

COMMUNIQUÉ

issued by

the Joint GoSL / RUF / UNAMSIL Committee on

Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration

The Joint Committee on Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) comprising representatives of the Government of Sierra Leone, the RUF and UNAMSIL held its eighth meeting in Freetown on 17 January 2002, under the chairmanship of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Sierra Leone, Ambassador Oluyemi Adeniji. The Government delegation was led by the Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Solomon Berewa, Esq. and the RUF delegation was headed by Issa Sesay, Esq.

The Government and RUF delegations expressed their sympathy to UNAMSIL for the peacekeepers who lost their lives and those who were injured during the explosion of ammunition in Tongo Fields on 5 January 2002.

1. The Joint Committee expressed great satisfaction at the tremendous progress made since the DDR programme was relaunched on 18 May 2001 leading to the disarmament of 46,453 combatants in all fighting groups. After a review of the conduct of the disarmament process in all districts, the Joint Committee formally declared the disarmament process completed throughout Sierra Leone.

2. The Joint Committee laid great emphasis on the importance of completing the disarmament and demobilisation process with the reintegration of ex-combatants. It expressed the fervent hope that the international community would respond with urgency to the statement on this subject issued by the President of the Security Council in New York on 9 January 2002 after the Council's discussion on the 12th Report of the United Nations Secretary-General on Sierra Leone. Meanwhile, it reiterated its earlier decision for the provision of opportunities for ex-combatants in various areas of Government services.

3. Aware that certain arms, particularly those that did not qualify for the DDR programme may still be in circulation, the Joint Committee re-stated its full support to the on-going Community Arms Collection and Destruction programme to create a weapons-free environment in Sierra Leone.

4. In its discussion of other issues from its earlier meetings, the Joint Committee noted that the transformation of the RUF into a political party has not been completed. The Chairman called on the two parties to assume fully their respective responsibilities for the completion of the process very quickly.

5. The necessity for a review of the Security Council travel ban on members of the RUF was raised. The Joint Committee took note that the formal declaration of the end of the war could provide an occasion for the Government of Sierra Leone to make the necessary approach to the Security Council for a review of the issue. It expressed hope that the Government would consider such action.

6. Building on the confidence that has been generated in the DDR process, the Joint Committee called for the acceleration of the extension of Government authority throughout the country.

Communique on completion of disarmament

7. The Joint Committee noted that the repatriation of Sierra Leonean refugees is of considerable importance. It is therefore of paramount importance that every effort be made to expedite the process to enable those willing to return home participate in the forthcoming elections.

8. The Joint Committee considered its own future and agreed that, as the creation of the UN/ECOWAS/GoSL Coordination Mechanism on Sierra Leone, it needs to submit a report to that committee. It therefore decided to mandate its Chairman to submit a final report to the UN/ECOWAS/GoSL Coordination Mechanism at the next ECOWAS Security and Mediation Council while retaining the option of informal meetings between UNAMSIL, GoSL and RUF as appropriate.

**For the Government of Sierra
Leone**

**Solomon Berewa
Attorney General and
Minister of Justice**

For the Revolutionary United Front

**Omrie Golley
Chairman
Peace Council**

**Witnessed by
UNAMSIL**

**Oluyemi Adeniji
Special
Representative of the
Secretary-General**

Done in Freetown, 17 January 2002