

P R E S S R E L E A S E

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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
on Sierra Leone**

The European Union strongly condemns the latest attempt to overthrow the democratically elected Government of Sierra Leone and reiterates its full support for President Kabbah and his government. The European Union commends the role of ECOMOG, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General and the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL). The European Union will continue to support ECOMOG's efforts to restore peace and stability in Sierra Leone and will provide appropriate humanitarian assistance for those in need.

The European Union strongly condemns all those who have supported the rebels in Sierra Leone and expresses its grave concern at reports that arms and personnel are being supplied, in particular, from the territory of Liberia. It calls on all States to comply strictly with existing arms embargoes.

The EU will continue to support all diplomatic efforts aiming at the restoration of peace and security in Sierra Leone and calls on all parties to protect civilians. It welcomes offers of dialogue and mediation from States in the region. In this context, the European Union endorses the approach agreed upon at the ECOWAS meeting of the Committee of Six on Sierra Leone in Abidjan on 28 December 1998.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, the associated country Cyprus and the EFTA countries, members of the European Economic Area align themselves with this declaration.

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