



Special Court for Sierra Leone Outreach and Public Affairs Office

PRESS RELEASE

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Special Court Hands Over Detention Facility to Government of Sierra Leone



Acting Registrar Binta Mansaray hands over the key to the Detention facility to Attorney-General and Minister of Justice Abdul Serry-Kamal

The Special Court for Sierra Leone today handed over its detention facility to the Sierra Leone Prison Service. The ceremony, which was opened by Special Court President Justice Jon Kamanda, marks a significant milestone in the completion of the Court's mandate in Freetown.

The site now returns to the Sierra Leone Prison Service, where it will be used to house female prisoners.

“We are handing over a facility that meets international standards, which we believe the Sierra Leone government can utilize at any time they require a facility of maximum security or for other vulnerable groups,” said Acting Registrar Binta Mansaray in handing over the keys to Attorney-General and Minister of Justice Abdul Serry-Kamal.

Mr. Serry-Kamal immediately handed the keys to Moses Showers, the Director of Prisons.



Prisons Director Moses Showers

Mr. Showers stressed the needs of females prisoners which, he said, the new facility will provide.

“Females prisoners all over the world are a marginalized lot, Sierra Leone not being an exception,” he said. “Emphasis is usually placed for male inmates, and facilities provided for detention centres are usually concentrated for the development and welfare of male inmates.”

The detention facility site was previously operated by the Prisons Service as a facility for short-term convicts. The Special Court for Sierra Leone refurbished the two existing prison blocks, and in August 2003 transferred indictees from the temporary Bonthe Island facility.

Last month, the prisoners held at the Special Court were transferred to Rwanda to serve their sentences.

Today's event was attended by Sierra Leone's Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, the Chief Justice, the Chief of Defence Staff, and the Director of the Sierra Leone Prison Service, along with diplomats, Special Court staff, members of Civil Society, and journalists.

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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.

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