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**UNAMSIL FORCE COMMANDER PAYS CONDOLENCE VISITS TO
PEACEKEEPERS**

Freetown - The Force Commander of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), Major General Sajjad Akram, recently ended a series of condolence visits to various UNAMSIL Units and Contingents who lost personnel in the UN helicopter crash on 29 June that claimed all 24 onboard.

Addressing peacekeepers of the Pakistani Provost Company at Goderich, outside Freetown, General Sajjad Akram who was away during the crash, described it as “a very tragic incident, which unfortunately cut short the lives of highly professional and dedicated peacekeepers,” adding, “It is an irreparable loss not only to the bereaved families and UNAMSIL, but also to the entire United Nations”.

The Force Commander prayed for their souls ekeepers to rest in peace and urged the serving peacekeepers not to allow the incident to dampen their morale but rather to strengthen their spirits and ensure that their mission of attaining utmost peace in Sierra Leone was attained.

Earlier, Major General Akram had paid similar visits to Bangladeshi peacekeepers, and officials of UT Air who also lost some of their colleagues in the crash.

General Akram later paid a one-day condolence visit to Pakistani peacekeepers of the Southern Command in the eastern district town of Koidu, who lost fourteen of their colleagues following the helicopter crash.

Sympathising with the peacekeepers, the Force Commander stated “Though it is difficult to fill the vacuum left by the peacekeepers, you should endeavor to establish contact with the bereaved families and give them the necessary support on repatriation back home”. He urged them not to allow their enthusiasm to wane as a result. He showered encomiums on the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG), the former Director of Administration and other senior officials of the Mission for their “cooperation and efficient handling of the incident”. He noted further that he was quite appreciative of the quick response and excellent coordination of the Deputy Force Commander, the Chief of Staff (Force), the medical team and the search-and-rescue team during the tragic incident.