

AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE

WHEREAS the Security Council, in its resolution 1315 (2000) of 14 August 2000, expressed deep concern at the very serious crimes committed within the territory of Sierra Leone against the people of Sierra Leone and United Nations and associated personnel and at the prevailing situation of impunity;

WHEREAS by the said resolution, the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to negotiate an agreement with the Government of Sierra Leone to create an independent special court to prosecute persons who bear the greatest responsibility for the commission of serious violations of international humanitarian law and crimes committed under Sierra Leonean law;

WHEREAS the Secretary-General of the United Nations (hereinafter "the Secretary-General") and the Government of Sierra Leone (hereinafter "the Government") have held such negotiations for the establishment of a Special Court for Sierra Leone (hereinafter "the Special Court");

NOW THEREFORE the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone have agreed as follows:

Article 1 Establishment of the Special Court

1. There is hereby established a Special Court for Sierra Leone to prosecute persons who bear the greatest responsibility for serious violations of international humanitarian law and Sierra Leonean law committed in the territory of Sierra Leone since 30 November 1996.
2. The Special Court shall function in accordance with the Statute of the Special Court for Sierra Leone. The Statute is annexed to this Agreement and forms an integral part thereof.

Article 2 Composition of the Special Court and appointment of judges

1. The Special Court shall be composed of a Trial Chamber and an Appeals Chamber with a second Trial Chamber to be created if, after the passage of at least six months from the commencement of the functioning of the Special Court, the Secretary-General, or the President of the Special Court so request. Up to two alternate judges shall similarly be appointed after six months if the President of the Special Court so determines.
2. The Chambers shall be composed of no fewer than eight independent judges and no more than eleven such judges who shall serve as follows:
 - (a) Three judges shall serve in the Trial Chamber where one shall be appointed by the Government of Sierra Leone and two judges appointed by the Secretary-General, upon nominations forwarded by States, and in particular the member States of the Economic Community of West African States and the Commonwealth, at the invitation of the Secretary-General;
 - (b) In the event of the creation of a second Trial Chamber, that Chamber shall be likewise composed in the manner contained in subparagraph (a) above;

(c) Five judges shall serve in the Appeals Chamber, of whom two shall be appointed by the Government of Sierra Leone and three judges shall be appointed by the Secretary-General upon nominations forwarded by States, and in particular the member States of the Economic Community of West African States and the Commonwealth, at the invitation of the Secretary-General.

3. The Government of Sierra Leone and the Secretary-General shall consult on the appointment of judges.

4. Judges shall be appointed for a three-year term and shall be eligible for re-appointment.

5. If, at the request of the President of the Special Court, an alternate judge or judges have been appointed by the Government of Sierra Leone or the Secretary-General, the presiding judge of a Trial Chamber or the Appeals Chamber shall designate such an alternate judge to be present at each stage of the trial and to replace a judge if that judge is unable to continue sitting.

Article 3

Appointment of a Prosecutor and a Deputy Prosecutor

1. The Secretary-General, after consultation with the Government of Sierra Leone, shall appoint a Prosecutor for a three-year term. The Prosecutor shall be eligible for reappointment.

2. The Government of Sierra Leone, in consultation with the Secretary-General and the Prosecutor, shall appoint a Sierra Leonean Deputy Prosecutor to assist the Prosecutor in the conduct of the investigations and prosecutions.

3. The Prosecutor and the Deputy Prosecutor shall be of high moral character and possess the highest level of professional competence and extensive experience in the conduct of investigations and prosecutions of criminal cases. The Prosecutor and the Deputy Prosecutor shall be independent in the performance of their functions and shall not accept or seek instructions from any Government or any other source.

4. The Prosecutor shall be assisted by such Sierra Leonean and international staff as may be required to perform the functions assigned to him or her effectively and efficiently.

Article 4

Appointment of a Registrar

1. The Secretary-General, in consultation with the President of the Special Court, shall appoint a Registrar who shall be responsible for the servicing of the Chambers and the Office of the Prosecutor, and for the recruitment and administration of all support staff. He or she shall also administer the financial and staff resources of the Special Court.

2. The Registrar shall be a staff member of the United Nations. He or she shall serve a three-year term and shall be eligible for re-appointment.

Article 5

Premises

The Government shall assist in the provision of premises for the Special Court and such utilities, facilities and other services as may be necessary for its operation.

Article 6

Expenses of the Special Court

The expenses of the Special Court shall be borne by voluntary contributions from the international community. It is understood that the Secretary-General will commence the process of establishing the Court when he has sufficient contributions in hand to finance the establishment of the Court and 12 months of its operations plus pledges equal to the anticipated expenses of the following 24 months of the Court's operation. It is further understood that the Secretary-General will continue to seek contributions equal to the anticipated expenses of the Court beyond its first three years of operation. Should voluntary contributions be insufficient for the Court to implement its mandate, the Secretary-General and the Security Council shall explore alternate means of financing the Special Court.

Article 7

Management Committee

It is the understanding of the Parties that interested States will establish a management committee to assist the Secretary-General in obtaining adequate funding, and provide advice and policy direction on all non-judicial aspects of the operation of the Court, including questions of efficiency, and to perform other functions as agreed by interested States. The management committee shall consist of important contributors to the Special Court. The Government of Sierra Leone and the Secretary-General will also participate in the management committee.

Article 8

Inviolability of premises, archives and all other documents

1. The premises of the Special Court shall be inviolable. The competent authorities shall take appropriate action that may be necessary to ensure that the Special Court shall not be dispossessed of all or any part of the premises of the Court without its express consent.
2. The property, funds and assets of the Special Court, wherever located and by whomsoever held, shall be immune from search, seizure, requisition, confiscation, expropriation and any other form of interference, whether by executive, administrative, judicial or legislative action.
3. The archives of the Court, and in general all documents and materials made available, belonging to or used by it, wherever located and by whomsoever held, shall be inviolable.

Article 9

Funds, assets and other property

1. The Special Court, its funds, assets and other property, wherever located and by whomsoever held, shall enjoy immunity from every form of legal process, except insofar as in any particular case the Court has expressly waived its immunity. It is understood, however, that no waiver of immunity shall extend to any measure of execution.
2. Without being restricted by financial controls, regulations or moratoriums of any kind, the Special Court:
 - (a) May hold and use funds, gold or negotiable instruments of any kind and maintain and operate accounts in any currency and convert any currency held by it into any other currency;
 - (b) Shall be free to transfer its funds, gold or currency from one country to another, or within Sierra Leone, to the United Nations or any other agency.

Article 10

Seat of the Special Court

The Special Court shall have its seat in Sierra Leone. The Court may meet away from its seat if it considers it necessary for the efficient exercise of its functions, and may be relocated outside Sierra Leone, if circumstances so require, and subject to the conclusion of a Headquarters Agreement between the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone, on the one hand, and the Government of the alternative seat, on the other.

Article 11

Juridical capacity

The Special Court shall possess the juridical capacity necessary to:

- (a) Contract;
- (b) Acquire and dispose of movable and immovable property;
- (c) Institute legal proceedings;
- (d) Enter into agreements with States as may be necessary for the exercise of its functions and for the operation of the Court.

Article 12

Privileges and immunities of the judges, the Prosecutor and the Registrar

1. The judges, the Prosecutor and the Registrar, together with their families forming part of their household, shall enjoy the privileges and immunities, exemptions and facilities accorded to diplomatic agents in accordance with the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. They shall, in particular, enjoy:

- (a) Personal inviolability, including immunity from arrest or detention;
- (b) Immunity from criminal, civil and administrative jurisdiction in conformity with the Vienna Convention;
- (c) Inviolability for all papers and documents;
- (d) Exemption, as appropriate, from immigration restrictions and other alien registrations;
- (e) The same immunities and facilities in respect of their personal baggage as are accorded to diplomatic agents by the Vienna Convention;
- (f) Exemption from taxation in Sierra Leone on their salaries, emoluments and allowances.

2. Privileges and immunities are accorded to the judges, the Prosecutor and the Registrar in the interest of the Special Court and not for the personal benefit of the individuals themselves. The right and the duty to waive the immunity, in any case where it can be waived without prejudice to the purpose for which it is accorded, shall lie with the Secretary-General, in consultation with the President.

Article 13

Privileges and immunities of international and Sierra Leonean personnel

1. Sierra Leonean and international personnel of the Special Court shall be accorded:

(a) Immunity from legal process in respect of words spoken or written and all acts performed by them in their official capacity. Such immunity shall continue to be accorded after termination of employment with the Special Court;

(b) Immunity from taxation on salaries, allowances and emoluments paid to them.

2. International personnel shall, in addition thereto, be accorded:

(a) Immunity from immigration restriction;

(b) The right to import free of duties and taxes, except for payment for services, their furniture and effects at the time of first taking up their official duties in Sierra Leone.

3. The privileges and immunities are granted to the officials of the Special Court in the interest of the Court and not for their personal benefit. The right and the duty to waive the immunity in any particular case where it can be waived without prejudice to the purpose for which it is accorded shall lie with the Registrar of the Court.

Article 14

Counsel

1. The Government shall ensure that the counsel of a suspect or an accused who has been admitted as such by the Special Court shall not be subjected to any measure which may affect the free and independent exercise of his or her functions.

2. In particular, the counsel shall be accorded:

(a) Immunity from personal arrest or detention and from seizure of personal baggage;

(b) Inviolability of all documents relating to the exercise of his or her functions as a counsel of a suspect or accused;

(c) Immunity from criminal or civil jurisdiction in respect of words spoken or written and acts performed in his or her capacity as counsel. Such immunity shall continue to be accorded after termination of his or her functions as a counsel of a suspect or accused.

(d) Immunity from any immigration restrictions during his or her stay as well as during his or her journey to the Court and back.

Article 15

Witnesses and experts

Witnesses and experts appearing from outside Sierra Leone on a summons or a request of the judges or the Prosecutor shall not be prosecuted, detained or subjected to any restriction on their liberty by the Sierra Leonean authorities. They shall not be subjected to any measure which may affect the free and independent exercise of their functions. The provisions of article 14, paragraph 2(a) and (d), shall apply to them.

Article 16

Security, safety and protection of persons referred to in this Agreement

Recognizing the responsibility of the Government under international law to ensure the security, safety and protection of persons referred to in this Agreement and its present incapacity to do so

pending the restructuring and rebuilding of its security forces, it is agreed that the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone shall provide the necessary security to premises and personnel of the Special Court, subject to an appropriate mandate by the Security Council and within its capabilities.

Article 17

Cooperation with the Special Court

1. The Government shall cooperate with all organs of the Special Court at all stages of the proceedings. It shall, in particular, facilitate access to the Prosecutor to sites, persons and relevant documents required for the investigation.
2. The Government shall comply without undue delay with any request for assistance by the Special Court or an order issued by the Chambers, including, but not limited to:
 - (a) Identification and location of persons;
 - (b) Service of documents;
 - (c) Arrest or detention of persons;
 - (d) Transfer of an indictee to the Court.

Article 18

Working language

The official working language of the Special Court shall be English.

Article 19

Practical arrangements

1. With a view to achieving efficiency and cost-effectiveness in the operation of the Special Court, a phased-in approach shall be adopted for its establishment in accordance with the chronological order of the legal process.
2. In the first phase of the operation of the Special Court, judges, the Prosecutor and the Registrar will be appointed along with investigative and prosecutorial staff. The process of investigations and prosecutions of those already in custody shall be initiated.
3. In the initial phase, judges of the Trial Chamber and the Appeals Chamber shall be convened on an ad hoc basis for dealing with organizational matters, and serving when required to perform their duties.
4. Judges of the Trial Chamber shall take permanent office shortly before the investigation process has been completed. Judges of the Appeals Chamber shall take permanent office when the first trial process has been completed.

Article 20

Settlement of Disputes

Any dispute between the Parties concerning the interpretation or application of this Agreement shall be settled by negotiation, or by any other mutually agreed-upon mode of settlement.

Article 21

Entry into force

The present Agreement shall enter into force on the day after both Parties have notified each other in writing that the legal requirements for entry into force have been complied with.

Article 22
Amendment

This Agreement may be amended by written agreement between the Parties.

Article 23
Termination

This Agreement shall be terminated by agreement of the Parties upon completion of the judicial activities of the Special Court.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the following duly authorized representatives of the United Nations and of the Government of Sierra Leone have signed this Agreement.

Done at Freetown, on 16 January 2002 in two originals in the English language.

For the United Nations
Hans Corell, Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs

For the Government of Sierra Leone
Solomon Berewa, Attorney General and Minister of Justice