

Special Court for Sierra Leone  
The Office of the Prosecutor

PRESS RELEASE

Freetown, Sierra Leone, 1 June 2003

**Special Court Takes Custody of Alleged Body of Indicted War Criminal**

Officials from the Special Court took into custody the alleged body of indicted war criminal Sam Bockarie early this afternoon. The release of the body comes after weeks of diplomatic pressure on the Government of Liberia prior to upcoming peace talks to be held in Ghana. The Court will commence an independent forensic examination starting Monday in an effort to identify the body and determine the cause of death.

Liberian authorities claim Bockarie was killed on May 6 during an alleged arrest attempt by government forces. Last week, they revised their story and announced that Bockarie was plotting a coup attempt against the Taylor regime. For the past three weeks, they have refused to transfer the remains to the Court for an independent forensic examination in order to provide positive identification.

The Chief Prosecutor, David M. Crane, promised that the truth would be uncovered in due time. "The people of Sierra Leone deserve to know whether Bockarie is dead, and if so, in what manner he died. Given their tactics of delay and obstruction, I seriously doubt the veracity of the account being offered by Liberian authorities."

Crane again called for Liberians to arrest and transfer indicted war criminal Johnny Paul Koroma to the Court. "If there is to be any lasting peace and security in the region, Koroma must have his day in Court. We want him delivered alive so he can answer for the serious charges against him. We know he is in Liberia under the protection of Charles Taylor."

Earlier this week, the Court indicted and arrested Brima "Bazzy" Kamara, a former senior commander in Koroma's junta, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC).

Bockarie and Koroma, indicted by the Court on March 7, 2003, are wanted for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law.

The Special Court, created through an international agreement between the United Nations and Sierra Leone, is mandated to try those who bear "the greatest responsibility" for atrocities committed during the country's decade-long civil war.

#END

INFORMATION FOR MEDIA - NOT FOR ADVERTISING