



Special Court for Sierra Leone
Press and Public Affairs Office

PRESS RELEASE

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Defence Testimony Ends in CDF Accused Trial

Defence testimony ended Wednesday in the trial of three accused former leaders of the CDF militia. Since January, the Court has heard evidence from 44 witnesses who testified in support of Sam Hinga Norman, Moinina Fofana, and Allieu Kondewa.

This trial, the first to begin at the Special Court, opened on 3 June 2004. All three defendants face eight-count indictments alleging war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law. All the accused have pleaded not guilty to the charges.

The Prosecution closed its case on 14 July 2005.

Twenty-eight witnesses appeared for First Accused Sam Hinga Norman, including Mr Norman himself, who testified on his own behalf.

Four of Mr Norman's witnesses are termed "common" witnesses, meaning that they were called by more than one of the accused. Two of these testified for all three defendants, while two others were called by counsel for Mr Fofana.

Counsel for Mr Norman concluded their case on 15 September.

In addition to the "common witnesses", Counsel representing Mr Fofana called an additional seven persons to testify, including one expert. They rested their case on 10 October. Counsel for Mr Kondewa called nine more witnesses. That case was concluded on 18 October.

The Trial Chamber has scheduled closing arguments for 28 November.

Meanwhile, in the trial of three accused former RUF leaders, Judges of Trial Chamber I heard oral arguments this week on Defence Motions for Judgment of Acquittal. Oral decisions on these motions are scheduled for 25 October.

In the trial of three accused former members of the AFRC, Judges of Trial Chamber II are continuing to hear testimony from Defence witnesses. That trial has reached an advanced stage.

The case of The Prosecutor vs. Charles Ghankay Taylor, which is being conducted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone at The Hague, is still in the pre-trial phase and is tentatively scheduled to begin on 2 April 2007.

#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. Ten indictees are currently in the custody of the Court.