



**REMARKS BY HIS EXCELLENCY, BRIGADIER (RTD)
DR. JULIUS MAADA BIO, PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND COMMANDER-
IN-CHIEF OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE
ARMED FORCES, AT THE COMMISSIONING OF THE
NEWLY CONSTRUCTED MYOHAUNG OFFICERS'
MESS AND SINGLE OFFICERS' QUARTERS,
WILBERFORCE BARRACKS,
MONDAY 25TH APRIL 2022**

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The Honourable Vice President,
Ministers of Government present,
The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic
of China in Sierra Leone, His Excellency Hu Zhangliang
Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps,
The Director General, Ministry of Defence,
Chief of Defence Staff and All Assistant Chiefs of Defence Staff,
Officers of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning,

1. On the 30th of December 2019, I turned the sod for the construction of these buildings. In record time, and in spite of the challenges of a global pandemic and other constraints, we reduced the old Myohaung Officers' Mess to rubble and then transformed it into these imposing edifices that will serve generations of fine officers of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces.
2. Ambassador Hu, kindly extend our sincere gratitude from the people of the Republic of Sierra Leone to President Xi Jinping and the people of the People's Republic of China. Through over fifty years of friendship, The People's Republic of China has always stood with and by the people of Sierra Leone. We are deeply appreciative of this great friendship.
3. In 2018, President Xi welcomed me to the People's Republic of China, and also discussed and concluded with me several agreements on areas of cooperation between our two friendly nations. This beautiful building is a result of that trip.
4. This Officers' Mess and Single Officers' quarters have been completed in the golden jubilee of this relationship of mutual respect, trust, and cooperation.

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5. Technical and resource support from the People's Republic of China has bolstered various aspects of our national development from security, health, infrastructure, to agriculture and more. Especially, the support in enhancing the capabilities and modernising the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces has been most invaluable.
6. On a personal note, I also want to thank the Chinese Expert Group led by Lt. Col. Tao, for completing the construction work within a record time of 20 months. I visited the construction site and interacted with the engineers and local contractors. Today, we are all truly proud of this testament to my Government's unrelenting commitment to cater for the welfare of our serving personnel. We are truly grateful for and will always remember the diligence and professionalism of the entire construction team.
7. I want to thank the Hon. Minister of Defence and his entire team at the Ministry for seeing this project through. This is a great credit to the commitment and focus with which you drove this project. Thank you.
8. My Government, through the Ministry of Defence, has procured limited numbers of furniture while we await the full complement of customised furniture and equipment from the People's Republic of China. Once that arrives and is installed, the building will be fully available for use.
9. With respect to the Officer's Mess, let me say that I am of these colours. This army taught me and groomed me to respect the values of patriotism, public service, and discipline. When I turned the sod for this Officer's Mess, I argued that soldiering goes beyond mere soldiering skills. Regimentation, *esprit de corps*, and discipline are essential. This imposing Officer's Mess is meant to promote those essential ingredients of morale and thus maintain the great traditions of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces.
10. The junior officers must be nurtured in the traditions, ethos, and values of our Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces. They should

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understand that they carry the weight of history, the responsibility for the future, and yet still, must walk with courage and great pride into that future, with the colours of these armed forces flying high on the mast of excellence.

11. I have always spoken about purposeful infrastructural development. One cannot access such magnificent buildings on pock-marked and dusty roads. I have therefore authorised funding to the Sierra Leone Roads Authority to pave the network of roads within the Wilberforce Barracks area. This will progress at the same time as other western area barracks roads.
12. But it does not end there. This building will only cater for the accommodation and social activities of Officers. But we also believe that other ranks of the force should have access to modern facilities. From this ceremony, I will move to the Warrant Officers and Senior Non-Commissioned Officers' ground to turn the sod for the construction of an ultra-modern Mess for their use.
13. Work on the construction of a canteen for Other Ranks will also go on at the same time as the construction of that mess for Warrant Officers and Senior Non-Commissioned Officers. We have approached a private local contractor and soon, we will be here again to commission that building too.
14. But I will also continue working hard for the welfare of serving personnel of these armed forces. Within limits we can afford, we have improved pay and conditions for our serving personnel. We have commissioned five Forward Patrol Bases (FPBs) that will provide decent accommodation for over 300 of our Military who are stationed in remote border areas of the country. These are also in addition to other initiatives right across this nation in the fields of education, health, agriculture, and more that benefit serving personnel and their families.

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15. Let me conclude, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, that I now have the honour, as Commander-In-Chief of the RSLAF, to present these ultra-modern buildings to Officers of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces.
16. This is my early Independence Day gift to officers of this great armed forces for your commitment and dedication to national security and nation-building.
17. Thank you all for your kind attention. Long-live the friendship between The Peoples Republic of China and the Republic of Sierra Leone. Long live the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces.