

Special Court for Sierra Leone
Press and Public Affairs Office

PRESS RELEASE

Bonthe, Sierra Leone, 21 March 2003

Sankoh Needs Further Evaluation

After receiving an initial psychiatric report on the alleged leader of the rebel Revolutionary United Front (RUF) Foday Saybana Sankoh, Special Court Judge Benjamin M. Itoe called for further psychiatric examinations. The hearing was held at a Sierra Leone district court in Bonthe where the Special Court is functioning while its permanent courthouse and detention centre are under construction.

The judge ordered that copies of the report, written by Dutch psychiatrist Dr Peter Verkaeed, be provided to lawyers of the Prosecution and Defence. The Prosecution requested that the Judge enter a 'not guilty' plea on behalf of Sankoh. Sankoh has not responded verbally since his first Special Court hearing earlier this month.

The Judge denied the Prosecution's request, deciding instead that all three judges of the trial chambers need to make a determination. The case was adjourned to a date to be fixed by the Registrar.

Public hearings were also held during the day for three other indictees -- alleged RUF commanders Issa Hassan Sesay and Morris Kallon, and alleged junta commander Alex Tamba Brima, who each face seventeen count indictments. Their cases were also adjourned. A fifth indictee, Chief Samuel Hinga Norman, has had closed hearings at an undisclosed location.

The Judge also held a hearing for the first suspect detained by the Special Court, Augustine Gbao. Suspects can be held up to ninety days without being charged, subject to the consent the Court.

#END

INFORMATION FOR MEDIA - NOT FOR ADVERTISING

Produced by the
Press and Public Affairs Office
Special Court for Sierra Leone
Mobile: 232 76 655 237 Email: SCSL-pressoffice@un.org
Visit our website at www.sc-sl.org