

Special Court for Sierra Leone
Press and Public Affairs Office

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

Groundbreaking for New Courthouse Freetown, Sierra Leone

On 3 October 2003 Registrar Robin Vincent presides over a ceremony marking the start of construction for the new courthouse. Below are excerpts from his address:



On the hill where we stand today, a modern courthouse of glass and steel and concrete will soon rise to become one of the most visible landmarks in this country. It will be a monument to justice standing long after the work of the Special Court is complete, and it will be a legacy for the people of Sierra Leone.

Eight hundred Sierra Leonean workers will labour for five months to build the new courthouse. A locally-based company will oversee construction of the two-story 1,800 square metre complex.

The court will consist of two round, interconnected buildings with flat sloping roofs, reflecting the internationally-recognised image of the scales of justice. When finished, it will house two courtrooms, giving the Court the ability to hold two trials at the same time.

The trials will be open to the public. Each courtroom will have seating capacity for 150 persons, ensuring the greatest possible transparency in the administration of justice. The courthouse is intended as not only a physical landmark, but as a landmark to restore the rule of law for the people of Sierra Leone.

#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. To date, the Prosecutor has indicted thirteen persons on various charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law. Nine indictees are currently in the custody of the Court.

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