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LETTER DATED 22 FEBRUARY 1999 FROM THE CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES A.I.
OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF LIBERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I present my compliments to you and, upon instruction of my Government, have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a statement issued on 19 January 1999 by the Government of Liberia on the Sierra Leonean crisis (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

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

Annex

Statement of the Government of Liberia on the Sierra Leonean
crisis, issued on 19 February 1999

The ongoing fighting in the sister Republic of Sierra Leone is hurting the subregion politically, economically and diplomatically. As a founding member of the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Mano River Union, Liberia values its historic role in world affairs, especially in African emancipation, independence and conflict resolution. This role places a compelling responsibility on the Government and people of Liberia to continue working for a final resolution of the Sierra Leonean conflict.

Liberia is sensitive to the international concerns that have been expressed regarding its alleged complicity in the Sierra Leonean crisis. The Government of Liberia is cognizant of the adverse effect that this state of affairs is having on the maintenance of peace, unity, stability and progress in Liberia, in the ECOWAS subregion and the larger international community. At the same time, the Government is outraged by the nature and level of atrocities attending the war in Sierra Leone. The use of children as soldiers and the maiming of fellow Sierra Leoneans are unconscionable. This malevolent human tragedy must be stopped.

The Government of Liberia recognizes the efforts of ECOWAS to restore and maintain peace in the subregion and, as a member of the Committee of Six, wishes to restate its support for the ECOWAS peace plan for Sierra Leone.

In this regard, the Government of Liberia reaffirms its recognition of the elected Government of President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah as the legitimate Government of Sierra Leone. The Government of Liberia states further that it has not and will not support, nor be a party to any attempt to destabilize the Republic of Sierra Leone or any other country.

As a democratically elected Government, the Government of Liberia has not and will not support any attempt by insurgents, including the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) or other armed dissidents to destabilize or remove the legitimate Government of Sierra Leone from office.

The Government of Liberia has consistently maintained that the war in Sierra Leone is internal and, relying on its experience, believes and hopes that the conflict in Sierra Leone can and should be resolved through dialogue and negotiation. This approach remains a constructive path to sustainable peace and national reconciliation in the Republic of Sierra Leone.

The Government of Liberia has consistently argued that Liberian citizens have been used as mercenaries in the Sierra Leonean conflict by successive governments of Sierra Leone, the RUF/AFRC, the Kamajors and the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG).

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The Government of Liberia notes the existence of legal instruments that prohibit its nationals from serving as mercenaries. These instruments include international conventions and protocols, particularly the Non-Aggression and Security Cooperation Treaty between countries comprising the Mano River Union. Most importantly, chapter eleven of the Liberian penal code, subsection 11.13 on mercenaries, provides for life imprisonment or the death penalty for convicted mercenaries.

In view of this notation, the Government of Liberia has repeatedly called on its citizens to disengage from the conflict in Sierra Leone and return home.

In furtherance of the efforts of the Government of Liberia to discourage Liberian citizens from complicating the crisis in Sierra Leone and to ensure compliance with the laws and conventions relating to mercenaries, the Government of Liberia undertakes the following:

1. Renews its call on the Government of Sierra Leone and all parties to the conflict in that country to abolish the use of Liberians as mercenaries;
2. As a matter of urgency, the Government of Liberia requests the United Nations to assist the Governments of Sierra Leone and Liberia in identifying, documenting and processing Liberians fighting in Sierra Leone for an organized repatriation;
3. Amnesty will be granted to those Liberians involved in the Sierra Leonean conflict who will cooperate with the voluntary repatriation programme. This amnesty takes immediate effect and will expire within forty-five (45) days from the date of this statement;
4. At the end of the voluntary repatriation exercise, the Government of Liberia, working with the Government of Sierra Leone, will arrest and prosecute, to the full extent of the law, any Liberian citizen found to still be engaged in the ongoing armed conflict in Sierra Leone;
5. In order to support the productive reintegration of ex-combatants and returnees and to prevent their cycling into lawlessness and violent activities anywhere, the Government of Liberia hereby appeals for assistance from the Government of the United States of America and countries of the European Union. Liberia also appeals for assistance from the United Nations system, in particular, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Food Programme (WFP);
6. The Government of Liberia hereby calls for the immediate appointment of members of the Joint Security Liaison Committee provided for in the Mano River Union Non-Aggression and Security Cooperation Treaty between Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. In order to enhance security and confidence within the Mano River Union, the Government of

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Liberia hereby requests the convening of a summit of the Mano River Union;

7. The Government of Liberia renews its request to the Government of Sierra Leone to accept the joint patrol and monitoring of the Liberian/Sierra Leonean border. The Government of Liberia again solicits assistance from the United States of America and the European Union to facilitate this joint border patrol to ensure compliance with all existing resolutions on Sierra Leone;
8. The Government of Liberia renews its request to the Security Council to approve deployment of United Nations monitors along with ECOMOG forces at the Liberian/Sierra Leonean border;
9. The Government of Liberia shall relocate all refugee camps further inland to discourage any attempt to use those camps for subversive activities against the Government of Sierra Leone. To this end, the Liberian Government again calls on UNHCR to assist in the inland transfer of all refugees from areas near its borders with Sierra Leone;
10. The Government of Liberia reinforces its directives to all its security forces to be on maximum alert, with specific instructions to vigorously patrol the borders and to further intensify customs and immigration procedures at all sea and air ports as well as other points of entry. The national security agencies are further mandated to continue to ensure that no cross-border movement of arms takes place and that there be no transshipment of arms and ammunition through Liberian territory.
