



PRESS RELEASE

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751 SOLDIERS DECORATED WITH UN MEDALS OF HONOUR

Freetown, Sierra Leone – Seven hundred and fifty-one soldiers including 43 officers of Nigerian Battalion Nineteen (NIBATT 19) of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) were today decorated with UN medals of honour at a parade at the Wilberforce Hockey pitch, west of the capital Freetown.

The soldiers were decorated by UNAMSIL's Deputy Force Commander Brig-General Paul Opoku; the leader of a three-man Nigerian military delegation Major-General M. A. Garba; the Chief of Defence Staff of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) Major-General Sam Mboma and the Nigerian High Commissioner to Sierra Leone, Adamu Alhaji Abass. UN medals are awarded to peacekeepers who have served in a peacekeeping mission for 90 days without committing any crime.

In his address, as the Guest of Honour representing the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) for Sierra Leone, Brig-Gen Opoku welcomed the Nigerian military delegation on behalf of the leadership of UNAMSIL and congratulated the men and women of NIBATT 19 for their excellent performance during the parade.

The Deputy Force Commander lauded soldiers of NIBATT 19 for their responsibility of providing security for the western area of Freetown and catalogued Nigerian troops' contribution to peace and development in Sierra Leone. He also stated that Sierra Leone security forces had taken over security primacy of the country but noted that UNAMSIL would continue to give support to local security agencies.

Highlights of the parade were dances depicting Nigerian cultures while the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces band was in attendance. The ceremony climaxed with the cutting of the "medal parade cake" and presentation of gifts to some invited guests. Also present was Sierra Leone's Inspector General of Police, Brima Acha Kamara.