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AFRICA/SIERRA LEONE - Taylor sentenced to 50 years imprisonment, "but who will pay the victims of violence?" Asks a missionary

Freetown (Agenzia Fides) - "It is a sign that men should remember to atone their sins, but it is not true justice, which we leave to the mercy of God," said Fr. Gerardo Caglioni, a Xaverian missionary with a long experience in Sierra Leone, commenting to Fides Agency the punishment of 50 years imprisonment imposed today by the International Criminal Court in The Hague, to the former Liberian President Charles Taylor. On 26 April, the ICC had held Taylor guilty of aiding and supporting the war crimes committed in Sierra Leone during the civil war (1991-2002). The Court had held that Taylor provided material aid, assistance and moral support to the rebels of the RUF (Revolutionary United Front) active in Sierra Leone.
"The evil that Taylor did is irreparable. Just think of the thousands and thousands of people forced to move from one country to another, with traumas of which child soldiers are still affected by and the rest of the population for sexual abuse and violence unheard of, physical and moral, which cannot be repaired by men," said Fr. Caglioni. "I remember a boy that the RUF guerrillas burned his parents live in the hut, cut their ears and who, before killing him, asked him to abuse his mother. Now that boy is left alone, without family, with psychiatric disorders which no one will be able to heal. " "Faced with thousands of cases like these, it is the 50 years' imprisonment inflicted on Taylor that can offer real hope to these people. So I think that humanity should give a piece of life to Taylor's victims, giving them a chance of different redemption," said the missionary.
Fr. Caglioni focuses on the Taylor's attitude: "During the trial he did not show any sign of sincere repentance for the tragedies he caused. I hope he can repent and reconcile with God, humanity and above all with his victims."
The missionary then recalls that yesterday, May 29th, was the anniversary of the Apostolic Prefecture of Makeni in 1952 (which later became the Diocese). "The Church in Makeni suffered the worst violence on behalf of the RUF. And this church has been able over the years to heal, somehow, the festering wounds left by civil war. It is the Church that has given a moral redemption as well as material to the people tried by such violence," concludes the missionary. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 30/5/2012)

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