

Special Court for Sierra Leone
Press and Public Affairs Office

PRESS RELEASE

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Special Court Judges Sworn-in

The eight judges of the Special Court for Sierra Leone were sworn in on Monday in the country's capital Freetown. The solemn ceremony marked the establishment of the world's newest international criminal justice body. The judges are expected to immediately elect a President of the Court.

"The Court is now fully constituted," said Behrooz Sadry, Acting Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General after witnessing the swearing in together with Sierra Leone Attorney General Eke Halloway. Mr. Sadry called the event a "first step on the path to combating impunity and addressing accountability for the serious crimes committed in Sierra Leone that have shocked the conscience of mankind."

The Court was created by an agreement between the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone earlier this year. It is more streamlined than the international criminal tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia with three years to fulfill its mandate.

Work has commenced in Freetown on the building of the court and detention facility. In July, the Registrar of the Court Robin Vincent began setting up temporary offices. At the same time, Prosecutor David Crane and his team of investigators and lawyers have started preparing their cases.

The eight judges include three Trial judges, two of whom were appointed by the UN; one by the Government of Sierra Leone. The five other judges are Appeals judges, three appointed by the UN; two by the Government of Sierra Leone.

In today's ceremony, each judge pledged to serve the Special Court for Sierra Leone "honestly, faithfully, impartially and conscientiously". Each signed a solemn declaration then shook hands with Sierra Leone's president Ahmad Tejan Kabbah.

The judges are Judge Emmanuel O. Ayoola of Nigeria, Judge Pierre Boutet from Canada, Judge Benjamin M. Itoe of Cameroon, Judge Hassan B. Jallow of The Gambia. Judge George Gelaga King and Judge Rosolu John Bankole Thompson of Sierra Leone, Judge Geoffrey Robertson from England and Judge Renate Winter from Austria.

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