



Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone
Public Information

PRESS RELEASE

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RUF Convict Augustine Gbao Eligible to Apply for Conditional Early Release

RSCSL President Justice Jon Kamanda, in a decision issued today, has found that former RUF commander Augustine Gbao is eligible for consideration of conditional early release. Under the Rules, Gbao must have served two-thirds of his 25-year prison sentence, that he has successfully completed any remedial, educational, moral, spiritual or other programme to which he was referred in prison, that he not be a danger to the community or to any member of the public, and that he has complied with the terms of his imprisonment.

In addition, Gbao must have shown that he respected the process under which he was convicted, that he refrained from incitement against the peace and security of the people of Sierra Leone while in prison, and that he has made a positive contribution to peace and reconciliation in Sierra Leone and in the region.

In October, Gbao submitted a written apology to the victims of his crimes, and Justice Kamanda has ordered that it be broadcast on radio and television in Sierra Leone. Gbao also signed a statement of understanding acknowledging that his release, if granted, will be subject to entering into a Conditional Early Release Agreement with the Court.

Augustine Gbao was a senior commander of the Revolutionary United Front from 1996. From 1998 to 2002 he was the Overall Security Commander of rebel forces, and after January 2002 he was the joint commander of rebel forces in the Makeni area of Sierra Leone. He was indicted by the Special Court on 16 April 2003 on 18 counts alleging he had committed serious crimes during Sierra Leone's civil war. He was arrested the same day.

Gbao was found guilty of 13 of the 18 counts against him, including for acts of terrorism (a war crime), extermination (a crime against humanity), murder (a crime against humanity), murder (a war crime), rape (a crime against humanity), sexual slavery (a crime against humanity), other inhumane act (forced marriage) (a crime against humanity), outrages upon personal dignity (a war crime), cruel treatment (a war crime), other inhumane acts (a crime against humanity), enslavement (a crime against humanity), pillage (a war crime), and attacks against UN peacekeepers (other serious violation of international humanitarian law). He was found not guilty on charges of the use of child soldiers (other serious violation of international humanitarian law), of murder of UN peacekeepers (a crime against humanity), the murder of UN peacekeepers (a war crime), and taking peacekeepers hostage (a war crime).

Gbao was sentenced to a 25-year prison sentence, which he is serving at Mpanga Prison in Rwanda.

If Gbao is granted conditional early release, he will serve the remainder of his sentence in his community, subject to strict conditions and monitoring.

#END

The Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone is responsible for the ongoing legal obligations of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, which concluded its mandate in December 2013. These include supervision of prison sentences, witness protection and support, maintenance and preservation of the archives, and assistance to national prosecution authorities.

Produced by the
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