

Dutch businessman's conviction overturned

by UPI

THE HAGUE, Netherlands - A Dutch appellate court has tossed out all charges against a businessman accused of arms-smuggling and complicity in war crimes in Liberia. Guus Kouwenhoven had been sentenced to eight years in prison after being convicted of providing arms to Charles Taylor's administration in Liberia in 2006, Radio Netherlands reported Monday. However, after he subsequently was found not guilty on the war crimes charge, prosecutors appealed. An appeals court in The Hague decided to discharge Kouwenhoven of both accusations, claiming there was not enough evidence to prosecute him, Radio Netherlands reported. The judge said prosecutors had "done a shoddy job" handling the case, the radio network said. Kouwenhoven allegedly had confessed to smuggling weapons to Charles Taylor's Liberian regime in 2002 and 2003, claiming he did it to salvage his wood-harvesting business in Liberia, Radio Netherlands reported.

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