

**SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTOR**

PRESS RELEASE

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PROSECUTOR WELCOMES CONVICTIONS IN RUF APPEALS JUDGEMENT

The Acting Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Joseph Kamara, today welcomed the final convictions of three leaders of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). The trial convictions of the RUF leaders were upheld by the SCSL Appeals Chamber, with Issa Sesay and Morris Kallon convicted on 16 counts and Augustine Gbao was convicted on 13 counts of an 18-count Indictment charging them with atrocities committed during Sierra Leone's civil war.

"Today's Appeals judgement is a final condemnation of one of the most brutal and notorious rebel groups in modern times," said Kamara. "The suffering inflicted by the RUF on the people of this country is beyond words."

"With the end of this trial, there is now a final recognition of their crimes. And there is a strong measure of justice and accountability for their victims – the families of those who were slaughtered, the women who were raped, the children forced to fight and kill, the many thousands who were mutilated and terrorized."

The Appeals Judgement upheld nearly all the conviction counts of the Trial Chamber's February 2009 ruling, including that the RUF had committed 'acts of terrorism' against the civilian population. "During the Sierra Leone civil war, it was more dangerous to be a civilian than a soldier," said Kamara. "This judgement sends a signal that such tactics of warfare will not go unpunished. It may act as a deterrent against those who would use this strategy to further their own aims at the expense of the innocent."

The Appeals Chamber also upheld two new international precedents from the trial judgement. The convictions of all three Accused were upheld for the crimes of 'forced marriage' and of 'attacks on peacekeepers.'

With today's judgement, trial proceedings of the Special Court in Freetown are now complete. The Court has now delivered final judgements against the Accused in all of its Freetown-based trials, with eight Accused persons convicted.

In its three Freetown trials, the SCSL has expanded jurisdiction for international crimes with the achievement of numerous "firsts" in international justice. In addition to the RUF convictions on forced marriage and attacks on peacekeepers, these include being the first court to recognize and pronounce convictions for the crimes of the use child soldiers and of sexual slavery.

The one remaining SCSL trial is that of former Liberian President, Charles Taylor, which is ongoing in The Hague, where it was moved for security reasons. The Accused has been testifying in his own defence since 14 July. It is expected that the Prosecution's cross-examination of Taylor will begin within the next few weeks.

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Produced by the
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