

Special Court for Sierra Leone
Press and Public Affairs Office

PRESS RELEASE

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Justice Geoffrey Robertson to remain on Appeals Chamber but won't hear RUF cases

The Appeals Chamber today ruled on a defence motion which sought the removal of Justice Geoffrey Robertson QC from the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

The motion was filed on 27 February by counsel acting for ex-RUF member, Issa Hassan Sesay, and was subsequently joined in by counsel for Morris Kallon and Augustine Gbao. The motion asked that Justice Robertson be disqualified from serving on the court on the basis of comments he made about the RUF in a book which he wrote prior to his appointment as a Judge of the Special Court.

The Court ruled that Justice Robertson will remain on the Appeals Chamber but he will not sit on any case involving the three ex-RUF members.

In delivering the statement, Justice George Gelaga King found that while the quotes Justice Robertson's book did show an appearance of bias, that was limited to the RUF.

Justice King agreed with Justice Robertson's interpretation of Rule 15(B) of the Rules of Procedure and Evidence, which was that a Judge could be barred from hearing a particular case, but not disqualified from serving on the Appeals Chamber itself.

Consequently, the Court directed that Justice Robertson should not participate in any cases in the Appeals Chamber involving members of the RUF.

In a separate statement filed with the Court under Rule 15(B) Justice Robertson said:

"I would like it known that I hold no preconceived views on the guilt or innocence of the three ex RUF defendants. However, because of my criticisms of the RUF as an organisation, published before I was appointed to the Court, I accept that there could be a perception that I could not judge them with an open mind and on that basis I will, unless they request me to sit, withdraw from their cases if they come before the Appeals Chamber."

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