

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SIERRA LEONE  
(UNAMSIL)

**PRESS RELEASE**

6 May 2002

**COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF US SPECIAL OPERATIONS VISITS  
UNAMSIL PEACEKEEPERS IN KOIDU AND MAKENI**

*Freetown* - The Commander-in-Chief of the US Special Operations Command, Gen. Charles Holland, on 4 May led a team of 25 officers on a visit to United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) Sector 5 Headquarters in Koidu, Kono District, where Pakistani peacekeepers are deployed, and to the US-trained Nigerian Battalion (NIBATT) 11 in Makeni, Bombali District.

Sector 5 Commander Brig. Gen. Ahmed Shuja Pasha briefed the team on the preparations for the 14 May elections in his area of responsibility. He said that more than 830 polling stations have been established in Kono and Kailahun districts, where over 200,000 registered voters will cast their votes for the presidential and parliamentary elections. In addition to maintaining a peaceful and stable environment in the two districts, the peacekeepers are to provide the necessary administrative support and security to the National Electoral Commission.

Brig. Gen. Pasha also briefed the US Army Chief on the current security situation in the area, the deployment of the Pakistani troops, the just-concluded disarmament programme in both the districts, and humanitarian assistance the Pakistani contingent is providing to local communities. This includes support to non-governmental organizations operating in the area, provision of free medical services to locals, renovation of places of worship, as well as road repair work by Pakistani Army Engineers. In response, Gen. Holland commended Pakistan's role in restoring peace in Sierra Leone.

Later, Gen. Holland, who was accompanied by UNAMSIL Force Commander Lt. Gen. Daniel Opande and the US Ambassador in Sierra Leone, Mr. Peter Chaveas, flew to Makeni where NIBATT 11 Commanding Officer Lt. Col. Olukayode Keshinro briefed him on the activities of his troops in their area of deployment. Lt. Col. Keshinro, whose battalion benefited from an American Army training assistance programme in peacekeeping prior to their deployment in UNAMSIL, noted with satisfaction the benefits of the training.