

Government of Sierra Leone in Exile
Minister of Presidential Affairs
19 December 1997

Statement by Minister for Presidential Affairs Momodu Koroma, on behalf of the government-in-exile of President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah

This morning, we heard over the BBC, a statement attributed to the leader of the junta in Freetown to the effect that the junta was not prepared to give way to the constitutional and democratically-elected Government by the 22 April 1998, in accordance with the Conakry Peace Plan.

Any attempt to postpone the restoration of the legitimate Government on or before 22 April 1998, is totally unacceptable to the Government and people of Sierra Leone.

We have always been suspicious of the intentions of the junta. They do not believe in negotiating in good faith. Therefore, the junta Chairman's statement did not come as a surprise. The whole world has now seen that they are not serious about peace, and that their real intentions have been, as we have always suspected, to buy time so as to rearm themselves and plunge our country into a bloodbath.

Government cannot be a party to that. A clear illustration of their real intention is shown in their construction of secret air strips in the Northern part of the country for the delivery of arms and ammunition, contrary to UN Security Council Resolution 1132.

It has always been Government's consideration to minimize the agony of the people who have suffered and continue to do so since this terror was unleashed on them by the illegal regime. It had always been the intention of Government to abide by the wishes of the international community that a peaceful resolution of the crisis should be the preferred course of action.

From the outset the junta has put a lot of obstacles in the way of commencement of the implementation of the Peace Plan. They cannot now use these obstacles to delay the restoration of the legitimate Government on or before 22 April 1998.

The Chairman of the illegal junta has now shown unbridled arrogance and intransigence which must now be stopped. He is not mandated to speak on behalf of the people, nor indeed, the country. After consultations with the international community and our people on the matter, Government will make a definitive position public and take appropriate action accordingly.

Government of Sierra Leone in Exile
Public Affairs Unit
6 January 1998

GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE
PUBLIC AFFAIRS UNIT

STATEMENT ON RECENT CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS

Reports of several cease-fire violations in Sierra Leone by the illegal regime have been received and noted by the legitimate Government of His Excellency President Ahmad Tejan-Kabbah.

The legitimate Government notes in particular the indiscriminate use of a helicopter gunship on displaced populated locations in Gerihun town, Bo District, on 31 December 1997, and a gunboat attack on Bonthe town in the Bonthe District on 1st. January 1998, leaving scores of innocent civilians dead and others severely injured.

The legitimate Government also wants to make public the attacks by the junta between January 2nd and 5th 1998 on the main camp for the displaced in Bo, leaving it totally burnt down and killing an unspecified number of displaced persons.

Also on January 4th 1998, the Centre for Under-nourished Children managed by a French NGO in Bo, was looted and sacked by elements of the illegal regime.

The several attacks on Civil Defence Forces positions in the country, especially in the South-East, by soldiers loyal to the junta have resulted in a series of clashes culminating in violence and mayhem.

Government therefore wishes to highlight these callous cease-fire violations committed by the illegal junta in Freetown, and roundly condemns the violence perpetrated against innocent and defenceless civilians.

Government calls on the international community to take note of these deplorable and destructive actions by the illegal junta which has placed fresh hurdles in the deployment of ECOMOG troops along with the United Nations Observer Force.

Government reiterates its commitment to all international and regional efforts aimed at bringing to an early end, the crisis in Sierra Leone.

Dated 6th January 1998

C/O PRESIDENTIAL LODGE, VILLA 49, O.A.U. VILLAGE, BELLEVUE
CONAKRY, GUINEA

Government of Sierra Leone in Exile
Public Affairs Unit
14 January 1998

Press Release, 14 January 1998

Government welcomes appointment of Mr. John Flynn as
Special Representative of the United Kingdom to Sierra Leone
and the convening by the UK of ad hoc meeting of donors in New York

The legitimate Government of Sierra Leone wholeheartedly welcomes the British Foreign Secretary's appointment of Mr. John Flynn as his Special Representative to Sierra Leone. Mr. Flynn, who will be based in London, will work internationally with other key players in the region and at the United Nations, to accelerate regional and international efforts to restore the democratically elected government of President Kabbah. The Government wishes to emphasise that Mr. Flynn's appointment is designed to support the role played by Mr. Peter Penfold who, as the British High Commissioner to Sierra Leone, played such an outstanding and significant role during the crisis.

As High Commissioner, Mr. Penfold will continue to represent the United Kingdom Government in Sierra Leone, and will continue to be the UK's main line of communication with the legitimate government temporarily located in Conakry. Mr. Flynn's role would primarily involve engaging with other governments and organizations with "a close interest" in the Sierra Leone crisis.

His appointment is a further demonstration of Britain's determination to ensure an early restoration of the legitimate government. The Sierra Leone Government hopes that Mr. Flynn's wealth of experience in conflict resolution in Africa, will be brought to bear on the Sierra Leone crisis. We also hope that his appointment will give renewed impetus, and once again ignite international action aimed at resolving the continuing crisis in Sierra Leone.

We fully support the move.

Ad Hoc donors meeting

The Government also welcomes the initiative of the United Kingdom to convene an ad hoc meeting on 15th January 1998, for donors and others interested in Sierra Leone.

The following is the text of the letter of invitation by the United Kingdom Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Sir John Weston, on 9th January 1998:

"1. Since the May 1997 coup in Sierra Leone, great efforts have been made in the region and the wider international community towards the restoration of the democratically elected

government of President Kabbah. The signing of the Conakry Communiqué by ECOWAS Committee of Five and the junta in October, was a significant breakthrough toward that end, and we believe that the international community has an important role to play in ensuring its successful implementation. In particular, the task of effective disarmament and demobilisation of the warring parties, undertaken by ECOWAS, will need material and financial support.

2. The communiqué of the ECOWAS meeting in Abuja on 19 December underlined the renewed commitment of ECOWAS to reach the speedy implementation of the peace plan.

3. We therefore believe it would be a good moment for potential donors and others with a close interest in Sierra Leone to consider what more can be done by the international community to support ECOWAS' efforts."

Finally, the Government of Sierra Leone wishes to acknowledge the role played by the United Kingdom Government in the international community's efforts, and in particular its assistance in drafting United Nations sanctions resolution 1132. The additional facilities, support and hospitality made available to our President and delegations at the recent Conference on Sierra Leone held in London, and at the Commonwealth Conference held in Edinburgh, are particularly appreciated.

Presidential Lodge
Villa 49
OAU Village, Bellevue
Conakry, Guinea

Government of Sierra Leone in Exile
Office of the President
13 February 1998

Statement issued by the Office of the President
on meeting with representatives of donor community
13 February 1998

His Excellency the President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, convened a meeting over the weekend in Conakry, Guinea, with representatives of the donor community to mobilize assistance for emergency and humanitarian relief, demobilization and reconstruction in Sierra Leone.

The President informed the representatives that Government was establishing a Task Force which will soon proceed to Freetown, to:

- i. prepare the ground for the immediate resumption of work by the the Government;
- ii. assess the damage caused to key administrative infrastructure and work out short-term remedies;
- iii. and prepare for the resumption of educational activities.

President Kabbah invited the meeting to consider the following priority needs in the country:

Humanitarian supplies

Food

Medicines

Petroleum products

Petrol

Diesel

Lubricants

Fuel oil

Kerosene

Demobilization

Resources to encamp and demobilize combatants

The President highlighted the need to also consider medium to long term development assistance, particularly reconstruction. He asked specifically for assistance to reconstruct houses which have been destroyed during the crisis, excluding his own, and suggested the creation of sustainable housing schemes throughout the country, so that the ordinary Sierra Leonean can afford a home of his or her own.

He also made specific proposals for youth employment, emphasizing that programmes can quickly be developed to address this problem which he said was one of the major causes of instability and violence in the country.

The representatives thanked the President and assured him that their respective agencies and Governments will act swiftly to meet the needs of the country. The UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy to Sierra Leone, disclosed that United Nations agencies are ready to begin delivery of assistance.

The British High Commissioner to Sierra Leone, Mr. Peter Penfold, assured the President that the British Government will extend required assistance to President Kabbah's Government and to the people of Sierra Leone bilaterally, and through the European Union, and that the United Kingdom will use its current chairmanship of the European Commission to mobilize European Union support. He disclosed that a British naval ship is on its way to Sierra Leone, bringing emergency medical supplies and personnel, engineers to repair electricity facilities, and experts on the detection and disposal of land mines.

The Charge d'Affaires of the Federal Republic of Germany assured the President that his Government has despatched four containers of medicines, baby foods and other humanitarian supplies. He also informed the President that his Government can provide assistance in the clearing of land mines, including training. He also responded positively to the President's appeal for the German Government to assist in youth employment programmes, in sustaining the Bo/Pujehun project, and in providing patrol vehicles for the police.

The head of delegation of the European Union assured the President that the Union will provide funds for the procurement of petroleum products, and that it will endeavour to speed up the process of bringing immediate relief to the country. Funds are also available for other areas.

The UNICEF representative disclosed that large quantities of food, medicines and educational supplies, except text books, are ready to be shipped to Sierra Leone following a needs assessment exercise.

A UN assessment mission is due in Freetown by the weekend when some medical supplies will be delivered.

Government of Sierra Leone
Office of the President
26 May 1998

FOR IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE

State House has announced that in reviewing government records, many people were found to have been issued Sierra Leone Diplomatic passports.

One such individual is a Mr. Roger Dale Crooks who was issued Diplomatic Passport Number D0023314 on 15th November, 1991 on the authorisation of former President Joseph Saidu Momoh in a letter dated 14th November, 1991. The issuing officer of the passport was Assistant Commissioner, Raymond Scott.

The reason given for the issuance of the passport was to "enable the holder (Mr. Crooks) to travel to the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Government of Sierra Leone". State House wishes to further announce that the Diplomatic Passport Number D002314 of Mr. Roger Dale Crooks has been withdrawn.

Office of the President
State House
FREETOWN
26TH May, 1998

Government of Sierra Leone
Ministry of Information, Communications, Tourism & Culture
26 May 1998

FOR IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE

It has come to the attention of State House that illicit mining, unauthorised fishing and smuggling are being undertaken by people to the detriment of the nation.

State house wishes to inform all that unless those engaged in illicit mining stop their illegal activities forthwith, they will only have themselves to blame. Since all rebels have been driven away from the mining areas and Government has asked people to stop mining until an appropriate mining policy is formulated, ECOMOG will treat anyone caught mining as a rebel. It is expected that the formulation of the new mining policy will be completed within the next 10 days. Government plans to put in place temporary measures for the resumption of mining activities. Before the recommended structure of the mining industry is put in place, "bona fide" miners are asked to be patient.

It has also been observed that people are engaged in smuggling with our neighbouring countries. Clearly, this will result in a loss of revenue and pose some security problems for us. We cannot provide basic facilities for our people when only a handful of people engage in an activity that siphons off revenue needed for general Government upkeep. These illegal activities must stop.

Office of the President,
State House
FREETOWN

Dr. Julius Spencer
Min. of Info., Communications, Tourism & Culture

Government of Sierra Leone
Office of the President
11 September 1998

Office of the President
STATE HOUSE

FOR IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE

Following the conclusion of the recent treason trial and the imposition of the death sentence on those found guilty, appeals and representations have been made to His Excellency the President for the sentences to be commuted.

The President has stated that such appeals and representations will in due time be given careful consideration, taking into account the concerns of the people of Sierra Leone.

Government however wishes to remind all concerned that according to the Constitution of Sierra Leone, convicted persons have the right of appeal to the Court of Appeal and to the Supreme Court, as may be appropriate. It is only after those judicial processes have been completed in the case of the death sentence that the President's prerogative powers can be invoked and again after the Prerogative of Mercy Committee, provided for in the Constitution of Sierra Leone, has looked at the case of each person's sentence. Accordingly, the plea for clemency at this stage is therefore premature. It would also be regarded as unconstitutional were the President to intervene in the judicial process at this stage, at a time when one of the arms of government is dealing with the matter.

At the same time references were made to those journalists who were convicted and sentenced as if they were tried for practising their profession. Such allegation is patently mischievous. The journalists concerned were charged and convicted not because they were practising their trade, but for having, of their own free will, actively participated in an illegal act which the Court has now held to be treason, just as in the case of non-journalists.

Government further wishes to point out that in bringing to justice those primarily responsible for the attempted overthrow of the constitutionally elected government and for the sustenance of the illegal Military Junta which has caused such horrors and atrocities on the people of Sierra Leone, it had spared no effort to ensure that the accused persons were given a fair trial. The trial was open to the public and international observers alike, and was acclaimed to have been freely and fairly conducted. No special laws were enacted or promulgated to bring the accused persons to trial.

Indeed, the death sentence as a penalty was inherited at independence by this nation and both the sentence and the mode of executing the sentence have not changed since.

It should also be noted that Sierra Leone is not the only country having the death penalty as part of its laws. Many others, including several of the states of the United States of America, have the death penalty as part of their law. Moreover, it is only recently that most of the states of the European Union have enacted laws to abolish the death penalty. The impression thus created that Sierra Leone is unique in this regard is totally misleading.

Finally, Government reiterates that while the appeals and representations of friendly governments and organisations will be given careful consideration, if and when this becomes necessary, such consideration is bound to take into account the interests of the people of Sierra Leone and the need to provide a deterrent against the recurrence of the ugly events from which this country has just emerged.

11th September, 1998

Government of Sierra Leone
State House
13 October 1998

FOR IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE

13TH OCTOBER, 1998

State House has announced that following the sentencing of the former Military officers on Monday 12th October, 1998 and even before, over 99% of the people of Sierra Leone have expressed the view that the law of Sierra Leone should take its course. The people of Sierra Leone are normally mild, kind, and God fearing people. For them to be overwhelming in their demand for the full implementation of the law with regard to the condemned former military officers is a clear manifestation of the extent of the atrocities committed by the AFRC/RUF Junta. The trials which are now over gave the people the opportunity to hear evidence from victims and eye witnesses which confirmed what the people already knew.

There are many examples of atrocities committed, but these are a few of the gruesome atrocities committed by the AFRC junta. An 86-year old woman was carried to a field where her only son, who had been brutalised and lying helpless in the hands of his captors saw them open his chest, cut off part of his heart and stuffed it into her mouth. Her son was subsequently decapitated and his head was given to her and was forced to breast-feed the decapitated head. The inhabitants of the township where she lived were told not to admit her to their homes after they had burnt down her own house.

Two Paramount Chiefs and a Chairman of a Town Council were killed in their homes. Soldiers who refused to participate in the commission of the atrocities were summarily executed.

Any Government opting for long custodial sentences for these dangerous people when the prison itself is old, outdated and therefore not worthy of the name, maximum security, will be a government that does not pay attention to the safety and security of its people. It was this same prison that was easily opened by one of these prisoners when he let loose all the inmates who subsequently became the AFRC/RUF junta.

Above all, throughout their trial, these people showed no remorse and were even making plans to escape from prison. The remnants of the AFRC/RUF are still callously amputating, decapitating, maiming and killing innocent civilians.

For these reasons therefore and without prejudice to the recommendation of the Prerogative of Mercy Committee required by the Constitution of Sierra Leone, Government will do all that is humanely possible to deal with pleas for clemency but in the final analysis, the experience and concerns of the people of Sierra Leone will have to prevail. Any deterrent measure taken will focus on the leaders rather than those who have been erroneously deceived into taking part in the mayhem and commission of heinous crimes.

Government of Sierra Leone
Ministry of Information, Tourism & Culture
26 December 1998

Ministry of Information, Communication, Tourism & Culture
PRESS RELEASE
December 26, 1998

Government wishes to reiterate that the security situation in the country is firmly under the control of ECOMOG and the other security forces. As far as Government is concerned, we remain faithful to the position adopted by the United Nations Security Council with respect to the conflict in Sierra Leone, which is to simultaneously pursue the military option and dialogue.

Those who presently live in Freetown and its environs know that the place is calm. Yesterday, President Kabbah went for congregational prayers with thousands of other Muslims in a Freetown mosque. Today, the inhabitants of the city staged a huge demonstration against the rebels and those who support them, demonstrating commitment to the liberation of their country and expressing contempt, particularly for supporters of the rebels in neighbouring and other countries.

Contrary to reports by the BBC, RFI and other media institutions, Makeni town is in the hands of ECOMOG, although there are continuing rebel attacks on the township. With regard to Kono, no military occupation has been established in the area by the rebels. Rather, the area was invaded by marauding gangs of illegal miners, among whom are rebels. This situation is being addressed by the security forces.

It is important to draw the attention of everyone to the fact that apart from Freetown, there are twelve districts in Sierra Leone. Of these twelve districts, the rebels are known to operate in only small parts of three districts. It is also important to stress here that the rebels are currently under severe pressure in the Eastern part of the country where they have their main base. All other parts of the country are calm and secure.

Government also would like to express its grave concern at the manner in which the crisis in Sierra Leone is being aggravated by inaccurate reporting of the events taking place by some international media houses. It is unfortunate that some of them are allowing themselves to be used as tools in the propaganda machinery of the rebels. We call on these international media houses to respect the sacred principles of good journalism by ensuring that reports relating to the situation in Sierra Leone are verified from credible sources before they are carried.

Government of Sierra Leone
Government of Sierra Leone
14 January 1999

Political settlement of the crisis in Sierra Leone
14 January 1999

The Government of Sierra Leone has taken note of recent statements from many sources, including governments and members of the United Nations Security Council, stressing the importance of dialogue and the need for a political rather than a military solution to the conflict in Sierra Leone.

The Government would like to assure the international community that it is still committed to a political settlement. Indeed, this is why it is actively and in good faith involved in current diplomatic efforts within the West African sub-region, by the Foreign Ministers of Cote d'Ivoire and Togo, under the auspices of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and by the Secretary-General of the United Nations through his Special Representative in Sierra Leone.

However, the Government of Sierra Leone would like to state categorically that while those diplomatic initiatives are underway, it will never abdicate its responsibility for the safety and security of the people of Sierra Leone who have been brutalized by rebels of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the

former military junta, with the support of various breeds of the proverbial 'dogs of war'. In this context, the Government of Sierra Leone is pleased that the Security Council, albeit belatedly, and some of the major Powers, have at last decided to name names, and to identify some of these 'dogs of war', their kennels, and their objectives. We hope that the Council and other governments would muster the courage not only to expose all those who supported and continue to support the rebels, including the supply of arms, but also to take all necessary measures to put an end to their conspiracy in this systematic destruction of Sierra Leone.

No government, democratic or otherwise, would stand idly by while its citizens are being butchered, raped, terrorized, and while their homes and farms are being scorched. The same concern which motivates some affluent governments to evacuate their citizens from areas of conflict in foreign lands, including Sierra Leone, has compelled the Government of Sierra Leone to take appropriate action, including military, to protect its people, the majority of whom have no means of escaping the rebel onslaught or of being evacuated to other countries. In this regard, the ultimate objective of the Government is self-defence.

The offensive against the rebels and their vicious allies, is not merely a struggle to uphold the principle of democracy or to bolster the democratically elected Government of President Kabbah. It is designed to protect by all means necessary the very lives of the people of Sierra Leone, and to prevent the total destruction of Sierra Leone as a nation. While pursuing dialogue, the Government of Sierra Leone, with the assistance of ECOMOG and the Civil Defence Force (CDF), is trying to ensure that the same RUF and its allies who had launched vicious military campaigns such as one

which they callously dubbed "Operation no living thing", will never achieve their objective of the total annihilation of the people of Sierra Leone.

Those who espouse unconditional dialogue with the rebels must understand that as in the case of many other conflict situations on the agenda of the United Nations Security Council, dialogues, negotiations and peace plans, per se, do not always or necessarily resolve armed conflicts, unless the parties concerned have the political will to implement the agreements derived from such negotiations. While the Sierra Leone Government does not in any way doubt the sincerity of most of the statements stressing the importance of dialogue, these should not create the impression that the Government has never had any dialogue with the RUF.

The Yammousoukrou Communiqué and Abidjan Agreement

The current position of the Government of President Kabbah regarding dialogue is not new. In his first major political act on assuming office in 1996, President Kabbah and the head of the RUF, Corporal Foday Sankoh, signed a communiqué at the Cote d'Ivoire city of Yammousoukrou, stressing their desire

to establish a permanent cease-fire in their country. The document opened the way for substantive negotiations on ending the conflict which, incidentally, started at least four years before the President was elected. On 30 November 1996, President Kabbah and Corporal Sankoh signed the Abidjan Peace Agreement.

At the signing ceremony, and in the presence of the President of Cote d'Ivoire, representatives of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations, President Kabbah and Corporal Sankoh embraced each other as peacemakers and brothers.

Three of the principal provisions of the Agreement were: a blanket amnesty for members of the RUF, the transformation of the RUF into a political party; and a programme of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants. Under the terms of the Agreement, a Commission for the Consolidation of Peace comprising representatives of the Government and the RUF was established. The United Nations, for its part, had prepared a plan for monitoring the disarmament and demobilization programme. The RUF proved that it had no intention of honouring its commitment under the Abidjan Agreements when it resumed the fighting less than three months after the Agreement. The whereabouts of some members of the RUF, including a member of the joint Commission for the Consolidation of Peace, who attempted to pursue implementation of the Abidjan Agreement through consultations, are still unknown.

ECOWAS peace efforts, including the October 1997 Conakry Peace Plan

When a group of unpatriotic members of the Sierra Leone Military Forces seized power from the democratically elected Government of President Kabbah in May 1997, and invited the RUF rebels to join them in Freetown, the RUF became the kingpin of the illegal regime. It established its own separate and independent structure, a so-called "Peoples Army", within the junta, and pursued its campaign of murder, terrorism, confiscation and wanton destruction of private and public property.

Advocates of dialogue with the rebels should remember that between June 1997 and February 1998, the RUF-controlled junta derailed every effort by ECOWAS aimed at the restoration of the

constitutionally elected Government of President Kabbah, and the establishment of a durable peace in Sierra Leone.

Throughout those eight months, President Kabbah supported every initiative, every communiqué, and every inter-governmental resolution designed to end the conflict peacefully. Perhaps the most important of these was the ECOWAS Six-month Peace Plan for Sierra Leone adopted in Conakry on 23rd October 1997. The document was signed by senior members of the RUF rebel/military junta and representatives of the ECOWAS Committee of Five on Sierra Leone.

Although President Kabbah's democratically elected Government was not a party to the Peace Plan, and despite serious reservations about some of its provisions, the President accepted it in principle. He urged all Sierra Leoneans to embrace the Plan which he described as "an instrument which will lead to sustainable peace..". In addition to the cessation of hostilities and the restoration of constitutional rule by 22 May 1998, the Plan made provisions for unconditional immunities and guarantees from prosecution to be extended to all those involved in the coup and subsequent unfortunate events between May 1997 and May 1998. The document also stated that in the spirit of the 1996 Abidjan Agreement, the RUF leader, Corporal Foday Sankoh, was expected "to return to his country to make his contribution to the peace process."

A few days after signing the Conakry Peace Plan the RUF dominated junta introduced new conditions and insisted that the provision for the disarmament and demobilization and reintegration of combatants did not apply to the "regular army". The rebels in the illegal regime also insisted that in any case disarmament of combatants would not begin until the RUF leader returned to Sierra Leone.

It will be recalled that in the absence of a satisfactory response from the RUF dominated junta, and notwithstanding its appeals for dialogue and national reconciliation for the restoration of lasting peace in Sierra Leone, the Security Council had itself found it necessary to take effective action under Chapter VII of the Charter by imposing an arms and oil embargo against the RUF dominated junta.

The terror unleashed by the RUF rebels and their junta allies during the past week, and concessions by the Government for the establishment of a cease-fire, followed by peace talks, illustrate once again the fact that the rebels do not negotiate in good faith, and that they cannot be trusted in implementing agreements which they themselves endorse.

Nevertheless, the Government of Sierra Leone will continue to maintain its two-pronged approach to the conflict, namely, its readiness to support diplomatic efforts aimed at the cessation of hostilities leading to lasting peace, and its determination to ensure the safety and security of its people.

14 January 1999

Government of Sierra Leone
Government of Sierra Leone
16 January 1999

STATEMENT BY THE GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

16TH JANUARY 1999

Recent developments in Sierra Leone have obliged Government to clarify certain issues and state its position on these and the general security situation in the country.

ECOMOG is firmly in control of Freetown and life is gradually returning to normal. It is envisaged that very soon everybody in the city will be free to go about their normal business as essential utilities, such as electricity and telephone, are being fully restored. Already many parts of the city have had their electricity and telephone facilities restored while the water supply system which was fully protected has been uninterrupted. Government acknowledges with pride the resilience which the people of Freetown have displayed during the difficult and trying period, and wishes to console them for the suffering they have endured in the hands of the callous and ruthless RUF terrorists who invaded Freetown and shattered the peace and calm for which the city has been known.

The recent upsurge in rebel activities in the country came about because,

- a) the Government of Liberia intensified its support for the rebels including the recruitment of mercenaries for them and
- b) some of the surrendered soldiers of the defeated Sierra Leone army whom the Government had re-engaged in the spirit of reconciliation and peace defected to the rebels.

The commendable efforts of ECOWAS and Others

Special thanks and appreciation go to the Member States of ECOWAS for their determination to defend our sovereignty and territorial integrity, our way of life and culture, even at the expense of the ultimate sacrifice of their nationals whom they have made available for our defence. The Federal Republic of Nigeria has, as always, by far played a leadership role in the provision of troops and logistics, followed by the Republics of Guinea and Ghana. It is hoped that troops from the Republic of Mali too will arrive in Freetown soon.

But for the timely assistance given by these countries, Sierra Leone would have been completely destroyed. The Government of Sierra Leone will ever remain grateful for the practical commitment of these countries to our cause. We will accordingly give due consideration to any advice or counsel emanating from those States with reference to any peace agreement which may emerge from the current diplomatic moves aimed at ending the crisis in Sierra Leone.

Government notes and appreciates the political and diplomatic support given to this country by the United Nations, the Commonwealth, the OAU, Britain, the United States, China and the other permanent members of the Security Council. But it is a matter of regret to state here that the Sierra Leone situation is a typical illustration of the selective manner in which democracy is defended generally by the international community. In our case, the international community will advocate and urge us to practise democracy and uphold democratic principles. However, in the face of terrorism and undemocratic forces determined to wreck our democracy and its institutions, they shy away and express reservations about providing adequate and practical assistance to defend our democracy.

The issue of dialogue with the RUF

Government wishes to set the record straight regarding dialogue with the RUF aimed at achieving permanent peace in Sierra Leone. It has been the Government's position from the outset that peace through dialogue was an option preferable to a military solution of the conflict in Sierra Leone. As a result, President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, within two weeks of his assumption of office, travelled to Cote d'Ivoire in April 1996 and held discussions with Corporal Foday Sankoh, leader of the RUF, under the auspices of the Ivorian Government. This resulted in agreement on the cessation of hostilities pending further discussions to seek a permanent solution to the crisis.

That agreement was followed by a series of meetings in Abidjan which culminated in the signing of the Abidjan Peace Accord in November, 1996 by President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah and Corporal Foday Sankoh and witnessed by the President of Cote d'Ivoire, and representatives of the UN, the OAU and the Commonwealth, all acting as moral guarantors to that Accord.

The Accord was hailed by the people of Sierra Leone as an instrument which would bring lasting peace to the country. Indeed, it contained provisions for achieving just that. In that document, the Government of Sierra Leone made a number of substantial concessions to the RUF, all in the name of peace. For example immunity was given to the RUF in respect of all the atrocities committed by that organisation up to the date of the signing of the Accord; the RUF undertook to give up violence in the pursuit of its objectives and to convert itself into a political party pursuing the path to peace, and the Government agreed to facilitate such a process with the assistance of funds from the international community; a time scale was stipulated for the disarmament of the RUF combatants under the supervision of UN monitors; the Government undertook to guarantee the safety of Corporal Foday Sankoh and other members of the RUF on their return to Sierra Leone; the Government undertook to dispense with the services of any armed group which was then in Sierra Leone other than by way of a treaty obligation; adequate provision was made for the retraining, resettlement and reintegration of the disarmed RUF combatants. In order to consolidate the peace, the Accord provided for the establishment of a Commission for the Consolidation of Peace with equal membership drawn from the Government and the RUF. The Commission was to meet regularly in Freetown.

The Government discharged all of its obligations under that Accord. However, within a week after the signing, Corporal Foday Sankoh gave orders to his men to resume full scale hostilities, explaining to them that he had signed the Accord only to relieve himself of international pressure to do so. This fact was brought to the attention of the moral guarantors to that Accord, including Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Guinea and Ghana. He refused to cooperate with the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace.

This short account clearly belies the allegation of intransigence levied on President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah by the detractors of the Government of Sierra Leone, and supporters of the RUF cause. It illustrates the fact that Corporal Foday Sankoh did not enter the negotiations leading to the Abidjan Peace Accord in good faith, that he has no interest in peace, that he has no political agenda, and moreover, that he is not interested in peace, but in causing carnage and destruction in Sierra Leone.

Over the past seven years Corporal Foday Sankoh has fought against three governments, including the present democratic Government of President Kabbah in Sierra Leone. He has given different reasons at different times for embarking on the armed conflict and terrorism against the people of Sierra Leone. The RUF was invited to participate in the democratic elections which ushered in the present Government, but they refused to participate. Their own aim was to assume power by force of arms, through the population, and thereby negate the elections which were certified by observers from the UN, OAU, Commonwealth, the African-American Institute and others as free and fair, and as a genuine expression of the will of the people of Sierra Leone

In spite of the refusal of Corporal Foday Sankoh and his RUF to abide by the terms of the Abidjan Peace Accord and to pursue the path to peace, the Government has continued to make peace overtures to them, and has always been willing to enter into a dialogue with them. This remains the position and commitment of the Government.

It is worth referring here to Mozambique. There a rebel war was fought for many years with atrocities at a level even greater than in Sierra Leone. At the end, the parties, including the rebel leader, accepted the principle of peace. They signed a peace Accord and all parties abided by its terms, peace was thereby restored to that country. The former rebel movement converted to a political party and contested the elections that followed. It secured sufficient seats to form the opposition. The verdict of the people was accepted by all the parties, and that verdict prevailed. It is important to note that no member of Renamo (former rebel movement) was included in the cabinet of Mozambique. What the people of Sierra Leone would wish to avoid is a situation in their country where opponents of their Government would die in mysterious circumstances or be forced by fear for their lives to reside abroad. The people do not want to entrust their future to a leader who has caused incalculable murder, torture and terrorism, either by himself or by his hired agents.

The people of Sierra Leone are yearning for and deserve peace. Perhaps it is an answer to this desire for peace that a large number of top fighters of the RUF who invaded Freetown have perished. The events of the past several days in Freetown also clearly demonstrated to the unpatriotic collaborators of the RUF what their lot would be in such circumstances.

Government wishes to reinstate its offer of amnesty to all those who have been involved in this senseless destruction of lives and property. They will be pardoned and made to participate in the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Rehabilitation programme, as a prerequisite for their re-integration into society. Those ring leaders of the RUF, about a dozen of them, who are outside Sierra Leone should remain wherever they are. They should allow us to rebuild our country. Thereafter, having made adequate apologies to the people of Sierra Leone for the crimes committed against them, they in due time will be allowed to return home.

In the case of Corporal Foday Sankoh, his appeal is still pending. Meanwhile, the Government will not allow him to reside in any other country. He shall remain in Sierra Leone in full view of the authorities and the people. Otherwise he would soon mount another terror on this nation. If he denounces his ways, he can live in Sierra Leone and his security is guaranteed. He is unreliable and

cannot be trusted as he illustrated recently after his meeting with President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah in Lungi. Both he and the President discussed and agreed on a cease-fire in the presence of a senior ECOMOG officer. Both of them even recorded the agreement for broadcast. As soon as he was taken to Conakry thereafter where he had hoped he would soon be released, he flatly denied ever agreeing to a cease-fire.

The Government has repeatedly stated that the involvement of President Charles Taylor of Liberia in Sierra Leone has been one of the most critical factors in the rebellion in Sierra Leone. The leader of the RUF, Corporal Foday Sankoh was an active member and combatant of President Charles Taylor's NPFL faction during the civil war in Liberia.

In 1991, when the Government of Sierra Leone agreed to make available its territory as a base for ECOMOG peace keeping operators in Liberia, Mr. Charles Taylor publicly stated that because of this, he would ensure that Sierra Leoneans taste the bitterness of the war in Liberia. Almost immediately after, Taylor armed Sankoh and, together with Taylor's own NPLF fighters, to unleash in Sierra Leone the carnage and destruction of our country, acts which Taylor has continued to support ever since.

Elimination of external involvement

Recent events have created a good opportunity for a quick and definitive solution of the conflict in Sierra Leone. In the first place, the whole world has now realized more than ever before, the role of President Taylor and other external parties in the conflict. This realization should now make it easier to mobilise effective international pressure to eliminate the external influence on the rebellion.

We therefore call on the international community to support ECOMOG to complete its operation in Sierra Leone.

Freetown

16th January 1999

Government of Sierra Leone
Government of Sierra Leone
23 January 1999

Government of Sierra Leone

Press Release

23 January 1999

Finance Minister Jonah continues contacts with development partners

Canada has assured the Minister of Finance, Development and Economic Planning, Dr, James Jonah, that it would give serious consideration to the provision of immediate assistance to Sierra Leone, in the wake of the recent rebel offensive and ECOMOG counter-offensive in Freetown. Dr. Jonah received the assurance in Ottawa on Friday, following a series of discussions with Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy and senior officials of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

According to Dr. Jonah, the Sierra Leone Government felt that as a Commonwealth partner and a current member of the United Nations Security Council, Canada "should be brought into the picture concerning our present ordeal." He said that there was a meeting of minds on the issues, and that the Canadian authorities had been holding consultations with both the United Kingdom and the United States on how best they can assist ECOMOG, and bring succor to the people of Sierra Leone in the near future.

Dr. Jonah is on the second leg of a special mission on behalf of President Kabbah, to acquaint Sierra Leone's partners in development, with the recent military and political activities in the country, since all foreign missions had left the capital before the rebel offensive.

Earlier in the week, he had held discussions in London with Mr. Tony Lloyd and other senior officials in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. He also had a meeting with the Minister of Development, Mrs. Claire Shaw, and other senior officials of DFID, the Department for International Development. Dr. Jonah said that the discussions were centred on two strategies; a determination of "the next steps to be taken after the defeat of the rebel offensive" and an "identification of the immediate needs of the Sierra Leone Government."

Without going into details on the need for reconstruction and development, the Minister strongly urged the United Kingdom to provide urgent humanitarian relief in such areas as medical supplies and field hospitals. These hospitals, he said, would be erected in the eastern part of Freetown in order to relieve the burden on the two main existing hospitals in the city. It is envisaged that two or three field hospitals in the east end, as well as in Kissy and Wellington, could be erected in the immediate future. Dr. Jonah also requested tents to alleviate the serious housing problem that has emerged as a result of the massive destruction of private houses in the east end of Freetown. The idea, he said, is to establish "some kind of 'tent city' to accommodate, on a temporary basis, the large number of citizens who are now homeless."

Another area of concern, according to the Finance, Development and Economic Planning Minister, is logistics, especially transportation. In his discussions with the British officials in London, he had emphasized the need for helicopters to airlift goods from the quay and Lungi airport to areas that are heavily devastated in the eastern part of the city and its environs. He also discussed the question of support for ECOMOG, in particular the need for the United Kingdom to reconsider its position regarding the provision of only non-lethal weapons. Dr. Jonah succeeded in receiving a commitment that the United Kingdom will reconsider its position on "this important matter." He also discussed the need for assistance in strengthening the civil defence capability of Sierra Leone, while efforts are underway to establish a new military force.

Dr. Jonah will continue his special mission on Monday 25 January, in Washington D.C., holding discussions with officials of the State Department, the IMF and the World Bank. He said that in view of the latest devastation of infrastructure, and the disruption of the development process, he expects a complete review of the programmes now being undertaken by the World Bank and the IMF in Sierra Leone.

Later in the week, the Minister is expected to hold discussion at the United Nations and the UN Development Programme (UNDP), in New York, before flying to Brussels to for similar discussions with the European Commission.

Government of Sierra Leone
Government of Sierra Leone
10 February 1999

Statement by the Government of Sierra Leone
10 February 1999

The Government of Sierra Leone has taken note of initial reactions to, and various interpretations of President Kabbah's decision to allow Foday Sankoh, leader of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), whose appeal against his conviction of treason is still pending in the Sierra Leone Court of Appeal, to hold face to face talks with other members of his organisation.

The Government would like to reiterate that this is the second time, since Foday Sankoh's conviction, that the President has allowed him to contact directly other members of the RUF regarding their position for a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Sierra Leone.

It should be emphasised that last month, President Kabbah himself had met the RUF leader, face to face. They had what was regarded as a constructive dialogue, and agreed on a cease-fire. Subsequently, some other RUF members and their supporters questioned the authenticity of their leader's pledge to President Kabbah, and insisted that they had to talk to Foday Sankoh directly. The President responded by taking the unprecedented step of allowing Foday Sankoh to leave the jurisdiction of Sierra Leone, temporarily, for the purpose of consulting with some of those RUF members who had apparently rejected the cease-fire agreement. The RUF leader was taken to Conakry, where, in the presence of two ECOWAS Foreign Ministers (Cote d'Ivoire and Togo), and the special representative of the UN Secretary-General, he spoke to his RUF members on the phone.

As President Kabbah pointed out in his broadcast to the nation last Sunday, there were conflicting signals coming from various factions and allies of the RUF, and from some undisclosed locations. Accordingly, on Sunday 7 February 1999, for the second time this year, President Kabbah agreed that the RUF leader, Foday Sankoh, should have another opportunity to speak directly with other members of his rebel movement and its allies. This time the President is allowing him to talk to them, not by phone, but face to face, at a suitable venue to be determined.

The Government of Sierra Leone considers, and reiterates, that the proposed face to face meeting between Foday Sankoh and his RUF members, supporters and allies, should provide them a golden opportunity to resolve their conflicting signals about peace, and to come up with a clear position on how they intend to facilitate the peace process, so that we can achieve security and genuine peace in our country. The position of the Government, as enunciated by President Kabbah in last Sunday's broadcast to the nation, is absolutely clear, namely that: (a) there is an international consensus on peace, and (b), the Government, for its part, is willing to use the Abidjan Peace Accord, which President Kabbah and the RUF leader, Foday Sankoh, had signed, as a frame of reference for a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

Government of Sierra Leone
Government of Sierra Leone
7 May 1999

GOVERNMENT STATEMENT ON THE PEACE PROCESS

Freetown, Friday 7 May 1999

Government is seriously concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian situation facing thousands of innocent civilians, including young children, caught in areas where rebels are found. As we witnessed recently in Songo and Masiaka, the atrocities committed by the rebels and their allies as they retreat from some of those areas have been horrendous. Those people who managed to escape the rebel onslaughts by hiding in the bush, and are now returning to their liberated but devastated towns and villages, are also facing a humanitarian crisis.

Government considers that the need to facilitate the delivery of large-scale emergency relief to these innocent civilians should be the first credible confidence-building measure the parties to the conflict can take at this stage of the peace process. The RUF rebels, on their part, should also give the matter priority consideration. Failure to do so now could delay the search for comprehensive and sustainable peace in our country.

At the same time, Government is concerned that the prolonged RUF internal consultations in Lome, have already delayed the start of substantive dialogue between Government and the rebels.

Last month, the Sierra Leone judiciary allowed the RUF leader, Cpl. Foday Sankoh, to travel to Lome under United Nations auspices, for consultations with other members of his organisation, on the understanding that their meetings would last for about six days. However, today, two weeks later, the consultations are still in progress.

In order to ensure that Government and the RUF address, face-to-face, and as a matter of priority, the need to facilitate the delivery of emergency humanitarian relief in several parts of the country, as well as other preliminary confidence-building measures, Government would like the RUF to conclude its internal consultations soonest. Any further delay could have a negative impact on the peace process as a whole.

Security and lasting peace in Sierra Leone are well overdue. The people are anxiously waiting for the RUF to renounce violence and pursue real peace through dialogue. The people, especially the children, deserve no less.

Government of Sierra Leone
Government of Sierra Leone
24 February 2001

GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

Statement on UN sanctions against Liberia
24 February 2001

It is now almost a month since the United Nations Security Council discussed the report and recommendations of the UN Panel of Experts set up last year to conduct an in-depth study of the role of diamonds in fuelling the armed conflict in Sierra Leone.

Sierra Leone participated in that discussion, concurred with the findings of the Panel, and endorsed its recommendation that the Security Council impose sanctions against Liberia for actively supporting the RUF at all levels, in providing military training, weapons, logistical support, staging ground for attacks and a safe haven for RUF retreat and recuperation.

It is almost two weeks since the Council and an ECOWAS Ministerial delegation met privately in New York to consider the question of imposing a series of sanctions against Liberia. While there was overwhelming support for sanctions, ECOWAS felt that such measures should be delayed for at least two months to allow the Government of Liberia to comply with a number of commitments it had made to ECOWAS to address the problems.

The Government of Sierra Leone took note of the views expressed by both sides in the discussion, and looked forward to the Council's formal response to the ECOWAS request.

Conscious of the need to muster the widest possible support among members of the UN Security Council for the proposed sanctions, the Government of Sierra Leone was even prepared to consider a compromise. Namely, that should the Council decide to adopt a draft resolution on sanctions against Liberia immediately, but to have it take effect two months thereafter, Sierra Leone would go along with such a course of action.

However, the Government of Sierra Leone has since come to the conclusion that the basis on which ECOWAS had advocated a two-month delay in the imposition of sanctions is gradually being eroded by the Liberian Government itself. First of all, the least that the Government of Liberia could have done to strengthen the credibility of ECOWAS, and to justify the proposed two-month delay, was to have taken immediate and verifiable action within these two weeks, to fulfill some of those basic commitments that did not require technical or financial assistance from any international organization. It has failed for instance, to show proof and independent verification of the steps it claims it has taken to "disengage" itself from the RUF. It continues to harbour senior members of the RUF and their families. It continues to violate the arms embargo imposed by resolution 788 (1992); the provisions concerning the sale or supply of arms and related materiel imposed by

resolution 1171 (1998), as well as its obligations under the ECOWAS agreement on a moratorium on the importation, exportation and manufacture of small arms and light weapons in West Africa.

The Government of Liberia is also gradually eroding the credibility of ECOWAS by demonstrating a lack of understanding of the seriousness of the situation and its implications for peace and stability in the West African sub-region, including Liberia itself.

Thirdly, the most disturbing aspect of the situation, is that the Liberian Government continues to demonstrate through complacency and delaying tactics, its belief that the Security Council is incapable of taking any action against that Government without the concurrence of ECOWAS. This belief is at the core of the whole question of whether or not the imposition of sanctions should be delayed.

In the view of the Government of Sierra Leone the Security Council should without further delay, take up this serious challenge to its responsibility under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Sierra Leone Government is convinced now, more than ever before, that at the end of any two-month delay in the Security Council's consideration of sanctions, Liberia plans to request the Council through ECOWAS, to allow it more time to comply with the ECOWAS commitments. It would also argue that it lacks the financial and technical resources required to comply with those commitments.

While the Government of Sierra Leone is fully aware of the emerging international consensus that in imposing sanctions the Security Council should ensure, among other things, that such measures do not create unbearable humanitarian consequences for innocent people, it is of the view that this is no longer a convincing argument in terms of the scope of sanctions now under consideration for Liberia. In deciding on the nature, scope and timing of sanctions against Liberia, the Council should take into consideration the following:

All member states of ECOWAS support the imposition of sanctions against Liberia. As the current Chairman of ECOWAS, President Alpha Konare of Mali told the Millennium Summit meeting of the Security Council, "sanctions form part of the means by which the Organization can take action. They must be adapted to their specific goals...The recent sanctions relating to the illicit exploitation of natural resources demonstrate how much more effective targeted sanctions can be." (S/PV.4194) No member of ECOWAS has argued that the proposed sanctions against Liberia would create serious humanitarian consequences for the people of Liberia. On the contrary, the people of Liberia have openly supported the adoption of sanctions resolution on their country. They cite the fact that only a handful of people who had been identified in the UN Expert Panel's report, and who benefit directly from privileges, would have their privileges suspended if sanctions were imposed on Liberia.

Inaction by the Security Council against Liberia has in effect not only contributed to the prolongation of the conflict, but has exacerbated the humanitarian crisis that has overwhelmed the people in Sierra Leone for almost ten years.

The gravity of the crisis and its impact on neighbouring countries, particularly Guinea, are on the records of UNICEF, UNHCR, OCHA and other international organizations and agencies. As the representative of Mauritius vividly described it, when one reads the report of the UN Panel of

Experts on diamonds and arms in Sierra Leone, "...the image that comes to mind is that of numerous children, women and men who have suffered cruel death or have been severely maimed and disabled in the senseless conflict that has gripped Sierra Leone for several years.. It is indeed outrageous that the lives of so many innocent Sierra Leonean children, women and men, have been extinguished and so many others have been condemned to live miserably for ever with vital limbs cut off simply because a powerful few have entertained a sinister dream to amass unlimited wealth through illegitimate means." (S/PV.4264)

A week ago UNICEF reported that the RUF was still holding 500 children; that some 10,000 children had lost contact with their families, while over 1,000 girls had become victims of rape. These and other human conditions were certainly not the consequences of sanctions. The people of Sierra Leone bore the brunt of sanctions imposed by ECOWAS in 1997 against the military/rebel junta with the blessing of the Security Council.

The people of Sierra Leone are already feeling the negative effects of the ban on the export of Sierra Leone diamonds under resolution 1306 (2000). They are however aware that the ban would, in the near future, help to break the link between the trade in diamonds and arms, and contribute to ending the rebel war.

The Government of Sierra Leone would therefore like to appeal to the Security Council to alleviate the suffering of the people of Sierra Leone, and prevent further deterioration of the current humanitarian situation in Sierra Leone and in the neighbouring countries, by taking a decision as expeditiously as possible, to impose sanctions against Liberia based on the findings and recommendations of its Panel of Experts on diamonds and arms.