



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF  
SIERRA LEONE TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT

*by*

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Permanent Representative  
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at the

Sixth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly  
**“Criminal Accountability of United Nations  
Officials and Experts on Mission”  
Agenda Item 79**

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**Madam Chair,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,**

1. The delegation of Sierra Leone respectively associates this statement with the statements delivered by the Distinguished Representatives of the **Kingdom of Morocco** on behalf of the African Group, and the **Islamic Republic of Iran** on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and we offer this further elaboration in our national capacity.
2. My delegation takes note with appreciation of the reports of the Secretary-General **A/76/205** and **A/76/208**. The report A/76/205 has been prepared pursuant to paragraph 30 of General Assembly resolution 75/132, and contains vital information on the policies and procedures of the UN Secretariat, funds and programmes and other entities regarding credible allegations that reveal that a crime may have been committed by UN officials or experts on mission, the relevant policies and procedures, and a reiterated recommendation for the policies and procedures to be coherent, systematic and coordinated throughout the UN system. The second report A/76/208 prepared pursuant to paragraphs 31 and 32 of same Assembly resolution provides update on implementation of the said resolution, as well as practical problems in its implementation based on information submitted by Governments and the Secretariat.
3. Sierra Leone notes with appreciation the issuance of a *“bulletin on addressing discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority”* by the Secretary-General to supplement the relevant rules

and procedures at the level of the UN Secretariat. It is therefore welcoming to note that consequently, “a number of Secretariat units and other entities reported that they had appointed a Conduct and Discipline Focal Point, in accordance with [the Secretary-General’s] bulletin, to provide advice and support on matters relating to conduct and discipline, including those under the bulletin”.

**Madam Chair,**

4. Although Sierra Leone did not make any submission as per resolution 75/132, we use this opportunity to acknowledge that the great majority of UN officials and experts on mission perform their duties with admiration, courage, and integrity; often in challenging circumstances, upholding the high standards expected of UN personnel. We, however, also note the existence of criminal behaviour, for which, accountability is critical for global confidence in the UN. Without doubt, UN officials and experts on mission should be held accountable for the crimes they commit, and this requires action on credible allegations that reveal that a crime may have been committed by UN officials or experts on mission by States with jurisdiction on the one hand, and on the other hand by action through the UN system, including its agencies, funds, and programmes.
5. Sierra Leone being a Troop and Police Contributing Country to UN peacekeeping operations, continues to build its legal and policy frameworks to strengthen criminal accountability, and to promote and cultivate an environment that limits or prevent criminal behaviour. For instance, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and

any act of sexual exploitation or abuse (SEA) by members of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) constitutes an act of serious misconduct and thereby prohibited by both military law and the general law. In addition, the RSLAF do have a policy of zero tolerance on SGBV, including SEA and is being fully implemented. This has been further supplemented by our first Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy launched in December 2020. The framework will be further strengthened by the enactment of the new Gender Act when the current Bill that is going through a national consultation phase is passed into law.

**Madam Chair,**

6. All peacekeeping personnel or experts on missions are obligated to act with the highest standards of integrity and conduct both in the performance of their official duties and in their private lives, and must be sensitive to local customs, traditions and cultures, and demonstrate respect for the local population, particularly women and children in their areas of operation. Upholding these high standards requires the necessary capacity and sensitivity training of personnel, which have formed a key component of the training regimen of Sierra Leonean peacekeepers. Training manuals on SGBV have been developed, and training programs rolled out accordingly. These trainings provide not only foundational knowledge and skills, but also support gender mainstreaming, in preventing SGBV, exploitation and abuse even in peace support and peacekeeping operations. All of these have manifested into exemplary conduct and discipline of our military and

police personnel on both the African Union peace support operations and UN peacekeeping operations.

7. Sierra Leone reiterates its belief that State of nationality should have precedence over the host country on the issue of criminal accountability of UN officials and experts on mission. We, therefore, appreciate the Organization's efforts to refer credible allegations of criminal conduct to the State of nationality and encourages all States to comply with the relevant UN resolutions.
8. Sierra Leone echoes the "no compromise" and comprehensive approach to criminal accountability, amplifying the call for zero tolerance against impunity. We fully support the "zero-tolerance policy" on sexual exploitation and abuse throughout the UN system. We underline the importance of strengthening this policy of zero tolerance through effective dissemination and robust implementation to address all cases of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by UN officials or experts on mission, most especially peacekeeping personnel.
9. In closing, **Madam Chair**, let me affirm the view that Member States are morally compelled not to allow privileges and immunities granted to UN personnel to be used as a shield to commit criminal acts with impunity.

**10. I thank you.**