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**PRESS RELEASE**

**UNAMSIL FORCE COMMANDER WITNESSES UNAMSIL/RSLAF SHOOTING  
COMPETITION**



*Deputy Minister of Defense, Hon. Joe Blell taking aim*

*Freetown – The Force Commander of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), Major general Sajjad Akram yesterday joined members of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) in marking the start of a 4-day Skills at Arms (SAS) firing competition at Benguema, Waterloo, outside the capital Freetown. The competition will see soldiers from the RSLAF and UNAMSIL peacekeepers compete in rifle and pistol firing.*

Speaking at the firing range, the Commander of the Sector West of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), Brig. Gen. Nuhu Bamali, who is the Exercise Director, said the significance of the competition was to gauge the marksmanship of the participating soldiers and in pursuit of UNAMSIL's objective of "keeping up our guard" and "building the capacity of the Government Sierra Leone" by improving on the weapon proficiency, safety precautions and sportsmanship of troops of the RSLAF.

Declaring the competition officially open, the Deputy Minister of Defense, Hon. Joe Blell said he was delighted at the joint training exercise and expressed appreciation at the "impacting knowledge into and helping transform the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces into a professional military"; hence enhancing the capability of the national security forces.

Other senior officers from UNAMSIL Force Headquarters as well as from the RSLAF graced the occasion, which also included novelty shooting in which the UNAMSIL force Commander, the Deputy Minister of Defense and other senior officers fired M16 rifles at targets sited at a distance of 300meters.

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