

UNITED NATIONS



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*UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SIERRA LEONE
(UNAMSIL)*

**PRESS BRIEFING
SECURITY COUNCIL MISSION TO WEST AFRICA
Freetown, Sierra Leone
25 June 2004**

(Near Verbatim)

**SIR EMYR JONES PARRY (UNITED KINGDOM)
HEAD OF MISSION**

.... (inaudible) ... mission which is taking us to 7 countries in 7 days, and what we are trying to do is underline the support of the Security Council and of the United Nations, for West Africa and for the countries of West Africa. And the United Nations are very heavily involved in Sierra Leone, and so we've spent a lot of today talking to UNAMSIL, with the Special Representative, and proving with him how effectively the United Nations is doing its job in this country. I have to tell you we are very pleased with what we have seen.

What we are especially pleased that the transformation in Sierra Leone that today, two years after the conflict was declared ended, there are visible signs that indeed things are on the mend, and we derive a lot of encouragement from the discussions we have had, especially the privilege of an hour with the President and the Vice President, and four of the Ministers. We explored lots of issues, and we came away really reassured by the commitment of the Government, what it wants to do for the good of Sierra Leone, and reassured by the perception of the United Nations that both, the military component, but also the very strong civilian and police dimension, is reinforcing the efforts here in Sierra Leone.

So we are delighted to see that - we've come also with a simple message, which is that the United Nations will stand by Sierra Leone until the job is done. The job will only be done when Sierra Leone has an enduring prospect of peace, and prosperity and an economic development, which can harness the talents of the people of Sierra Leone and the assets of this country.

That's what it's all about – part of our task of course is to prepare Sierra Leone for that time when she does all these things on her own: to reduce the dependency, especially in the security field and we hope very much that the reducing commitment of the United Nations in terms of present troops is balanced out by a greater, more efficient local contribution, in both the military and police.

And to achieve that, we will do our very best to ensure that full support is given to complete the disarmament, demobilization and the reintegration into society of combatants and at the same time to ensure that police and military are as efficient as they can be, and that they can do the job. That's our task – so that Sierra Leone can control its own destiny but we must continue, as I said, to give all the other support, especially on the economic side, to develop and cope with the serious economic problems, which we understand, but to help tackle those.

And can I finish by just saying as the British Ambassador to the United Nations what a particular pleasure it is to come to a country with which we have had an association for over two hundred years, and where our association in the last

recent, and I say especially five years, has been so close. It is a privilege to see on the ground the cooperation and to recognize what the British troops in particular have been trying to do with the Department of International Development to give direct practical support to Sierra Leone. The President was kind enough to pay tribute to that.

Thank you very much indeed, and I am very happy to take questions – as indeed are my colleagues with me. So just direct your questions, please:

Q: I want to know what the Security Council is doing to get Charles Taylor here, considering fact that it was the Security Council that established the Special Court for Sierra Leone or War Crimes Tribunal?

A: ..and I should, of course, have said very clearly that we spent an hour and a half actually in the Special Court and in that time explored lots of different issues. Not least the questions of permitting the Court to function, making sure that its revenue was guaranteed so that the costs of the Court could be met. We are very impressed by the Court, because the whole question of justice and reconciliation of two elements are actually meeting the prospect of an enduring rule of law and a democratic state. In the Court we discussed also the position of Mr. Taylor. Now the Security Council doesn't have a formal position on Taylor but I don't think I will be contradictive of my colleagues if I said that our approach as individuals is that there should be no impunity for people who have been alleged to have committed the sorts of crimes that an indictment was issued against Taylor. The timing for bringing anybody before the Court is a mix – both of the indictment and of the circumstances of the case. And it can be argued that in fact when you are in a post conflict situation, the first thing you do is make sure that you've stop the conflict and then you stop any chances of it reoccurring. And then you've got two objectives: one is to promote reconciliation, truth and on the other hand to bring to justice those people who should be brought to justice. I think we are getting towards that third stage in the case of Liberia. The question therefore is when should Taylor be actually brought before the Court and the conditions for that have been set out by the President of Nigeria and it's really a question of whether a request is made and how that should be dealt with. The Security Council has no formal position on it itself, but what we have done is through the United Nations and indeed the budgetary provisions voted by the General Assembly made sure that the Court itself can function and has the revenue to permit it to do so.

Q: My name is Lansana Fofanah, I work for the BBC. You mentioned there that the Security Council is helping Sierra Leone to take control of the destiny and you mentioned the serious economic problem which you say you are aware of? Now as ...yourself, representing Britain at the United Nations Security Council and you are pouring so much money here, why do you think people are complaining about this massive corruption in the Government and the apparent of the Anti Corruption Commission, which you are funding as well? Don't you think these are all pointers to future conflict if you don't deal with these issues as much as you care about the security?

A: Well I think we have common ground in terms of establishing the sort of Sierra Leone that everyone wants to see, but you need to have security, you need to have development, and to achieve both of those things you need to end corruptionHow do you set about it. You referred to the contribution made by the Department of International Development in London. The President, when we saw him, stressed the need to tackle corruption, and he referred to that programme and said the Government was committed to tackling corruption head on, and that we fully applaud. In the end, you know, rule of law is so basic to a prosperous and democratic society, but there is no other option and rule of law isn't just having some democratic traditional norm – maybe one or two institutions. It's also all about criminality, it's about commercial law.....and that includes by definition, corruption. If Sierra Leone is to attract investment for example, it needs to make sure that corruption is ended because the companies who are looking for investment destinations are very clear by what they require, and they require a secure environment, they require one where they have a certainty in terms of the conditions in which they operate and they want which is fundamentally honest. So it is very much in Sierra Leone's interest that the climate of corruption should end and I hope that can become a common purpose.

Q: My name is Christo Johnson and I work for Reuters. You have made a very serious pointSierra Leoneans must take control of their destiny, which I agree with you. But now that you've meet with the President and you came just for a short time, I am sure you have been discussing with other institutions, more so the United Nations Development Programme here, UNAMSIL etc. Do you see a future where Sierra Leoneans take over destiny sir?

A: I am not going to be one of these people who spend seven hours in the country and then claims to be a total expert, not at all. We have had the benefit of talking to eleven of the Ambassadors resident here, so we canvassed as many views as we could and that process is continuing now, and will continue tonight. We are not going to make instant judgment, but let it be clear the aim in any post conflict situation is to establish rule of law, institutions, democratic elections, and a democratic system, and an end to all the problems which led to the conflict, and the prospect of economic development. Resources of the country being harnessed for the people of the country. We would all rally to that. It's right that the United Nations should play it's part in facilitating that, but the United Nations is not abig brother. It is a means by which nations achieve their aims and what has to be the case, is that we underpin Sierra Leone and we make sure that the job is done. But the job eventually will be only be done by the people of Sierra Leone. And that's the simple message. Over time the dependency has to end, it has to end gradually and there is you know a development assistance framework put together by all the agencies of the United Nations which guides the work that they do here, and which is a shared common platform with the Government, it's a partnership. That partnership must lead, we hope, to a successful outcome, but an outcome for the benefit of Sierra Leone and for the people of Sierra Leone to run their own country, and to have their own policies unhindered, and unsupported, because they are quite happy to be on their own and capable of being on their own.

Q: (inaudible)

A: I (inaudible) to mind you, my colleagues are very happy to have their chance before the microphone so if you want to address them elsewhere, please do.

Q: My name is Kelvin Lewis I work for Awoko Newspapers. Sir, you've been to Liberia and you have seen the economic situation there. Now do you think there would be need for further extension of UNAMSIL mandate in Sierra Leone?

A: Well the UNAMSIL mandate comes up for renewal this year, but on the basis that we have already agreed that for the first half of next year there should be a UNAMSIL presence, but it should be substantially reduced. That's a decision which fits in with the policy of leading Sierra Leone capability in both police and military, to be able to do the job for Sierra Leone. I don't want today to speculate beyond the summer of next year. At the moment what we've said is that there will be an initial investment and a new UNAMSIL which will be for the first six months of the next year. I think we should postpone judgment as to what happens. But the aim must be clear. It is to create the conditions that UNAMSIL is no longer necessary, because that's when we declare success. That's what we want, because 1) you reduced the courses of conflict and 2)you created a secure environment ... the security authorities in Sierra Leone can do the job themselves, but that's the aim.

Q: I am Ethel Sillay from Sky Radio 96.6 FM, I would like to know if there is any mandate of examining a country's rule of law, and also I would like to know when you consent to send or to combat something like conflict in a country, what is your mandate, what are you looking for?

A: I think in terms of mandates there isn't a mandate really either to assess rule of law or specifically to address conflict prevention in the terms you put your question. What there is, is an increasing awareness in the international community in general, and especially in the United Nations that conflict preventions is one of those areas where we haven't been doing enough and therefore we should be doing more. Within the United Nations system there are all sorts of people who currently work very hard on conflict prevention. If you talk to UNDP, if you talk to, as we did, in Ivory Coast, UNICEF presented us with a paper on conflict prevention, their contribution to reducing conflict in that country. The agencies at the United Nations, under a broad political guidance from the Department of Political Affairs, are involved in this. The European Union has programmes on it. G8 does. A number of bilateral donors do. That effort must continue and in my view should be increased. On the question of how do you measure rule of law there isn't a measurement as such, but again it comes back to: it is one of the basic ingredients of successful

democratic state. It is also one of those things where a number of different bits of the United Nations are again working on it. I was quite impressed, we had a debate in the Security Council in September, at ministerial level, on rule of law. After that, the Secretary-General has said that he will report to the Council, which I think he would be doing in the next couple of weeks, setting out what to be done about rule of law. But the more we looked at the subject the more we realized that people like the United Nations Development Programme invest large sums of money day by day in institution building, in creating the conditions for rule of law to be developed. What's not happening is that this is in a joined up fashion where we all agreed on the objectives and the parameters; who is doing what. So we need more organization. But it's not specifically a Security Council responsibility, because both areas are ones which touch on all the organs of the United Nations and all the agencies at the United Nations, because they are both fundamental issues, how you stop conflict, how you actually develop a rule of law. That's my simple assumption. If you have the rule of law, you are more likely to be democratic, and if you are democratic you are less likely to be in conflict, either internally or with other countries. That's the causality, it's very simple, but they are big issues and of course they need to be tackled comprehensively across the range of different areas.

Q: My name is Abubakr Tejan and I work for the Democrat Newspaper. My question has to do with the United Nations... (inaudible) and I would like to express our appreciation for certain recent moves that have been made so far which are very strong. But from a legal point of view, I think it would be very contentious if the United Nations or those whosanctioned travel bans on people not to give ... evidence as to the reasons why they are doing that. I wonder if there is anything stopping the United Nations from setting up a tribunal, similar to the Special Court which they have spent quite a lot of money on that will deal with corruption at that level, because the US or whatever country is responsible for that must have had strong evidence to justify the line of action?

A: In terms of tribunals, I don't think I'm in favour of a new tribunal at the moment because you alluded to the cost, and costs are pretty substantial. But corruption, in a way like tackling the problem of drugs, there are whole series of different ways of doing it and there is no simple one answer to it, so you have got to attack on all fronts. And for corruption, I mean there are for example in the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, they have specific conventions against corruption, which those member countries are supposed to sign up to. The United Nations in its different organs is trying to pursue the same aim. In the end, of course, it's quite simple to set out one other criteria, when we are trying to stop corruption, whatever its manifestations, well that's pretty obvious. What you need to do -- in any country one accepts that the responsibility must rest with local government, it's a government that has to set the tone, and parliaments have to legislate, and you have to have systems which are sufficiently open and transparent that you can avoid the blatant corruption. So that means if contracts are to be awarded they should be done on the basis of an open tendering system, but the tenders should be open to scrutiny and there should be some external validation, preferably within the country of the process adopted. Of course another bill of this is that, you know, who are often corrupt are policemen or border guards who haven't been paid for the past two months. It's a common problem in many parts of the world. Government can't create the conditions to avoid corruption unless they treat their employees properly and give them an income. That's just one example of another solution to tackle the same problem. But the law, the criminal law is also part of it and should bring to justice people who have been seen to be corrupt, or profited from it and should not be allowed to get away with it. So whole series of things needs to happen, but I don't think it needs a supra national tribunal from the United Nations. It does require individual countries to take their responsibility.

Thank you very much.

(inaudible) I just want to repeat how pleased we are to be and to invite Mr. Mahmood who represents Pakistan on the Council. He would like to say just a little bit about Pakistani's contribution to Sierra Leone at the moment.

Mr. Mahmood (Pakistan):

I thank you so much. Just as mentioned as a representative of Pakistan, I would like to take this opportunity to say how proud Pakistan is to have contributed to international efforts to bring peace and security to Sierra Leone and the extent of being done by Pakistani troops as part of UNAMSIL is acknowledge at the highest level and we are grateful for that. It's our fervent hope that peace becomes irreversible in Sierra Leone and the friendly people of Sierra Leone enjoy the fruits of peace, stability and

economic development over the long term. Thank you so much.

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