



UNITED NATIONS

NATIONS UNIES

*UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SIERRA LEONE  
(UNAMSIL)*

**PRESS BRIEFING**

**05 JULY 2002**

**(Near Verbatim)**

**MR. PATRICK COKER, UNAMSIL ACTING SPOKESMAN**

**UN SECURITY COUNCIL SANCTIONS COMMITTEE ON SIERRA LEONE  
CHAIRMAN VISITS KONO AND KENEMA DISTRICTS**

The Chairman of the United Nations Security Council Sanctions Committee on Sierra Leone, Ambassador Adolfo A. Zinser, on 30 June visited the district headquarters town of Kenema and Koidu in the diamond-rich district of Kono to assess the current peace process and political developments in Sierra Leone.

The Committee was set up by the Security Council under Resolution 1132 of 8 October 1997 to monitor and report on violations of the arms embargo imposed against Sierra Leone when the democratically elected Government of President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah was overthrown by a military junta on 25 May 1997.

In Kenema, the Commander of Sector 3 of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), Brig. Gen. George Ayi Bonte, briefed Ambassador Zinser on the security situation in the southern districts of Kenema, Bonthe, Bo, Moyamba, and Pujehun, which he said was “calm” despite the “continuous inflow of Liberian refugees” into Sierra Leone. He assured the ambassador that UNAMSIL was “closely monitoring potential tension points” and assisting the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in transporting Liberian refugees to camps in Kenema and beyond.

On the current situation in yet another diamond-rich area of Tongo Fields, Kenema, where some tensions have arisen regarding illegal occupation of houses by ex-combatants the sector commander said that “scarce job opportunities are exacerbating the tensions,” stressing that ex-combatants involved in mining had “no other prospects” for getting a job. District authorities are, however, urging the ex-combatants to exercise patience and restraint to resolve ongoing disagreements.

Ambassador also Zinser toured Kenema town where he met with a licensed diamond-dealer who described the intricacies of his business.

In Koidu in the diamond-rich district of Kono, the ambassador was briefed by Sector 5 Commander Brig. Gen. Ahmed Shuja Pasha who explained that the situation in the area was calm and that “people were eager to rebuild their shattered towns.” He also informed Ambassador Zinser on the role played by Pakistani peacekeepers during the disarmament process and the May elections, as well as the extensive road engineering work by the contingent. Other

---

*UNAMSIL Headquarters, Mammy Yoko, P. O. Box 5, Freetown, Sierra Leone  
Tel: 232-22-273-183/4/5 Fax: 232-22-273-189*

humanitarian activities the Pakistanis are undertaking include renovation of schools, mosques and churches.

Before flying back to Freetown, Brig. Gen. Pasha took Ambassador Zinser on a tour of Koidu town where the delegation witnessed mining activities.

Later during the day, Ambassador Zinser held discussions at UNAMSIL Headquarters in Freetown with the leader of the Peace and Liberation Party, Mr. Johnny Paul Koroma, and officials from the Revolutionary United Front Party (RUFFP) who included interim leader Gen. Issa Sesay and the party's presidential candidate in the last elections, Mr. Alimamy Paollo Bangura.

Prior to traveling to the eastern districts, Ambassador Zinser had meetings with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Sierra Leone, Ambassador Oluyemi Adeniji, senior UNAMSIL officials, as well as with the UN Country Team, members of the diplomatic community and the civil society.

### **BANGLADESHI FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTER PAYS COURTESY CALL ON SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL**

As he continues with his three-day visit to Sierra Leone, the Bangladeshi Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Morshed Khan, on 30 June 2002, paid a courtesy call on the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) in Sierra Leone, Ambassador Oluyemi Adeniji.

Mr. Morshed Khan praised the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) for the "impressive work undertaken in such a short time," not only in peacekeeping but also, in bringing social and humanitarian assistance. Describing his tour of UNAMSIL deployments as "mind-boggling," Minister Morshed said his first encounter with UN peacekeeping operations offered him a "better understanding of the investment" his country was making in bringing peace to Sierra Leone.

In his welcome remarks, Ambassador Adeniji expressed the United Nations gratitude for Bangladesh's commitment to UNAMSIL. As a member of the Security Council for 2000-2001, Bangladesh, and the SRSG recalled, played a "leading role in Sierra Leone" at a time when the security conditions on the ground necessitated the Mission's rapid reinforcement. Ambassador Adeniji outlined the successes of the peace process and expressed the hope that the "troop-contributing countries will maintain their pledge" in order to "secure the international community's investment" in Sierra Leone.

The Foreign Minister of Bangladesh said he was opportune to feel the "rumor and dynamic of Sierra Leone" and strongly believed that the Mission's continued existence was "critical" at this point of the Sierra Leonean peace process. Further stressing that "the international community should have the patience to witness the dividends of its investment in Sierra Leone," Minister Morshed renewed his country's commitment to UN peacekeeping operations.

The Bangladeshi Ambassador accredited to Sierra Leone and based in Morocco, Maj. Gen. Anwar Hussein, and UNAMSIL Sector 4 Commander, Brig. Gen. Iqbal Karim Bhuiyan accompanied the minister

## **SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE VISITS KAILAHUN DISTRICT**

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) in Sierra Leone, Ambassador Oluyemi Adeniji, accompanied by the Force Commander of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), Lt. Gen. Daniel I. Opande, and other senior UNAMSIL officials, on 02 July 2002, visited the eastern district of Kailahun to assess the influx of refugees and returnees and the security situation in the area.

In his briefing to the SRSG and his entourage, the Pakistani Battalion (PAKBATT) 2 Commanding Officer, Lt. Col. Ahmad Nawaz, noted that the security situation in his area was calm. He indicated that over 14,000 Sierra Leonean returnees and about 6,600 Liberian refugees have crossed over from Liberia into the area over the past month.

Lt. Col. Nawaz also stressed the acute shortage of infrastructure and other amenities in Kailahun and its environs with consequent effects on the resettled and returning citizens. The commanding officer said that PAKBATT 2 has been winning the hearts and minds of the people with free medical camps, blood donations, provision of safe drinking water at designated points in the town, sporting activities, refurbishment of schools, rehabilitation of roads and donation of garments and other humanitarian items.

Ambassador Adeniji and his team later met with the representatives of district authorities, the Sierra Leone Police, the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces, traditional leaders, and members of the civil society at the PAKBATT 2 Headquarters. During the meeting, Mr. Sulaiman Senge Koroma, the District Officer, said district administration has resumed with most of the functionaries now in place. He, however, lamented that hospitals, schools and the local prison were not functioning well due to lack of facilities. He commended the close cooperation and support of UNAMSIL's Civil Affairs Section since he arrived in Kailahun earlier in the year.

The traditional chiefs informed the SRSG that 80 percent of the houses within the district were destroyed during the war. They expressed concern about acute shortage of infrastructure and called on the government and the UN to assist with rehabilitation and reconstruction. They also emphasized the need for better coordination between the local authorities and the non-governmental organizations working in the district.

In response, the SRSG observed that there was need for the chiefs and the people to prioritize what is to be done, as all these could not be handled at the same time. "It is important that you coordinate properly with NGOs and necessary government agencies such as the District Recovery Committee and National Commission for Social Action [NaCSA] to get some of these problems solved," he said.

The SRSG and his team were later taken on a tour of Kailahun town with a visit to projects built and rehabilitated by PAKBATT 2 peacekeepers

## **SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE MEETS WITH COMMISSIONERS OF THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION**

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) in Sierra Leone, Ambassador Oluyemi Adeniji, on 4 July met with the members of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The seven-member team is composed of four national and three international commissioners.

In his opening remarks, the SRSG said that with the progress made thus far in the peace process, it has become a challenge to establish transitional justice organs. He said that the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) had worked closely to ensure that well experienced and capable persons were appointed as commissioners. The selection, he said, was also made after considering factors such as gender balance to ensure that “the Commission is not gender distorted.”

Ambassador Adeniji said UNAMSIL’s Human Rights Section and the human rights network in Sierra Leone have gathered some dossiers, which should facilitate the work of the commissioners. He pointed out that Sierra Leoneans were comforted that the TRC and the Special Court for Sierra Leone will work simultaneously to promote justice and reconciliation.

He informed the Commissioners that fund-raising efforts to run the TRC have not yielded much, as was the case with the Special Court. He expressed the hope that more donors would make generous contributions towards the TRC to enable it to meet its mandate.

In his response, the Chairman of the TRC, Rt. Rev. Dr Joseph Christain Humper, a national commissioner, thanked the UN for the progress made thus far in setting up the Commission. He however expressed concern over reports by the TRC’s interim secretariat on the funding situation, which he described as “discouraging.”

Rt. Rev. Humper said the international community was underestimating the significance of the Commission in contributing to the Sierra Leone peace process. He stressed that the delayed commencement of the Commission had caused problems, as most Sierra Leoneans, including ex-combatants and the victims of atrocities, are anxious to see it operating.

The Chairman said the Commission’s mandate could only be executed if the international community provides the necessary resources, which would then ensure justice, peace and respect for human rights in the country. “Not providing resources can be misconceived, misunderstood and unfortunate,” he said, adding, “denying the Commission means to carry out its function is denial of justice itself.”

The Commissioners are Professor John Kamara (Sierra Leone), Mr. Sylvanus Torto (Sierra Leone), and Hon. Justice Laura Augusta Ebunolorun Marcus-Jones (Sierra Leone), Ms. Yasmin Louise Sooka (South Africa), Madam Ajaaratou Santang Jow (Gambia) and Professor William Schabas (Canada).