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**UNAMSIL CHIEF MILITARY OBSERVER VISITS TEAM SITES IN
EAST AND SOUTHERN DISTRICTS**

Freetown – The Chief Military Observer (CMO) of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), Maj. Gen. Syed Athar Ali, on 17 September visited Military Observer (MILOB) team sites in the southern towns of Bo, Kenema, Zimmi and Pujehun to familiarize himself with the general security situation in the area.

In the town of Bo, Capt. Ejaz Khan briefed the CMO on the current security situation in the area, which he described calm and peaceful. There are four refugee camps in the district hosting more than 25,000 refugees. About 7,500 ex-combatants were registered and have so far benefited from several reintegration projects. Capt. Ejaz said that over the next six months, another 1,400 ex-combatants were expected receive similar skills training in various fields.

As part of their duties, MILOBs monitor all activities in their areas of responsibility, including inspection of mining sites, which is done in joint operations with local mining inspectors to check against illegal mining.

In Kenema, Maj. Gen. Athar Ali received a similar briefing from the deputy team site leader, Maj. Masanneh Kinteh, who pointed out that the ultimate success of the entire peace process depended largely on reintegrating ex-combatants into civilian life. He disclosed that more than 7,800 ex-combatants have been registered for reintegration in the area and that 42 implementing partners of National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (NCDDR) are running training programmes in various disciplines.

The CMO noted that with the assistance of UNAMSIL Civilian Police (CIVPOL), the Sierra Leone Police is now deployed throughout the district. He told the MILOBs that since the Mission was in a transitional phase from peacekeeping to peacebuilding, both the military and the civilian components should work closely together to ensure success.

Maj. Gen. Athar Ali later visited the team site in Zimmi where the operations officer, Maj. David Mason, briefed him, noting the ongoing reintegration projects in the town. Before flying back to Freetown, the CMO made a brief stopover in the town of Pujehun where he urged the MILOBs to maintain their dedication to duty.

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