



Special Court for Sierra Leone
Press and Public Affairs Office

PRESS RELEASE

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Defence Opens Case in AFRC Accused Trial

The Defence opened its case today in the trial of three alleged former leaders of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC).

Alex Tamba Brima, Brima Bazzy Kamara, and Santigie Borbor Kanu each face a 14-count indictment alleging war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law.

In an opening statement which lasted for just under an hour, Prof. Geert-Jan Knoops, Lead Counsel for Third Accused Kanu, laid out the Defence case on behalf of all three defendants. This was followed by opening statements on factual points from Lead Counsel for First and Second Accused.

The trial, which is being held before the Special Court's Trial Chamber II, began on 7 March 2005. The Prosecution concluded its case on 21 November 2005 after calling 59 witnesses.

In December 2005, counsel for the Defence filed Motions for Judgment of Acquittal on behalf of all three accused. Those motions were dismissed by the Trial Chamber on 31 March 2006, clearing the way for the start of the Defence case.

Following the opening statement, the Court began hearing evidence from the First Accused, Alex Tamba Brima, who is testifying in his own defence.

The AFRC trial is the second Special Court trial in which the Defence has opened its case. Defence counsel opened their case in the trial of three alleged CDF leaders on 19 January 2006.

#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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