

International Court Conviction

Karen Sloan:

Charles Taylor showed little reaction in court in the Netherlands Thursday, where he was found guilty of aiding and abetting war crimes and crimes against humanity. He's the first head of state convicted by an international court since the Nuremberg Tribunal convened following World War II.

Karen Sloan:

The presiding judge said the sixty-four-year-old warlord-turned-Liberian-president backed notoriously brutal rebels in neighboring Sierra Leone, and in return received so-called "blood diamonds" from the guerrillas. He said Taylor provided arms, ammunition, communications equipment, and planning to rebels during the latter part of the civil war in Sierra Leone that killed more than fifty thousand and left many more wounded. Taylor was found guilty on charges covering terror, murder, rape, and conscripting child soldiers.

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Those shown here may have been lucky enough to make it into a rehabilitation program, but thousands of others kidnapped were forced to serve as fighters, bodyguards, and even sex slaves. The prosecutor in Taylor's trial says by finding him guilty, the court has sent an important message.

Brenda Hollis:

Today's historic judgment reinforces the new reality that heads of state cannot hide behind their positions, that they will be held to account for war crimes and other international crimes.

Karen Sloan:

The judge said the court will consider sentencing for Taylor next month. Lawyers on both sides say they'll look at whether they have grounds to appeal.

Karen Sloan:

Karen Sloan, The Associated Press.

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