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UN Envoy pledges UN's continued commitment to peace and stability in Liberia

Monrovia, Liberia -- The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Alan Doss, has strongly urged senior military officers of UNMIL to work harder to strengthen peace and stability in Liberia. "We cannot allow anyone to undermine the country's peace and stability, which has been achieved at such high cost," he said.



SRSR Doss decorates Force Commander, Lt.-Gen. Obiakor

The UN Envoy made this call on Thursday, 26 October, when he awarded United Nations peacekeeping medals to 164 Staff Officers and Military Observers, of various nationalities, performing specialized tasks behind the scenes to ensure the smooth running of the mission's operations in Liberia. UNMIL Force Commander, Lt.-Gen. Chikadibia Isaac Obiakor, and Military Chief of Staff, Brig.-Gen. John Forkuo, were among the officers decorated at the ceremony in Monrovia.

"We must continue working to promote and protect human rights everywhere in this nation; we must continue working to curb crime and make communities safe; we must continue working to rebuild roads and create jobs across the country," the Special Representative of the Secretary-General told the senior officers.

In commending the Military Observers or MILOBs, Mr. Doss said, "They are our eyes and ears; they provide regular assessments on security and public order, cross border movements, community disputes, weapons collection, unexploded ordinance, road and bridge conditions, illegal traffic of timber and rubber."

SRSR Doss also paid tribute to the staff officers who help in various capacities in UNMIL, "UNMIL Staff Officers are the administrative backbone of the military management in UNMIL. They are construction engineers, medical doctors, logistics experts, supply specialists, military analysts, personnel managers, trainers and legal advisers just to mention a few of their many areas of responsibility." "You will agree with me that providing support for a fifteen-thousand-strong multi-national force in Liberia is not a simple task," he added.

He then stressed the need for these senior officers to remain vigilant and careful with their behaviour so that nothing is done to undermine the trust that the people of Liberia have in UNMIL. "Liberians expect us to help them recover from the trauma and pain of conflict. We must not add to their suffering. This is why we must all scrupulously respect the Secretary-General's policy of zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse," Mr. Doss said. He then commended the Force Commander, Lt.-Gen. Obiakor and his senior command officers for their excellent leadership of this complex and demanding military mission.

Military Chief of Staff, Brig.-Gen. John Forkuo, who also addressed the medal parade congratulated the Staff Officers and Military Observers and said they have shown and deserved the medals of recognition, "This, they have attained with enthusiasm, determination and the right attitude." He called his fellow decorated senior colleagues, "true ambassador for your countries."

The medal award ceremony was attended by the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Operations, Mr. Luiz Carlos da Costa, the Director of Administration, Mr. Ronnie Stokes, and other senior officials of UNMIL.
