



Special Court for Sierra Leone
Outreach and Public Affairs Office

PRESS RELEASE

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Special Court Launches Glossary of Legal Terms in Local Languages

Special Court Registrar Herman von Hebel today launched the “Integrated Glossary of Legal Terminology: Krio, Limba, Mende, Themne” at a ceremony presided over by Sierra Leone’s Acting Chief Justice, Hon. Umu Hawa Tejan-Jalloh.

The glossary, which was compiled by the Special Court’s Language Unit and which draws upon the experience of the Court’s interpreters, for the first time makes available to Sierra Leone’s national judiciary legal terminology in the country’s four major local languages.

“The creation of this glossary by the Special Court, aimed at strengthening of the Sierra Leone’s judicial system, is part of the legacy that we want to leave behind,” von Hebel said. “When people are charged before a court, they have the right to hear the case against them in a language they understand. This glossary will contribute significantly in making this possible.”

“We believe that the ability for a court to communicate legal terminology to those who come before it in terms they understand is crucial the accessibility of justice and the right to a fair trial.”

The Court’s Language Unit, part of the Court Management Section, was the first in West Africa to train court interpreters. Many of these interpreters are expected to return to the national judiciary.

#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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