

Special Court for Sierra Leone
Press and Public Affairs Office

PRESS RELEASE

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Judge Orders Norman's Bank Account Unfrozen

Sam Hinga Norman's bank account has been ordered unfrozen, following a ruling on Monday by Judge Bankole Thompson of the Special Court's Trial Chamber.

A provisional order to freeze Chief Norman's assets, including his Union Trust bank account, was included in the arrest warrant signed by Judge Thompson on 7 March 2003.

Earlier this month, following reports that the bank had unilaterally unfrozen the account, prosecutors filed an ex parte motion seeking that the account, and any other accounts belonging to Norman, be ordered frozen on an interim basis until the matter could be finally determined by the Court.

Judge Thompson issued the interim order on 2 April, but also scheduled a closed-door hearing to include both prosecution and defence. That hearing took place on 13 April.

Prosecutors argued that funds in the account may have been transferred illegally by the CDF. Judge Thompson, while acknowledging that national and international jurisprudence on the issue of freezing the assets of an accused person is unclear, held that the applicable standard is "whether there is clear and convincing evidence that the targeted assets have a nexus with criminal conduct or were otherwise illegally acquired."

Judge Thompson ruled that prosecutors had failed to produce evidence that the property was connected with criminal conduct or illegally acquired. Consequently, he ordered the account unfrozen.

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