



PRESS RELEASE

Ref No UNAMSIL/PIO/PR240 /2005

Date: 30 June 2005

CIVPOL CONDUCTS LAST MEDAL PARADE

Freetown, Sierra Leone- Thirty-eight officers of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) Civilian Police (CIVPOL) were today at the Mission's headquarters in Freetown decorated with United Nations medals of honour at the last medal parade for CIVPOL officers of UNAMSIL.

The Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) Ambassador Daudi Mwakawago, the UNAMSIL Force Commander Major General Sajjad Akram and the Inspector General of the Sierra Leone Police, Brima Acha Kamara, decorated the recipients from thirteen countries. United Nations medals are usually given to those officers who have successfully completed 90 days of service without any blemish.

In his opening address, CIVPOL's Commissioner, Hudson Benzu disclosed that most of the recipients had been in the Mission for more than five to six months "and have been very eager to receive the medals." He noted that the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) had improved to "the extent that they are now able to compete with any police force in the world," and acknowledged the tremendous contributions they had received from the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP) and other donors in building the capacity of the SLP.

Brima Acha Kmara, the Inspector General of the Sierra Leone Police, noted, "these officers and their predecessors have contributed to making the SLP a force for good", adding that, "I'm very happy that these fine officers have helped sharpened the investigative skills of SLP officers." He expressed gratitude to UNAMSIL hierarchy for filling the gaps in the Sierra Leone Police.

The Guest Speaker, Ambassador Mwakawago said the "medal is a manifestation of your hard work and also an appreciation of the United Nations for your professionalism, sacrifice and devotion towards the restoration of law and order and the consolidation of lasting peace in Sierra Leone." He disclosed that he was told that 11 CIVPOL officers were currently assisting in training the SLP at the Police Training School at Hastings and at regional training centres in the southern Bo, the eastern Kenema and the northern Makeni, while 47 others were deployed throughout the country as mentors to the SLP officers.

Ambassador Mwakawago stated that a lot had been achieved by UNAMSIL CIVPOL officers over the years as demonstrated by the fact that over 3000 SLP had been recruited and trained but warned that, "our final goal of 9,500 by December, 2005 may fall short by 500 officers who need to be trained." He also once again congratulated recipients on being awarded UN medals of honour.

The countries whose officers received medals were Ghana, Nepal, India, Norway, Malaysia, Kenya, Turkey, Jordan, Russia, Namibia, Sweden, Zambia and Zimbabwe.



UNAMSIL
United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
