



UNMIL/PIO/PR/116

Press Release, 9 October 2006

Liberians must work with UN to prevent any recruitment of mercenaries, says UN Envoy, Alan Doss

Zwedru, Liberia - Liberians, especially those living along the country's borders, must work closely with the United Nations Mission in Liberia, (UNMIL) to prevent any recruitment of mercenaries or arms trafficking across the border. This appeal was made on Saturday by the Head of the UN Mission in Liberia, Mr. Alan Doss, during a medal parade ceremony for Ethiopian peacekeepers deployed in Zwedru, near Liberia's border with Cote D'Ivoire.



Ethiopian troops with the UN, Liberian and Ethiopian flags at a medal parade in Zwedru

"We should remain alert and ready to deal with any troubles that may come from across the border," Mr. Doss stressed. He pledged the UN's continued commitment to the consolidation of peace in Liberia, "Our job in Liberia is not yet done. The UN Security Council has just extended our mandate because it knows that Liberia still needs UN help to deal with the many challenges that lie ahead as the country begins to rebuild itself."



SRSR Alan Doss congratulates Brig. Gen. Birhanu Jula

Zwedru, in Grand Gedeh County, was reduced to a ghost town just three years ago when Liberia's recent conflict was at its worst. The area was the focus of many armed attacks that forced thousands of residents to flee into neighbouring Cote D'Ivoire. But since the arrival of Ethiopian UN peacekeepers in the area, peace, security and stability have been restored. Mr. Doss said the presence of UNMIL peacekeepers and the help of the UN refugee agency, UNHCR, have encouraged hundreds of thousands of refugees and displaced people to return home. "You have given assistance to the needy, the poor, and the blind. The security you provide throughout the Sector continues to encourage

people to return to their homes and towns, and to begin rebuilding their lives," he added.

Before awarding UN peacekeeping medals to the soldiers at the parade, the UN Envoy acknowledged the ultimate sacrifice made by those Ethiopians who died in Liberia, "I pay special tribute to them on this day. We remember them and thank them for helping Liberia find its way back to peace." He reminded the contingent that they must strictly abide by the UN's zero tolerance policy of sexual abuse and exploitation.

The Ethiopian contingent has been active in the UN-designated Sector Four, made up of six of Liberia's fifteen counties – Grand Gedeh, River Gee, Grand Kru, Sinoe, River Cess and Lower Nimba. They have conducted extensive patrols across the area and provided humanitarian assistance to the needy population. They have also assisted in the monitoring and reporting of any illegal movements of Liberia's natural resources, such as rubber, timber and precious minerals.

The ceremony was attended by senior local and UNMIL officials, including Force Commander, Lt. Gen. Isaac Chikadibia Obiakor, Military Chief of Staff, Brig.-Gen. John Forkuo, the Sector Four Commander, Brig.-Gen. Birhanu Jula, the Sector Three Commander, Brig.-Gen. Rahman, the UNMIL Director of Administration, Mr. Ronnie Stokes, the Mayoress of Zwedru and a representative of the Superintendent of Grand Gedeh County, Tarley A. Dweh.

* * * * *