

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SIERRA LEONE  
(UNAMSIL)

## **PRESS RELEASE**

Ref No UNAMSIL/PIO/PR286/2005

### **More than 15,000 Turned Out To Celebrate the War Don Don, Peace Don Kam: the Music Festival**

*Freetown, Sierra Leone – On Saturday 26 November 2005*, in front of an audience of over 15,000, Sierra Leone's best musicians and cultural acts joined forces to celebrate the dividends of peace in the once war-ravaged country.

Organized by the United Nations in Sierra Leone, in conjunction with the Government of Sierra Leone, the event marks a turning point in the country's history as it will soon bid farewell to its last peacekeepers, a clear sign of the renewal of this beautiful West African country. The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, once the largest peacekeeping force in the world with 17,500 troops, will officially withdraw from the country on 31 December 2005.

"War Don Don, The Peace Festival" saw the country's top artists, including Daddy Saj, K'Man, Extra O and Jungle Leaders, grace the stage with United Nations Development Programme Goodwill Ambassador AJA (Barbados) to play for both local citizens and international and political dignitaries alike. Attendees included the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Sierra Leone, Ambassador Daudi N. Mwakawago, as well as representatives from the Government of Sierra Leone, United Nations agencies and the international community.

Declaring the event opened, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for Sierra Leone, Ambassador Daudi Ngelautwa Mwakawaga, stated that the festival was a demonstration of the absence of the 11 years war, and emphasized that Sierra Leoneans should close an old chapter and open a new one, where achievable goals would be set, and never gain would there be a war in Sierra Leone.

The SRSG called on the artists to articulate messages that will enhance sustainable peace and development in Sierra Leone, so that the UN would never come again to Sierra Leone to resolve conflict.

The phrase "War Don Don, Peace Don Com" denotes the words of President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, who in 2002, after more than a decade of conflict, declared the war officially over.

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*UNAMSIL Public Information Office, Mammy Yoko Hotel, Room 230 Aberdeen, Freetown, PO Box 5  
MEDIA CONTACT: Ag. Spokesman: Daniel Adekera: 232-22-295-817 or Mob:232-76-609-294  
or Information Assistant: Mohamed Sankoh: 232-76-611-986 or 232-22-295-676 EMAIL pis@un.org*

The event highlights the success of the peace process in Sierra Leone, and provides proof of the country's renewed confidence and vigor.