

UNITED NATIONS



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(UNAMSIL)

PRESS RELEASE

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**UNAMSIL ACTING SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE DECORATES
UKRAINIAN PEACEKEEPERS**



Freetown - The Acting Special Representative of the Secretary General, Mr. Behrooz Sadry, on 6 December decorated 528 Ukrainian peacekeepers serving with the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) with UN medals of honour at a colourful ceremony held in Hastings, Freetown. They included 130 officers.

Addressing the peacekeepers at a ceremony attended by the Ukrainian Ambassador to Guinea, Olexandr Shulga, the Acting Special Representative said it was a day filled with joy. He went on to say that the Ukrainian peacekeepers had not only performed their tasks with “professionalism, dedication, pride and accomplishment,” but that they had proven to be “strong and up to the task” in all their undertakings, including in the area of humanitarian assistance to the people of Sierra Leone. This, he said, was the true picture of a peacekeeper.

Mr. Sadry expressed his condolences to the Ukrainians on the loss of one of their warrant officers who died recently in a road accident on the outskirts of Freetown and wished those injured in the accident speedy recovery.

The Ukrainian Ambassador to Guinea, Olexandr Shulga said the medals parade coincided with celebrations marking Ukrainian Armed Forces Day. Addressing the peacekeepers, he said the award of the service medals “certifies your ability and proves your efficiency in UNAMSIL.” This, he said, had been echoed in his meetings with key officials of the Government of Sierra Leone. He wished them good luck and entreated them to continue striving hard.

UNAMSIL Force Commander Lt. Gen. Daniel I. Opande expressed satisfaction at the performance of the Ukrainian peacekeepers saying “you have played a great role in the success of UNAMSIL; a success that belongs to you like it does to us all.”

The Contingent Commander of the Ukrainian peacekeepers in Sierra Leone, Col. Ihor Stelmakh, said the occasion only strengthened their resolve “to perform our duties with the highest level of efficiency.” He assured that the Ukrainian contingent would always “perform with excellence.”

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The programme, which was also attended by two of UNAMSIL's sector commanders, Brig. Gen. Steve P. Guar and Brig. Gen. George Ayi Bonte, was decorated by spectacular Ukrainian cultural performances and climaxed by an exhibition of some Ukrainian military hardware and software.