



PRESS RELEASE

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GERMAN PRESIDENT ADDRESSES UNAMSIL PEACEKEEPERS IN KENEMA

Freetown, Sierra Leone – The visiting President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Horst Köhler yesterday visited Pakistani peacekeepers serving in the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) in the eastern provincial headquarters of Kenema.

Lauding the efforts of the troops to bring peace and security to Sierra Leone, he emphasized that Germany categorically supported conflict resolution throughout the world. He noted the humanitarian and other efforts of these peacekeepers and visited medical camps run by them where he witnessed Pakistani doctors administering treatment to the visually impaired and performing surgeries on patients from various parts of Kenema town and its environs. He presented some with gifts bearing the inscription, “Mankind: No Colour. No Race”.

Furthermore, stating that, “The UN is neither powerless nor unwilling to help,” Mr. Köhler assured that what had befallen Sierra Leone would never again be allowed to happen. However, the country still needed assistance as the core problems could not be solved “overnight”.

UNAMSIL Force Commander, Major General Sajjad Akram said the visit was timely and appropriate. He also acknowledged Germany’s “outstanding record” in peacekeeping, especially in the Balkans and Afghanistan.

On his return to Freetown, President Köhler visited UNAMSIL’s logistics base at Hastings, where he met with German staff members of the Mission who explained the nature of their jobs. Later, at Waterloo, on the outskirts of Freetown, President Köhler commissioned the community and skills-training centres built by the non-governmental organization, German Technical Cooperation (GTZ). During a conducted tour, he expressed amazement at how guns which were used to fight in the country’s civil war had been converted to farming tools. This demonstrated that there were growing prospects for peace, reconciliation and development in the country, he said. Germans were committed to being in Sierra Leone to assist the young, in particular, who needed an attractive vocation.

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