Special Court for Sierra Leone
Outreach and Public Affairs Office

PRESS RELEASE

Freetown, Sierra Leone, 27 August 2013

Charles Taylor Appeal Judgement Scheduled for 26 September 2013

The Judges of the Special Court's Appeals Chamber announced today that they will deliver their Appeal Judgement in the trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor on Thursday, 26 September 2013 at 11:00 a.m. local time in The Hague.

Media accreditation for the judgement is now open in The Hague. The Appeal Judgement will be streamed live to the SCSL courthouse in Freetown, and journalists in Freetown will join journalists in The Hague by video link for a post-judgement press conference.

On 26 April 2012, the Judges of Trial Chamber II found Mr. Taylor guilty on all counts of the 11-count indictment. The Judges found unanimously that he had participated in the planning of crimes, and of aiding and abetting crimes, committed by rebel forces in Sierra Leone. On 30 May 2012, the Trial Chamber sentenced him to a term in prison of 50 years.

The Defence has appealed against judgement and sentence on 42 grounds, arguing that the Trial Chamber had made systematic errors in the evaluation of evidence and in the application of law sufficiently serious to "reverse all findings of guilt entered against him" and to vacate the judgement. The Defence also argued that the 50-year sentence was "manifestly unreasonable."

The Prosecution has appealed on four grounds, arguing that Mr. Taylor should have been found individually criminally responsible for ordering and instigating crimes committed by rebels in Sierra Leone. The Prosecution also asked the Appeals Chamber to reverse the Trial Chamber's finding that crimes committed in certain areas of five districts fell outside the scope of the indictment, and argued that the 50-year sentence was not "reflective of the inherent gravity of the totality of his criminal conduct and overall culpability" and should be increased to 80 years.

Charles Taylor was tried on an 11-count indictment, alleging (as violations or Article 3 Common to the Geneva Conventions and of Additional Protocol II) acts of terrorism, murder, outrages upon personal dignity, cruel treatment and pillage; (as crimes against humanity) murder, rape, sexual slavery, other inhumane acts and enslavement; (as other serious violation of international humanitarian law) the conscription, enlistment or use of child soldiers.

#END

The Special Court is an independent tribunal established jointly by the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone. It is mandated to bring to justice those who bear the greatest responsibility for atrocities committed in Sierra Leone after 30 November 1996.

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