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PRESS RELEASE

**UNAMSIL HANDS OVER SECURITY PRIMACY OF SOUTHERN PROVINCE
TO SIERRA LEONE GOVERNMENT**



From left to right: UNAMSIL Force Commander Maj.-Gen. Sajjad Akram, Vice-President Solomon Berewa and DSRSG Alan Doss

by the symbolic transfer of control of security from the UNAMSIL Sector Commander, Brig. Gen. Shafiq Uzzaman, to the Regional Commissioner of the SLP, Amadou E.P. Kai-Kai.

Freetown – The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) yesterday handed over security primacy of the Southern Province to the Government of Sierra Leone. The ceremony, held in the provincial capital of Bo, was presided over by the Vice-President Hon. Solomon Berewa and the Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (DSRSG) for Governance and Stabilization, Mr. Alan Doss. The parade, jointly performed by the Sierra Leone Police (SLP), the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) and UNAMSIL

Handing over security primacy, the DSRSG congratulated the people of the area on this achievement, saying it marked an important milestone in the consolidation of peace and security in Sierra Leone. He stated that the responsibility for security was gradually assumed by national security forces, following an assessment of their capabilities, concurrently with the progressive withdrawal of UNAMSIL troops. The DSRSG said that much would be expected from the security forces, and that this would require a high sense of responsibility, but also patience in face of constraints, as needs were great and resources scarce. He assured the audience that “the United Nations remained committed in Sierra Leone”: the Security Council had recently mandated the retention of a residual presence to backstop security forces and respond to any threat to peace and security.

The DSRSG emphasized that long-term security was “more than just effectiveness and efficiency of the security agencies, but also about how people live and work together, how this country is governed, how its wealth is shared among its people”. An important step in this regard would be the upcoming local elections, which he urged all to contribute to make fair and violence-free.

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Vice President Berewa emphasized the significance of the event, which provided an opportunity to both “acknowledge the services rendered by UNAMSIL in bringing back peace to Sierra Leone” and to “show the confidence of the Government in its security agencies”. He underlined the importance of security as bedrock for development, mentioning the resources devoted by his Government to the security sector, and highlighted the key role to be played by the communities and Paramount Chiefs in preserving security. He also defined the role of the police and the army, deployed respectively to serve the community and to focus on protecting the borders. The Vice-President stated his Government’s commitment to set an example for other countries, pledging to promote good governance to consolidate peace.

The host Paramount Chief, on behalf of the local community, expressed their appreciation for the work of UNAMSIL, which proved that “peacekeeping can go side by side with development”. He called on the Government to further support the national security agencies, so that all activities performed by UNAMSIL, including quick-impact projects, could be continued through them, in particular the RSLAF.

The ceremony ended with the release of four white doves, symbolizing peace in the four districts of the Southern Province.

Also present at the ceremony were the UNAMSIL Force Commander, Maj.-Gen Sajjad Akram, the Chief of Defense Staff of the RSLAF, Maj.-Gen. Sam Mbomah, the Inspector General of Police, Brima Acha Kamara, the IMATT Commander, Brig. Simon Porter, UNAMSIL Sector Commanders, the UNAMSIL Police Commissioner, members of Parliament and Paramount Chiefs from the region.

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