislature aimed at training and the establishment of a Legislative library.
- Support through a bilateral facility for settlement of our external debts under an IMF supported regime.
- US Treasury Department sponsored technical assistance to the Ministry of Finance and Central Bank to enhance resource management.
- Eligibility for the General System of Preferences and for OPIC investment guarantee, and opening of an EXIM Bank window.

- Commitment of the African Development Foundation of US\$ 1 million facility to support small enterprises development.

The U.S. trip also provided opportunity for a visit to the World Bank, where we held very productive discussions with World Bank President, Paul Wolfowitz and senior Bank officials. We were assured of accelerated disbursement of a grant commitment of US\$25 Million for infrastructure development which brings World Bank assistance to a total grant of US\$60 million.

Meanwhile, the World Bank has also promised full Country Representation within a few months, a clear demonstration of confidence in our government.

Moreover, we expect World Bank cohosting along with the US Government and the United Nations of a partnership conference later this year to review Liberia's development agenda and strategy.

While in the U.S. I also addressed the United Nations Security Council, during which all 15 members of the Security Council responded with positive statements to our expression of appreciation for the continuation of service of the UN peace keeping force.

I reviewed progress of the Government in meeting the requirements for the lifting of timber and diamond sanctions with emphasis on the bold step taken by Government to terminate all forestry concessions deemed in noncompliance with their concession agreements.



**Fellow Citizens**, let me point out that foreign trips of the kind that we have just concluded are not luxury or pleasure excursions. They constitute a fundamental part of our foreign policy strategy designed to cultivate and harness the cooperation and support of our partners in our post-conflict reconstruction and peace building efforts.

Thus, while we will strive to keep such official foreign visits as cost effective as possible, we will continue to avail ourselves of the opportunities they afford us to make a case for assistance in tackling the compelling needs of our people and country.

Nonetheless, be assured that in keeping with the new travel ordinance, report on expenses for their visits will be filed with the Ministry of Finance for publication in regular expenditure reports of the Ministry.

~~That said, we remain forever convinced that no amount of foreign largesse and support can sustainably substitute for the principle of self reliance as a long-term development strategy of any country.~~

That is why our Government will continue to invest as much time and energy into the mobilization of our domestic resources and capacities with a view to timely achieving our national development objectives.

An important domestic resource is vested in the thousand of our citizens who reside in the US and other countries. We met with them and appealed to them to come home, as many as can do so. We also

appealed to the US Congress to grant those who cannot do so right away, continuing protective status. I want you to know that our compatriots abroad are responding positively to our appeal in this regard.

Fellow citizens, as we pursue the path of national healing and renewal, the launching of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission must be seen as a big stride in this regard. For now we, as Liberians, have chosen to use the TRC to help address the complex issues of injustice and human rights violations that characterized our conflict period.

I am confident that the TRC will help us to reconcile with our past with ourselves, and therefore make our forward march into the future easier. We thank the members of the Commission for accepting this responsibility and challenge.

Fellow Citizens, in the midst of all these challenges and obstacles, let us close ranks in the spirit of national unity. Let us work toward rebuilding a Liberia that is respected throughout the world; a Liberia that is poised to become a success story in a sub region that has had its share of grief and retrogression; a Liberia in which we all can live peacefully and happily as we each pursue our individual and collective desires and aspirations in an atmosphere of harmony and tranquillity. Your Government stands ready to lead and to support your efforts as we march into the future of change and promise.

**I thank you and may God bless us all.**