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(UNAMSIL)*

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**UN SECURITY COUNCIL SANCTIONS COMMITTEE ON SIERRA LEONE  
CHAIRMAN VISITS KONO AND KENEMA DISTRICTS**

*Freetown* – The Chairman of the United Nations Security Council Sanctions Committee on Sierra Leone, Ambassador Adolfo A. Zinser, yesterday visited the district headquarters town of Kenema and Koidu in the diamond-rich district of Kono to assess the current peace process and political developments in Sierra Leone.

The Committee was set up by the Security Council under Resolution 1132 of 8 October 1997 to monitor and report on violations of the arms embargo imposed against Sierra Leone when the democratically elected Government of President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah was overthrown by a military junta on 25 May 1997.

In Kenema, the Commander of Sector 3 of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), Brig. Gen. George Ayi Bonte, briefed Ambassador Zinser on the security situation in the southern districts of Kenema, Bonthe, Bo, Moyamba, and Pujehun, which he said was “calm” despite the “continuous inflow of Liberian refugees” into Sierra Leone. He assured the ambassador that UNAMSIL was “closely monitoring potential tension points” and assisting the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in transporting Liberian refugees to camps in Kenema and beyond.

On the current situation in yet another diamond-rich area of Tongo Fields, Kenema, where some tensions have arisen regarding illegal occupation of houses by ex-combatants the sector commander said that “scarce job opportunities are exacerbating the tensions,” stressing that ex-combatants involved in mining had “no other prospects” for getting a job. District authorities are, however, urging the ex-combatants to exercise patience and restraint to resolve ongoing disagreements.

Ambassador also Zinser toured Kenema town where he met with a licensed diamond-dealer who described the intricacies of his business.

In Koidu in the diamond-rich district of Kono, the ambassador was briefed by Sector 5 Commander Brig. Gen. Ahmed Shuja Pasha who explained that the situation in the area was calm and that “people were eager to rebuild their shattered towns.” He also informed Ambassador Zinser on the role played by Pakistani peacekeepers during the disarmament

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*UNAMSIL Headquarters, Mammy Yoko, P. O. Box 5, Freetown, Sierra Leone  
Tel: 232-22-273-183/4/5 Fax: 232-22-273-189*

process and the May elections, as well as the extensive road engineering work by the contingent. Other humanitarian activities the Pakistanis are undertaking include renovation of schools, mosques and churches.

Before flying back to Freetown, Brig. Gen. Pasha took Ambassador Zinser on a tour of Koidu town where the delegation witnessed mining activities.

Later during the day, Ambassador Zinser held discussions at UNAMSIL Headquarters in Freetown with the leader of the Peace and Liberation Party, Mr. Johnny Paul Koroma, and officials from the Revolutionary United Front Party (RUF) who included interim leader Gen. Issa Sesay and the party's presidential candidate in the last elections, Mr. Alimamy Paollo Bangura.

Prior to traveling to the eastern districts, Ambassador Zinser had meetings with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Sierra Leone, Ambassador Oluyemi Adeniji, senior UNAMSIL officials, as well as with the UN Country Team, members of the diplomatic community and the civil society.