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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3963rd meeting of the Security Council, held on 7 January 1999 in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Sierra Leone", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council expresses its grave concern at the attacks by armed rebels of the former junta and Revolutionary United Front in the capital of Sierra Leone, and at the resulting suffering and loss of life. It condemns the unacceptable attempt by the rebels to overthrow by violence the democratically-elected government of Sierra Leone. The Council also condemns the rebels' continued campaign to terrorize the population of Sierra Leone and especially the atrocities committed against women and children. The Council demands that the rebels lay down their arms immediately and cease all violence. The Council reiterates once more its firm support for the legitimate and democratically-elected government of President Kabbah.

"The Security Council strongly condemns all those who have afforded support, including through the supply of arms and mercenaries, to the rebels in Sierra Leone. In this context, it expresses its grave concern at reports that such support to the rebels is being afforded in particular from the territory of Liberia. It reaffirms the obligation on all Member States to comply strictly with existing arms embargoes. In that context, the Security Council urges the Committee created pursuant to resolution 985 (1995) and the Committee created pursuant to resolution 1132 (1997) to pursue active measures to investigate violations of the embargoes and to report to the Council, with recommendations as appropriate.

"The Security Council stresses the importance of dialogue and national reconciliation for the restoration of lasting peace and stability to Sierra Leone. The Council welcomes the efforts to resolve the conflict being undertaken by the Government of President Kabbah, and further endorses the approach set out in the final communiqué of the meeting in Abidjan of the Committee of Six on Sierra Leone of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) of 28 December 1998 (S/1998/1236). It welcomes the offers made by leaders in the region aimed at resolving the conflict and in that context urges them, including the ECOWAS Committee of Six, to facilitate

the peace process. It also calls on the Secretary-General to do all he can to assist in these efforts, including through his Special Representative.

"The Security Council also expresses its concern at the serious humanitarian consequences of the escalating fighting in Sierra Leone. It calls on all States and international organizations to provide appropriate humanitarian assistance and on all parties in Sierra Leone to afford humanitarian access. The Council notes that United Nations agencies are working with the increasing numbers of refugees in neighbouring countries and calls on all States to ensure that the humanitarian agencies are adequately resourced to meet the additional demand.

"The Security Council commends the forces of the Military Observer Group of West African States in Sierra Leone for the courage and determination they have demonstrated over the last year in their efforts to maintain security in Sierra Leone. It also commends the key contribution of UNOMSIL and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in efforts to restore stability in the country. The Council urges all States urgently to provide resources, including logistical and other support, to help maintain an effective peacekeeping presence in Sierra Leone.

"The Security Council expresses its intention to continue to monitor the situation closely, and to consider urgently any further action which may be necessary."

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