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PRESS RELEASE

FORCE COMMANDER PAYS CONDOLENCE VISIT TO BANGLADESHI BATTALION 9 IN BO

The Force Commander of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, UNAMSIL, Major General Sajjad Akram, December 30, paid a condolence visit to the Bangladesh Battalion 9 in Bo following the deaths in plane crash of 13 officers from the battalion. The officers died when a Union Transport African (UTA) plane in which they were traveling crashed off the coast of Cotonou, Benin Republic December 25.

Gen. Akram paid tribute to the 13 officers and said they had contributed immensely to the task of consolidating peace in Sierra Leone.

The Commanding Officer of banbatt 9, Col Fazlul said that the tragedy was a great loss to his unit, Bangladesh Army and the people of Bangladesh. "Those officers who lost their lives have contributed and made sacrifices for the noble course of peacekeeping in Sierra Leone," he said and urged prayers for the repose of their souls.

He thanked the FC for his quick response to the tragedy by sending a coordinating team from UNAMSIL to Cotonou for identification of the bodies, autopsy and to facilitate the movement of the remains of the deceased from Cotonou to Bangladesh.

Col. Fazlul also mentioned the efforts of the UNDP, UNICEF and the French Embassy in Benin in coordinating the work in Cotonou. The government of Benin Republic provided a befitting guard of honour for the officers before their remains were flown home December 31, he disclosed.

The Force Commander was accompanied by Sector West Commander, Brig Gen Nuhu Bamalli, Sector East Commander, Brig Gen Ahmed Bakhshi Sector Center Commander, Brig Gen Shafiquzzaman as well as other senior officers from UNAMSIL force Headquarters.

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