

Communiqué issued at Conakry on 23 October 1997 at the conclusion of the meeting between the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Committee of Five on Sierra Leone of the Economic Community of West African States and the delegation representing Major Johnny Paul Koromah

1. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Ministerial Committee of Five on Sierra Leone held a meeting at Conakry on 22 and 23 October 1997.
2. In continuation of the negotiations initiated at Abidjan on 17 and 18 and 29 and 30 July 1997, the Committee held discussions with an enlarged delegation representing Major Johnny Paul Koromah.
3. The meeting reviewed the situation in Sierra Leone since the breakdown of negotiations between the Committee of Five and the representatives of the junta on 30 July 1997. It recalled the ECOWAS decisions concerning the monitoring of the ceasefire, the imposition of sanctions and the embargo, as well as the restoration of peace to Sierra Leone by the ECOWAS Military Observer Group (ECOMOG). It also recalled Security Council resolution 1132 (1997) of 8 October 1997 placing an embargo on Sierra Leone.
4. The Committee of Five and the junta's delegation agreed to accelerate efforts towards the peaceful resolution of the Sierra Leonian crisis.
5. To that end, the Committee of Five and the representatives of Major Johnny Paul Koromah adopted an ECOWAS peace plan for Sierra Leone and a timetable for its implementation over a six-month period with effect from 23 October 1997.
6. It is recognized that Corporal Foday Sankoh, as a leader of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), could continue to play an active role and participate in the peace process. In the spirit of the Abidjan Accord and in the context of this agreement, Corporal Sankoh is expected to return to his country to make his contribution to the peace process.
7. The ECOWAS peace plan for Sierra Leone provides for:
  - (a) The reinstatement of the legitimate Government of President Tejan Kabbah within a period of six months;
  - (b) The immediate cessation of hostilities;
  - (c) Cooperation of the junta with ECOMOG in order to enforce the sanctions peacefully;
  - (d) Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants;
  - (e) Provision of humanitarian assistance;

(f) Return of refugees and displaced persons;

(g) Immunities and guarantees to the leaders of the coup d'état of 25 May 1997;

(h) Modalities for broadening the power base in Sierra Leone.

8. The Committee of Five and the representatives of Major Johnny Paul Koromah agreed to continue negotiations towards effective and prompt implementation of the peace plan.

9. The meeting renewed its appeal to the international community to provide appropriate humanitarian assistance to the refugees and displaced persons and to facilitate their return.

10. The meeting reiterated its appeal to the international community to provide adequate assistance to the neighbouring countries of Sierra Leone, which have recorded an increased influx of refugees on their territory.

11. The meeting expressed its appreciation to the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity for their cooperation with ECOWAS and appealed to them for material, logistic and financial support to ECOMOG to enable it to carry out the mandate given by the Authority of Heads of State and Government and the Security Council.

12. The Committee expressed its deep gratitude to General Lansana Conte, President of the Republic of Guinea, Head of State, and to the Government and people of Guinea for the excellent facilities put at their disposal and for the hospitality accorded to all the delegations.