

UNITED NATIONS



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UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SIERRA LEONE
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**ACTING SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE WITNESSES THE
SWEARING-IN OF SPECIAL COURT JUDGES**



Freetown – The establishment of the Special Court for Sierra Leone is the first step on the path to combating impunity and addressing accountability for the serious crimes committed in Sierra Leone that have shocked the conscience of mankind, the Acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Sierra Leone, Mr. Behrooz Sadry said today.

Addressing hundreds of people who had gathered in Freetown to witness the swearing-in ceremony of eight judges of the Special Court, Mr. Sadry, who was representing the United Nations Secretary-General at the occasion, said the setting up of the Court was also another testimony to the fact that UN members have come to realize the necessity of addressing impunity. He pledged “fullest co-operation and assistance” from the United Nations Secretary-General and that the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) would “continue to provide whatever assistance it can consistent with its mandate to enable the Special Court to fulfill its functions.”

In his speech, the Acting Special Representative gave a brief background of the formation of the Court and also alluded to the importance of Truth and Reconciliation Commission which he said was another institution also tasked to address impunity; respond to the needs of the victims; promote healing and reconciliation; and prevent a repetition of the violations and abuses suffered. He stated that the two institutions “must be seen as complementary to each other.”

Mr. Sadry reminded the judges that “in discharging your responsibilities, you as the Judges of the Special Court for Sierra Leone offer hope to future generations, not only of this country but also to the rest of the world that no more may deeds which offend the conscience of humankind go unpunished, a hope that human rights may be truly universal and that, in the affairs of men and women of all nations, the rule of law may prevail.”

The eight judges were sworn in by the Court’s Registrar, Mr. Robin Vincent, with Mr. Sadry and Sierra Leone’s Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, Eke Halloway, signing the sworn statements as witnesses. The judges sworn-in were Judge Emmanuel O. Ayoola (Nigeria), Judge Pierre Boutet (Canada), Judge Benjamin M. Itoe (Cameroon), Judge Hassan B. Jallow (The Gambia), Judge George Gelaga King and

Judge Rosolu John Bankole Thompson (Sierra Leone) Judge Geoffrey Robertson (England) and Judge Renate Winter (Austria). Also present to witness the occasion were President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah and Vice President Solomon Berewa, several cabinet ministers and members of the diplomatic corps.

In his congratulatory message, Mr. Halloway described the ceremony as an “occasion of solemnity and joy” that constituted a turning point in the history of Sierra Leone. He welcomed the commitment of the international community in assisting Sierra Leone to establish the Court. Describing the Special Court and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as “the twin pillars of accountability and justice,” the minister said the country needed both institutions. He appealed to Sierra Leoneans to show the world that “we are committed to the rule of law.”