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LETTER DATED 6 JANUARY 1999 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I.
OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF LIBERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to present you my compliments and to forward herewith the attached letter addressed to you by Charles Ghankay Taylor, President of the Republic of Liberia, concerning the situation in Sierra Leone.

I would be grateful were you to circulate the text of this letter as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Famatta R. OSODE
Chargé d'affaires, a.i.

Annex

Letter dated 6 January 1999 from the President of Liberia
addressed to the President of the Security Council

I am pleased to present my compliments and to refer to recent accusations made against the Government of Liberia by the Force Commander of the Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the Foreign Minister of Sierra Leone at the recent meeting of the ECOWAS Committee of Five on Sierra Leone, held in Abidjan, on 28 December 1998. The Government of Liberia was accused of supporting the rebellion in Sierra Leone.

The Government of Liberia wishes to inform the Security Council that it is in no manner or form supporting the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council/Revolutionary United Front (AFRC/RUF) forces in Sierra Leone, and that it continues to abide by all existing Security Council resolutions and embargoes. The failure and inability of those parties accusing Liberia to produce any evidence or proof is sufficient grounds to warrant such accusations as not credible and speculative. The Government of Liberia calls upon the Security Council to investigate freely those malicious allegations, which are purely intended to cover up the failure of the use of force as a policy to end the civil war in Sierra Leone.

It is important to note that, while accusing Liberia of supporting the rebels, both ECOMOG and the Government of Sierra Leone have also accused "white mercenaries" and certain senior military officers of the Sierra Leonean army in Freetown. In fact, there has been no consistency with regard to whom is being accused. Political opposition leaders living in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America and certain non-Sierra Leonean businessmen deported by the Kabbah Government have also been accused. What is quite interesting is the fact that Sierra Leone is not only bordered by Liberia, but by two countries. The other country has a border three times the length of the border with Liberia. The strength of the rebels and their activities have been confirmed to be concentrated in the northern region, which is of geographical proximity not to Liberia, but to the other neighbor. The eastern region, which is of geographical proximity to Liberia, is calm. The accused "white mercenaries" have been identified as Ukrainians; the only presence of Ukrainians in the subregion is to be found in the other neighboring country. The lack of proof against Liberia could very well be due to the fact that the accusing fingers are being pointed at the wrong person, and that other possible sources of support for the rebels have been ruled out. Circumstantial evidence and the process of elimination are not tenable grounds upon which to make such grave accusations against a State Member of the United Nations. We believe that the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone should conduct its own independent analysis of the situation, and that the international community should not be compelled to make decisions based on speculation.

The Government of Liberia renews its request to the United Nations to put into place a mechanism to ensure transparency in the monitoring of its border by the United Nations. Our commitment to the restoration of peace and security in Sierra Leone is evidenced by the following measures undertaken with regard to

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the situation in Sierra Leone: (a) the Government has publicly and unequivocally stated its support for the elected Government of President Kabbah and condemned the atrocities perpetuated against the people of Sierra Leone; (b) the Government has requested, through the Secretary-General of the United Nations, that the United Nations deploy observers at the Liberian-Sierra Leonean border to monitor the implementation of the United Nations embargo; (c) the Government has requested ECOWAS, through its Executive Secretary, to deploy an observer unit of ECOMOG at the Liberian-Sierra Leonean border; (d) the Government has offered to conduct joint border security activities with the Government of Sierra Leone; (e) the Government has undertaken to maintain regular high-level contacts with the Government of Sierra Leone through the exchange of envoys; (f) the Government has voted for and supported sanctions and embargoes against AFRC/RUF, and all ECOWAS initiatives for Sierra Leone; (g) the Government has offered to accept undercover security personnel from Sierra Leone to operate in Liberia in assisting to ensure that no activities against Sierra Leone are carried out; (h) the Government, through its President, has proposed an initiative to assist the peace process in Sierra Leone; and (i) the Government continues to provide safe refuge for tens of thousands of Sierra Leonean refugees in Liberia.

We believe that the United Nations can still play an important role in the resolution of the conflict in Sierra Leone. Since October 1997, the Government of Liberia has called on the United Nations to deploy observers on the Liberian-Sierra Leonean border. Again in May 1998, we reiterated this appeal to the Secretary-General. In paragraphs 78 and 79 of his fifth progress report on Sierra Leone (S/1998/486), the Secretary-General indicated his intention to discuss the matter further with the Government with a view to making appropriate recommendations to the Security Council for the deployment of observers on the border. To date, nothing has been done by the Security Council to this effect.

There can be no doubt that the Government of Sierra Leone takes offence at the suggestion of the Government of Liberia that dialogue be pursued as a means to end their civil war. From our experience in Liberia, only a negotiated settlement, and not a military victory, will bring sustainable peace to Sierra Leone. The aversion of the Government of President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah to dialogue is a clear indication of a lack of political will to pursue a negotiated settlement. The attendant failure of the Government of Sierra Leone to achieve a military conquest has occasioned these unfounded allegations against the Government of Liberia. In all candor, we should be concentrating our efforts, directing our energies and committing our resources to the attainment of a ceasefire and the re-establishment of dialogue, rather than engaging in reckless accusations.

Permit me to reassure the members of the Security Council of the continued willingness of the Government of Liberia to play a positive and meaningful role in helping to bring peace to Sierra Leone and to enforce all resolutions of the United Nations.

(Signed) Charles Ghankay TAYLOR
