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**UNMIL Senegalese Contingent awarded United Nations peacekeeping medals**

*Harper, Liberia* - The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Alan Doss, yesterday decorated 594 Senegalese peacekeepers with United Nations medals for distinguished service. The ceremony took place in Harper, Maryland County.

Giving recognition to the Senegalese contingent for their contribution towards maintaining peace in Liberia, Mr. Doss said that UN peacekeepers will continue their tireless efforts to defend the peace in Liberia. "The UN is here to stay the course, recognizing that our most important mandate is security," he said, speaking in French. "There has been great progress, an end to violence and the Senegalese forces have contributed well," the SRSG said. He also recognized the community work the contingent has undertaken, including the rehabilitation of damaged infrastructure and the medical care provided to the local population.

The SRSG reminded the troops that they must strictly abide by the Secretary-General's policy of zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse. "Commanders and officers have a special responsibility in this respect, to lead by example and get this message across to all their troops," he added.



Senegalese troops on parade

"It is because of you that we are alive," said Maryland Senator John Ballout, thanking the Senegalese forces. He asked that the UN remain in Liberia and focus on development projects, including the revival of the William V.S. Tubman College of Technology in Harper.



SRSG meeting Webbo residents

Special Representative Doss also visited Senegalese troops stationed in Webbo, a strategic town located close to Liberia's border with western Côte d'Ivoire. Inspecting the improvements being made to the camp facilities, Mr. Doss recognized the difficult conditions under which the troops lived and worked. He commended the Senegalese contingent and UNMIL military observers for monitoring the border and carrying out frequent foot patrols in the thick forest bordering Côte d'Ivoire.

Speaking to a group of community leaders in Webbo, Mr. Doss reiterated UNMIL's commitment to ensuring security in Liberia. The SRSG urged them to cooperate

closely with UNMIL and to alert UN forces should they become aware of any illegal activities on the border. He also informed the residents that work will soon begin on the Fishtown- Harper road.

Special Representative Doss was accompanied by senior civilian and military officials of UNMIL, including Deputy Force Commander Maj.-Gen. Mohammed Tahir. Senegal first began contributing peacekeepers to the United Nations in 1960. Since then, they have served in five United Nations missions throughout the world. Currently, Senegalese military personnel are deployed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, the Sudan and Liberia.

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