

**Security Council**

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Letter dated 15 May 2000 from the Deputy Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On instructions of my Government, I have the honour to forward herewith, the text of a broadcast message to the nation by the President of Sierra Leone, Mr. Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, in which, *inter alia*, he told RUF field commanders that the cause for which they had been fighting was lost, and appealed to them to release all United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) peacekeepers illegally detained by the RUF (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex message could be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Sylvester E. Rowe
Ambassador/Deputy Representative
(Political Affairs)

Annex to the letter dated 15 May 2000 from the Deputy Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

**Broadcast to the nation by President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah
14 May 2000**

The three-day period of national prayer for unity and mourning for nineteen fallen martyrs, victims of the brutality perpetrated by some members of the RUF outside the house of Corporal Foday Sankoh last Monday, is over. However, the pain and grief still linger in our hearts.

Meanwhile, I am happy to report that the security situation in the country has improved considerably, thanks to those loyal Sierra Leoneans and men of good will from abroad who have come to assist us in protecting ourselves and in establishing some stability in the country.

In official government statements we have assured you, among other things, that in order to maintain this improvement, and to ensure that civilians go about their business without fear or hindrance, we have established joint patrols including UNAMSIL personnel and Sierra Leone military police. Similar security measures are being taken in other areas of the country to protect civilians and, at the same time, to enable authorized security personnel to carry out their functions effectively to the benefit of all Sierra Leoneans.

Today, I thought I should go beyond government statements and press releases and speak to the nation personally on another important matter.

My message is in the form of an appeal, a special appeal specifically addressed to all RUF combatants, their allies and field commanders who, unfortunately, have still not realized that disarmament, demobilization and reintegration into society is in their own best interest. We appeal to them to lay down their arms, now.

I would like to let anyone who has access to these RUF field commanders and their combatants, to let them know, by radio, by word of mouth, or by whatever means of communication at their disposal, that the cause for which the RUF had been fighting is lost. I repeat, lost, lost forever.

Let them know, wherever they are, that enough is enough. Too many lives, including those of their comrades-in-arms, their friends and families, including innocent children, have been lost, unnecessarily. Too much blood has been spilt. Too many schools, farms, villages, towns and homes have been destroyed. Let them know that there is no longer any reason to detain foreign nationals, and that they must release them immediately, unharmed and unconditionally.

Let the RUF and their field commanders know that there is no longer any reason why they should punish their comrades who are fed up with life in the bush; those who are tired of fighting and killing their own kith and kin, and who want to disarm and return home and be integrated into society. Tell them that whatever the cause for which they had been fighting, over the last eight or nine years, no longer exists. Let them know that allegiance to this nation, and to the ideals for which it stands, is far better, far more rewarding, than blind allegiance to one man and one organization whose objective is to seize power or else destroy every living thing.

I would also like to appeal to all those who are really interested in peace, in their own countries, and in the sub-region at large, to use whatever means of communication, whatever influence they have at their disposal, to let the RUF commanders and combatants know that it is no longer necessary to detain or abduct foreigners, peacekeepers and humanitarian workers whose only mission is to assist us in our quest for peace, security and economic prosperity for all Sierra Leoneans. Let them know that kidnappings, abductions of foreign personnel, rape, mutilation, amputation and other atrocities have not helped and will never help their cause. Let them know that after nine long years the war they had been waging on the people of Sierra Leone is over.

On behalf of the Government and the peace-loving people of this country, I would like to assure them that now, more than ever before, they have no reason to hang on to their weapons. They have no reason to be afraid. Their safety is assured. Let them know that this grieving but resilient nation, is ready to receive them as members of this great family we call Sierra Leone. Together, we can all join in a collective effort to use our human and natural resources, not in destroying, but in building our country, for the benefit of us all.

Let this message go out from this day on, that a new Sierra Leone is emerging out of the ashes of a nine-year rebel war, out of the tears and blood of a people who deserve to live in peace and security.

I trust that everyone will do everything in his or her power to pass on this special appeal to the rebels and their commanders as a matter of extreme urgency.

I thank you for your attention.
