Special Court for Sierra Leone
Outreach and Public Affairs Office

PRESS RELEASE

Freetown, Sierra Leone, 4 June 2012

Justice Fisher Elected President of the Special Court

Justice Shireen Avis Fisher of the United States has been elected to a one-year term as Presiding Judge of the Appeals Chamber, a post which makes her President of the Special Court for Sierra Leone. She succeeds Justice Jon Kamanda of Sierra Leone, who has served as President since 2009.

Justice Emmanuel Ayoola of Nigeria was re-elected to a third term as Vice President. Justice Ayoola previously served as President of the Special Court from 2004-2005. He has also served as Staff Appeals Judge of the court since 2009 and will remain in the position for another year.

Immediately prior to her appointment to the Special Court in May 2009, Justice Fisher was a Commissioner on the Kosovo Independent Judicial and Prosecutorial Commission. From 2005 to 2008, Justice Fisher served as an International Judge of the War Crimes Chamber, Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The cases adjudicated by Justice Fisher at the Bosnia War Crimes Chamber included convictions for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. During her time at the Bosnia War Crimes Chamber, Justice Fisher developed the court rules for victim and witness judicial protection measures. Justice Fisher also established the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina Advanced Judicial Education Program.

Since 1986 she has also served as a Judge of General Jurisdiction Trial Courts in the U.S. state of Vermont, currently with Active-Retired Status. Justice Fisher began her legal career as a Public Defender in Vermont and founded her own litigation law firm.

She was called to the Bar in 1976.

Justice Fisher received her *Juris Doctor* from the Columbus School of Law, Catholic University of America, in 1976 and an LLM in International Human Rights Law from University College London in 2001.

She has written and lectured extensively on public and private international law in the United States, Europe and Africa.

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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.