The courthouse at night, taken by a member of Public Affairs who forgot his umbrella in his car and unsuccessfully tried to wait out the rain.

PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

Friday, 16 June 2006

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
Martin Royston-Wright
Ext 7217
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Britain accepts to jail Taylor

The British Foreign Secretary, Margaret Beckett announced yesterday, Thursday, 15 June that the United Kingdom would allow Charles Ghankay Taylor to serve his sentence in the United Kingdom should he be convicted by the United Nations backed Special Court for Sierra Leone, in Freetown, thus clearing the way for Taylor to tried outside Sierra Leone. This decision according to a press release from the British High Commission in Freetown is subject to the UK Parliament passing the necessary legislation.

Charles Taylor: Going away?

The Foreign Secretary is Contd: page 2
Britain accepts to jail Taylor

From front page

quoted as have said, “I was delighted to be able to respond positively to the request of the United Nations Secretary General that, should he be convicted, Charles Taylor serve his sentence in the UK. My decision was driven by two compelling arguments. Firstly, that Taylor’s presence in Sierra Leone remains a threat to peace in that region. Secondly, that we are demonstrating through concrete action the UK’s commitment to international justice.”

The release went on to emphasise the UK government’s commitment at ensuring that those accused of serious crimes of international concern face justice; and to prevent and resolve conflict through a strong international system, which, according to the release, are part of the UK government’s foreign policy.

However, several international Human Rights Organisations including Human Rights Watch have expressed serious concerns over this latest development which they consider as an affront to the people of the West African sub region.

Human Rights Watch in particular is very much concerned as is indicated by these remarks by a Counsel with its International Justice Program, Elise Keppler. She had these to say as her reaction to the UK decision: “By offering a jail cell if Taylor is convicted by the Special Court, the United Kingdom has taken a crucial step by unblocking the stalled effort to relocate his trial to The Hague.

At the same time, relocating Taylor’s trial also has major disadvantages, particularly for the accessibility of the Special Court’s work to the people of West Africa.

If the relocation to The Hague moves forward, it will be essential that court staff intensify outreach efforts about Taylor’s trial in Sierra Leone. Donors will need to fund these initiatives.”
Charles Taylor goes to jail in Britain, if convicted

BY SANTIGIE KAMARA

The British Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett announced on Thursday, June 15th, that subject to parliamentary approval, the United Kingdom would allow the former president of Liberia, Charles Taylor, to serve his sentence in the UK, should he be convicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone, paving the way for the former president to be tried in The Hague, Netherlands.

"I was delighted to be able to respond positively to the request of the United Nations Secretary General that, should he be convicted, Charles Taylor serve his sentence in the UK," she said, adding: "My decision was driven by two compelling arguments, firstly that Taylor's presence in Sierra Leone remains a threat to peace in that region, and secondly, that we are demonstrating through concrete action the UK's commitment to international justice."

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Charles Taylor goes to jail in Britain, if...

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Mrs. Beckett continued, "if we want to live in a just world, we must take responsibility for creating and fostering it, and in taking this decision we are demonstrating clearly tow of our foreign policy priorities: to ensure that those accused of serious crimes of international concern face justice; and to prevent and resolve conflict through a strong international system. The UK is determined to do what is necessary to defend international justice."

Mr. Taylor, a former teacher who became one of Africa's most feared warlords, is currently awaiting trial at the United nations-backed war crimes tribunal in Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone.

He faces eleven counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity for backing Sierra Leone's rebels who sent drugged child soldiers into battle and mutilated and raped civilians during the brutal conflict.

The Court had asked Netherlands to try the former president in The Hague due to security concerns but needed a third country to volunteer to be his jailer.

Britain's announcement clears the way for the UN Security Council resolution authorizing Taylor's transfer to The Hague.

Peter Andersen, Public Relations Officer at the Special Court for Freetown welcomed the gesture by the British Government, noting that the development is a significant step towards the resolution of the issue of Mr. Taylor. He said the Court is now waiting on the Security Council of the UN to give the final clearance for the transfer of the former warlord to the Netherlands.

At The Hague, he said there would be a panel of three judges from the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone to sit on the case.
The British Foreign Secretary, Margaret Beckett, announced on 15 June that, subject to Parliament passing the necessary Legislation, the United Kingdom would allow the former president of Liberia, Charles Taylor, to serve his sentence in the UK should he be convicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone. Mrs. Beckett said “I was delighted to be able to respond positively to the request of the United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan that, should he be convicted, Charles Taylor will serve his sentence in the UK.”

UK to Jail Charles Taylor

sentence in the UK. My decision was driven by two compelling arguments. Firstly, that Taylor’s presence in Sierra Leone remains a threat to peace in that region. Secondly, that we are demonstrating through concrete actions the UK’s commitment to international justice.”

Mrs. Beckett continued “If we want to live in a just world, we must take responsibility for creating and fostering it. In taking this decision we are demonstrating clearly two of our foreign policy priorities: to ensure that those accused of serious crimes of international concern face justice; and to prevent and resolve conflicts through a strong international system. The UK is determined to do what is necessary to defend international justice.”
Taylor Could Serve Prison Sentence in UK if…

British foreign Secretary has announced that former Liberian president, Charles Taylor, could serve prison sentence in UK if he is found guilty by the UN backed Special Court. The British Foreign Secretary, Margaret Beckett, announced on 15 June that, subject to Parliament passing the necessary legislation, the United Kingdom would allow the former President of Liberia, Charles Taylor, to serve his

continued page 2

Note: Story did not continue.
TAYLOR MAY SERVE PRISON TERM IN UK

Former President of Liberia, Charles Taylor may serve his sentence in the United Kingdom if he is convicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone, the British Foreign Secretary, Margaret Beckett announced yesterday in London.

A press release circulated yesterday in Freetown by the British High Commission stated that the decision to allow Charles Taylor to serve his sentence in the UK is subject to British parliament passing the necessary legislation.

Mrs. Becket said she was delighted to be able to respond positively to the request of the United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan that Charles Taylor, presently tried by the Special Court in Sierra Leone can serve his sentence in the UK when the need arises.

She further said that the decision was driven by two region and secondly, that we are demonstrating, through concrete action, the UK’s commitment to international justice.”

Mrs. Beckett continued, “If we want to live in a just world, we must take responsibility for creating and fostering it. In taking this decision, we are demonstrating clearly two of our foreign policy priorities to ensure that those accused of serious crimes of international concern...
From page 1

Just as our move is to prevent and resolve conflict through a strong international system. The UK is determined to do what is necessary to defend international justice.

Charles Taylor is now awaiting trial for crimes against humanity at the cells of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, New England in Freetown. The President of the Special Court for Sierra Leone had earlier made a request to the government of the Netherlands and the President of the International Criminal Court (ICC) to facilitate the conduct of the trial of Charles Taylor by the Special Court in The Hague under Rule 4 of the Special Court Rules of Procedure and Evidence.

The Netherlands had agreed to the request to have Charles Taylor tried in The Hague, but had stated that should Taylor be convicted, he is to serve his sentence in another country.

Meanwhile, the Charles Taylor defence team had filed in a motion that no change of venue from the court in Freetown be ordered and that Charles Taylor should be tried in Sierra Leone.

The Appeals Chamber of the Special Court, comprising Justice George Gelage-King, Presiding Judge, Justice Emmanuelle Ayodele and Justice Renate Winter in a judgment delivered on 29th May, 2006, found the motion inadmissible and thus, dismissed the motion in its entirety. The judgment states, "the motion is inadmissible because it seeks to inject the Trial Chamber and now the Appeals Chamber into the administrative and diplomatic functions of the President."

Neither the Trial Chamber nor the Appeals Chamber is authorized to take the actions sought by the defence. The procedure for changing the venue of a trial is set out in the Agreement between the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone on the Establishment of a Special Court for Sierra Leone and the Rules of Procedure and Evidence. Without prejudging the appropriate procedure to be followed, it is clear that these procedures necessarily entail the type of preliminary diplomatic steps taken by the President and reported in the press release.

"Neither the Statutes nor the Rules authorize a Chamber to intervene in the administrative and diplomatic functions entrusted to the President. Even the residual inherent power of the Chambers to ensure the fairness of the trial cannot be invoked to support the declaratory and prospective relief sought by the Defence in the instant case since no decision has been taken which affects any fair trial rights."

"At this stage of the proceedings, matters relating to the venue of the Taylor trial are exclusively within the administrative and diplomatic mandate of the President."

Prior to a decision being made, any questions relating to the President's activities concerning the venue of the Taylor trial should be directed to the Office of the President and not to the Trial or Appeals Chamber."

The possibility of taking Charles Taylor to The Hague for trial is becoming more and more real not only because the Netherlands has agreed that Charles Taylor can be tried at the ICC in The Hague, but also because the British government has allayed the fears expressed by the Netherlands authorities by volunteering to provide prison facilities for Charles Taylor in the event that he is found guilty of offences of crimes against humanity.

The next step will be for the United Nations Security Council to pass a resolution to provide the legal conditions for Charles Taylor to be taken to The Hague, after which a Memorandum of Understanding between the Special Court in Sierra Leone and the ICC in The Hague will be signed by the two Courts. The possibility that Charles Taylor will go to The Hague is already made clear by the fact that the Security Council Resolution to be passed is a Chapter 7 Resolution, the United Nations' way of stating that a decision has to be carried out.
PRESS RELEASE

British Foreign Secretary
Announces That Former
Liberian President, Charles
Taylor, Could Serve Prison
Sentence in UK

Charles Taylor should be on his way to The Hague in Holland any time from now for his trial now that the British government had accepted to take him in to serve his sentence should he be found guilty of the offences as charged.

Below is a press statement to the effect...

The British Foreign Secretary, Margaret Beckett, announced on 1 June that, subject to parliament passing the necessary legislation, the United Kingdom would allow the former President of Liberian, Charles Taylor, to serve his sentence in the UK, should he be convicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Mrs. Beckett said “I was delighted to be able to respond positively to the request of the United Nations Secretary General that, should he be convicted, Charles Taylor serve his sentence in the UK. My decision was driven by two compelling arguments. Firstly, that Taylor’s presence in Sierra Leone remains a threat to peace in that region. Secondly, that we are demonstrating through concrete action that UK’s commitment to international justice”.

Mrs. Beckett continued “If we want to live in a just world, we must take responsibility for creating and fostering it. In taking this decision we are demonstrating clearly two of our foreign policy priorities: To ensure that those accused of serious crimes of international concern face justice; and to prevent and resolve conflict through a strong international system. The UK is determined to do what is necessary to defend international justice”
Kabbah escapes Special Court

Story: Tanu Jalloh

A joint signatory of ruling by Presiding Judge, Pierre Boutet and Justice Benjamin Mutanga.

Kabbah escapes Special Court

From page 1

President Kabbah by defense counsels for the first and second accused of the Civil Defense Forces (CDF) indictment, Sam Hinga Norman and Moimmah Fofanah respectively.

"The Applicants are seeking to secure a pre-testimony interview and the testimony of President Kabbah as a prospective witness by way of a subpoena pursuant to Rule 54. According to the provisions of this rule, a subpoena must be "necessary for the preparation or conduct of trial.""

"The Chamber having proceeded to a detailed examination of the Application’s submissions, finds, for reasons set forth in the previous part, more specifically part C. paragraph 32 to 54 inclusive, that the issuance of the subpoena is not warranted in relation to President Kabbah as concerns either the First or the Second Accused. This finding constitutes a sufficient basis to dispose of this Application," a preamble of the ruling states.

In its disposition the Court therefore ruled: "For these reasons and pursuant to the provisions of Rule 54, the Chamber hereby denies the Motions by the Court Appointed Counsel for the Second Accused and Court Appointed Counsel for the First Accused, for the issuance of a subpoena to H.E. Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, for a pre-testimony interview and for testimony at this trial."
UN Radio (Freetown)
Thursday, 15 June 2006

By Ibrahim Mansaray

The first accused under trial at the Special Court on Thursday denied involvement in the January 6, 1999 attack on Freetown.

Three senior members of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council are alleged to have planned, prepared, ordered, commanded, instigated and been aware of the carnage carried out between the periods of January 6 and February 28, 1999 in Freetown.

During this time large killings of women and children took place in Wellington, Fourah Bay, Kissy, Calaba town and communities around state house by juntas.

Many were abducted, forced as sex slaves and forced into marriages, whilst hundreds more civilians were also abducted and used as forced labor by the same junta soldiers.

Some juntas mutilated civilian limbs looted and burnt down houses including eastern police central and Harbor police stations. This was evidence before in court against the first accused, Alex Tamba Brima and his colleagues.

The attack on state house left police and ECOMOG soldiers executed in large number according to the evidence.

He answered no throughout the examination in-chief to these allegations as they were read slowly to him in English and interpreted in Krio. He said that in fact he was not in Freetown when this inhumane act was done. Alex Brima said all the testimonies before the court as evidence were lies adding that the witnesses were paid to come to the court to testify against him.

The bitter historic invasion now been remembered as J-6 on the capital city left the once admired Freetown badly damaged which is still evident today as people struggle to rebuild it.
UN Radio (Freetown)
Wednesday, 14 June 2006

Ibrahim Mansaray

A decision on the motion filed in court by CDF indictees Mr. Sam Hinga Norman and Moinina Fofana for the issuance of a Subpoena AD Testificandum to President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah for a pre-testimony interview and for testimony before the court has been denied and dismissed accordingly by the trial chamber court number one.

Defense Lawyers of both Mr. Norman and Moinina Fofana had submitted to the court that President Kabbah’s testimony would materially assist the First and Second accused since he was minister of Defense at the time. Secondly, President Kabbah appointed Mr. Norman as National Coordinator of CDF and who was directly answerable to him. Thirdly President Kabbah and Mr. Norman were in constant contact through a satellite phone as to the conduct of war. And finally, the president raised money to pay for the war.

But, the chamber said that the submissions of the defense lawyers fail to identify with sufficient specific evidence that the proposed testimony of president Kabbah would materially assist the case of the two CDF accused.

In a 21- paper public document issued by the court on Tuesday, the chamber stated that in deciding whether or not to grant the application, the chamber must first determine the legal standard it considers applicable to the issuance of a Subpoena and whether or not that standard has been met by the indictees.

According to the standard of issuing a subpoena in line with Rule 54 of the rules of procedure, as contained in the document, the request of either party or of its own motion, a judge or a trial chamber may issue orders, summonses, subpoenas, warrants and transfer orders as may be necessary for the purposes of investigation, preparation or conduct of the trial.

In conclusion, the chamber stated that, having made a detailed examination of the application, finds for these reasons set forth that the issuance of subpoena was not warranted to president Kabbah as concerns the two accused persons.
Britain to Imprison Liberia's Taylor if He's Convicted

By Colum Lynch
Washington Post Staff Writer

UNITED NATIONS, June 15 -- Britain agreed Thursday to jail former Liberian president Charles Taylor if he is found guilty of responsibility for atrocities in Sierra Leone, ending an impasse that for months had delayed his transfer to The Hague to stand trial before a war crimes tribunal.

"I was delighted to be able to respond positively to the request of the United Nations secretary general that, should he be convicted, Charles Taylor serve his sentence in the U.K.," British Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett said in London. "My decision was driven by two compelling arguments. Firstly, that Taylor's presence in Sierra Leone remains a threat to peace in that region. Secondly, that we are demonstrating through concrete action the U.K.'s commitment to international justice."

Taylor faces 11 counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity and other violations of international humanitarian law. The United Nations-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone was set up in 2002 to prosecute those bearing greatest responsibility for atrocities committed by rebels under Taylor's sway in the Sierra Leone civil war, which lasted from 1991 to 2002. Taylor has said he is not guilty of the charges.

Beckett's announcement ends a protracted U.N.-led effort to locate a country that would be prepared to detain Taylor.

U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan welcomed the decision. "I am very grateful to Prime Minister Tony Blair and Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett for this statesmanlike decision, which marks another step forward in our battle against impunity for the most heinous crimes," Annan said at a news conference at U.N. headquarters.

Taylor was arrested March 29 in Nigeria, where he lived in exile since being forced to give up the Liberian presidency in 2003. Taylor sought to flee Nigeria after Liberia's new president, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, requested this year that he be surrendered to the Sierra Leone court to face trial. He was captured as he tried to slip across the border and flown to Monrovia, Liberia, where he was detained by U.N. peacekeepers and transferred to a prison in Sierra Leone.

The court's president asked to try him in another country because of concerns that Taylor supporters could threaten members of the court and possibly help him escape. The Netherlands agreed to allow the Sierra Leone court to carry out its trial at the headquarters of the International Criminal Court, on the condition that another country agree to take Taylor. Several countries, including Austria, Sweden and Denmark, had refused to take him.

Beckett said the decision still requires approval by the British Parliament. But Britain's U.N. ambassador, Emyr Jones Parry, said he would seek passage of a Security Council resolution on Friday to authorize Taylor's transfer from Sierra Leone to a prison cell at the headquarters of International Criminal Court.

Taylor launched a bloody insurgency in Liberia in 1989, where he ruled as a warlord before being elected president in 1997. While in power, he supported rebel movements in neighboring countries, including Sierra Leone, and contributed to instability across West Africa.

He faces charges of backing Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front, which killed, raped, enslaved and mutilated thousands of civilians during the civil war.
UN moves to transfer Taylor trial

Moves to transfer former Liberian leader Charles Taylor to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the Hague are under way.

The British ambassador to the UN said a draft resolution which would allow the transfer to go ahead is ready to go before the Security Council.

A UN-backed tribunal in Sierra Leone, where Mr Taylor is on trial, wants the case moved for security reasons.

Mr Taylor faces war crimes charges in relation to Sierra Leone's civil war.

He is accused of backing rebels in the decade-long war in which up to 50,000 people died.

On Thursday, the British government said Mr Taylor could serve a prison sentence in the UK if he was convicted of war crimes.

Last resort

The Dutch government said this meant all conditions had been met for his trial to be moved to the Hague, after other European countries had refused to host him.

It had agreed to hold Mr Taylor's trial, as long as he was imprisoned in another country if he was convicted.

British Foreign Minister Margaret Beckett said the UK's decision showed Britain's "commitment to international justice".

The International Criminal Court came into force in 2002 and 100 countries have backed it so far.

Its role is to prosecute and bring to justice those responsible for the worst crimes - genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes - committed anywhere in the world.

It is a court of last resort, intervening only when national authorities cannot or will not prosecute.

Both Sierra Leone and Liberia are recovering from years of conflict, in which Mr Taylor played a central role.

Liberia's President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, who took office in January, said she feared that putting Mr Taylor on trial in West Africa could lead to renewed instability.

Britain, the former colonial power in Sierra Leone, sent troops to help oust rebels from the capital, Freetown in 2000.

Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front rebels were notorious for mutilating civilians, by hacking off their arms or legs with machetes.
Britain offers to jail Taylor if convicted of African war crimes

By Anne Penketh, Diplomatic Editor

The trial of one of Africa's most ruthless leaders, the former Liberian president Charles Taylor, is to be moved to Europe after Britain offered him a jail cell if he is convicted of war crimes.

The British decision lifts the final obstacle in the long-running process aimed at securing justice for the West African leader accused of funding rebels in neighbouring Sierra Leone who hacked off the limbs of their victims during a decade-long civil war. Mr Taylor, who faces charges of crimes against humanity, is also accused of selling diamonds on behalf of the former rebels of the Revolutionary United Front in return for weapons.

Mr Taylor's trial at a UN-backed court has been on hold in Sierra Leone pending a decision on its transfer to The Hague, amid fears that his trial in Africa could be a destabilising factor for the still-fragile democracies of the region. But that decision depended on whether a European country would agree to imprison Mr Taylor if he is found guilty.

The Liberian President, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who had pressed for the trial to be heard in Europe, discussed the issue of Mr Taylor's possible imprisonment in Britain during a visit to London last month.

Announcing the decision yesterday, the Foreign Secretary, Margaret Beckett, said that the former president's presence in Sierra Leone "remains a threat to peace in that region ... we are demonstrating through concrete action the UK's commitment to international justice."

The Dutch government said that with Britain's announcement, conditions it set for hosting the trial at The Hague have been met. "This is a crucial step," said Herman van Gelderen, the spokesman for the Foreign Minister, Ben Bot. "We think it's important that people suspected of crimes like these - terrible crimes, war crimes - should be held accountable, should be tried, and if we can play a role we are ready to play a role," he said.

The Netherlands last week sentenced a Dutch businessman to eight years in prison for breaking a UN arms embargo by smuggling weapons into Liberia, which were used by militias loyal to Mr Taylor to kill civilians, including children.

British diplomats said that the UN Security Council would now "expeditiously" consider a UK-sponsored draft resolution formally transferring the Taylor trial to The Hague.

British legislation will have to be adapted to allow Mr Taylor's possible incarceration. The Swedish parliament went so far as to pass a law in order to allow Mr Taylor to be jailed in Sweden in case of conviction, but the government in Stockholm did not follow through with a political decision.

Mr Taylor's lawyers had sought to have the trial held in Sierra Leone on the ground that West African witnesses and Mr Taylor's relatives would not be able to attend the trial if it were moved to Europe. The former leader, who received asylum in Nigeria following his removal as president in 2003, was moved to Sierra Leone for trial in March.

Human Rights Watch, which welcomed Britain's decision, urged international donors to redouble their efforts to make Mr Taylor's trial accessible to the people of West Africa by providing funding, once the transfer to The Hague is agreed.
The trial of one of Africa's most ruthless leaders, the former Liberian president Charles Taylor, is to be moved to Europe after Britain offered him a jail cell if he is convicted of war crimes.

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Liberian Can Serve Prison Term in Britain

By SARAH LYALL

LONDON, June 15 — Britain said today that the former Liberian president Charles G. Taylor can serve his sentence in a British prison if he is convicted at his forthcoming war crimes trial.

The announcement paves the way for Mr. Taylor, currently being held in Sierra Leone on charges related to his role in that country's bloody civil war, to face trial in The Hague. The Netherlands has agreed to host the trial, but only on condition that Mr. Taylor would not serve his sentence there if convicted.

Other European countries have refused, but Britain, the former colonial power in Sierra Leone and a country that sent troops into Sierra Leone in 2000 to help put an end to the war, said that it had started the process, "and we want to finish it," in the words of Lord Triesman, the minister for Africa.

Margaret Beckett, the British foreign minister, said that the decision to take in Mr. Taylor, who has been charged with 11 counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity and other violations, was evidence of Britain's "commitment to international justice."

"I am delighted to be able to respond positively to the request of the United Nations Secretary General that, should he be convicted, Charles Taylor serve his sentence in the U.K.,” Mrs. Beckett said.

Mr. Taylor is accused of financing the rebel force in Sierra Leone, the Revolutionary United Front, by selling diamonds on their behalf and then supplying them with arms. In a decade-long war that left 50,000 people dead and countless others maimed and displaced, the rebels were notorious for raping civilians and for using machetes to kill people and to hack off limbs and other body parts.

The trial is to be held in the International Criminal Court complex in The Hague under the auspices of the United Nations-backed court established in Sierra Leone to try people suspected of committing atrocities during the war, which lasted from 1991 to 2002.

Mr. Taylor, who was arrested in March 2006, is to be tried in the Hague because of fears that putting him on trial in west Africa, where he still has allies, would further destabilize the region.

A spokeswoman for the British foreign office said that the government's willingness to take in Mr. Taylor — a move that will require special legislation to go ahead — means that the trial can now proceed.

"We have a commitment to seeing justice being done, and this underlines our commitment,” she said. "We want the trial to start, and we have put our money where our mouth is."
Britain vows to imprison the tyrants of Africa

From David Charter and Anthony Browne in Brussels

BRITAIN has offered to lock up one of Africa’s most bloodthirsty tyrants for life, a move that could lead to several more dictators and warlords being sent to the country’s overcrowded prisons.

Should Charles Taylor, the 58-year-old former President of Liberia, be convicted of war crimes at his trial at The Hague, he will spend his jail term here at a cost to the taxpayer of £70,000 a year. Other criminals who, it was suggested, could follow him include warlords such as the leaders of the rebel Lord’s Resistance Army in Uganda.

Critics will say that Britain can ill afford the cost of jailing international criminals when prisons are full to bursting, and the Home Office is already under attack for its inability to track foreign prisoners convicted in Britain. The Prison Service is on the verge of a record of more than 77,823 inmates in the 139 jails in England and Wales. But ministers said that they wanted to prove their commitment to international justice, and Foreign and Commonwealth Office sources described the move as an “invest-to-save” policy for a country in which Britain has spent £60 million trying to restore order in the past five years.

Britain has been heavily involved in peacekeeping in Sierra Leone, where Mr Taylor is accused of directing rebel fighters during the civil war that left hundreds of thousands of people dead.

The Prison Service has been preparing to hold international war criminals for six years since Jack Straw agreed that Britain would take its share of those found guilty.

If Mr Taylor were convicted he would initially be assessed as a high-risk, Category A offender and held in the high-security unit — the jail within a jail — at Belmarsh prison, near Woolwich, southeast London. Belmarsh inmates include some of those awaiting trial on charges linked to the July 7 bombings in London. The Government made it clear that war criminals would not benefit from the early-release and parole system for those convicted in British courts.

Margaret Beckett, the Foreign Secretary, said that the offer to jail African tyrants was “in the best tradition of British foreign policy”. To volunteer to jail Mr Taylor had broken an impasse that has stalled the transfer of his trial from Sierra Leone to the International Criminal Court in the Netherlands.

Mrs Beckett said that she had answered a plea from the United Nations after a series of countries, including Austria, Denmark and Sweden, refused to take Mr Taylor. A UN resolution is likely to follow within weeks to allow him to be tried in The Hague. Mrs Beckett said: “We strongly believe in an international system of justice. In the UK, we are prepared, if Charles Taylor is found guilty, to take him and imprison him.

“My decision was driven by two compelling arguments: firstly, that Taylor’s presence in Sierra Leone remains a threat to peace in that region; secondly, that we are demonstrating through
concrete action the UK’s commitment to international justice. If we want to live in a just world, we must take responsibility for creating and fostering it."

Mrs Beckett said that the handing over of Mr Taylor by Nigeria into custody this year was “an historic day” for the people of West Africa but she acknowledged fears that his detention in Sierra Leone posed a threat to regional security. “The international community must not fail them by asking them to run the risk associated with his continued presence in Freetown,” she said.

Mr Taylor was captured in Nigeria in March and brought to Sierra Leone, where he pleaded not guilty to 11 charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity and violations of international human rights. He allegedly backed rebels who enlisted child soldiers and terrorised victims by chopping off their limbs, ears and lips during the civil war in the 1990s.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone requested that the trial be moved to The Hague for security reasons. But the Netherlands only agreed on condition that a third country agreed to jail him or take him if acquitted. The Foreign Office said yesterday that Britain would not take Mr Taylor as a free man.

Lord Triesman, a Foreign Office minister, said that it would be up to the current Liberian President, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, to decide who should face further action over the Sierra Leonean civil war. “I hope she will feel that the most serious allegations will be pursued against people who are war criminals, people who have committed massive crimes against humanity,” he said.

Lord Triesman added that bringing the leaders of the rebel Lord’s Resistance Army to court would be another signal that there was no escape from justice for war criminals. “The fact is that these are again people of unusual brutality and . . . if they were arrested and brought to trial it would, as with Taylor, send a very, very stark message.”
The tyrant with a swagger who will now face justice

By Richard Beeston, Diplomatic Editor

CHARLES TAYLOR was once asked by a journalist how he responded to charges that he was nothing better than a murderer.

Without pausing, the flamboyant former guerrilla leader and then President of Liberia shot back: “Jesus Christ was accused of being a murderer in his time.”

The response was typical of a man of great charisma, a sense of humour and, to those he liked, even charm. At the time Taylor never imagined that one day he might have to face his accusers and come up with a better defence.

For most of his fellow Liberians and many of his neighbours in Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast, his name will for ever be associated with a decade of unimaginable violence when governments collapsed and the only law came from the barrel of a gun, often carried by groups he armed and financed.

Specifically, Mr Taylor is accused of helping Sierra Leone’s Revolutionary United Front (RUF), a rebel group that repaid the support with “blood diamonds”. The RUF established a reputation for unparalleled savagery, which included hacking off the limbs of their victims, mass murder and rape. As many as 200,000 people died during the civil war, which ended after a British military intervention to restore the Government to power.

In all, Mr Taylor is charged with 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity. If found guilty he will probably serve his sentence in Britain.

The prospect of spending his remaining years behind bars will come as no shock to Mr Taylor, whose life has been punctuated by dramatic highs and lows.

Plucked from the Americo- Liberian elite, who are descendants of freed slaves returned from America, Mr Taylor was sent to the US to read economics in the early 1970s. He was rewarded with a senior job in the Liberian Government but was forced to flee after being accused of embezzling nearly $1 million (£540,000). US authorities held him on an extradition warrant in Massachusetts, but he escaped 18 months later using a saw to cut through his bars and climb down a knotted bedsheets.

He made his way to Libya, where Colonel Muammar Gaddafi trained him to become a guerrilla leader. He returned home at the head of a rebel army and spent the next decade fighting for control of Liberia in a conflict that cost 250,000 lives and forced half its population to flee.

Mr Taylor was elected President in 1997 but the title fooled no one. International opinion was hardening against him, his regime was targeted with sanctions and his grip on power challenged by a new rebel group.
When The Times accused him of cannibalism, he threatened to sue the newspaper for libel but dropped the case because he feared being arrested if he came to Britain to give evidence.

After charges were brought against him for war crimes, Mr Taylor agreed to leave Liberia in exchange for asylum in Nigeria. He lived there with his family until March, when even the Nigerians could no longer protect him.

The once immaculate dresser, who on one occasion wore the white robes of an angel, was last seen being led into captivity in Freetown, Sierra Leone. The swagger was gone and he looked old and dishevelled as, in his first appearance in court, he pleaded not guilty.

A WARLORD'S LIFE

1948 Charles Taylor born. Studied economics in US. Remained there to work for Liberian Government

1984 Accused of embezzling $1 million of Liberian funds. Jailed in US but escaped

1989 Formed National Patriotic Front of Liberia and overthrew Government

1997 Ran for election under slogan, “He killed my ma, he killed my pa, I vote for him.” Won landslide victory

2003 Rebellion forced resignation. Sought exile in Nigeria

2006 Arrested. Taken to Sierra Leone to face trial
Britain willing to jail Liberian leader

Charles Taylor, the former Liberian President, could be jailed in the UK if he is convicted of war crimes in an international court, the government has said.

Taylor is currently in Sierra Leone, where he pleaded not guilty before a UN war crimes court in April this year to charges stemming from the country's civil war.

Taylor was captured in Nigeria in March 2005 but no trial date had been set because of problems over where he might be jailed if found guilty.

Sierra Leone has asked the Netherlands-based International Criminal Court to host the trial because of fears over renewed instability and violence should it take place in Africa.

The court agreed on the condition a third country jail Taylor if he is convicted or accept him as a citizen should he be freed.

Denmark, Austria and Sweden had all rejected requests to jail Taylor.

Margaret Beckett, the Foreign Secretary, said the government's decision to offer to imprison Taylor demonstrated a commitment to international justice.

The Dutch government has said Britain's announcement satisfied their conditions for starting Taylor's trial.

Taylor faces 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity. The charges relate to his alleged links to Sierra Leonean rebel gangs who terrorized victims during the country's 1991-2002 civil war.

He is also accused of stirring up violence in Liberia and across West Africa.

Taylor won the Liberian presidency in 1997 after launching an insurgency in 1989. In 2003 he was ousted by rebels and fled to Nigeria in asylum.
Britain agrees to jail Charles Taylor if convicted

MONROVIA, 15 June (IRIN) - The British government has said former Liberian President Charles Taylor, who is in Sierra Leone awaiting trial on charges of war crimes, could serve his prison sentence in the United Kingdom if he is convicted.

Other European countries have refused to host Taylor. Liberia and the United Nations-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone do not want Taylor tried in West Africa because of security fears.

Taylor triggered 14 years of civil war in Liberia when he launched a rebellion from neighbouring Cote d'Ivoire in December 1989 to unseat President Samuel Doe, who was later killed.

Taylor has also been indicted on eleven counts of war crimes in Sierra Leone whilst he was president of Liberia, including murder, rape and recruitment of child soldiers.

Many Liberians want to leave the war and their former president Taylor in the past.

"This Taylor issue is behind us. All the international community wanted was him to face trial and now that he is in court they should decide what to do with him," said market woman Mimi Beysllow.

Some Taylor loyalists, however, are making efforts to support him. John Richardson, who served as national security adviser under Taylor, said he and others are trying to raise US $5 million for a defense fund.

"If former president Taylor is represented by a crack defense team he would be a free man since we are convinced that allegations levied against him by the prosecutors cannot be proven if he has a fair trial," Richardson said.

Taylor was arrested and taken to the Special Court in Freetown after Liberia's new President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf made an official request for his extradition from exile in Nigeria.

British Foreign Minister Margaret Beckett was quoted by the British Broadcasting Corp. as saying new legislation would be required to imprison Taylor in the United Kingdom.

The British gesture paves the way for Taylor to be tried in The Hague. The Dutch government agreed to host Taylor's trial if another country volunteered to imprison him if he was convicted.

Taylor remains imprisoned in Freetown under guard of UN troops from Mongolia. Human rights advocates caution that failing to try Taylor in Freetown could deny Sierra Leoneans a sense of closure.

"There is such a strong belief in Sierra Leone that powerful people are above the law," Corinne Dufka, West Africa team leader for New York-based Human Rights Watch (HRW), told IRIN. "That Sierra Leoneans will not witness his trial I think is unfortunate."

She adds, however, that HRW believes that security must take precedent and if regional governments and the Special Court do not feel confident of security then the rights group would support moving Taylor's trial.
Charles Taylor may serve jail term in UK if convicted

By David White in London

Britain agreed in principle on Thursday to have Charles Taylor, the former Liberian president, serve his sentence in a UK jail if he is convicted of war crimes.

The decision removes an obstacle to plans for putting Mr Taylor on trial in The Hague, using the facilities of the International Criminal Court. However, a trial is not expected to get under way before next year.

Mr Taylor has been in custody since March in Sierra Leone, where he is accused of fomenting a decade-long civil war that ended five years ago and left tens of thousands dead.

The Netherlands government said Britain’s offer met its conditions for allowing Mr Taylor’s trial by Sierra Leone’s UN-backed special court to go ahead on its territory.

It had previously stated its willingness to host the trial on condition that Mr Taylor left the country once proceedings were concluded.

The United Nations had also put out feelers to Sweden, Austria and Denmark to find a place to imprison Mr Taylor if convicted. Denmark said publicly it would not take him.

Neither Sierra Leone nor Liberia wants Mr Taylor in its jails for fear of provoking further violence or a possible prison break.

Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, Sierra Leone’s president, said recently it would be “very helpful” if Britain, the country’s main foreign donor, were willing to take Mr Taylor.

Margaret Beckett, British foreign secretary, said the decision sent “a strong signal of our willingness to combat impunity”. The offer is subject to UK legislative approval.

A spokesman for the special court called the British move “a welcome and significant step forward”. The next step, he added, would be a UN Security Council resolution enabling the Netherlands to host the trial.

Mr Taylor, who left Liberia in 2003 and took refuge in Nigeria, faces charges on 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including responsibility for murder, mass rape, mutilation and the use of child soldiers. He has pleaded not guilty and rejected the court’s jurisdiction.

Experts said it was likely to be several months before defence lawyers got through the 32,000 pages of documents and witness statements attached to the indictment.
Associated Press  
Friday, 16 June 2006  

**Britain would jail Charles Taylor**

LONDON // The British government said yesterday that it was willing to jail former Liberian President Charles Taylor if he is convicted of war crimes, breaking an impasse that had stalled his trial before an international tribunal.

Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett said the decision showed "the U.K.'s commitment to international justice."

Taylor was captured in Nigeria in March and taken to Sierra Leone, where he pleaded not guilty before a U.N.-backed war crimes court in April to charges stemming from Sierra Leone's civil war.

No trial date had been set pending a decision on where he might be jailed.

The Sierra Leone court had asked the Netherlands-based International Criminal Court to hold the trial, fearing that Taylor's trial in Africa might revive regional instability.

The Netherlands agreed, on the condition that a third country jail Taylor if he is convicted or take him in if acquitted.

Denmark, Austria and Sweden had all rejected requests to jail Taylor.

In a letter to British lawmakers, Beckett said the international community must not fail West Africans "by asking them to run the risk associated with his continued presence in Freetown," in Sierra Leone.

"This is a welcome and significant step to fulfil the conditions set by the Dutch government for Charles Taylor's trial to take place," said Peter Andersen, spokesman for the Sierra Leone war crimes court.

Liberia's justice minister, Frances Johnson-Morris, said Britain's move was "in the interest of peace and security in the region."
Hurdle Cleared for Trial of Taylor

The former Liberian president can be tried at The Hague now that Britain has agreed to imprison him if he is convicted of war crimes.
By Maggie Farley, Times Staff Writer

UNITED NATIONS — The British government said Thursday that it is willing to imprison former Liberian President Charles Taylor if he is convicted of war crimes, breaking an impasse that had stalled his trial before an international tribunal.

Taylor is accused of supporting the Revolutionary United Front rebels in Sierra Leone, including buying weapons for them with money from selling diamonds mined in the rebels' territory. The group was notorious for hacking off limbs of civilians during the 11-year civil war.

The United Nations-backed war crimes court in Sierra Leone asked that Taylor's trial be moved to the International Criminal Court in The Hague, the Netherlands, because of fears that proceedings in Sierra Leone would invite violence.

The Netherlands agreed to take Taylor's trial, but only if he left the country after the judgment was delivered. Several countries refused to take him if he was convicted. If he is acquitted, he will be free to leave the Netherlands.

"If we want to live in a just world, we must take responsibility for creating and fostering it," British Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett said Thursday, announcing the decision. Britain "is determined to do what is necessary to defend international justice."

The offer is subject to approval by Britain's Parliament and a U.N. Security Council resolution authorizing the potential transfer.

British Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry, who introduced the resolution Thursday, said he expected it would be approved today.

"We've spent some weeks trying to find a solution," Jones Parry said. "In the end we provided the solution ourselves."

Human Rights Watch lauded the British move, which will allow the trial to proceed. But it urged the court to make the trial accessible to people in Sierra Leone, so they could see justice being done. "Victims of atrocities in Sierra Leone have long waited for Charles Taylor to face trial," said Richard Dicker, director of the group's international justice program.

Taylor launched a rebellion in Liberia in 1989, which spread through the region and undermined governments in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Ivory Coast. In 1997, he was elected president of Liberia, which again fell into civil war.

In 2003, as he faced an arrest warrant issued by the Sierra Leone tribunal, Taylor was given asylum in Nigeria. After an attempt to flee Nigeria in March, he was handed over to the court.
Irish Examiner
Friday, 16 June 2006

Taylor to be kept in high security prison, almost alone

Former Liberian President Charles Taylor may soon be moved to a high security prison in the Netherlands that should withstand even his notorious ability for escape.

A major hurdle to Taylor’s transfer to The Hague was overcome yesterday when Britain agreed to imprison him if he is convicted of war crimes stemming from Sierra Leone’s long and brutal civil war.

The UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone asked to stage the trial in The Hague, fearing it could destabilise the region if it were conducted in Africa.

Taylor is expected to be transferred from detention in Freetown, Sierra Leone, shortly after the UN Security Council adopts a resolution asking the Netherlands to host the trial.

The two courts need to work out arrangements, including the finances, for Sierra Leone judges and support staff to use one of the two recently completed ICC courtrooms in former offices of a telecom company on the edge of The Hague.

Taylor’s first stop will be the ICC detention unit, a 12-cell wing in a maximum security Dutch prison complex in the coastal suburb of Scheveningen. He will be virtually alone.

The International Criminal Court has one suspect in detention, Thomas Lubanga, a former Congolese warlord arrested last year and transferred from Kinshasa to The Hague in March.

It was unclear whether the two prisoners would be allowed to socialise in common areas, such as the exercise yard or gym.

Five other suspected war criminals from Uganda have been indicted, but there was no indication they would be arrested in the near future and brought to The Hague.

The UN war crimes tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, which tried former President Slobodan Milosevic, maintains a separate bloc of 84 cells in the same prison complex. Milosevic died there on March 11 of a heart attack.

The prison is surrounded by high walls and electronic surveillance. Outside the walls, armed Dutch police patrol the perimeter at least three times per hour.

An independent study of the facility following Milosevic’s death recommended that security at the Yugoslav wing be reviewed, since many of the detainees “have both money and trained personnel at their disposal” to stage a prison break.

Taylor’s detention arouses extraordinary nervousness. He escaped from a Massachusetts jail in 1985 where he was being held for allegedly embezzling money in Liberia.

Three men, an American and two Sierra Leoneans, were arrested in April for allegedly plotting to free Taylor from detention in Freetown after they were discovered photographing the compound where he was being held.
Good Morning, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I expect you’ve all heard that the British government has said it is willing to have Charles Taylor serve any prison sentence imposed on him by the Special Court for Sierra Leone in the United Kingdom. This should make it possible for the trial to be transferred to The Hague. I am very grateful to Prime Minister Tony Blair and Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett for this statesmanlike decision, which marks another step forward in our battle against impunity for the most heinous crimes.

-SNIP-
Annan hails moves hastening war crimes trial of Liberian ex-leader Taylor

15 June 2006 – United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan today hailed the British government’s decision to allow former Liberian President Charles Taylor serve in the United Kingdom any prison sentence imposed on him by the Special Court for Sierra Leone, a move that makes it possible to transfer the war crimes trial to The Hague in the Netherlands.

“I am very grateful to Prime Minister Tony Blair and Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett for this statesmanlike decision, which marks another step forward in our battle against impunity for the most heinous crimes,” Mr. Annan said in an opening statement at a news conference at UN Headquarters in New York.

The UN-backed Court in the Sierra Leonean capital of Freetown, where Mr. Taylor faces an array of charges, including crimes against humanity and other serious violations of international humanitarian law, has sought the transfer of the trial from Freetown to the Netherlands for security reasons.

Turning to another region, Mr. Annan said he was “greatly distressed” to hear that over 60 people were killed and more than 40 injured in Sri Lanka when a civilian bus was blown up by a mine. “It is wholly irresponsible and unjustifiable for combatants in any cause to plant mines that can have this kind of tragic result,” he declared.

“And it shows how desperately important it is for all parties in Sri Lanka to renew the ceasefire and halt the slide back into full-scale civil war.”
Sierra Leone Special Court Welcomes British Announcement on Charles Taylor

By Joe De Capua
Washington
15 June 2006

The announcement by Britain that it would imprison Charles Taylor, if he’s convicted of war crimes and crimes against humanity, is being praised by the UN backed Special Court in Sierra Leone.

Peter Anderson is the court spokesman. From Freetown, he spoke to VOA English to Africa Service reporter Joe De Capua about the British announcement.

“This is welcome news. This is a significant step. It’s just one step along the way. We’re still looking at a couple of more steps that have to be accomplished before we can say that we can hold a trial at The Hague. I want to also make it clear that this was a requirement of the Dutch government that some other country would take Taylor if he were found guilty and that he has by no means been found guilty. The trial is still ahead of us and he is still considered to be innocent until proven guilty before the court,” he says.

What more needs to be done before the trial is held? Anderson says, “The next step would be that we would look for a (UN) Security Council resolution. That is also a requirement of the Dutch government in order to conclude a headquarters agreement with us that would allow us or indeed any international courts to sit within their jurisdiction.”

Despite the process, he says it is not a foregone conclusion that Taylor will be tried at court facilities at The Hague.
Activists Mixed Over Britain's Offer to Jail Taylor

By Nico Colombant
Abidjan
15 June 2006

Human rights activists are giving mixed reviews to a decision by Britain to jail Charles Taylor if Liberia's former president is convicted for his role during Sierra Leone's civil war. The decision paves the way for the trial to be held in The Hague.

The Dutch government says its conditions have been met for hosting Charles Taylor's war crimes trial.

A foreign ministry spokeswoman said she expects a U.N. Security Council resolution to be adopted within a few days to make the move possible.

Mr. Taylor has been in jail at the Freetown special court in Sierra Leone's capital, awaiting the transfer, which Liberia's government asked for on security grounds.

The Netherlands had said it would only host the trial if a country came forward that would jail the former Liberian rebel turned president in case of a conviction.

After several rejections by other European countries, Britain came forward. The minister for Foreign Affairs, Margaret Beckett, said Britain has a strong international reputation as one of the world's leading advocates for international justice.

A West Africa researcher for U.S.-based Human Rights Watch, Corinne Dufka, welcomed the move.

"We are very encouraged by these developments," she said. "We believe that the failure of any country, until today, to take this on was regrettable, particularly given the security concerns that prompted this relocation request. So we are very encouraged and relieved that the British government has finally come forward and agreed to take Mr. Taylor if convicted."

But Ibrahima Kane, the Africa specialist for a London-based group advocating international norms of justice, says Mr. Taylor should not get special treatment, compared to other war crime suspects who will remain in Sierra Leone.

"If they take only one person, not only try him in Europe, but also keep in custody in Europe, this is discrimination," he said.

He also says victims of the war will miss out on the whole process.

"I think Charles Taylor must face the reality of Sierra Leone," he added. Charles Taylor must face the reality of prison in Sierra Leone and I think that if that is done people will believe in Sierra Leone that justice is done. As we say in English, justice should not only be done, but also should be seen to be done, and in this particular case it is not the reality."

Mr. Taylor pleaded innocent in early April after the 11 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity he faces were read to him in Freetown. He is accused of having organized Sierra Leone's brutal rebellion to control its diamond fields.
Taylor Trial: U.K. Removes a Key Obstacle

Court, Donors Must Make a Hague Trial Accessible to West Africans

(New York, June 15, 2006) - The British government's decision today to offer detention facilities for Charles Taylor if he is convicted removes the main obstacle to relocating the former Liberian president's trial to The Hague, Human Rights Watch said today.

On March 29, Taylor was surrendered to the Special Court for Sierra Leone, which has indicted him on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity in the country's 11-year civil war. The U.N.-backed war crimes court immediately requested the relocation of Taylor's trial to The Hague, citing concerns about stability in West Africa if the trial is held at the court's headquarters in Sierra Leone's capital, Freetown.

The Netherlands agreed to host Taylor's trial in The Hague, but on the condition that he leaves the country after the judgment is delivered.

"The U.K. has taken a crucial step by offering Taylor a jail cell if convicted," said Richard Dicker, international justice director at Human Rights Watch. "Today's announcement ends many weeks of stalled negotiations over the relocation of Taylor's trial."

The Netherlands still requires a U.N. Security Council resolution to provide a legal basis for the relocation. It is expected that this will pass shortly and the relocation will move forward. In a trial of Taylor in The Hague, judges and staff from the Special Court will conduct the proceedings according to the court's statute and rules, while the International Criminal Court will lend its facilities for the trial.

Human Rights Watch cautioned, however, that the Special Court and its donors will need to redouble their efforts to make Taylor's trial accessible to the people of West Africa if it is relocated to the Netherlands.

"The Special Court's location in Sierra Leone and its robust outreach have helped make justice accessible to the people most affected by the crimes," said Dicker. "With Taylor headed to The Hague, the Special Court must provide outreach on his trial in Sierra Leone, and donors must provide the funding needed to make this happen."

Moving Taylor's trial outside Sierra Leone has serious disadvantages, Human Rights Watch said. The most significant is that locating Taylor's trial out of the country severely threatens to limit the accessibility of the trial to people in West Africa. However, legitimate and substantial concerns over security may make the move necessary and appropriate.

"Victims of atrocities in Sierra Leone have long waited for Charles Taylor to face trial," said Dicker. "Security concerns may well merit moving the trial to The Hague, but the Special Court needs to explain this more fully to the people of West Africa."
Since it began operations in 2002, the Special Court has conducted various outreach and communications activities. The programs have included disseminating video and audio summaries of proceedings around the country, engaging local journalists and civil society on court developments, and targeting various sectors of the population for discussion on the Special Court. To make a trial of Taylor in The Hague accessible to Sierra Leoneans and West Africans, the Special Court should implement - and donors should fund - the following activities:

* Video and audio summaries of Taylor's trial for dissemination throughout Sierra Leone;

* Live broadcasts of the trial at the court premises in Freetown; and

* Observation of the trial in The Hague by some representatives of Sierra Leone's media, monitors, civil society, and other sectors of the country, such as paramount chiefs.

Donors including the United States, United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Canada should also provide funding to cover other costs associated with holding Taylor's trial in The Hague. These include logistical and technical costs. Funding must further be provided to ensure the Special Court can successfully complete the rest of its work in Freetown. This includes conducting fair and expedient trials where witnesses receive adequate protection and support, and outreach and communications activities are sufficient. Additional funding will be needed for necessary activities in the post-completion phase of the court's operations, such as long-term witness protection.

Background

The Special Court for Sierra Leone was set up in 2002 to try those "bearing the greatest responsibility" for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during Sierra Leone's armed conflict. The crimes include killings, mutilations, rape and other forms of sexual violence, sexual slavery, the recruitment and use of child soldiers, abduction, and the use of forced labor by armed groups.

The Special Court has indicted Taylor for war crimes (murder, pillage, outrages upon personal dignity, cruel treatment, terrorizing civilians), crimes against humanity (murder, mutilation, rape, enslavement, sexual slavery) and other serious violations of international humanitarian law (use of child soldiers) in the course of Sierra Leone's armed conflict. The indictment alleges that Taylor, as president of Liberia, provided training and financing to the main rebel group in Sierra Leone, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). Taylor was allegedly the rebel group's main backer, providing logistical and military support to the rebels and benefiting greatly from the diamonds extracted in rebel-held areas.

Initially forced to rely on voluntary contributions, the Special Court has faced constant financial shortfalls. The United Nations provided some financial assistance to the court, but this does not cover all of the court costs. Donors made additional pledges at a funding conference in late September 2005. However, these are insufficient to cover operations for 2006 and beyond.
UK clears way for Taylor trial in The Hague

AMSTERDAM — The main pre-condition set by the Netherlands to host the trial of Charles Taylor was met on Thursday when the UK announced it would jail the former Liberian president if he is convicted of war crimes.

"I was delighted to be able to respond positively to the request of the United Nations secretary-general that, should he be convicted, Charles Taylor serve his sentence in the UK," British Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett said.

The UN-backed Special Tribunal for Sierra Leone requested in March that the trial be moved to The Hague shortly after Taylor was captured while trying to flee Nigeria. It was feared holding the trial in Sierra Leone would lead to further unrest.

Taylor faces charges of crimes against humanity, war crimes and violations of international human rights. They accuse him of sponsoring and aiding rebel groups who perpetrated murder, sexual slavery, mutilation and conscription of child soldiers in Sierra Leone's civil war, in exchange for a share in the diamond trade.

The Dutch authorities set three conditions for the trial to be moved to The Hague. A spokesperson said the UN Security Council would have to pass a resolution backing the change of venue and Taylor would have to leave the Netherlands once the court delivered its verdict.

In addition, the Dutch said the International Criminal Court in The Hague had to make arrangements for the provision of a court room and a cell to hold Taylor during his stay in the Netherlands.

"With the British offer to take Taylor to serve a possible sentence there, all conditions set by the Dutch government have been met. The next step is a UN Security Council resolution which I expect to be drawn up in the next few days," a spokesperson for the Dutch foreign ministry said.
Britain says ready to imprison Charles Taylor if convicted

Britain is ready to imprison former Liberian president Charles Taylor if he is tried and convicted by a UN court, said British Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett on Thursday.

"In the United Kingdom, we are prepared -- should Charles Taylor be found guilty -- to take and imprison him in the UK," Beckett told reporters upon her arrival at a summit of European Union heads of state and government.

"This is absolutely consistent with the best traditions of the British foreign policy."

She said UN Secretary General Kofi Annan had asked London whether it is ready to imprison Taylor if he is tried and convicted in The Hague.

"We strongly believe in the importance of an international system of justice. People, who are found guilty of terrible crimes, should not only stand trial, but be imprisoned and should serve the full sentence for those crimes," she said.

Taylor was arrested in Nigeria in March and then transferred to Sierra Leone, where he pleaded not guilty before a UN-backed war crimes court.

Sierra Leone asked The Hague-based UN tribunal to try the strongman. But the trial has been stalled as the Netherlands had refused to imprison him if convicted.

Taylor is accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity for his alleged role in Sierra Leone's 1991-2002 civil war.

Taylor fled to Nigeria in 2003 after losing a civil war in his own country.

Source: Xinhua
Facts about Charles Taylor

Taylor was born in 1948 to a family of Americo-Liberians a small but traditionally powerful group descended from the freed slaves who founded the West African country of Liberia in the 19th century.

A devout Christian who studied in the United States and enjoys playing tennis, Taylor's trademark outfit was a white suit and a cane.

Jailed by the US authorities for embezzlement, Taylor escaped from his Massachusetts cell in 1985 after a year. He resurfaced in Cote d'Ivoire and launched a rebellion in 1989 to topple Liberia's then-President Samuel Doe.

The war ended in 1996 with 200,000 dead. Taylor became president after a campaign memorable for the macabre unofficial anthem: "You killed my ma, you killed my pa. I'll vote for you."

Taylor's foes rose again in 1999 and he fled into exile in Nigeria in 2003 with rebels camped in Liberia's capital Monrovia and US President George W. Bush demanding he leave.

The charges Taylor faces at a UN-backed war crimes tribunal include acts of terrorism, murder, rape, enslavement, conscripting child soldiers, sexual slavery, pillage and outrages upon personal dignity. He has pleaded not guilty.
"Norman Defence May Appeal"---- SamForay


Defence lawyers of war crimes indictee Samuel Hinga Norman may appeal Tuesday’s special court ruling.

A press release by Reverend Alfred SamForay of the Hinga Norman Defence Fund stated that the defence team headed by Dr. Bubuakei-Jabbi is presently reviewing the ruling and is expected “to appeal the matter to the Appeals Chamber promptly”.

SamForay also observed although the court’s decision gives a judicial victory to Mr. Kabbah, the president may have lost his chance to mend fences with Chief Norman and that for Mr. Kabbah and the nation, the stakes cannot be higher.

SamForay, who resides in the US, also disclosed that the Norman defence team will “end with a bang” by calling other high ranking foreign government and military officials who will testify to orders given by Mr. Kabbah “to bomb civilian targets to oust the rebels”.

Photo: Judge Gelega-King of the Special Court.
UK willing to incarcerate Taylor if ex-leader convicted of war crimes charges
Joshua Pantesco

[JURIST] UK Foreign Minister Margaret Beckett said Thursday that Britain will take custody of former Liberian President Charles Taylor if he is convicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone as long as authorizing legislation is passed by parliament. In a statement, Beckett said that as long as parliament passes new legislation to permit the UK to recognize the convictions of the SCSL, the UK would accept Taylor to "demonstrate the UK's absolute determination to see the alleged perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes held to account." Beckett's statement further said that "[w]ere the Court to acquit former President Taylor, we would not be required to allow him to come to the UK. Were he to be convicted, and subsequently released after serving a sentence, the expectation at this stage is that former President Taylor would leave or face removal from the UK." UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan welcomed the UK decision saying it "marks another step forward in our battle against impunity for the most heinous crimes."

Earlier this month, the Swedish parliament passed a law permitting Taylor's incarceration but the Swedish government has not yet indicated whether it would be willing to take custody of Taylor. The former Liberian president has been indicted by the SCSL for crimes against humanity and violations of international humanitarian law, including murder, rape and the recruitment and use of child soldiers during the war in Sierra Leone. The SCSL wants to move Taylor's trial to The Hague for security reasons, but the Netherlands has said that it will only agree to host the trial if the SCSL finds a country willing to imprison Taylor if he is found guilty and a country that will grant him asylum if he is acquitted.

1:57 PM ET - A Dutch Foreign Ministry spokeswoman said Thursday that with Beckett's announcement all conditions that the Netherlands had set for hosting the trial had been satisfied. The UN Security Council must now pass a resolution authorizing the transfer and the spokeswoman said that the resolution is expected to be drawn up in within the next several days.

5:56 PM ET - The Special Court for Sierra Leone has welcomed the UK's offer to take custody of Taylor if he is found guilty, calling the move "a significant step." Rights activists in Sierra Leone, however, said that the trial should remain in Africa so that those affected by the war have the opportunity to witness the trial.
International Clips on Liberia

**BBC** Last Updated: Thursday, 15 June 2006, 12:23 GMT 13:23 UK

**UK agrees to jail Charles Taylor**

The British government has agreed that former Liberian leader Charles Taylor could serve a prison sentence in the UK, if he is convicted of war crimes. This paves the way for his trial to start in The Hague, after other European countries refused to host him. A UN-backed tribunal in Sierra Leone, where he is in prison, wants the trial to be moved due to security fears. Mr Taylor faces 11 war crimes charges after allegedly backing rebels in the decade-long Sierra Leone civil war. "I was delighted to be able to respond positively to the request of the United Nations Secretary General, that, should he be convicted, Charles Taylor serve his sentence in the UK," British Foreign Minister Margaret Beckett said.

**Annan grateful to Britain for offer to jail Taylor**

UNITED NATIONS, June 15, 2006 (AFP) - UN chief Kofi Annan on Thursday expressed gratitude to Britain for its offer to jail former Liberian president and warlord Charles Taylor if the latter is convicted of war crimes. "I am very grateful to Prime Minister Tony Blair and Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett for this statesmanlike decision, which marks another step forward in our battle against impunity for the most heinous crimes," the secretary general told a press conference here.

**Annan to visit Liberia in July**

MONROVIA, June 15, 2006 (AFP) - United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan is due to visit Liberia at the beginning of July, the foreign affairs ministry here said Wednesday. The UN leader and his wife will be in Liberia from July 3 to July 5, the ministry said in a letter to parliament read out to the legislators. During the visit, Annan is scheduled to address a session of parliament. In his recent report on Liberia, he said the security situation in the West African country, just emerging from a brutal 14-year civil war, was stable but still fragile.

**International Clips on West Africa**

**Ivorian government, rebels resume talks on disarmament**

ABIDJAN, June 15, 2006 (AFP) - Disarmament talks between Ivory Coast's loyalist forces and rebels reopened Thursday in Abidjan, two weeks after the two meetings between their armies in the administrative capital Yamoussoukro. Rebel military chief Soumaila Bakayoko and General Philippe Mangou of government forces were meeting in the presence of the Defence Minister Rene Aphing Kouassi, a day before the start of the disbanding of the hardline pro-government militias.
Local Media – Newspapers

Press Union Rejects Government’s Invitation

- The Press Union of Liberia (PUL) yesterday declined an Executive Mansion invitation to a roundtable meeting with President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and other stakeholders on grounds that the government had failed to address the issue of the attacks on journalists by state security agents.
- In a reply to Executive Mansion Chief of Staff Morris Dukuly, the PUL said that it was not prepared to discuss other matters while the government continued to brush aside its complaint of the state security apparatus’s aggression against journalists.
- The PUL reiterated its call on the government to probe the persistent incidents of security excesses, especially where journalists are concerned.

Lawmaker and Pro-Democracy Group Condemn Attack on Journalists
(The News, The Analyst and The Inquirer)

- The NAYMOTE-partners for Democratic Development in a press release yesterday denounced the constant manhandling of journalists by state security personnel.
- The group said that the attacks were counter-productive to the country’s newfound democracy and urged the government to launch an investigation into the incidents to discourage such acts.
- At the same the Chairman of the House Standing Committee on Information and Broadcasting Vinicius Hodges called on President Johnson-Sirleaf to keep her campaign promise of upholding press freedom by intervening in the security clampdown on journalists.

Electricity and Pipe-Borne Water Return to Monrovia Shortly

- Addressing a press conference in Monrovia yesterday, Lands, Mines and Energy Minister Eugene Shannon said the process of returning electricity to Monrovia begins next week with the symbolic planting of pole for wiring by President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. Meanwhile the Liberia Water and Sewer Corporation has begun a test of the water supply system in Monrovia and its outlying areas to resume full operation.

Close Associates to Testify against Taylor
(Liberian Express)

- Former President Charles Taylor is reported by a family source to have expressed disappointment in former close associates and members of his inner circle who have reportedly agreed to testify against him at a war crimes trial.
- He reportedly wept when he learned that his former special assistant Kadiatou Diarra-Findley and concubine Agnes Reeves consented to a request by prosecutors of the Special Court for Sierra Leone and rights advocates to testify against him.
- FrontPageAfrica reported that Mrs. Diarra-Findley had already made several trips to The Hague in preparation for Mr. Taylor’s trial and had testified in the trial of the Dutchman Guus van Kouwenhoven, a close associate of Mr. Taylor, who was convicted and sentenced to eight years in prison for busting a UN arms embargo on Liberia.
In collaboration with UNMIL, UNDP has handed over 15 Toyota 4-Runner vehicles and spare parts for use by the superintendents of the country’s 15 counties, a UNDP press release said yesterday.

UNMIL and Information Ministry to Launch National Talent Hunt

UNMIL Public Information in collaboration with the Ministry of Information will next week launch an under-20 nationwide talent hunt—dubbed A Star is born—to discover Liberia’s best singer and best comedian.

The program, which takes place at Musu’s Spot in Congo Town, will also be used to raise awareness of social issues, including HIV/AIDS and rape and to promote peace and reconciliation. U.S. Ambassador Donald Booth’s wife Anita will serve as chief patron of the program.

The National Elections Commission (NEC) in collaboration with the International Foundation for Elections Systems will on Friday host a two-day roundtable forum with members of the National Legislature in Gbarnga, Bong County, an NEC press release said yesterday. The forum will focus on possible constitutional and electoral law reform in preparation for the pending municipal and chieftaincy elections in Liberia, the press release added.

Police in Freetown, Sierra Leone recently arrested 44 Liberian refugees following a protest demonstration at the headquarters of the UN refugee agency UNHCR in Freetown. The police said that around 200 refugees vandalized the UNHCR offices after they accused the agency of unfair treatment and failure to facilitate their return home.

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Local Media – ELBS Radio

Light Poles Arrive to Electrify Monrovia

UN Gives Vehicles for Use by County Superintendents

Press Union Shuns Invitation to Discuss Government Deliverables

Sub-Regional Body Turned into Commission

Heads of State of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) meeting in Abuja, Nigeria, said that they have transformed the organization into a Commission to be known as ECOWAS Commission, a dispatch from Nigeria said.
• In an interview yesterday, United States Embassy Public Affairs Director Meg Riggs said that the embassy’s curfew which was imposed on American citizens was being misinterpreted by some Liberians. She noted that the embassy constantly advises its citizens to remain indoors after certain time.  
(Also reported on Star Radio)

State Prosecutors Petition Judge to Rescind Ruling against Rapist
• State prosecutors in the rape case involving defendant Solomon Musa Fallah filed a motion for Judge James Zota to rescind his ruling of 7 years in prison against Mr. Fallah for raping a 9-year-old girl. The prosecutors added that the sentence should be extended to life imprisonment as required by the new Rape Law.  
(Also reported on Star Radio)

Human Rights Groups Resist Commissioning of Associate Justice
• A conglomerate of human rights organizations in Liberia yesterday resisted the commissioning of former Justice Minister Kabineh Ja’neh as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court. The group, in a petition to the Supreme Court, said that Cllr. Ja’neh’s issue should be returned to the Senate for hearing to ensure that due process is applied at the Senate.  
• The group’s spokesman, human rights defender Dempster Brown said that the human rights groups would ensure that warlords do not sit on the Supreme Court Bench.  
(Also reported on Star Radio)

Former First Lady Says former Ruling Party is Bankrupt
• Former First Lady, Bong County Senator Jewel Howard Taylor told journalists yesterday that the former ruling National Patriotic Party was bankrupt and therefore planning to lease part of its headquarters in Monrovia. However, the ex-combatants that live in the building rejected the plan, asserting that Senator Taylor and others were planning to sell the Party property.  
(Also reported on Star Radio)
War crimes court set to try Sudan officials

CHRIS STEPHEN
SUDANESE officials are likely to face prosecution for war crimes following a report by the International Criminal Court on massacres in the Darfur region.

The report paints a gruesome picture of massacres and hundreds of mass rapes in south-western Sudan.

But it may also complicate United Nations efforts to send a NATO-led peacekeeping force to the region, with Sudanese officials nervous that they may face arrest.

ICC chief prosecutor, Luis Moreno Ocampo, told the UN Security Council in New York of "large-scale massacres with hundreds of victims in each incident". His report, a year in completion, is the most comprehensive picture yet painted of the three-year campaign of ethnic cleansing by pro-government forces.

It includes a database detailing thousands of individual atrocities which will form the evidence for future indictments of officials. It found that hundreds, possibly thousands, of women have been subjected to mass rape by the militias.

The report repeats complaints Mr Ocampo made last year that the Sudanese authorities are dragging their heels in cooperating with his investigation.

Khartoum insists it is holding its own investigation into the atrocities.

An estimated 200,000 have been killed in the ethnic cleansing, with hundreds of thousands expelled.

The UN is trying to broker permanent peace deals between Sudan and rebel factions and hopes to have a peacekeeping force there this summer to replace troops from the African Union.

Meanwhile, Britain has announced it will provide a jail cell for the former Liberian president Charles Taylor if he is found guilty of war crimes by the special court in Sierra Leone. The move increases the chances that his crimes trial, the first of a former African president, will be switched to The Hague amid security fears.