

Special Court for Sierra Leone  
Press and Public Affairs Office

PRESS RELEASE

Freetown, Sierra Leone, 3 December 2003

**The Special Court responds to TRC statement**

The Special Court welcomes efforts by the Truth and Reconciliation to correct certain inaccuracies in their December 1 press statement on a judicial decision regarding testimony by Chief Sam Hinga Norman.

The Special Court is especially encouraged by a statement by Executive Secretary Franklyn Bai Kargbo to Radio UNAMSIL that the TRC has "sufficient evidence or testimony that would still enable the Commission to deliver an objective and authoritative report by impartial documentation of the conflict."

Mr. Kargbo added that "in the event a person who has not been able to testify before the Commission is named, it would be very unjust for that person not to have a chance to make a rebuttal."

The Special Court would like to clarify several points raised in the TRC press statement.

Special Court President Justice Geoffrey Robertson, Q.C. ruled last week that Chief Hinga Norman would be allowed to tell his story to the TRC by way of written statement and a meeting with the Commissioners, but not in a public hearing which would include radio and television coverage.

In the view of the Court, the decision confirms Chief Hinga Norman's right to free speech and he is expressly granted the right to express himself, in writing and under oath, before the TRC.

In the same interview on Radio UNAMSIL, Special Court Registrar Robin Vincent said he was disappointed that the TRC had decided not to pursue their right to obtain testimony from Chief Hinga Norman.

Mr. Vincent pointed out that whilst the decision had been made in the case of Chief Hinga Norman, it remained open for other detainees to make statements to the TRC, should the TRC wish to apply to interview them.

Mr. Vincent also noted that the Special Court and the TRC had undertaken extensive work over a four month period to facilitate the testimony from Chief Hinga Norman and other detainees.

Mr. Vincent stressed that both institutions have important and complementary roles to play in promoting reconciliation and the rule of law in Sierra Leone.

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