

Special Court for Sierra Leone
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PRESS RELEASE

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Forensic Expert Begins Examination of Mass Graves

William D. Haglund is a forensic anthropologist. He exhumes remains of human beings to determine how they died and who they were. He has been in Sierra Leone for the last month for the Office of the Prosecutor of the Special Court reviewing existing data on potential gravesites and inspecting actual sites in locations throughout the country.

Dr Haglund is the Director of the Boston-based International Forensic Program for Physicians for Human Rights. He has investigated cases of potential human rights abuses, mass murder and genocide around the world. He has served as the United Nations' Senior Forensic Advisor for the International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda and the Former Yugoslavia. Recently he headed a forensic team in Afghanistan that found a mass grave containing the bodies of Taliban detainees of the Northern Alliance.

Dr Haglund's initial assessment in Sierra Leone indicates that atrocities took place systematically over the last several years. He will now advise investigators at the Office of the Prosecutor on the resources and expertise they need to recover and examine the human remains and associated evidence the Prosecutor needs to develop his cases. "The remains of the dead victims of the atrocities that were committed here are waiting in mining pits, water wells and latrines for their story to be told," he said. "Their bones retain the scars of their deaths. They do not lie. Forensic evidence will allow them to be witnesses to the atrocities that were committed against them."

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