

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

*UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SIERRA LEONE
(UNAMSIL)*

PRESS BRIEFING

2 August 2002

(Near Verbatim)

MS. MARGARET NOVICKI - UNAMSIL SPOKESMAN

UN SECURITY COUNCIL TO ENHANCE RELATIONSHIP WITH AFRICAN UNION

The Security Council has agreed to enhance its relationship with the newly created African Union, the President of the 15-member body said on Wednesday.

The decision came in response to one of a number of recommendations put forward by the Council's ad hoc working group on conflict prevention and resolution in Africa, Ambassador Jeremy Greenstock of the United Kingdom told reporters following closed-door consultations.

Based on a report by the working group's chairman, Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul of Mauritius, the Council had also agreed to a recommendation on the creation of a "Groups of Friends" of particular countries where conflict is ongoing, the President said.

PEACEKEEPERS HAND OVER RENOVATED CHURCH IN KOIDU

In a ceremony held on 29 July, peacekeepers of Pakistan Battalion (PAKBATT) 1 handed over the recently renovated main Roman Catholic Church in Koidu to the community. The church was completely renovated by PAKBATT with its own resources, and can now accommodate over 500 people.

Unveiling a plaque marking the church's hand-over, Dr. Aiah Sama Mondeh, Minister for Agriculture and Food Security, expressed his sincere gratitude on behalf of the Christian community of Koidu and said that words were insufficient to thank the peacekeepers for their humanitarian contributions during their stay in Sierra Leone. He noted that the Pakistan contingent had renovated places of worship irrespective of religion, for which they would always be remembered.

Speaking at the occasion, Mrs. S.E. Ngongou, Deputy Minister of Works and Maintenance, said that along with peacekeeping duties, the troops had carried out a lot

of rehabilitation work in Kono district, making them very popular with the local population. The chairpersons of the Kono Town Committee and the Kono District Council also thanked PAKBATT and the Contingent Commander, Brig. Ahmed Shuja Pasha, for the troops' outstanding work.

Lt. Col. Tariq Javed, Commanding Officer of PAKBATT 1, said that his troops and others who will soon replace them, would continue their humanitarian support to the people of Kono.

The Pakistani Contingent is in the process of rotating its troops. The rotation began this week, with the first troops departing Sierra Leone today, and will continue until early September.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Q: What's happening with the investigation on the July 18 incident?

Ms. Margaret Novicki: It's ongoing. We expect it to be completed in the coming week.

Q: Regarding this dissidents involved in these cross-border raids, you said the last time that you're not sure whether they're AFL or LURD because they were not in uniform. Do you have any other information that they belong to any other rebel group?

Ms. Novicki: No.