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Statement from
Mohamed L. Suma, Director of the Sierra Leone Court Monitoring Programme

“The essence of having SCSL located in Sierra Leone, where the crimes took place, is to let the people that suffered see justice first-hand. The lack of access to justice is one of the primary causes of the war, so the SCSL is a very good opportunity for the Sierra Leone people. Almost all of the big fish have died, except Sam Hinga Norman, so getting Charles Taylor was important and highly anticipated. Everyone was waiting for Charles Taylor for over 4 years to see him humbled and subdued to the rule of law. That opportunity has come and now it is being taken away from Sierra Leoneans.

The Court was already losing some morale because of what has happened with some of the indictees, and the opportunity to regain that morale is slipping away again. Sierra Leoneans are learning a lot from the Court and that is being taken away from them. Already, a lot is happening at the SCSL to impact the court system in Sierra Leone. That opportunity as well as the Sierra Leonean flavor of the court and Sierra Leone’s connection to the court will slip away in the twinkle of an eye. The issue of security has always existed. As a matter of fact, to use the security issue as a reason to have the trials not take place in Sierra Leone is redundant because that concern has always existed and nothing has ever happened. To put it simply, they are stealing this away from us.”