

Special Court for Sierra Leone
The Office of the Prosecutor

PRESS RELEASE

Freetown, Sierra Leone, 5 May 2003

"This is your Court:" Prosecutor Addresses FBC Students

Speaking to an audience in the University's Mary Kingsley Auditorium, the Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, David M. Crane, called on students from Fourah Bay College to educate themselves about the Court and join the national dialogue on the importance of justice and the rule of law in post-conflict Sierra Leone.

Crane stressed the importance of the active participation of Sierra Leoneans in the operation and support of the Court. He indicated that 38% of his professional staff are drawn from within the country, including six of his attorneys. "You should all be proud of the fine work they are doing. We could not do it without them... Together, we are doing our best to represent you faithfully in the execution of our mandate."

Crane took the opportunity to again call on Charles Taylor, President of Liberia, to arrest and surrender wanted indictees, Sam Bockarie and Johnny Paul Koroma, to the Court. "Time is running out. He knows where they are. The world is watching to see if he is truly committed to peace and security in the region."

Following Crane's remarks, the group had a lively discussion moderated by Dean D.T. Ashley. In response to a question regarding the indictment of Samuel Hinga Norman, Crane answered, "We don't indict people just because we don't like them. Indictments are based on fact and we follow the evidence wherever it leads. We have more than enough evidence to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Mr. Norman is guilty of the crimes alleged in the indictment." The indictment can be found on the Court's website, www.sc-sl.org.

One student asked how they could support the Court. Crane said he was encouraged by the level of open debate surrounding the Court over the past few weeks and urged students to follow the Court's work. "This is your Court. I encourage you to watch the trials closely. This is a truly historic moment, not just for your country, but for all of West Africa. Together, we will send a signal, regionally and internationally, that impunity for gross violations of human rights will no longer stand in Sierra Leone."

Crane's lecture was part of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law's Fourth Annual Faculty Week celebrations. Founded in 1827, it is one of sub-saharan Africa's oldest and most prestigious institutions of higher learning. It is currently celebrating its 175th anniversary.

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