

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
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Special Court Calls for Students to Take a Lead in Human Rights



Registrar Robin Vincent

Top officials of the Special Court for Sierra Leone called on students and faculty of Fourah Bay College to lead the march into a new era of accountability and human rights in Sierra Leone. Speaking to an animated audience in the University's Mary Kingsley Auditorium for International Human Rights Day, the Registrar Robin Vincent and the Prosecutor David Crane commended the level of excellence coming out of the institution and said that students can play an important role in bringing justice and peace.

Vincent and Crane asked the students to support both the work of the Special Court and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. More than a hundred attended the meeting; many participating in the lively discussion.

Some students asked questions relating to temporal jurisdiction of the Court, which can only try people for crimes committed after November 1996. Others wanted to know how the

Court can bring to justice those who are currently outside of Sierra Leone.

Several students asked the Registrar about his plans to provide indictees with a defence. "I will ensure that defendants have competent legal counsel," he said. "For the Special Court to be a success, my duty as the Registrar is to ensure that these trials are fair and credible," He added that in recent weeks he has begun to shift the focus of the Registry from building up the prosecution to building up the judiciary and defence.

Vincent and Crane commended the students and staff for their tireless efforts under difficult conditions. The university remained open throughout the decade of conflict. Founded in 1827, it is one of sub-saharan Africa's oldest and most prestigious institutions of higher learning.

Tuesday's meeting was sponsored by Fourah Bay College's Human Rights Clinic and came on the heels of a lecture the week before by the President of the Special Court Judge Geoffrey Robertson QC on the history of international criminal law. #END

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