

SAR UNITED STATES STEERING COMMITTEE (2021-2023)

Abdul Tejan-Cole

Executive Director, African Studies Association

Abdul Tejan-Cole is a Barrister and Solicitor of the High Court of Sierra Leone with an LLB (Hons) degree from the University of Sierra Leone, and an LLM from University College, London. A noted international human rights lawyer and activist, Mr. Tejan-Cole brings with him more than 25 years' experience of leadership in African Studies, with a specific focus on human rights, anti-corruption, environmental and social justice, post-conflict resolution, transitional justice and the rule of law. He has a track record of successfully leading non-profit organizations and a strong background of board and fiscal management.



Prior to joining ASA, Mr. Tejan-Cole served as a Senior Director at Waxman Strategies (2018-2020), a global firm based in Washington, D.C. and committed to securing a living, healthy planet for all the people and creatures that live on it and on protecting native ecosystems. He was the Executive Director of the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) from 2010-2018 with executive authority over their offices in Dakar, Abuja, Monrovia, Freetown and Conakry. In this capacity, he helped develop and implement OSIWA's strategy, provided leadership and direction, and managed all aspects of its work including support for pan-African initiatives on climate change, food security, and natural resources governance. He was Board Chair of West Africa Democracy Radio, Timap for Justice, and the West Africa Civil Society Institute. He also served variously as Secretary General, Vice President, and President of the Sierra Leone Bar Association.

Abdul Tejan-Cole was also a war crimes prosecutor in the Special Court for Sierra Leone, established to prosecute violations of international humanitarian law during the Sierra Leone Civil War (1991-2002), where he delivered the opening address in the case against the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels. He served as head of the Anti-Corruption Commission of Sierra Leone (2007-2010), and Deputy Director of the International Center for Transitional Justice's Cape Town office (2006-2007).

He taught land law and the environment at the University of Sierra Leone, was a Human Rights Teaching Fellow at Columbia University in New York and a Yale University World Fellow and has published widely on human rights and international justice issues. He is a recipient of the 2001 Human Rights Watch Annual Award and is a member of the Africa Group for Justice and Accountability.

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