



## Special Court for Sierra Leone

### Press and Public Affairs Office

# **PRESS RELEASE**

**Freetown, Sierra Leone, 19 June 2006**

### **Justice Thompson Elected Presiding Judge of Trial Chamber I**

Justice Bankole Thompson of Sierra Leone has been elected to a one-year term as Presiding Judge of Trial Chamber I. He succeeds Justice Pierre Boutet of Canada.



Justice Thompson, who begins his term on Monday, 19 June, becomes the first Special Court Judge to sit as Presiding Judge a second time. He also served as Presiding Judge of Trial Chamber I from 2003 to 2004.

Before his appointment to the Special Court in December 2002, Justice Thompson was Dean of the Graduate School at Eastern Kentucky University. He is currently on a leave of absence as Professor of Criminal Justice.

Previously, he was Associate Professor of Criminal Justice at Kent State University.

Justice Thompson holds the degree of MA, LLB and Ph.D (Law) from the University of Cambridge, England, and also an MA in Philosophy from Durham University.

He first served as counsel in his native Sierra Leone from 1971 to 1977, rising to the rank of Principal State Counsel in the Law Officers' Department, and then Judge of the High Court of Sierra Leone. During that time he was a Founder-Member of the country's Law Reform Commission. He also served as Legal Officer for the Mano River Union, West Africa, from 1978 to 1981.

His specialities are comparative constitutional law, comparative law, and international criminal law. He was the first African to hold the David Brennan Endowed Chair of Comparative Constitutional Law at the Akron School of Law in Ohio, U.S.A. He has to his credit several articles, book chapters, and two recently-published books, The Constitutional History and Law of Sierra Leone (1961-1995) and The Criminal Law of Sierra Leone.

#END

The Special Court is an independent tribunal established jointly by the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone. It is mandated to bring to justice those who bear the greatest responsibility for atrocities committed in Sierra Leone after 30 November 1996. To date, the Prosecutor has indicted eleven persons on various charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law. Ten indictees are currently in the custody of the Court.

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