

# **PRESS RELEASE**

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## **THE UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS STOPS AT GRAFTON AMPUTEE AND WAR WOUNDED CAMP.**

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Madam Louise Arbour, today visited Grafton Amputees and War Wounded Camp in Eastern Freetown.

Welcoming the High Chief, the Chairman of the Amputees Association, Alhaji Jusu Jaka, called on the Human Rights Chief to impress on the Sierra Leone government to urgently establish the Special funds for war victims and also implement a credible reparations program as stated in the Lome Peace Agreement and in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Report.

Alhaji Jaka also solicited for the provision of medical facilities and micro Credit facilities for war victims in order to alleviate their deplorable conditions.

Responding, The High Commissioner, Justice Louise Arbour promised to convey all their concerns to the government. He assured them that the international community is very much concerned about establishing lasting peace in Sierra Leone and the UNAMSIL Human Rights Officers will continue to meet with them and offer whatever assistance they can.

Louise Arbour assured the amputees that the international community over the last ten years had made a public commitment that justice was essential to lasting peace. He explained that the former Liberian President was removed from the country by Nigeria's president Obasanjo in good faith so that peace will prevail, but added that time has now come for justice also to be given a chance. She once again called on the Nigerian President and all African leaders particularly in the sub region to stand up and say very frankly that they believe in justice as much as they believe in peace.

Earlier in the morning, Louise Arbour attended a combined meeting of the UNAMSIL and the United Nations Agencies in the country to find out how they streamline human rights activities in their various areas of responsibility. She took a swipe at the issue of female genital mutilation and other abuses of women and child's rights and called for their criminalization. She also condemned the spate of corruption in the country especially in the administration of justice.

The Human Rights Chief stressed that the UN Secretary General has positioned Human Rights as the third pillar in his Larger Freedom reform programme and emphasized the need for her office to maintain strong field presence in Sierra Leone.

Tomorrow, Louise Arbour will round up her visit by addressing a press conference at the UNAMSIL Press Briefing Room.