



Liberia's Taylor to appeal war crimes conviction

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AMSTERDAM – The Special Court for Sierra Leone said Tuesday former Liberian President Charles Taylor will appeal his war crimes conviction.

Taylor was convicted for arming and supporting murderous rebels in Sierra Leone in return for "blood diamonds," and was sentenced last month to 50 years in prison.

His lawyers said then they were considering an appeal and Tuesday the court said in a brief statement they have now filed a formal notice of their intention to do so.

While the Sierra Leone court is based in that country's capital, Freetown, Taylor's trial is being staged in Leidschendam, a suburb of The Hague, Netherlands, for fear that holding it in West Africa could destabilize the region.

Taylor's lawyer Morris Anyah said the defense is seeking extra time — until July 19 — to file the appeal, due to the "extraordinary length" of the sentencing judgment, which runs more than 2,000 pages.

Prosecutors have argued the deadline should be no later than July 5, and the court has yet to set a date.

Anyah said it would not be in Taylor's interest to disclose the likely grounds for his appeal.

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