

Sierra Leone Rejects Jenner Law Firm's Lawsuit Over \$8 Million Fee



Sierra Leone has asked a Washington, D.C., federal judge to dismiss a lawsuit filed by law firm Jenner & Block seeking \$8 million in legal fees, claiming the lawsuit is vague and imprecise. Lawyers for Sierra Leone said Jenner had failed to demonstrate that it was owed any more than the \$3.6 million the West African country had already paid to the Chicago-based law firm. The case is pending before U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan, and no hearing dates have yet been set.

Jenner & Block filed its lawsuit in November, claiming it had "vigorously represented" Sierra Leone in a legal matter involving an iron ore contractor pursuing claims that potentially exposed the country to \$1.8 billion in damages. According to the lawsuit, the dispute was settled without Sierra Leone paying any monetary compensation. Jenner's complaint said the firm was suing Sierra Leone for legal work done between 2019 and 2021 that "turned out to be far more complex and voluminous than either party initially contemplated."

In their filing, Sierra Leone's attorneys said that Jenner's complaint was "void of precision" regarding what Sierra Leone allegedly agreed to pay Jenner & Block "beyond the terms of the parties' agreement." The attorneys argued that the law firm had provided valuable services to the Republic but that these services were valued at an agreed-upon flat fee of \$1,500,000 per year. They claimed that Sierra Leone had already paid Jenner & Block \$3.6 million, the amount agreed upon in the contract.

The lawsuit stemmed from a contract dispute in which Sierra Leone claimed concessionaire Gerald International Ltd breached its contract to remove and sell iron ore from mines. Sierra Leone retained Jenner & Block in 2019 for legal work on the matter involving Gerald. In its lawsuit, Jenner & Block claimed that Sierra Leone acknowledged that additional payment to the firm was "required and appropriate."

A representative from the country's U.S. embassy and a lawyer for Sierra Leone did not immediately respond to messages seeking comment on the case. Similarly, a Jenner attorney who filed the lawsuit did not immediately respond to a message requesting comment.

In summary, Sierra Leone has urged the Washington, D.C., federal judge to dismiss Jenner & Block's lawsuit seeking \$8 million in legal fees, claiming that the lawsuit lacks clarity and that the law firm has not demonstrated that it is owed more than the \$3.6 million that has already been paid to it. The case is pending before U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan, and no hearing dates have been set yet.

REFERENCES:

Sierra Leone rebuffs law firm Jenner's \$8 million fee lawsuit