



Special Court for Sierra Leone
Press and Public Affairs Office

PRESS RELEASE

Freetown, Sierra Leone, 28 March 2007

Autopsy Shows Sam Hinga Norman Died of Natural Causes

An autopsy to determine the cause of death last month of Special Court indictee Sam Hinga Norman showed he died of natural causes.

According to the autopsy report, Mr. Norman “died of natural causes from a myocardial infarction”. The report was finalised this week after receipt of the results of toxicology tests.

The autopsy was conducted on March 5 by a four-member team of pathologists and medical experts led by Prof. Mendes of Senegal. One of the experts was selected by the Special Court, and one by the Government of Sierra Leone.

Former Vice President Dr. Albert Joe Demby, a medical doctor, observed the autopsy on behalf of the Norman family. Dr. Donald Harding, the Special Court’s Medical Officer, also attended as an observer.

In January, Mr. Norman was taken to Hôpital Aristide Le Dantec, a military hospital in Dakar, Senegal, for a routine medical procedure which was not available in Sierra Leone. The procedure was performed successfully on February 8. On February 22, Mr. Norman collapsed in his hospital room. Doctors tried unsuccessfully to revive him.

On February 22, former Special Court Registrar Lovemore Munlo SC, ordered an inquest to determine the cause of Mr. Norman’s death.

A separate inquiry into the circumstances surrounding his death was ordered by the President of the Special Court, Justice George Gelaga-King. That inquiry is being conducted by Justice Renate Winter of Austria.

A second indictee, Issa Hassan Sesay, also received medical treatment in Dakar on the same day. Mr. Sesay was returned to Freetown on March 1 and is in good health.

A copy of the autopsy report was sent to the Norman family. The results of the toxicology tests will now be made available to the family.

#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.

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Produced by the
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