

Press release - 26.04.2012

Lochbihler on the verdict of Charles Taylor: Justice has been done

On the occasion of today's verdict against former Liberian president and warlord Charles Taylor, the chair of the Human Rights Subcommittee of the European Parliament Barbara Lochbihler declares:

"Today's verdict of the Special Court for Sierra Leone is a historic watershed for international justice, as it marks the first time an international tribunal has reached judgment in the trial of a former head of state. It is a landmark decision in the fight against impunity and sends out a clear signal that the gravest crimes, even at the highest echelons of power, are not left unpunished.

Charles Taylor was a ruthless leader who, as president of neighbouring Liberia, sold weapons, ammunition and other conflict equipment to Sierra Leone rebels in return for blood diamonds. The rebels Taylor supported, most notably the Revolutionary United Front and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, were notorious for hacking off the limbs, noses and lips of their enemies. Most of their surviving leaders already have been convicted and imprisoned by the court.

Regardless of the sentence, which Taylor will have to spend in a British prison, today's verdict is paramount to the numerous victims. Only justice can heal the wounds of war and armed conflict. Today, justice has been done!"

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