

human rights *first*

THE NEW NAME OF
LAWYERS COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

April 29, 2005

The Honorable Ed Royce
U.S. House of Representatives
Room 2202, Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Royce:

On behalf of Human Rights First I write to express our support for H. Con. Res. 127, which you introduced on April 12, 2005, calling on Nigeria to transfer former Liberian President Charles Taylor to the jurisdiction of the Special Court for Sierra Leone. We thank you for your leadership and hope that the Congress will act swiftly to pass this important resolution.

Human Rights First agrees that there is no reason to permit Mr. Taylor to continue to use his exile in Nigeria to evade justice in Sierra Leone. For more than two years, there has been a warrant for Mr. Taylor's arrest on charges of crimes against humanity, war crimes, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law. Significantly, these charges include allegations that Mr. Taylor is responsible for criminal attacks on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone to which Nigeria contributed its own soldiers as peacekeepers. In addition, it is nearly a year since the Special Court rejected Mr. Taylor's claim that he is immune from prosecution.

We are also concerned by continuing reports that Mr. Taylor is maintaining regular contact with former military commanders, business associates and members of his political party who are planning to undermine the peace process in Liberia.

U.S. leadership is essential if Nigeria is to be persuaded to bring Mr. Taylor to justice. This role is entirely consistent with resolutions of the U.N. Security Council urging all states to cooperate with the Special Court and with U.S. membership on the Court's Management Committee, a body whose specific responsibilities include encouraging state cooperation with the Court.

Headquarters

333 Seventh Avenue
13th Floor
New York, N.Y. 10001
Tel: (212) 845-5200
Fax: (212) 845-5299

Washington D.C. Office

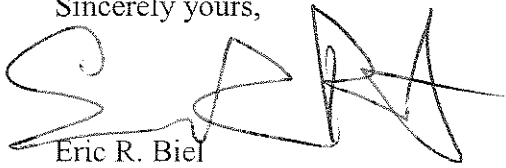
100 Maryland Avenue, N.E.
Suite 500
Washington, D.C. 20002
Tel: (202) 547-5692
Fax: (202) 543-5999

www.HumanRightsFirst.org

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Thank you again for your leadership on this important issue. We stand ready to work with you and your colleagues to encourage Nigeria to surrender Mr. Taylor to the Special Court, and more broadly to promote increased accountability for violations of human rights and humanitarian law in West Africa.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric R. Biel". The signature is stylized with large, sweeping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Eric R. Biel
Deputy Washington Director and Senior Counsel