



Special Court for Sierra Leone
Press and Public Affairs Office

PRESS RELEASE

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Special Court Convenes International Conference to Consider Residual Issues

The Special Court is convening an international conference this week to consider “residual issues” that will need to be addressed after the Court ends its judicial activities and physically closes down.

On February 20 and 21, Special Court officials and members of the Special Court’s Management Committee will be joined in Freetown by UN Security Council representatives, Sierra Leone government officials, diplomats, legal experts, human rights workers, and members of civil society from Sierra Leone and around the world.

The conference will be opened by the President of Sierra Leone, H.E. Ernest Bai Koroma. Delegates will be welcomed by Hon. Justice George Gelaga King, the President of the Special Court. It will be co-chaired by the Government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations, and was made possible by a financial contribution from the Government of Canada.

Questions the conference will consider include identifying a specific mechanism to prosecute indictee Johnny Paul Koroma should he surface after the lifespan of the Court. Mr. Koroma’s whereabouts are unknown, and it is not known whether he is still alive.

The conference will also consider issues arising from the enforcement of sentences, how requests for a review of a judgement would be handled, and how witnesses who testified before the Special Court will be protected after the Court closes. Delegates will discuss matters relating to Special Court’s archives.

“This is the first time such a conference has been convened by international court to find solutions to these problems,” said Special Court Registrar Herman von Hebel. “It is taking place here in Sierra Leone because the Special Court is closer to completing its mandate than are the other tribunals,”

He noted that among the experts attending this week’s conference are officials from the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), and the International Criminal Court (ICC).

“The issues we deal with here will eventually confront every international court as it ends its work,” Mr. von Hebel said. “This conference therefore marks a significant milestone in international justice.”

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