

MIATTA MARIA SAMBA (SIERRA LEONE)

Statement of Qualifications

This statement is made pursuant to article 36, paragraph 4 (a) of the Statute of the International Criminal Court.

The Government of Sierra Leone, following the decision of the autonomous Judicial and Legal Service Commission of Sierra Leone, has decided to nominate Judge Miatta Maria Samba for election as a Judge of the International Criminal Court for the term 2021 to 2030. The elections will take place during the Nineteenth Session of the Assembly of States Parties in December 2020 in New York.

1. Judge Miatta Samba fulfils the requirements in Article 36 paragraphs 3 (a)(b) and (c) of the Rome Statute in that:
 - a. She is a distinguished jurist of high moral character, integrity, and has a record of impartiality and sound judgement. Judge Samba has over 20 years of international and domestic experience as a criminal law practitioner and judge. As a Judge of the Court of Appeals in the judiciary of Sierra Leone, Judge Samba possesses 5 years judicial experience and 15 years court experience as an advocate of the Superior Courts of Judicature. She is eminently qualified for the highest judicial office in Sierra Leone.
 - b. Judge Samba has demonstrated superior competence in criminal law and procedure, having dealt with complex criminal cases at national level as a Senior Prosecutor at the Anti-Corruption Commission of Sierra Leone between 2010 and 2015 before her appointment as a High Court Judge (the highest court of first instance for criminal cases). As a High Court Judge and of the Court of Appeals since February 2019, Judge Samba hears and determines complex criminal cases, particularly having to do with corruption, theft and sexual violence, among other criminal offences.
 - c. Equally pertinent, Judge Samba's work as Associate Prosecutor at the Special Court of Sierra Leone demonstrated very high levels of professionalism as well as solid competence in criminal law, humanitarian law, international human rights law and rules of procedure and evidence. In that position, from October 2002 to October 2006, Judge Samba investigated, managed and prosecuted war crimes, crimes against humanity and other serious violations of the international law under the jurisdiction of the Special Court for Sierra Leone. On the basis of this experience, Justice Samba was recently appointed as a Judge of the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone, the successor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, which was established by Agreement between the Government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations.
 - d. Judge Samba possesses valuable experience dealing with the African regional instrument, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, including filing, on behalf of the Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa and Campaign for Good Governance, two international Non-Governmental Organisations based in the Gambia and Sierra Leone respectively, two Communications with the African Commission of Human and Peoples' Rights on the treatment of refugees and discrimination.

- e. Judge Samba has rendered ground-breaking judgments relating to sexual violence against children in the domestic courts in Sierra Leone, significantly contributing to ensuring accountability for sexual and gender-based violence in Sierra Leone. Between 1999 and 2015 before she was appointed a Judge of the High Court of Sierra Leone, Judge Samba represented, on a pro-bono basis, victims of sexual offences, particularly cases involving minors, in the domestic courts in Sierra Leone.
 - f. Judge Samba is the Chair for the Legal Aid Board in Sierra Leone. The Board regulates the provision of legal representation for indigent persons in conflict with the law, including women and children all over Sierra Leone.
 - g. Judge Samba had her primary and higher education in the English language, the official language of Sierra Leone – and a working language of the Court. She has excellent command, both written and spoken, of the English Language; she worked in the English language at national and international levels at the Special Court for Sierra Leone and as Field Operations Officer for the International Criminal Court's Office of the Prosecutor in Uganda, dealing with witnesses and victims for the Office of the Prosecutor between October 2006 and October 2010. She is also a criminal law lecturer at the University of Sierra Leone and teaches in the English language.
2. Judge Samba is nominated for inclusion in List A, pursuant to Article 36 paragraph 5 of the Rome Statute. Her nomination was approved in accordance with the procedure established in Article 36 paragraph 4(a)(i) of the Rome Statute.
 3. Judge Samba is from the African region, with a common law background. The Government of Sierra Leone strongly believes that electing an outstanding African female Judge of her standing, experience and record will greatly advance the diversity, geographical representation and gender balance of the Court.
 4. Judge Samba's curriculum vitae shows that she has unique first hand legal experience in dealing with victims of war crimes and crimes against humanity, particularly victims of sexual and gender based crimes; the protection of witnesses, remedies of victims of violations of human rights, as seen from her experience as Witness Management Coordinator and Investigator at the Special Court for Sierra Leone and her duties as Field Operations Officer for the Office of the Prosecutor in Uganda, in addition to protecting the rights of victims and witnesses; as a lead investigator of atrocities committed against Sierra Leonean refugees during the civil war in Sierra Leone.
 5. Judge Samba is of a very strong moral character, possesses great intellectual and professional integrity, and is highly competent in criminal law and procedure, international criminal law and procedure, international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Her record shows her as a dedicated jurist who believes in the timely dispensation of justice. Sierra Leone is confident that she will help advance the objective of the Court for integrity, competence and independence.