

NEW YORK CITY BAR

BETTINA B. PLEVAN

PRESIDENT

Phone: (212) 382-6700

Fax: (212) 768-8116

bplevan@nycbar.org

www.nycbar.org

January 4, 2006

Hon. Condoleezza Rice
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rice:

I am writing on behalf of the New York City Bar Association concerning Nigeria's continued failure to surrender former Liberian President Charles Taylor to the Special Court for Sierra Leone. We wrote to you concerning this issue in September 2005. We are writing again as we believe the recent election of Liberian President-elect Johnson-Sirleaf provides a unique opportunity for the world community to help ensure Taylor's surrender.

The Association is an independent non-governmental organization with a membership of more than 22,000 lawyers, judges, law professors and government officials, principally from New York City, but also from throughout the United States and 50 other countries. Founded in 1870, the Association has a long history of dedication to human rights, notably through its Committee on International Human Rights, which investigates and reports on global human rights issues. The Association also closely follows legal developments in Africa through its Committee on African Affairs.

While the Special Court for Sierra Leone indicted Taylor over two years ago on 17 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity for his role in the deaths, rapes, disappearance, and mutilations of thousands of civilians during the brutal civil war in Sierra Leone, he continues to enjoy safe haven in Nigeria.

Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo has thus far refused to surrender Charles Taylor to the Special Court on the basis that he was granted asylum in 2003 with the international community's support to prevent Liberian civilian casualties from battle over control of Liberia's capital. However, President Obasanjo has also indicated that he would consider surrendering Taylor upon a request from a duly-elected Liberian government.

We appreciate the efforts by the United States government to ensure Taylor's surrender, including raising the issue with President-elect Johnson-Sirleaf when she was in Washington this past month.

We are deeply troubled by Taylor's continued evasion of the rule of law. Continued sanctuary for Taylor undermines justice and the security of the peoples of West Africa, and belittles the suffering of his victims. Taylor's alleged manipulation of regional political affairs and his close contacts with supporters presents a real threat to stability in West Africa, and the international community's failure to bring Taylor to justice only serves to perpetuate this threat.

We urge the United States government to continue to make the most of the recent election of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf as the new Liberian president by engaging in intensive diplomacy to convince her to demonstrate a clear commitment to promoting the rule of law in West Africa by requesting Taylor's prompt surrender to the Special Court. While such a request should not be necessary given Taylor's outstanding indictment, it appears it could prove pivotal in ensuring his surrender. The fact that the Special Court is expected to operate only for a limited time further underscores the importance of a prompt request so that justice may be done.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bettina B. Plevan", with a stylized, flowing script.

Bettina B. Plevan

NEW YORK CITY BAR

BETTINA B. PLEVAN

PRESIDENT

Phone: (212) 382-6700

Fax: (212) 768-8116

bplevan@nycbar.org

www.nycbar.org

January 4, 2006

Rt. Hon. Jack Straw MP
Secretary of State
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH
United Kingdom

Dear Foreign Secretary:

I am writing on behalf of the New York City Bar Association concerning Nigeria's continued failure to surrender former Liberian President Charles Taylor to the Special Court for Sierra Leone. We wrote to you concerning this issue in September 2005. We are writing again as we believe the recent election of Liberian President-elect Johnson-Sirleaf provides a unique opportunity for the world community to help ensure Taylor's surrender.

The Association is an independent non-governmental organization with a membership of more than 22,000 lawyers, judges, law professors and government officials, principally from New York City, but also from throughout the United States and 50 other countries. Founded in 1870, the Association has a long history of dedication to human rights, notably through its Committee on International Human Rights, which investigates and reports on global human rights issues. The Association also closely follows legal developments in Africa through its Committee on African Affairs.

While the Special Court for Sierra Leone indicted Taylor over two years ago on 17 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity for his role in the deaths, rapes, disappearance, and mutilations of thousands of civilians during the brutal civil war in Sierra Leone, he continues to enjoy safe haven in Nigeria.

Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo has thus far refused to surrender Charles Taylor to the Special Court on the basis that he was granted asylum in 2003 with the international community's support to prevent Liberian civilian casualties from battle over control of Liberia's capital. However, President Obasanjo has also indicated that he would consider surrendering Taylor upon a request from a duly-elected Liberian government.

We are deeply troubled by Taylor's continued evasion of the rule of law. Continued sanctuary for Taylor undermines justice and the security of the peoples of West Africa, and belittles the suffering of his victims. Taylor's alleged manipulation of regional political affairs and his close contacts with supporters presents a real threat to stability in West Africa, and the international community's failure to bring Taylor to justice only serves to perpetuate this threat.

We urge the British government make the most of the recent election of the new Liberian president by engaging in intensive diplomacy to convince Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf to demonstrate a clear commitment to promoting the rule of law in West Africa by requesting Taylor's prompt surrender to the Special Court. While such a request should not be necessary given Taylor's outstanding indictment, it appears it could prove pivotal in ensuring his surrender. The fact that the Special Court is expected to operate only for a limited time further underscores the need for a prompt request so that justice may be done.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bettina B. Plevan", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Bettina B. Plevan