

Special Envoy. With more than a little trepidation, I accepted. I was asked to lead a fact-finding mission and to examine the security, humanitarian and political situations in Sierra Leone. Following the mission, I was to prepare a report for the Minister's consideration.

In preparation for my mission, I visited the United Nations on March 12 for meetings and briefings with U.N. officials and Heads and Deputy Heads of Missions. On March 20, I departed for Africa with Mr. Jacques Crête, Director of the West and Central Africa Division of the Foreign Affairs Department. We later linked up with Lt-Col. Stephen Moffat, Head of the Peacekeeping Section of Foreign Affairs.

Our mission took us initially to London where we met with the U.K. Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), the Right Honourable Tony Lloyd, the Head of the African Department, FCO, Mr. James Bevan, and Mr. Moses Anafu, a senior official of the Commonwealth Secretariat, among others. From London, we travelled to Conakry, Guinea, where we met with senior officials including the Prime Minister, Mr. Lamine Sidime. During our stay in Guinea, we also visited a refugee camp at Forecariah not far from the Sierra Leonean border.

Our next stop was Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone where we met with a number of senior officials including President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah and the Chief of the Defence Staff for the Sierra Leonean Army, Brigadier-General Maxwell Khobe, a Nigerian, and British High Commissioner, Peter Penfold. We toured various parts of Freetown including the facilities for displaced people, the main hospital, an amputee camp and the largely destroyed east-end of the city. We also met with various representatives of NGO's. After a brief stop in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire and a meeting with a senior Foreign Ministry official, we concluded our visit to the sub-region in Accra, Ghana where we met several other ministers and the Vice-President of Ghana John Atta Mills.

It is worthwhile emphasizing that the contents of this report should not be viewed as the future framework for Canadian foreign policy on Sierra Leone. This is not a Government of Canada report. It is the report of a private Member of Parliament who has, with the help of Foreign Affairs staff and working within some tight time frames, directed a fresh pair of eyes and ears to the current crisis in Sierra Leone. Should this report result in some actions being taken by the Canadian Government to increase the assistance we provide this devastated country, I will of course, be very, very pleased. Because, God knows, Sierra Leone needs our help.

David Pratt, M.P.
Nepean-Carleton
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