Special Court for Sierra Leone
Outreach and Public Affairs Office

PRESS RELEASE

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Former RUF Leaders Found Guilty of War Crimes, Crimes Against Humanity

Three former leaders of Sierra Leone's rebel Revolutionary United Front were found guilty today of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the country's decade-long civil war. Former RUF Interim Leader Issa Hassan Sesay and RUF commander Morris Kallon were each found guilty on 16 of the 18 counts in the indictment. Former RUF Chief of Security Augustine Gbao was found guilty on 14 counts.

Presiding Judge Justice Pierre Boutet of Canada reads out the judgment in court.

The Court found all three accused not guilty on count 16 (murder, a crime against humanity) and count 18 (the taking of hostages) in connection with the May 2000 abduction of United Nations peacekeepers. In addition, Gbao was found not guilty on count 12 (conscripting of child soldiers), and count 17 (murder, a war crime) in relation to the abduction of peacekeepers.

The Trial Chamber concluded that the three were not responsible for crimes committed in three districts and the Western Area. This included the bloody January 1999 attack on Freetown which left over 5,000 dead.

A sentencing judgment will take place in the coming weeks.

#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.

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