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**Press Release**

**UNAMSIL Force Commander Bids Farewell to GHANBATT 8, Pays Working Visit To KENBATT 12, Sector Centre**

*Freetown -*

The Force Commander of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), Major General Sajjad Akram recently paid a farewell visit to the eighth Battalion (GHANBATT 8) at the international airport town of Lungi, in the northern district of Port Loko, as they prepare to leave the Mission area after a successful completion of their 6-month tour of duty.



Addressing officers and soldiers of the battalion, Major General Akram said that they had contributed tremendously to the success of UNAMSIL, and also thanked them for their renovation of schools, churches, mosques and the construction of bridges despite their operational

and training tasks. He wished them a safe return to their country.

The Force Commander also paid his maiden visit to troops of the twelfth Kenyan battalion (KENBATT 12) in Masiaka, also in Port Loko district, who have been here since September 2003. Welcoming the Force Commander, the Commanding Officer, Lt. Col. Roosevelt Nzomo Nguku gave a brief on the operational readiness of the battalion, its deployment on the ground, the welfare of the troops and the general security situation in Masiaka, which he described as “cool and calm”.

The Force Commander expressed confidence in the capacity of the unit, but, however entreated them to emulate their predecessors whom he said did not only excel in military operations but also in providing humanitarian assistance to their host communities.

Maj. Gen. Akram later proceeded to the Headquarters of Sector Centre at Magburaka, northern province, where the Sector Commander, Brig Gen Shaffiq Uzzaman briefed him on the deployment, and the handing over of security primacy of the northern district of Bombali to the Sierra-Leone Police.

Also in Magburaka, Gen Akram in his capacity as UNAMSIL Chief Military Observer, visited Military Observers serving in the area, whom he applauded for their “active participation in the on-going electoral process” through the distribution of electoral materials to the districts and the success of the mines survey conducted in the general area.

In another development, Maj. Gen. Akram inaugurated the Sierra-Bangla Friendly Agricultural Project of livestock and crops at Rokumbi. Speaking at the occasion, the Force Commander noted that Sierra Leone had vast agricultural resources that could be harnessed to improve food self-sufficiency and eradicate hunger. He urged the people to maintain their agricultural development strides in the locality.

Responding, the District Agricultural Officer for Tonkolili, Mr. Saffa Kallon expressed appreciation for UNAMSIL’s contributions towards the development of Sierra Leone, promising to complement her effort by providing insecticides for use on the farm.

In the southern province of Moyamba, the Commanding Officer of the fifth Nepalese Battalion (NEPBATT 5) stationed there, Lt Col Dilis Bikram Rana informed the Force Commander that their mission was to assist the Government of Sierra Leone within its area of responsibility in the maintenance of law and order, in conjunction with other national security agencies. A mission, which according to him, has been tenaciously pursued till date.