

## **THE PURPOSE OF DEDUCTING USD 200 FROM ALLOWANCES OF TROOPS ON FOREIGN PEACEKEEPING MISSION IN SOMALIA**

1. The UN or AU pays One Thousand and Twenty Eight US Dollars (USD 1,028) per month to the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) as a form of reimbursement for its expenditure on every soldier deployed on peacekeeping under the category of group participation mentioned above. This amount is not a salary for the soldier and does not even belong to the soldier but to the government. The government is expected to utilize this money to offset its expenditure during the special peacekeeping training given to the soldier, and the special uniforms and equipment the soldier uses during his/her deployment. A soldier on peacekeeping continues to receive his/her home salary and other emoluments in full. At the mission area, the soldier is provided with free lodging and feeding by the mission headquarters.

2. However, it has become a common practice among African Governments to donate part of the reimbursed amount to the soldier to boost his morale and compensate him/her for the sacrifices he/she is making in the mission area under rain or shine. The amount a government decides to donate is purely discretionary and not fixed at all. Therefore it varies from country to country depending on the country's financial buoyancy. In the Somalia Mission for example, Kenyan soldiers receive the full amount with no deductions for obvious reasons. On the contrary, Djiboutian soldiers receive USD 728 whilst Ethiopian soldiers receive only USD 500. For Sierra Leonean troops, the GoSL is giving (not paying) each soldier an amount of USD 828 per month and retaining the balance of USD 200. This by far surpasses the amount of USD 450 which our troops previously deployed in Darfur were receiving. Of the USD 828, the soldier receives USD 100 per month in the mission area whilst his/her remaining USD 728 is remitted into his/her personal account at the Union Trust Bank (UTB) intact. The USD 200 deduction per soldier per month is also remitted into the MoD Peace Support Operations (PSO) account at UTB as well. The MoD holds another PSO account at the Sierra Leone Commercial Bank where gains accrued from the Darfur Mission were kept.

3. It is worth noting at this point that the MoD/RSLAF's decision to intensify its peacekeeping effort is purely to provide an alternative means to complement the GoSL's effort in alleviating the numerous challenges the RSLAF is currently facing. Thus, it is envisaged that in the near future when the RSLAF would have fully consolidated on peacekeeping, a lot of gains would have been accrued which could be used to improve soldiers' conditions of service and adequately equip the Army. It is no hidden secret that the GoSL is currently grappling with such challenges in the midst of a gradually growing economy. Therefore, our peacekeeping effort is like an enterprise where money is invested to accrue profit for the eventual benefit of the soldier, the army, and by extension the country as a whole.

4. When the MoD/RSLAF was preparing to launch the first batch of soldiers into peacekeeping, the GoSL poured a huge amount of resources but could still not make it alone, save for the assistance of our development partners. This was done with the full confidence that once the first batch is launched into the theatre, the sustenance of the venture can simply come from the reimbursements. This was how the Darfur Mission thrived on until it was ended; and part of the gains accrued was conveniently utilised to initially fund our Somalia Mission until it could stand on its own. Standing on its own simply means that all expenditures directly or indirectly related to the Somalia Mission are funded from the Somalia Peacekeeping Account where all reimbursements from that mission, including the USD 200 deductions, are retained.

5. The various areas of recurrent expenditure from the Peacekeeping Account are as outlined below. Please note that one batch of trainees is about 1,000 personnel and one batch of peacekeepers is 850 personnel (one battalion); the first battalion (LEOBATT 1) has completed its 1 year tour in Somalia, the second batch of trainees has completed training and about to relieve LEOBATT 1, and the third batch of trainees is about to be inserted for training.

- a. Local training of one batch of officers and soldiers at a time for peacekeeping to include: food rations, training materials, training ammunition, medical drugs,
- b. Travel allowances for officers on overseas peacekeeping training.
- c. Medical screening for one batch of trainees.
- d. Passports for one batch of trainees.
- e. Name tags, country flashes and rank badges for one batch of trainees.
- f. Uniforms and boots for one battalion of peacekeepers.
- g. Vaccines for one battalion of peacekeepers.
- h. Reconnaissance/familiarisation and VIP visits to the mission area to include: air tickets and travel allowances.
- i. Monthly running costs for one battalion in mission area.
- j. Local foodstuff for one battalion for at least 6 months period.
- k. Media coverage of all peacekeeping related activities.
- l. Air ticket and travel allowances for officers on overseas peacekeeping conferences.
- m. Procurement of equipment and spares for peacekeeping.

6. It is also worth mentioning that the signatories to the peacekeeping accounts are the Director General of Defence (in his absence the Chief of Defence Staff) and the Accountant General (in his absence the Director of Budgets). Furthermore, expenditures from the peacekeeping fund for purposes not peacekeeping related are allowed only on extremely exceptional cases and must receive the concurrence of HE the President and Commander-in-Chief of the RSLAF.