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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**SIERRA LEONE TROOPS ARE NOT STRANDED IN CHAD,
SAYS DIRECTOR OF PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS**

Freetown, Sierra Leone, January 11, 2015 – The Director of Peacekeeping Operations in the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) has refuted the social media story making the rounds that the Sierra Leone peacekeepers returning from the Africa Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) are currently stranded in Chad.

Disproving the media report as "untrue", Lieutenant Colonel Kemoh Sesay said the troops had neither arrived in Chad nor left Kenya where they have been concentrated at Wajir International Airport to await repatriation to Freetown. Lieutenant Colonel Sesay said the first batch of 116 personnel would arrive on Tuesday, 13th January, 2015.

The Director of Peacekeeping Operations confirmed that as per initial plan, the troops would have started arriving today but the repatriation had been delayed by 48 hours in order to secure landing permit for transit through Nigeria. He added that the initial transit point had been Chad but Nigeria was later considered as a better option.

In fulfillment of her international obligation to global peace and security, Sierra Leone deployed 850 peacekeepers in Somalia in 2013, becoming the first troop contributing country outside East Africa. The Sierra Leone contingent would have been rotated in last July but due to fear of the Ebola outbreak in the West Africa sub-region, the Somali Government rejected deployment of any troops from the Ebola affected countries. As a result of war weariness on the troops that have long over-stayed in the East Africa war, the Sierra Leone Government requested for their withdrawal from the Africa Union mission.

For any media enquiry on the repatriation of the troops, please contact Colonel Michael Samura (on 076 616 457) or Captain Yayah Brima (on 078 452 876).