



## **Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Briefing**

### **Achieving Complete Justice: The Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone**

**Thursday, November 20, 2014  
10:00 AM – 11:30 AM  
SVC-210 Capitol Visitor Center**

#### **Opening Remarks**

Good morning. Thank you all for attending today's briefing, *Achieving Complete Justice: The Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone*. I would like to extend a special welcome to our panelists, and to Ambassador Stephen Rapp for joining us today – Thank you for your tireless commitment to advancing global criminal justice.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone represents a victory in the fight against impunity. From its establishment in 2002 to its closure last December, the Special Court pioneered a number of global justice achievements, including the first conviction for the crime of forced marriage, and the first conviction for the recruitment and use of child soldiers. For international tribunals, the Special Court's legacy is its unique experience as the first hybrid ad hoc court, the first international court to be funded solely on voluntary contributions, and the first court since Nuremberg to achieve its mandate and close. For the people of war-torn Sierra Leone, the Special Court made extraordinary contributions to post-conflict justice, reconciliation, and the rule of law.

Today, the Residual Special Court carries out a number of on-going obligations of the Special Court, including witness protection and support, and the supervision of prison sentences. These are core obligations, crucial to protecting fundamental rights, ensuring the legacy of the Special Court, and strengthening the global justice system. These obligations will need to be addressed for many years to come.

In today's briefing, we seek to examine the Residual Court's mandate and functions, as well as its challenges. I look forward to hearing from our panelists who are tasked with operating this unprecedented follow-up mechanism, and discussing how to address the challenges in achieving complete justice.