



Special Court for Sierra Leone
Outreach and Public Affairs Office

PRESS RELEASE

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Defence Case Closes, Final Arguments, in Bangura, et. al. Contempt Trial

Following the formal closure today of the Defence case, Prosecution and Defence delivered their closing statements in the contempt trial of three former AFRC leaders accused of tampering with a Prosecution witness.

Convicted AFRC leaders Ibrahim Bazy Kamara and Santigie Borbor Kanu (aka “Five-Five”), and former AFRC member Alhassan Papa Bangura (aka “Bomblast”) are accused of offering a bribe to a witness to recant testimony he gave before the Special Court, and of otherwise attempting to induce a witness to recant his testimony. Kamara is also accused of knowingly revealing the name of a protected witness.

A fourth co-accused, Samuel Kargbo (aka “Sammy Ragga”) pleaded guilty at his initial appearance in July 2011 and was convicted. Kargbo subsequently testified for the Prosecution. He remains free on bail pending his sentencing hearing.

The hearings are taking place before a single judge, Justice Teresa Doherty, who as a member of Trial Chamber II also sat on the AFRC trial in Freetown and the trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor in The Hague.

The Independent Prosecutor called five witnesses during the prosecution case. In the defence case, Bangura and Kanu testified on their own behalf but called no other witnesses; Kamara also testified on his own behalf and called one additional witness. Two of the trial sessions were held in Rwanda where Kamara and Kanu are serving sentences of 45 and 50 years, respectively, on their convictions for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed against Sierra Leonean civilians. The courtrooms in Sierra Leone and Kigali were linked by a video stream.

Justice Doherty has retired to consider her judgement. Delivery of the judgement is expected in the coming weeks.

Meanwhile, in the contempt case of The Independent Prosecutor v. Eric Koi Senessie, the Defence waived its right to appeal, but asked the Appeals Chamber to review the judgement in light of new facts which had been discovered. The Appeals Chamber dismissed the application this week on the grounds that the facts were not new and were known to Senessie during his trial.

Senessie was convicted on 21 June 2012 on eight counts of offering bribes to prosecution witnesses who had testified in the Taylor trial, and of otherwise attempting to interfere with prosecution witnesses, to induce them to recant their testimony. He is currently serving a two-year sentence in the Special Court’s detention facility.

#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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