



Special Court for Sierra Leone
Press and Public Affairs Office

PRESS RELEASE

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New Prosecutor Selected for the Special Court for Sierra Leone

The Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr Kofi Annan, has appointed Desmond de Silva QC as the new prosecutor for the UN backed Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Mr de Silva will replace David Crane who was appointed to the position in April 2002 and announced in February this year he would not be seeking reappointment at the completion of his three year contract in July.

Mr de Silva – a British national – was nominated by the Government of Sierra Leone at the Court's commencement in July 2002 as the Deputy Prosecutor.

During the past three years Mr de Silva and Mr Crane have worked closely to develop and execute the prosecutorial strategy for the Special Court for Sierra Leone. In his capacity as Deputy Prosecutor Mr de Silva has overseen the Appellate Section within the Office of the Prosecutor.

Mr de Silva is one of Britain's best known Queen's Counsel and has been in practice for 40 years at the English bar. He has also been a member of the Sierra Leone Bar since 1969 when he arrived in Freetown to appear as defence counsel in Sierra Leone's first treason trial.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone was set up jointly by the Government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations after a Security Council Resolution. It is mandated to try those who bear the greatest responsibility for serious violations of international humanitarian law and Sierra Leonean law committed in the territory of Sierra Leone since 30 November 1996.

Currently, 11 persons associated with all three of the country's former warring factions stand indicted by the Special Court. They are charged with war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law.

#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 eleven 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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