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*UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SIERRA LEONE  
(UNAMSIL)*

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**FORCE COMMANDER TOURS KENEMA AND MAKENI TO ASSESS  
SECURITY AND ELECTION PREPAREDNESS**

*Freetown* - The Force Commander of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), Lt. Gen. Daniel Ishmael Opande, on 7 May toured the towns of Kenema and Makeni to assess the general security situation, get an update on the arrangements being made by peacekeepers in preparation for the 14 May elections, as well as to formally welcome troops of Ghanaian Battalion (GHANBATT) 5 who joined the mission recently.

Upon arrival in Kenema, the Force Commander was briefed by Sector 3 Commander Brig. Gen. George Ayi-Bonte, who explained that the security situation in his area was calm and that the troops under his command have been properly oriented on their role before, during and after the elections. The election campaign in the area has been peaceful and arrangements put in place to ensure adequate security for free, fair and transparent elections.

In his response, Lt. Gen. Opande cautioned the peacekeepers to maintain their vigilance by continuing regular patrols and information-gathering activities. He also urged the sector commander to provide sufficient support to the National Electoral Commission (NEC) and the Sierra Leone Police, as well as election monitors and observers.

The Officer Commanding the Bangladeshi Signal "C" Company in Makeni, Lt. Col. Zia Ur Rashid Fadar, informed the Force Commander that his team has installed VHF radio transmitters in the area for the NEC and that the commission's personnel have received training on operating the equipment. In his address to the officers and men of the company, the Force Commander noted the importance of communications in any organization and therefore urged them to work hard and maintain the equipment.