

SIERRA LEONE:
COUP D'ETAT
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In the morning of Sunday, 25 May the president of Sierra Leone, democratically elected 14 months ago, was overthrown by a military coup d'etat. A country-wide curfew was imposed and all borders were closed.

According to the international press, looting took place on Sunday, and sporadic, occasionally heavy, shooting was heard. The number of dead and wounded is not yet known and the population has been urged to stay home.

The International Federation compound was looted during the night. Four Federation vehicles were damaged and radios stolen while the National Society lost one vehicle. The Federation Secretariat has been in permanent contact with the five expatriate delegates in Freetown since the coup. They are in good health, staying at the Delegate house, and morale is good.

The Federation Delegation has been in Sierra Leone for six years assisting the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society (SLRCS) in its relief and community development programmes for those affected by the civil war.

"In conformity with our humanitarian mandate we will continue to work with this National Society which requires us to pay special attention to the communities who had begun to return to their villages of origin, following four difficult years", said Margareta Wahlström, Federation Under-Secretary General, Disaster Response and Operations Co-ordination Division.

SLRCS is a member of the International Federation and thus belongs to the world-wide network of 171 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. It is one of the strongest, best-structured National Societies in the region and has more than 300 volunteers involved in its rehabilitation programmes.

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