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PRESS RELEASE

**HUMAN RIGHTS SECTION HANDS OVER REFERENCE
LIBRARY IN LUNGI**

Freetown – Over 100 persons, among them government officials, local and traditional leaders, youth and women’s groups, United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) peacekeepers, military observers and civilian police, yesterday attended the formal handing over ceremony of a human rights reference library by the Human Rights Section of UNAMSIL to the people of Lungi in northern Sierra Leone.

The library is the fifth of its kind established in the last two years by UNAMSIL’s Human Rights Section in collaboration with local human rights task forces. Libraries have already been handed over in Kambia, Port Loko, Lunsar and Masiaka, all in the north of the country. In each location, the Human Rights Section assists the local task force to become a registered human rights non-governmental organization (NGO) titled United for the Protection of Human Rights (UPHR). Books are then provided following the host community’s provision of a building to house the library.

At yesterday’s handing over ceremony of the human rights reference library in Mahera, Lungi, event Chairman, Paramount Chief Bai Sherbro Komkanda II stated that in their peacekeeping development, UNAMSIL personnel had left lots of educational facilities nationwide that would leave footprints in the sands of time.

Officer-In Charge of the Human Rights Section, UNAMSIL, Ahowanou Agbessi said “the opening of a human rights library in Lungi is part of UNAMSIL’s support to the people for human rights education”, adding that they should be proud they had not been forgotten in this human rights education decade. He stressed that there could not be sustainable peace, reconciliation and development without human rights.

UNAMSIL Human Rights Officer in Port Loko who facilitated the establishment of this library, Boubacar Dieng, said the library was the collaborative efforts of his Section and the community in consultation with the Paramount Chief who provided the building.

Lionel Kamara, a member of the task force, on behalf of colleagues noted that if people had recognized others’ rights there would not have been a war. “If people begin to use their rights properly then it means we have entered the civilized world,” he said and promised that the library would be used properly.

***UNAMSIL Headquarters, Mammy Yoko, P. O. Box 5, Freetown, Sierra Leone
Tel: 232-22-273-183/4/5 Fax: 232-22-273-189***