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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Sierra Leone Security Forces Told to Respect Civil Authority.**

*Freetown, Sierra Leone-- 09 September 2005*, As the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) embarks upon its final withdrawal process, the Sierra Leone Security Forces have been admonished to subject themselves to the legitimacy of civilian authority as provided by the constitution.

The Special Representative of the Secretary General for Sierra Leone, Ambassador Daudi Mwakawago, made this call at the closing ceremony of a one-week seminar on Civil-Military Relations organized by the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) for the capacity building of the Sierra Leone Security Forces and the media.

The SRSRSG told participants at the seminar that security can better be embraced when there is mutual trust and respect between the people and the security agents. Protection of life and property, and the maintenance of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the nation, he said, are the primary functions of the security forces, but added that these functions cannot be carried out alone by the security sector without the assistance and support of the people. He therefore stressed that the concept of community policing is most vital in reinforcing the efforts of the police towards a safe and orderly community.

Ambassador Mwakawago warned against excessive disproportionate use of coercive power as it has the tendency to render the security force into being an enemy rather than a protector of the people.

The SRSRSG exercised delight at the inclusion in the training manual of HIV/AIDS which he said has become a big obstacle to the building and sustenance of capacity in every society. He emphasized that there was no use expending a lot of efforts, energy and funds to develop manpower meant to keep and enforce law and order and also protect the territorial integrity of a nation; only to lose the manpower within a very short time. He advised participants to undergo appropriate HIV/AIDS tests and take relevant protective measures through abstinence or other means to save their lives and those of their partners and communities from the scourge.

Ambassador Mwakawago also advised them to give serious attention to gender mainstreaming in their programs and activities adding that the contribution of women in dealing with security issues where women and family matters are involved, can be very valuable.

The Workshop which was handled by experts from the Center for Civil-Military Relations, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California drew participants from the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces, the Sierra Leone Police and the media