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**PRESS RELEASE**

**MILITARY SPOKESMAN AND CIVPOL COMMISSIONER BRIEF PRESS**  
**ON SECURITY AND TRAINING OF SIERRA LEONE POLICE**

*Freetown* – The military spokesman of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) Major Onyema Nwachuku and the Commissioner of Civilian Police (CIVPOL) Hudson Benzu today briefed members of the press at UNAMSIL headquarters in Freetown on security issues and on how CIVPOL has been helping the Sierra Leone Police to improve its standards.

Major Nwachuku said the general security situation in Sierra Leone was calm and stable, particularly at the border areas.

In his briefing, Commissioner Benzu gave an update of CIVPOL's assistance to the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) to bring that force up to international standards. "We have provided a 10 per cent quota for recruitment of officers to join the SLP. In addition to that, we agreed to train instructors as what we call training of trainers. Currently we have 121 trained. Of this, 60 were trained this year alone and we intend to train 40 more," he said and catalogued the several trainings which CIVPOL had rendered to the SLP.

Commissioner Benzu disclosed that at the moment, eight billets were being planned for the eastern region as there was the need for officers at Sierra Leone's borders with Liberia and Guinea because UNAMSIL would be pulling out from those areas.

During the question and answer session, Maj. Nwachuku disclosed that there might be a security breach along the Sierra Leone-Liberia border, but noted that the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) were doing their best to resolve the issue of an alleged hostage taking of a member of the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Development (LURD) by the RSLAF. "Now on the border security between Sierra Leone and Liberia, there is collaboration between the Southern Command of UNAMSIL and UNMIL."

Commissioner Benzu said the SLP had now reached "professional standards", adding that the way the force performed in the May local government elections was beyond expectations.