



Special Court for Sierra Leone

Outreach and Public Affairs Office

PRESS RELEASE

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Closing Arguments Conclude in RUF Trial

The Judges of Trial Chamber I heard closing arguments Monday and Tuesday in the trial of three former leaders of Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front (RUF). In two days of submissions, lawyers for the Prosecution and for the Accused – Issa Sesay, Morris Kallon and Augustine Gbao – made presentations to the Court and answered questions relating to evidence presented in the trial, and to the application of law.

During the trial, which opened in Freetown on 5 July 2004, the Judges heard evidence from 85 witnesses called by the Prosecution and an equal number called by the Defence. The final witness testified on 25 June 2008 as the Defence case came to an end.

Deputy Registrar Binta Mansaray hailed the closing arguments as a “significant milestone” for the Special Court as it works to complete its mandate.

“It has been a long process to get to where we are today, but the fact that the closing arguments took place on schedule marks an important step in the life of the Court”, Ms. Mansaray said. “By showing that justice can be delivered on time and in accordance with the highest standards of international law, we will not only have lived up to our mandate, but we will also have left a legacy in law for the people of Sierra Leone”.

The Judges will now retire to consider their Judgment in the case. A Trial Judgment is expected later this year.

The RUF trial is the last of three Special Court trials held in Freetown. The trials of three former members of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) and two members of the Civil Defence Forces (CDF) are complete, including sentencing and appeals.

The Special Court’s trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor is continuing in The Hague. Since it got underway in January, the Court has heard testimony from 35 Prosecution witnesses.

#END

The Special Court is an independent tribunal established jointly by the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone. It is mandated to bring to justice those who bear the greatest responsibility for atrocities committed in Sierra Leone after 30 November 1996.

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Special Court for Sierra Leone
Mobile: 232 76 655732
Email: SCSL-pressoffice@un.org

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