

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE  
OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTOR

## **PRESS RELEASE**

Freetown, 28 February 2005

### **Special Court Prosecutor to Step Down**

Today David M. Crane, Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, notified the Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, by letter that he would not seek reappointment and will leave his position effective 15 July 2005.

Appointed in April 2002, Mr Crane assumed his duties as Prosecutor on 15 July 2002, with the mandate of prosecuting those who bore the greatest responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity during the civil war in Sierra Leone in the 1990's. Arriving in August of 2002, Mr Crane began his investigations which culminated in the first set of indictments being issued seven months later. Six of the eight indictees were arrested in Operation Justice on 10 March 2003 in Sierra Leone. Since then there have been five other indictments issued for a total to date of thirteen. Nine of these indictees are in custody and being tried in three joint criminal trials. The investigations continue.

Following Mr Crane's indictment of then-President Charles Taylor of Liberia, Taylor fled to Calabar, Nigeria. Taylor, indicted on seventeen counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, is only the second head of state in history, and the first African, ever to be indicted for war crimes.

Mr Crane told the Secretary General that he hoped he could serve mankind and the United Nations in another capacity someday. By statute only the Secretary General can appoint a Prosecutor for the Special Court.

Mr Crane is known for his town hall meetings where he frequently met with the people of Sierra Leone to talk about the Court and listen to their questions and concerns about justice in Sierra Leone. He travelled throughout the countryside. Mr Crane always told the citizens of Sierra Leone that the law is fair, that no one is above the law, and that the rule of the law is more powerful than the rule of the gun.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone is the world's first hybrid international war crimes tribunal, and was established by an agreement in January 2002 between the United Nations and the Republic of Sierra Leone. It is headquartered in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

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