

Special Court for Sierra Leone
The Office of the Prosecutor

PRESS RELEASE

Freetown, Sierra Leone, 17 May 2004

Prosecutor Welcomes Arraignment of RUF and AFRC Indictees on Charges Related to Forced Marriage

Prosecutor David M. Crane welcomed today's arraignment of RUF and AFRC indictees on new charges of "other inhumane acts" relating to forced marriage, which the Trial Chamber approved ten days ago. Issa Sesay, Morris Kallon and Augustine Gbao of the RUF, and Alex Tamba Brima, Brima Bazy Kamara and Santigie Borbor Kanu of the AFRC, were in court today to enter pleas to the new charges.

"These additional charges of crimes against humanity reflect the fact that women and girls suffered greatly during the war, including through widespread forced marriage," said Mr Crane. "The Office of the Prosecutor is committed to telling the world what happened in Sierra Leone during the war, and gender crimes have been at the core of our cases from the beginning. These new charges recognise another way that women and girls suffered during the conflict."

At the Special Court for Sierra Leone, acts of forced marriage will be prosecuted as an "inhumane act" -- a crime against humanity -- for the first time in the history of international law.

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