

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SIERRA LEONE
(UNAMSIL)

PRESS RELEASE

15 May 2002

**SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE PRAISES THE ORGANIZATION
OF SIERRA LEONE ELECTIONS**

Freetown – The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), Ambassador Oluyemi Adeniji, said the organization of yesterday’s presidential and parliamentary elections in Sierra Leone was “extremely well done” throughout the country.

Addressing dozens of local and international journalists gathered at UNAMSIL Headquarters in Freetown following the closure of polling stations in most parts of the country, Ambassador Adeniji praised Sierra Leoneans for their conduct during elections.

“The comportment of the voters, of the people of Sierra Leone, has been exemplary, practically in every place we visited,” he said.

Earlier in the day, the Special Representative toured several polling stations in the northern districts of Koinadugu, Bombali, Tonkolili and Port Loko, while his deputy for Operations and Management, Mr. Behrooz Sadry, toured polling stations in the eastern and western parts of the capital, Freetown. The Deputy Special Representative of Secretary-General for Governance and Stabilization, Mr. Alan Doss, visited Kono, Kailahun and Kenema districts in the east.

Ambassador Adeniji said that from what he and his deputies had observed, the rate of turnout was “quite high.” Commenting on UNAMSIL’s role in providing logistical support to the National Electoral Commission (NEC) as mandated by the UN Security Council, he confirmed that “all the materials were in place by the time people started voting,” adding that even in some inaccessible places, UNAMSIL helicopters were still delivering materials well into the evening before the elections.

“Those materials were in place, they were adequate, and so we did not come up against any complaints from people wanting to vote and being told that the materials were no longer available,” he said.

The Special Representative, however, noted that there were “a couple of grumblings” from people who wanted to vote in areas where they were not registered. He explained that

these were not from people who had moved from one part of town to the other, but from one district to another and insisted on exercising their right to vote. Most of them had moved from Kono District to the districts of Bombali and Tonkolili. He noted with satisfaction that NEC officials later arranged to have everybody allowed to vote.

Ambassador Adeniji expressed the hope that political parties would abide by the code of conduct they signed and a declaration they made with the NEC on Saturday, 12 May. "We are expecting that as just as the election has been free of violence, so will the aftermath of the election when the results are announced," he said.