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PRESS RELEASE

**FORCE COMMANDER WELCOMES NEW GHANAIAN AND BANGLADESHI
PEACEKEEPERS TO UNAMSIL**



The FC Maj Gen Sajjad Akram being introduced to officers of Ghanbatt9

Freetown - Major General Sajjad Akram, the Force Commander of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), yesterday visited the newly arrived Bangladeshi and Ghanaian peacekeepers in Sierra Leone.

Accompanied by the Commander, Sector West, Brig Gen Nuhu Bamali and the Assistant Chief of Staff, Logistics, Col Kofi Yeguo, the Force Commander welcomed the ninth Ghanaian battalion (GHANBATT 9) at Lungi, Port Loko district, north of the country. Major General Akram said he had so far been impressed

by the performance of the Ghanaian contingent in the UNAMSIL, something he said prompted him to recommend to the United Nations Security Assessment Team on their recent visit to Sierra Leone that a Ghanaian Battalion be involved in the residual 3,250-strong force that will form part of the follow-on Mission to UNAMSIL. He stressed the dire need for the battalion to be operationally prepared to handle any eventuality that might arise in the country especially with the presence of the Special Court and the forthcoming Local Government elections.

Gen Akram urged the troops to avoid “recklessness” in driving and conform to highway codes to prevent undue loss of life in peace time and warned them about the HIV/AIDS scourge. Briefing the Force Commander, the Commanding Officer of GHANBATT 9, Lt Col. Yanyi Akofur said they had carried out a threat assessment on the Freetown International Airport at Lungi alongside the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) and Special Court security and that appropriate measures had been taken to forestall any act of insecurity. He disclosed that the unit was instrumental in moving electoral officers in the northern Kambia and Port Loko Districts.

The Force Commander later proceeded to Hastings, outside Freetown where he told officers and soldiers of the fourth Bangladeshi Engineers (BANENGRS 4) that the UN code of conduct would not be compromised and that appropriate disciplinary actions would be taken against defaulters. He however expressed confidence in the “professional capability” of the Bangladesh troops and hoped he would not be let down.

The Commanding Officer of BANENGRS 4, Lt Col Manwar told the Force Commander that his unit provided engineering support to UNAMSIL in the areas of construction and improvement of roads, bridges, airfields, runways and electrification.

He pointed out that the unit was at present involved in the repairs of the Yilleh–Matotoka road in the Tonkolili district and the the Congo Town Bridge.

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