

Box 4.9.1 Public Perceptions of Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone

In January and February 2005, Jean Krasno conducted a public opinion survey in Sierra Leone to assess perceptions of UNAMSIL. Based on 872 questionnaire responses, the survey is intended to give “a glimpse of what the people of Sierra Leone are thinking at a given time.” Results included:

- Almost all respondents, 98 percent, believed that the security situation had improved since UNAMSIL’s deployment.
- Four-fifths rated the disarmament process as “good” or “very good.”
- Only half thought that UNAMSIL personnel “always” treated the local population with respect, although 45 percent believed that it “sometimes” did so.
- Four-fifths felt that UNAMSIL personnel had attempted to resolve communities’ problems. Of these, 65 percent found UNAMSIL personnel “very helpful” and only 6 percent found them unhelpful.
- While 73 percent were glad that ECOMOG had intervened in Sierra Leone, respondents were evenly divided on whether peacekeeping should be carried out solely by the UN, or also by other actors.
- Asked who should launch a mission in cases where the UN would not or could not, 36 percent preferred a West African force, and 48 percent preferred an all-African force. Three-quarters felt that African missions should “always” be

followed up by “full-blown” UN peacekeeping operations.

While 41 respondents did not have any complaints against UNAMSIL, 201 referred to sexual exploitation issues. While this represents only 23 percent of those surveyed, it is noted that critical respondents were concentrated in the capital, Freetown, and in the western town of Port Loko. Other negative issues concerning UNAMSIL raised by respondents included reckless driving, and fears for the employment prospects of local staff after the mission’s departure.

Source: Jean Krasno, *Public Opinion Survey of UNAMSIL’s Work in Sierra Leone* (New York: United Nations, DPKO Best Practices Unit, 2005).