

Special Court for Sierra Leone  
Press and Public Affairs Office

PRESS RELEASE

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Fofana and Kondewa Plead Not Guilty

Two alleged leaders of the Sierra Leone militia known as the Civil Defence Forces (CDF) had initial hearings in Bonthe on Tuesday. They had been indicted a few days before, after having been held for almost a month as suspects at the Court's detention centre.

Moinina Fofana and Allieu Kondewa now stand accused of committing crimes against humanity. According to the indictments, Fofana was the National Director of War of the CDF, which included fighters known as the Kamajors. Kondewa was allegedly the high priest of the CDF and was responsible for initiations.

Judge Pierre Boutet, who presided over the hearings, had the indictments read out in full. Each has eight counts against them, including unlawful killing, terrorizing civilians, looting and recruiting child soldiers. They both pleaded not guilty to all charges.

The defence section of the Court must now help Fofana and Kondewa choose lawyers. The lawyers should have the relevant experience in international criminal law needed to counter the cases that the lawyers for the prosecution will present against the two indictees during their trials.

The Special Court has so far indicted twelve individuals, including Charles Taylor, the president of neighbouring Liberia. The Prosecutor accuses them of bearing the greatest responsibility for the violence that occurred in Sierra Leone.

The indictees include leading members of all three of Sierra Leone's armed groups. Nine of them are currently in the custody of the Court.

The trials are expected to begin by the end of the year.

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