



Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone Public Information

PRESS RELEASE

Freetown, Sierra Leone, 15 May 2021

Statement by RSCSL President Jon Kamanda on the Death of Justice Rosolu John Bankole Thompson

“It is with great sadness that I report the death of Justice Thompson, who passed away today at the Choithram Hospital in Freetown after a short illness.”



“I have conveyed to Justice Thompson’s family and colleagues my profound sympathy on behalf of the Judges, the Oversight Committee, and the principals and staff of the Court”.

Registrar Binta Mansaray recalled Justice Thompson’s contributions to the Court during his time there, and after the Court’s closure. “With the passing of Justice Thompson, we have lost a great colleague, a jurist committed to the rule of law, and a great Sierra Leonean who saw the court and its legacy as key to restoring the rule of law in Sierra Leone after more than a decade of civil war. His colleagues and staff of the RSCSL will miss him greatly. May his soul rest in perfect peace”.

Justice Thompson was one of the first judges to join the Special Court in December 2002. As a Judge of Trial Chamber I, he sat on the trials of leaders of the Civil Defence Forces and of the Revolutionary United Front. In December 2013, he was sworn in as a roster judge of the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Justice Thompson was called to the England Bar in 1971. His distinguished career included serving as a Judge of the Sierra Leone High Court from 1981 to 1987, and Professor in the Department of Criminal Justice and Police Studies at Eastern Kentucky University in the United States, where he was also Dean of Graduate Studies. In 1987 he was David Brennan Endowed Professor in Comparative Constitutional Law at Akron University. More recently, he headed a Commission of Inquiry for the Government of Sierra Leone.

Prosecutor Jim Johnson said of Justice Thompson, “We mourn the passing of a fine gentleman, a true believer in the rule of law and international justice. His passing will be a great loss to his colleagues and to the people of Sierra Leone”.

Principal Defender Ibahim Yillah said the world had lost a gentleman and jurist of great standing “who fought during his time at the Special Court for fairness in the judicial process and the rule of law”.

#END

The Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone is responsible for the ongoing legal obligations of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, which concluded its mandate in December 2013. These include supervision of prison sentences, witness protection and support, maintenance and preservation of the archives, and assistance to national prosecution authorities.

Produced by the
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