



Special Court for Sierra Leone
The Office of the Prosecutor

PRESS RELEASE

Freetown, Sierra Leone, 22 May 2003

Deputy Prosecutor Expresses Anger at Taylor's "Pariah Regime"

This afternoon, the Chief of Investigations of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Dr. Alan White, charged that Liberian authorities have failed to comply with an official request for the transfer of the alleged body of indicted war criminal, Sam Bockarie, to the Court. "As of today, they are not in compliance with their international obligations. We have given them more than enough time to meet our demands. This is completely unacceptable."

The official request, signed and hand-delivered by the Registrar Robin Vincent to Liberia's Permanent Mission to the United Nations on May 19th, called on the Government of Liberia to cooperate fully with the Court in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1470 and 1478. The two resolutions call for all states to cooperate with the Special Court. Resolution 1478 is directed specifically at the Government of Liberia.

The Court's British Deputy Prosecutor, Desmond de Silva, QC, expressed anger over Liberia's continuing failure to cooperate. "The refusal of the Liberian government to hand over the body amounts to a flagrant disregard of the United Nations. Security Council Resolutions 1470 and 1478 have been flouted by Charles Taylor with the contempt one has come to associate with his pariah regime. It is difficult to determine whether he is an adult playing childish games or a child playing stupid games."

Liberian authorities claim Bockarie was killed on May 6 during an alleged arrest attempt by government forces. For the past two weeks, they have refused to transfer the remains to the Court for an independent forensic examination in order to provide positive identification. The Office of the Prosecutor has repeatedly called on President Taylor to cooperate with the Court's work to no avail. Senior officials in the Office of the Prosecutor also claim Bockarie and his family were executed under orders by Taylor.

Dr. White also continues to receive credible information that international fugitive, Johnny Paul Koroma, is in Liberia. "Turn him over to us alive. He must answer for what he has done to the people of Sierra Leone."

Bockarie and Koroma, indicted by the Court on March 7, 2003, are wanted for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law.

The Special Court, created through an international agreement between the United Nations and Sierra Leone, is mandated to try those who bear "the greatest responsibility" for atrocities committed during

the country's decade-long civil war.

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