

Special Court for Sierra Leone
Press and Public Affairs Office

PRESS RELEASE

Freetown, Sierra Leone, 3 March 2004

Defence Motion Seeks Removal of Appeals Chamber President

An application has been received from the defence representatives of the defendant, Issa Hassan Sesay, seeking the removal of the President of the Appeals Chamber, Justice Geoffrey Robertson QC, on the basis of comments made about the RUF in a book he wrote prior to his appointment as a Judge of the Special Court.

In a response to that application, the Prosecution urged the Appeals Chamber to act on the application prior to the delivery of any of the appellate motions currently pending before the Appeals Chamber.

The Registrar, Robin Vincent, noted that applications to invite a judge to stand down are not uncommon in international courts and tribunals, and that the International Court of Justice had only very recently given a ruling on a similar application.

"The Special Court's rules provide for such applications to be considered and decided upon on the basis of legal principles. In the event of a Judge being unable to sit, he or she could be replaced by an alternate Judge," Mr Vincent said.

The Registrar confirmed that the President had already, as a matter of course, requested both the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone to appoint alternate Judges to replace any Judge falling ill or being unable to sit for any other reason.

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