



Special Court for Sierra Leone
Outreach and Public Affairs Office

PRESS RELEASE

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Eric Koi Senessie Sentenced to Two Years in Prison for Contempt of the Special Court



Former Revolutionary United Front member Eric Koi Senessie was sentenced today to a two year term of imprisonment for his conviction last month on eight counts of contempt of the Special Court. Senessie was convicted on four counts of offering a bribe to a witness, and on four counts of attempting to influence a witness, to recant testimony given in the Taylor trial.

Justice Teresa Doherty imposed eight two-year sentences for each of the eight counts on which Senessie was convicted. The sentences will run concurrently, meaning that he will serve a total of two years in prison.

Under the Rules of the Special Court, Senessie faced a maximum sentence of seven years imprisonment, a two million leones fine, or both.

In their sentencing briefs, the Prosecution had recommended a sentence of 5-7 years and a two million leone fine, while the Defence had recommended a two million leones fine and no custodial sentence.

In delivering her judgement, Justice Doherty pointed to a number of aggravating factors, and noted especially the number of offences and the persistence of the defendant which, in her view, warranted sentences of imprisonment. She said, however, that she had also taken into account Senessie's expression of remorse when he addressed the Court on Wednesday.

"I accept that Senessie has now realized the errors of his ways, and it is commendable even at this late hour he has acknowledged his offences and shown sincere remorse," she said. "I have allowed for the remorse that the defendant has shown. In his own words, with which I agree, 'it is better late than never'."

Senessie will serve his sentence at a detention facility on the Special Court premises in Freetown.

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