

Special Court for Sierra Leone
Press and Public Affairs Office

PRESS RELEASE

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Brima and Kallon Plead Not Guilty

During a second day of pre-trial hearings, two of the seven men indicted by the Special Court pleaded not guilty. The hearings were held in a district court house in Bonthe as the Special Court's permanent site in Freetown is still under construction.

Alex Tamba Brima, an alleged commander in the Sierra Leone army, and Morris Kallon, an alleged commander in the rebel Revolutionary United Front (RUF) face the same seventeen counts. The charges against them include murder, rape, extermination, acts of terror, enslavement, looting and burning, sexual slavery, conscription of children into an armed force, and attacks on UNAMSIL peacekeepers and humanitarian workers.

A recorded translation of their indictments had been provided to them before their hearings. However, the Judge, Benjamin M. Itoe of Cameroon, asked that the fourteen-page document be translated again during each of their hearings.

Kallon listened carefully as the counts were read out to him. At the end of each one he said 'not guilty'. In the Brima hearing, even before entering his not guilty plea, Brima often shook his head denying the charges being read out against him.

Brima said he did not require legal assistance to mount a defence as he expects his family to provide the necessary support. Kallon, however, did request legal assistance.

The hearings began last Saturday with alleged RUF leader Foday Saybana Sankoh and RUF commander Issa Hassan Sesay. Sesay pleaded not guilty; Sankoh did not respond verbally throughout his hearing. The Judge ordered that Sankoh undergo a psychiatric and medical evaluation. His hearing will resume this Friday.

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