

Charles Taylor Jr. Incarcerated for 97 years in the US for Torture in Liberia

A local Court in the United States according to a local law of 1994 that permits the Federal Government to prosecute anyone in the territory for the crime of torture committed out of the United States have sentenced Taylor's son for his role as a leader of a group, the so called "Demon Forces" that was allegedly ordained to combat terrorism; he was appointed by his father to lead this group that was reportedly involved in systematic violation of human rights in Liberia between 1999 to 2003, the jury contended. This case is significant because it is the first time that a local court in Miami have prosecuted anyone for the crime of torture committed out of the United States.

Taylor's Jr. "Demon Forces" used various torture techniques said witnesses. At trial, five witnesses were brought to testify against the accused and his soldiers for horrific torture techniques that includes: electric shock, molten plastic, lit cigarettes, hot irons, bayonets and biting ants shovelled onto people's bodies; and the Prisoners were kept in water-filled pits covered by heavy iron gates and barbed wire.¹

The Federal Prosecutor had persuaded the judge to sentenced Mr. Taylor Jr. to a more harsher sentence of 147 years in prison but his Defence lawyers argue that he was not convicted of murder so therefore he should be sentenced for 20 years.

His father Mr. Taylor was also convicted for 50 years in jail by a majority of judges in the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) on April 26, 2012.² On Appeal the verdict was upheld on 26 September 2013.³ Taylor's ex wife during an interview with the Guardian she pointed out that Mr. Taylor should not be held responsible for the crimes committed in Sierra Leone but however, she agreed that crimes were committed and all of them were responsible for their action or inaction.⁴ On 30 January 2015, the Trial Chamber of the SCSL rule on the

¹ The Guardian, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/jan/09/charles-taylor-jr-torture-liberia>, [28 March 2015].

² International Justice Monitor, <http://www.ijmonitor.org/2012/04/charles-taylor-found-guilty/>, [28 March 2015].

³ International Justice Monitor, <http://www.ijmonitor.org/2013/09/charles-taylors-conviction-and-sentence-upheld-what-next-for-him/>, [28 March 2015].

⁴ The Guardian, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2012/apr/25/charles-taylor-wife-war-crimes-video>, [28 March 2015].

motion denying Taylor's request to serve his sentence in Rwanda on grounds that he has been refuse the right to family visitation.⁵

The incarceration of Mr. Taylor Jr. and his father have double effects: on the one hand it is justice for the victims who can say justice has been accomplished. It is also necessary because those in power who wants to abuse it in the hope that they can seek refuge in another jurisdiction will be reminded that there is no place to hide.

⁵ RSCSL, <http://www.rscsl.org/RSCSL-News.html>, 26 March 2015.