

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesperson

For Immediate Release

April 25, 2014

STATEMENT BY SECRETARY KERRY

On the Occasion of the Republic of Sierra Leone's National Day

On behalf of President Obama and the people of the United States, I send best wishes to Sierra Leoneans as you celebrate 53 years of independence on April 27.

We are all profoundly aware that Sierra Leone is becoming one of Africa's greatest success stories. When I was Senator from Massachusetts, the suffering of Sierra Leone was not just an issue on the Foreign Relations Committee; it became personal because my state became a haven to so many Sierra Leoneans fleeing violence and grievous wounds. I came to know children who had lost parents and parents who had carried on after losing their children. They dreamed of a day when their home would be peaceful again.

Today, that is much more than a dream. Sierra Leone is a model post-conflict country. Although so many lost so much during the civil war, we have proudly witnessed how Sierra Leoneans summoned the will to pick themselves up and rebuild their country.

We are pleased to continue helping train and equip Sierra Leone's own troops. Sierra Leoneans are not just beneficiaries of peace. They are performing admirably as contributors to peace and security not just across the region, but around the world.

There are still miles to go to build durable, democratic institutions, provide services, and improve governance. But Sierra Leoneans will not face these challenges alone. The United States remains deeply invested in peace and stability in Sierra Leone and will continue to lend its support.

On this historic occasion, we celebrate Sierra Leone's progress and its promise for the future. I offer best wishes for a safe and joyous holiday.

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