



## Special Court for Sierra Leone Outreach and Public Affairs Office

# **PRESS RELEASE**

**Freetown, Sierra Leone, 20 March 2009**

### **Special Court Concludes Enforcement Agreement With Rwanda**

Up to eight former Sierra Leonean rebel and militia leaders convicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone could serve their sentences in Rwanda, under the terms of an agreement signed in Kigali on Wednesday between the Special Court and the Government of Rwanda.



Special Court Registrar Herman von Hebel with Rwandan Foreign Minister Hon. Rosemary Museminali (left) and Justice Minister Hon. Tharisse Karugarama (right).

The Agreement for the enforcement of sentences pronounced by the Special Court, signed by Special Court Registrar Herman von Hebel and Rwandan Foreign Minister Hon. Rosemary Museminali, marks an important milestone in completing the mandate of the Special Court.

The Agreement provides for up to eight cells at the newly-built Mpanga Prison, an hour and a half outside of the Rwandan capital Kigali. The Dutch government recently financed the construction of a new wing of the prison, comprising 30 cells. The facility was designed to house persons convicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda

(ICTR), which brokered Wednesday's Agreement between the Special Court and the Government of Rwanda.

Following a tour of the Mpanga Prison on Wednesday, Mr. von Hebel described it as "beyond international standards."

Mrs. Museminali and Justice Minister Hon. Tharcisse Karugarama referred to the agreement as a big step towards the implementation of the rule of law in Africa and the restoration of justice in countries such as Rwanda and Sierra Leone, where horrendous crimes have been committed.

Eight persons have been convicted by the two Trial Chambers of the Special Court. Five prisoners have so far been sentenced to terms ranging from 15 to 50 years, and three more are awaiting sentencing in Freetown.

The Registrar is continuing to seek additional enforcement agreements.

#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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