

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



New Judge Shireen Fisher at yesterday's swearing-in ceremony. See additional photos in today's *'Special Court Supplement'*

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:

Tuesday, 5 May 2009

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

Justice Shireen Avis Fisher Sworn in as Appeals Judge / Press Release	Page 3
Trial Chamber Dismisses Motion for Judgment of Acquittal ... / Press Release	Page 4
Prosecution's Case Upheld in Charles Taylor Trial... / OTP	Page 5
Special Court Swears New Judge / Premier News	Page 6
Taylor Acquittal Request Rejected / Premier News	Page 7
Fisher Sworn in as Appeals Judge for Special Court / Spectator	Pages 8-9
New Appeals Court Judge Sworn In / Awoko	Page 10
Taylor Loses Hague Bid / Concord Times	Page 11
Johnny Paul Gravely Sick / Exclusive	Page 12

International News

Judges Reject Taylor Acquittal / Al Jazeera	Pages 13-14
Special Court Rejects Acquittal of Former Liberian President / VOA	Page 15-16
Charles Taylor Loses Hague Bid / BBC	Page 17
Court Denies Taylor Motion for Acquittal / Independent Online	Page 18
Liberia's Taylor 'Must Face Charges' / The Scotsman	Page 19
Torture and Corruption: War Crimes Trial of Former Liberian... / ABC News	Pages 20-21
Court Dismisses Charles Taylor's Acquittal Motion / Associated Press	Pages 22-23
Warcrimes Court Rejects Taylor Acquittal Bid / Agence France-Presse	Pages 24-25
Sierra Leone - Trial of Charles Taylor / African Press Organization	Page 26
Court Denies Taylor Acquittal / Daily Observer	Page 27
Judges at UN-Backed Court Dismiss Motion to Acquit... / UN News Centre	Page 28
Taylor's acquittal plea thrown out / Afrol News	Page 29
Court Refuses to Acquit Former Liberian President Taylor / Xinhua	Page 30
No Release for Liberia's Taylor / Radio Netherlands	Page 31
Taylor's Request for War Crimes Acquittal Rejected / Reuters	Page 32
Taylor's Acquittal Motion Denied / Star News	Page 33
UN Court Rejects Former Liberian President's Acquittal Bid / RTT News	Page 34
Taylor Trial Update / UN Dispatch	Page 35

Special Court Supplement

Swearing-in Ceremony for Justice Shireen Avis Fisher, in Pictures



Special Court for Sierra Leone
Outreach and Public Affairs Office

PRESS RELEASE

Freetown, Sierra Leone, 4 May 2009

Justice Shireen Avis Fisher Sworn in As Appeals Judge

Justice Shireen Avis Fisher, an experienced international judge and legal scholar, was sworn in today as Appeals Judge for the Special Court for Sierra Leone.



Justice Shireen Fisher subscribes to the Judicial Oath during Monday's ceremony in Freetown.

Justice Fisher, from the United States, was appointed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

She succeeds Justice A. Raja N. Fernando of Sri Lanka, who passed away last November.

Immediately prior to her appointment to the Special Court Justice Fisher served, from 2005 to 2008, as an International Judge of the War Crimes Chamber, Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The cases adjudicated by Justice Fisher at the Bosnia War Crimes Chamber included convictions for

sexual slavery and other crimes against humanity, war crimes, and notably, the first convictions for the commission of genocide at Srebrenica. She also developed the court rules for victim and witness protections in the courtroom. She currently serves as a Commissioner on the Kosovo Independent Judicial and Prosecutorial Commission.

Since 1986 she has also served as a Judge of General Jurisdiction Trial Courts (criminal, civil and family courts) in the U.S. state of Vermont, currently with Active-Retired Status. Justice Fisher began her legal career as a Public Defender in Vermont, with a particular focus on juvenile justice cases.

She was called to the Bar in 1976.

Justice Fisher received her *Juris Doctor* from the Columbus School of Law, Catholic University of America, in 1976 and an LLM in International Human Rights Law from University College London in 2001. She anticipates receiving her Ph.D in International Law from University College London in 2009.

She has written and lectured extensively on international law.

#END



Special Court for Sierra Leone
Outreach and Public Affairs Office

PRESS RELEASE

Freetown, Sierra Leone, 4 May 2009

Trial Chamber Dismisses Motion for Judgment of Acquittal, Orders Taylor Defence to Open on June 29

The Judges of Trial Chamber II in The Hague have dismissed in its entirety a Motion for Judgment of Acquittal brought Under Rule 98 by Defence counsel on behalf of former Liberian President Charles Taylor. This means that Mr. Taylor has a case to answer on all 11 counts of the indictment.

The Trial Chamber ruled that the Prosecution had presented sufficient evidence on all counts which, if believed, would be capable of supporting a conviction. The Chamber made its finding based on the joint criminal enterprise mode of liability, and ruled that it need not examine other modes of liability, that is, aiding and abetting, planning, instigating, ordering, and superior responsibility.

“The Trial Chamber agrees with the Prosecution that it is not necessary for the purposes of Rule 98 to evaluate the sufficiency of the evidence in relation to each mode of liability and that it is sufficient if there is evidence capable supporting a conviction on the basis of one of those modes,” Justice Richard Lussick said in reading out the Chamber’s decision. “In relation to the alleged participation of the accused, the Trial Chamber finds that there is evidence that the accused participated in the joint criminal enterprise.”

Justice Lussick emphasized that the standard for determining sufficiency of evidence under Rule 98 “is not evidence on which a Trial Chamber should convict, but evidence on which it could convict.”

The Chamber ordered that the Taylor Defence open their case on 29 June 2009. A Pre-Defence Conference will take place on 8 June 2009.

Mr. Taylor is expected to take the stand in his own defence. Under the Special Court’s Rules, he will be the first witness to testify in the Defence case.

#END



SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
Office of the Prosecutor

PRESS ALERT

**Prosecution's Case Upheld in Charles Taylor Trial as
Judges Deny Defense Motion for Acquittal**

THE HAGUE, NETHERLANDS May 4, 2009 — Judges in the war crimes trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor have denied the Defense Motion for Judgment of Acquittal “in its entirety.” In a decision announced Monday morning in The Hague, the Trial Chamber of the Special Court for Sierra Leone ruled that the Prosecution had presented evidence that Taylor “was involved in a plan to terrorize civilians” in Sierra Leone.

The Judges further held that “during the campaign to terrorize the civilian population civilians were killed, raped, forced into sexual slavery, subjected to physical violence including amputations and mutilation, and were abducted and forced to labor” and “that children participated actively.”

“We are pleased that the Trial Chamber has ruled that Charles Taylor must answer each and every one of the eleven counts of our indictment for crimes against humanity, war crimes, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law,” said Stephen Rapp, the Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

The Judges also ordered that the Defense begin the presentation of its case on June 29, 2009. Based on public statements by Taylor's lawyers, it is anticipated that the first Defense witness will be Taylor himself. In their decision issued on Monday, the judges decided that the evidence was sufficient to create a case to answer. It is only after the presentation of defense evidence that the judges will decide whether the Prosecution has met its burden of proving Taylor guilty of each count beyond a reasonable doubt.

Taylor was arrested in March 2006 and transferred to The Hague in June 2006. Over 90 witnesses testified on behalf of the Prosecution before a three-judge Trial Chamber in The Hague. The first Prosecution witness began testimony in January 2008, and the Prosecution concluded its case in chief in February 2009.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone was set up jointly by the Government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations. It is mandated to try those who bear the greatest responsibility for atrocities committed during Sierra Leone's brutal civil war between 1996 and 2002.

The trials of three former leaders of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), two members of the Civil Defence Forces (CDF) and three former Revolutionary United Front (RUF) leaders have been completed. The RUF trial is in the appeals phase, the others have concluded the appeals process.

To learn more about the Special Court, please see the Special Court for Sierra Leone Web site: <http://www.sc-sl.org/>. The Taylor trial proceedings are streamed over the internet, and can be watched at [Hague Link 1](#) and [Hague Link 2](#).

#END

Premier News
Tuesday, 5 May 2009

Special Court Swears New Judge



The Special Court for Sierra Leone has sworn in American-born Justice Shireen Avis Fisher, as the new judge for the Appeals Chamber of the court.

By Joseph Turay

The swearing-in ceremony took place yesterday at the court's premises, Jomo Kenyatta Road, Freetown.

In her statement, the Acting Registrar, Binta Mansaray said the appointment of Justice Fisher came at the right time, when the court needs someone like her with vast experience in international jurisprudence and is another milestone in the history of the court.

Mrs. Mansaray said even though the court is winding-up its activities, there are lots of things to do, that warrants the appointment of Justice Fisher. She said her appointment is part of the court's rules and procedure and part of the mandate to appoint a new judge when one passes away.

The Registrar praised Justice Fisher for her vast experience and contribution in the international justice system.

In her brief statement, Judge Fisher promised to work with the court and the other judges in the Appeals Chamber to the best of her knowledge and experience.

She also expressed delighted for the appointment.

The swearing-in declaration was signed by the Justice Minister Abdul Serryay on behalf of Government.

Justice Fisher succeeds Justice A Raja Fernando, who passed away in November last year.

Prior to her appointment, Justice Fisher served as Trial Judge from 2005 to 2008 for the War Crimes Court in Bosnia and Herzegovina and since she joined the Bar in 1976, she has also served as Judge of the General Jurisdiction Trial courts in the US State of Vermont since 1986.

Justice Fisher received her Juris doctorate from the Columbus School of Law, Catholic University of America in 1976 and an LLM in International Human Rights Law from the University of College in 2001.

She has written and lectured on international law.

She also developed the rules for victims and witnesses prosecution in the courtroom.

Justice Fisher is currently serving as a commissioner on the Kosovo independent Judicial and Prosecution Commission.

The swearing-in was witnessed by the ESRSG Michael Schelumburg, Attorney- General and Minister of Justice Abdul Serry Kamal, the Minister of Information and Communications Alhaji Ibrahim Ben Kargbo and other top dignitaries.

Page 10, Premier News, ISSUE 379

Africa News

Taylor acquittal request rejected

War crimes judges have rejected a request to acquit Liberia's former President Charles Taylor on charges of crimes against humanity.

violence such as cutting off limbs, using child soldiers and enslavement.

Mr Taylor's defence team argued that there was not enough evidence for the trial to proceed.

The decision by the Special Court for Sierra Leone at The Hague means that Mr Taylor, who has pleaded not guilty, must now present his defence.

Tens of thousands of people died in Sierra Leone's decade-long civil war.

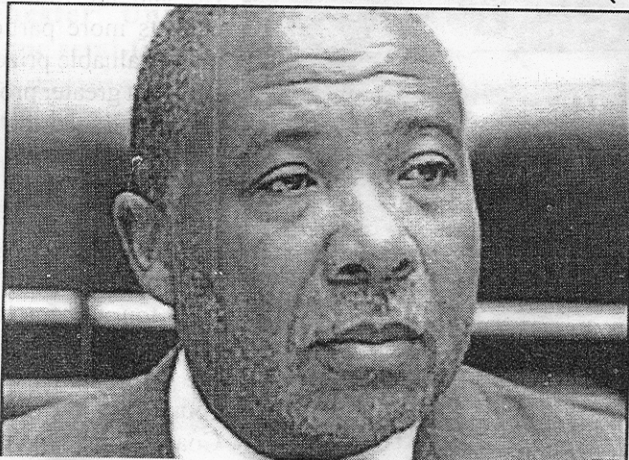
"The prosecution has produced evidence capable of supporting a conviction of the accused," the presiding judge told the court, as he dismissed the defence's request.

It is not unusual for a defence team to lodge a request for dismissal at this stage in an international tribunal's proceedings, analysts say.

The judge also stressed that the decision does not mean that the tribunal will convict Mr Taylor.

The trial is scheduled to continue on 29 June.

Charges
Charles Taylor faces 11



charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity over his alleged role in the brutal civil war in neighbouring Sierra Leone, where he is accused of backing rebels responsible for widespread atrocities.

Prosecutors argue that Mr Taylor planned the atrocities, committed by Revolutionary United Front rebels, during the civil war, which only ended in 2002.

The specific charges relate to terrorising the civilian population, murder, sexual violence, physical

Mr Taylor took up arms in Liberia in 1989, before being elected president in 1997.

After a period of exile in Nigeria, he was eventually extradited from Liberia in 2006.

The trial is being held in The Hague, not by the International Criminal Court but by a United-Nations backed Special Court for Sierra Leone.

It was moved to the Netherlands from Sierra Leone's capital Freetown out of fear that it could foment instability in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

Spectator
Tuesday, 5 May 2009

Fisher Sworn in As Appeals Judge for Special Court

Immediately prior to her appointment to the Special Court Justice Fisher served, from 2005 to 2008, as an International

Judge of the War Crimes Chamber, Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The cases adjudicated by Justice Fisher at the Bosnia War Crimes Chamber included convictions for sexual slavery and

other crimes against humanity, war crimes, and notably, the first convictions for the commission of genocide at Srebrenica.

Continued page 2

Fisher Sworn in As Appeals Judge for Special Court

PRESS RELEASE

From front page

Justice Shireen Avis Fisher, an experienced international judge and legal scholar, was sworn in today as Appeals Judge for the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Justice Fisher, from the United States, was appointed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. She succeeds Justice A. Raja N. Fernando of Sri Lanka, who passed away last November.

Immediately prior to her appointment to the Special Court Justice Fisher served, from 2005 to 2008, as an International Judge of the War Crimes Chamber, Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The cases adjudicated by Justice Fisher at the Bosnia War Crimes Chamber included convictions for sexual slavery and other crimes against humanity, war crimes, and notably, the first convictions for the commission of genocide at Srebrenica. She also developed the court rules for victim and witness protections in the courtroom.

She currently serves as a Commissioner on the Kosovo Independent Judicial and Prosecutorial Commission. Justice Shireen Fisher subscribes to the Judicial Oath during Monday's ceremony in Freetown. Since 1986 she has also served as a Judge of General Jurisdiction Trial Courts (criminal, civil and family courts) in the U.S. state of Vermont, currently with Active-Retired Status. Justice Fisher began her legal career as a Public Defender in Vermont, with a particular focus on juvenile justice cases. She was called to the Bar in 1976. Justice Fisher received her Juris Doctor from the Columbus School of Law, Catholic University of America, in 1976 and an LLM in International Human Rights Law from University College London in 2001.

She anticipates receiving her Ph.D in International Law from University College London in 2009. She has written and lectured extensively on international law.

New Appeals court judge sworn in

By Betty Milton

Justice Shireen Avis Fisher from the United States, was yesterday sworn in as the new Appeals Court judge for the Special Court of Sierra Leone replacing the late Justice Raja Fernando who died in November last year.

Present at the ceremony were the Attorney General and Minister of Justice Serry Kamal, the Special Representative of the United Nations Michael Schulenburg and the Minister of Information and Communication, Ibrahim Ben Kargbo.

At the ceremony which took place at the Trial Chamber of the Court, the Acting Registrar of the Court

Bint a Mansaray made a brief statement of the events after which she called on the newly appointed judge to take the oath.

The president of Court Justice Renata Winters welcomed Justice Fisher to the court and further
Continued on Page 7



Justice Shireen Fisher

Frazer explained that when he arrived in 1969 at PCMH the standard was impressive "over the years we witnessed a decline across the board in medical practice among practitioners," he said.

Dr Frazer revealed that he was so disappointed with the way things were operating that he had to retire 3 years before the due time.

He explained that the causes for increased maternal and infant mortality are multi-faceted. Highlighting some of the causes of the increase in infant and maternal mortality, Dr Frazer said, "drugs supplied last for only few days or weeks and ends up God know's where; doctors and nurses are poorly paid; nurses establish private nursing homes encourage patients to deliver at home; lack of transportation; lack of communication to the ambulance bay; potters now act as midwives" all these

National Dialogue for Salone

New Appeals court judge sworn in

From Page 2

told her about the challenges and tasks which lies ahead.

Justice Shireen Fisher is an experienced international judge and legal scholar who was appointed to serve in that capacity by the Secretary General of the United Nations. Prior to her appointment, Justice Fisher served from 2005 to 2008 as an international judge of the war crimes Chamber, Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Justice Fisher also developed the court rules for victims and witness protection in the courtroom. She currently serves as a Commissioner on the Kosovo Independent Judicial and Prosecutorial Commission. Since 1986 she has also served as a judge of General Jurisdiction Trial Courts (criminal, civil and family courts) in the U.S. state of Vermont.

Concord Times
Monday, 4 May 2009

Taylor loses Hague bid

War crimes judges have rejected a request to acquit Liberia's former President Charles Taylor on charges of crimes against humanity.

Mr Taylor's defence team argued that there was not

enough evidence for the trial to proceed.

The decision by the Special Court for Sierra Leone at The Hague means that Mr Taylor, who has pleaded not guilty,

Contd. page 3



Taylor loses Hague bid

From page 1

must now present his defence.

Tens of thousands of people died in Sierra Leone's decade-long civil war.

"The prosecution has produced evidence capable of supporting a conviction of the accused," the presiding judge told the court as he dismissed the defence's request.

It is not unusual for a defence team to lodge a request for dismissal at this stage in an international tribunal's proceedings, analysts say.

The judge also stressed that the decision does not mean that the tribunal will convict Mr Taylor.

The trial is scheduled to continue on 29 June.

Charges

Charles Taylor faces 11 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity over his alleged role in the brutal civil war in neighbouring Sierra Leone, where he is accused of backing rebels responsible for widespread atrocities.

Prosecutors argue that Mr Taylor planned the atrocities, committed by Revolutionary United Front rebels, during the civil war, which only ended in 2002.

The specific charges relate to terrorising the civilian population, murder, sexual violence, physical

violence such as cutting off limbs, using child soldiers and enslavement.

Mr Taylor took up arms in Liberia in 1989, before being elected president in 1997.

After a period of exile in Nigeria, he was eventually extradited from Liberia in 2006.

The trial is being held in The Hague, not by the International Criminal Court but by a United-Nations backed Special Court for Sierra Leone.

It was moved to the Netherlands from Sierra Leone's capital Freetown out of fear that it could foment instability in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

BBC NEWS:

Exclusive
Tuesday, 5 May 2009

Johnny Paul Gravely Sick

Exclusive reports about former AFRC leader now fugitive, Johnny Paul Koroma continue to find it way into The Ex-

clusive newsroom every now and then.

At first, contrary to rumours that he (Johnny Paul Koroma)

was dead, The Exclusive gathered that he was alive and kicking in a suburb in Burkina Faso.

Later, we were intimated that he had plans to return home after the final close of the Special Court of Sierra Leone; a jurisdiction that he escaped following

his indictment a couple of years ago.

Latest report about this fugitive is that he is currently ill, *Continued page 2*

Johnny Paul Gravely Sick

From front page

broke and in a miserable condition in Burkina Faso.

The once military strongman, who together with a handful of renegade soldiers held the entire

country to ransom for nine dreadful months, has now become a social misfit who is neither comfortable in a foreign land nor free in his homeland.

According to Special

Court Public Affairs Officer, Peter Anderson, Johnny Paul will be pursued wherever he is even after the mandate of the court in Sierra Leone expires.

Al Jazeera

Tuesday, 5 May 2009

Judges reject Taylor acquittal

Judges at the Special Court for Sierra Leone have rejected a request by Charles Taylor, the former Liberian president, that he be acquitted of war crimes charges.

The special tribunal meeting on Monday in The Hague said he must account for allegations of waging a campaign to terrorise Sierra Leone through mass murder, rape and mutilation.

It ordered the trial to resume next month.

Taylor, 61, is accused of fomenting Sierra Leone's conflict by supporting the Revolutionary United Front guerrillas during his own country's civil war from 1989-2003.

His legal team have argued there is not enough evidence to support the charges.

Taylor has pleaded not guilty to 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including conscripting child soldiers and sexual slavery.

But following the close of the prosecution case, Judge Richard Lussick said there was enough evidence "capable of supporting a conviction of the accused".

Supporting evidence

"[T]he trial chamber finds that there is evidence on which it could find that the accused and others shared a common purpose to take part in a campaign to terrorise the civilian population of the Republic of Sierra Leone," he said, rejecting an application for Taylor's acquittal.

"The [trial] chamber ... dismisses the defence's submission in its entirety."

Lussick also rejected a request by the defence for a delay in the start of the defence case.

Prosecutors say Taylor sought to control Sierra Leone's diamond mines and destabilise its government to boost his regional influence.

About 120,000 people were killed in the conflict in Sierra Leone, with rebels mutilating thousands more – cutting off arms, legs, ears or noses.

The former Liberian president is accused of arming, training and controlling RUF rebels, blamed for many of the mutilations, and of being involved in the trade of so-called "blood diamonds".



Charles Taylor has pleaded not guilty to charges of mass murder, rape and mutilation [EPA]



An estimated 120,000 people died during the 10-year conflict in Sierra Leone [EPA]

Taylor has been on trial in The Hague since June 2007 following his arrest in Nigeria and his subsequent handover to the tribunal.

He had gone into exile in 2003 in a deal that ended Liberia's civil war.

The trial is being held on the premises of the International Criminal Court in The Hague for fear that his presence in Freetown, the Sierra Leone capital where the special court was set up, could destabilise the region.

Voice of America

Monday, 4 May 2009

Special Court Rejects Acquittal of Former Liberian President



Former Liberian President Charles Taylor sits in courtroom prior to hearing of witnesses in trial in The Hague, 08 Jan 2008

By Scott Stearns

Dakar

04 May 2009

The war crimes tribunal for Sierra Leone has rejected a defense motion to acquit former Liberian President Charles Taylor.

Defense lawyers asked the special court to acquit Mr. Taylor because they argue prosecutors failed to present evidence linking him to the planning, instigation, or execution of crimes committed during Sierra Leone's 10-year civil war.

The former Liberian leader pled not guilty to an 11-count indictment of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including acts of terrorism, murder, rape, sexual enslavement, and conscription of child soldiers.

At this point in the trial, judges were only to decide whether they have heard enough evidence to support a finding of guilt.

Dismissing the defense motion for acquittal in its entirety, presiding judge Richard Lussick says prosecutors have presented evidence that meets that threshold.

"The prosecution has adduced evidence that the accused provided arms, ammunition, financial assistance, manpower and other supplies to other participants in the joint criminal enterprise in furtherance of the common purpose, that he provided safe havens to other members, that he provided moral encouragement and military advice, that he facilitated the export of diamonds in return for arms, that he facilitated communication between the various members of the joint criminal enterprise, and that he had persons who he believed endangered the common purpose killed," he said.

Lussick restated that while the evidence presented could be used to find Mr. Taylor guilty, that does not

mean the trial chamber will ultimately convict him.

Prosecutors say the former Liberian president led Revolutionary United Front rebels across the border in Sierra Leone and acted as their effective leader for much of the conflict.

Supporting the indictment of acts of terrorism, Lussick cited prosecution witnesses who testified Mr. Taylor was involved in planning the rebel "Operation No Living Thing," during which crimes set out in the indictment were systematically committed against the civilian population.

He also rejected a defense motion challenging the testimony of witnesses who referred to places in Sierra Leone by slightly different names than those in the indictment.

"It would not be appropriate or desirable to strike out the names of such locations given that a variety of languages and dialects are spoken in Sierra Leone and that some witnesses are illiterate. Thus, names of locations mentioned by witnesses, which are similar, but not identical to names of locations that appear in the indictment may refer to the same location," he said.

With the rejection of their motion for acquittal, Mr. Taylor's lawyers are scheduled to open their defense case June 29. They say the former Liberian rebel leader will testify in his own defense.

Mr. Taylor began a rebellion against Liberian President Samuel Doe in 1989. He served as Liberian president from 1997 until 2003 when he was forced into exile in Nigeria. He was arrested in 2006 on a warrant from the special court jointly established by the United Nations and the government of Sierra Leone.

His trial was moved to The Hague because of fears that his supporters might disrupt proceedings in neighboring Sierra Leone.

BBC

Monday, 4 May 2009

Charles Taylor loses Hague bid

War crimes judges have rejected a request to acquit Liberia's former President Charles Taylor on charges of crimes against humanity.

Mr Taylor's defence team argued that there was not enough evidence for the trial to proceed.

The decision by the Special Court for Sierra Leone at The Hague means that Mr Taylor, who has pleaded not guilty, must now present his defence.

Tens of thousands of people died in Sierra Leone's decade-long civil war.

"The prosecution has produced evidence capable of supporting a conviction of the accused," the presiding judge told the court as he dismissed the defence's request.

It is not unusual for a defence team to lodge a request for dismissal at this stage in an international tribunal's proceedings, analysts say.

The judge also stressed that the decision does not mean that the tribunal will convict Mr Taylor.

The trial is scheduled to continue on 29 June.

Charges

Charles Taylor faces 11 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity over his alleged role in the brutal civil war in neighbouring Sierra Leone, where he is accused of backing rebels responsible for widespread atrocities.

Prosecutors argue that Mr Taylor planned the atrocities, committed by Revolutionary United Front rebels, during the civil war, which only ended in 2002.

The specific charges relate to terrorising the civilian population, murder, sexual violence, physical violence such as cutting off limbs, using child soldiers and enslavement.

Mr Taylor took up arms in Liberia in 1989, before being elected president in 1997.

After a period of exile in Nigeria, he was eventually extradited from Liberia in 2006.

The trial is being held in The Hague, not by the International Criminal Court but by a United-Nations backed Special Court for Sierra Leone.

It was moved to the Netherlands from Sierra Leone's capital Freetown out of fear that it could foment instability in Sierra Leone and Liberia.



Charles Taylor is accused of backing Sierra Leone's rebels

Independent Online (South Africa)

Monday, 4 May 2009

Court denies Taylor motion for acquittal

Amsterdam - The Special Court for Sierra Leone on Monday rejected the request by the defence team for a partial or complete acquittal of the charges of war crimes brought against former Liberian president Charles Taylor.

The defence had argued that chief prosecutor Stephen Rapp, who has completed the presentation of his case in the first phase of the trial several months ago, has insufficient evidence to lead to a conviction.

Speaking in the court in The Hague on Monday, the judges however said there was sufficient evidence.

Chief Prosecutor Rapp has witnesses who provided information about murder, rape and the cutting off of people's limbs during Sierra Leone's civil war in the late 1990s.

There are also witnesses who told how Taylor, when he was president of Liberia, planned the war crimes together with Sierra Leonean rebels.

It is common practice for international courts to render an intermediary ruling on all accounts a defendant has been charged for after the prosecution has completed presenting its case.

Any accounts the defendant would be acquitted from, the defence team would not need to refer to any further during the second phase of the trial.

Taylor's defence is due to start in several weeks' time.

In July 2007, Taylor was charged with orchestrating war crimes and crimes against humanity during Sierra Leone's 11-year civil war before the United Nations-backed SCSL.

Taylor allegedly backed the rebel forces in Sierra Leone to gain control of the country's diamond mines. In 2003, he went into exile as rebels closed in on the Liberian capital.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone, set up jointly by Sierra Leone and the United Nations, is mandated to try those who bear the greatest responsibility for serious violations of international humanitarian law and Sierra Leonean law committed in the territory of Sierra Leone since November 30, 1996.

For security reasons, the trial of the former Liberian president is taking place at the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

Taylor, who entered a plea of not guilty to all charges, is the first president of an African country to be charged with serious crimes under international law by an international criminal court. - Sapa-dpa

The Scotsman

Tuesday, 5 May 2009

Liberia's Taylor 'must face charges'

JUDGES yesterday rejected a request by former Liberian President Charles Taylor for his acquittal on war crimes charges, saying he must answer allegations he was part of a campaign to terrorise Sierra Leone's population through murder, rape and mutilation.

The Special Tribunal for Sierra Leone ordered Taylor's trial to resume on 29 June with the opening of the defence.

ABC News
Monday, 4 May 2009

Torture and Corruption: War Crimes Trial of Former Liberian President to Proceed

Charles Taylor Case Enters Final Stage for Alleged Killings, Rape, Mutilation
By ANNA SCHECTER

The gruesome trial of the former Liberian president, who witnesses say gave orders to rape, mutilate, and amputate his enemies, will continue, as judges upheld the prosecution's case today.



In this file photo, former Liberian President Charles Taylor (R) sits in the courtroom of the... ▼
(MICHAEL KOOREN/AFP/Getty Images)

Judges at the war crimes trial of Charles Taylor denied the defense's motion for acquittal "in its entirety," saying that there is enough evidence that Taylor was directly involved in the atrocities carried out against civilians during Sierra Leone's brutal civil war to continue the trial.

The judges held that "during the campaign to terrorize the civilian population civilians were killed, raped, forced into sexual slavery, subjected to physical violence including amputations and mutilation, and were abducted and forced to labor" and "that children participated actively."

Taylor, who served as Liberia's president from 1997 to 2003, is charged by the Special Court for Sierra Leone with 11 counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity and other serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in Sierra Leone during the country's roughly 10-year conflict that officially ended in 2002.

The case is being tried in The Hague instead of in Sierra Leone to reduce chances of sparking unrest in the West African state or in neighboring Liberia.

Prosecutors have accused Taylor of murdering and mutilating civilians, including cutting off their limbs, using women and girls as sex slaves, abducting adults and

children, and forcing them to perform forced labor or become fighters to further his economic and political ambitions in the region.

Stephen Rapp, lead prosecutor on the case, said he is "pleased that the Trial Chamber has ruled that Charles Taylor must answer each and every one of the eleven counts of our indictment."

Human rights activists and Sierra Leone experts have said that Taylor was directly involved in the atrocities that occurred in Sierra Leone.

"All evidence points to his direct involvement. There are thousands of witnesses," said Ian Smillie, research director for the nonprofit research organization Partnership Africa Canada. Smillie was an expert witness in Taylor's trial who testified that Taylor plundered millions of dollars in blood diamonds (diamonds exchanged for arms) in order to fund his militias.

Associated Press

Monday, 4 May 2009

Court dismisses Charles Taylor's acquittal motion

By ARTHUR MAX

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — Judges on Monday rejected a request by former Liberian President Charles Taylor for an immediate acquittal on war crimes charges, saying he must answer allegations that he was part of a campaign to terrorize Sierra Leone's population through murder, rape and mutilation.

The U.N.-backed Special Tribunal for Sierra Leone ordered Taylor's trial to resume on June 29 with the opening of the defense. Defense attorney Courtenay Griffiths said he will call Taylor to the stand to testify in his own defense.

Prosecutors concluded their case against Taylor in February. The defense then asked the court to acquit Taylor, arguing that prosecutors had presented insufficient evidence linking him to atrocities for the trial to proceed.

The judges, however, cited testimony from 91 witnesses alleging that Taylor, along with Sierra Leone rebels, recruited child soldiers and sent them to kill and mutilate civilians; that he had people killed who interfered with his plans; and that he was responsible for sexual slavery, cruelty and pillaging.

The court "dismisses the defense motion in its entirety," said Judge Richard Lussick. Prosecutors had presented evidence "capable of supporting a conviction" against Taylor on all 11 counts he is facing, the judge said.

"That doesn't mean that at the end of the day the trial chamber will return a conviction," Lussick said.

Chief prosecutor Stephen Rapp said he was pleased by the decision. "We are encouraged by the language and the analysis" of the unanimous ruling, he told The Associated Press from his office in Washington.

Taylor was expected to be the first defense witness, and to testify for a month or two, followed by several weeks of cross-examination. Hearings could be concluded by October when the court adjourns for its annual recess, Rapp said.

An estimated half-million people were killed in Sierra Leone's 1991-2002 war, which was fueled by an illicit diamond trade. Rebels used machetes to maim thousands of victims, chopping off their hands, legs, lips, ears and breasts.

Taylor is accused of arming and controlling militias from across the border in Liberia while he held power.

Submitting a motion for early acquittal is a common defense tactic in war crimes cases, although the motions are seldom granted. But the rulings often give an indication of which testimony the judges pay closest attention to.

The ruling said the evidence suggested that Taylor provided arms, ammunition, manpower and finances to the rebels, that he offered them "safe haven and moral encouragement," and that he traded in diamonds for arms.

Taylor, 61, was Liberia's president from 1997 until he was forced into exile in 2003. He was arrested in Nigeria in 2006, but his trial was moved to The Hague for fear that his appearance in a courtroom in Africa could re-ignite violence.

The trial opened in June 2007, but was suspended for six months when Taylor fired his first lawyer and refused to attend the court sessions.

Agence France-Presse

Monday, 4 May 2009

Warcrimes court rejects Taylor acquittal bid

Mar 24, 2009

THE HAGUE (AFP) — Former Liberian president Charles Taylor lost a bid on Monday for his acquittal on war crimes charges in the Special Court for Sierra Leone, which set June 29 as the date for the start of his defence case.

"The (trial) chamber ... dismisses the defence's submission in its entirety," judge Richard Lussick ruled in an application for Taylor's acquittal at the close of the prosecution case.

Taylor is charged with 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity stemming from his support of Revolutionary United Front (RUF) guerrillas in neighbouring Sierra Leone's 1991-2001 civil war.

There was evidence on which a court may eventually find that Taylor had been involved in a campaign to terrorise the civilian population of Sierra Leone, during which civilians were killed, raped and mutilated, the judge said.

The 61-year-old has been on trial in The Hague since January 2008 following his arrest in Nigeria and his subsequent handover to the tribunal. He had gone into exile in 2003 in a deal ending Liberia's civil war.

Evidence showed that he provided arms, ammunition and manpower to the RUF, that he provided moral encouragement and military advice, and that he "facilitated the export of diamonds in exchange of arms," said Lussick in Monday's ruling.

About 120,000 people were killed in Sierra Leone's conflict, with rebels mutilating thousands more -- cutting off arms, legs, ears or noses.

Taylor is accused of arming, training and controlling RUF rebels, blamed for many of the mutilations, and of being involved in the "blood diamonds" trade.

The former warlord was elected president of Liberia from 1997-2003 after his rebel forces unseated then-president Samuel Doe, but was himself unseated by a rebellion.

The tribunal's rules of procedure allow for an acquittal at the end of the prosecution's case, which concluded in January, if the judges are convinced there is no evidence to support a conviction.

But Lussick's ruling means Taylor's lawyers will now have to present evidence in his defence.

"The Trial Chamber is further satisfied that during the campaign to terrorize the civilian population, civilians were killed, raped, forced into sexual slavery, subjected to physical violence including amputations and mutilations and were abducted and forced into labour," the judge found.

"The Trial chamber is similarly satisfied that children participated actively in hostilities and that civilian property was pillaged.

"Taken together, the trial chamber finds that there is evidence on which it could find that the accused and others shared a common purpose to take part in a campaign to terrorize the civilian population of the Republic of Sierra Leone."

In January, the 91st and final prosecution witness in Taylor's trial told judges how he had pleaded with rebels to cut off his remaining hand so they would spare his toddler son.

Lussick also dismissed Monday a request by the defence for a delay in the start of the defence case, setting June 29 as the opening date.

"We are of the view that a reasonable and appropriate date for the start of the defence case is Monday, June 29, 2009," he said.

Taylor's lawyers have previously indicated that he is likely to be the first witness to take the stand for the defence.

Chief prosecutor Stephen Rapp has said he expected the defence case to conclude by the end of the year.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone, which sits in The Hague, was established in 2002 through an agreement between the United Nations and the Sierra Leonean government.

African Press Organization

Tuesday, 5 May 2009

Sierra Leone / Trial of Charles Taylor

FREETOWN, Sierra Leone, May 5, 2009/African Press Organization (APO)/ — Daily press briefing by the office of the spokesperson for the UN secretary-general:

On the Special Court for Sierra Leone, the Trial Chamber there has dismissed in its entirety a motion for acquittal filed by the defence team of Charles Taylor, the former President of Liberia. Through this ruling the Court has made it clear that it expects Taylor to answer on all 11 counts of his indictment for war crimes allegedly committed during the civil war in Sierra Leone.

The Court also ordered Taylor's defence team to be ready to open its arguments in late June. Taylor is expected to take the stand in his own defence at that hearing. Under the Court's rules, the accused should be the first witness to testify in a defence case.

SOURCE

United Nations - Office of the Spokesperson of the Secretary-General

Daily Observer (Liberia)

Tuesday, 5 May 2009

Court Denies Taylor Acquittal

Published: **05 May, 2009**

THE HAGUE, Liberia's former president Charles Taylor attempt to gain an acquittal in The Hague over charges of war crimes in neighboring Sierra Leone has been denied.

The BBC reports: War crimes judges have rejected a request to acquit Liberia's former President Charles Taylor on charges of crimes against humanity.



Former president Charles Taylor

UN News Centre

Monday, 4 May 2009

Judges at UN-backed court dismiss motion to acquit Charles Taylor



The Special Court for Sierra Leone

4 May 2009 – Judges at the United Nations-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone have rejected a request to acquit the former President of Liberia, Charles Taylor, on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Mr. Taylor's lawyers had filed a motion for him to be acquitted, arguing that the Prosecution had not presented sufficient evidence to support a conviction in the case, which is being tried in The Hague. But the judges ruled that there was evidence on which Mr. Taylor could be convicted, and dismissed the motion.

"The Trial Chamber finds that there is evidence that the accused participated in the joint criminal enterprise," Justice Richard Lissick said in reading out the Chamber's decision.

They ordered that Mr. Taylor's lawyers open their case on 29 June. Mr. Taylor is expected to take the stand in his own defence.

The former President has pleaded not guilty to the 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, which include pillage, slavery for forced marriage purposes, collective punishment, and the recruitment and use of child soldiers. The charges relate to his alleged support for two rebel groups in neighbouring Sierra Leone, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council and the Revolutionary United Front, during the civil war from 1996 to 2002.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone was established in January 2002 by an agreement between Sierra Leone's Government and the UN. It cannot impose a life sentence, but it has already sentenced two defendants in another case to 50 years in jail. Britain has said it would be willing to imprison Mr. Taylor if he is found guilty.

In 2006, the UN Security Council authorized Mr. Taylor's trial to be held in The Hague, Netherlands, instead of its usual venue in Sierra Leone's capital, Freetown, citing security reasons.

Afrol News

Monday, 4 May 2009

Taylor's acquittal plea thrown out

afrol News, 4 May - The Special Tribunal for Sierra Leone judges, have today rejected an application for acquittal by former Liberian President, Charles Taylor, ordering the trial to resume on 29 June.

Mr Taylor, who had made an acquittal pleas has now been ordered to resume his defense on war crimes charges that include murder, rape and other violence in the neighbouring Sierra Leone, during the reign of terror that gripped the country from 1991-2002.

More than 100,000 people were killed during the Sierra Leone war, fuelled by greed for illicit diamonds

Amongst evidence gathered against Mr Taylor, are allegations that he supported and armed rebels in Sierra Leone, who amongst others, recruited child soldiers to carry out the atrocities.

The 61 years old Mr Taylor, who was Liberia's president from 1997-2003, was arrested in Nigeria in 2006 where he was exiled.

By staff writer

Xinhua

Tuesday, 5 May 2009

Court refuses to acquit former Liberian president Taylor

BRUSSELS, May 4 (Xinhua) -- The Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague rejected a defense request on Monday to acquit former Liberian President Charles Taylor, whose defense team will present its case on June 29.

Taylor's defense filed an application in April asking the court to drop the charges against Taylor. Taylor's lawyer Courtenay Griffiths said the evidence presented by the prosecution is too weak to link Taylor to the crimes committed in Sierra Leone.

But the judges ruled against the motion, saying that chief prosecutor Stephen Rapp has proof that might lead to a conviction.

"The trial chamber finds that there is evidence on which it could find that the accused and others shared a common purpose to take part in a campaign to terrorize the civilian population of the Republic of Sierra Leone," judge Richard Lussick found.

Taylor, 61, faces 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the 1991-2001 civil war in Sierra Leone. He has been on trial since June 2007.

Taylor, who was Liberian president from 1997 to 2003, allegedly orchestrated or supported the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels in neighboring Sierra Leone in committing murder, rape, conscription of child soldiers and other atrocities.

He has pleaded not guilty to all 11 charges. Defense lawyer Griffiths said he had not helped the RUF rebels and he had tried to bring peace to Sierra Leone.

The rules of the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone permit the defense to make an appeal for acquittal once the prosecutors have finished presenting their evidence. The prosecutors ended their case in February.

Judge Lussick also dismissed a request by the defense on Monday for a postponement of the presentation of the defense case, setting June 29 as the opening date.

Radio Netherlands

Monday, 4 May 2009

No release for Liberia's Taylor

The trial of Charles Taylor by the Special Court for Sierra Leone is to continue. Mr Taylor, who was president of Liberia from 1997 to 2003, is being tried for war crimes and crimes against humanity in The Hague. His defence team had argued that the prosecutors had presented insufficient evidence and requested his release. The judges denied the request.

Mr Taylor is charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity during the civil war in Liberia's neighbouring country, Sierra Leone, between 1991 and 2001. He is said to have played a major role in the arming and training of members of the country's Revolutionary United Front. During the war, the RUF murdered 120,000 people and raped and mutilated many thousands more.

The rules of the Special Court permit the defence to make an appeal for release once the prosecutors have finished presenting their evidence. Now that the appeal had been denied, the next step in Mr Taylor's trial will take place on 29 June when the defence begin presenting their evidence.

Reuters

Monday, 4 May 2009

Taylor's request for war crimes acquittal rejected

Judges at the Special Court for Sierra Leone ruled today against a defence request to acquit former Liberian President Charles Taylor on war crimes' charges.

The defence's case will start on June 29, they said.

"The prosecution has produced evidence capable of supporting a conviction of the accused ... based on his participation in a joint criminal enterprise," judge Richard Lussick said.

But Lussick stressed the ruling did not mean that Taylor would be convicted.

Taylor, 61, has pleaded not guilty to 11 counts involving murder, rape, conscripting child soldiers and sexual slavery during the intertwined wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone in which more than 250,000 people were killed.

Defence lawyers said in April he should be acquitted because there was no evidence he planned or instigated atrocities in Sierra Leone. Prosecutors say he directed the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels in a campaign of terror against civilians.

The prosecution closed its case in February and a request for acquittal before the start of the defence's case is considered common in international tribunals.

The court rejected a request from defence counsel Courtenay Griffiths to set a date of at least mid-July for the start of the defence's case.

"Our resources are currently stretched to its very limits," Griffiths had told the court.

He said he would be in West Africa with most of the defence team until the end of May and unable to spend time with Taylor, expected to be the first defence witness, to prepare him for his testimony.

Taylor has been on trial in The Hague since June 2007 at facilities provided by the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Prosecutors say he sought to control Sierra Leone's diamond mines and destabilise its government to boost his regional influence.

Star News (Liberia)

Monday, 4 May 2009

Taylor's acquittal motion denied

Judges hearing the trial of former President Charles Taylor have dismissed in entirety, a Motion for Judgment of Acquittal filed by lawyers of the detained former President.

This means Mr. Taylor has a case to answer on all eleven counts of the indictment brought against him by the international community.

The former Liberian President is on trial for allegedly sharing greatest responsibility for the eleven-year bloody civil war fought in Sierra Leone.

The Trial Chamber ruled that the Prosecution had presented sufficient evidence on all counts which, if believed, would be capable of supporting a conviction.

The Chamber made its finding based on the joint criminal enterprise mode of liability, that is, aiding and abetting, planning, instigating, ordering and superior responsibility.

The Trial Chamber finds that there is evidence that Mr. Taylor took part in the joint criminal enterprise that destroyed Sierra Leone and spilled innocent blood.

The Chamber ordered that the Taylor's defense open their case on June 29 with Mr. Taylor expected to take the stand in his own defense.

Meanwhile, an American, Justice Shireen Avis Fisher has been sworn in as Appeals Judge for the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Justice Fisher was appointed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to succeed Justice A. Raja N. Fernando of Sri Lanka, who passed away last November.

RTT News

Monday, 4 May 2009

UN Court Rejects Former Liberian President's Acquittal Bid

(RTTNews) - The judges at the Special Court for Sierra Leone at The Hague in the Netherlands on Monday dismissed a motion filed by former Liberian President Charles Taylor for his acquittal on the war crimes charges pressed against him, saying that there was enough evidence to support his conviction in the case.

"The prosecution has produced evidence capable of supporting a conviction of the accused, " the presiding judge ruled as he dismissed the defense request.

The ruling came after Taylor's lawyers filed a motion for his acquittal arguing that there was not enough evidence for the trial to proceed. His trial is now scheduled to continue on 29 June.

Charles Taylor is facing 11 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity allegedly committed during the civil war in neighboring Sierra Leone.

In April, the court had sentenced three former leaders of the Liberian Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebel group to jail terms ranging from 25 to 52 years for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the country's 10-year civil war that began in 1991.

The judges at the Special Court had ruled in February that the three former rebel leaders "significantly contributed" to a joint effort involving former Liberian President Charles Taylor to control the diamond fields of Sierra Leone to finance their warfare.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone is a joint project of Sierra Leone and the United Nations, and its mandate is limited to trying only "those who bear greatest responsibility for atrocities committed in Sierra Leone."

by RTT Staff Writer

For comments and feedback: contact editorial@rttnews.com

UN Dispatch – Matthew Cordell’s Blog

Monday, 4 May 2009

Taylor trial update

[Matthew Cordell](#) - May 4, 2009 - 12:59pm

- [ICC](#)



Former Liberian President Charles Taylor's defense lawyers had requested that the Special Court for Sierra Leone drop war crimes' charges. And, today the Court [responded](#), "uh...no":

"The prosecution has produced evidence capable of supporting a conviction of the accused ... based on his participation in a joint criminal enterprise," judge Richard Lussick said.

Taylor, if you'll recall, is charged with 11 counts of "murder, rape, conscripting child soldiers and sexual slavery" during the Second Liberian Civil War in which more than 250,000 people were killed.

- [Matthew Cordell's blog](#)
- [Login](#) or [register](#) to post comments

Special Court Supplement
Swearing-in Ceremony for Justice Shireen Avis Fisher
Monday, 4 May 2009



