



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **LURD REBEL FACTIONS MEET IN FREETOWN IN EFFORTS TO RESOLVE DISPUTE**

*Freetown, Sierra Leone* – Under the chairmanship of Sierra Leone’s President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah and the facilitation of the United Nations, members of the two factions in the former rebel Liberians United for Reconciliation and Development (LURD), including their disputed leader Sheku Damate Konneh and his challenger Kabineh Janneh, who is also Minister of Justice in the National Transitional Government of Liberia, yesterday reached “an agreement on broad principles” following a two-day meeting in Freetown aimed at resolving their differences.

According to a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed at the President’s Lodge in Freetown, the two sides agreed to “work as one united entity,” agreeing that LURD would be transformed into a political movement. They expressed concern at the composition of the Liberian National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration and Resettlement (NCDDRR), which they say does not adequately address the needs of their members, calling for the inclusion of senior former faction members to be appointed at senior level within the Commission.

The MoU also expressed concern at recent disturbances in the Liberian capital, Monrovia, asking that an independent assessment mission be established and sent to review the disarmament process in that country.

Earlier, President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah said he was optimistic the agreement would hold, adding that he had spoken on the phone with the estranged wife of Mr. Konneh, who strongly contests her husband’s leadership, and she pledged her support for the outcome of the talks.

The President said peace or instability in Liberia would be mirrored in Sierra Leone, hence his decision not to pressure President Olus egun Obasanjo to hand over former Liberian President Charles Taylor to the Special Court for Sierra Leone. He reiterated his commitment to peace in the West Africa sub-region, including the Mano River Union basin comprising the States of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Accompanying the two LURD delegations was the Speaker of the Parliament of the National Transitional Government of Liberia, George Dweh.

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