

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



PRESS CLIPPINGS

Enclosed are clippings of local and international press on the Special Court and related issues obtained by the Outreach and Public Affairs Office

as at:

Thursday, 31 May 2012

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Taylor to spend rest of his life in prison

By Hassan G. Koroma

The Special Court for Sierra Leone yesterday sentenced former Liberian president Charles Taylor to 50 years imprisonment for aiding and abetting war crimes in Sierra Leone. He is expected to serve his sentence in a high security prison in the United Kingdom for his role in the 11-year civil war in Sierra Leone, which claimed about 50,000 lives.

However, the court urged Mr. Taylor's defence team to appeal the judgement

within the next 14 days.

Sentence was passed in The Hague in the Netherlands on Wednesday by a trial chamber of the court comprising Justice Richard Lussick, Justice Teresa Doherty and Justice Julia Sebutinde. Justice Sebutinde, who also serves on the International Court of Justice, is a Ugandan jurist who qualified at Makerere University. The court was set up jointly by the government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations.

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Taylor to spend rest of his life in prison

From page 1

Passing sentence, Justice Lussick recalled testimonies of brutality from witnesses during the trial. In one he cited, a witness said she was forced to carry a bag filled with human heads dripping with blood.

Another witness said she was gang-raped and her mother's eyes were pulled out by rebels. Amputees who had their limbs cut off in the war will now survive on charity, the judge said. Furthermore, child soldiers and young girls who were raped face stigmatisation.

Taylor denied direct involvement in the war crimes and asked the judge to show mercy, since he is 64 years old and can no longer be a threat to society.

Justice Lussick said the court viewed Taylor's crimes with "the utmost gravity". It rejected a number of defence pleas for mitigation, among them that Taylor had played a substantial role in the peace process and had secured the release of peacekeepers and other hostages during the war. The court said that while Taylor publicly professed to work for peace, he was secretly instigating conflict, and his help with hostages was not a significant mitigating factor.

Nor was Taylor's public service a

mitigating factor, the court found, and the sympathy he expressed for victims of the war did not constitute "remorse that would merit recognition for sentencing purposes". The court found as an aggravating circumstance the fact that Taylor exploited the conflict for financial gain.

However, Justice Lussick rejected the prosecution plea for an 80-year prison sentence on the grounds that Taylor was not convicted on the most serious charges he faced. When convicting Taylor, the judges did not accept the prosecution's contention that Taylor had effective command and control over the Sierra Leone rebels he supported.

Before announcing sentence, the judge said there was no precedent for sentencing Taylor. Although his conviction was limited to planning, aiding and abetting crimes, as a head of state, he was "in a class of his own", the judge said, and "the gravity of his betrayal of public trust" had weighed with the court.

The case was heard in The Hague for fear that a trial in Sierra Leone could destabilise the region.

Meanwhile, some residents of Freetown expressed their gratitude for the sentence slammed on Taylor, noting that justice has been done and would serve as a deterrent to others.

Awareness Times
Thursday, 31 May 2012

50 Years Sentence for a 65 years old man means Charles Taylor our Scapegoat will Die in Jail

It is now time to learn what really went wrong that caused Sierra Leoneans to so very brutally slaughter & maim Sierra Leoneans

By Sylvia Olayinka Blyden
Former Liberia warlord turned Liberia President, Charles Taylor was yesterday May 30th 2012 sentenced to 50 years jail term for aiding and abetting Sierra Leone RUF rebels. The interesting fact which many have not fully appreciated is that the Judges repeatedly rejected many of the Prosecution's numerous allegations against Taylor. The rejected allegations include ones claiming Taylor had command responsibility for actions of perpetrators who committed inhumane atrocities. Whilst the judges promoted the superficially examined theory of the war being fuelled by lust for Sierra Leone diamonds by Taylor, the trial, like other trials of the Special Court, have not still been able to tell the world what fuelled terrible atrocities of a like not seen by mankind before. It is now up to Sierra Leoneans to find the answers; many are already recorded in the Truth & Reconciliation Commission Report.

In order to help compatriots, I will now resume the proposed series of *Charles Taylor: Sierra Leone's Scapegoat*. Now Taylor is sentenced, I will commence re-examining the facts around what fuelled the viciousness and atrocities committed in our war rather than Blood Diamonds theories which the judges themselves, despite bundles of findings, have not been able to explain even to themselves. Why did Sierra Leoneans become so brutal to each other?

Charles Taylor has been sentenced and that chapter is virtually closed but there are deeper, as-yet-un-aired reasons for the sufferings we went through. So, let's start the journey of examination to ensure we never go back along those paths.

Do not miss Part 2 of *Charles Taylor: Sierra Leone's Scapegoat* out tomorrow.

50 Years for Charles Taylor

Liberia's ex-President Charles Taylor has been sentenced to 50 years in jail by a UN-backed war crimes court.

Last month Taylor was found guilty of aiding and abetting rebels in Sierra Leone during the 1991-2002 civil war.

Special Court for Sierra Leone judges said the sentence reflected his status as head of state at the time and his betrayal of public trust.

Taylor, 64, insists he is innocent and his lawyer has told the BBC he will appeal against the sentence.

"The 50-year sentence pronounced today effectively is a life sentence for someone that age - the rules of the court prohibit expressly the imposition of a life sentence," defence counsel Morris Anyah told the BBC's Newshour programme.

The appeal process could last up to six months, the BBC's Anna Holligan in The Hague reports.

Taylor, wearing a suit and yellow tie, showed no emotion during the hearing.

"The accused has been found responsible for aiding and abetting some of the most heinous crimes in human history," Judge Richard Lussick said.

The crimes - which took place over five years - included cutting off the limbs of their victims and cutting open pregnant women to settle bets over the sex of their unborn children, he said.

The prosecution had wanted an 80-year prison term to reflect the severity of the crimes and the central role that Taylor had in facilitating them.

But the judge said that would have been excessive - taking into account the limited scope of his involvement in planning operations in Sierra Leone.

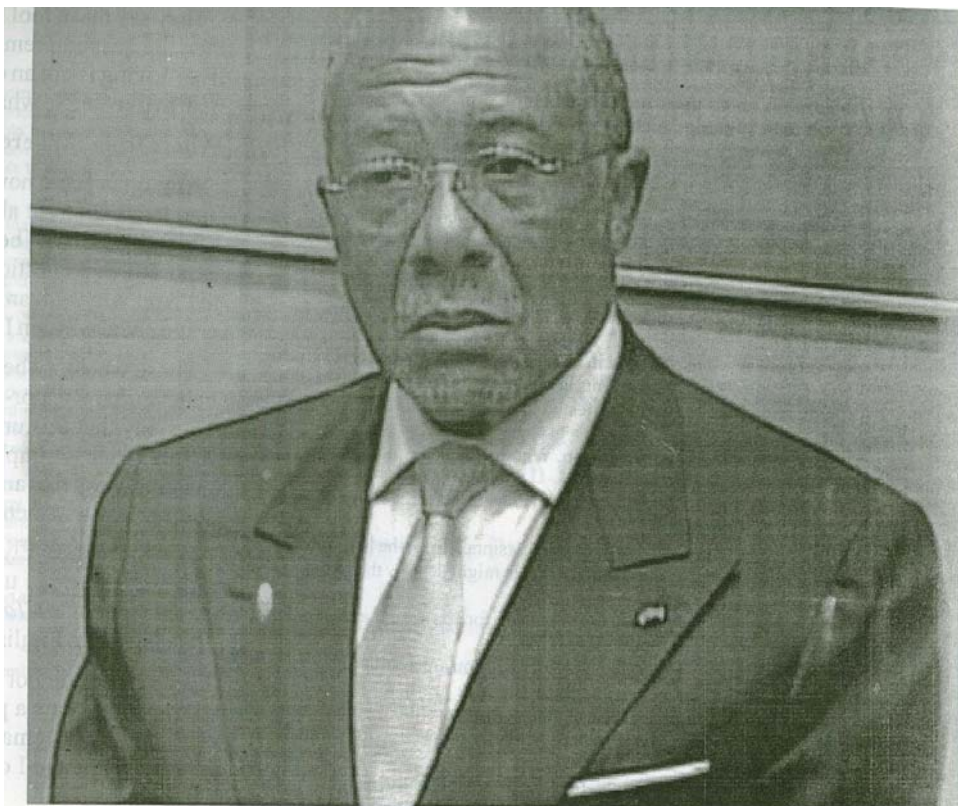
However, Judge Lussick said in return for a constant flow of diamonds, Taylor provided arms and both logistical and moral support to the Revolutionary United Front rebels - prolonging the conflict and the suffering of the people of Sierra Leone.

"While Mr Taylor never set foot in Sierra Leone, his heavy footprint is there," the judge said.

"The lives of many more innocent civilians in Sierra Leone were lost or destroyed as a direct result of his actions," he said.

In its landmark ruling in April, the court - set up in 2002 to try those who bore the greatest responsibility for the war in which some 50,000 people were killed - found Taylor guilty on 11 counts, relating to atrocities that included rape and murder.

He became the first former head of state to



be convicted of war crimes by an international court since the Nuremberg trials of Nazis after World War II.

This "special status" had put Taylor in a "different category of offenders for the purpose of sentencing," the judge said.

His sentence was in line with others handed down by the Special Court for Sierra Leone. One of the convicted Revolutionary United Front (RUF) leaders, Issa Sesay, received a 52-year jail term and a rebel from the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC) group, Alex Tamba Brima, was given 50 years.

"But the difference is that those two - Brima and Sesay - are direct perpetrators: they carried out the crimes themselves," Mr Anyah said.

These concerns - and other mitigating facts rejected by the judges, such as Taylor's role in ending the conflict - would be brought before the appeals chamber, the defence lawyer said.

Taylor, who accused the prosecution of paying and threatening witnesses in his war crimes trial, had asked judges to consider his age when making their decision, saying he was "no threat to society".

But the trial chamber said that, given his social background and standing, "rehabilitation" was not likely.

The fact that he had not expressed remorse or apologised for his part in the conflict also affected the sentence, the

judge said.

Earlier, his lawyers had urged the court not to support "attempts by the prosecution to provide the Sierra Leoneans with this external bogeyman upon whom can be heaped the collective guilt of a nation for its predominantly self-inflicted wounds".

Sierra Leone's government has welcomed the sentence.

"It is a step forward as justice has been done, though the magnitude of the sentence is not commensurate with the atrocities committed," AP news agency quotes Deputy Information Minister Sheku Tarawali as saying.

Taylor's brother-in-law in Liberia, Arthur Saye, maintained the whole process had been "politically motivated".

"The sentence is outrageous. How can you give a man 50 years for only aiding and abetting?" he told the BBC.

Suzanah Vaye, whose husband was killed during the last days of Taylor's rule, was less sympathetic: "Today, I join Sierra Leoneans in saying this should be a lesson to people that God has his own way of bringing judgement to people."

The case was heard in The Hague for fear that a trial in Sierra Leone could destabilise the region.

The Dutch government agreed only if Taylor would serve any sentence in another country.

He will serve any prison term in the UK but will be held in The Hague until the results of his appeal.

Standard Times
Thursday, 31 May 2012

50-Year Prison Term for Charles Taylor

Former Liberian president Charles Taylor has been given a 50-year prison sentence in The Hague by the Special Court for Sierra Leone for aiding and abetting war crimes.

The prison term is for crimes committed in Sierra Leone between 1996 and 2002. Amnesty International looks at key dates in the organization's campaigning work on his crimes and alleged crimes in Sierra Leone and Liberia prior to his arrest. Charles Taylor, who also led the armed opposition group National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), was found guilty last month by international judges of aiding and abetting war crimes during the Sierra Leone internal armed conflict. He is yet to be prosecuted for crimes allegedly committed in his native country, Liberia.

While this historic judgment affirms that former heads of state cannot consider themselves immune from international justice, Amnesty International remains concerned that tens of thousands of people who suffered atrocities in Liberia and Sierra Leone are yet to see other perpetrators brought to justice.

TIMELINE

In April 1992, Amnesty International representatives just back from researching human rights abuses committed during the internal armed conflict in Sierra Leone noted that an invasion force led by the NPFL under

force led by the NPFL under Charles Taylor had captured towns and villages in the southern and eastern provinces of Sierra Leone. The rebel forces, Amnesty International said, had been responsible for major human rights abuses, killing hundreds of people who refused to help them.

In a report on the 1995 Liberia peace agreement released in September 1995, Amnesty International reported that a number of political assassinations - including two leading opposition party figures carried out in July 1994 - had been ordered by the NPFL under Charles Taylor's leadership.

In August 1997, Charles Taylor was inaugurated as President of Liberia following the general election of July 1997. In October 1997, Amnesty International called on the newly elected government of Liberia to place human rights on the national agenda and investigate human rights abuses committed during the war.

In December 1999, an Amnesty International press release noted that Charles Taylor had intimidated a Liberian human rights group, the Justice and Peace Commission of Liberia (JPC), after it called for a truth commission to be established in the country to look into violations committed during Liberia's seven-year internal armed conflict.

An April 2001 report remarked that Charles Taylor's government had done virtually nothing to investigate and bring to justice those responsible for widespread

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An April 2001 report remarked that Charles Taylor's government had done virtually nothing to investigate and bring to justice those responsible for widespread

human rights abuses during Liberia's internal armed conflict, which had been raging since 1989.

The report also documented that since mid-2000, dozens of civilians had allegedly been extrajudicially executed and more than 100 civilians, including women, had been tortured by the Anti-Terrorist Unit (ATU) and other Liberian security forces. It noted that a former media consultant to President Taylor had 'disappeared' after he criticized exploitation of forest resources in southeastern Liberia by logging companies without benefits to the locals.

In July the same year, Amnesty International reported that at least

40 Liberian students attempting to hold a peaceful rally had been tortured by security forces. At least 20 students were detained and female students were reportedly raped while held incommunicado and without charge for weeks. Yet the Liberian authorities did not open any investigations into the allegations and no one was brought to justice, Amnesty International said.

In December 2001, Amnesty International called on the international community to take steps to protect the population from further human rights abuses in Liberia.

In June 2003, the Special Court

for Sierra Leone announced publicly that Charles Taylor was charged with war crimes. Charles Taylor was in Accra attending talks aimed at ending Liberia's internal armed conflict and Amnesty International urged the Ghanaian authorities to arrest him. In August that year, Taylor resigned the presidency and was granted exile in Nigeria.

In the following years, Amnesty International repeatedly urged the Nigerian government to arrest Charles Taylor.

On 23 March 2006, Amnesty International called on Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo to comply with Liberian President

Johnson-Sirleaf's request for Taylor to extradite Taylor and allow him to face trial at the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Taylor was captured by Nigerian authorities during a failed attempt to flee the country, and by 29 March he was surrendered to the Special Court for Sierra Leone in Freetown.

In February 2007 Amnesty International concluded that during Charles Taylor's presidency, no effort was made to remedy past human rights violations committed during the armed conflict.

Government security forces, including the Anti-Terrorist Unit, included former combatants who had not been vetted or retrained, nor undergone any process of demobilization or reintegration.

Numerous examples of interference of the executive in trials, especially those of political nature, proved that the judiciary was not independent of the executive, and it made no effort to bring any of the perpetrators to justice. Impunity reigned.

Amnesty International continues to call for the investigation and prosecution of Charles Taylor for crimes he is alleged to have committed in Liberia.

While this historic judgment affirms that former heads of state cannot consider themselves immune from international justice, Amnesty International remains concerned that tens of thousands of people who suffered atrocities in Liberia and Sierra Leone are yet to see other perpetrators brought to justice

New Vision

Thursday, 31 May 2012

£5 Million to Keep Taylor in UK

Former Liberian President Charles Taylor was yesterday May 30th, 2012 jailed for fifty years for his part in 'some of the most heinous and brutal crimes recorded in human history'.

The 64-year-old, who will serve his time in a British jail, was convicted of aiding and abetting Sierra Leone rebels on a savage decade-long rampage that ended in 2002 and killed 50,000.

Judges at an international war crimes court said the warlord-turned-president funneled arms, ammunition and other supplies in return for 'blood diamonds' mined using slaves.

Taylor had fled from Liberia to the United States where he was imprisoned but the recent revelation about his involvement with U.S. intelligence casts doubt over his alleged escape back to Liberia.

The Defence Intelligence Agency, the Pentagon's spy wing, admitted there was a relationship but refused to elaborate, claiming it could harm U.S. national security. Presiding Judge Richard Lussick told Taylor his crimes were of the 'utmost gravity in terms of scale and brutality'.

He added: 'The lives of many more innocent civilians in Sierra Leone were lost or destroyed as a direct result of his actions.'

Taylor is the first former head of state convicted by an international war crimes court since World War II and judges said they had no precedent when deciding his sentence.

He looks likely to serve his sentence in a British jail after Tony Blair's government in 2006 made the offer to resolve a stand-off that had delayed Taylor's two-year trial.

Over the seven months he testified in his own defence at an international war crimes tribunal, Taylor cast himself as a peacemaker and statesman in West Africa

It will cost UK taxpayers at least £100,000 a year to keep the former Liberian president behind bars. If the sentence stands as it is then the UK government will have to spend five million pound sterling for the fifty years that Taylor will be serving in their jail.

His lawyers, however, are expected to appeal his convictions and that will likely keep him in a jail in The Hague, Netherlands, for months.

Taylor showed no emotion as Lussick handed down what will effectively be a life sentence.

Prosecutors had asked judges at the Special Court for Sierra Leone to impose an 80-year sentence.

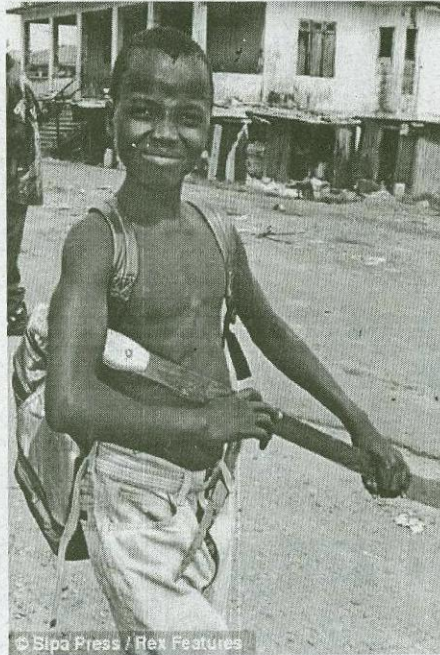
But Taylor's lawyers urged judges to hand down a sentence that offered him some hope of release before he dies. Lussick said an 80-year sentence would have been

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£5m To Keep Taylor In UK

excessive as Taylor was convicted of aiding and abetting crimes and not direct involvement. But the judge added that Taylor was 'in a

sympathy' for the suffering of victims of atrocities in Sierra Leone. But he insisted he had acted to help stabilize the West African



Taylor armed child soldiers who rampaged through Sierra Leone

class of his own' compared to others convicted by the United Nations-backed court.

RUF soldiers, backed by Taylor, pictured riding in a pick-up truck

region and claimed he never knowingly assisted in the commission of crimes.

He said: 'What I did...was done with honour. I was convinced that



Judgment was passed at the International Court in The Hague

at their base in the outskirts of Freetown. He said: 'The special status of Mr. Taylor as a head of state puts him in a different category of offenders for the purpose of sentencing.' At a sentencing hearing earlier this month, Taylor expressed 'deepest

unless there was peace in Sierra Leone, Liberia would not be able to move forward.' However, judges ruled that Taylor armed and supplied the rebels in full knowledge they would likely use weapons to commit terrible crimes.

This was in exchange for payments of 'blood diamonds' often obtained by slave labour. Prosecutors said there was no reason for leniency, given the extreme nature of the crimes, Taylor's 'greed' and misuse of his position of power. Prosecutor Brenda Hollis wrote in a brief: "The purposely cruel and savage crimes committed included public executions and amputations of civilians.

'The display of decapitated heads at checkpoints, the killing and public disembowelment of civilians whose intestines were then stretched across the road to make a check point, public rapes of women and girls, and people burned alive in their homes.'

Taylor stepped down and fled into exile in Nigeria after being indicted by the court in 2003. He was finally arrested and sent to the Netherlands in 2006.

Campbell's former agent Carole White also gave evidence that



Carole White (left) who said Campbell gave evidence that Taylor was an African despot. She said she was given it by the former Liberian ruler in 1997 while the Sierra Leone court is based in that country's capital, Freetown, Taylor's trial is being staged in Leidschendam, a suburb of The Hague, for fear holding it in West Africa could destabilize the region.

contradicted that of the model. She said that Campbell knew the diamonds were from Taylor. Actress Mia Farrow trial that fashion model Naomi Campbell confided she had been sent a 'huge diamond' by the former Liberian ruler in 1997 while the Sierra Leone court is based in that country's capital, Freetown, Taylor's trial is being staged in Leidschendam, a suburb of The Hague, for fear holding it in West Africa could destabilize the region.

One of Taylor's sons is in jail for torture, another is awaiting trial for murder and two more children were fathered while he was in Dutch custody. More than 120,000 people were killed and two million displaced in Sierra Leone's civil war which was characterized by atrocities, the use of enslaved child soldiers and the amputation of children's limbs as a weapon of terror.

Britain played a vital role in ending the war after Tony Blair sent in 800 troops in May 2000 to evacuate foreign nationals and support Sierra Leone's fledgling democracy.

The UK troops also assisted in capturing rebel leader, Foday Sankoh and helped to form a military strategy which forced the Revolutionary United Front to retreat from the capital, Freetown, a former Crown colony.

Pivotal to the case was the evidence of supermodel Naomi Campbell and actress Mia Farrow, who provided a clear link between Taylor and blood diamonds he received in payment for arms. London-born Miss Campbell admitted being given a pouch of uncut gems by the president's men after a dinner in South Africa.

Taylor is thought to have acquired from the rebels diamonds worth as much as £950million.

New Citizen

Thursday, 31 May 2012

Taylor Gets 50 Years Jail

Last month Taylor was found guilty of aiding and abetting rebels in Sierra Leone during the 1991-2002 civil war. Special Court for Sierra Leone judges said the sentence reflected his status as head of state at the time and his betrayal of public trust. Taylor, 64, insists he is innocent and his lawyer has told the BBC he will appeal against the sentence. "The 50-year sentence pronounced today effectively is a life sentence for someone that age - the rules of the court prohibit expressly the imposition of a life sentence," defence counsel Morris Anyah told the BBC's Newshour programme. The appeal process could last up to six months, the BBC's Anna Holligan in The Hague reports. While Mr Taylor never set foot in Sierra Leone, his heavy footprint is there

Taylor, wearing a suit and yellow tie, showed no emotion during the hearing. "The accused has been found responsible for aiding and abetting some of the most heinous crimes in human history," Judge Richard Lussick said. The crimes - which took place over five years - included cutting off the limbs of their victims and cutting open pregnant women to settle bets over the sex of their unborn children, he said. The prosecution had wanted an 80-year prison term to reflect the severity of the crimes and the central role that Taylor had in facilitating them.

Sentencing the 64-year-old former president to 50 years effectively means Charles Taylor will spend the rest of his life locked up in jail. His defence team were hoping judges would take into account the fact that Taylor has a family: he is a father of 14 children and an educated man. But the judges decided his role in aiding and abetting the RUF rebels in Sierra Leone was serious enough to warrant 50 years. It is

a sentence that human rights groups say will set a precedent and send a message out to other world leaders - that if they commit crimes against humanity they will be forced to face the consequences, regardless of how powerful they are. But the judge said that would have been excessive - taking into account the limited scope of his involvement in planning operations in Sierra Leone.

However, Judge Lussick said in return for a constant flow of diamonds Taylor provided arms and both logistical and moral support to the Revolutionary United Front rebels - prolonging the conflict and the suffering of the people of Sierra Leone. "While Mr Taylor never set foot in Sierra Leone, his heavy footprint is there," the judge said.

"The lives of many more innocent civilians in Sierra Leone were lost or destroyed as a direct result of his actions," he said.

In its landmark ruling in April, the court found Taylor guilty on 11 counts, relating to atrocities that included rape and murder. He became the first former head of state to be convicted of war crimes by an international court since the Nuremberg trials of Nazis after World War II. This "special status" had put Taylor in a "different category of offenders for the purpose of sentencing," the judge said.

Taylor timeline

- 1989: Launches rebellion in Liberia
- 1991: RUF rebellion starts in Sierra Leone
- 1997: Elected president after a 1995 peace deal
- 1999: Liberia's Lurd rebels start an insurrection to oust Mr Taylor
- June 2003: Arrest warrant issued; two months later he steps down and goes into exile to Nigeria
- March 2006: Arrested after a failed escape bid and sent to Sierra Leone
- June 2007: His trial opens - hosted in The Hague for security reasons
- April 2012: Convicted of aiding and abetting the commission of war crimes
- May 2012: Sentenced to 50 years in jail

Taylor, who accused the prosecution of paying and threatening witnesses in his war crimes trial, had asked judges to consider his age when making their decision, saying he was "no threat to society". But the trial chamber said that, given his social back-

Taylor Get 50 Years Jail

ground and standing, "rehabilitation" was not likely. The fact that he had not expressed remorse or apologised for his part in the conflict also affected the sentence, the judge said. Earlier, his lawyers had urged the court not to support "attempts by the prosecution to provide the Sierra Leoneans with this external bogeyman upon whom can be heaped the collective guilt of a nation for its predominantly self-inflicted wounds".

Taylor's brother-in-law in Liberia, Arthur Saye, maintained the whole process had been "politically motivated". "The sentence is outrageous. How can you give a man 50 years for only aiding and abetting?" he told the BBC. Suzannah Vaye, whose husband was killed during the last days of Taylor's rule, was less sympathetic: "Today, I join Sierra Leoneans in saying this should be a lesson to people that God has his own way of bringing judgement to people." The case was heard in The Hague for fear that a trial in Sierra Leone could destabilise the region.

The Dutch government only agreed if Taylor would serve any sentence in another country. He will serve any prison term in the UK but will be held in The Hague until the results of his appeal.



Liberia's ex-President Charles Taylor has been sentenced to 50 years in jail by a UN-backed war crimes court

African Young Voices

Thursday, 31 May 2012

Charles Taylor Goes Down for 50 Years

Amnesty calls for him to be tried for crimes he committed in Liberia

Former Liberian President Charles Ghankay Taylor, was yesterday sentenced to a fifty year prison sentence in The Hague by the Special Court for Sierra Leone for aiding and abetting war crimes in the eleven year old civil war in Sierra Leone.

The prison term is for crimes committed in Sierra Leone between 1996 and 2002.

Amnesty International looks at key dates in the organisation's campaigning work on his crimes and alleged crimes in Sierra Leone and Liberia prior to his arrest.

Charles Taylor, who also led the armed opposition group, National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), was found guilty last month by international Judges of aiding and abetting war crimes during the Sierra Leone internal armed conflict. He is yet to be prosecuted for crimes allegedly committed in his native country, Liberia.

While this historic judgment affirms that former Heads of State cannot consider themselves immune from international justice, Amnesty International remains concerned that tens of thousands of people who suffered atrocities in Liberia and Sierra Leone are yet to see other perpetrators brought to justice.

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An April 2001 report remarked that Charles Taylor's government had done virtually nothing to investigate and bring to justice those responsible for widespread human rights abuses during Liberia's internal armed conflict, which had been raging since 1989.

The report also documented that since mid-2000, dozens of civilians had allegedly been extra judicially executed and more than 100 civilians, including women, had been tortured by the Anti-Terrorist Unit (ATU) and other Liberian security forces. It noted that a former media consultant to President Taylor had 'disappeared' after he criticized exploitation of forest resources in south eastern Liberia by logging companies without benefits to the locals.

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In June 2003, the Special Court for Sierra Leone announced publicly that Charles Taylor was charged with war crimes. Charles Taylor was in Accra attending talks

aimed at ending Liberia's internal armed conflict and Amnesty International urged the Ghanaian authorities to arrest him. In August that year, Taylor resigned the Presidency and was granted exile in Nigeria.

In the following years, Amnesty International repeatedly urged the Nigerian Government to arrest Charles Taylor.

On 23rd March 2006, Amnesty International called on Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo to comply with Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf's request for Obasanjo to extradite Taylor and allow him to face trial at the Special Court for Sierra Leone. Taylor was captured by Nigerian authorities during a failed attempt to flee the country, and by 29 March he was surrendered to the Special Court for Sierra Leone in Freetown.

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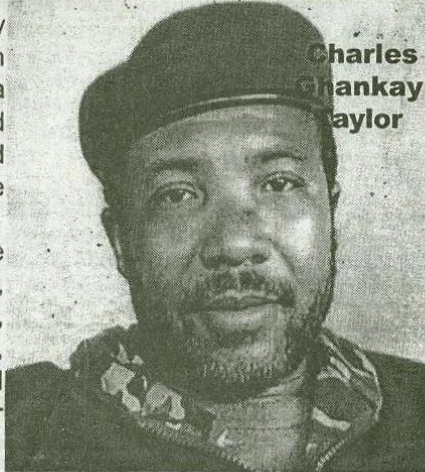
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Amnesty International continues to call for the investigation and prosecution of Charles Taylor for crimes he is alleged to have committed in Liberia.

CHARLES TAYLOR SENTENCED TO 50 YEARS IN PRISON

The Judges of Trial Chamber II today sentenced convicted former Liberian President Charles Ghankay Taylor to a term of 50 years in prison for planning and for aiding and abetting crimes committed by rebel forces in Sierra Leone during the country's decade-long civil war.

The Trial Chamber, comprised of Justice Richard Lussick of Samoa (Presiding), Justice Teresa Doherty of Northern Ireland, and Justice Julia Sebutinde of Uganda, unanimously imposed the single global sentence for all 11 counts of the crimes for which Mr. Taylor was convicted.



Charles Ghankay Taylor

These included acts of terrorism, murder, rape, sexual slavery, outrages upon personal dignity, cruel treatment, other inhumane acts, conscripting or enlisting of child soldiers, enslavement and pillage.

Justice Lussick, who read out the judgement in court, said the Trial Chamber found that Mr. Taylor's abuse of his position as President of Liberia to aid and abet the commission of crimes in Sierra Leone, and the abuse of his

Contd. Page 2

CHARLES TAYLOR SENTENCED TO 50 YEARS IN PRISON

From Front Page

position as a member of the ECOWAS Committee of Five (later Six), which was "part of the process relied on by the international community to bring peace to Sierra Leone," was "an aggravating factor of great weight."

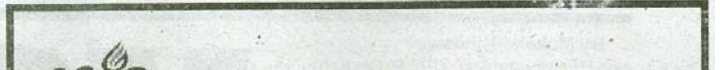
The Judges also cited the extra-territoriality of Mr. Taylor's acts, and his exploitation of the Sierra Leone conflict for financial gain, as aggravating factors considered in the sentencing. The Judges took into account the report of Mr. Taylor's good conduct in detention, but otherwise rejected a number of mitigating factors proposed by the Defence.

While the jurisprudence of the Special Court and other tribunals "holds that aiding and abetting as a mode of liability generally warrants a lesser sentence than that

imposed for more direct forms of participation," Justice Lussick said that Mr. Taylor's leadership role "puts him in a class of his own."

"The Trial Chamber wishes to underscore the gravity it attaches to Mr. Taylor's betrayal of the public trust," Justice Lussick said. "In the Trial Chamber's view, this betrayal outweighs the distinctions that might otherwise pertain to the modes of liability discussed above."

The parties, if they intend to appeal, must submit written notice to the Appeals Chamber within 14 days of today's sentencing judgement, setting forth the grounds of their appeal.



Awoko

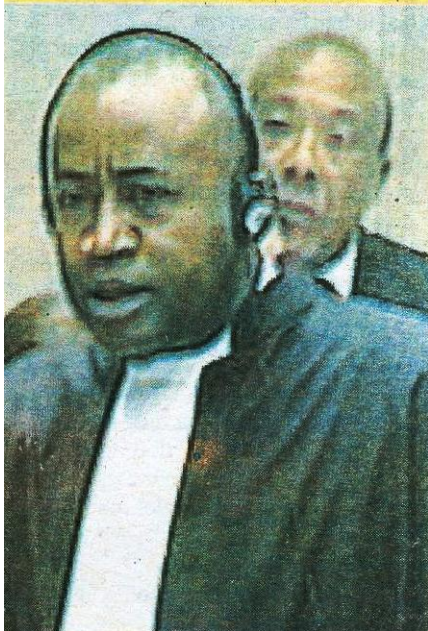
Thursday, 31 May 2012

As Judges slam 50yrs jail term, lawyer says "Charles Taylor will die in prison"

By Betty Milton

The lead Defence Counsel, Courtenay Griffiths QC of former Liberian President Charles Taylor has said in a press conference in The Hague just after a 50 year sentence was handed down by Judges of the Special Court for Sierra Leone that Mr Taylor "will die in prison."

Continue page 2



As Judges slam 50yrs jail term, lawyer says "Charles Taylor will die in prison"

Courtenay Griffiths was delivering his opening remarks before answering questions from journalists both in The Hague and Freetown.

He said "Now it's quite clear from the sentence imposed that the international community have been satisfied for effectively Charles Taylor will die in prison."

Mr Griffiths noted grimly that "Nobody expects him (Taylor) to live to the age of a hundred and fourteen so this is in fact a life sentence."

Given the above Mr Griffiths was even more worried that the prosecutor Brenda Hollis was "contemplating appealing" the sentence. In his usual controlled voice which masked his apparent anger, he asked "how much more do they (International Community) actually want or how much more do they need to appease this international thirst for blood?"

Earlier the Judges of the Trial Chamber of the Special Court for Sierra Leone sitting in The Hague yesterday handed down a unanimous sentence of "a single jail term of fifty years" on the former President of Liberia Charles

Ghankay Taylor.

On the 26th April the three Judges had found Mr Taylor guilty on one "mode of liability" which was "aiding and abetting" the rebel Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and which covered all the 11 counts charges that he faced. They however found him not guilty on the other two "modes of liability" which are "command responsibility" and "joint criminal enterprise."

After the verdict of guilty and in the process of considering the sentence the prosecution asked the judges to impose an 80 year sentence on Mr Taylor. The defence said this was "too long."

The judges ruled that Mr Taylor's personal circumstances which is reference to his age, the fact that he has so many children and even grand children and his age was not a mitigating factor for his sentence.

They also refused to agree with the defence that the two years seven months that Mr Taylor spent in asylum in Calabar, Nigeria should be used as credit for time spent and deducted from his sentence. They said he could move around and he was effectively not in detention in Nigeria. They furthered that even in

Mr Taylor's own testimony he had told the court that he was not under arrest while in Nigeria.

Also the defence had asked the Judges to consider the expression of sympathy by Mr Taylor after his guilty verdict was delivered. The Judges again refused to use that as a mitigating factor since they said Taylor had himself ordered his counsel to disregard an order of the court and that he had not accepted responsibility for the crimes committed in Sierra Leone.

The Trial Chamber further stated that in the issue of Mr Taylor's role in the peace process in Sierra Leone, though he was playing a significant role publicly as he was a member of the ECOWAS Committee of five but "secretly he was fuelling hostility between the AFRC/RUF and the democratically elected government by urging the former not to disarm and by actively supplying them with arms and ammunition to the RUF rebels." Therefore they submitted they did not find his role as a mitigating factor.

The Judges also ruled that as President of Liberia Mr Taylor held a position of trust which he abused. They said that rather than promote peace his role in supporting the RUF promoted the conflict. His exploitation of the conflict for personal profit they ruled is an aggravating factor.

Smartly dressed as always, this time in a dark blue European suit with a dull yellow tie Mr Taylor looked bland and resigned to any outcome as he was told to stand by the presiding Judge Justice Richard Lussick.

The judge then pronounced "Mr. Taylor for the foregoing reasons, the Trial Chamber unanimously sentence you to a single term of imprisonment of a single term of 50 years for all of the counts you have been found guilty. Credit shall be given to you for the period commenced 29th March 2006 during which you were detained in custody."

This means a reduction of some six years (29th March 2006 to 30th May 2012) to the 50 year sentence thus making it effectively 44 years. The 64 year old Charles Taylor will be 108 years at the end of his jail term.

During her press conference Prosecutor Brenda Hollis said "today is not a happy day, because we are here today because of the horrific crimes committed against the people of Sierra Leone. Today is another important day for the people of Sierra Leone and for the international community."

She said that they appreciate that the trial chamber appropriately highlighted the extreme gravity of the crimes of which he (Taylor) has

been convicted. He was responsible for planning of the most vicious crimes especially "operation no living thing" and that Taylor did not only plan it but issued the imperative that it should be fearful and that they should use all means to reach Freetown.

However, she said that the sentence imposed yesterday "does not replace the amputated limbs, it does not bring back to life those who were murdered and it does not heal the wounds of those who are victims of sexual violence, but the sentence brings some level of justice and reflect the condemnation of all members of the global community for the suffering reflected on innocent men women and children."

Brenda Hollis disclosed that they will carefully read the sentencing judgment "keeping in mind the critical role Taylor played in the commissioning of the crimes of which he has been convicted" and that after going through it they will then decide if they will appeal or not.

Courtenay Griffiths lamented that there was only one insignificant factor that the judges saw as a mitigating factor and not even the fact that he stepped down to save lives in Liberia was seen as a mitigating factor by the judges.

In the next 14 days Taylor's team of lawyers are expected to file in their appeal papers.

Thursday, 31 May 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

I'm sending you my article, a reflection on my experience with Charles Taylor, that I would like you to publish in your medium. I'm also sending you a PDF attachment of the context of that experience. I would be very pleased if you could publish/embed the PDF document along with the article.

Let me know if you have questions.

Patrick

Charles Taylor and His Demand for My Head

By Patrick S. Bernard

On May 30, 2012 former rebel leader, war lord, and President of Liberia Charles Taylor Charles Taylor was sentenced to 50 years in prison. This followed his conviction on April 26, 2012 by the United Nations-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone in the Hague for war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Civil War that engulfed Sierra Leone for over ten years (1991-2002). Taylor was found guilty for having aided and abetted crimes including rape, murder, the use of child soldiers, acts of terrorism, sexual slavery, enslavement and pillage, inhumane treatments including mutilations and amputations in that conflict. However, it should not be forgotten that Taylor also started and oversaw a fratricidal Civil War that killed thousands in his own country, Liberia. His sentence represents for many in West Africa the end of an era that promoted the violent and unredeeming ideology that terrorizing, dehumanizing and murdering innocent citizens on a large scale, an ideology Taylor basked in when he started his internecine war against then Liberian President Samuel K. Doe in December 1989, was the ultimate source and maintenance of power. In Sierra Leone in particular, his sentence is cold comfort for the thousands of people wantonly slaughtered, and countless living others who had their hands, arms, legs, or other body parts hacked, because of Taylor's support of Sierra Leone's rebel leader and bloody-minded war lord Corporal Foday Sankoh (who died in 2003) and his Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels who committed some of the most atrocious brutalities in any civil war in recent memory.

I would have been among those murdered by Taylor and his Sankoh-backed rebels. In fact, Taylor declared me a legitimate target, "public enemy number one" as he called me then, to be eliminated because I had dared to publish a letter in 1993 that linked him directly to the civil war in Sierra Leone. In the hey-days of Taylor as the indisputable purveyor of violence in that region, linking him to any strand in the brutal conflict in Sierra Leone amounted to committing a treasonable offence. That exactly happened when I published the letter: Taylor publicly offered a ransom to anyone who would take my head to him in Gbarnga, his rebel headquarters in Liberia, for what he also called my "anti-revolutionary" activities. In Taylor's West Africa of the early '90s, such a proclamation was, obviously, a death sentence.

More to that letter anon. First, the background.

In 1992, I was a journalist editing a newspaper in Sierra Leone called *Liberty Voice*. By the time I became editor, Taylor had overran Liberia and taken over the country (with the exception of the capital Monrovia) then led by Samuel Doe. Doe was later captured and brutally murdered by the rebel faction led by Prince Johnson who had fought alongside Taylor. Taylor's pronouncements as he fought the war in Liberia did not hide his territorial ambitions; nor did they hide his intentions of spreading his brand of

rebel warfare to other parts of West Africa to achieve those ambitions. No sooner had Taylor gained ascendancy in Liberia than the major regional players in West Africa realize the destabilizing danger he posed to the region and to their own entrenched authority. They decided that Taylor's influence in the region had to be nipped in the bud or contained to Liberia. To pursue this objective several West African countries, spearheaded by Nigeria and Ghana, started a strategy to contain Taylor by forming in 1990 the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group, ECOMOG for short, a multilateral armed force empowered to intervene in Liberia. ECOMOG chose Sierra Leone as its operational headquarters.

Sierra Leone shares a lengthy land border with Liberia. After ECOMOG's intervention in Liberia in 1990, the Civil War in Sierra Leone started along the Sierra Leone-Liberia border in 1991. Taylor had previously threatened to declare war on Sierra Leone before the intervention, so when ECOMOG was deployed in the country he unambiguously stated: "Sierra Leone will taste the bitterness of war." But once the Sierra Leone civil conflict began, Taylor religiously denied that he had anything to do with it. And there was no direct evidence to counter his denials.

Meanwhile, a coup d'état occurred in Sierra Leone in April 29, 1992 led by young military officers some of whom had been deployed in ECOMOG in Liberia and later returned to join the fight against Sankoh's rebels along the border. They overthrew the country's President Joseph Momoh who they said, among other reasons, was inept in fighting the war against Sankoh. (The military leaders were later to be ineffective in pursuing the war as well.) With the change, the new military government vowed to fight the war and crush Sankoh's rebels; in fact, the new government's first proclamation promised unequivocally to forestall the gains Sankoh had made in the country. By now Sankoh had partial control of Kailahun District which bordered Liberia, and was advancing to take the District's Daru Barracks, the largest military base outside of Sierra Leone's capital, Freetown. Sankoh's rebels also had infiltrated the diamond-rich Kono District and seized some territories where they were already mining diamonds which they sent to Taylor in exchange of arms and other military materiel. (Thus started what later became known as "blood diamonds." Revenues from blood diamonds supported the war in Sierra Leone as well as Taylor's unapologetic splendor and flamboyant life-style in Gbarnga.) To pursue their war policies, the new military leaders launched counter offensives against the rebels, and in one such attack they overran Pendembu, a strategic town in Kailahun District which Sankoh had made his headquarters for his RUF rebels. The soldiers drove Sankoh and his rebels out of Pendembu and seized weapons, vehicles, maps, and rebel paraphernalia.

Among the latter were letters from Taylor and Sankoh. At my newspaper we laid hands on the letters of Sankoh to Taylor, and without hesitation published the one that unequivocally showed that both were in touch about the war in Sierra Leone. We published the letter under the caption "Dear Charles Taylor" in the June 16, 1993 edition of the newspaper (PDF file attached). By doing so, we became the first media outlet to show with documentary evidence that Taylor and Sankoh had direct contacts, and that the former supported the latter in the war in Sierra Leone.

Here is the letter:

Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone

5th May 1992

*His Excellency,
CIC Charles Gbankay Taylor
President, P.P.R.A.G.
Gbarnga, Liberia*

Dear Brother,

I am thanking you very much for the brotherly help you are rendering me in my struggle. This struggle itself has reached a crucial and sensitive stage wherein I cannot afford to give up. However, there is an urgent need to sit and discuss issues on the current development in Sierra Leone and also on the deployment of ECOMOG at the borders. These events are crucial and we need to address ourselves to them. I am therefore requesting an audience with you before I leave.

I appreciate the five boxes of A.K. 47 raffle [sic] ammunition and ten boxes of R.P.G. gun rackets [sic] which I should receive from you today. But I have just received a radio message from General Depoe that our men have encircled Daru Barracks and they are waiting to do the final assault.

I believe what you have offered is not enough to carry out "Operation Capture Daru." So I am asking you in the name of Almighty God to kindly increase the number of boxes of A.K. 47 ammunition to (20) twenty and that of the RPG rackets [sic] to (12) plus some baretta [sic] rounds. This will sustain me for some time while awaiting the long term supply that you have promised me. Moreover, it will boost the moral of my fighters who are in top form to advance on the enemies.

Lastly, today I am a common laughter because of lack of vehicle for my mobility. My only jeep is in the garage beyond repairs. I do ride on a Toyota truck for a long distance journey or beg for lift here in town. Such practices pose a high risk on my security but I have no alternative. I am asking you to arrest this situation by providing me even a second hand pick up [truck] to enhance my mobility. While anticipating your usual consideration, I would be grateful to you for your continued support in my struggle to liberate my people.

*Kindest regards
Yours sincerely,
Cpl. Foday Sankoh*

The letter revealed indisputably the contact between Taylor and Sankoh, and the support the latter was receiving from the former in his war efforts. The letter further exposed the asymmetrical relationship between them (Taylor providing arms and ammunitions while Sankoh could not afford a vehicle, for instance). More significantly the letter demonstrated that Taylor provided military support, weapons, and strategy to Sankoh. On the military side also, the letter showed their awareness of the deployment of ECOMOG forces and the calculations they needed to make to deal with this multilateral force. (One of the counts the UN-backed court found Taylor guilty of in its April 26 judgment reads: Taylor had "aided and abetted the rebels by providing them with arms and ammunitions, military personnel, operational support and moral support.") Sankoh's letter of 1992 had established this indisputable truth.

At *Liberty Voice*, the letter was a journalistic coup. It was reported in newspapers and radio stations, and its contents traveled far and wide in West Africa and beyond. Taylor could not now deny this unambiguous evidence that linked him to the war in Sierra Leone.

To say that Taylor was dissatisfied with the letter's publication is an understatement. He was furious, and madly so. His response was swift. From his radio station in Gbarnga and also through other international radio outlets, he categorically denied any such connections that the letter revealed. Specifically, he decried the "false" information I had peddled linking him to Foday Sankoh, whom he said he had never met. (Taylor and Sankoh in fact trained in Libya in the 1980s.) He not only stopped at the denial, but also promised to "eliminate" me from the face of the earth. He declared me an enemy of the rebel cause who must be purged through death by bringing my head to him at Gbarnga. I was scared. All of us at *Liberty Voice* were scared. In fact, we were so scared that the day and week after the publication we didn't go to the office.

We had to be scared.

By this time, Taylor's rebels, operators, and commandos had infiltrated Sierra Leone, which they had entered furtively, fighting alongside Sankoh's rebels. Also, Taylor had created an efficient network of spies and informants who were as effective as they were ruthless. They crisscrossed Sierra Leone and Liberia murdering anyone they perceived to be a threat to Taylor and his brutal rebel cause. Among their targets were journalists who were critical of or questioned Taylor's agenda. Indeed many journalists disappeared during Taylor's ruthless quest for power in Liberia. (Many were also later killed in Sierra Leone.) His ransom decree following the letter's publication meant that I was not to be an exception. Taylor had a devious and devilish mind when it came to dealing with those he considered his "enemies." This spirit of deviousness animated the barbarously vile vision he trumpeted unapologetically through a monstrosity of violence that was unforbidding as it was ruthless. His devilish mind fed his appetite for power and guided his macabre uses of violence in pursuit of his agenda of revenge and retribution. And no site was more central to the vistas of violence Taylor put in place than Gbarnga, where he had asked for my head to be taken.

Taylor enamored West Africa from his headquarters in Gbarnga where he gave charismatic radio interviews, characterized by his exaggerated and calculated mannerisms, assured arrogance, and a flippancy bursting with megalomania. He laced his bombastic rhetoric of self-admiration with insults and intimidation against anyone who questioned his legitimacy or connected him to the war in Sierra Leone. But Gbarnga was not only about flowery speeches: it was there Taylor engineered the tools of dehumanization that Sankoh was to finesse in Sierra Leone.

From Gbarnga, he developed the mechanisms of violence that promoted a reign of terror that flagrantly disregarded the sanctity of human life. It was from Gbarnga that he institutionalized the rituals of violence that were to characterize his approach to power, whose hierarchies, flamboyance, and protocols he simultaneously violated and venerated. Gbarnga represented Taylor's glamorization of brutality as well as the propagation of a brand of violence that was pathological, bizarre and apocalyptic in its vision and practice.

Taylor's rebel war, and its export to Sierra Leone, represented a paradigmatic shift in the spectacle of violence in West Africa, a region by this time that was infamous for its unending military coup d'états and public executions, of mostly politicians. But from Gbarnga, Taylor introduced to West Africa a version of violence that was indiscriminate and mutable; it massacred innocent and helpless civilians for no just cause other than to promote fear and paranoia. Taylor and Sankoh deployed crude technologies of brutality, torture, and slaughter that desecrated and defiled the human body in ways never seen before in West Africa. The newness and swiftness of this brand of violence and its ritualized strategies of torture, sadism, and psychosis bordered on the unimaginable for its sheer antipathy toward human suffering and dignity. (My newspaper also became the first media outlet to publish the picture of Foday Sankoh in the June 30, 1993 edition titled "This is Foday Sankoh." When the war started in 1991, there were no known photos of Sankoh, a circumstance the rebels used to construct a phantom aura around their leader that at times claimed he did not exist. Dispelling this myth doubled the death threats against me, this time by RUF rebels. At this stage in the war, disclosing any markers about Sankoh's identity or existence was one of the most serious crimes one could commit against the rebel cause.)

I knew that publishing the letter was fraught with deathly danger for me and my reporters; but I was enthusiastic to take the risk, if not for anything else but to alert the world of the horror Taylor and Sankoh presented to Sierra Leone. I will take that risk again if I have to in the service of humanity. If only the powers that be, particularly the international community, had taken the action they took thirteen years after I published the letter, the thousands of innocent people who lost their lives in that senseless war would be living today. Taylor was indicted in 2006 for war crimes committed against the people of Sierra Leone during its civil conflict. The letter had revealed that truth in 1993!

I left Sierra Leone before the Civil War reached its most brutal stages. Two journalists, a reporter and a cartoonist who worked with me, were later killed in the war. My younger brother was also killed in the war. For me, Taylor's 50-year prison sentence brings a painful closure: I now can breathe a huge sigh of relief, confident that my head will never be taken to Charles Taylor in Gbarnga.

Patrick S. Bernard is Associate Professor and Chair, Department of English, Franklin & Marshall College, Lancaster, PA

LIBERTY VOICE

we report the news
in the news.

VOL 1 No. 20 FREETOWN.

WEDNESDAY, June 16, 1993

Motto: Truth

PRICE Ls. 100

The Undersecretary of State Defence has disclosed in Freetown last week

WAR LATEST

be located. Giving an update on the war situation, Lt. Mondeh



SAJ Musa - The Kono must go home See page 8

that the war situation in Sierra Leone since the fall of Kono to government forces has improved tremendously with a follow-up of lightening success in parts of Kailahun District and Pujehun. Defence and military sources have predicted that there is much hope of an early end of the

war. It has also been revealed that enemy morale is at a low ebb, and the rebels now resort to ambushes and infiltration tactics. The rebel Headquarters, it has been reliably learnt is now based at Kailahun - and according to Defence sources Foday Sankoh is in disarray. He cannot



MONDEH - Moral wongering pays off - said, all the Battalions are going contd. p.3

DEAR CHARLES TAYLOR

REVOLUTIONARY UNITED FRONT OF SIERRA LEONE 5th May 1992

His Excellency,
CIC Charles Gbankay Taylor
President, P.P.R.A.G.
Gbarnga, Liberia

Dear Brother,

I am thanking you very much for the brotherly help you are rendering me in my liberation struggle. This struggle itself has reached a crucial and sensitive stage wherein I cannot afford to give up. However, there is an urgent need to sit and discuss issues on the current development in Sierra Leone and also on the deployment of RUF at the borders. These events are crucial and we need to address ourselves to them. I am therefore requesting an audience with you before I leave.

I appreciate the five boxes of A.K.47 rifle ammunition and ten boxes of R.P.G. gun rockets which I should receive from you today. But I have just received a radio message from General Depoe that our men have encircled the Daru Barracks and they are awaiting to do the final assault.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING? (CLARIFICATION)

Today is the Day of the African Child. And today as we celebrate that day, we need to look at the condition of the child in Africa particularly so in Sierra Leone. But honestly before we do, answer this question simply: contd. p.2

I believe that what you have offered is not enough to carry out the "Operation Capture Daru". So I am asking you in the name of the Almighty God to kindly increase the number of boxes of A.K.47 ammunition to (20) twenty and that of the RPG rockets to (12) plus some baretta rounds. This will sustain me for some time while awaiting the long term supply that you have promised me. Moreover, it will boost the moral of my fighters who are in top form to advance on the enemies.

Lastly, today I am a common laughter

NO MACHINES BUT... See page 2



Kindest regards
Yours sincerely,
Cpl. Foday Sankoh
See page 3

NPRC FIRST



GBONDO - Rehabilitation goes on



OMOWALE: Children, our concern See page 3

Daily Times (Nigeria)

Wednesday, 30 May 2012

Former Liberian leader Taylor jailed for 50 years

Prosecutors had demanded 80 years

By From the wires



Former Liberian President Charles Taylor was jailed for 50 years on Wednesday for helping Sierra Leonean rebels wage a savage war, receiving a precedent-setting sentence from a special war crimes court.

Taylor, the first head of state convicted by an international court since World War Two, had been found guilty of backing rebels who murdered, raped and mutilated tens of thousands of people in an 11-year war that ended in 2002.

Presiding judge Richard Lussick said there was no legal precedent by which to determine a sentence, but the term was intended to reflect Taylor's position of authority. Prosecutors had demanded 80 years.

"He was found responsible for aiding and abetting some of the most heinous and brutal crimes in recorded history," he said, reading out the sentencing.

"Leadership must be carried out by example by the prosecution of crimes not the commission of crimes."

The sentence is intended to "underscore the gravity it attached to the betrayal of public trust."

Dressed in a blue suit and yellow tie, Taylor sat impassively through the roughly 45-minute reading at the Special Court for Sierra Leone. Hands clasped in front of his mouth and his brow furrowed, Taylor shifted uneasily when the camera broadcasting proceedings settled on him.

Both sides are expected to appeal.

Reacting from Sierra Leone, deputy minister of information Sheka Tarawalie said: "Today the people of Sierra Leone, the victims, and ordinary observers inside and outside the country would believe that some kind of justice has been done."

The St Louis American

Wednesday, 30 May 2012

Former president of Liberia receives 50 years for war crimes

The first former head of state to be convicted of war crimes since World War II was sentenced to 50 years in prison Wednesday by an international court in The Hague, Netherlands.

The court convicted Charles Taylor last month of aiding rebels in neighboring Sierra Leone in a campaign of terror, involving murder, rape, sexual slavery and the conscription children younger than 15.

The prosecution had asked the Special Court for Sierra Leone for a sentence of 80 years for Taylor, the president of Liberia from 1997 to 2003, but the judges found the recommendation "excessive" citing the "limited scope" of the conviction in some points.

There is no death penalty in international criminal law, and Taylor, 64, would serve out his sentence in a British prison.

The former Liberian president is appealing his conviction and will receive credit for time already served since March 2006.

He does not see himself as a war criminal but as a victim – a leader wronged by corruption and a hypocritical hand of justice with a political agenda.

He said he was saddened by last month's guilty verdict, in which the court said he had assisted Revolutionary United Front rebels who fueled Sierra Leone's long and bloody civil war that ultimately left 50,000 dead or missing.

Taylor, who has expressed no remorse, has insisted his intent was far from what had been portrayed by prosecutors and described himself as a peacemaker.

He blamed money for an unfair trial, claiming prosecutors received millions of dollars from the United States government and witnesses were paid off.

Last month's landmark ruling by the Special Court for Sierra Leone against Taylor was the first war crimes conviction of a former head of state by an international court since the Nuremberg trials after World War II that convicted Adm. Karl Doenitz, who became president of Germany briefly after Adolf Hitler's suicide.

Taylor, 64, was found guilty of all 11 counts of aiding and abetting the deadly rebel campaign in Sierra Leone and mining diamonds to pay for guns.

The prosecutors failed, however, to prove that Taylor assumed direct command over the rebels who committed the atrocities.

He was a pivotal figure in Liberian politics for decades and was forced out of office under international pressure in 2003. He fled to Nigeria, where border guards arrested him three years later as he was attempting to cross into Chad.

The United Nations and the Sierra Leone government jointly set up the special tribunal to try those who played the biggest role in the atrocities. The court was moved to Netherlands from Sierra Leone, where emotions about the civil war still run high.

Voice of America
 Wednesday, 30 May 2012

Liberia's Taylor Sentenced to 50 Years for War Crimes

Lisa Bryant

PARIS - Former Liberian president Charles Taylor has been sentenced to 50 years in prison for aiding and abetting horrific war crimes committed during Sierra Leone's civil war. Both defense and prosecution are expected to appeal the sentence by an international court in The Hague. Taylor is expected to serve any jail term in a British prison.

Dressed in a dark blue suit and yellow tie, Taylor listened somberly to his sentence that was read by presiding judge Richard Lussick.

"Mr. Taylor, for the forgoing reasons, the trial chamber unanimously sentences you to a single term of imprisonment of 50 years for all the counts on which you have been found guilty," said Lussick.

Guilty on 11 counts

Last month, the Special Court for Sierra Leone found Taylor guilty on 11 counts of aiding and abetting rebels who killed, raped and mutilated thousands of people during Sierra Leone's civil war. He is the first African leader to be convicted by an international court and, more generally, the first head of state to face such a conviction since World War II.

The prison sentence handed to Taylor is less than the 80 years the prosecution requested. But the court also dismissed a slew of mitigating factors the defense argued should lighten his sentence, noting his special status as a former head of state.

"The trial chamber wishes to underscore the gravity it attaches to Mr. Taylor's betrayal of public trust. In the trial chamber's view, this betrayal outweighs the distinctions that might otherwise pertain to the modes of liability discussed above," said Lussick.

'Heinous' crimes, 'culture of impunity'

Reacting to the sentence, Sierra Leone's government said some justice had been done. Sierra Leone researcher for Amnesty International, Lisa Sherman-Nikolaus, also expressed satisfaction.

"But what I think is more important to remember today is that while Taylor has been handed a 50-year sentence, for a lot of the survivors of the war in Sierra Leone and Liberia, justice is still not complete. Most of them are still struggling to make a daily living. There's still a culture of impunity," said Sherman-Nikolaus.

Judge Lussick's remarks during the sentencing reflected that sentiment.

"For those who survived these crimes, the long-term impact on their lives is devastating. Amputees without arms who now have to live on charity because they can no longer work. Young girls who have been publicly stigmatized and will never recover from the trauma of rape and sexual slavery to which they were subjected," he said.

Lussick described the crimes in Sierra Leone as some of the most heinous in history.

David Crane, former chief prosecutor for the Special Court for Sierra Leone, called the 50-year sentence "appropriate." Crane spoke to VOA reporter Joe De Capua about the sentence. To listen to the interview, click on the player below.

Voice of America

Thursday, 31 May 2012

Sierra Leone: Taylor Sentencing Is 'Justice Done'

The government of Sierra Leone says "justice has been done" with the sentencing of former Liberian president Charles Taylor.

Government spokesman Sheka Tarawalie said Wednesday that Taylor's 50-year prison sentence for war crimes and crimes against humanity was welcome news for victims who may now find some relief.

Some Sierra Leonians expressed disappointment with the sentence, saying it was too short.

However, the former chief prosecutor for the Special Court for Sierra Leone tells VOA that Taylor's sentence is "appropriate."

David Crane says Taylor's sentence represents the "end of an era" for a man who played a central role in atrocities that destroyed lives in Sierra Leone.

"I am pleased for the people of Sierra Leone who finally have seen final justice for the one man who was really the center point in aiding and abetting a horror story that destroyed their lives."

Taylor was convicted for supporting rebels who killed, raped, and mutilated thousands of people during Sierra Leone's civil war.

Ibrahim Jalloh, a leader of a Sierra Leone expatriates' group in the Netherlands, expressed approval of the sentence. He said Taylor deserved the jail term because the rebels committed "a very serious crime" in Sierra Leone.

Agence France Presse

Wednesday, 30 May 2012

Taylor Sentenced to 50 Years

A UN-backed court jailed Liberia's Charles Taylor for 50 years yesterday for fuelling Sierra Leone's savage war, known for its mutilations, drugged child soldiers and sex slaves.

The former Liberian president, 64, was convicted last month of all 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity for aiding and abetting Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front during the country's 1991-2001 civil war.



Taylor listens to the judge at the opening of the sentencing near The Hague, judgment hearing at the court in Leidschendam

In return, he was paid in "blood diamonds" mined by slave labour in areas under control of the rebels, who murdered, raped and kept sex slaves, hacked off limbs and forced children aged under 15 to fight, the court found.

"The accused has been found responsible for aiding and abetting some of the most heinous crimes in human history," said Special Court for Sierra Leone judge Richard Lussick, reading out the ruling yesterday.

He detailed a litany of horrors, including rebels cutting open pregnant women "to settle bets on the sex of a child". Many witnesses, Lussick said, were "weeping as they testified. Their suffering will be life-long". "The trial chamber noticed that the effects of these crimes on the families and society as a whole in Sierra Leone was devastating," the judge said at the hearing in Leidschendam, just outside The Hague. It was the first sentence against a former head of state in an international court since the Nuremberg Nazi trials in 1946.

Taylor – with gold-rimmed glasses and cropped greying hair, a dark suit and gold tie – listened with his eyes closed as the judge handed down the sentence, which Taylor's team, and prosecutors, have two weeks to appeal.

Chief prosecutor Brenda Hollis had asked for 80 years' prison and said her team would study the sentence before deciding whether to appeal.

"The sentence ... does not replace amputated limbs, does not bring back to life those who were murdered," she said. "It does not heal the wounds of those victims of sexual violence and does not remove the permanent emotional and psychological scars of those enslaved or recruited as child soldiers.

"But it brings back some measure of justice ... for those fortunate enough to survive."

In Sierra Leone's capital Freetown, hundreds of survivors of the war that claimed 120,000 lives watched the proceedings in silence on a large TV screen.

Among them was Al Hadji Jusu Jarka, former chairman of the association of amputees, who had both his arms cut off by the rebels.

"The curtain has now been drawn on Charles Taylor," he said. "I hope he will be haunted by his deeds as he languishes in jail."

Sierra Leone hailed the sentencing as "welcome news to both government and the nation".

"It is a step forward as justice has been done," Deputy Information Minister Sheku Tarawali said.

Human Rights Watch said the sentence "sends a strong signal to other highest-level leaders that the world

is becoming increasingly intolerant of those who use their positions of power to commit the most serious crimes”.

Taylor’s lawyer Courtenay Griffiths however said the sentence meant that “effectively Charles Taylor will die in prison” while the legal team indicated it would appeal.

Judge Lussick said that Taylor, as president from 1997 to 2003, “held a position of public trust and higher authority, which he abused”.

Throughout the trial, Taylor maintained his innocence and insisted he was instrumental in eventually ending Sierra Leone’s civil war.

But the judge said Taylor “secretly ... was fueling hostilities”.

The ex-president will now remain in the UN’s detention unit in The Hague until appeal procedures are finalised, his lawyers said. The process could still take several months.

Taylor’s sentence will be served in a British prison under a 2007 agreement to put him on trial in the Netherlands-based court.

The nearly four-year trial, which wrapped up in March 2011, saw several high-profile witnesses testify.

Among them was supermodel Naomi Campbell, who told of a gift of “dirty diamonds” she received from Taylor in 1997 at a charity ball hosted by South Africa’s then-president Nelson Mandela.

Nigeria arrested Taylor in March 2006 as he tried to flee from exile there after being forced to quit Liberia three years earlier, under international pressure to end that country’s own civil war.

He was transferred to The Hague in mid-2006 amid security fears should he go on trial in Freetown.

Associated Press
Wednesday, 30 May 2012

Judges to pass sentence on Charles Taylor

LEIDSCHENDAM, Netherlands – Judges at an international war crimes court were passing sentence Wednesday on former Liberian President Charles Taylor following his landmark conviction for supporting rebels in Sierra Leone who murdered and mutilated thousands during their country's brutal civil war.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone found Taylor guilty last month on 11 charges of aiding and abetting the rebels who went on a bloody rampage during the decade-long war that ended in 2002 with more than 50,000 dead.

The 64-year-old warlord-turned-president became the first former head of state convicted by an international war crimes court since World War II.

Prosecutors have asked judges at the Special Court for Sierra Leone to impose an 80-year sentence; Taylor's lawyers urged judges to hand down a sentence that offered him some hope of release before he dies.

Taylor will serve his sentence in a British prison.

He is expected, however, to appeal his convictions and will likely remain in jail in The Hague while the appeals process plays out.

At a sentencing hearing earlier this month, Taylor expressed "deepest sympathy" for the suffering of victims of atrocities in Sierra Leone, but insisted he had acted to help stabilize the West Africa region and claimed he never knowingly assisted in the commission of crimes.

"What I did...was done with honor," he said. "I was convinced that unless there was peace in Sierra Leone, Liberia would not be able to move forward."

However, Judges ruled that Taylor armed and supplied the rebels in full knowledge they would likely use weapons to commit terrible crimes, in exchange for payments of "blood diamonds" often obtained by slave labor.

Prosecutors said there was no reason for leniency, given the extreme nature of the crimes, Taylor's "greed" and misuse of his position of power.

"The purposely cruel and savage crimes committed included public executions and amputations of civilians, the display of decapitated heads at checkpoints, the killing and public disembowelment of a civilian whose intestines were then stretched across the road to make a check point, public rapes of women and girls, and people burned alive in their homes," prosecutor Brenda Hollis wrote in a brief appealing for the 80-year sentence.

Taylor stepped down and fled into exile in Nigeria after being indicted by the court in 2003. He was finally arrested and sent to the Netherlands in 2006.

While the Sierra Leone court is based in that country's capital, Freetown, Taylor's trial is being staged in Leidschendam, a suburb of The Hague, Netherlands, for fear holding it in West Africa could destabilize the region.

Read more: <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2012/05/30/judges-to-pass-sentence-on-charles-taylor/#ixzz1wLNR0ZAX>

Mladic: just another "false start"

The Hague, Netherlands

The trial of former Bosnian Serb Army commander Ratko Mladic started before the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) last Wednesday – but not really. Immediately after the Prosecution’s two-day opening statement, presentation of the evidence was “suspended sine die”, as presiding judge Alphons Orie put it, or - indefinitely.

By Radosa Milutinovic, The Hague

Caused by the prosecution’s failure to disclose its voluminous evidence to the defence on time, the early delay of Mladic’s trial was as preventable as it was foreseeable. Judges were certainly put on notice by defence counsel Branko Lukic as early as last autumn. Ever since, Lukic has been consistently complaining of late and incomplete disclosure, requesting an additional three to six months to receive all materials and fully prepare for the trial. All along, prosecutors maintained, with some caveats, that the defence request had no merit.

Judge Orie’s chamber seemingly opted to go with the flow and hope for the best, when it decided to start the trial on May 16 and to hear the first witness on May 29. By the time the prosecution sheepishly conceded its failure to disclose thousands of documents on May 14, it was already too late. Judges were left to assess the damage, give the defence additional time and reschedule the start of the evidence as soon as possible. What was eagerly expected as the Tribunal’s finest hour ended up in the headlines as a “fiasco” and “confusion”. ICTY insiders see all this as just another procedural glitch - more embarrassing, though, because of intense public scrutiny.

Suggestions about the court's inefficiency and ineptitude have almost overshadowed the prosecution's overview of evidence of Mladic's alleged crucial role in the genocide at Srebrenica, the shelling of Sarajevo, an ethnic cleansing campaign throughout Bosnia and the taking of UN soldiers as hostages, from 1992-95.

The evidence against Mladic, amassed through years of investigation and courtroom litigation, is "overwhelming and unassailable," prosecutor Peter McCloskey said. Mladic was the chief implementer of Radovan Karadzic's overarching criminal plan to forcibly create a new Serbian state by persecuting Muslims and Croats, claimed prosecutor Dermot Groome. For 44 months, Sarajevo was "in the palm of Mladic's hand," said Groome. Quoting Mladic's recorded ultimatum to Muslims after the fall of Srebrenica ("You can either survive or disappear"), McCloskey said Mladic was "obsessed with the destruction of Muslims". What happened at Srebrenica in 1995 "is genocide and always will be genocide," he added.

Not the first time

For seasoned court observers, the "false start" to the Mladic trial indicates pressure from the UN Security Council. The court is in a hurry to finish most of its trials (eight in the first instance, with one more to start and six appeals) before the Residual Mechanism takes over in July 2013. At the same time, a shrinking staff, limited resources and smaller budget, combined with its congenital bureaucratic nature, have made the ICTY prone to succumb to pressure to "start the trial now and solve problems as we go."

It's not the first time such an approach has backfired. Karadzic's genocide trial started in October 2009, only to be swiftly adjourned for six months. Proceedings have been interrupted four times since, once for two months because of belated evidence disclosure. For different reasons, the trials of Vojislav Seselj and Jovica Stanisic had to be re-started after successful defence appeals against judges' decisions to start proceedings in 2006 and 2008 respectively.