



Special Court for Sierra Leone
Press and Public Affairs Office

PRESS RELEASE

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New Deputy Prosecutor for the Special Court

Dr Christopher Staker, has been appointed as Deputy Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone. He succeeds Desmond de Silva QC, who was recently appointed as Chief Prosecutor by the United Nations Secretary-General in consultation with the Government of Sierra Leone.

As provided by the Special Court Statute, Dr Staker was nominated by the Government of Sierra Leone.

Dr Staker's appointment will ensure continuity within the area of appeals, if appeals are lodged against any decisions that are expected to be handed down in 2006. He appeared for the Prosecution in relation to a number of preliminary appeals before the Appeals Chamber in 2003. Those motions, which were won by the Prosecution, included whether the former President of Liberia could plead head of state immunity, whether the Special Court lacked the jurisdiction on the ground that it was unconstitutional and whether the recruitment of child soldiers was a crime under customary international law within the temporal jurisdiction of the Special Court.

Dr Staker has extensive experience in international and public law. He studied at the University of Adelaide, and has a doctorate (D.Phil.) in public international law from the University of Oxford. He was called to the Bar in Australia in 1987. He has held various legal positions in the Australian Attorney-General's Department, including in its Office of International Law. He later served as the Counsel Assisting the Solicitor-General of Australia. Internationally, he has held the posts of Principal Legal Secretary at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and Senior Appeals Counsel at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

He was counsel in a number of prominent cases before the High Court of Australia, and other Australian courts, involving issues of constitutional law, administrative law and public international law. He has also appeared before the International Court of Justice (for Australia in the East Timor case and the Nuclear Weapons advisory opinions) and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (as agent and lead counsel for Guinea-Bissau in the Juno Trader case).

During his two years at the ICTY, he worked for the Prosecution, and served as lead counsel before the Appeals Chamber.

Dr Staker will take up his post on 15 July 2005.

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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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