



Special Court for Sierra Leone
Outreach and Public Affairs Office

PRESS RELEASE

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Testimony Ends in RUF Trial; Last Witness Testifies in Freetown

The Defence concluded their case late Tuesday in the trial of three former leaders of Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front (RUF). An Expert Witness, called jointly by counsel for First Accused Issa Sesay and Third Accused Augustine Gbao, was the last witness to testify in the RUF trial and also before the Court in Freetown, as the Special Court for Sierra Leone takes a significant step forward in completing its mandate.

The trial of The Prosecutor vs. Issa Hassan Sesay, Morris Kallon and Augustine Gbao opened in Freetown on 5 July 2004. The Judges of Trial Chamber I heard testimony from 86 witnesses during the Prosecution case, including one called at the behest of the Defence. 85 witnesses were called by the Defence. Of the 85 Defence witnesses, 59 witnesses were called by counsel for Sesay, while counsel for Kallon called 22 witnesses, and counsel for Gbao called eight witnesses. Three of the witnesses were common to Sesay and Kallon, and one was common to Sesay and Gbao.

Final trial briefs are due by 29 July 2008 and oral arguments will take place on 4-5 August, prior to the Court's judicial recess. The Judges will then retire for deliberations. A trial judgment in the case is expected later this year.

Two other cases were concluded at the Special Court earlier this year. On 22 February 2008 the Appeals Chamber rendered its judgment in the case of three former leaders of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council. On 28 May 2008 the Appeals Chamber handed down its judgment in the case of two former Civil Defence Forces leaders.

The Special Court trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor continues at The Hague.

#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.

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