

The Prosecutor vs. Charles Ghankay Taylor



Charles Taylor, the former President of Liberia, was indicted on 7 March 2003 on 17 counts (later amended to 11 counts) of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law. He was turned over to the Special Court for Sierra Leone on 29 March 2006. On 3 April 2003 he made his initial appearance in Freetown, where he pleaded not guilty to all charges.

Key Dates in the Taylor Trial

7 March 2003

The Trial Chamber confirms the indictment of Charles Taylor, signed by the Prosecutor on 3 March, and orders it to remain under seal.

4 June 2003

The Prosecutor unseals the indictment while Charles Taylor is visiting Ghana.

11 August 2003

Charles Taylor steps down as President of Liberia and goes into exile in Calabar, Nigeria.

4 December 2003

Interpol issues a "Red Notice" (international arrest warrant) for Charles Taylor.

31 May 2004

The Appeals Chamber dismisses a motion brought on behalf of Charles Taylor which challenged his indictment on the grounds of sovereign immunity and extraterritoriality.

16 March 2006

The Court approves an amended indictment, reducing the counts from 17 to 11.

29 March 2006

Charles Taylor is apprehended by the Nigerian authorities and flown to Monrovia where he is arrested by UNMIL. He is then transferred to the Special Court.

3 April 2006

Charles Taylor makes his initial appearance at the Special Court in Freetown. He pleads not guilty to all charges.

16 June 2006

UN Security Council Res. 1688 clears the way for Taylor to be tried in The Hague, saying that his presence in the sub-region was "an impediment to stability and a threat to the peace".

30 June 2006

Charles Taylor is transferred to The Hague.

4 June 2007

The Prosecutor makes his opening statement in The Hague. Charles Taylor boycotts the trial and dismisses his legal team. The trial is adjourned until new counsel can be assigned.

7 January 2008

Prosecution witness testimony begins.

30 January 2009

Prosecution witness testimony ends. In all, 91 witnesses testified, including 58 crime base witnesses, 29 insider (linkage) witnesses and four expert witnesses. In addition, written statements were admitted from four crime base witnesses.

27 February 2009

The Prosecution formally rests its case.

4 May 2009

The Trial Chamber dismisses in its entirety a Motion for Judgment of Acquittal brought by the Defence.

13 July 2009

The Defence opens their case.

Key to the Indictment

Charles Taylor faces an 11-count indictment for crimes against humanity, violations of Article 3 Common to the Geneva Conventions and of Additional Protocol II, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law.

- *1 Crimes Against Humanity
- *2 Violation of Article 3 Common to the Geneva Conventions and of Additional Protocol II (war crimes)
- *3 Other serious violation of international humanitarian law

Terrorizing the civilian population and collective punishments

1. Acts of terrorism. *2

Unlawful killings

2. Murder *1
3. Violence to life, health and physical or mental well-being of persons, in particular murder *2

Sexual violence

4. Rape *1
5. Sexual slavery *1
6. Outrages upon personal dignity *2

Physical violence

7. Violence to life, health and physical or mental well-being of persons, in particular cruel treatment *2
8. Other inhumane acts *1

Use of child soldiers

9. Conscripting or enlisting children under the age of 15 years into armed forces or groups, or using them to participate actively in hostilities *3

Abductions and forced labour

10. Enslavement *1

Looting

11. Pillage *2