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A Nation's Collapse: The Civil War Tactic and Impact
Case Study: Sierra Leone
(1991-2002)

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this humble work to:

My beloved parents,

*For whom I owe a special feeling of gratitude and wish a long
happy life;*

My lovely brothers, Abdelhak and Amine,

My sweet sisters, Soumia and Bahidja,

For their sound advice, support and assistance;

My dear husband,

For his support and encouragement;

My kind sisters in law, Nadia and Nour El Houda,

My lovely niece and nephews: Aya, Wassim, and Anis,

For whom I wish a successful future;

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My friends and

All those who fight for peace.

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Abstract

Sierra Leone is among the African countries which plunged into a brutal armed conflict that lasted for a long time and had disastrous effects on the country. The war in this country was a product of a complex combination of both internal and external factors. The conflict went on for many years with the rebel forces which used terror tactics of various designs to instill fear and get recognition from the civilian population. Its inability to provide its own security led to its dependence on foreign mercenaries for security. Peace accords provided a framework for a speedy disarmament process. Moreover, external intervention and committed response of the international community, including for example ECOMOG, UNAMSIL and the British army were very important in coercing the warring factions to a negotiating table. As disarmament progressed, peace began to seem more attainable. Thus, the disarmament programme was completed in January, 2002 and the war was officially declared over. The conflict destroyed all economic activities and social and agricultural projects were vandalized or completely looted. Consequently, the crises left the country much more disenchanted. This interruption however, provided an opportunity for the government and people to set fresh goals and priorities for the Sierra Leonean society. Furthermore, they have to start all over again to rebuild their lives and rehabilitate the structures which served them well over the years. The core purpose of this work is to seek the origins and reasons that were behind the onset of the civil war in Sierra Leone and the efforts made to end it. Subsequently, it attempts to highlight the impact of the civil war on life in Sierra Leone and how Sierra Leoneans were displaced, brutalised and tortured, and the devastating effects of the conflict on the social, political, economic field and the infrastructure of the country as a whole.

Key words: Sierra Leone, civil war, terror tactic, child soldiers, intervention, peace, impact.

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List of Abbreviations

ACC: Anti-Corruption Commission
AFRC: Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
APC : All Peoples' Congress
AU: African Union
CAST: Consolidated African Selection Trust
CDF: Civil Defence Forces
CMRRD: Commission for Mineral Resources, Reconstruction and Development
CMS: Church Missionary Society
DDR: Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration
ECOMOG: Economic Community Monitoring Group
ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States
EMSC: ECOWAS Mediation Standing Committee
EO: Executive Outcomes
FAWE: Forum of African Women Educationalists
FY: Fiscal Year
GBV: Gender-Based Violence
ILO: International Labour Organisation
IMATT: International Military Advisory Training Team
IMF: International Monetary Fund
MDTF: Multi-Donor Trust Fund
MEST: Ministry for Education, Science and Technology
NAS: National AIDS Secretariat
NCDDR: National Committee for Disarmament Demobilization & Reintegration
NCRRR: National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and
NCSLW: National Congress of Sierra Leone Women
NDMC: National Diamond Mining Company
NEC: National Election Commission
NGO: Non Governmental Organization
NPFL: National Patriotic Front of Liberia
NPRC: National Provisional Ruling Council
NRC: National Reformation Council
NUC: Njala University College
OAU: Organization of African Unity
OLRT: Operational Liaison and Reconnaissance Team
PANSO: Pan-Africanist Nkrumahist Student Organisation
PMMC: Precious Metals Mining Company

RSLMF: Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces
RUF: Revolutionary United Front
SALW: Small Arms and Light Weapons
SLA: Sierra Leone Army
SLPMB : Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Board
SLPP: Sierra Leone People's Party.
SLST: Sierra Leone Selection Trust
SLWM: Sierra Leone Women's Movement
UK: United Kingdom
UN: United Nations
UNAMSIL: United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF: United Nations Children Emergency Fund
UNOMSIL: United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone
USA: United States of America
USAID: United States Agency For International Development
WOMEN: Women's Organization For a Morally Enlightened Nation
YWCA: Young Women's Christian Association

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General Introduction

West Africa is one of the world's unstable regions. Since 1957, it has faced violent conflicts that have caused a vast number of deaths, injuries, refugees and displaced persons. These conflicts differ in their sources, dynamics and complexity. They have their own histories and specific characteristics. There are local and particular manifestations associated with the distinct historical experiences of colonial rule, nation building, internal consolidation and socio-economic development of the post colonial state.

The causes and nature of these conflicts vary, mostly involving a combustible mix of political rivalry, ethnic conflicts, malfeasance and competition for plunder of natural resources. They cover various forms of predatory insurrection in which it is difficult to distinguish soldiers from rebels such as what occurred in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The latter had a chequered history characterized by repeated violent change of governments. On 27 April, 1961 Sierra Leone achieved its independence with great enthusiasm and optimism for a promising future. At Independence, it had all the potential of becoming a wealthy and developed state in the West African sub-region. Unfortunately, the history of Sierra Leone at post-independence was replete with frustrating paradoxes.

After independence and until 1992, Sierra Leone gradually fell victim to continued coups, corrupt and inefficient governments, and economic collapse. For 24 years between 1968 and 1992, Sierra Leone was ruled by Siaka Stevens and his successor General Joseph Momoh. Both of them came from the ranks of the All Peoples Congress (APC) and their rule was characterised by mismanagement and corruption which left Sierra Leone in

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economic ruin, fostered ethnic conflict, and placed the country in deep financial dependence upon foreign aid and loans. These conditions paved the way for the outbreak of the civil war and marked the beginning of mayhem for the country.

The civil war broke out in 1991 when a rebel group, known as the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) launched a military offensive from neighboring Liberia. The RUF was cruel, committing atrocities including rape, mutilation, abductions, and destruction of property on a vast scale. One of the RUF's most despicable techniques was the abduction of young children and the use of child soldiers to commit further atrocities. Attempts for international actions to put an end to the civil war and alleviate the human suffering led to a succession of military interventions in Sierra Leone between 1992 and 2002 so as to restore order.

The objective of this work is to find out the causes which led to the outbreak of the civil war. Though it is far from being exhaustive, it is an attempt to shed some light on the factors that fostered the onset of the civil war in Sierra Leone. This humble work will attempt to convey the involvement of childsoldiers and the role performed by women in this tragic war. Then, the conditions which put the peace process forward and the civil war officially declared over will be discussed. Subsequently, it will try to highlight the effects and impact of the civil war on people and the country as a whole.

In this respect, the actual work is split into four chapters. The first chapter provides a historical background to the civil war in Sierra Leone. It supplies a historical overview of Sierra Leone. Next, it will attempt to give an idea about Sierra Leone people, focussing on youth. The study also will

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examine the historical and sociological processes, which gave birth to the RUF and the impact of youth culture and character on Sierra Leone crisis. Then the chapter will deal with the RUF motivation to the Sierra Leonean youth to join their rebel movement. Eventually, women involvement in the civil war, their affiliation to international organizations and involvement in Sierra Leone civil war will be tackled.

The second chapter traces the origins of the conflict, including the political and economic turmoil. Next, the study articulates around the external factors of the civil war such as the Libyan connection and the impact of the Liberian civil war on the onset of the war in Sierra Leone. The study also copes with the onset of the civil war in the 1990's and the horrific strategy of the internal factions and their inhuman treatment of Sierra Leoneans and the Revolutionary United Front terror tactic for the war.

The third chapter is designed to throw light on the major attempts at finding a negotiated settlement, and supplies a brief overview of the three peace accords, noting how the treatment of DDR and accountability evolved through these series of agreements signed between 1996 and 2001 as well as the involvement of the external interventions in paving the way for peace process. Then, the chapter will look at those various ways in which women were affected by the conflict and how they were involved in the official decision making process for solutions to end the conflict.

The last chapter is devoted to the impact of the civil war on Sierra Leone's people, especially children, women, refugees and displaced persons, the status of the disabled in general will also be described. The chapter will also attempt to convey the impact of the rebel war on the social, economic and political field and the interventionist measures taken

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by both state and non-state actors in meeting the difficulties namely through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Special Court organisations and their impact on the living conditions of the people of Sierra Leone.

Introduction

Sierra Leone is a country with a tumultuous past and it was among West African Sub-Sahara most troubled areas. In spite of its rich and diversified natural resources, marine resources, and tourist attraction, Sierra Leone had dropped at the very bottom of the world's poorest countries. Endemic corruption and mismanagement were the main causes to this problem, aggravated by state collapse, state paralyse, and a traumatic civil war waged against its government, its military and citizens for ten years. Three groups, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) and the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC) had played pivotal roles in sustaining this war. All represented themselves as revolutionary forces; but unfortunately ended in victimising different regions and segments of the Sierra Leonean society.

The RUF was the most vicious of the three; and by the time, it launched the war in 1991, Sierra Leone was a virtually collapsed state; poverty and despair rotted the society; violence and political thuggery became the norm in terms of governing and control of the civilians. These circumstances encouraged the development of a climate of disorder, composed of alienated youth who were considered as a central element in the crisis. They were predominantly second generation residents in the city, known for their anti-social culture: gambling, drugs, petty theft, crimes and cruelty committed against the innocent civilian population. Such circumstances had smothered and impacted the country and people who once lived a simple, but peaceful life were subjected to constant scare and pain.

This chapter provides a historical background to the civil war in Sierra Leone. It supplies a historical overview of this West African country. Then it attempts to give an idea about Sierra Leoneans' circumstances, focussing on the youth. Growing grievances in the pre-war period paved the way for the birth of the RUF, the main rebel group which initially triggered Sierra Leone civil war. In this context, the history of the emergence of the RUF will be addressed, subsequently the chapter will trace their motivation to Sierra Leone youth to join their rebel movement and consequently produce a profound tragedy for Sierra Leone statehood. Eventually, women involvement in the civil war, their affiliation to international organizations and involvement in Sierra Leone civil war will be tackled.

1. History of Sierra Leone before the Civil War

1.1 Historical Overview

The name "Sierra Leone" dates back to 1462, when Portuguese explorer Pedro da Cintra, sailing down the West African coast, saw the tall mountains rising up on what is now Freetown Peninsula and called them "Lion Mountains," or "*Serra Lyoa*." Successive visits by English sailors and later British colonization modified the name to "Sierra Leone." This tiny former British colony is located on the West African Coast, north of the equator. It is bordered by Guinea to the north and northeast, Liberia to the south and southeast, and the Atlantic Ocean to the west. Sierra Leone consists of a hilly western peninsula and a hinterland abundant in diverse natural agricultural and mineral riches. It is a land of staggering natural scenery.

Map One: Sierra Leone Location



Source: <http://www.worldatlas.com/>

Its colonial history can be traced as far back as to 1787 when a group of British abolitionists and philanthropists acquired a piece of land in the western part of the country to be used as a haven for freed slaves. These former slaves (liberated Africans) were mainly from England, America, Nova Scotia, the West Indies and the West African high seas. This tiny country was known as the “Province of Freedom”, serving as a beacon of Western civilisation and Christianity in Africa. In 1808, the British divided the country into two administrative regions: the Colony and the Protectorate. The Colony comprised the capital Freetown and the associated western areas. It enjoyed a relatively high standard of living, education and social development.

Missionaries were active in the Colony, they used to introduce Western ideas and customs and in the yellow fever of 1823, many missionaries died. In these circumstances, the Church Missionary Society (CMS) saw that training Africans for the ministry was obligatory.¹ So, in 1827 a training institution opened at Fourah Bay. It started out as a CMS sponsored theological institution in Cline Town, near the Freetown harbour. It attracted many leading Sierra Leoneans and students from all over West Africa, particularly British West Africa (Nigeria, the Gambia, and Ghana). As a result, ministers, missionaries and agents for the rest of West Africa were trained and Sierra Leone became known for its favourable social endowment and the first and the oldest university-level institution in sub-Saharan Africa, Fourah Bay College which assured the country its crucial role in higher education in the continent.

1- CMS and Sierra Leone : www.christiantoday.com/templates/news_view.htm?id=58&code=afri

In 1896, the British made the outlying areas into a Protectorate, where the colonial administrators exerted indirect control through traditional rulers. They relied on local chiefs to rule the hinterland, elevating them to the position of Paramount Chiefs, rewarding loyal chiefs and replacing disloyal ones with more pliable candidates. Those paramount chiefs had wide ranging responsibilities including maintaining security, collecting taxes as well as control of land distribution. So, they quickly started abusing their power, leading to widespread unhappiness among the general population and to a general corrupt system.

The 1920's became a turning point in Sierra Leone's history through the emergence of new schools and the educated elite who believed that education was the key tool that would help them to reach their aims, therefore they claimed for higher education. As regard the economic sphere, economic development was concentrated mainly in Freetown and the southern parts of the country. At that time, Sierra Leone witnessed reforms in agriculture and transportations. A few years after the First World War, the extractions of minerals began. Generally, the 1950's was economically a good period because of the economic expansion, which was due to a great increase in mining especially diamonds.

In the political field, the early 1950s witnessed a modern face of traditional rule. The Sierra Leone People's Party emerged as a new political power dynamics in preparation for independence. On 27 April 1961, Sierra Leone gained its independence under the leadership of Milton Margai and the SLPP by peaceful means, through negotiations with the British colonial master. One prominent American scholar of Africa, Thomas Patrick Melady, later United States ambassador to Burundi and Uganda as well as ambassador to the Holy See, was typical of his contemporaries in his enthusiastic optimism about the future of the new West African state:

Sierra Leone can emerge as a showcase of West Africa, progressive in its politics and forward-looking in its policies. Its prime minister, Milton Margai, was strongly opposed to Communist infiltration. Building on a solid agricultural base, the economy had profited from diamond deposits and growing interest in its promising industries, which ranged from fish to oil. Sierra Leone is more than a symbol of freedom; it is an embodiment of the aspirations of Africa.²

Tragically, the ensuing decades turned this promise on its head and made Sierra Leone a weak and paradoxical state. Sierra Leone was as Ake Apter put it, “inordinately powerful and pitifully irrelevant”.³

After its independence, Sierra Leone witnessed political upheaval with the SLPP as the dominant political institution to produce the country’s first two heads of state, Milton Margai and his brother Albert Margai. Milton Margai (1895 - 1964) had been the first native of the Protectorate to earn a bachelor’s degree and the first to qualify as a doctor from Fourah Bay College. He led the country to the 1962 election which was the first to take place in an independent nation where the SLPP emerged victorious due to the Mende’s and Krio elites great support. The SLPP dominated chief’s courts won twelve of the eighteen northern seats.⁴ As a result, Milton Margai remained Prime Minister until his death on 28 April, 1964. He extremely relied on the chiefs at the local level arguing that:

If we have to move towards progress, we must move hand in hand with our chiefsmy conscience would not allow me to uphold a chief who goes on oppressing his people, but a chief who has not done any wrong, I’m always here to uphold him.⁵

² Thomas Patrick Melady, *Faces of Africa*, (New York: Macmillan 1964), 39.

³ A.P. Kup, *Sierra Leone: A Concise History*, (London, David and Charles Newton Abbot, Canada, 1975), 212.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 209.

⁵ John R. Cartwright, *Political Leadership in Sierra Leone*, (London, Croom Helm Ltd, London, 1978), 39.

Upon his death Milton's brother, Albert Margai (1910 –1980), succeeded him and managed to have social ties with both the Mende and the Sherbro speaking groups.

The early years of independence were characterised by a period of relative peace and stability which regrettably was very short lived before it degenerated into a dictatorship. The degradation began after the hotly contested general elections of 1967, which was won by the opposition party, APC led by Siaka Probyn Stevens (1905 -1988). During his rule, he faced serious and tragic problems including corruption and nepotism, in addition to rampant unemployment and poverty coupled with economic mismanagement, and other scourge, which brought about a total neglect of basic and social needs of the general populace, the impact of which engendered widespread dissatisfaction and frustration, especially among the youth and the disadvantaged segments of society. These conditions created massive economic inequalities, and eventually led to an insatiable demand and struggle for a share of the state's resources, which sowed the seeds for a violent conflict when the RUF force invaded Kailahun and Pujehun districts of eastern and southern parts of the country, from neighbouring Liberia in 1991. So, a horrific civil war erupted, raging till 2002 marking the beginning of mayhem for the country and its people.

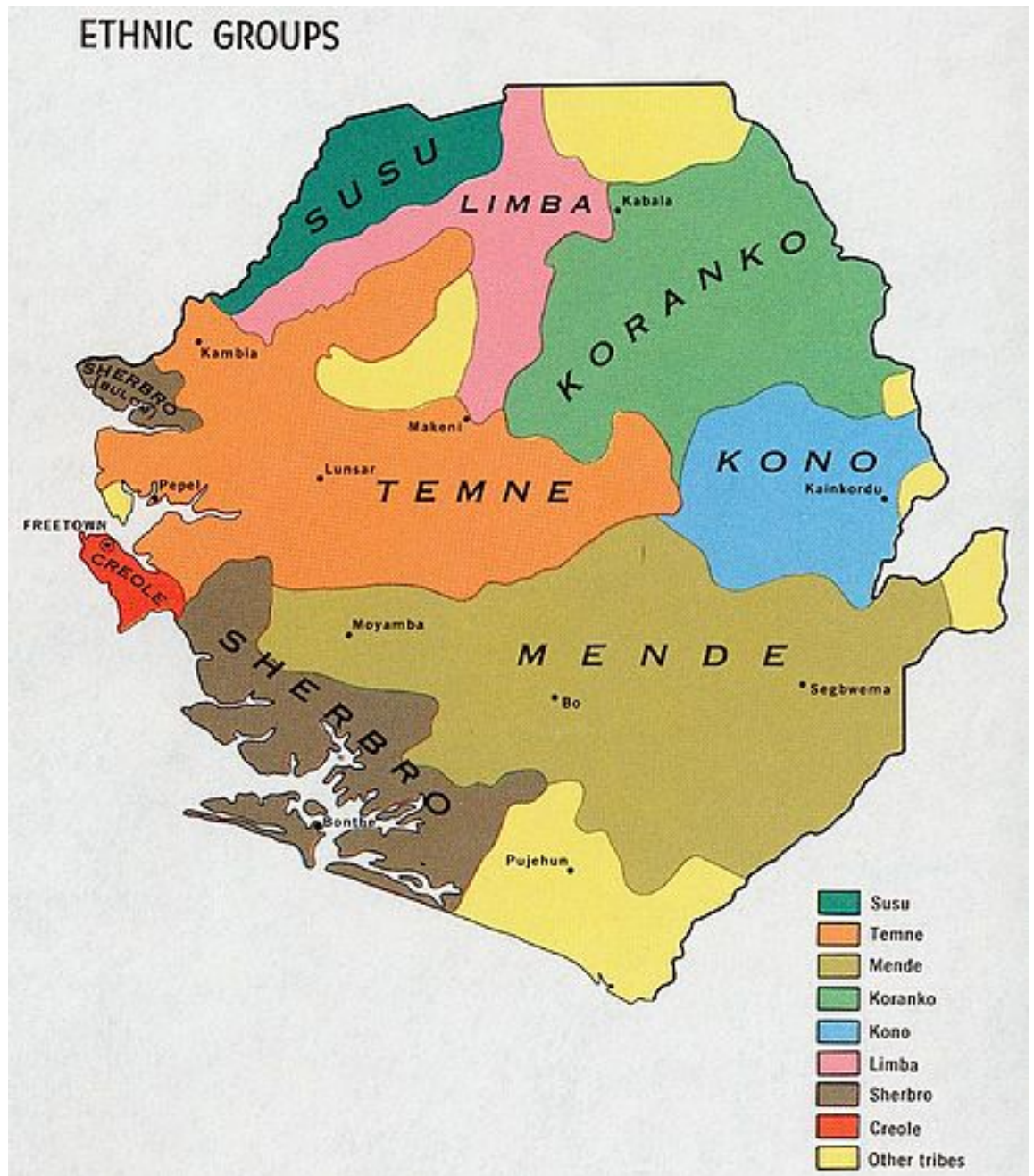
1.2 Sierra Leone People

1.2.1 Sierra Leone Ethnic Groups

Sierra Leone is made up of seventeen different ethnic groups, the largest of which is the Mende of the southern and eastern regions. The second largest group is the Temne, followed by the Limba, both of which are dominant in the north. Other groups include the Kono in the east, the northern Koranko, the Mandingo, Loko, Susu, Fullah and Yalunka. Smaller

groups include the Bullom, Sherbro, Vai, Gola and Krim, with the Kissi in the eastern hinterland. In order to understand the divergences, it will be helpful to identify the various ethnic groups of the country.

Map Two: Sierra Leone Ethnic Groups



Source : From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
<http://en.wikipedia.org/>

1.2.2 Ethno-Regional Divisions

Ethno-regional divisions largely characterized the pre-war period and had bedevilled Sierra Leone's political history. Such rivalries pre-date independence and initially pitted the Creoles of the colony, against the other 15 indigenous ethnic groups of the Protectorate. Colonialism created an environment for political competition between them. Independence and majority rule politically handicapped the Creoles, their identity was no longer highly salient to the political alignments. A new division combining ethnic and regional elements, Mendes versus the northerners, was taking shape, while the Kono ethnic group had already entrenched itself as the basis for an autonomous political force.⁶ After independence the Protectorate's electoral supremacy was to diminish the Creole-Protectorate rivalry. The Creoles realised that they had to join a Protectorate-led party to exert any political influence.⁷ Incipient rivalries deepened between the SLPP and the APC, which became the main opposition party to the ruling of the former.

The ethno-regional divisions generated distributional grievances. In the location of development projects the APC apparently discriminated against the south-eastern regions, which bore the brunt of anti-agricultural policy under the APC such as the exchange rate overvaluation, subsidies on food imports, and the dismantling of the railway which was pivotal to rural agriculture.⁸ Northerners often complained about discrimination with regard to economic opportunities by the current ruling SLPP. Besides, Ethno-regional divisions had engendered poor political leadership and its

⁶ Cartwright, *Political Leadership in Sierra Leone*, 197.

⁷ Christopher, Clapham, *Liberia & Sierra Leone: An Essay in Comparative Politics* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press; 1976), 86.

⁸ Victor A. B. Davies, *War, Poverty and Growth in Africa Lessons from Sierra Leone*, Oxford University 2002), 12.

damaging consequences. In the general elections of 1967, the APC was the winner because of regional divide. The APC won thirty two seats⁹ in the northern regions, and the western area where the creoles supported the APC out of disaffection with their pre-independence rivals. The SLPP won twenty eight seats¹⁰ in the southern and eastern regions, except for the Kono district in the east, the home to the Konos and a large immigrant diamond mining community (including Temnes from the north).¹¹

Ethno-regional rivalries also caused political instability. After the APC electoral victory, in 1967 Brigadier David Lansana's coup was perceived by northerners as an attempt to prevent power shifting to the North. This led to a high ethno-regional unstable period and a possible civil war was averted when Siaka Stevens was instated in 1968. The 1996 election was also a consequence of the ethno-regional rivalries. Tejan Kabbah was chosen as the SLPP's presidential candidate principally to counter accusations of southeastern dominance. When the SLPP won office in 1996 for the first time in nearly 30 years, it was widely perceived as the return to power of a Mende constituency. However, Tejan Kabbah tried to heal ethnic divisions by bringing representatives of other parties to his government.

The different identities in Sierra Leone were not intractable because of their rational content. The fact that the use of political power was perceived in rational terms, it made it possible for ethnic and regional alignments to remain fluid, and maintain the possibility of change in the system. Two illustrations of this are: first the breakaway of the northern

⁹ Cartwright, *Political Leadership in Sierra Leone*.82.

¹⁰ Davies, *War, Poverty and Growth in Africa* ,13.

¹¹ *Sierra Leone Consolidating the Recovery and Reconstruction Process, Country Assessment Report*, A report prepared by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) under the auspices of the AU/NEPAD Sub-cluster on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development,(Addis Ababa, Ethiopia March) 2008,19.

tribes from their protectorate alignment with the Mendes and their eventual alliance with the Creoles for the 1967 elections, and second the formation in 1970 of a new predominantly Temne opposition party, with some Mende support following the coming to power of this coalition of Temnes, Limbas, Creoles and other non-Mende groups.¹²

Equally important, it was the fact that political power was perceived as being used for the advantage of some and the drawback of other ethnic and regional groups that made ethnic and regional identities the most salient for the policy. Indeed, the ethno-regional divisions had outlived the war. Political parties were still largely defined along ethnic lines. The huge costs and organisational difficulties involved in the formation of political parties, and deep-seated ethnically based loyalty to the older parties, had prevented the emergence of strong new parties that would break the ethno-regional divide. The ruling SLPP and APC, and their ethno-regional cleavages, appeared set to polarize post-conflict politics in Sierra Leone.

1.2.3 Marginalization of the Native Population

The war was also attributed to government's neglect and marginalisation of the rural population and its inability to improve the welfare of the majority of youth, of whom many were illiterate and unemployed. About 80%¹³ of the poor who produced a significant proportion of the nations' wealth lived in the rural districts. They faced increasing isolation and were deprived of basic services. One reason was the over-centralisation of power in Freetown, the capital. Most of the daily life requirements such as electricity, water supply, telecommunications facilities etc., had been located in the urban areas mainly, Freetown. The isolation of the rural population worsened their social situation. In 1990, it

¹².Davies, *War, Poverty and Growth in Africa*, 14.

¹³ Cartwright, *Political Leadership in Sierra Leone*, 199.

was estimated that only 22% and 35% of the rural poor had access to safe drinking water and sanitation, compared to 83% and 59% respectively in the urban areas.¹⁴ This worsened the distribution of income and created discontent among the rural population.

Furthermore, During the 1990s, there was a dramatic growth in the number of unemployed and disaffected youth. As Harsch noted, “Since most African cities simply are unprepared to accommodate the additional urban migrant population, this will lead to a further mushrooming of quarter settlements of high densities and inadequate or no services”. Due to the marginalisation of the rural areas, the majority of them drifted from the countryside to Freetown and other urban areas and to the diamond mining areas in Tongo and Kono in eastern Sierra Leone.¹⁵ These youth became socialized in a climate of violence, drugs and criminality, and were therefore vulnerable to the manipulations of selfish politicians during elections. It was therefore easy to find alibis to fuel the revolution.

Explicit and implicit taxation of agriculture also fostered rural isolation. Prior to the early 1990s, the government taxed rural agriculture implicitly through the fixing of agricultural production prices by the Marketing Board, and explicitly through export taxes. The Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Board (SLPMB) purchased palm kernels, coffee, cocoa, and ginger from peasants, then transported, bulked them, and sold them on the world market. However, they paid the farmers only a proportion of the world price. The value varied from year to year and crop to crop, but it was

¹⁴ James o.c.Jonah., *Economic Dimensions of the Conflict in Sierra Leone*, 2004, 2.

¹⁵ Ernest , Harsch., *African Cities Under Strain: Initiatives to Improve Housing, Services, Security and Governance.* *Africa Recovery* , 2001,15 (12): 1-9.
[<http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec/vol15no1/151city.htm>]

about 45% of the world price.¹⁶ The ratio of producer price to export price for palm kernels, the leading agricultural export declined from 66% in 1961-65 to less than 25% in 1982-86.¹⁷ The same ratio was less than 15% for cocoa and less than 25% for coffee in 1982-86. The share of total produce output sold to the SLPMB declined from 87% for cocoa in 1980 to 38% in 1986, whereas the share for coffee declined from 50% in 1980 to 25% in 1986.¹⁸

Table One: Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Board: Prices and Purchases.

Year	Palm Kernels: producer's price, % of export price	Cocoa		Coffee	
		Producer's price % of export price	SLPMB Purchases (% of total)	Producer's price, % of export price	SLPMB Purchases % of total
1961-65	66				
1966-70	56	48		49	
1971-75	62	56		54	
1976-79	50			43	
1980	53	104	87	64	50
1981	62	98	68	90	50
1982	22	17	58	20	52
1983	8	10	74	11	30
1984	21	10	71	14	8
1985	37	19	52	27	44
1986	30	11	38	43	25
1987					22
1988		33	33		
1988		48	21		

Source: World Bank (1993), which obtained statistics from Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Board (SLPMB). The data end in 1989 because the SLPMB was dismantled shortly after 1989.

¹⁶ Severine Rugumamu, Osman Gbla, *Studies in Reconstruction and Capacity Building in Post-Conflict Countries in Africa Some Lessons of Experience from Sierra Leone*, Sierra Leone Revised Report December 2003.24.

¹⁷ Barry, Riddell, *Sierra Leone: The Horror, The Horror*, 2002 <http://clubs.myams.org/united/3-1/articles/riddell.html>

¹⁸ Victor A. B. Davies, "Sierra Leone's Economic Growth Performance, 1961–2000," (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 681.

Some of the residual went toward expenses, but millions of Lions (the Sierra Leone currency) were amassed, and then transferred into government hands. Meanwhile the government spent this money largely on the elite and in the capital city. Peasant life was made poorer because much of their income was taken away, and the schools and health facilities that were paid for out of their revenues tended to be found in cities and not in the countryside i.e there was an urban bias , but not as a development tool , but as a ‘rip off’ (elite self-indulgence). Peasant farmers in the country were very disquieted and this was only one fashion by which they felt ‘ripped off’. Their kids couldn’t attend school, while the elite in the capital Freetown lived in relative luxury.¹⁹ Most of the quantity of crops, which were grown principally for export, and were not sold to the SLPMB was presumably smuggled abroad. Furthermore, the lack of a rural road network raised transport costs, and consequently led to the depression of agriculture and rural incomes, and aggravated rural isolation.

The reasons for the urban bias are that first, both the pre-independence and past elite were urban-based and had no rural interests. Prior to 1972, power was divided between the chiefs and elected local government councils. In 1972, Stevens abolished elected local government councils, leaving chiefs as the only form of local government. With the abolition of local government councils and the alienation of the rural areas by the government, chiefs came to assume wide and unchecked powers such as the allocation of land, supervision of community services, and judicial powers. Abuses by chiefs had been advanced as one of the causes of the war.²⁰ The second reason was fear of politically volatile urban groups. For instance, in 1977, students at the university of Sierra Leone’s

¹⁹ Riddell, *Sierra Leone*, 2002 <http://clubs.myams.org/united/3-1/articles/riddell.html>

²⁰ Richards, P, *To Fight or to Farm? Agrarian Dimensions of the Mano River Conflicts (Liberia & Sierra Leone)*, African Affairs, 2004, 104.

Freetown-based Fourah Bay College campus initiated nationwide anti-Stevens riots which almost toppled the APC.

Although the roots of the conflict were usually urban, the fighting took place in rural areas. Thus, it was not the peasantry that called for the urban youth to help them in their struggle, but the young urban rebels that tried to persuade the peasantry to fuel a revolution, otherwise they would tend to consider them as reluctant, enemies and traitors. Generally, rural isolation supplied a justification for the rebellion. Also, unfair appointment of traditional rulers led to human rights abuses and widespread grievances among the population, mainly the youth. So, to understand how the youth became embroiled in the civil war, one has to analyse the precarious and vulnerable position of this category of people in Sierra Leone.

1.2.4 Sierra Leone Alienated Youth

Surviving in cities was a hustle for many African youth; who, according to Kaplan, “face the corrosive effects of cities, where African culture is being redefined as deforestation tied to overpopulation”.²¹ They were also viewed as dangerous and rebellious. Kaplan considers the young men that filled West African cities as “out of school, unemployed, loose molecules in an unstable social fluid that threatened to ignite”.²² Their concentration in African cities raised the specter of expanding youth problems including unemployment, discord, and unrest. Such hardship and malaise could create various conceptions of what success in cities might signify. For many youth, for example, it may simply mean the ability to survive, to stay afloat in an urban world teeming with rivalry risk and marginalisation.

²¹ Robert D, Kaplan, *The Ends of the Earth: A Journey at the Dawn of the 21st Century*, (New York, Random House, 1996), 34.

²² Kaplan, *The Ends of the Earth*, 16.

Macharia highlighted how Africa's urban youth were typically overlooked: "The youth in most African cities made up at least 60 percent of the urban population, yet most programmes in these cities rarely addressed this specific problem."²³ A World Bank report entitled, "The Future of African Cities", supported this assertion. It suggested that urban projects constituted less than five percent of all World Bank projects for Sub-Saharan Africa in 1972-96.²⁴ This means that targeting urban youth needs and concerns was not directly taken into consideration. As a result, impoverished, unskilled, and poorly educated urban youth often recast themselves as an inferior and alienated generation. Paul Collier hypothesizes that a state that has an abundance of primary commodity, with a large proportion of youths between the ages of 15 and 24 not adequately provided for by an education endowment, has a tendency for conflict.²⁵

Indeed, the youth was the lifeblood of the Sierra Leonean nation. Everyone between the ages of 18 and 35 years old was considered to be a youth. According to a government paper of 2003, youths constituted forty-five percent of the country's estimated 4.5 million population.²⁶ The following table indicates the age distribution of Sierra Leone's population.

²³ Macharia, Kinuthia, *Integrating Youth in the Informal Sector: Lessons from Nairobi and Harare*. Urban Management and Urban Violence in Africa, Volume 2, edited by Isaac O. Albert, J. Adisa, T. Agbola, and G. HÉrault. Idaban: IFRA (Institut Français de Recherche en Afrique), 1994, 161.

²⁴ Hope, Kempe Ronald, *Urbanization and Urban Growth in Africa.*, Journal of Asian and African Studies, 1998, 9.

²⁵ Paul Collier, "Doing Well Out of War: An Economic Perspective", in Mats Berdal & David Malone (eds), *Greed & Grievance: Economic Agenda in Civil Wars*, (Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc, 2000), 91.

²⁶ Ministry of Youth and Sports, Government of Sierra Leone, *Sierra Leone National Youth Policy*, strategy paper published in July 2003, 5.

Table Two: Age distribution of Sierra Leone's population

Period	Age group (years)		
	0-14	15-64	65+
1960-69	40	57	3
1970-79	41	56	
1980-89	41	56	3
1990-99	42	55	3
2000-2005	43	54	3

Source: World Development Indicators, April 2007

Table two indicates that the proportion of the population in the 15-64 year age bracket, which encompasses youths, is high, ranging from 54 to 57 percent over the years. Thus, the youthfulness of the population may also have contributed to the youth problem that paved the way for the formation of the rebel movement.

Before the conflict, there was a particular category of marginalised youths, referred to as the *rarray man dem*.²⁷ They constituted a predominantly male-specific, oppositional sub-culture, prone to violence and other anti-social behaviour such as drug dealing, petty theft and riotous conduct. Mostly illiterates, they were economically insecure. They survived by moving in and out of casual jobs as domestic hands, night watchmen and labourers. They lived on the margins and were alienated from society. Their violence mainly involved *chuk* (stabbing with a knife) but was not of a political nature.²⁸ After the promulgation of the Republican Constitution

²⁷ Report of the Sierra Leone Truth & Reconciliation Commission, 345.

²⁸ Ibid.

in 1971, Vice President S. I. Koroma's cynical tactics transformed *rarray man dem* into "thugs" i.e youths who were utilised for political violence.²⁹

In the provinces, marginalised youths were known as "san san boys" and "*njiahungbia ngornga*", the San san boys were marginalised youths eking out a living in the "sandpits" of the diamond mines.³⁰ Most of them never fulfilled their dreams of becoming wealthy through diamonds. Instead, they became part of a harsh, greedy and adventurous way of life. "*Njiahungbia ngornga*" is a Mende phrase meaning unruly youth.³¹ This group included semi-literate youths in the provinces who loathed traditional structures and values. They saw "the rebellion as an opportunity to settle local scores and reverse the alienating rural social order in their favour."³²

After independence, the youth found within Freetown and its outskirts were perceived as illiterate and unenlightened with a collectively negative attitude, gravitating naturally towards violence. Most of them could never fulfil their ambitions because they were not "connected" to the political system. So, they tended to be rebellious towards the authority.³³ The external political culture that they were exposed to in the 1970s and 1980s was also rebellious. It comprised revolutionary ideas and models emerging from a variety of sources, and culminating in radical pan-Africanism, Gaddafi's Green Book, North Korea's Kim Il Song's Juche idea, the anti-apartheid struggle in Southern Africa, and the more militant stages of the US civil rights movement. With the increase in the number of marginalised

²⁹ P. K, Muana, "The Kamajoi Militia: Civil War, Internal Displacement and the Politics of Counter-Insurgency", in Abdullah, I. and Bangura, Y. (eds.); *Lumpen Culture and Political Violence: The Sierra Leone Civil War*, Africa Development special edition on the Sierra Leone conflict, Volume XXII, Nos. 3 / 4, 1997 (hereinafter "Muana, *The Kamajoi Militia*"), 80.

³⁰ Muana, *The Kamajoi Militia*, 126.

³¹ Rachid, I., *Subaltern Reactions: Lumpens, Students and the Left Africa* Development, Special Issue on Lumpen Culture and Political Violence: The Sierra Leone Civil War, (1997b.), 23.

³² Muana, *The Kamajoi Militia*, 126.

³³ Rachid, *Subaltern Reactions*, 3.

youths came a corresponding increase in the number of *potes*. The peddling of drugs became a form of full-time employment for many youths.³⁴

University students also joined the drift to the *potes*. Student activists began establishing *potes* on their campuses and the drug culture started to gain a grudging acceptance in society.³⁵ Youths were also influenced by contemporary music, particularly reggae music by Bob Marley, Peter Tosh and Bunny Wailer. The lyrics of their songs depicted realities of the day-hardship, degradation and oppression. Ibrahim Abdullah saw students immersed in the rebellious youth culture becoming the articulate mouthpiece of a disaffected youth cohort. They attacked APC party rule and called for fundamental change. “*Potes*” where drugs like marijuana were sold and consumed, provided a venue for such interactions.³⁶ He saw this interaction as key to the emergence of the civil war.

Another factor was economic hardship at the time. Youths bore the economic difficulties under Stevens’ presidency. Youth unemployment was as much a problem of the economic crisis as it was of the type of education given to the youth.³⁷ An elitist system of education inherited from colonialism emphasised academic instruction, rather than the acquisition of required practical skills. The colonial emphasis on supplying a bureaucratic and professional class was not manifestly problematic prior to independence when human capital of any kind was scarce. However, by the 1970s, as education was supplied, unemployment among “educated” youths increased.

³⁴ Ibrahim, Abdullah, "Youth Culture and Rebellion: Understanding Sierra Leone's Wasted Decade", in *Critical Arts journal*, Volume 16, Number 2, 2002,29.

³⁵ Abdullah, *Youth Culture and Rebellion*, 31.

³⁶ Ibid, 69.

³⁷ Rachid, *Subaltern Reactions*, 76.

Against this backdrop, a radical youth tendency, led by students, sprang in the 1970s. They were militant and more directly involved in national politics. With civic and political opposition, these students at Fourah Bay College spearheaded opposition to the Stevens regime. FBC campus' initial mission, the primary terrain of students politics, was to produce clergymen. In 1876, it became a degree granting institution affiliated to the Durham university.³⁸ Until the 1950s, the majority of its students were Africans and only a small fraction came from the tiny Freetown Krio elite. Of the 357 degree students enrolled in 1954, only 49 were Sierra Leoneans. By 1985, the student population numbered over 1,500.³⁹ By the 1960s, more Krio and students from the hinterland were finding their way into the institution.⁴⁰ In 1972, FBC was formally amalgamated with Njala University College (NUC) to constitute the University of Sierra Leone. It was these changes in orientation that made possible for the Pan-Africanist Nkrumahist Student Organisation (PANSO) to emerge in the 1960s.⁴¹

The post-independence ethnic, cultural and social diversity of students' generation was reflected in the plethora of clubs hosted by the college. They included alumni associations, districts unions, fraternities and sororities, faculty groups and social clubs, gardeners and radicals, founded in the 1970s. Membership of these clubs ranged from 30 to 50 students in the 1970s and 1980s. New members were recruited from those students who displayed a positive attitude and anti-system posture. Gardeners, the more militant, met in the college's Botanical Gardens to discuss campus and national problems. In the 1970s, it produced an annual magazine

³⁸ John D. Hargreaves, *The End of Colonial Rule in West Africa*, London, (The Macmillan Press LTO, London, 1979), 100.

³⁹ Kup, *Sierra Leone*, 114.

⁴⁰ Hargreaves, *The End of Colonial Rule in West Africa*, 100.

⁴¹ Rachid, *Subaltern Reactions*, 70.

‘Frontline’. The magazine covered several aspects of campus life, but what made it different from other campus publications was its opposition to Siaka Stevens’ regime. The most politically active and vocal students usually came from the ranks of these radical clubs in the 1970s.⁴²

Student thinking and the campus climate were ripe for protest action. Hindolo Trye was elected president of FBC student union in 1976. The student motto “The Self” implied the importance of self-esteem and dignity, the awareness of the right to liberate oneself and the right of the collective self to initiate liberation.⁴³ Between 1977 and 1992, it was these youth who took a leading militant role in directly challenging the authority and legitimacy of the APC party movement. In 1977, the regime was almost brought down by riots sparked off by a student demonstration, following the arrest of their student leader Hindolo Trye. According to one participant:

They sent thugs and members of the paramilitary to beat us up. They destroyed the campus, which led to a national uprising led by the students and sparked up by school children. It is what we called the “no college, no school” demonstration. It spread countrywide and became a national uprising, which lasted for several weeks.⁴⁴

The government used the university administration to try to stifle students’ anti-establishment activities, culminating in the expulsion of some students from the university in the mid 1980s. There were also some radical “study groups” outside the university which attracted urban youths such as school dropouts disillusioned with the government. These groups propagated the various revolutionary ideas and models that were gaining currency at the time.

⁴² Rachid, *Subaltern Reactions*, 70.

⁴³ James, Currey, *The Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone: African Guerrillas*, (1998), 175.

⁴⁴ Olu Gordon, former student of Fourah Bay College in the 1970s who later became a lecturer and prominent participant in PANAFU, TRC interview conducted in Freetown, March 11th, 2003.

In fact, youth in Sierra Leone were regularly depicted as dangerous and veering out of control. They were not viewed as vibrant, dynamic contributors to a city's culture and daily life, but on the contrary they were viewed as carriers of crime and disease and they were disengaged from civil society. Youth had been misunderstood, undervalued, and distanced from mainstream society. So, the forms of alienation that they articulated were a product of their exclusion from mainstream society. Constructive social incentives offered to youth were insufficient to guarantee the perpetuation of an already failing state built on a society which was unable to maintain its own cohesion and to prevent the radical students and urban youth from the participation in the project to overthrow the state. This inevitably led to a negative impact on personal and community security.

Moreover, we can guess that their alienation and their subsequent revolt came about as a result of political and economic factors that eventually led to the Sierra Leonean crisis. They had interest in joining any process that in their worldview would contribute to improve their survival. For some, the RUF offered a new system of social incentives, an answer to what a destabilised state by a failing economy failed to provide. So, youth alienation and its subsequent radicalisation culminated in the formation of the rebel movement.

1.3 The Revolutionary United Front (RUF)

Sierra Leone's conflict gave birth to numerous opposition and rebel movements in the 1980s and 1990s, among them the Revolutionary United Front. Former army corporal Foday Saybana Sankoh stood out as the most important among that undistinguished group. How did the Revolutionary

United Front emerge? How did Foday Saybana Sankoh manage to become the leader of this revolutionary group?

1.3.1 The RUF Political Origins

The Revolutionary United Front is the Sierra Leonean rebel movement led by Foday Sankoh, according to Olu Gordon, whose idea is that the RUF:

....actually came from the expelled students from Fourah Bay College, especially Alie Kabba. And the specific reason why it was called a “united front” was because they had attempted to draw several organisations into their plan, including the organizations belonging to the Pan African Union .⁴⁵

This rebel movement was composed of a terrorist group formed in the 1980s in Sierra Leone; it sought to overthrow the government and gain control over the diamond producing regions. This movement which was sponsored by the president of Liberia, was also responsible for attacks on civilian population, widespread torture, murder and the use of children to commit atrocities. Ibrahim Abdullah and Patrick Muana had observed:

The RUF has defied all available typologies on guerilla movements. The RUF has made history; it is a peculiar guerilla movement without any significant national following or ethnic support. Perhaps because of its lumpen⁴⁶ social base and its lack of an emancipatory programme to garner support from other social groups, it has remained a bandit organization solely driven by the survivalist needs of its predominantly uneducated and alienated battle front and battle group commanders.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Olu Gordon, former student of Fourah Bay College in the 1970s who later became a lecturer and prominent participant in PANAFU, TRC interview conducted in Freetown, March 23th , 2003.

⁴⁶ Lumpen : under-class,poor and often criminal.

⁴⁷ Ibrahim Abdullah and Patrick Muana, *The Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone. A Revolt of the Lumpen proletariat in Christopher Clapham(ed.):African Guerillas, Oxford:James Currey,1998,42.*

Sierra Leone academics argued that the RUF originally had a legitimate political pedigree based on student-led opposition to the repressive and corrupt one-party regime of Siaka Stevens (1968-85).⁴⁸ At that time, many university students in Sierra Leone had become radicalized because of the government's suppression of their demonstrations so as to contain their exposure to new ideas, including the thoughts of Col. Qaddafi. This was matched by the continued and dramatic growth among unemployed and disaffected youth who had become socialized in a climate of violence, drugs and criminality. Radical students and lecturers thrown out of universities in the 1980s after a series of protest actions headed for exile in Ghana under the government of Jerry Rawlings (1993-2001), led by intellectuals such as Abu Kanu, a founding member of Future Shock Club and a graduate of Njala University College, and Rashid Mansaray, an activist from Freetown East End, who had allegedly left the country in 1986 to join the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola in the fight against the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola, only to be told to return home and pursue the struggle in his own country.⁴⁹

Between 1987 and 1988, between twenty five and fifty Sierra Leoneans were taken to Libya for training in the "art of revolution".⁵⁰ At the end of 1989, Charles Taylor launched an attack on Samuel Doe's government with a small band of men, several of them, including Taylor himself, with Libyan training or connections. Taylor also received support from the Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso. Burkinabè support for Taylor was later extended to Foday Sankoh and the RUF.⁵¹ Despite its brutal attacks on

⁴⁸ afrol News-African news agency, The Civil War in Sierra Leone
www.afrol.com/html/News/1007-civil-war.htm

⁴⁹ Ibrahim Abdullah, *Between Democracy and Terror: The Sierra Leone Civil War*, Dakar Senegal: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, 54

⁵⁰ Abdullah and Muana, *The Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone*, 54.

⁵¹ globalsecurity.org

civilians, the RUF claimed to be a movement in opposition to the country's corrupt and "tribalistic" political class. According to the Integrated Regional Information Network, Sankoh pointed in a statement in March 2000: "We seized the moment of 1991, at the height of Stevens's All People's Party misrule, to face the challenge of countering the nefarious plans that the party had hoped to put in place to entrench itself in power."⁵²

1.3.2 The RUF's Leader Foday Saybana Sankoh

Foday Saybana Sankoh was born on 17 October, 1937 in Masang Mayoso, Tonkolili district, in Northern Sierra Leone.⁵³ He served in the RSLMF in the early 1970s and had obtained the rank of corporal. Upon leaving the army, he worked as a TV cameraman. He then became a freelance photographer while attending Freetown College.⁵⁴ Sankoh led a vicious rebel group whose fighters used machetes to hack off the hands, feet, lips and ears of Sierra Leone's civilians. He was idolised as a lion by his supporters.⁵⁵ In the 1970's, he was an activist student and demonstrated against the government.⁵⁶ He was jailed for alleged implication in the 1971 coup plot against Siaka Stevens and upon his release he declared that he would seek revenge on the ruling APC government. On his release, he joined radical circles, and eventually arrived in Libya, where Muamar Gadafy was eagerly spreading his crackpot revolutionary ideas among West African dissidents.⁵⁷

⁵² Abdullah, *Between Democracy and Terror*, 56.

⁵³ Lansana, Gberie, *A Dirty War in West Africa The RUF & The Destruction of Sierra Leone*, (Hurst & Company Ltd, London, 2005), 6.

⁵⁴ Kwaku Nuarmah and William Zartman, "Intervention in Sierra Leone," in *Military Intervention: Cases in Context for the Twenty-First Century*, William J. Lahneman (New York: Rowmann and Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2004.), 133- 150.

⁵⁵ BBC News, *Foday Sankoh: The Cruel Rebel*, July, 2003. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3110629.stm>

⁵⁶ Nuarmah and Zartman, "Intervention in Sierra Leone", 133- 150.

⁵⁷ Derek Brown, *Who is Foday Sankoh*, Guardian, May 17, 2000. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2000/SierraLeone>

Sankoh returned with his friends to Liberia. There, he took part in the early stages of the rebellion in 1990 that was to bring Charles Taylor, the Liberian warlord, to power.⁵⁸ They recruited local youths to the RUF and with the help of Taylor, and two other Libyan-trained friends, Abu Kanu, and Rashid Mansaray, they launched an insurrection that developed into a civil war in 1991. In 1992, a young army captain, Valentine Strasser, seized power and clung to it with the aid of a motley group of white mercenaries, who were promised a generous share of the country's diamond wealth in return for restoring order. Charles Taylor had other ideas. He gave liberal aid to the RUF to keep Sierra Leone in turmoil, while Liberia's own diamond exports under Taylor's control steadily mounted.⁵⁹

Those who met the RUF's leader before his 2000 arrest and subsequent stroke spoke of the charismatic, ebullient character of the man known to his fighters as "Popay" or "Papa".⁶⁰ This was regarded as a key factor behind his ability to rally thousands of impoverished youths behind his rebellion against the wealthy Freetown political class. As the leader of the RUF, Foday Sankoh used brutal tactics to seize and maintain control over Sierra Leone's diamond mines, including extensive use of child soldiers, systematic amputation of limbs, and rape as a means of terrorizing civilians into submission.⁶¹

The RUF imposed its will in the impoverished interior of the country with systematic barbarity. Its ragtag forces, including a high proportion of press-ganged and brutalised children, became notorious for abduction, and gang rape. Its speciality was hacking off the limbs of children. In a land

⁵⁸ Brown, *Who is Foday Sankoh*, Guardian, May 17, 2000.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2000/SierraLeone>

⁵⁹ Abdullah, *Between Democracy and Terror*, 54

⁶⁰ Brown, *Who is Foday Sankoh*, Guardian, May 17, 2000.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2000/SierraLeone>

⁶¹ Ibrahim Abdullah, "Bush Path to Destruction: The Origin and Character of the Revolutionary United Front/Sierra Leone" *Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol.36, no.2, 1998, 55.

with chronic food shortages, the RUF is also said to have practised cannibalism. Sankoh's response to criticism had always taken two forms. He blandly denied atrocities and, when possible, put to death his critics. Two of his early Libyan-trained comrades, Abu Kanu and Rashid Mansaray were executed after they tried to moderate the excesses of the RUF.⁶²

In August 1992, Abu Kanu was executed by a firing squad for failure to follow instructions and conniving with the enemy. Then, in November of the same year, Rachid Mansary was also executed for technical failure to defend a strategic position against the enemy. He was tried in front of the last two story building on the Koindu-Kailahun road and shot by a firing squad.⁶³ Neither Kanu nor Mansary were glad with the random violence that the RUF forces were committing in the name of the revolution. It was reported that the area under Kanu's control was generally peaceful and well organised. However, Rachid Mansary opposed the indiscriminate killing of the innocent civilians and this is one of the reasons why he was executed.⁶⁴ So once the movement received the support of Charles Taylor, Sankoh no longer needed these two vanguards anymore.

In 1997, Sankoh was condemned to death for disloyalty by the High Court of Justice in Freetown. However, he was granted an amnesty on the basis of a clause in the Lome Peace Agreement which provided for the pardon and amnesty of all the members of the RUF. According to the indictment, Sankoh was the leader of the RUF and one of the principal leaders of the alliance between RUF and AFRC Armed Forces

⁶² Brown, *Who is Foday Sankoh*, Guardian, May 17, 2000.

<http://www.guardian.co.UK/world/2000/SierraLeone>

⁶³ Abdullah, *Between Democracy and Terror*, 61.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

Revolutionary Council. He thus had the authority, control and command over the members of the RUF and the RUF/ AFRC alliance.

In May 2000 a crowd estimated at 20,000 marched on Sankoh's villa in Freetown and he was close to being lynched when government forces and British peace-keepers intervened, taking him into custody.⁶⁵ In early 2002, the RUF became a political party and contested the elections held just months later. With Sankoh already in prison, Alimamy Pallo Bangura was its presidential candidate, but he received just 1.7% of the vote and the RUF did not gain a single seat in parliament.⁶⁶ "He has the character of the lion," top rebel official Jonathan Kposowa described during the election campaign. Mr Sankoh was captured after his rebels killed more than a dozen protesters outside Freetown.⁶⁷ His arrest led to celebrations in the streets of Freetown. After 22 months in custody, he emerged as a shadow of his former self. During one court meeting, he continuously broke into unexplained fits of laughter and said that he was surprised that he was tried because he was the leader of the world.⁶⁸

He was indicted on 7 March 2003, on 17 counts of crimes against humanity. On the basis of his acts and omissions and his total responsibility, Foday Sankoh was accused of a number of terrible crimes, mainly: extermination, murder, rape, sexual slavery, other forms of sexual violence, enslavement, and other inhuman acts as crimes against humanity; acts of terrorism, collective punishments, violence, outrages upon personal dignity, pillage, abductions, and the taking of hostages; other serious violations of international humanitarian law, namely the recruitment of

⁶⁵ Trial for Daily News. www.trial.ch.org

⁶⁶ BBC News, *Foday Sankoh: The Cruel Rebel*, July, 2003. <http://news.bbc.co.UK/2/hi/africa/3110629.stm>

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

children under 15 years into the armed forces, and attacks against humanitarian assistance operations and UN Peacekeepers.⁶⁹

Sankoh's last appearance in court was in a wheelchair where he was unable to respond to questions. The court doctor said he was unable to talk, walk or feed himself. Sankoh died of natural causes on 29 July, 2003 when he was in detention in the Choithrams hospital in Freetown. His death granted him "a peaceful end that he denied to so many others", according to a statement from the United Nations-backed war crimes court chief prosecutor, David Crane.⁷⁰ As for Foday Sankoh, his motivation seems to have been personal pique rather than ideological:

He seemed driven by personal anger at his own lack of success within Sierra Leonea society rather than by ideology. He was completely indifferent to the horror that he was inflicting upon ordinary people. When two lions or elephants are fighting, who is going to suffer? he said, when Howard French of the New York Times asked him about atrocities. The grass, of course. I cannot deny it.⁷¹

Indeed, the RUF was not only a product of lumpen culture, but its membership was also lumpen. They took political action and proclaimed a revolution which reflected the true character of their lumpen base. The RUF was a movement, which extremely succeeded to attract Sierra Leonean children and motivate them to recruit themselves in the rebel movement.

⁶⁹ Trial for Daily News. www.trial.ch.org

⁷⁰ BBC News, *Foday Sankoh: The Cruel Rebel*, July, 2003. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3110629.stm>

⁷¹ William Shawcross, *Deliver Us From Evil: Peacekeepers, Warlords and a World of Endless Conflict* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), 196-197.

1.4 Child Soldiers

Child soldiers are among the saddest victims of the conflict: they rarely emerged from military service with a sense of their own worth and identity. Worse, they often experienced violence that left them physically or psychologically scarred. Facing a difficult adolescence, many turned to drugs, alcohol and anti-social behaviour. So, what is a child soldier? How did this kind of generation become soldiers? What was their role in Sierra Leone civil war?

A child soldier had been defined as a person under the age of 18 who directly or indirectly participated in an armed conflict as part of an armed force or group.⁷² Apart from boy soldiers, girl soldiers made up an estimated 25% of all the warring sides, and 16% of the RUF's total force.⁷³ In 1996, in a special report on the impact of armed conflict on children, Mrs. Graça Machel explained how this generation became soldiers:

Hunger and poverty may drive parents to offer children for service or attract children to volunteer as a way to guarantee regular meals, clothing or medical attention. Some children become soldiers to protect themselves or their families in the face of violence and chaos around them, while others, particularly adolescents, are lured by ideology.⁷⁴

Child soldiers played a big and violent role in Sierra Leone civil war, as part of both government and rebel forces. There were different estimates of the number of child soldiers in Sierra Leone. The Children's Right Organisation UNICEF estimated there were 5,000 child soldiers in Sierra

⁷² Myriam Denov, *Child Soldiers in Sierra Leone: Experiences, Implications and Strategies for Reintegration and Community Reintegration*, (University of Ottawa, Canada, 2005), 2.

⁷³ McKay, S, 'Girls as "Weapons of Terror" in Northern Uganda and Sierra Leonean Rebel Fighting Forces', (Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 2005), 390.

⁷⁴ Denov, *Child Soldiers in Sierra Leone*, 2.

Leone.⁷⁵ The office of the United Nations Special Representative for Children put the number at 10,000.⁷⁶ Another estimate stated that child soldiers composed 40-50 percent of the RUF's 15,000 forces and 20 percent of the Sierra Leonean government's 25,000 member civil defence forces.⁷⁷ This is in contrast to a 1997 estimate that the government sent 1,000 children into battle.⁷⁸

The use of this generation had been facilitated by improvements in military technology. Guns, such as the Soviet-made AK-47 or the American M-16, were increasingly simple to use and could be stripped and gathered by children as young as 10. These rifles were cheap and easily available, obtained in some parts of Africa for less than \$6 each.⁷⁹ A 1999 Human Rights Watch report noted, "Child combatants armed with pistols, rifles and machetes actively participated in killing and massacres....often under the influence of drugs, they were known for their impuriosity, lack of control and brutality."⁸⁰

Child soldiers were often preferred to be used because children were fearless, obedient, compliant, easily manipulated, and they did not demand compensation. A Sierra Leonean who worked with former child soldiers reported that child combatants:

Were very scary, more eratic and more violent than most fighters. They obeyed any order, no matter how brutal....unlike adults, children did not negotiate with the enemy or take bribes...they did not form factions or take up arms against you, and they were more

⁷⁵UNICEF 2000, *Crisis in Sierra Leone Could Bring New Efforts to Recruit Childrn.* www.unicef.org/newsline/00pr39.htm.

⁷⁶United Nations 1999, *Sierra Leone :30August-4September 1999.* www.un.org/special rep/children-armed- conflict/country visits.htm.

⁷⁷Barbara, Crossettea, *Sierra Leone is No Place to be Young*, New York Times, February 1st ,1999,A1.

⁷⁸Mac-Johnson,Rod, *Sierra Leone Struggles to Mend War-Torn Minds*, Child newslne, 1997. www.gn.apc.org/childnewslne/sierra.htm quoted in 'Prosecution of Sierra Leone's Child Soldiers: What Message is the UN trying to Send?' by Monique Ramgoolie, Prnceton University, 2001,148.

⁷⁹UNICEF 1996, *The State of the World's Children 1996*, www.unicef.org/sowc96/

⁸⁰ Ibid.

easily controlled. Kids just wanted to be loved, if not by a parent, then a rebel commander.⁸¹

Child soldiers could be sent into a crowd without suspicion. They were also considered expendable because they did not have families.

Youths who joined the RUF could be further distinguished according to those who joined voluntarily and those who were forced to join. Some of the youths who joined willingly were won over by the simplistic rhetoric of the movement and believed that their involvement would help to reform “the system” that had oppressed them for so long.⁸² They were fed up with the APC and wanted a change of government. In this context, a resident of Pujehun District stated:

We assembled at the barray and they addressed us... We have come to make Sierra Leone a better Sierra Leone... Sierra Leoneans are suffering... education is expensive... we have come to get rid of the APC rule. After their address, we were happy and prepared food for them... They appointed a town commander... Some of them left after they had finished eating.⁸³

Other children joined the army because they had lost all hope. They had sunk into an abyss of unemployment and disillusionment. In this state, fighting in the war seemed a viable alternative. It presented a means through which youths could possibly break out of their despair and transform their lives and feel safe. Many youth aligned themselves with one or more of the factions and swiftly achieved what they considered progress: they were able to accrue “wealth”, “status” and friendliness in arms that otherwise would have been unattainable.⁸⁴ Ishmael Beah, a child soldier, provided the following account in his now famous memoirs:

⁸¹Farrah, Douglas, *Children Forced to Kill*, Washington Post, April 8th, 2000.

⁸²Barbara, Crossette, *Sierra Leone is No Place to be Young*, New York Times, February 1st, 1999A1.

⁸³Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone, *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone*, 352.

⁸⁴Alusine Rogers, TRC statement recorded in Kpaka Chiefdom, Pujehun District, March 22nd, 2003.

I am from Sierra Leone, and the problem that is affecting us children is the wars that force us to run away from our homes, lose our families and aimlessly roam the forests. As a result, we get involved in the conflict as soldiers, carriers of loads and in many other difficult tasks. All this is because of starvation, the loss of our families, and the need to feel safe and be part of something when all else has broken down. I joined the army really because of the loss of my family and starvation. I wanted to avenge the death of my family. I also had to get some food to survive, and the only way to do that was to be part of the army. It was not easy being a soldier, but we just had to do it.⁸⁵

Others were forcibly recruited by the RUF. In 1990, Foday Sankoh began to assemble more fighters for his RUF rebellion. He used Charles Taylor's NPFL bases and logistics to train Sierra Leoneans from diverse backgrounds who had been caught up in the turmoil in Liberia. Some were migrant workers whom Sankoh plucked from prisons in NPFL control areas; others were marginalised urban youths and common criminals. They became known as the RUF "vanguards".⁸⁶

Table Three: Estimated Number for Total Forces, Child Soldiers

Force	Total	Child Soldiers
RUF	45,000	22,500
AFRC	10,000	5,000
SLA	14,000	3,500
CDF	68,865	17,216
TOTAL	137,865	48,216

Source : Dyan Mazurana and Khristopher Carlson, *From Combat to Community: Women and Girls of Sierra Leone*, Hunt Alternatives Fund, 2004,12.

⁸⁵Ishmael Beah, *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier*, (New York: Sarah Crichton Books, 2007),199.

⁸⁶The RUF vanguards were actually a disparate collection of Sierra Leoneans and Liberians from across the demographic spectrum gelled together through coercion and training into a fighting force. The Sierra Leonean vanguards included large numbers of Mendes and Temnes; boys as young as 11 years of age, 'senior citizens'; illiterate labourers and secondary-school drop-outs through to a few highly educated professionals in diverse fields.

However, whether by choice or against their will, practically all the recruits soon adopted forms of behaviour that characterised marginalised youths drug addiction and violence. Involvement in the rebellion itself became an alienating and marginalising process. RUF atrocities in Sierra Leone soon provoked discontent and opposition from the communities they were attempting to win over. Youths who had joined the rebellion became completely alienated from their own people, either due to acts in which they participated personally or due to their association with the outrages perpetrated by the movement as a whole.⁸⁷ Women were also subjected to RUF atrocities and involved in the armed conflict.

1.5 Women and the Armed Conflict in Sierra Leone

In West African countries such as Liberia, Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast, women performed significant combat roles in war situations. They were not 100% peace promoters in war situations. Women were, often exploited and suffered atrocities. They acted as agents of destabilisation and destruction through their supports of the various armed factions. They also contributed immensely in armed conflicts, especially in mobilizing the war assets.

Traditionally, women in Sierra Leone had a lower status than men. In the Provinces, a strong cultural belief existed that “women should be seen and not heard”.⁸⁸ But in the colony as early as 1787, women had enjoyed access to various levels of education. The Krios, descended from an immigrant culture did not have any such entrenched traditional belief systems that barred women from political participation. They had come to

⁸⁷ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone, *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone*, .352.

⁸⁸ Volume Three B *Report of the Sierra Leone Truth & Reconciliation Commission* Graphic Packaging Ltd Press, Accra, Ghana, 2004,97.

Freetown to express their desire for freedom in all spheres of life. The culture of independence that they brought with them facilitated the participation of Krio women in modern politics. So, how did women in Sierra Leone become involved in politics?

The participation of women in politics on a mass scale in Sierra Leone was largely limited to the provision of moral support, the raising and collection of party funds, voluntary labour and the organisation of catering or entertainment in their various political parties. However, at the end of the First World War, women of Krio origin, born in the Colony,⁸⁹ made their voices heard in the political arena. At the same time, in the Protectorate, a few women wielded political power by becoming Paramount Chiefs or Section Chiefs.

In Freetown, women of the Protectorate extraction from Mende and Temne ethnic groups served as both Section and Tribal Headwomen. In 1938, Constance A. Cummings-John became the first woman to stand for office in Freetown in the municipal elections.⁹⁰ In 1951, the Sierra Leone Women's Movement (SLWM), a non-political representative organisation, was established, its broad based membership had numbered up to five thousand women by the time of independence. Its goals were “to improve the status of all Sierra Leonean women, whether born in the Colony or in the Protectorate, and to seek female representation on government bodies concerned with education, social welfare and the economy.” In 1954, the formation of this group culminated in the rise of Mabel Dove, one of the

⁸⁹ The “Colony”, or the “Crown Colony”, was the name given to Freetown during colonial rule. The remainder of the territory of Sierra Leone was known as the “Protectorate”.

⁹⁰ Denzer, LaRay, “*Women in Freetown Politics 1914 – 1961, A Preliminary Study*”, in Last, M., Richards, and Fyfe, C. (eds.); *Sierra Leone 1787 -1987: Two Centuries of Intellectual Life*, Journal of the International African Institute, Volume 57, No. 4, 1987 (hereinafter “Denzer, *Women in Freetown Politics 1914 – 1961*”, 451.

founding members as the first woman in West Africa to be elected to the legislature.⁹¹

Women made real progress in the political field, as a result some of them succeeded to hold political office in the 1950s in Sierra Leone. In the 1957 election, Madam Ella Koblo Gulama, a Paramount Chief, became a Member of Parliament. She also became the first female Minister in Sierra Leone, although she was never in charge of any specific ministry.⁹² In 1958, three women: Constance Cummings-John (1918-2000), Lena Weber (1898-1951) and Stella Ralph-James became members of the municipal council while, in 1960, one woman was elected Deputy Mayor of Freetown and another, Nancy Koroma, was elected Mende Headman in Freetown.⁹³ Two other women (Constance-Cummings-John and Etta Harris) were also made delegates to the constitutional talks that resulted in Sierra Leone's independence.⁹⁴

Upon achieving independence, women were shocked when men failed to share positions of power equitably. The historian LaRay Denzer stated:

Naturally, [women] expected to reap the reward of their loyalty and service [by] obtaining party support for election and campaigning appointments to decision making bodies and government committees, and reforms in discriminatory laws. Instead, they were shunted aside as male leaders monopolised the spoils of office. By and large, male leaders defaulted in their commitments to their female colleagues.”⁹⁵

Women personalities continued to make their voices heard on political issues in Freetown right through the time of independence, despite the fact

⁹¹ Denzer, “*Women in Freetown Politics 1914 – 1961*, 450.

⁹² Ibid, 451.

⁹³ Denzer “*Women in Freetown Politics 1914 – 1961*,2.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 450.

⁹⁵ Denzer, Laray; *Constance Cummings-John: Memoirs of a Krio Leader*, Sam Bookman, Ibadan, Nigeria, 1995, 3.

that the vast majority of them were excluded. In spite of this kind of resistance, Cummings-John became the first black African woman to govern a capital city on the African continent in 1961.⁹⁶ Alongside Cummings-John, notable women became political leaders including Adelaide Casely Hayford, Stella Thomas Marke, Edna S. Elliot-Horton, Lorine E. Miller, Lottie Black, Mabel Dove, Nancy Koroma and many others.

After independence and undeterred by the fractious political climate that ensued over the years, some women continued to forge on in politics, with interesting results. During the reign of the APC Government of Siaka Stevens, another women's organisation, the National Congress of Sierra Leone Women (NCSLW), headed by Nancy Steele, was formed based on a Marxist approach.⁹⁷ This organisation managed to achieve some success, but lost relevance as the gap between the APC and the population became wider and wider and was eventually ousted from power. Among its other accomplishments, the NCSLW raised the level of women's political consciousness and paved the way for the appointment of women to high office. This continued momentum culminated in five women gaining office in Freetown City Council in 1975. In 1977, a woman again became the Mayor of Freetown. Moreover, from the Provinces, a woman Paramount Chief called Madam Honoria Bailor-Caulker represented Moyamba District in Parliament.⁹⁸ Were women voluntary partners in the war or were they reluctant actors being manipulated by ruthless army officers? How was their situation during the conflict?

⁹⁶ Denzer, "Women in Freetown Politics 1914 – 1961, 451.

⁹⁷ Denzer, *Cummings, Memoirs of a Krio Leader*, 66.

⁹⁸ Volume Three B *Report of the Sierra Leone Truth & Reconciliation Commission* Graphic Packaging Ltd Press, Accra, Ghana, 2004,95.

It is important to examine the methods of recruitment of women and girls into different armed factions in West Africa. Certainly the modes of conscription varied as was the case for boys and men.⁹⁹ While many women were forcibly conscripted to bear weapons and act as sexual partners and nurses for wounded soldiers, others voluntarily took part in the war.¹⁰⁰ In Liberia, Sierra Leone and Ivory Coast, warlords and militias recruited most of their soldiers male and female through coercion and, as a result, many women and girls were trapped and thus became female combatants and wives to male soldiers.¹⁰¹ In the case of Sierra Leone, rebels chose “very young women or girls because they were assumed to be virgins, healthy and resilient. Many women and girls were kept with rebel forces for many years and they gave birth to children fathered by rebels.”¹⁰² Wolte gave a disturbing account of the mode of recruitment and exploitation of women and girls during the civil war:

Some women and girls were forced to become combatants for the rebels. Forced women combatants were repeatedly raped by the rebels. Before they were sent to fight, some women and girls were given drugs. The rebels carved with razor blades the names of their faction onto the chest of the abducted women and girls.¹⁰³

If these marked women and girls were caught by pro –government or other rebels they would often be killed. Yet, depending on the situation, some women tried their best to escape.

Moreover, once recruited, women and girls had numerous roles, including that of frontline fighters. In fact, nearly half (44 percent) of the

⁹⁹ MacMullin Colin and Maryanne Loughry “Investigating Psychosocial Adjustment of Former Child Soldiers in Sierra Leone and Uganda”, *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 2004, vol. 17, no. 4.

¹⁰⁰ These female combatants who were married to male soldiers were often referred to as ‘bush wives’.

¹⁰¹ Sonja ,Wolte , *Armed Conflict and Trafficking in Women*, Eschborn, Germany: Deutsche Gessellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH2004, 58.

¹⁰² Wolte , *Armed Conflict and Trafficking in Women*,62 .

¹⁰³ Report of the Sierra Leone Truth&Reconciliation, Vol Three B Chapter Three Women and the Armed Conflict in Sierra Leone Graphic Packaging Ltd,GPL Press,Accra,Ghana,2004,171.

study population received basic military and weapons training from their commanders or captor husbands.¹⁰⁴ However, nearly all women and girls performed additional roles: 72 percent as cooks; 68 percent as porters; 62 percent as assistants for the sick and wounded; 60 percent as “wives;” 44 percent as food producers; 40 percent as messengers between rebel camps; 22 percent as spies; 18 percent as communications technicians; and 14 percent as workers in diamond mines for their commanders or captor husbands.¹⁰⁵

Table Four: Estimated Number for Total Forces, Girl Soldiers

Force	Total	Girl Soldiers
RUF	45,000	7,500
AFRC	10,000	1,667
SLA	14,000	1,167
CDF	68,865	1,722
TOTAL	137,865	12,056

Source : Dyan Mazurana and Khristopher Carlson, *From Combat to Community : Women and Girls of Sierra Leone* ,Hunt Alternatives Fund, 2004,12.

Despite that women had been subjected to widespread violence, poverty and the traditional challenges that they faced, they were able to contribute to some extent in the political field and some of them continued to forge on in politics with fruitful results. Furthermore, they performed considerable roles and they gradually became active agents and participants in the conflict.

¹⁰⁴ Dyan Mazurana and Khristopher Carlson, *From Combat to Community: Women and Girls of Sierra Leone*, Hunt Alternatives Fund, 2004, 12.

¹⁰⁵ Mazurana, Dyan and Carlson Khristopher, *From Combat to Community*, 12.

Conclusion

It's convenient to note that the exceptionally long period of British colonialism may have done more harm than good for Sierra Leone. It was considered as exploited, and a deeply insecure country. The British colonial administration had laid the foundation for this situation with its policy of separate and unequal development for the Krio Colony and the inland Protectorate of indigenous peoples. Moreover, by manipulating the chieftaincy system, they had undermined its legitimacy, thereby sowing the seed of the serious disconnection between rulers and the citizens. Unfair appointment of traditional rulers led to human rights abuses and widespread grievances among the population.

Although the civil war was not an ethnic war, ethno-regional undercurrents paved the way for its outbreak. Furthermore, rural marginalization induced migration to towns and diamond mining areas, increasing unemployment in those areas and then creating a pool of potential rebels. Their migration to urban Sierra Leone extended far beyond the search for economic viability. It seems to have become a kind of passage into manhood.

Youth alienation and their subsequent revolt came about as a result of political and economic factors that eventually led to the Sierra Leonean crisis. They had interest in joining any process that in their worldview would contribute to improve their survival. For some, the RUF offered a new system of social incentives, an answer to what a destabilised state by a failing economy failed to provide. So, youth alienation and its subsequent radicalisation culminated in the formation of the rebel movement.

As regards women, like in the other West African countries, women's role in Sierra Leone was not limited to perform their work at home as nurturers, homemakers, and life givers, but they forced themselves through lobbying to take part in the armed forces. But, they continued to endure inadequate representation in political and decision-making because of formidable socio-cultural discrimination against women's participation in higher education. Lack of formal education had been continuously limiting women in attaining political equality with men. Furthermore, despite the proliferation of women's civil society organisations, cooperation among them was weak as a result; they became more vulnerable to domination.

Political grievances from all parts of the country forced many people to enlist in the RUF rebel movement, many of them recruited by force. In its first months, the RUF attempted to rally support not on the grounds of ethnic favouritism, but in protest against social and political exclusion, a result of the unaccountability of the central government. Generally speaking, Sierra Leone tragedy could be found in the country's history, from the time it gained independence in 1961 up to the period of the onset of the conflict in 1991. On the whole, the inadequate provisions of basic needs for its people, which is the key indicator of a weak state sowed the seeds for a violent conflict. So, how was it launched and escalated?

Introduction

In Sierra Leone as well as in most of the other parts of Africa, where governance institutions are weak and malleable, the government's survival strategy significantly influences the political and social destiny of the country. Since its independence, Sierra Leone had never experienced a truly democratic or accountable government, a succession of ineffectual leaders alternated with a series of several "big men"¹ who took their turns at attempting to knit a nation-state out of its fractured colonial heritage. Sierra Leone gradually fell victim to continued coups, corrupt and inefficient governments, and economic collapse, which was to lead to the Sierra Leonean crisis and dire social conditions of its citizens, who became subjected to constant violence, hardship and pain.

This chapter will examine the origins of Sierra Leone civil war, including the political and economic turmoil. Next, the study provides the external factors of the civil war such as the Libyan connection and the impact of the Liberian civil war on the onset of the war in Sierra Leone. Subsequently, the study articulates around the onset of the civil war in the 1990's and the horrific strategy of the internal factions, which took part in the conflict and became embroiled in it.

1.The Causes and Dynamics of the Conflict in Sierra Leone.

Civil wars are generally motivated by political and social dissatisfaction and by opportunities of economic profit. They may also occur as a result of criminality or environmental collapse. This section

¹Ero, C, *The Legacies of Authoritarianism and Political Violence: Governing Insecurity* (Ed) by Gavin Cawthra and Robin Luckman, Zed Books, Vol1. 2003,234.

traces the political and the economic causes which led to Sierra Leone crisis and tragedy. However, the structural problems and the economic reasons do not solely account for the causes of the war. Regional factors and external assistance also paved the way for the onset of the civil war.

1.1 Political Turmoil.

The post-colonial dispensation quickly descended into a one-party dictatorial and predatory state with the political elite who placed their personal, ethnic and communal ties above putative national interests. They provided the central cause of the conflict: “endemic greed, corruption and nepotism that deprived the nation of its dignity and reduced most people to a state of poverty”.² It’s noteworthy that the political elites of all the post-colonial regimes paved the way and were to a very significant extent responsible for creating the conditions for conflict in particular Siaka Stevens’ patrimonial system of governance, and then under the presidency of Josef Saidu Momoh.

1.1.1 Poor Governance 1968-1992.

Many commentators had attributed the conflict to the phenomenon of bad governance. The period 1968-1992 represents a distinct watershed in the political history of Sierra Leone as it witnessed the reign of the APC, first under Siaka Stevens (1968-1985), and later under Josef Momoh (1986-1992).

When Stevens entered politics in the 1950s, he was a trade union official. This provided him with a perfect platform to launch a career in

² Victor, Minikin, “Indirect political participation in two sierra Leoneans chiefdoms” journal of modern African studies 11(1) 1973,98.

Freetown politics, but trade unions were small and entirely urban-based. To reach out into the rural areas, Stevens strategy was to forge alliances with rival and disgruntled Paramount Chiefs. He deposed disloyal chiefs and appointed their rivals, his allies. In 1967 controversial general elections marked a turning point in the country's political history, the country was subjected to its first military coup which prevented the APC from forming a government. However the military stepped another coup in 1968 to appoint Siaka Stevens as Prime Minister (1968-1971) and President (1971-1985), since then Sierra Leone vacillated and oscillated in electoral spasms that were frequently very violent. As one observer had concluded 'Albert Margai's attempt to subvert the multi-democratic constitution, and the intervention of the military in 1967, paved the way for what became a military nightmare in the nineties.'³

Stevens came into office as Prime Minister in a multiparty political system built on the British model and stepped down seventeen years later as President of one party state. Violence and intimidation were used to ensure victory for the All People's Congress at election. This prompted the opposition to boycott the 1973 general elections, the first under Stevens.⁴ His rule was called the 'seventeen-year plague of locusts'⁵ He destroyed and corrupted every institution of the state. In his attempt to annihilate any form of opposition to his regime, Siaka Stevens employed series of techniques, including repression, draconian press laws, executions and detention of political opponents.⁶

³ Cheney, Coker, *Agony of a State*, unpublished manuscript, September, 1999.

⁴ Davies, *Sierra Leone's Economic Growth Performance, 1961–2000*, 5.

⁵ Revolutionary United Front, 'Footpath to Democracy,' unpublished manuscript; Opala, 'The People of Sierra Leone', 9-12.

⁶ Rugumamu & Gbla, *Studies in Reconstruction and Capacity Building in Post-Conflict Countries in Africa*, 23.

In fact, Stevens' rule was characterized by political and social exclusion, centralization of public administration, and lack of democratic principles by the ruling elites.⁷ Those who opposed the imposition of one party state in 1977 were either executed, forced into exile, or reduced to a condition of penury.⁸ The Bank of Sierra Leone governor, Sam L. Bangura, was killed under mysterious circumstances in 1979 after challenging the wisdom of lavish expenditures on the Organisation of African Unity summit.⁹ Through corruption and violence, Stevens destroyed the order of Sierra Leone society and his corrupt system also led to the failure of different institutions. The populace retreated into a culture of fear, silence and complicity, culminating in one party rule from 1978.¹⁰ So, the despotic rule by the All People's Congress Party led by Siaka Stevens under the one party political system resulted in disillusioned educated elites, and frustrated unemployed youth.

Thus, growing unemployment and disillusionment among youths, and Stevens' use of socially deprived youths motivated with dangerous drugs to unleash violence, produced the recruitment base for the rebel movement. Recruitment into the military based on loyalty to Stevens and the APC eroded morale and discipline which would prolong the rebel war by producing a weak government military response to it. Political repression radicalised university students, Stevens' main source of opposition. Some left in 1987 for military training in Libya to overthrow the APC, leading to the formation of the rebel movement.¹¹ There was

⁷ Jonah, *Economic Dimensions of the Conflict in Sierra Leone*, 1.

⁸ John L. Hirsch, *Sierra Leone: Diamonds & the Struggle for Democracy*, (Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc, USA, 2001), 28.

⁹ Abdul K. Koroma, *Sierra Leone : The Agony of a Nation* (United Kingdom : Andromeda Publications, 1996), 38.

¹⁰ Davies, *War, Poverty and Growth in Africa*, 20-21.

¹¹ Abdullah, *Youth Culture and Rebellion*, 3-4.

also rampant corruption and mismanagement, as the leaders and their henchmen fed fat on the sweat of the people by embezzling public funds most of which were kept in foreign banks.¹² In addition to rent-seeking activities through the administered marketing of rice petroleum products as well as foreign currency and the allocation of access rights in the exploitation of the natural resources, primarily diamonds, which was based on political connections.¹³

Stevens did not invest the natural resources in rural infrastructure and social services that had always been sorely lacking in rural Sierra Leone. Instead, he invested those funds into building a powerful patronage network, through his APC party apparatus, which relied largely on chiefs to mobilize people in the countryside, but also among Lebanese traders and other economic powerbrokers. He made attempts in particular in diamond mining areas where chiefs had grown particularly powerful due to their control of land tenure and thus access to mining activities, to establish extractive networks that were independent from those chiefs.¹⁴

In addition, instead of building a large and complex military apparatus, Stevens chose to personalize the means of coercion at various levels. At the level of the central state, he built a small, but well equipped and ruthless praetorian guard, the Internal Security Unit, only loyal to him. He recruited marginalized youth through his party network as informal police force, who would harass and rough up opposition

¹² Rugumamu & Gbla, *Studies in Reconstruction and Capacity Building in Post-Conflict Countries in Africa*, 23.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ William, Reno, *Shadow States and the Political Economy of Civil War*, in Mats Berdal & David Malone (eds.): *Greed and Grievance. Economic Agendas in Civil Wars*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2002, 65.

politicians. The army was largely regarded as an instrument of the ruling party to coerce the population and hold on to power.¹⁵ Soldiers' loyalty was thus to political parties rather than to the country. Military professionalism was sacrificed at the expense of using the military for the ruler's political survival. In such an atmosphere, military corruption was rampant and private armed groups were created to protect political factions.

In 1991-92, the national security forces were expanded to around 13,000 with the avenue of the RUF from an initial 3,000 under President Siaka Stevens.¹⁶ Recruitment attracted street boys and unemployed youth. This led to the emergence of 'sobels', meaning 'soldiers by day, rebels by night'¹⁷ due to poor leadership, lack of training and equipment, the disillusionment among frontline soldiers, inadequate supplies or weaponry, and SLA disloyalty to the state. Sierra Leone has a long history of private armies formed by particular parties or factions, degenerating into banditry, and official security forces being abused for private interest. Nevertheless the one-party state created a conducive environment for the war and the eventual state collapse. It did not only deny space for healthy competition among different political players, but also destroyed the foundations for a system of government of checks and balances.

¹⁵ Jonah, *Economic Dimensions of the Conflict in Sierra Leone*, 2.

¹⁶ International Crisis Group (ICG). , *Sierra Leone: Time for a new Military and political Strategy*. ICG Africa Report No 28. Freetown/London/Brussels,2001,quoted in *Sierra Leone Consolidating the Recovery and Reconstruction Process*,18.

¹⁷ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone, *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone*, 284.

Chapter Two: The Onset of the Civil War: Its Causes, Dynamics, Threat and Insecurity.

After several years of economic decline, increased political opposition, and Stevens increasingly autocratic approach, Joseph Saidu Momoh could cling to power in August 1985 as successor to Stevens until ousted by a military coup d'état in 1992. Momoh was notoriously inept. When he assumed office, the public expected a new leadership. But unfortunately their aspiration to Momoh's position fell on deaf ears because his early cabinet was made up of recycled APC politicians.

The whole APC one-party state was rotten to the core; it was a near-Kleptocrati outfit serving only a few people, mostly foreigners, although it still maintained the trappings of state bureaucracy.¹⁸

Stevens continued to maintain contact with his corrupt friends and former colleagues. Two years later, Stevens, who apparently still had political ambitions, together with two high-level accomplices, plotted Momoh's assassination.¹⁹ The coup was discovered before it could be carried out. Momoh placed Stevens under house arrest and he died alienated from his family several months later.²⁰ Momoh took over an economy in deep crisis. He ignited widespread hope, promising a 'new order'. He tried to regain control of Sierra Leone's diamond resources from Stevens' clients. Creditors approved, noting that the main obstacle to fighting corruption and servicing foreign debt in Sierra Leone was the hold over diamond resources exerted by rogue state officials and Stevens' business clients.²¹ Creditors recommended inviting foreign firms to regularise or impose control over diamond mining.²² Momoh facilitated the entry of foreign firms; consequently, his efforts to manage

¹⁸ Lansana Gberie, *A Dirty War in West Africa The RUF & The Destruction of Sierra Leone*, (Hurst & Company Ltd, London, 2005), 35.

¹⁹ Joseph, Opala, *The People of Sierra Leone in Christopher Clapham, Recent History of Sierra Leone in Africa South of the Sahara 2000* (London: Europa, 1999), 951-954.

²⁰ Hirsch, *Sierra Leone*, 30.

²¹ William, Reno, *Warlord Politics and African States*, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1998).

²² Reno, *Warlord Politics and African States*, 53.

the economic crisis were somewhat counterproductive to state security. Thus, Momoh proved unable to exert effective leadership.

In fact, Stevens came to power through a narrow election victory based on opportunistic promises to illicit diamond miners and clever exploitation of ethno-regional divisions. He relied on a resource mobilization strategy by forging alliances with external sources of funding solely controlled by the ruler. As described in great detail by William Reno, Stevens relied heavily on outside funding, the control of trade and international aid, and later on personal international business deals mining companies.²³ This extraction strategy seemed convenient in that it gave Stevens the opportunity to control personally the funds or at least direct them to important clients. It was also much easier strategy than taxing populations, which would have made him accountable to the people of course by relying on the chiefs as intermediaries and tax collectors.

Moreover, there was always the prospect of a coup from the military who had already staged three successful coups between 1967-1968. These factors apparently shortened the APC's time horizon. Under Stevens' presidency, self-seeking government policies fostered state collapse and failure in Sierra Leone.²⁴ Siaka Stevens' survival strategy from 1968-85 was the period of Sierra Leone's economic collapse and disastrous contribution in the evolving Liberian civil war. Unchecked corruption and poor fiscal management led to the country's collapse. Such was the repressive nature of the state during Stevens' reign.

²³ William , Reno, *Corruption and State Politics in Sierra Leone* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 144.

²⁴ Tammany Hall was the popular name for the political machine based on corruption in New York City during the 1800s. Tammany bosses including William M. Tweed ruled the city for almost a century. 'Boss' Tweed controlled nominations and patronage in New York City Democratic politics after 1857. The Tweed Ring, which consisted of Tweed, the mayor ; the city comptroller, and the city chamberlain, sold political favors and defrauded the city of at least &30 million during that time.

On the other hand, under Momoh's presidency Sierra Leone's situation had worsened more and more. His economic reform efforts in the late 1980's were complicated by his inability to access funding from the international financial institutions that demanded payment of debt arrears and fiscal discipline as a pre-condition. On the whole, the pattern of corruption and misrule set by both Stevens and Momoh resulted in a collapsed state.

1.2. The Principal Economic Factors.

Sierra Leone, like many other African countries, is endowed with huge natural resources comprising diamonds, gold, iron mining and other minerals. Successive political regimes had failed to soundly manage these huge economic potential, mainly diamonds. Sierra Leone is the perfect illustration of boundless human greed for diamonds. As the name 'blood diamonds'²⁵ suggests, these gemstones became a symbol of thousands of ruined human lives.²⁶ Despite its abundant natural resources, Sierra Leone experienced economic decline throughout the 1980s, due in large part to rampant corruption. Rich diamond mining areas fueled the conflict between various groups and individuals. The exploitation of diamond resources escalated to such extent that the diamonds became known as 'bloodshed diamonds'.²⁷ One should keep in mind that Sierra Leone is home to some of the most high quality diamonds in the world. Extensive alluvial and kimberlitic diamond

²⁵Lansana, Gberie, Ian, Smillie, and Ralph, Hazleton, *The Heart of the Matter: Sierra Leone, Diamonds and Human Security*, (Partnership Africa Canada,2000),38.

²⁶ Conflict Diamonds:otherwise known as blood diamonds are diamonds that originate from areas controlled by forces or factions opposed to legitimate& internationally recognized governments,&are used to fund military activities in opposition to governments,or in contravention of the decision of the Security Council.

²⁷ Gberie, Smillie and Hazleton, *The Heart of the Matter*,45.

deposits were found in the east and the south of Sierra Leone. World diamond experts believe that diamonds from Sierra Leone are mainly gemstones, the clear and colourless stones used in jewellery. As such, they are the most valuable stones in the world diamond market. In this section, we will attempt to examine how the economic factors, including diamonds and Lebanon connection contributed to the escalation of Sierra Leonean civil war.

1. 2.1 Diamonds Curse

Diamonds had played a tremendous role in Sierra Leone's political economy and a direct role in the rebel war. John Hirsch could not assume that diamonds was a main impediment to the attainment of peace in Sierra Leone, just as it was a major factor for the combatants who were engaged in the cross-border war in the country. His argument complements the analysis of *Partnership Africa Canada*; a Canadian non-governmental organization that asserted that diamonds had been central to the political problems of Sierra Leone since the 1930's when they were discovered.

The origins of these problems go back to its discovery in the eastern Kono District in 1930, when a small geological survey team led by N.R Junner and his assistant, J.D Pollet picked up a crystal by the Gboraba stream. The team had been examining stream-bed gravels for heavy minerals; instead the crystal turned out to be a diamond. The next day, the team found another diamond at the same site.²⁸ It was a turning point for the British Colonial authorities, who sought to maintain political stability in the rebellious hinterlands in the face of decreasing financial

²⁸ Gberie, Smillie and Hazleton, *The Heart of the Matter*, 45.

support from London. Their solution was twofold: to institute indirect rule through the traditional paramount chiefs and to use a tributary system whereby miners would receive a share of any gold or diamonds they would recover instead of wages.²⁹ Junner brought it to the attention of the De Beers³⁰ controlled Consolidated African Selection Trust (CAST). In March 1931, a prospecting party from CAST arrived in the country and in that same month, the first hint of the widespread nature of diamond occurrences in Sierra Leone was received when Pollet found two more diamonds in the gravel of Kenja stream, near Pava, about 50 miles south of the original discovery.³¹

From the 1930's onward, the diamond sector was nominally under the control of successive concessionaires. In 1934, the Sierra Leone Selection Trust (SLST), a De Beers subsidiary, was granted a ninety nine year monopoly.³² In return, SLST was to pay an income tax at the rate of 27 per cent, later increased to 45 per cent on its profits in addition to a small 'special development' fund, mainly for the Kono region.³³ The colonial administration granted the paramount chiefs control of settlement and local migration in order to placate the local population. As local chiefs obtained the power to decide who would live in Kono, illicit mining grew in space in the 1940s and 1950s as those with money and connections found ways to circumvent the SLST monopoly. By the early 1950's a huge influx of illicit miners attracted by internal SLST theft had nearly overrun the company's holdings, and by 1956, there

²⁹ Hirsch, Sierra Leone,26.

³⁰ De Beers is organizational two major companies emerged from the South African diamond rush of the 1870's & 1880's. The Kimberly Central Mining Company & the Beers mining Company, named after the De Beers brothers, owners of the land where rush began. In 1888, the two companies merged to form De Beers Consolidated Mines Limited (DBCM) which is incorporated & has its headquarters in Kimberly, South Africa.

³¹ Gberie, Smillie and Hazleton, *The Heart of the Matter*, 38.

³² Hirsch, Sierra Leone,26-27.

³³ Gberie, Smillie and Hazleton, *The Heart of the Matter*, 38.

were illicit miners estimated at 75,000 in Kono District, leading to smuggling on a vast scale, and causing a general breakdown of law and order.³⁴

The buyers and smugglers of illicitly mined diamonds at that time were mainly Mandingo traders from neighbouring West African states, and Lebanese traders. De Beers was forced to set up a buying office in Monrovia in 1954 to keep as much of the trade under its control as possible. The impact of smuggling on the Kono mining areas was immensely destabilising. According to Koskoff,

Large combines of diggers emerged, now with more elaborate equipment, with financing from buyers in Monrovia or from local Lebanese. The illegal industry was taken over by toughs. Itinerant buyers were occasionally murdered by hard-pressed diggers. According to one source, by 1954 forty murders had already occurred in the diamond areas, including one case of a digger who had been disembowelled in search of a stone that he had been seen to swallow.³⁵

Diamonds had constrained economic growth; by 1955, many of the young men had abandoned the rice fields for the more interesting and promising diamond mines. As a result, by the end of the 1950s, from a net exporter of rice Sierra Leone became a net importer. In the same year, a group of local miners stormed the SLST security forces and police station, bringing the situation to a halt. The colonial administration was forced to give way, reducing the SLST's territory and granting local miners the right to engage in legalized small mining operations.

³⁴ Gberie, Smillie and Hazleton, *The Heart of the Matter*, 39.

³⁵ Diamond Agreement & Licence (Ratification) Act, Government Printing, Freetown, 1934, quoted in Lansana, Gberie, Ian, Smillie, and Ralph, Hazleton, *The Heart of the Matter*, 41.

Established in 1955, the Mining Area Development Association was consequently, provided with additional resources to develop the region's economic potential as well as to keep it stable for continued mining. In 1962-1963 these funds reportedly were used to buy electoral support as the Kono Progressive Movement entered into competition with the ruling SLPP. Moreover, the informal illicit diamond market and those who benefited from it became players in the rivalry between the SLPP and the APC. The Lebanese and others who were often perceived as responsible for corruption, had no choice but to participate if they were going to operate.³⁶

Diamonds had also criminalized and informalized economic activity, eroding the tax base and government control of the economy, and precipitating economic collapse. Exchange and price controls and exchange rate over valuation in the 1970s and 1980s fostered a lucrative underground trade involving smuggling diamonds to purchase scarce essential imports for sale in black markets with the revenues in turn used to purchase diamonds for smuggling. Consequently, official diamond exports and government revenues had collapsed. Tax revenues plummeted from 19% of GDP in 1981 to 6% in 1990.³⁷ Diamond rents were not consumed or re-invested in the economy and roads, buildings and bridges were sometimes destroyed to dig for diamonds, while pits were left unfilled. Diggers dug pits of 30-40 feet in areas suspected of containing diamonds, collecting the gravel in mountainous heaps which, after days of digging, they painstakingly washed and sieved through for diamonds. In most of the time the diggers did not find anything and got no reward. They stayed on, however, hoping for a diamond find that

³⁶ David, Keen, *War as a source of Losses & Gains*, (Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford, July 1995), 27.

³⁷ Victor A. B., *War, Poverty and Growth in Africa*, 8.

would one day produce wealth for life. Worse still, sometimes the gravel heaps collapsed into the pit, burying the diggers. Sometimes also a lucky digger finding a diamond unnoticed would sell it secretly elsewhere at a huge discount.³⁸

Table Five: an estimated number of diamond diggers from 1952 to 1958.

Year	Diamond Diggers
1952	5,000
1953	5,000
1954	30,000
1955	40,000
1956	60,000-75,000
1957	50,000-70,000
1958	25,000

Source: Van der Laan, 65.

After independence, further degradation of the mining sector continued. The National Diamond Mining Corporation started as a joint government-SLST venture in 1970.³⁹ The directors drew down their assets with the construction of expensive housing as well as the provision of large salaries and other emoluments. When the SLST pulled out in 1984, the official diamond sector was clearly failing. The state had lost control of its assets, enabling private entrepreneurs to take over Kono and adjacent diamond-rich regions. Moreover, the collapse of fiscal revenues induced government dysfunction. Thus, diamonds played a key role in inducing state collapse that made the country ripe for civil

³⁸ Victor A. B., *War, Poverty and Growth in Africa*, 8.

³⁹ Hirsch, *Sierra Leone*, 28.

war. Sierra Leone's ambassador to the UN, Ibrahim Kamara had argued that:

[t]he conflict was not about ideology, tribal or regional differences. It had nothing to do with the so-called problem of marginalised youths, or ... an uprising by rural poor against the urban elite. The root of the conflict was and remained diamonds.⁴⁰

Diamonds had played a vital role in the Sierra Leonean economic policy and a major role in the process of state collapse, consistent with the view that natural resource abundance could raise the risk of civil war. However, the risk in Sierra Leone's case had been not only the mere existence of diamonds, rather the risk laid with the fact that diamond deposits were alluvial; in the sense that alluvial diamonds could be mined with little capital and were difficult to police because they were widely dispersed. Thus, diamonds could be mined relatively easily by rebels and wayward government soldiers. Generally speaking, on one hand, diamonds accounted for 15% of GDP, 80% of foreign exchange earnings, and considerable tax revenues up to the early 1970s.⁴¹ On the other hand, the alluvial and geographically dispersed nature of Sierra Leone's diamonds, economic distortions and exploitation policy induced severe economic and social dislocations, constraining agricultural and overall economic growth; entrenching poverty, fostering crime, illicit mining, smuggling and violence. Kono District was left as one of the most underdeveloped regions of Sierra Leone, despite its diamond wealth.⁴²

Furthermore, diamonds played a direct role in the rebel war. It financed the rebellion. The value of 'conflict diamonds' exported by the

⁴⁰ Sierra Leone: ECOWAS lukewarm about diamond trade embargo, 6 July 2001 and, Sierra Leone: Trade embargo on Sierra Leone diamonds, 6 July 2001 at <<http://www.afrol.com/afrol.htm>>

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Victor A. B., *War, Poverty and Growth in Africa*, 9.

RUF was estimated at US \$20-70 million a year.⁴³ Diamonds also produced a war-prolonging congruence of interests among the belligerents who sometimes mined side by side diamonds peaceably, attacking civilians to keep them off. So, from the 1930s, diamonds had become the crucial keystone in the widespread pattern of corruption and private benefit that had remained beyond the institutional capacity of successive governments to control. Ultimately the patterns of the 1930s-1960s set the stage for the events of the 1990s.⁴⁴

1.2.2 Lebanese Connection

The Lebanese first began settling in West Africa in the mid-19th century when a silk-worm crisis struck their homeland, then part of the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁵ The first Lebanese arrived in Sierra Leone in 1893 and by 1901, there were some 41 in Freetown, all of them Maronite Christians, who had fled either the poor economic conditions or the tyranny of the collapsing Turkish authority.⁴⁶ Soon, Shia Muslim Lebanese began to arrive from South Lebanon in 1903, as a result of an agricultural crunch and population pressure.⁴⁷ They worked as small traders, at first occupying the same position in the economic structure as indigenous coastal traders.

At first, they had little access to capital and little control of import or export; they were at the mercy of the large colonial merchant firms. They brought imported manufactured goods such as textiles, jewellery,

⁴³ Victor A. B., *War, Poverty and Growth in Africa*, 9.

⁴⁴ Gberie, *Smillie and Hazleton*, *The Heart of the Matter*, 28.

⁴⁵ Lansana, Gberie, *War & Peace in Sierra Leone :Diamonds,Corruption& the Lebanese Connection*, (Partnership Africa Canada, 2002),10.

⁴⁶ Neil Leighton, 'Lebanese Emigration :its Effects on the Political Economy of Sierra Leone', in Albert Hourani & Shehadi, eds, *The Lebanese in the World: A Country of Emigration*, I.B. Tauris & Co., London 1992, 581.

⁴⁷ Gberie, *War & Peace in Sierra Leone*, 10.

and mirrors to rural areas where European and creole traders would not go, and traded them for local agricultural product, primary palm kernels and kola nuts.⁴⁸ By the outbreak of the First World War, the Lebanese had also become successful in the retail trades of Freetown. As they expanded their trading interests into the interior, they gained some commercial power. Consequently, their achievement created a kind of hostility among the local population, because the Lebanese were suspected of hoarding and smuggling goods in order to artificially increase prices. In 1919, following a widespread rice scarcity, riots broke out in Freetown, directed mainly against Lebanese merchants; shops were damaged, and hoarded rice was sold at vastly reduced prices. Even the British, longtime patrons of the Lebanese, were sufficiently concerned about the hoarding that they deported two Lebanese rice dealers for causing the scarcity.⁴⁹ This was one of the first major incidents that gave a negative image about the Lebanese in Sierra Leone.

With the arrival of impoverished and desperate Lebanese, however, the British colonial officers favoured the Lebanese over the Creoles who had been the first to penetrate the interior. In the 20th century, the British authorities looked for ways to marginalize the Krios who had been their middlemen in trade relations with the interior. They suspected them of disloyalty to the colonial people. The fact that the Krios could gain great success in business, in the professions, and in other elitist endeavours frustrated British colonial administrators, in the sense that such achievements would ultimately work against the broader colonial cause in West Africa.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Gberie, *War & Peace in Sierra Leone*, 10.

⁴⁹ H.L. Van der Laan, *The Lebanese traders in Sierra Leone*, (Monton & Co. N V, The Hague, 1975), 79.

⁵⁰ Gberie, *War & Peace in Sierra Leone*, 10.

Over time the Lebanese supplanted the Creoles in commerce and the colonial government used to promote them as middlemen who would pose no political threat to British hegemony in the region. The Lebanese were provided with loans and other incentives, and were encouraged to move into the interior. The fact that feeder roads were constructed and lorries were introduced greatly helped the process. Soon, the way was paved for the Lebanese to be the major proprietors in the transportation business.⁵¹ Furthermore, they did not only enjoy better access to credit, but also played a role themselves in extending credit to agricultural producers in the interior, sometimes at exorbitant rates which sparked the intervention of the colonial government.⁵² In the early 1930s, the Lebanese began to outcompete indigenous traders, by concentrating their returns from commerce back into the same sector to expand their purchases of goods, rather than diversifying into other sectors. They also initiated their own links to exporters in other countries.

During the same period, the discovery of diamonds at Kono District sparked the beginning of a major shift in the business activities and a range of subterranean political activities of the Lebanese. The first Lebanese trader who, arrived in Kono soon after the discovery of diamonds, had set up a shop, ahead of colonial officials who did not establish a district office there until two years later.⁵³ From 1935 to 1956, it was illegal for anyone not working for SLST to deal in any way with diamonds. However, illicit mining activities were rampant, with

⁵¹ Gberie, *War & Peace in Sierra Leone*, 10.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 11.

many Lebanese subsequently settling in Kono and funding Africans to mine and sell their finds to them.⁵⁴

During the 1940s and 1950s, many Lebanese traders were arrested and deported for trading illicitly in diamonds.⁵⁵ In the 1950s, Illicit diamond mining and smuggling increased dramatically. Initially, the smuggling route was from Freetown to Beirut and then to European markets. But with the tightening of security between Kono and Freetown in the early 1950's, Lebanese smugglers began moving their goods across the Mano river to Liberia, where they were easily sold for US dollars.⁵⁶ During the same year, it was estimated that 20 per cent of all diamonds reaching the world's diamond markets were smuggled from Sierra Leone, largely through Liberia, and mainly by Lebanese and Madingo traders.⁵⁷

Liberia's Lebanese community grew in proportion to this smuggling activity, and some of the Lebanese families which settled there had relatives in Sierra Leone. One example is the Basmal, a Shi'ite family which had become one of the five key Lebanese family groupings in Sierra Leone by the 1970s.⁵⁸ The Basmal family in Sierra Leone, headed by Kassim Basmal, one of the country's most prominent diamond traders, had been involved in the diamond business since the 1950s.⁵⁹ Their counterparts in Liberia were also diamond traders. Under the new scheme of the Alluvial Diamond Mining of 1956, licences were granted to private individuals, including 32 Lebanese traders. This legalized

⁵⁴ H.L. Van der Laan, *The Sierra Leone Diamonds*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1965, 163.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Gberie, Smillie and Hazleton, *The Heart of the Matter*, 38.

⁵⁷ Van der Laan, *The Sierra Leone Diamonds*, 163.

⁵⁸ David, Casper Fithen, *Diamonds and War: Cultural Strategies for Commercial Adaptation to Low-intensity Conflict*, (Ph.D Dissertation, University of London, 1999), 97.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

Lebanese participation in the diamond trade, but smuggling to Liberia continued, forcing the government to amend the Alluvial Diamond Mining Act.⁶⁰

In the 1950s and 1960s, three Lebanese figures gained notoriety: Fred Kamil, Henneh Shamel and Jamil Sahid Mohamed. Fred Kamil was a Lebanese trader based in Liberia who operated a bandit group, based on the Sierra Leone-Liberian border, to hunt down diamond smugglers and steal their goods. Kamil had reported in his memoirs that he started his operations after a diamond smuggler, passing through Liberia from Sierra Leone, cheated him of his savings.⁶¹ His gang of toughs, recruited from the main streets of Monrovia, started a small-scale guerrilla war, attracting the attention of Sir Percy Sillitoe, who had been hired by De Beers to organize an intelligent operation that would curb diamond smuggling.⁶²

Sillitoe, a former Director-General of MI5, offered Kamil Sierra Leone government protection and information about smugglers, along with weapons, in return for which Kamil was to hand in the diamonds and receive one third of their value in payment. For a time the operation worked well, until Kamil became overly ambitious and had a falling out with the authorities.⁶³ Shamel was a member of the Shi'ite Shamel family from South Lebanon. As early as 1936 the family had 1,100 men working for them in Sierra Leonean gold mines. Shamel became involved in diamond smuggling in the 1950s, and was a supporter of Siaka Stevens by the time he became Prime Minister of the country in

⁶⁰ Gberie, *War & Peace in Sierra Leone*, 12.

⁶¹ Fred, Kamil, *The Diamond Underworld*, (Allen Lane, London, 1979), 79.

⁶² Gberie, *War & Peace in Sierra Leone*, 12.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

1968, however, the latter had fallen out with Shamel, and in 1969, after armed robbers purloined \$3 million worth of diamonds at Hastings Airport, Shamel was arrested and charged with the theft. In January 1970, a judge dropped the charges against Shamel, but Stevens had him deported anyway.⁶⁴

In 1971, Stevens announced the formation of the National Diamond Mining Company (NDMC) which effectively nationalized (SLST). The NDMC was to be run by a board of directors composed of 11 members, six nominees of the government and five of SLST, but in fact all important decisions were made by the Prime Minister. The new company took over 51 per cent of SLST's shares and SLST retained 49 per cent.⁶⁵ In 1984, SLST sold its remaining shares to the Precious Metals Mining Company (PMMC), a company controlled by Stevens' new Afro-Lebanese protégé, Jamil Sahid Mohamed, a Lebanese businessman.⁶⁶ Jamil, as he was known, was born in Sierra Leone, and he had extensive contacts with many politicians. Stevens had an intimate relationship with him. Stevens utilized Jamil to invest his wealth in private commercial ventures and foreign banks and to bankroll the state when it needed urgent financial help.⁶⁷

It was surmised that the robbery charged by Shamel had been organized by Stevens and Jamil. To ensure that he had a reliable front man in the new arrangement, Stevens arranged for Jamil, who in 1959 had been sentenced to six months in jail for unlawful possession of diamonds to take over 12 per cent of the government's shares. SLST's

⁶⁴ Gberie, *War & Peace in Sierra Leone*, 12.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Gberie, Smillie and Hazleton, *The Heart of the Matter*, 4.

⁶⁷ Ibrahim, *Subaltern Reactions*, 23.

diamond shipments dramatically declined soon later.⁶⁸ With Stevens' active participation, Jamil's men were stealing and smuggling as much as they declared.⁶⁹ Stevens' preference for Lebanese commercial interests may have been because the Lebanese posed no threat of political rivalry: they were generally regarded as "foreigners" and therefore ill placed to compete for political office.⁷⁰

From the late 1970's to the early 1990's, aspects of Lebanon's civil war were played out in miniature in Sierra Leone. Various Lebanese militia sought financial assistance from their compatriots in Sierra Leone, and the country's diamonds became an important informal tax base for one faction or the other. This was of great interest to Israel, in part because the leader of the important Amal faction, Nabil Berri, had been born in Sierra Leone and was a boyhood friend of Jamil. Following a failed 1987 coup attempt in Sierra Leone, Jamil went into exile, opening the way for a number of Israeli 'investors' with close connections to Russian and American crime families, and with ties to the Antwerp diamond trade.⁷¹ Accordingly, 'Sierra Leone had become a classic banana republic, although some analysts prefer the term 'soft state', an expression that makes more sense than the more dramatic, but value-laden term 'failed state'.⁷² Obviously, these external factors ever to play a considerable role to turn Sierra Leone into an area of human greed for smuggling, and consequently augmenting Sierra Leone crisis.

⁶⁸ Gberie, *War & Peace in Sierra Leone*, 12.

⁶⁹ David, Koskoff, *The Diamond World*, (Haper Collins, New York, 1981), 89-90.

⁷⁰ Davies, *Sierra Leone's Economic Growth Performance, 1961-2000*, 6.

⁷¹ Gberie, Smillie and Hazleton, *The Heart of the Matter*, 4.

⁷² Jimmy Kandeh, 'Ransoming the State: Elite Origins of Subaltern Terror in Sierra Leone,' *Review of African Political Economy*, 1999, 249.

1.3 Regional Factors.

Besides the internal factors already discussed, Libyan and Liberian contributions had their weight. On one hand, Libya attracted Sierra Leonean university students, and as a result a new tendency emerged among the radicals, who opposed the government system and advocated its replacement with alternative models. On the other hand, Liberia borders opened the doors for the RUF attacks.

1.3.1 The Libyan Connection.

Despite the importance of Pan-Africanism and militant anti-colonialism, it was not until the late 1970s and 1980s that radical politics became a major feature of the university culture in Sierra Leone, radical students came to constitute the ‘active minority’, which many suggest, was essential for the provision of leadership, direction and organisation for campus-inspired political actions.⁷³ By the 1980s, a new tendency emerged among the radicals; they did not only oppose the system, but also advocated its replacement with alternative models among them Ghadaffi’s Green Book.

The poverty of the student movement in Sierra Leone with regard to ideology, and the lack of post-colonial radical tradition, were probably the principal factors in explaining the attractiveness of Ghadaffi’s Green Book.⁷⁴ Their failure to criticise Ghadaffi’s ideas indicates their level of political consciousness, they did not debate Ghaddafi’s populist ideas

⁷³ Ibrahim, *Subaltern Reactions*, 69.

⁷⁴ Interview with student radicals, (Oct-Dec, 1996), quoted in Ibrahim Abdullah, “Bush path to Destruction: The Origin and Character of the Revolutionary United Front”, *Sierra Leone, Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 36, No 2, (1998).

nor could they make the obvious connections between the Green Book and Libya's foreign policy.⁷⁵

In the mid-1970's the Libyans reached Sierra Leone and began to make inroads into the civil society by using religious as well as non religious channels to establish their presence. They gave generous grants for the annual pilgrimage to Mekkah; established links with the powerful and crafty diamond dealer J.S.Mohammed who arranged a state visit for Siaka Stevens; provided a printing press for the *Tablet* newspaper; the main opposition tabloid; and sponsored Green Book study groups at FBC.⁷⁶

Alie Kabba was the president of FBC student union. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission and many other works had linked Alie Kabba's student union government activities with the RUF. In a fervent determination to instill revolutionary activities in Africa mainly in search of a base upon which to rest the Green Book [Green Revolution], the likes of Alie Kabba attracted Libyan authorities so much. Alie Kabba was already a firebrand of student leaders in Sierra Leone whose mercurial oratory and revolutionary political dispensations had led to a student demonstration in 1985 that saw the expulsion of many students from Fourah Bay College, including Alie Kabba himself.⁷⁷ He was more of an opportunist than a true nationalist, who sought to bring political change. Evidently, he was nowhere to be heard of in the present multi-party political dispensation in Sierra Leone.

⁷⁵ Abdullah, *Youth Culture and Rebellion*,50.

⁷⁶ Richards, Paul, *Fighting for the Rain Forest : War Youth & Resources in Sierra Leone*, (London: James Currey Publishers,1996),74.

⁷⁷ Kabba, Karamoh, "*Opposition Movement in Sierra Leone "link" Ruling Party Leaders to Rebellion*", Awareness Times Newspaper in Freetown , June 8th , 2007.

By virtue of his position, Alie Kabba was wedged in a students' uprising, a heavy-handed government that led to his arrest and five other students that spent two months at the notorious Pandemba Road prisons. Amongst those arrested at that time were three lecturers: Cleo Hancilles, Olu Gordon and Jimmy Kandeh, the original founders of PANAFU; also accused by the APC of spurring the students' discontent and subsequent demonstration. They were kicked out of the university. Dr. Kandeh, a US-base tenured associate professor of political science, who, for an apparent reason, had become a strong political activist for democratic change in Sierra Leone,⁷⁸ expressed:

When the college reopened for the third semester in April 1985, forty-one students were declared ineligible to register, among them was Alie Kabba. The student union protested against this decision. The campus demonstration spread to the city centre, where shops were looted and vehicles burnt down, apparently by unemployed youths who used the political demonstration of the students as a chance to wreak havoc and enrich themselves. Such opportunism, to many different degrees, would become a constant feature of the conflict in the 1990s."⁷⁹

In the 1980's, the Libyan foreign policy had a specific goal: revolution. Therefore, everything about Libyan foreign policy at that time revolved around this idea. It was this aspect of Libyan foreign policy, which interested the radicals and individuals like the expelled student union's president Alie Kabba.⁸⁰ They travelled to Libya to acquire military training as revolutionaries with the sole motive of ousting the regime of the All Peoples Congress party.

⁷⁸ Karamoh, "Opposition Movement in Sierra Leone "link" Ruling Party Leaders to Rebellion", June 8th, 2007.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

Alie Kabba had visited Libya before 1985⁸¹ and made numerous trips to that country, and occasionally to Guinea. It was during this period that he met Charles Taylor of the NPFL who had been imprisoned in the United States and Ghana, Kukoi Samba Sanyang, and others so called revolutionaries who crossed the Ghana, Burkina-Faso-Libya 'revolutionary triangle'.⁸² Kabba's relationship with these persons validated his revolutionary credentials. He became the self-appointed coordinator of the Libyan connection, and became the recruiter for revolutionary minded Sierra Leoneans, including Foday Sankoh.⁸³ The call to travel to Libya for military training was an avenue for him to avenge his grievance.

Before this period his vision did not go beyond the Sierra Leonean border; his ideas remained those of an angry man who had an axe to grind because of his imprisonment. His idea of revolution, if he had any before this period, it was to seize power by any conceivable means. So, when the call to Tripoli came from Accra, Sankoh willingly joined the crowd. What the others did not realise was that they were paving the way for Sankoh who had waited for just this kind of opportunity.

All those who went to Libya, and who later became involved in the RUF, including Sankoh, returned to Sierra Leone before the launching of the armed struggle. Attempts were made to recruit and train cadres in the Yele area;⁸⁴ this was however abandoned because it was considered risky. Up to this point, Sankoh had not emerged as the leader of the movement; there was no organisation, it was a loose collection of

⁸¹ Abdullah, *Youth Culture and Rebellion*, 51.

⁸² Ibid, 52.

⁸³ Karamoh Kabba, "President Kabbah and Berewa Linked to RUF Formation", *Standard Times* Wednesday, 6 June 2007, 4.

⁸⁴ Ibrahim, "Bush Path to Destruction:", 220.

individuals who had returned from military training in Tajura. At the beginning, there was no leadership. “All of them were all (sic) organisers”, Sankoh revealed in an interview.⁸⁵ Those who returned to Sierra Leone were determined to pursue the ‘revolution’, among them were Foday Sankoh, Abu Kanu and Rashid Mansaray. They formed a closed-knit group in the city, met periodically to discuss strategy, and embarked upon another recruitment drive. This time, they decided to leave Freetown and settle in the hinterland, a move that opened the link between the RUF and the National Patriotic Front of Liberia.

1.3.2 The Immediate Impact of the Liberian Civil War.

Sankoh’s Libyan connections, together with the relationship that he established with Charles Taylor from 1988 onwards helped him to emerge as the head of the RUF. Sankoh met Charles Taylor in Libya in 1988, who then invited him to join the NPFL. This organization was under the leadership of Charles Taylor, and the Gambian, Kukoi Samba was its founding member and vice president.⁸⁶ Its forces obtained their training, and received their financial support from Libya, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, and from Liberian opposition group abroad.⁸⁷ Sankoh was later invited to visit the Po military camp in Burkina Faso, where he came into contact with the mercurial NPFL commander Prince Yomi Johnson. Like Thomas Quiwonkpa Commanding General of Armed Forces of Liberia before him, Taylor visited Sierra Leone in 1988 to explore the possibility of using Pujehun as a launching base for his

⁸⁵ Abdullah, *Youth Culture and Rebellion*, 56.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Mark, Huband, *The Liberian Civil War*, (London: Frank Cass,1998),2.

revolution. Travelling on a Burkinabe passport, he was arrested, detained and subsequently deported.⁸⁸

Towards the end of 1989, internal tensions heightened and a civil war broke out in Liberia, when the NPFL invaded Liberia from the Ivory Coast, with the assistance of regular soldiers from Burkina Faso, and mass recruits from the Mano and Gio ethnic groups.⁸⁹ Foday Sankoh and his group helped Charles Taylor, who in his turn would provide them with a base to launch their armed struggle. So, it was only after the outbreak of the Liberian civil war that the RUF were able to gain a frontier across which to launch their campaign in Sierra Leone. The ability to exploit the frontier with a complimentary state had been critical to most African insurgencies. The insurgency force from Liberia was composed of three distinct groups: those who had acquired military training in Libya (predominantly urban lumpens) and had seen action with the NPFL as combatants; a second group of Sierra Leoneans, resident in Liberia, mostly lumpens and criminals recently released from jail; and a third group of hard-core NPFL fighters from Liberia on loan to the RUF.⁹⁰

One of the RUF's strongest commanders, Papa Kamara and the late field commander Sam Bokharie aka Maskita were both recruited in Monrovia and Abidjan respectively. Kamara was a high-school drop out who later became an APC thug and was involved in criminal activities before drifting to Liberia. Bokharie left high school in Form Three, and had a stint as an illicit diamond miner in Kono before moving to Monrovia and then Abidjan, where he was recruited by Sankoh.

⁸⁸ Abdullah, *Youth Culture and Rebellion*, 56.

⁸⁹ Huband, *The Liberian Civil War*, 2.

⁹⁰ Abdullah, *Youth Culture and Rebellion*, 57.

Jonathan Kposowa, who was the RUF Adjutant- General, was serving time in a prison in Monrovia; he was released to join the RUF.⁹¹ Being in collaboration with the NPFL, the RUF sought control of Sierra Leone's rich diamond mines for millions of dollars of high quality. Diamonds were mined every month and most were smuggled out of the country to finance the rebels.⁹²

The armed forces crumbled as the state and rebels alike relied on child militias who were entangled in violence and drug uses. Incursion from Liberia was certainly the proximate cause of the war in Sierra Leone. The incursion was sponsored by Liberian rebel, Charles Taylor. The latter had been frustrated by Sierra Leonean's support for the ECOMOG forces that were preventing him from taking over the Liberian capital, Monrovia. Subsequently, one of the Liberian armed factions promoted by ECOMOG as a counterweight to the NPFL, Ulimo, operated from Sierra Leonean territory back into Liberia. Support for the RUF was thus an eminently rational response on Taylor's part,⁹³ who looked to Sierra Leone as an outlet for the energies of some of his more restless and volatile forces because of Sierra Leone's diamonds.⁹⁴ *The London Guardian* reflected on the early year of the 1990s that, "Support of the RUF was part of this strategy (of smuggling the diamonds and military protecting the mines). The diamond profits sustained both Taylor and the RUF, and the RUF kept much of the diamond area out of the government's control"⁹⁵ In this context, it was pointed that:

⁹¹ Abdullah, *Youth Culture and Rebellion*.57.

⁹² Clapham, *Liberia & Sierra Leone* ,16.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ David, Keen, *Conflict & Collusion in Sierra Leone* , (New York: Palgrave, 2005), 21.

⁹⁵ Tom Kamara, *Diamonds, War and State Collapse in Liberia and Sierra Leone* www.theperspective.org

Chapter Two: The Onset of the Civil War: Its Causes, Dynamics, Threat and Insecurity.

Official figures for diamond production (reflecting the quantities passing through official hands and the quantities on which revenues could be raised) fell from 418,000 carats in 1977 to just 13,000 in 1990.... By the late 1980s, economists were estimating that 95 per cent of Sierra Leone's diamond production was being smuggled out of the country.... Smuggling of gold and a variety of agricultural products was also rife.⁹⁶

In fact, Col. Gaddafi provided training ground, finances, and weapons for the RUF. On the other hand, the civil war in neighbouring Liberia played a vital role in the onset of the brutal civil war in Sierra Leone. Tactics of terror used in Liberia had been perfected in Sierra Leone. As stated by Mr. Koroma, who worked with the rebels in seizing the state: "I think the RUF got their indoctrination from the Liberian war (in which the RUF participated in support of Taylor's NPFL faction)."⁹⁷ Taylor sponsored the RUF as a means to destabilise Sierra Leone and had access to Sierra Leone's diamond wealth and an ally across the border. The two men became friends in the eighties when they were trained together at one of Col. Gaddafi's desert camps for African revolutionaries in Libya.

Two years after launching its bloody NPFL insurrection in 1989, the RUF launched its attack on Sierra Leone. The RUF was strong in Sierra Leone mainly because of the replication of evil technique that it had brought with it from Liberia nine years before. At all events, the competitors were not the colonialists. They were international and local criminals determined to plunder the continent regardless of the human cost.⁹⁸ On the whole, the combination of the elite, popular alienation,

⁹⁶ Keen, *Conflict & Collusion in Sierra Leone*, 21.

⁹⁷ Tom Kamara, *Diamonds, War and State Collapse in Liberia and Sierra Leone* www.theperspective.org

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

and external support for insurgency was too much for the Sierra Leonean state to bear.

1.4 Aid and other External Resources.

A large amount of the resources used to sustain conflict in poor states was brought from the outside often as part of the international operations that were intended to encourage conflict or restrict it. As far as Sierra Leone is concerned, actually aid donors including, some financial institutions and foreign governments which provided financial aid, policy advice and conditionalities with strong economic and sometimes political ramifications assisted in the outset of the civil war.

1.4.1 External Assistance to the Sierra Leonean Government.

The Sierra Leonean government was almost entirely sustained from outside through aid donors who played little direct role in the process of state failure and war onset in Sierra Leone. Prior to the war onset, the country received a large amount of foreign assistance which came mainly from various bilateral donors. Much of the bilateral aid was off-budget. Thus, the government lacked central control over alien aid. Meanwhile, the government lacked the ability to institute fiscal discipline, as required by the international financial institutions, as a pre-condition for on-budget aid that the government would have controlled.

Germany was the leading bilateral aid donor. It was extremely involved in civil engineering works, construction of roads and bridges and in rural development.⁹⁹ The Chinese were involved in agriculture,

⁹⁹ Victor A.B. Davies, *Development co-operation and conflict in Sierra Leone*, Conflict, Security & Development_Vol. 10 , Iss. 1,2010,58.

and infrastructure. They constructed a national stadium in 1979, and later a ministerial building.¹⁰⁰ The Chinese were also involved in hydro-electric projects. The US provided commodity aid: the PL480 rice; the proceeds from the sale of the rice were meant to finance development tasks. However, there was no evidence that the proceeds from the sale of the rice financed development projects, as expected. The rice, which was sold at below-market prices, became a source of patronage for members of the ruling party. The aid scheme might have also served to discourage domestic production by keeping prices artificially low.¹⁰¹

The international financial institutions, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, were the most influential development partners: they did not only provide financial aid, but also policy advice and conditionalities with strong economic and sometimes political ramifications. Sierra Leone's relationship with the two institutions dates back to the 1960s. The IMF had, from time to time, provided loans in support of the balance of payments, while the World Bank had financed a range of development projects. In the 1980s, as Sierra Leone's economic crisis deepened, its relationship with the two institutions became strained with protracted and disruptive negotiations on economic reforms.¹⁰² The government was unable to meet outstanding foreign debt, withdrew subsidies on certain basic commodities, and more generally, instituted restrictive fiscal measures.

In February 1984, the state was allowed a one-year standby arrangement with the IMF. Thus, loans of up to Special Drawing Right

¹⁰⁰ Davies "Sierra Leone's Economic Growth Performance, 1961–2000", 16.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid, 17.

\$50 were provided to allow the government to re-schedule \$50 million of its \$400 million outstanding external debt.¹⁰³ However, negotiations for a further IMF loan collapsed in February 1985 owing to the government's failure to withdraw domestic subsidies for petrol, rice and electricity; and the IMF suspended drawings from the one-year stand-by facility. The World Bank also suspended disbursements in November 1985, owing to the government's failure to clear US\$ 1 million in arrears.¹⁰⁴

After the government's subsequent negotiations with the international financial institutions, a structural adjustment programme was initiated in June 1986 under which it agreed to float the exchange rate, remove subsidies on rice and petroleum, liberalize trade, increase producer prices and pay US\$3 million in arrears to the IMF. The Paris Club of Western creditor governments also agreed on condition to reschedule Sierra Leone's immediate debt obligations. The government decided to return to a fixed peg in August 1987. It fixed the exchange rate, revaluing the national currency relative to the exchange rate prevailing during the float.¹⁰⁵ The IMF withdrew its financial support in 1988, stating that the government had not met the agreed conditions. In the same year Sierra Leone was declared ineligible to use IMF resources and was under threat of suspension from membership of the Fund for failing to service its foreign debt.¹⁰⁶

In the mid 1980s Momoh obtained a loan from a Lebanese businessman to pay for printing the national currency abroad. In return,

¹⁰³ Davies "Sierra Leone's Economic Growth Performance, 1961–2000", 17.

¹⁰⁴ S.M. Funna, *Sierra Leone Economy*, in *Africa South of the Sahara, 22nd Edition*: (London, Europa Publications Limited, 1993), 92.

¹⁰⁵ Davies, *Sierra Leone's Economic Growth Performance, 1961–2000*, 17.

¹⁰⁶ Funna, *Sierra Leone Economy*, 98.

Momoh allowed the businessman to keep a portion of currency shipments as payment.¹⁰⁷ Momoh's response to the crisis was to try to regain control of Sierra Leone's diamond resources from Stevens' clients. Creditors approved, noting that the main obstacle for fighting corruption and servicing foreign debt in Sierra Leone was the hold over diamond resources exerted by rogue state officials and Stevens' business clients. Creditors recommended inviting foreign firms to regularise or impose control over diamond mining.

However, the foreign firms that showed up were generally shady businessmen mostly connected to international criminal networks. They received generous diamond mining and other concessions in return for their offers of aid. Among the foreign firms, LIAT Finance and Construction, an Israeli firm. The latter appeared in 1987 with promises to finance and build development projects in return for diamond mining concessions.¹⁰⁸ LIAT's assets did not amount too much. Most of its contracts were with the government, including a low-cost housing scheme in Freetown that never got started. The firm's chief, the Russian-born Shaptai Kalmanowich main interest was diamonds. He set up a diamond buying office in Freetown. At first, the partnership appeared to be beneficial for the diamond industry, and exports increased by 280 per cent in late 1987. But later on, it was discovered that Kalmanowich was using Sierra Leone to circumvent the weapons, diamonds and gold embargoes on South Africa. It was also thought that he had connections with the Israeli intelligence apparatus and to have played an advisory role in Israeli politics.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Reno, *Warlord Politics and African States*, 105.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ Reno, *Warlord Politics and African States*, 131-135.

While in Sierra Leone, Kalmanowich brought in other money launderers, drug traffickers and arms dealers, all scrambling to gain access to diamonds, including Marat Balagula, considered the ‘Godfather’ of Russian mafia in Brooklyn, N.Y, Boris Nayfeld and Rachmiel ‘Mike’ Brandwain. Balagula and Kalmanowich became involved briefly in the importation of petroleum products to Sierra Leone, in a deal reportedly backed by a fugitive American businessman, Mark Rich, and guaranteed by the Luccheses, an old time American family.¹¹⁰ In 1987, all of them met in Freetown. Brandwain at that time ran a small electronics store near the diamond district of Anewerp and was involved in tax-free export transactions with Eastern Europe. He was also involved in trafficking activities, including heroin trafficking and diamond smuggling. Shortly after the Sierra Leone meeting, Kalmanowich was arrested in London in 1987 on an American warrant.¹¹¹ He was extradited to Israel to face additional charges. This ended LIAT’s Sierra Leone operations.¹¹²

Soon after Kalmanowich’s arrest, a more organized Israeli firm, appeared in 1989 with an offer to manage Sierra Leone’s diamond mines. The N.R. SCIPA group, owned by Nir Guaz (known as the Skipper), set up diamond buying offices in Freetown and Kenema. This firm continued a LIAT enterprise, importing rice and machinery and selling it at low prices.¹¹³ SCIPA paid overdue civil servants’ salaries and also allegedly paid a portion of Sierra Leone’s arrears with conventional creditors, helping to put debt negotiations with the IMF back on track in

¹¹⁰ Robinson, Jeffery, *The Merger*, (Simon & Schuster UK, London, 1999), 115-6.

¹¹¹ Reno, *Warlord Politics and African States*, 83.

¹¹² Gberie, Smillie and Hazleton, *The Heart of the Matter*, 45.

¹¹³ Reno, *Warlord Politics and African States*, 98.

1989.¹¹⁴ However, SCIPA was not actually interested in mining diamonds or managing the industry. SCIPA purchased diamonds mined in Sierra Leone for export elsewhere as a money laundering operation. To dominate the market SCIPA tried to develop a group of people among illicit diamond operators, and gave gifts to Momoh's allies and rivals alike. In 1989, SCIPA's head was arrested for "economic damage", thus ending SCIPA's operations.¹¹⁵

In December 1989 the government adopted once again an IMF-approved economic reform programme. The government received no financial assistance, but had to meet certain criteria to qualify for a full programme with a financial aid package. The Leone was devalued by 85 percent in January 1990, and in April 1990 the Leone was floated, with the result that it depreciated rapidly¹¹⁶. The government introduced some revenue measures like awarding foreign firms contracts to manage the seaport, monitor customs operations, and to patrol the Sierra Leonean coastal waters to improve fishery royalty collection. Import and export licences were abolished for all commodities. A freeze was imposed on civil service recruitment, except for essential services. An exercise was launched to reduce the 75000-strong government work force by a third by 1993. This was to be achieved by deleting "ghost" workers from government payroll and retrenchment.¹¹⁷

However, despite the measures taken to improve the economic sector and increase fiscal revenue collection, the civil war broke out in 1991. Thus, Sierra Leone pursued an adjustment programme in the midst

¹¹⁴ Reno, *Warlord Politics and African States*, 98.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ Davies, "Sierra Leone's Economic Growth Performance, 1961–2000", 18.

¹¹⁷ Funna, *Sierra Leone Economy*, 53.

of the war, which led to some improvement in certain macroeconomic indicators during wartime: inflation was cut from an average of 93 percent a year between 1986 and 1990, to 24 percent between 1993 and 2000.¹¹⁸ The black market spread fell from an average of about 140 percent in the 1980s to less than 20 percent in the 1990s.¹¹⁹ The programme involved large-scale cuts in the public sector workforce. Many of those affected were those who did not actually work for the government.

Funding from the international financial institutions helped sustain the government during the war. In May 1992 the IMF released an initial U.S \$43 million for the import of essential commodities.¹²⁰ In July the government announced that international donors, including the African Development Bank and the European Union, had begun to release additional funds for use in restructuring the economy.

Although the policies of the international financial institutions did not directly contribute to state failure and civil war, the difficulties that the Momoh administration faced in obtaining funding from the two institutions revealed the fact that the IFIs did not have a policy for dealing with weak states like Sierra Leone.¹²¹ Momoh faced the basic pre-conditions for aid imposed by the international financial institutions: settling debt arrears and exerting fiscal discipline. Thus, immediate

¹¹⁸ Davies, "Sierra Leone's Economic Growth Performance, 1961–2000," 18.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Funna, *Sierra Leone Economy*, 58.

¹²¹ The IMF Emergency Post-Conflict Assistance program "provides emergency assistance to help member countries with urgent balance of payments financing needs in the wake of natural disasters or armed conflicts". As the name indicates the facility is intended for countries facing natural emergencies or emerging from conflict, and not for weak states facing the threat of internal conflict. The World Bank's International Development Association allocates aid on the basis of a "performance based allocation" mechanism which features the Country Policy and Institutional Assessment index (CPIA). Lastly, it had launched the Low Income Countries Under Stress (LICUS) program. However, this is not specifically designed to address the needs of countries facing the risk of civil conflict.

financial help from conventional donors was not forthcoming. Contract terms dictated that Sierra Leone government would provide greater security in mining areas. Towards this end Momoh staged two military operations to evict the tens of thousands of illicit miners operating in the mines.¹²² Furthermore, the diamond and other commercial networks that Momoh disrupted earned him fresh enemies some of whom later tried to cut deals with the rebels.¹²³

Indeed, domestic management of Sierra Leone's alluvial diamond resources posed special problems. Donors and policy makers did not appear to have a clear understanding of the complexity of the problem. As a result, policies and schemes could be implemented that end up unwittingly, leading to a grim civil war. Generally, conditions imposed on poor countries are often imposed on fragile countries without adequate consideration of their special circumstances. The Sierra Leonean case highlights such point. To receive aid from donors it was required to pay part of debt arrears as a pre-condition. Thus, Momoh's effort at economic reform was complicated by its inability to access funding from conventional donors. So, the Sierra Leonean case demonstrates the need for the international financial institutions to develop a different approach to economic reform in weak countries.

1.4.2 Trafficking of Arms, Ammunition and Drugs.

Throughout the armed conflict, the RUF used diamonds to buy ammunition, arms, medicine and food. The possession of arms and ammunition by rebel groups gave them power to control vast territories

¹²² Reno, *Warlord Politics and African States*,36.

¹²³ *Ibid*,38.

of the country, enslave civilians and exploit them in the diamond mines. The desire to expand 'controlled areas' into parts of the country ripe for economic exploitation gradually became the main motivating factor for all the armed groups and many local commanders, which triggered further conflict.¹²⁴ They used to acquire weapons so as to carry on their armed struggle.

Thus, arms and ammunition had been acquired by the RUF through Liberia by a complex process, which closely paralleled the development of Liberia into a criminal state. Tension between the RUF and the NFPL leadership became so intense that Taylor decided to remove his troops from Sierra Leone. As the NFPL troops left, they took all of their weapons and ammunitions with them leaving Sankoh and the RUF in a vulnerable situation. Sankoh and his soldiers had captured some equipment from the RSLMF, but not enough to sustain operations.

Sankoh and the RUF soon discovered the importance and value of diamonds. As Sankoh and his soldiers took over mining areas in southern Sierra Leone, he found himself with a product he could barter. Sankoh approached Taylor about an exchange and Taylor was interested.¹²⁵ He allegedly backed the RUF by giving orders, providing assistance and supplying arms and ammunition in exchange for diamonds.¹²⁶ He established a network of illegal buyers and sellers from various countries and was able to smuggle weapons and ammunition to barter with Sankoh and to support his war. A diamond network was

¹²⁴ Supra note 1, Volume 3b: Chapter 1: *Mineral Resources: their Use and their Impact on the Conflict and the Country*, para. 6. In Iryna Marchuk, *Confronting Blood Diamonds in Sierra Leone: The Trial of Charles Taylor*, (University of Copenhagen, Denmark, Yale Journal of International Affairs (2009).

¹²⁵ L.J. Wood, T.R. Reese, *Military Interventions in Sierra Leone: Lessons from a Failed State*, The Long war Series Occasional Paper 28, Combat Studies Institute Press US Army, Combined Arms Center, (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 2008), 18.

¹²⁶ Wood, Reese, *Military Interventions in Sierra Leone*, 20.

developed from Sierra Leone, going through Liberia and Guinea, and then on to Antwerp, Belgium; Bombay, India; or New York City using a variety of Lebanese merchants.¹²⁷

By the end of the 1990s a report stated, ‘Liberia had become a major centre for massive diamond-related criminal activity, with connections to guns, drugs and money laundering throughout Africa and considerably further afield’.¹²⁸ Criminal entrepreneurs had actively sourced arms from countries in the former Soviet Union, most notably Ukraine, and supplied them to the government of Liberia and Burkina Faso. These weapons were subsequently supplied to the RUF in exchange for diamonds. As a result, diamonds became the principal means to fund the war in Sierra Leone for both sides. They were easy to transport, hide, and easy to convert into cash, and they were virtually impossible to detect in airports.¹²⁹ Controlling the mines allowed millions of dollars worth of diamonds to change hands in order to purchase and trade for equipment, weapons, and medical supplies. The presence of alluvial diamonds made it easy for the RUF to channel illegal diamonds to Liberia. Since alluvial diamonds were not mined in the traditional sense, but rather by “panning” in much the same way as miners “panned for gold,” it made it easy to extract them and carry them to buyers in other countries.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Donald Temple, *Sierra Leone: An Obscure Battlefield in the War on Terrorism The Jamestown Foundation*, <http://www.jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2369857&orubttgus=1> (accessed 15 June 2007).

¹²⁸ Clapham, *Liberia & Sierra Leone*, 20.

¹²⁹ Eunice Ajambo, *Debate Over al Qaeda’s Connection to West Africa’s Diamond Trade Takes New Turns*, *allAfrica.com*, 5 August 2004, <http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200408050800.html> (accessed 12 June 2007).

¹³⁰ Greg Campbell, *Blood Diamonds: Tracing the Deadly Path of the World’s Most Precious Stones*, Bolder CO: Westview Press, 2002, 54.

Arms and ammunition had also been acquired by the RUF through the capture of arms from various military forces that had been developed in Sierra Leone, such as the Nigerian ECOMOG troops. In 1998, the RUF routed the ECOMOG at Kano, where they captured substantial quantities of weapons. Moreover, an active network of smuggling appeared between the opposing forces and the RUF commanders who were able to buy weapons from Nigerian ECOMOG troops for each, diamonds, food and medicine. In addition to financing and equipping its forces, the RUF was particularly preoccupied with crippling Sierra Leone's commercial and industrial activities, undermining the physical security of the state and attracting international publicity.¹³¹

Sankoh believed that if he could deny diamond revenues to the state, then he could cripple the government and impose a negotiation between the RUF and the government. After wisely assessing the situation, he carried out raids and ambushes on state controlled diamond mining operations and used intelligent information gathered from local infiltrators often children and conducted stakeouts to ensure success.¹³² The RUF whittled away at the Sierra Leonean Army and undermined its credibility. As it captured equipment, its members would dress up in their confiscated army uniforms, move into civilian villages and towns, and conduct operations.

Consequently, civilians found themselves victims of property destruction, mass killings, brutality, rape, and kidnapping.¹³³ Finally,

¹³¹ Clapham, *Liberia & Sierra Leone*, 2.

¹³² Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone, *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone*, 422, 428, 429.

¹³³ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone, *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone*, 423.

Sankoh wanted to attract international attention for the RUF's armed struggle and to be part of the negotiation process. Sankoh believed that if he could make life unbearable in Sierra Leone, it would bring the government to the negotiating table.¹³⁴ He believed that if he could persuade the media favorably toward his revolution, then he could eventually have a part in the new government.

It is noteworthy that economic and political factors closely interacted. Diamonds had played an active role both in financing Taylor's own expansionist enterprise, and in bringing Sierra Leone to its knees. In return for weapons, Liberia had provided the RUF with an outlet for diamonds, and had done the same for other diamond producing countries, fuelling war and providing a safe haven for organised crime.

1.The Onset of the Civil War and the Internal Factions Strategy.

The end of the 1980s could show how people were inadequately provided with basic needs, becoming hopeless, blaming the government for their troubles and were ready as Fyle said, 'to jump onto the streets to express their frustration',¹³⁵ a fact that started gradually. This background certainly set the necessary groundwork for the onset of the armed conflict in Sierra Leone in 1991 and lasted until 2002. The poor provision of social services in Sierra Leone created the general economic desperation and conditions for an organized armed opposition. As the conflict continued to extend its tentacles to most parts of the country, other internal factions emerged and became embroiled in it. How was the

¹³⁴ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone, *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone*, 423.

¹³⁵ Fyle, M, *The State and the Provision of Social Services in Sierra Leone, Since Independence, 1961-1991*, (ed), Codesria Book Series, 1993, 5-11.

civil war launched and what were the atrocities committed against the Sierra Leonean civilians?

1.1 The Ongoing of the War.

The civil war in Sierra Leone was ostensibly launched as a spillover from Liberia, which had been wracked by a devastating civil war since the invasion on Christmas Eve 1989 by a small group of armed men, led by a former junior government minister named Charles Ghankay Taylor.¹³⁶ This latter supported the insurgency of the Revolutionary United Front which launched its first incursions into Eastern Kailahun¹³⁷ and Pujehun on the southern border from Liberia on March 23rd, 1991. In one of the opening paragraphs of its manifesto titled: “*Footpath to Democracy: Towards a New Sierra Leone*”, the RUF stated:

We entered Sierra Leone through Liberia and enjoyed the sympathy of Sierra Leonean migrant workers some of whom joined us to cross the border to start our liberation campaign. This generation of Sierra Leoneans who have had to migrate to make a living in Liberia are now referred to as mercenaries and bandits by the Freetown based military junta. The military has also used this fact to gain support from Guinea, Nigeria, the United Nations and Britain in its avowed policy of war to rid Sierra Leone of alien rebels.¹³⁸

¹³⁶ War & Peace in Sierra Leone, 5.

¹³⁷ Kailahun: is the capital of Kailahun District in the Eastern Province of Sierra Leone. It lies approximately 75 miles north-east of Kenema and about 300 miles east of Freetown. It is a rural town and is a major agricultural and business center. The town is a political stronghold of the Sierra Leone People (SLPP), the main opposition party in Sierra Leone.

¹³⁸ Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone (RUF/SL): Footpaths to Democracy: Toward a New Sierra Leone, 1996. <http://www.sierra-leone.org/AFRC-RUF/footpaths.html>

Map Three:RUF Offensives, 1991.



Source:Larry J.Woods & C.Timothy R.Reese, *Military Interventions in Sierra Leone*,16.

NPFL and RUF forces launched their eastern attack from the Liberian town of Foya Kamal, attacking down the main highway from the western edge towards the interior of Sierra Leone. Their initial objective was to clear the road to Koindu and then to wait for reinforcements to continue to advance.¹³⁹ Their ultimate objective was to capture the strategic military barracks, known as Moya Barracks, in the town of Daru located on the Moya River.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone, *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone*, 159.

¹⁴⁰*Ibid*, 221-222.

The first attacks targeted the existing state structure and individuals associated with it; captured and beheaded chiefs, village heads and other government workers.¹⁴¹ The invading force comprised only 300 fighters and included mercenaries from Burkina Faso and forces from Charles Taylor's NPFL.¹⁴² Taylor's assistance to the RUF was initially described as quite limited and was low on small arms and ammunition, but there was a steady flow of arms from Liberia to the RUF throughout much of the conflict.¹⁴³ The RUF was also supplied with arms from Ivory Coast, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Slovakia, and Libya. Libya enhanced the formation of the RUF in a number of ways. First, it provided both the logistics and the training ground for the movement. Second, it facilitated the RUF's connection with Charles Taylor's NPFL. Besides, during the conflict at various points, Ivory Coast for example provided safe sanctuary and passage for war material to the NPFL. However, at the onset of the war, the Sierra Leone Army was not well armed, they had few weapons, and those were in poor condition including small arms.¹⁴⁴ Then, with the onset of the conflict, arms availability increased in the first few months of the conflict. However, the army never managed to effectively defend the population across the country from the RUF.

In 1992, a year after the RUF had begun the war, Momoh was deposed in a coup led by Captain Valentine E.M. Strasser (1992 -1996).

¹⁴¹ Meredith, M, *The Fate of Africa- From the Hopes of Freedom to the Heart of Despair*, (Public Affaires, New York, 2005), 563.

¹⁴² Jeremy Giner, *Armed Violence and Poverty in Sierra Leone*, Centre for International Cooperation and Security, Department of Peace Studies, (University of Bradford, March 2005), 10.

¹⁴³ Erik Berman, 'Rearmament in Sierra Leone: One Year After the Lomé Peace Agreement', Occasional Paper No. 1, Small Arms Survey: Geneva, December 2000),14.

¹⁴⁴ Berman, 'Rearmament in Sierra Leone, 20.

A National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) was subsequently established with Strasser as the head of state, ruling the country until 1996. The NPRC owed much of its popularity to public disgust with APC misrule. The Junta was initially hailed as the liberators from the repressive regime. It began auspiciously with a determination to introduce positive changes. The energies of the young people were for instance, redirected to meaningful engagement by actively involving them in the monthly cleaning and beautification of the city. The regime's Deputy Chairman SAJ Musa compelled a significant number of civil servants to imbibe positive work ethics like going to work regularly and on time. However, in less than two years, the Junta turned out to be more undemocratic and corrupt than its predecessor. It was noted for gross human rights violations, undemocratic tendencies and corrupt practices.

The civil war rised and many territories became under the RUF control. Furthermore, as the countryside collapsed into banditry, violent youths who were either from rebel forces, or government troops attacked communities and overran the country's lucrative diamond producing areas in the south and east, the source of the "blood" bath caused by the crimes and cruelty committed against the innocent civilian population. Tens of thousands of innocent lives, including women, children and the aged, were tortured and murdered. Even though the NPRC continued the campaign against the RUF, very minimal success was achieved until the NPRC recruited the South African private security firm, the Executive Outcomes (EO)¹⁴⁵, which was remarkably successful.

¹⁴⁵The Executive Outcomes was a private military company founded in South Africa to provide military personnel, training and logistical support to officially recognized governments only. However, they were often accused of providing the military strength for corporations to control natural resources in failed states or conflict ridden areas because their governments mostly paid for their services with mining concessions.

The first contingent reached the country in May 1995, and by the end of the year had established a position of military superiority, including control of all the major diamond areas, securing then the capital. They were assisted by a local militia, the kamajor,¹⁴⁶ which launched its task as a genuine civil society movement of people, determined to protect local communities in the main area of RUF operations and force the RUF into peace negotiations. Meanwhile, Captain Valentine Strasser, like Momoh before him came under increasing foreign and domestic pressure to hold elections, which were boycotted and sporadically disrupted by the RUF. The pressure yielded fruits and presidential and parliamentary elections were conducted concurrently in March 1996.

Despite the fact that the RUF refused to take part in the elections, some Sierra Leone military loyalists and the civil militias agreed on peace negotiations and in November 1996, a peace agreement was signed in Abidjan,¹⁴⁷ Ivory Coast, between the new government of President Kabbah and the RUF. The agreement quickly broke down as the RUF reneged on disarmament and the creation of a monitoring force. Two months after the accord was signed, fighting broke out once again. At that time, the Sierra Leone Army was regarded as very unfriendly to the newly elected government for some reasons including the rivalry between them and the pro-government 'Kamajors' and the loss of power to a civilian government. The military wing of the Economic Community of West African States ECOWAS, the ECOMOG which

¹⁴⁶The "kamajors" : Kamajor is a Mende word meaning hunter. In traditional Mende society, the hunter was a guardian of society and part of a mystical, "invincible" warrior cult. Kamajors are traditional hunters who fought against the RUF during Sierra Leone conflict.

¹⁴⁷The Abidjan Peace Accord was the first treaty signed in November 1996 between the Sierra Leone Peoples' Party government of Ahmed Tejan Kabbah and the Revolutionary United Front rebel group led by Foday Sankoh.

was already operating in the neighbouring Republic of Liberia was called upon to extend its role in Sierra Leone and to enforce the UN sanctions. In the process of trying to enforce the sanctions, dozens of innocent civilians were killed in the clashes between ECOMOG and the AFRC/RUF junta. The AFRC/RUF continued to prove adamant to relinquish power even after signing a peace plan in Conakry.¹⁴⁸

In February 1998, ECOMOG forcefully routed the AFRC/RUF out of power and marched on to Freetown. In March of the same year, the elected government of President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah was reinstated after nine months in exile. This event was indeed a milestone in the history of democracy in Africa because it was actually the first time that a coup against a democratic government in Africa had been reversed without the intervention of the United Nations.¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, despite President Kabbah's attempts to reconstruct the security sector, and the presence of the ECOMOG amounting to 12,000-15,000 men, the RUF seized Freetown in January 1999.¹⁵⁰ Fighting reached parts of Freetown, leaving thousands dead and wounded. The ECOMOG forces drove back the RUF attack several weeks later. Eventually, the RUF forces retained control of most of the rest of the country. What was then, the RUF strategy in Sierra Leone civil war?

2.2 Internal Factions in the Conflict.

The Sierra Leone conflict was launched as previously mentioned by the Revolutionary United Front with support from the special forces of

¹⁴⁸The Conakry peace was an ECOWAS six months peace plan for Sierra Leone That was brokered between the government of Sierra Leone (GOSL) and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC). It was scheduled to be implemented from 23rd October, 1997 to 22nd April, 1998.

¹⁴⁹This was the first time that a coup against a democratic government in Africa has been reversed without United Nations intervention, suggesting a new and positive level of regional cooperation.

¹⁵⁰ Clapham, Christopher, *Sierra Leone : The Political Economy of Internal Conflict*, Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', Conflict Research Unit, July 2003, 8.

the National Patriotic Front of Liberia. As the conflict continued to extend its tentacles to most parts of the country, other internal factions emerged and became embroiled in it. What was noticeable was the widespread of the use of children as soldiers. Seized at a young age and brainwashed with a variety of fanatical beliefs, they became involved in the civil war. All factions used children in this way and became engaged in fighting and killing child soldiers. In this respect, the attempt is to look at some of the main factions that actually played some role and bore the greatest responsibility in the conflict during its decade long span.

2.2.1 The Revolutionary United Front Terror Tactic in the War.

In 1991, the Revolutionary United Front launched their armed insurgency in Sierra Leone. Although there were many different actors in the decade-long war, the RUF was the major belligerent group in the conflict that dominated accounts of having committed the most savage acts against the civilian population. The official government's truth and reconciliation commission documented war atrocities reporting that over 70% of all human rights abuses were committed by RUF fighters.¹⁵¹ In this context, Chris Squire pointed out:

The Revolutionary United Front was the product of bad governance in Sierra Leone. However, in the making of their revolution, the rebels engaged in inhuman atrocities against defenseless children, women and men who had nothing whatsoever to do with the government and the corruption the Revolutionary United Front claimed to be fighting against. Limbs of people of all ages have been callously amputated, as well as whole communities burnt and properties destroyed or looted.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹Conibere, Richard, Jana Asher, Kristen Cibelli, Jana Dudukovich, Rafe Kaplan, and Patrick Ball.. "Statistical Appendix to the Report of Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Report of Sierra Leone." Human Rights Data Analysis Group, the Benetech Initiative, 2004 .

¹⁵² Squire, Chris, *Bound to Cooperate: Peacemaking and power-sharing in Sierra Leone*, (Geneva: United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, 2000), 56.

At the beginning of the war, the Sierra Leonean Army was ill equipped, weak and unprofessional. As a result of these inadequacies; the rebels of the RUF were able to raid several towns and villages. Within a month of the beginning of their campaign, they were able to put under their control most of the parts of the Kailahun district. This was made possible by the use of various terror tactics which were applied as a strategy so as to instill fear into the minds of civilians. They forcefully abducted children and conscripted them into combatants with death threats; they did not only massacred entire village and town communities but also targeted traditional rulers and people of influence in these communities; public and brutal executions were said to have been carried out on civilians who refused to obey their instructions or alleged to have committed crimes. The amputation of limbs and otherbody parts was also common when the rebels advanced to a new territory; rape and sexual violence against women and girls of different age was widespread. The destruction and looting of property was the order of the day and a main source of survival for the group.¹⁵³ The RUF treatment to civilians was so severe and cruel, as recorded in the '*No Peace Without Justice*' (NPWJ) report:

On 26 December 1994, RUF forces attacked Mattru on the Rail (Tikonko chieftdom, Bo District) in the afternoon, mutilating civilians' arms and legs. The RUF then, opened sporadic gunfire on the civilians, killing many people, looting their property and burning down their houses. They also abducted civilian youths who they conscripted into the RUF forces.¹⁵⁴

The terror tactics employed by the RUF resulted into a humanitarian crisis. The latter made the inhabitants of towns and villages escape to

¹⁵³ *No Peace Without Justice* (NPWJ) Report, 2004, 303,395,133,361.

NPWJ is a non-profit organization that works to promote an effective international criminal justice system and to support accountability mechanisms for war crimes. The report seeks to record all violations of humanitarian law that occurred over the entire conflict period. The report is available online at: <http://www.npwj.org>

¹⁵⁴ *No Peace Without Justice* (NPWJ) Report, 2004, 303,395,133,361.

The report is available online at: <http://www.npwj.org>

save their lives because the Sierra Leonean Army was ill-equipped to adequately defend and protect their lives and property. Though one of the motives of the Revolutionary United Front was to oust the government of the All People's Congress under Joseph Saidu Momoh, they never relented in pursuit of their objective even when a group of young soldiers travelled from the war front to overthrow that government and establish the National Provisional Ruling Council.¹⁵⁵

They continued to use their terror and inhuman tactics as their trademark in fighting successive governments. They included the government of the All People's Congress Party, the National Provisional Ruling Council and the Sierra Leone People's Party. This latter was democratically elected under Ahmad Tejan Kabbah after the 1996 general elections that made an exit for the military junta of the National Provisional Ruling Council. Indeed, the terror tactics used by the Revolutionary United Front in pursuing the war according to Abdallah Ibrahim's book titled: "Bush Path to Destruction", "defied traditional patterns of guerrilla movements and in many ways defined the emergency patterns of armed struggle in Africa".¹⁵⁶

2.2.2 The Sierra Leonean Army (SLA) and the RUF.

The Sierra Leone Army had a constitutional and primary responsibility to defend Sierra Leone's territorial integrity against external aggressors. During the time the Revolutionary United Front launched their insurgency on the eastern and southern borders of the country, the Sierra Leone Army was unable to adequately carry out its

¹⁵⁵Abdullah, "Bush Path to Destruction, 203-235.

¹⁵⁶*No Peace Without Justice* (NPWJ) Report, 2004, 303,395,133,361.

The report is available online at: <http://www.npwj.org>

constitutional and primary responsibility of defending the citizens of the country.¹⁵⁷ The ineffectiveness of the army was due to the All People's Congress regime that abandoned most of the basic needs of the military to the extent of making it very unprofessional and incapable of performing its expected role. Instead, the All People's Congress regime concentrated on strengthening a paramilitary force that was concerned only with the internal security at an almost inverse proportion to the army in order to entrench themselves in power.

The failure of the army to provide necessary security against the Revolutionary United Front invasion of the country brought about a loss of trust between them and the civilian population.¹⁵⁸ This loss of trust reached its peak when it was discovered that the rebels and the SLA coordinated their movements in order to avoid direct battles, and at times worked out mutually beneficial profit sharing arrangements in diamond areas.¹⁵⁹ This was especially true, following the 1997 coup that formally brought the SLA and the RUF together into a national coalition government called the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council.¹⁶⁰ Some soldiers apparently fought for the SLA by day and the RUF by night.

It was also during the years of the conflict that the army carried out numerous human rights violations by tutoring, and arbitrarily killing civilians suspected to be rebels or collaborators without establishing the veracity of such allegations. These actions of the army helped to fuel the

¹⁵⁷Cox, Thomas S., *Civil Military Relations in Sierra Leone: A Case Study of African Soldiers in Politics*, (Cambridge, MA Harvard University Press, 1976),207.

¹⁵⁸Woods, and Reese , *Military Interventions in Sierra Leone*, 32.

¹⁵⁹John Bellows a, Edward Miguel b, *War and Local Collective Action in Sierra Leone*, *Journal of Public Economics*, Dept. of Economics, University of California, Berkeley, USA,2009.,1146 Journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jpube.

¹⁶⁰ Keen, *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone*,75.

conflict in the sense that some relatives of the victims of their actions tried to find all avenues available, like becoming rebels in their efforts of avenging their grievances. As a result, the main victims of the violence were civilians, who were terrorized not only by the RUF but also by the army that was supposed to protect them. Accordingly, on Ahmed Tejan Kabbah's second coming from exile, the Sierra Leonean Peoples Party Government had disbanded and demobilized the army to depend on foreign troops including United Nations peacekeepers, British troops, and civil militia for the protection of the state.¹⁶¹ However, with the end of the war and through funding from Britain and other countries, a newly restructured Sierra Leone Army was created with the assistance of International Military Advisory and Training Team (IMATT)¹⁶² which tried to recognize, retrain and reintegrate members of the former Sierra Leone Army.

2.2.3 The Violent Conflict and the Rise of the Civil Defence.

In response to the attacks by the rebels and the lack of support from the army, many loyal towns and villages formed paramilitary units and militias that would eventually become known as Civil Defense Forces (CDF). They organised their own local fighting groups in order to protect themselves from the terror of RUF and SLA fighters. This civil militia carried different names depending on which part of the country they were established. Those from Kenema district and other eastern and southern parts of the country were called "Kamajors", those from the north

¹⁶¹ IRIN – WA Update 250 of Events in West Africa, 14 July 1998.

¹⁶² International Military Assistance Training Team (IMATT, SL) was established in 2002 following the end of the war and the disarmament of rebels by the United Nations in Sierra Leone. Its Mission is to help develop the Armed Forces into a democratically accountable, effective and sustainable force to fulfill security tasks required by government.

especially Kabala district were called “Tamamboroh” or “Capras” and those from Kono district were known as “Donsors”.¹⁶³ CDF fighters were overwhelmingly civilians and they relied primarily on local fund raising for supplies. While there were numerous manifestations of the CDF throughout the country, the command and organization of the CDF were often linked with traditional chiefly authorities. For example, the largest CDF, known as the *kamajors*, were an extension of traditional Mende hunter groups.¹⁶⁴ Among all these names, the one that came to prominence was the Kamajors.

They were selected by the paramount chiefs and were known for their ability to hunt and trap wild animals. Originally paramount chiefs selected only two kamajors per village, but as the civil war progressed, the need for more kamajors became important. They officially became known as the Kamajor Militia Movement of Sierra Leone. It is a new form of social organization that is simultaneously political, social and economic. The movement became very powerful during the Sierra Leone civil conflict as it helped in defending most parts of the country from the rebel insurgency. In the beginning, the only weapons they had were machetes, swords, paddles, and rocks to fend off the rebels. Using captured NPLF and RUF weapons and equipment, they became a formidable force, actually outnumbering the rebel army in some parts of the country.

Conflicting parties in Sierra Leone civil war are illustrated in the following table :

¹⁶³Unisa Sahid, Kamara, *Conflict Resolution and Peace Building: The Case of Sierra Leone*, (University of Malta, February 2009), 42.

¹⁶⁴Mariane C ,Ferme, “The Underneath of Things: Violence, History and the Everyday in Sierra Leone”, Journal article by David Harris; Africa, Vol. 72, (2002).

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Table Six: Conflicting Parties in Sierra Leone Civil War.

Acro- nym	Name	Established	Represents	Affiliation	Support	Conflict with
RUF	Revolu- tionary United Front	1991	Mostly the Nimbas, Makeni Bikolo/illi-cit diamonds miners, mar- ginalised youth.	Ousted leaders of (SLA) Since 1994 (AFRC) in 1998	Liberia Burkina Faso, Libya, with the backing of France, mercenaries from the Ukraine & other E.European countries.	The S.L. Gov. ECOMOG and the Kamajors militia/ terror against the civilian population.
Kama- jors	Kamajors Rural militia	1994	Mostly the Mende ethnic group.	The S.L. Gov. ECOMOG supported by civilian population		RUF/AFRC
SLPP's Gov.	Sierra Leone People's Party	1996	Predominant- ly by activists of the Mende ethnic group in the E. & the S.part of the country.	Kamajors & ECOMOG Gov.	ECOMOG (Nigeria, Ghana & Guinea), the UK & the US mercenaries from mainly S. Africa(EO) & the UK.	RUF/AFRC
SLPP's Gov.	Renegade Faction of S.L Army, led by Major John Koromah/ Armed forces Revolu- tionary council.	1997	John Koromah's loyalists.	RUF	Liberia, Burkina Faso, Libya with the backing of France, mercen- naries from the Ukraine & other E. European countries.	The Sierra Leonean Government ECOMOG and the Kamajors militia.

Source: Terhi Lehtinen & Nosakhare Ogumbor, *“Diamonds, Mercenaries and Civilian Targets” :The Brutal Civil War in Sierra Leone*, 2004, 201.

The CDF is an example of how a war could create new influential institutions and of how Sierra Leonean individuals responded to war violence with an increased desire to assert their political rights. It continued to be admired within Sierra Leone for their selfless defense of civilians. However, late in the conflict when their power and numbers had grown, some CDF units lost discipline and they too began to abuse civilians and enter the illicit trade in diamonds, but not to the extent that the RUF or SLA did.¹⁶⁵

2.3 Return to Civilian Government.

In October 1990, President Joseph Momoh set up a constitutional review commission to review the one-party 1978 constitution with a view to broadening the existing political process and strengthening and consolidating the democratic foundation and structure of the nation. There was great suspicion that Momoh was not serious, however, and All Peoples Congress (APC) rule was increasingly marked by mismanage of power. The rebel war in the eastern part of the county posed an increasing load on the country, and on 29 April, 1992, a group of young Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces (RSLMF) officers launched a military coup, which sent Momoh into exile in Guinea and established the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) as the ruling authority in Sierra Leone. After four years of military government, which followed 25 years of one party rule, the Republic of Sierra Leone returned to civilian government after the 1996 elections.

¹⁶⁵Keen, *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone*, 268.

2.3.1 1996 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections

The 1996 presidential and parliamentary elections were conducted because of combined pressure from political parties, the civil society and the international community. While Sierra Leone hard situation reached its peak, popular opinion was galvanized both against the NPRC and RUF; people began to agitate for a return to democratic rule. The NPRC made several paths to botch the process, including beating, humiliating, arresting and detaining politicians and civil activists alike. With the help of the private security company, Executive Outcomes, and Kamajor civil defence forces, the rebels were driven back. This military success provided the government in late 1995 with the breathing space to move toward elections with the aim of reestablishing civilian rule. As a result of popular demand and mounting international pressure, the NPRC agreed to hand over power to a civilian government through presidential and parliamentary elections. Despite various glitches, the elections took place on 26 and 27 February, 1996 but were opposed violently by rebel forces resulting in 27 deaths. Neither candidate, Ahmad Tejan Kabbah nor John Karefa-Smart, received a majority of the vote. Consequently, a second round of voting was held on 15 March, 1996.

The prevailing war conditions imposed parliamentary elections for the first time, under the system of proportional representation. However, the ruined state of the country hampered communications and enforcement of electioneering rules. Reports poured in from all over the country about local bans on rallies, indiscriminate amputations of hands and arms to prevent voting, looting and destruction of property by the RUF. Despite these problems, on the election's day nearly 60 % of

the population in Sierra Leone voted. Allister Sparks, an international election observer in the 1996 Sierra Leone presidential election, described how the citizens of Kenema Town bravely resisted the RUF in order to exert their right of voting:

The polling stations were due to open at 7 am, but at exactly 6.15 am the rattle of small-arms fire broke out around the centre. ... At times the rebels ran close past our building and we could hear them shouting: “No election! No election!” between their bursts of AK-47 fire. We heard a counter-chant coming from the direction of the town: “We want vote! We want vote!” As the observers made their way gingerly into the town, crowds lining the streets yelled impatiently at us: “Bring the boxes. We want vote!” The polling stations opened late, but electoral officials worked frantically to open extra stations, and by the time the polls closed at 6 pm nearly every registered adult in Kenema had voted.¹⁶⁶

Thirteen political parties participated, with the SLPP winning 27 seats, UNPP 17, PDP 12, APC 5 and DCP 3.¹⁶⁷ Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, the leader of the SLPP, emerged victorious in both presidential and parliamentary elections, defeating John Karefa Smart, the leader of the United National People’s Party 59 to 41 percent of the votes respectively. The results ushered in the civilian government of Ahmed Tejan Kabbah as the first directly elected head of state. The military junta handed him power in an orderly fashion on 29 March, 1996.¹⁶⁸ International observers declared the election free and fair. In his inauguration speech in Freetown, Kabbah promised to end the civil war.

¹⁶⁶ Sparks, Allister, *Beyond the Miracle: Inside the New South Africa*. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2003), 309.

¹⁶⁷ Sierra Leone Web, “Sierra Leone News Archive 29th March 1996”, <http://www.sierra-leone.org/slnews0396.html> (accessed 8 July 2007).

¹⁶⁸ Ibid

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Table Seven : Presidential Elections

Candidates	Parties	First round		Second round	
		Vote	%	'Votes	%
Ahmad Tejan Kabbah	Sierra Leone People's Party	266,893	35.80	608,419	.59.50
John Karefa-Smart	United National People's Party	168,666	22.62	414,335	40.50
Thaimu Bangura	People's Democratic Party	119,782	16.07		
John Karimu	National Unity Party	39,617	5.31		
Edward Turay	All People's Congress	38,316	5.14		
Abu Aiah Koroma	Democratic Centre Party	36,779	4.93		
Abass Bundu	People's Progressive Party	21,557	2.89		
Amadu Jalloh	National Democratic Alliance	17,335	2.33		
Edward Kargbo	People's National Convention	15,798	2.12		
Desmond Luke	National Unity Movement	7,918	1.06		
Andrew Lungay	Social Democratic Party	5,202	0.70		
Andrew Turay	National Peoples Party	3,925	0.53		
Mohamed Sillah	National Alliance Democratic Party	3,723	0.50		
Total		745,511	100	1,022,754	100

Source: Elections Today Sierra Leonean general election 1996
<http://www.sierra-leone.org/election1996.html>

Table Eight: Parliamentary Elections

Party	Votes	%	Seats
Sierra Leone People's Party	269,888	35.94	27
United National People's Party	165,219	22.00	17
People's Democratic Party	114,429	15.24	12
All People's Congress	42,467	5.66	5
National Unity Party	39,285	5.23	4
Democratic Centre Party	35,632	4.75	3
People's Progressive Party	21,361	2.84	0
National Democratic Alliance	20,125	2.68	0
People's National Convention	19,019	2.53	0
National Unity Movement	8,885	1.18	0
Social Democratic Party	5,900	0.79	0
National People's Party	3,992	0.53	0
Indirectly elected paramount chiefs	-	-	12
Invalid/blank votes	4,656	-	-
Total	750,858	100	80

Source: Elections Today Sierra Leonean general elections 1996
<http://www.sierra-leone.org/election1996.html>

The life span of the democratically elected government was brief; the ray of hope that shone when Ahmed Tejan Kabbah democratically elected president, ended on the 25 May 1997, being overthrown by the AFRC, led by Major Johnny Paul Koroma (1960 - 2003), in alliance with the RUF. Although Johnny Paul Koroma was still leader of the AFRC, the RUF seemed to have taken control over the affairs of the government. The coup was widely condemned by the United Nations, then the Organisation of African Unity and other members of the international community. On 8 October, 1997, the UN imposed sanctions prohibiting the importation of weapons, military materials, and petroleum as well as a ban on international travel by members of the military junta.¹⁶⁹ All these measures were meant to bring pressure to bear on them to return power to the democratically elected government of Ahmed Tejan Kabbah of the SLPP, who was in exile in neighbouring Guinea. Consequently, he again took power from 1998 to 2007.

Conclusion

Indeed, political and economic factors interacted closely. Stevens' strategy of state building through alliances with chiefs was reinforced by existing practices and informal arrangements. Stevens saw no other option than to rely on chiefs to mobilize support particularly in rural areas. He had to contend with their roles as powerful allies, but also potentially powerful opponents. So, there was no other way than feeding their demands for getting a share of the pie as best as they could, since it was the cultural frame in which he had grown up.

¹⁶⁹ United Nations Security Council Resolution 1132, (1997), 8th October, 1997, United Nations Security Council <http://www.un.org/Docs/scres/1997/sc99.htm>.

Stevens' patrimonial system of governance triggered other conflict risk factors such as poor growth and mismanagement of the diamond resources. Diamonds had played an active role both in financing Taylor's own expansionist enterprise, and in bringing Sierra Leone to its knees. In return for weapons, Liberia had provided the RUF with an outlet for diamonds, and had done the same for other diamond producing countries, fuelling war and providing a safe haven for organised crime.

On the whole, although the Civil Defence Forces assisted in defending the country in general and the localities of its members in particular against the rebels, they too committed a lot of human right violations against civilians. In fact, both the RUF and the pro-government forces were guilty of using child soldiers who faced some of the gravest abuses and offensive actions in this armed conflict. Many of the committed atrocities in Sierra Leone were executed by child warriors, sometimes drunk, sometimes high in drugs and sometimes simply fanatical in their actions.

Furthermore, successive governments had extremely failed to address many of the fundamental and endemic problems that had underpinned the conflict. Some of these problems included : their failure in authority to properly manage the country's huge economic and natural resources mainly diamonds for the benefit of the whole population and the total absence of true democratic practices like free and fair elections. Guided by his philosophy of "political inclusion" president Ahmed Tejan Kabbah appointed the most broad-based government in the nation's history, drawing from all political parties in parliament of civil society. The President's first major objective was to end the rebel war

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which, in four years had already claimed hundreds of innocent lives, driven thousands of others into refugee status, and ruined the nation's economy.

Eventually, we can say that the war was engendered by a combination of interrelated social, political, economic, cultural, and external factors. To attribute it to any one single factor will obviate any objective analysis of its true nature and manifestations. What was needed was a sound management of natural resources to promote economic development and prevent state collapse. So, what were the measures stepped towards ending the war and when was peace officially attained?

Introduction

A peace process is a political process in which conflicts are resolved by peaceful means, a "mixture of politics, diplomacy, changing relationships, negotiation, mediation, and dialogue in both official and unofficial arenas".¹ Its establishment is not a single event, but rather a process characterized by progress and setbacks, successes and failures. We can say that the most realistic approach to understand the peace process is to acknowledge that, though negotiations are "the best-known stage in a process of peace," as Anderlini et al. wrote in *Journeys Through Conflict: Narratives and Lessons*,

[They] represent but one moment. Though essential, they nevertheless do not exhaust all the possibilities of actions or initiatives that such a process may require. For negotiations to take place, prenegotiations are necessary, either formal or informal. For a political settlement to succeed, implementation of the provisions of an accord in the postnegotiation period is vital. In other words, it could be said that peace processes have three broad phases: preparation, transformation and consolidation.²

During the Sierra Leonean conflict, peaceful elections and accords in which persons disabled by the war played a unique and intriguing role, were instigated. This chapter attempts to shed light on the major attempts at finding a negotiated settlement and provides a brief overview of the three peace accords, noting how the treatment of Demobilisation Disarmament and Reintegration programmes and accountability evolved through this series of agreements signed between 1996 and 2001 and the involvement of the external interventions and women in ending the war.

¹ Harold H Saunders, "Pre-negotiation and Circum-negotiation: Arenas of the Multilevel Peace Process", *Turbulent Peace*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Institute of Peace, 2001, 483.

² Anderlini, Sanam N., Ed Garcia, and Kumar Rupesinghe, "Nonconventional Diplomacy." *Journeys Through Conflict: Narratives and Lessons*. Eds. Hayward R. Alker, Ted Robert Gurr, and Kumar Rupesinghe. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2001, 200.

1. Attempts at Peace.

The conflict had witnessed three major attempts at finding a negotiated settlement. Each one of these, was based on the principles of power sharing, amnesty for the RUF and removal of foreign forces in the conflict. The first attempt, the Abidjan Peace Agreement of November 1996, the second one, the Conakry Peace Plan of October 1997 and the third attempt, the Lome Peace Agreement of July 1999.

1.1 Peace Accords

1.1.1 Abidjan Peace Accord in 1996

The Abidjan Peace Agreement of November 1996, was brokered by President Henri Konan Bedie of the Ivory Coast with the governments of Bio and Ahmad Tejan Kabbah. The peace commission was composed of eight appointees announced by President Kabbah equally divided between the government and RUF. They included the government side Sama Banya, Sheka Mansaray, Desmond Luke and Joe Jackson and on the RUF side Fayia Musa, Ibrahim Deen-Jalloh, Mustapha Alie Bangura and Philip Palmer,³ together with Berhanu Dinka - Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General for Sierra Leone, Adwoa Coleman (M/S) - Representative of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and Moses Anafu (DR) - Representative of the Commonwealth Organization.⁴

Discussions for peace began in May 1996, in the city of Yamoussoukro, Ivory Coast and on 30 November, 1996, Sankoh signed the

³ Yusuf Bangura, *UNRISD: Reflections on the 1996 Sierra Leone Peace Accord*, Report from United Nations Research Institute on Social Development, 16 February 1999, 2.

⁴ Abidjan Accord, From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/>

Abidjan Peace Accord in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. ⁵The accords sought out a broad range of goals:

- A National Commission for the Consolidation of Peace was to be established.
- A Neutral Monitoring Group, which would consist of 700 troops was proposed.
- All RUF combatants would disarm and amnesty would be granted to them.
- Efforts would be made to reintegrate RUF rebels into society.
- Foreign mercenary groups such as the government hired Executive Outcomes (E.O) would leave the country after the establishment of the monitoring group. ⁶

The monitoring group did not get off the ground and the RUF proposed it should consist of only 120 monitors, ⁷ so the agreement could not be reached. Sankoh promised that the RUF would adhere to the accord and both the government and RUF made a commitment to disarm, demobilize and resettle all combatants. As early as mid-December 1996, Kabbah and Sankoh began to disagree over how to implement the Abidjan Agreement. In January 1997, tensions mounted when the RUF spokesmen and supporters of the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace, Fayia Musa, Ibrahim Deen-Jalloh and Philip Palmer ⁸ were accused of attempting to overthrow Sankoh as leader of the RUF. The three were interred by RUF forces and Sankoh consolidated power in the RUF leading up to the military coup of May 1997, by Johnny Paul Koroma, leader of the newly formed Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, which joined with the RUF forces. Gberie, Lansana commented:

⁵ Tom Cooper & Court Chick, *Westen & Northern Africa Database-Sierra Leone 1990-2002*, Air Combat Information Group Journal, 5 August, 2004. <http://www.acig.org/>

⁶ Abidjan Accord, From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/>

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Fayia Musa, Ibrahim Deen-Jalloh, and Philip Palmer :The leaders of the coup attempt of 25th May, 1997, who inclined to cooperate with the government to implement the Abidjan Accords.

This was a coup by the rebel element in the army, and Koroma's own record as a rebel officer was beyond dispute. In a sense the AFRC ... marked the final stage in the collapse of the long-suffering Sierra Leonean state, a collapse accelerated by the ravages of the NPRC's army from which the rebel phenomenon emerged. It was now clear that the war itself was not about politics but organised theft, and the capture of the state was simply a formal indication of the absolute criminalisation of the Sierra Leonean state.⁹

This coup took place when soldiers captured Freetown and ousted the elected government of Tejan Kabbah. Instead, they constituted a new Armed Forces Ruling Council and installed Major Paul Koroma, a failed coup plotter released from prison, to head the AFRC. This marked another turning point in the renewal of hostilities in the country, and was certainly the death knell for any hope of peace stemming from the Abidjan Accords.

1.1.2 The Conakry Peace Plan in October 1997

As a response to the military coup of 1997, the ECOWAS received permission to send troops to enter the country and return the Kabbah government to power. ECOMOG initiated contact with the junta in order to convince them to hand over power to the ousted Kabbah government. These efforts led to the Conakry Peace Plan of 23 October, 1997.

The Conakry Plan had provisions for the DDR, the immediate cessation of hostilities and the handing over of power by the junta to Kabbah on 22 May, 1998. Under the plan, all those involved in the coup were granted a blanket amnesty, including Foday Sankoh who had been arrested in Nigeria for illegal possession of firearms. The Conakry Plan had no provisions for transitional processes or broader aims for peace and justice. It rather focused on reinstating the ousted government.

⁹ Gberie, *A Dirty War in West Africa*, 29.

Despite this, the Conakry Plan was not implemented. The AFRC refused to disarm and the pro-Kabbah government and CDF continued to attack the junta forces. As a result, ECOMOG decided to use force to reinstate the ousted Kabbah government. In February 1998, junta forces attacked an ECOMOG base just outside Freetown. Eventually, ECOMOG's counteroffensive dislodged the junta from Freetown and reinstated President Kabbah in March 1998. The AFRC and RUF retreated into the hinterland and the reinstated Kabbah government achieved a militarily strong position during the post-Conakry agreement period.

Kabbah's government tended to create a National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration and received support for disarmament from ECOWAS and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The World Bank also coordinated a Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF), established by numerous international actors, for the DDR process in Sierra Leone. The latter was intended to disarm more than 75,000 combatants from various warring factions (RSLAF, CDF, AFRC and the RUF), including children. A little more than 3,000 combatants were disarmed before the AFRC and RUF attacked Freetown in January 1999.¹⁰

1.1.3 Lome Peace Accord in 1999.

At the peak of the January 1999 attack on Freetown, the Kabbah government called for a cease-fire. However, the AFRC and RUF refused to halt their offensive and only a deployment of ECOMOG reinforcement troops from Nigeria pushed the rebels out of Freetown. At the same time,

¹⁰ United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), *The DDR Process in Sierra Leone: Lessons Learned* (Freetown: UNAMSIL DDR Coordination Section, 2003), quoted in Mohamed Gibril Sesay & Mohamed Suma, *Transitional Justice and DDR: The Case of Sierra Leone*, Research Unit International Center for Transitional Justice, June 2009, 10.

the new Nigerian government of President Olusegun Obasanjo was facing domestic pressure to withdraw its forces from Sierra Leone.¹¹ This meant the removal of the major obstacle to an AFRC-RUF military takeover of the country. Concern about the prospect of a withdrawal led to increased calls for a negotiated settlement to end the conflict. The international community, particularly Britain and the United States, exerted pressure to bring Kabbah government to the negotiating table.¹²

Sierra Leonean politicians at home and abroad were ready to negotiate with the rebels, including Omrie Golley and Pallo Bangura (AFRC/RUF junta's "foreign minister").¹³ Kabbah wanted peace and was willing to make sacrifices whereas Sankoh wanted power and decided to fight for it. However, the continuous search for sustainable peace heralded the birth of another peace agreement signed between the government and the RUF on 7 July, 1999, following a meeting in Lome, Togo, from 25 May, 1999 to 7 July, 1999, under the auspices of the then Chairman of ECOWAS, President Gnassingbe Eyadema.¹⁴

The Lome Peace Agreement contained thirty-seven articles and five annexes.¹⁵ It was largely a rehash of the Abidjan Peace Accord. The agreement reaffirmed in its preamble the imperative to end hostilities as a basis for transition to sustainable peace, democracy and development. Following this resolution, the parties agreed on the cessation of hostilities,

¹¹ Abdul Karim Koroma, *Crisis and Intervention in Sierra Leone 1997–2003*, (Freetown: Andromeda Publications, 2004), 212–13.

¹² Yusuf Bangura, "Strategic Policy Failure and State Fragmentation: Security, Peacekeeping, and Democratization in Sierra Leone." In Laremont, Ricardo Rene ed., *The Causes of War and the Consequences of Peacekeeping in Africa*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2002, 21.

¹³ Hirsch, Sierra Leone, 82.

¹⁴ Shola Omotola, J., "The Sierra Leone Lome Peace Accord", *Conflict Trends*, Vol. 10 (3), African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), (Pretoria, South Africa, 2007), 40.

¹⁵ Hirsch, Sierra Leone, 135.

and established a Ceasefire Monitoring Committee and a Joint Monitoring Commission to oversee its effective implementation.

Under political issues, the agreement granted complete pardon and amnesty to Sankoh and all rebel combatants (Article IX). Besides, it allowed the RUF to become a political party. It ensured that no official or judicial action would be taken against any member of the opposition and rebel groups in respect of anything done by them in pursuit of their objectives as a member of those organisations, since March 1991, up to the time of the signing of the present agreement.¹⁶

In order to achieve these goals, the agreement called for the UN observer Mission in Sierra Leone UNAMSIL and ECOMOG to form a neutral peacekeeping force to oblige all mercenaries to leave the country and create a new Sierra Leonean Army. Sankoh was offered the chairmanship of the Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development. It was charged with the responsibility of securing and monitoring the legitimate exploitation of Sierra Leone's gold, diamonds and other resources that were determined to be of strategic importance for national security and welfare as well as to cater for post-war rehabilitation and reconstruction.¹⁷ The agreement under post- military conflict and security issues dealt extensively with the new mandate for peacekeeping, encampment, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration. It also allowed that ex-combatants could be integrated into the Sierra Leonean Armed Forces, if they wished. Other important issues were provided in the agreement such as the release of prisoners and abductees, refugees and displaced persons, human rights and

¹⁶ Hirsch, Sierra Leone, 143.

¹⁷ Omotola, J, *The Sierra Leone Lome Peace Accord*, 41.

reconstruction, a special fund for war victims, child soldiers and education and health.¹⁸

The agreement represented an important step forward in the search for peace, democracy and development. However, its efficiency was hampered by limitations such as the complete granting of amnesty to ex-combatants who committed heinous crimes against humanity, contrary to international humanitarian law. Moreover, the inclusion of the RUF in the Government of National Unity, as well as its transformation into a political party, also served to undermine the strength of the agreement. Again, the pivotal position accorded to the RUF in the Commission for Mineral Resources, Reconstruction and Development (CMRRD) seemed to have strengthened the RUF's stronghold on the economic strengths of the country, against the government. Therefore, the Lomé Peace Agreement was perceived as rewarding violence.

By the end of 1999, the abuse of human rights increased, following the renewal of hostilities, particularly between the RUF and the UN peacekeeping forces UNAMSIL.¹⁹ For instance, in May 2000, the RUF killed seven UN peacekeepers and captured fifty others. The number of peacekeepers taken prisoner soon increased.²⁰ The RUF reportedly took 500 UNAMSIL peacekeepers hostage, contesting the legitimacy of UNAMSIL and then obstructed its operations.²¹ As documented by Human Rights Watch, after the Lomé Peace Agreement, terrible testimonies abounded from victims of rebel abuses in Sierra Leone.²² Responding to

¹⁸ Omotola, J, *The Sierra Leone Lomé Peace Accord*, 38.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Peter Pham, *Liberia and Sierra Leone: A Study of Comparative Human Rights Approaches by Civil Society Actors*, James Madison University, Virginia, Reed Press, 2004.40.

²¹ Ibid., 42

²² 'Civil War in Sierra Leone: Focus on Human Rights', available at <www.hrw.org/Campaigns/Sierra/>.

the tenuous relations between the RUF and UNAMSIL after the Lomé Peace Agreement, Ambassador Oluyemi Adeniyi, then Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Sierra Leone, noted:

From its induction in Sierra Leone, Sankoh had displayed an antagonism which proved implacable to the UN Mission. He denounced its deployment as illegal and inconsistent with the Lomé Agreement, done without his agreement and threatening to his party....²³

On the whole, we can say that the Lomé Agreement contained various mechanisms for rebuilding Sierra Leone, reconciling its political parties and disarming its various armed factions. As was the case with the November 1996 Abidjan Peace Agreement and the October 1997 Conakry Peace Agreement, the Lomé Agreement had also failed to work, leading to another wave of intervention in Sierra Leone. In this context, it is interesting to note that women were also active in their quest for peace. What was the role of women in the peace process? Why were they marginalized and what were the effects of their exclusion from the DDR process?

1.2 Women as Mediators and Peace Makers.

Generally, women play active and multiple roles in mediation and peace processes. Increasingly, their emerging roles at national and international levels are widening the scope of their participation in mediation teams. Although statistics on their impact were sparse, quite a number of women were globally recognized for their effectiveness in mediation and peace processes. In Sierra Leone, despite the patriarchal nature of this society that positioned women as second-class citizens and made them virtually voiceless, from the early days of the war, in both rural

²³ Reported to 3rd JIC meeting, 13th May, 2000, quoted in Bright, Dennis (2000) 'Implementing the Lomé Peace Agreement', 2.

and urban centers, they mobilized to protest the atrocities and call for peace. Their involvement provided a striking model of how women were able to work against the odds in the destructive civil war. They navigated their way to talk to rebels and warring factions during the conflict, attempting to convince the parties involved to end the rebel hostilities. They had proved their ability by risking their lives during the conflict to get the groundwork ready for negotiations to proceed. So, in what way did women contribute in the peace process?

The period between 1994 and 1995 witnessed a great momentum in women's agitation for peace in Sierra Leone. Their roles in peacemaking became more noticeable with the formation of women's civil society groups through which they mobilised and galvanised society. Both rural and urban women from all classes and ethnic groups mobilized to form active organizations, conduct marches and lead rallies for peace, democracy and justice.

In February 1995, through the untiring efforts of women like Zainab Bangura, Lavalie, and others, the Women's Movement for Peace organised a march for peace in the country's two biggest cities of Freetown and Bo. A month earlier, Mrs. Lavalie led a peaceful demonstration organised by the Eastern Region Women's Movement for Peace. Women's agitation for peace climaxed in March 1995 when the organization (Women's Movement for Peace), organised a press conference in which a letter sent to the RUF leader, Foday Sankoh, was read calling for the end to the senseless war. At the conference, the Public Relations Officer of the organisation, Mrs. Isha Dyfan asserted: "women have a specific role in conflict resolution and our concern here is to bring the war to a speedy end

with independence and neutrality being our main focus.” Supporting Mrs. Isha Dyfan, Fatmata Kamara added: “since the public is in full support of a peaceful resolution of the conflict, we are going to keep harping on this until the warring factions come to the negotiating table.”²⁴

These movements and others including, the Mano River Women’s Peace Network, Forum of African Women Educationalists (FAWE), Sierra Leone Women’s Forum and Network of Women Ministers and Parliamentarians, educated civilians on electoral proceedings, recruited and trained observers, and exerted pressure on the military to respect the results of elections. Their efforts were critical in shaping informal and formal peace processes and in bringing about an eventual end to the conflict.²⁵

Women’s quest for peace climaxed in the aftermath of the January 1996 coup d’état. Women’s groups, led by Women Organized for a Morally Enlightened Nation (WOMEN), pressed Bio’s military government, the National Provisional Ruling Council to hold democratic elections.²⁶ At Bintumani II,²⁷ women delegates reached a consensus that was made public:

We support that peace negotiations and elections must go hand in hand as previously agreed. We therefore demand that the elections...go ahead on 26 February 1996 as agreed at the National Consultative Conference and approved by the NPRC Government the political parties, civil society and the Interim National Electoral Commission.²⁸

²⁴ The National Consultative Conference (known as the Bintumani I) of 17 August 1995 has earlier scheduled the elections for 26 February 1996.

²⁵ Binta Mansaray, “Women Against Weapons: A Leading Role for Women in Disarmament.” *Bound to Cooperate: Conflict, Peace and People in Sierra Leone*. Eds. Anatole Ayissi and Robin-Edward Poulton. Geneva: United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, 2000. 139-162.

²⁶ Diop, B. *Peace Women, Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom*. 2005, 8-10.

²⁷ Bintumani II : One of the major five-star hotels in the capital city Freetown named after the peak of the Loma Mountains is the Bintumani Hotel situated on the coastline beach at the capital city Freetown looking out on Atlantic Ocean. It was at this imposing location that the Bintumani II historical consultative conference took place on 12th February 1996.

²⁸ Women leaders launched a sensitization campaign raising the awareness of the danger of such postponement. Through these activities, the plan was defeated.

It is interesting to note that women were active in their inquiry for peace. They used to form organisations such as Women in Action, Women in Need, Women Accord, etc. These organisations gave a high profile to women leaders of civil society and more women were chosen to head such civil society organisations. When the military sacked the democratically elected government of Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, women carried on their progress to challenge this illegality and confronted the AFRC. During this period, women organised mass rallies, and civil disobedience that virtually handicaped the country and made life hard for the junta. The deposed first lady, Mrs. Patricia Kabbah, appealed strongly to the Sierra Leone women not to give up their fighting for democracy. As a response to the coup d'état of 25 May, 1997, many women were exiled and coordinated opposition to the military regime. For instance, Zainab Bangura mobilised the civil society from neighbouring Guinea while her Campaign for Good Governance office in Conakry became the meeting place for all civil society groups to discuss their strategies and coordinate their tasks.

Through Radio Democracy (F.M 98.1) regular contacts were made with those activists at home. Women, through the Women's National Salvation Front, confronted the Junta and exposed to daylight their numerous atrocities exposed on Radio Democracy. Anti-Junta discussions were aired on Radio Democracy which, undoubtedly, kept the civil society united and increased the tempo of their opposition to military rule. All these efforts by women bore fruits as they encouraged ECOWAS to intervene. This intervention resulted in the return of democracy in March 1998. The outstanding role women played in bringing back peace to the country confirmed their success in conflict preventing as contained in the Kigali Declaration:

Society should recognize women's traditional peacemaking roles and their rights to equal involvement in all peace initiatives, including early warning mechanisms and swift responses at national, regional, and international levels.²⁹

It was an important step that could pave the way for women to be involved in peacemaking at a large scale.

Moreover, the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA),³⁰ as a founding member of the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone, played a leading role in the negotiations that led to the signing of the 1999 Lomé peace accord, officially ending the war.³¹ Two women were involved in the Lomé process: one was a member of the government delegation and the other a representative of the RUF. Although they were not chief negotiators, the final document reflected at least some gender-specific issues as a result of women's participation. For example, Article 28 calls for special attention to victimized women and girls in formulating and implementing rehabilitation, reconstruction, and development programs.³²

Despite the Lomé accord, Sankoh intended to continue the war. As a result, women assembled in the streets demanding "Not again! Enough is enough!"³³ Their slogan was a response to both the inadequate representation of women after the 1996 elections and Sankoh's tactics which the women understood to be a means for him to re-arm for war. The women on the streets called for an end to male domination and male-biased decisions within the parliament. They were particularly critical of the

²⁹ Badmus, I.A. *Explaining Women's Roles in the West African Tragic Triplet: Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Ivory Coast in Comparative Perspective*, Journal of Alternative Perspectives in the Social Sciences Vol. 1, No 3, 2009, 827. Available at: www.japss.org/upload/15.badmusarticle.pdf, Accessed on 13/09/2010..

³⁰ (YWCA), a Christian based Women's Association was established with the primary aim of promoting education and Christian values among young women. This group established a vocational institution for girls who dropped out of school in 1961.

³¹ Mansaray, "Women Against Weapons", 139-162.

³² Dyan Mazurana and Christopher Carlson, *From Combat to Community*, 16.

³³ Ibid.

decision to appoint Sankoh as a minister and repeatedly drew attention to the fact that he was consolidating for war.³⁴

In 2000, women's activism climaxed, playing a catalytic role in bringing an end to the conflict. A group of elderly women, representing churches and mosques, asked for a meeting with Sankoh who was living in Freetown. The women came as an inter faith folk requesting for peace at any cost. When they reached there, they were abused by Sankoh, as well as his guards and advisors who opposed them and did not like to listen and mistreated them. They opened fire, killing a number of the protestors. The assembled older women acted in a courageous manner. They stood outside the house of Sankoh, hitched up their skirts, bent over and bared themselves.

When hearing what had happened in the streets, people were shocked. But at the same time, they were stimulated and encouraged to face the violent treatment of both Sankoh and the RUF. The conduct of women mobilized people, men in particular, to defend the power and honor of these respected, senior, religious women. Furthermore, the families of the women, religious organizations, labor and trade unions, and adolescents and school children committed to join the peace protests. Consequently, 8 May, 2000, marked a turning point in the conflict and was set as the date for mass peace protests and demonstrations.³⁵

From the early days of the war, women in rural and urban centers mobilized to protest the atrocities and call for peace. The majority of the women who could have full access to the DDR Programme played a great

³⁴ Dyan Mazurana and Khristopher Carlson, *From Combat to Community*, 17.

³⁵ Ibid.

role in the conflict; most of them had contributed in some way to the war. Many had ambitions for education and independence; they felt tremendous responsibility for their offspring and aspired to offer them a better future.

Yet when the DDR programme was implemented, there was virtually no recognition of the multiple roles women played or the skills they had gained. Unfortunately, they were marginalised and their existence and the complexity of their situations were not taken into consideration in the DDR process and their needs were subsequently neglected. It was estimated that about 30% of the child soldiers in the Sierra Leone conflict were girls.³⁶ Between 1999 and 2002, only 8% of the total number of released and demobilised children were girls.³⁷ In this respect, Dr. Francis Kai-Kai, Executive Secretary of the NCDDR stated: “we had about eight percent of them...In the designed program we made every provision for the female excombatant.”³⁸ During the last demobilisation phase in November and December 2001, this number sank to 3%.³⁹

According to the UN Department of Peacekeeping, at the end of 2002, out of the 75,000 demobilized combatants, 4,751 were women. Additionally, the number of girls who entered the demobilization programme was far less than expected. Only 0.4 percent of the estimated 1,772 girls in the CDF entered the process; for the RUF, it was 6 percent of

³⁶ Legrand, J-C. Child Protection Senior Regional Advisor for UNICEF, West and Central Africa; “*Demobilisation and Reintegration of Child Soldiers: Why are we missing the girls?*”; paper presented to a conference on child protection, Bonn, Germany; March 2003 (hereinafter “Legrand, *Demobilisation and Reintegration of Child Soldiers*”).

³⁷ Sierra Leone: “IRIN interview on disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration”, Report from Irin , Published on 8 March 2003.
<http://reliefweb.int/report/sierra-leone/sierra-leone-irin-interview-disarmament-demobilisation-and-reintegration>

³⁸ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. “IRIN Interview on Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration.” *Integrated Regional Information Networks*. 28 March 2003.

³⁹ UNICEF, Child Protection Report, April 2002, quoted in Vol Three B Chapter Four Children and the Armed Conflict in Sierra Leone, 325.

the estimated 7,500; and for the AFRC, only 2 percent of the estimated 1,667 girls within their ranks entered the DDR process.⁴⁰

One part of the requirements to meet the benefits of the DDR programme was that they first had to hand in their weapons.⁴¹ This proved to be a particular problem for women and girls who did not always have a weapon in their possession. Although they had been in the fighting forces, many female ex-combatants found themselves without weapons. Many in the CDF were ordered to hand in their weapons prior to demobilization. Other girls indicated that their guns were taken away by their commanders to whom they were deliberately attached. In order to prevent the girls from accessing the DDR programme, commanders intentionally removed the guns from them and handed these guns to male fighters whom they preferred. Many commanders, deeply suspicious of the motives behind the NCDDR, declared their readiness to use physical violence against these girls if they disobeyed them and took part in the DDR process.⁴²

Table Nine : Girls in Fighting Forces and Formal DDR

Force	Estimated Number of Girls in Force	Number of Girls in DDR
RUF	7,500	436
AFRC	1,667	41
SLA	1,167	22
CDF	1,772	7
Total	12,056	506

Sources: Names withheld. Personal interviews. August 2002; September 2002; Sesay; Statistical Data from the National Committee on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration; Statistical Data from the United Nation’s Children’s Fund.

⁴⁰ Dyan Mazurana and Kristopher Carlson, *From Combat to Community*, 20.

⁴¹ Dr. Kellah and Mr. Lansana, former officials of the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (NCDDR), TRC interviews in Freetown, 8 January 2004.

⁴² Ibid.

Another factor that contributed into the exclusion of hundred of females from the DDR process, was the images of war created and circulated by the media. The media had created a situation where people tended to associate the expression ‘child soldiers’ with images referring to portrayals of boys and not girls carrying weapons. Consequently, many girls could not access DDR, yet they were also unable to join any services from the National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation, as they were not considered to be internally displaced persons.⁴³ The absence of girls in such significant numbers from the DDR process contravened UNSC Resolution 1314 of August 2000, which demanded that special attention should be given to women’s and girls’ needs in the wake of armed conflict, included security of their rights, protection and welfare.⁴⁴

Women’s exclusion had compromised their reintegration into society, their economic and social needs were not addressed. Socially, the girls would have stood a better chance of acceptance if they had acquired the necessary skills or education, as they would have been perceived as potential contributors to the development of their families and communities. Instead, they were often regarded as unwanted economic burdens on their families and society.

Indeed, despite their positive role in nation building, there are multiple challenges and constraints that inhibit the effectiveness of women in this endeavour. Since women’s role is fundamental in conflict transformation, there is an urgent need to encourage their participation in politics by

⁴³NICEF, *Lessons Learned on Child Protection in DDR*, 30.

⁴⁴ United Nations Security Council Resolution 1314 on Women and Girls in Armed Conflict, S/RES 1314/2000, August 2000.

incorporating their views in decision making. Throughout Sierra Leone's history, women had held leadership roles. As a reward, the authorities were supposed to provide them with fresh opportunities to acquire skills and education. Moreover, it was essential that the government should take note of the omission of girls from its programmes and act swiftly to make amends, and pave for them the way to attain positions of authority and subsequently, be engaged in the political sphere. Other public sector offices, as well as international and local NGOs, should channel their activities to support the government in addressing the needs of these forgotten women. Despite the widespread violence, they were fundamental to the reorganization of civil society, mass mobilization for peace and the eventual cease-fire. In addition to the peace accords and women involvement in the peace process, external military intervention in Sierra Leone were also needed.

1.3 External Intervention

The ineffectiveness of the Sierra Leonean government and its national army to defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity enabled the rebels to continue to ravage towns and villages, committing serious human right abuses. Consequently, the international community intervened in diverse ways to bring the conflict to an end. External intervention to contain the conflict was practised by three agents: the essentially Nigerian force of the Military Observer Group (ECOMOG) of the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOWAS), the United Nations Observer/Armed Mission in Sierra Leone UNOMSIL/UNAMSIL) and the British Army.

1.3.1 Economic Community of the West African States

The Economic Community of the West African States is one of the organizations in West Africa, established in 1975 in order to allow the free movements of people and goods within the region as well as to promote the economic development of West Africa. In December 1989, when the civil war started in Liberia, the ECOWAS already had a military cooperation instrument; a “Non Aggression Protocol” that prohibited the use of military forces by one state against another one within the community.⁴⁵ That protocol had a Special Committee for the settlement of conflicts in West Africa, it was created in May 1990 under the name the ECOWAS Mediation Standing Committee (EMSC). As a result of the conflict in Liberia that affected the whole West African countries with massive movements of refugees, criminality and other scourges, the ECOWAS decided to send an interposition force to Liberia. This decision led to the creation of a military branch, the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group called ECOMOG. The objective of ECOMOG was to safeguard peace and security in West Africa and intervene when conflicts arose. In addition, it would help to conduct free elections as well as fostering respect of democratic rules in those countries.

For instance, ECOMOG was deployed in Liberia, Sierra-Leone and Guinea-Bissau; three West African countries in which there were political problems and civil wars. The main role of ECOMOG was to achieve and monitor the cease-fire in West Africa. During its different deployments, it faced several problems, one of them was the diversity of cultures linked to colonization. Three different languages were spoken in the ECOWAS

⁴⁵ Adjovi, Roland, *Questionnaires about ECOMOG : Liberia, Sierra-Leone and Guinee-Bissau*. <From http://www.Lexana.org/f/org/lettre2_ra.htm>.

countries, a fact that made unity in the region difficult. ECOMOG also had financial problems and despite the Nigerian financial efforts, the ECOWAS countries were not able to sustain and equip men. Men sometimes did not have their salaries or per diem on the field and that usually led to motivation and discipline problems within the contingents.

Furthermore, Nigeria had the highest strength of troops in the institution; that constituted a difficulty for ECOMOG because that situation led to the superiority of Nigeria anytime the ECOMOG officials had to make a decision. In addition to these problems, Liberian President Taylor's supporters did not agree with the idea to create ECOMOG and affirmed that ECOWAS was an economic rather than a security organization, with no legal right to create a military group such as ECOMOG. The 1978 ECOWAS Protocol on Non-Aggression and the Organization of African Unity and UN charters, all prohibited interference in the domestic affairs of member state's internal conflicts.⁴⁶

Despite these difficulties and criticism, ECOMOG successfully executed its challenging missions. Its different interventions in West Africa stopped the fighting, although only temporarily, allowed for peaceful negotiations and led to the legitimacy of governments. In August 1990, ECOMOG actually conducted its first operations in Sierra Leone. The government granted permission to ECOWAS to establish the base of ECOMOG in the country for the intervention in the Liberian civil war, which was brought in 1989 by Charles Taylor and his National Patriotic Front of Liberia.

⁴⁶ Taw, Jennifer Morrison, *U.S. support for regional complex contingency operations: Lesson from ECOMOG, Lesson from ECOMOG, Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, Vol.22, 1999,81.*

In May 1992, the government of Sierra Leone, under separate bilateral agreements with Nigeria and Guinea, had troops from these countries deployed in the capital Freetown, and some parts in the North and South. In the face of mounting pressure, from the advancing rebels, Sierra Leone and Nigeria renewed their agreement. Nigeria was to provide presidential protection, strategic support and training for the Sierra Leonean Army.

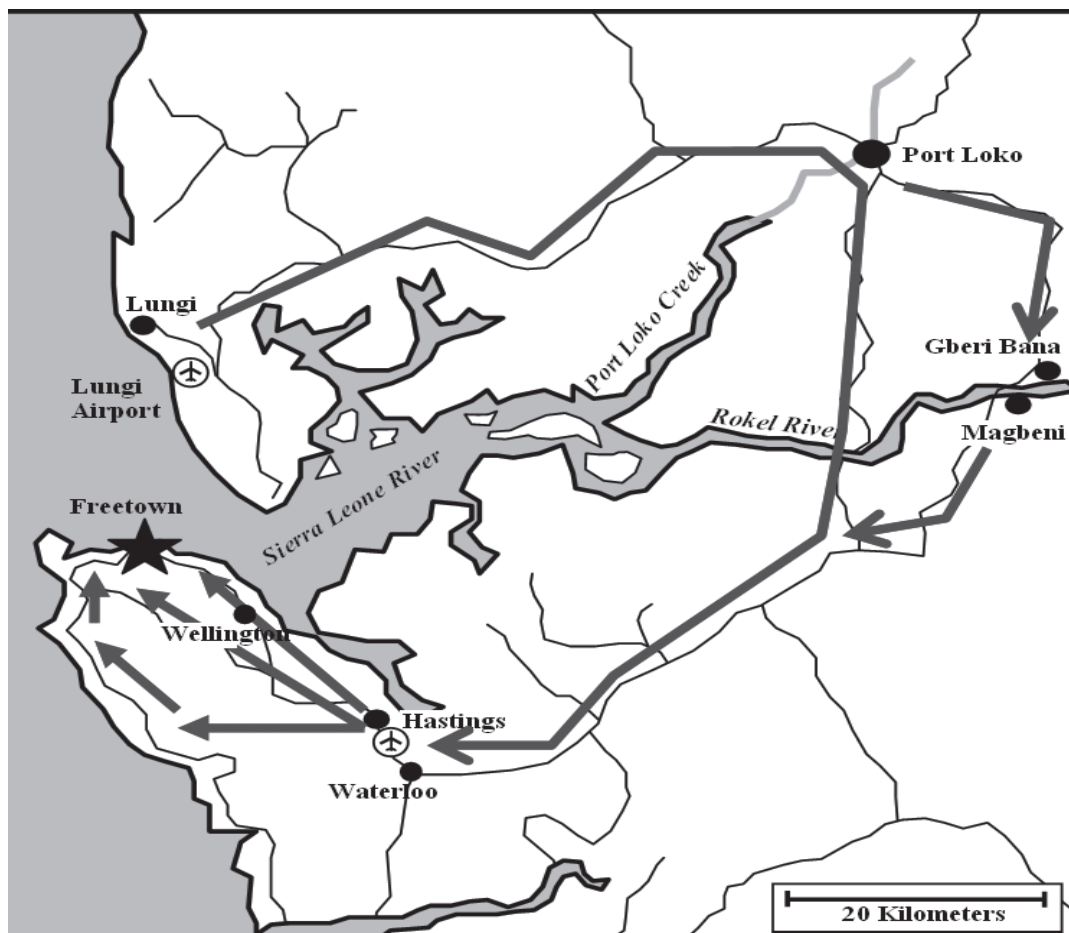
ECOMOG attempted to seal the border with Liberia in order to cut off one of Charles Taylor's Liberian rebels' source of supplies and men. It used the Lungi airport north of Freetown as its supply base and ECOMOG troops were stationed at key places in the country to guard their supply lines to the south. They soon became involved in assisting the Sierra Leonean government in its battle against RUF forces being supported from Liberia. Their situation in Sierra Leone became tenuous in May 1997 when the Kabbah government, which was supported by Nigeria, was overthrown. By November 1997, it became clear that armed intervention was the only way to remove the AFRC junta and to restore the elected government of Sierra Leone.

ECOMOG's initial intervention in 1998 was encountered by strong resistance from the AFRC and RUF on all its three routes. ECOMOG leaders spent ten days attacking AFRC positions before getting in place to assault the city. On 12 February, 1998, ECOMOG units broke into Freetown and achieved a stunning success.⁴⁷ The Government of President Kabbah was reinstated in a ceremony at the State House on 10 March, 1998, with great fanfare.

⁴⁷ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone, *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone*, Chapter 3, sections 850-863, <http://trcsierraleone.org/drwebsite/publish/v3a-c1.shtml> (accessed 3 August 2007).

Once restored to the presidency by ECOMOG units, President Kabbah immediately took action to responsabilize the AFRC soldiers for the rebellion. He initiated vetting procedures in the military so as to exclude former members of the RUF, AFRC and other armed groups who were involved in the coup. Many of the soldiers who perpetrated the coup were confined to Pa Demba Road Prison, from where many of them had been earlier released. Kabbah also demobilized the entire army and held court-martial for the coup leaders. Thus, twenty-four AFRC military officers were executed, among them RUF leader and AFRC co-leader Foday Sankoh.⁴⁸

Map Four : ECOMOG Operations near Freetown, 1998.



Source : Larry J Woods and Colonel Timothy R. Reese, *Military Interventions in Sierra Leone*, 43.

⁴⁸ Woods, Reese, *Military Intervention in Sierra Leone*, 45.

After the Conakry Agreement and the death sentence imposed on Sankoh in absentia infuriated the AFRC/RUF members and intensified their drive for revenge.⁴⁹ As a response, the AFRC/RUF regrouped and remobilized their forces and trained new recruits. They sent hundreds of their combatants to Gbatata and Liberia for training led by mercenaries from Ukraine, Burkina, Nigeria, Libya and South Africa. In return to their previous practices, they captured civilians and children, forcing them to participate in the revolutionary movement. As Amnesty International reported:

Since their removal from power, the AFRC and RUF have wreaked a campaign of terror against unarmed civilians and human rights abuses have reached unprecedented levels. Several thousand civilians have been brutally killed or mutilated. Hundreds of others have been abducted from their villages and forced to join the revolutionary movement.⁵⁰

The RUF deputy commander Sam Bockarie (alias Mosquito) planned the attack to retake Freetown and to free Sankoh from prison in one stroke. Bockarie called the attack 'Operation No Living Thing'. For two weeks the AFRC/RUF mobs rampaged throughout the city in a cruel manner. Sadly, ECOMOG units proved to be equally ruthless, capturing and killing anyone they thought was connected with the RUF. Some ECOMOG soldiers also took part in the atrocities against civilians caught up in the chaos. In January 1999, the tiny UNOMSIL force departed the country in haste

⁴⁹ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone, *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone*, Chapter 3, section 986.

⁵⁰ Amnesty International, "Sierra Leone: 1998–A Year of Atrocities Against Civilians," November 1998, <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/engAFR510221998> (accessed 3 August 2007).

because it became apparent that there was no reconciliation to observe and that their lives were in danger.⁵¹

President Kabbah was evacuated to the Lungi airport by the ECOMOG to ensure his safety. While at Lungi, Kabbah called the Nigerian leader, General Abdulsalami Abubakar, to request additional assistance. General Abubakar immediately deployed several additional battalions of soldiers and replaced the ineffectual ECOMOG commander, General Shelpidi, with General Khobe. The latter was indeed, familiar with the field and urban operations. Within 10 days of their arrival the new ECOMOG battalions were on the offensive against the AFRC/RUF attackers. As the AFRC/RUF forces were gradually forced out of Freetown they turned the battle into an orgy of looting, destruction, abduction, rapes and killings.⁵²

After three weeks of fighting, ECOMOG succeeded to restore order in Freetown. When the latter was cleared of the AFRC/RUF rebels, it halted its operations. They did not have a mandate to extend their operations beyond restoration of the Kabbah government in Freetown. ECOMOG forces were to remain in place until the UN force deployed to the country, though some of its troops became part of the new United Nations Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone. The UN Security Council passed Resolution 1270 on 22 October, 1999 authorizing a new UN force to be deployed to Sierra Leone by January 2000. Nigerian and ECOMOG forces were withdrawn from Sierra Leone in March and April 2000. They formally turned over responsibility to the new UN force on 4 May, 2000.

⁵¹ Nuarmah and Zartman, "Intervention in Sierra Leone," 133-150. The UNOMSIL mission was officially ended by the UN in October 1999 when it was replaced by the new UNAMSIL force, quoted in Woods, Reese, *Military Intervention in Sierra Leone*, 45.

⁵² Nuarmah and Zartman, "Intervention in Sierra Leone," 133-150, quoted in Woods, Reese, *Military Intervention in Sierra Leone*, 47.

The intervention by ECOMOG was an attempt by regional African nations to solve their own internal problems. It was seen as an important milestone on the maturation of African states as controlling their own destiny and a necessary institution to help bring about peace in West Africa. Furthermore, the intervention of the ECOMOG forces in Sierra Leone between 1997 and 1999 brought a fragile peace to the country. Though plagued by many military weaknesses of its own, even though it was said to be under-equipped and under-funded, ECOMOG was sufficiently powerful enough to restore the Kabbah government to power and enable it to negotiate with the RUF rebels. But ECOMOG's limited mandate and military weaknesses left the RUF in control of much of the eastern and southern parts of Sierra Leone. Therefore, Kabbah was forced to make considerable concessions to the RUF in the Lome Agreement of July 1999 in order to end the fighting.

Indeed, ECOMOG could do better if ECOWAS countries leaders fought for unity in the region, for a better financial and logistical support to the institution. A greater cooperation between the supporting countries and other international organizations such as UN and the OAU could also assist in this task. Considering all these facts, we can conclude that ECOMOG was a necessary peacekeeping institution in West Africa. Besides, the United Nations also took part in resolving the Sierra Leonean conflict.

1.3.2 UN Intervention

Since 1998, the United Nations had been involved in the disarmament and establishment of peace in Sierra Leone. In June 1996, the UN Security Council established the UN Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL)

for an initial period of six months. The unarmed (UNOMSIL) monitored and advised to disarm combatants and restructure the nation's security forces. On 22 October, 1999, the United Nations passed Resolution 1270, which authorized the creation of a new UN force known as the United Nations Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), a peacekeeping and monitoring force. The Security Council selected General Vijay Jetley of India to serve as the commander of UNAMSIL. UN Security Council ordered UNAMSIL to assist with the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) process conducted in accordance with the terms of the Lome Agreement. As stated by the United States Department:

UNAMSIL's mandate is to assist the government of Sierra Leone to extend state authority, restore law and order and progressively stabilize the country, and to assist in the promotion of the political process leading to a renewed disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. The mission's current tasks include providing security at key installations in Freetown and Southern Sierra Leone; facilitating the free flow of people; goods, and humanitarian assistance along specified roads; safeguarding and disposing of arms collected from excombatants; and assisting Sierra Leone's law enforcement authorities in the maintenance of Law and order.⁵³

UNAMSIL suffered from an inauspicious beginning as it deployed to Sierra Leone. Soldiers from the various member states arrived in Freetown in waves over several months beginning in January 2000.⁵⁴ Most of the national contingents did not bring their own logistical support and quickly found that there was insufficient infrastructure and logistics to accommodate them, particularly when they moved out of Freetown into the countryside.

⁵³ US State Department, 2001.

⁵⁴ Mirna Galic, "Into the Breach: An Analysis of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone," *Stanford Journal of International Relations*, http://www.stanford.edu/group/sjir/3.1.04_galic.html (accessed 18 August 2007).

The Lome Agreement guaranteed United Nations officials and UNAMSIL unhindered and safe access to all areas in the country. However, as peacekeepers deployed to areas outside of Freetown, they often encountered tense and volatile security situations. In spite of the cease-fire agreement, RUF fighters operated freely throughout the country. The peacekeepers were denied freedom of movement and were subjected to ambushes and illegal roadblocks throughout Sierra Leone by armed fighters, mostly RUF factions.⁵⁵

In response, the UN increased the size of UNAMSIL from 6,000 to 11,000 troops under Resolution 1289 which was passed on 7 February, 2000. More than half of the 11,000 soldiers that were supposed to comprise UNAMSIL were to come from Nigeria while the rest were supposed to come from India, Jordan, Guinea, Kenya, and Zambia. This was supposed to include an additional six infantry battalions and more UN observers to offset the withdrawal of Nigerian ECOMOG units in the spring.⁵⁶ With the deteriorating security situation, UNAMSIL was granted much wider freedom to use military force in the performance of its mission.

Despite this key change in mandate, UNAMSIL failed to respond to repeated provocations throughout Sierra Leone. Rebel forces grew bolder and even blocked the deployment of Indian and Ghanaian elements from deploying to the eastern Bendu half of the country.⁵⁷ A report from the

⁵⁵ United Nations Security Council, *Third report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations mission in Sierra Leone, S/2000/186*, 7 March 2000, paragraph 10,

<http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/reports/2000/sgrep00.htm> (accessed 10 August 2007).

⁵⁶ United Nations Security Council Resolution 1289 (2000), 7 February 2000, United Nations Security Council, <http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/res/2000/sc2000.htm> (accessed 18 August 2007).

⁵⁷ General David Richards, "Sierra Leone—'Pregnant with Lessons?'" in *Royal United Services Institute Whitehall Paper 63—Global Challenges and Africa: Bridging Divides, Dealing with Perceptions, Rebuilding Societies* (August 2004), 9-21.

office of Secretary-General of the United Nations described one of many such incidents:

On 22 April, a group of some 20 RUF fighters prevented UNAMSIL military observers from entering the premises of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration reception center of Magburaka (near Makeni). They also alleged that UNAMSIL soldiers, who were providing security at that location, had taken some ammunition belonging to the RUF. A small-scale scuffle ensued, after which UNAMSIL troops at the site decided to withdraw temporarily to avoid escalation. The Makeni/Magburaka area remained very tense and subsequently became the scene of the first attacks by RUF on UNAMSIL troops.⁵⁸

Nigeria completed the withdrawal of its troops from Sierra Leone in late April, leaving the country without its largest and most powerful military contingent.⁵⁹

On 4 May, 2000, the very day that ECOMOG transferred its responsibilities to UNAMSIL, the RUF attacked and “detained” a contingent of Kenyan UNAMSIL soldiers in the Kono diamond mining region near the town of Makeni, about 70 kilometers east of Freetown. Some 200 Zambian UNAMSIL soldiers who had been sent to relieve the captive Kenyans were also taken hostage along with their armored personnel carriers. The Zambians then surrendered to the RUF on 6 May, bringing the total number of hostages held by the RUF to over 500.⁶⁰ Soon, RUF forces, using the armored personnel carriers and other weapons seized from the UN forces, began to advance towards Freetown. On 4 May, 2000, the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, requested the United Kingdom and other countries to intervene and save the UNAMSIL mission and the government of Sierra Leone from collapse.

⁵⁸ United Nations Security Council, *Fourth Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, S/2000/455*, 19 May 2000, paragraph 17, <http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/reports/2000/sgrep00.htm> (accessed 10 August 2007).

⁵⁹ William J. Lahneman, *Military Intervention: Cases in Context for the Twenty-First Century*, (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2004), 143-145.

⁶⁰ Wood, *Military Intervention in Sierra Leone*, 60.

1.3.4 Great Britain Intervention

The British government, at the request of the UN and President Kabbah, immediately sent an Operational Liaison and Reconnaissance Team (OLRT) led by Brigadier General David Richards to Freetown on 5 May, 2000, to assess the situation. After assessing the situation Brigadier Richards decided to greatly expand his mission to include saving the UNAMSIL mission from collapse. He quickly dispatched British officers to provide military advice and resolve to UNAMSIL units and Sierra Leone Army units at key points in and around the city, including the key town of Waterloo, twenty kilometers south of Freetown on the horseshoe road. He also discouraged the armed factions from joining the fighting by demonstrating the resolve of the UK and UNAMSIL to remain in control.⁶¹ The British naval force was also anchored close to the Freetown harbor while British aircraft conducted demonstrations overhead, including dropping leaflets discouraging anyone from interfering with British forces.⁶²

On 8 May, some ten thousand Freetown residents and government soldiers marched on the residence of RUF leader Sankoh with authorization of the government. They carried placards with inscriptions directed at Sankoh, such as “No Violence Sankoh,” “Enough is Enough,” and “Sankoh: Our People are dying.”⁶³ Sankoh was informed about the march in advance and had over 150 members of the RUF at his home for

⁶¹ David Richards, “Expeditionary Operations: Sierra Leone—Lessons For the Future.”, *World Defence Systems* 3/2 (2001), 9-21.

⁶² Andrew Dorman, “The British Experience of Low Intensity Conflict in Sierra Leone,” *Defense and Security Analysis Journal*, Volume 23, Number 2 (June 2007), 185-200, <http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/routledg/cdan/2007/00000023/00000002> (accessed 8 August 2007).

⁶³ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone, *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone*, Chapter 3, para 1336, 1337, <http://trcsierraleone.org/drwebsite/publish/v3a-c1.shtml>, (accessed 10 June 2007).

protection. UNAMSIL had also placed 30 armed soldiers around the house. UNAMSIL personnel fired a warning shot in the air in a misguided attempt to disperse the mob. RUF soldiers in Sankoh's resident opened fire on the crowd and a battle ensued as armed civilians and soldiers in the crowd returned fire. UNAMSIL soldiers retreated from the area. Many RUF members were killed by the mob and the house was looted and ransacked. By the end of the day, over 40 civilians had been killed and several people wounded. During the panic, Sankoh escaped, dressed as a woman, into the forest behind his house.⁶⁴

With Lungi International Airport security and the NEO completion, UNAMSIL and SLA units, with British advice and advisors, began to turn the tide against RUF forces. SLA and UNAMSIL units were assisted with military planning and technical advice and by 15 May, 2000, they had driven RUF forces several miles back from the outskirts of Freetown. Two days later, Foday Sankoh and his bodyguard came out of hiding and into public view. As he was walking around near his house, Sankoh was recognized by local residents who alerted a militia commander known as Black Scorpion.⁶⁵ Black Scorpion laid an impromptu ambush, killing Sankoh's bodyguards and wounding Sankoh. Prior to being turned over to British soldiers, he was stripped and forced to walk through the streets naked. The humiliated warlord was charged with the murder of the demonstrators in a Freetown municipal court and placed in prison awaiting trial.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone, *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone*, , Chapter 3, para 1336, 1337.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, para 1466.

⁶⁶ Gberie, *A Dirty War in West Africa*: 167.

By the end of May 2000, with the help of a Jordanian Special Forces battalion, UNAMSIL, SLA and British forces drove the RUF forces far away from Freetown and the Lungi airport. On 15 June, Operation Palliser and British forces left Sierra Leone. However, a training contingent of about 200 British soldiers stationed at Camp Waterloo, about 20-km southeast of Freetown were responsible for training SLA soldiers in infantry skills.⁶⁷

When General Issa Sesay took over control of the RUF Party and RUF military forces, he started to work with UNAMSIL and multiplied his efforts for a peace settlement between the RUF and the government. Despite being Sankoh's deputy, the change in leadership and policy caused a split in the RUF and many of its members deserted its ranks.⁶⁸ But, fighting continued between UNAMSIL and rebel groups in outlying areas around Freetown.

As a direct result of the intervention, the RUF was forced to release the 500 UN hostages.⁶⁹ The British impact was felt again, in late August 2000 when the West Side Boys⁷⁰ abducted eleven British soldiers and a Sierra Leonean as leverage for the release of their leader. The British troops intervened to secure their release. British assistance was also responsible for the successful deployment of the Jordanian contingent in Sierra Leone.

⁶⁷ Prins, Gwyn "Strategic Raiding." unpublished manuscript, Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, KS, in Wood, L.J. and Reese T.R., *Military Interventions in Sierra Leone: Lessons from a Failed State*. The Long war Series Occasional Paper 28, Combat Studies Institute Press US Army. Combined Arms Center, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 2008,45.

⁶⁸ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone, *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone*, para 1502

⁶⁹ Kwaku Nuamah and I William Zartman, National Intelligence Council Project, Case Study: *Intervention in Sierra Leone*, 15.

⁷⁰ The Westside Boys : a perpetrator grouping that included serving Sierra Leonean Army officers, including AFRC Ministers such as Santigie Kanu, members of the Sierra Leonean Border Guards and civilians had their headquarters at Gberegama in Port Loko District. They emerged in the aftermath of the ECOMOG putsch of rebels from Freetown after the 6 January 1999 invasion of the city and its environs. They have been described as a gang of bandits rather than credited as a politically motivated fighting force.

Without their helicopters and operational cover, the Jordanian troops could have become stranded or restricted to non-contested terrain while the RUF continued to devastate the diamond-rich northwest. Furthermore, British capacity-building effort yielded better results for UNAMSIL, which became more professional and superbly handled the rescue of 233 peacekeepers (mainly from India)⁷¹ held hostage by RUF in Kailahun soon after the British intervention. In fact, the Military intervention was not enough to end a conflict whose basic cause was state collapse, but was an important element in the process of bringing the conflict under control and a necessary ingredient in engaging the road to conflict's end.

1.3.5 Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration Process in Sierra Leone.

The transition from conflict to peace brought many challenges for society, especially for its most vulnerable members. The immediate concern for a successful transition to peace was to disarm combatants, compensate them financially and reintegrate them back into their communities. This was achieved through Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration process.

The signing of the Lome Peace Accord of July 1999 registered a very important stage in the peacebuilding efforts of Sierra Leone. One of its foundations was the creation of a Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration program for ex-combatants, which was carried out by the United Nations Mission to Sierra Leone.⁷²

⁷¹ Kwaku Nuamah and I William Zartman, National Intelligence Council Project ,16.

⁷² Article 16 states, Upon the sign of the present Agreement, the Government of Sierra Leone shall immediately request the international Community to assist with the provision of the necessary financial and technical resources needed for the adaption and extension of the existing Encampment, Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Program in Sierra Leone.

DDR was initiated by the Sierra Leonean government People's Party in the aftermath of the 1996 Abidjan accords. A National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (NCRRR) was established with a responsible department for disarming the varying factions⁷³ that participated in the Sierra Leonean conflict following the ousting of the President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah in May 1997. DDR was considered by International policymakers as one of the most important steps in any peace process. The World Bank defined a successful DDR programme as “the key to an effective transition from war to peace.”⁷⁴

Nicole Ball of the University of Maryland broke down reintegration into two phases: initial reinsertion and long-term reintegration.⁷⁵ Reinsertion referred to the short-term arrival period of an ex-combatant into his/her former home or into a new community. Reintegration took a long-term approach to assist the community and the ex-combatant in the difficult transition to civilian life.⁷⁶

The plan of the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration programme was one of the foundations of the Lome Peace Accord. It was mapped out in April 1998 and implemented by the government of Sierra Leone with the support of the World Bank, the United Nations, donor governments and other international non-governmental organizations and

⁷³ Mark, Malan, et al. “Sierra Leone : Building the Road to Recovery.” Monograph 80, Pretoria, South Africa : Institute for strategic Studies, 2003, .25.

⁷⁴ Dyan Mazurana and Khristopher Carlson, *From Combat to Community*,8.

⁷⁵ Ball, Nicole. “Demobilization and Reintegrating Soldiers: Lessons from Africa.” *Rebuilding War-Torn Societies:Critical Areas for International Assistance*. Ed. Krishna Kumar. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers,Inc.,1997, quoted in Dyan Mazurana and Khristopher Carlson, *From Combat to Community*,8.

⁷⁶ Ball, Nicole. “Demobilization and Reintegrating Soldiers: quoted in Dyan Mazurana and Khristopher Carlson, *From Combat to Community*,8.

institutions. The Multi Donor Trust Fund was set up to fund the Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration process and had until then received over U.S \$31.5 million dollars⁷⁷ although the total estimated cost for the programme was actually U.S. \$75 million dollars.⁷⁸ Its goals were threefold:⁷⁹

- 1) Collect, register and destroy all conventional weapons and munitions turned in by combatants.
- 2) Demobilize the estimated 45,000 combatants from the SLA, RUF, AFRC, and the CDF, 12 percent of whom were thought to be women;
- 3) Support ex-combatants through demobilization to prepare them for reintegration.⁸⁰

Although each of the three elements of DDR had different goals and required independent planning,⁸¹ the phases overlapped and depended upon each other. The first phase was from August 1998 to December 1998. It was conducted by the NCDDR, chaired by President Kabbah and ECOMOG, which was mandated to assist in disarmament, weapons collection and demobilization. During this phase, a total of 45,000 combatants were targeted.⁸² Out of this number, only a meager number of 3,200 combatants were disarmed and this constituted mostly ex-SLA/AFRC fighters who willingly surrendered to the ECOMOG.⁸³ Its programme was derailed due to the rebels' attack on the capital of Freetown on 6 June 1999. The latter deteriorated the security situation of the country.

⁷⁷Malan, et al., *Sierra Leone : Building the Road to Recovery*, 25.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Dyan Mazurana and Khristopher Carlson, *From Combat to Community*, 18.

⁸⁰ Mohamed Gibril Sesay & Mohamed Suma, *Transitional Justice and DDR: The Case of Sierra Leone*, Research Unit International Center for Transitional Justice, June 2009, 15.

⁸¹ Kamara, *Conflict Resolution and Peace Building*, 58.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ **Malan, et al., *Sierra Leone : Building the Road to Recovery*, 25.**

The programme was resurrected to a second phase as a result of the implementation of the Lome Peace Agreement. Phase II was initiated in October 1999, running until April 2000.⁸⁴ DDR was conducted by NCDDR and the United Nations Observer Mission to Sierra Leone which was mandated to assist in disarmament and monitoring of demobilization. In October 1999, UNOMSIL was replaced by a significantly larger peacekeeping mission to support the DDR effort. Phase III, which ran from May 2001 to January 2002, was conducted by NCDDR and the UNAMSIL.⁸⁵

After disarmament and demobilisation, the reintegration process started in February 2000. Sierra Leonean children were divided into two groups. First, those below the age of 15 were sent to interim care centres in the care of UNICEF and their Child Protection Agency partners. These children were provided with services such as family tracing, psychosocial counselling and basic health care. Second, those between the ages of 15 and 17 were put in “group homes” or allowed independent living. They were provided skill training under the NCDDR’s Training and Employment Programme, which could last for up to nine months. During their training, they were provided with a basic monthly allowance of Le 15,000.00 and were also given training materials.⁸⁶ At the end of their training, start-up kits were distributed to them. Some children were also put to work in agriculture and community-based initiatives.

Both the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone and the NCDDR spearheaded the DDR program, which ran from October 1998 to January

⁸⁴ Malan, et al., *Sierra Leone : Building the Road to Recovery*, 25.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ The National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (NCDDR); submission to the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 4 August 2003, 13.

2002. The programme finally demobilized a total number of 72,490 combatants, 97 per cent of them had been reunified with their families and communities.⁸⁷ A total of 42,300 weapons and 1.2 millions rounds of ammunition were also collected through the process.⁸⁸

Definitely, against this background, the DDR program could be regarded as a success, since it actually realized its objective of disarming the various warring factions including members of the Armed Forces of Sierra Leone, the RUF and the Civil Defense Forces, thereby promoting peace and security in the country. Nevertheless, there were problems with the programme in certain areas. The most glaring of these problems was the absence of girls in significant numbers from the DDR process.

2. The End of the Civil War and the Official Attainment of Peace.

After the dramatic collapse of the Lome agreement, and the completion of the disarmament process, the Sierra Leonean conflict was officially declared over on 17 January, 2002. Actually, the resolution of the Sierra Leonean conflict resulted from some factors that they combined to gain fruitful results.

2.1 The Last Steps towards Disarmament and Peace.

Despite that most British troops had already left Sierra Leone in June 2000, the United Kingdom subsequently remained militarily active in Sierra Leone. During the same period, the UN Secretary-General sent an assessment team to Sierra Leone in order to review UNAMSIL's operations. The team

⁸⁷ Thusi, Thokozani. "Learning from Sierra Leone: A Step Towards Peace Disarmament in Africa", *Monograph*, no. 98 (February), 2004, 49.

⁸⁸ Gberie, Lansana., "Sierra Leone: Remembering a Difficult Disarmament Process", *Pambazuka News*, no.12.2003.

highlighted in particular the lack of cohesion, the absence of a commonly shared understanding of the mandate, problems in command and control, the insufficient preparedness of some of the contingents, problems related to internal communication and coordination, lack of integrated planning and logistical support, as well as training and equipment shortfalls.

In addition to the difficulties related to Sankoh's arrest, the RUF encountered diplomatic and economic pressures. In July 2000, the UN Security Council prohibited 'the direct or indirect import of all rough diamonds from Sierra Leone' and called for the establishment of a certificate-of origin regime which would enable the Sierra Leonean government to be exempted from the sanctions while retaining control over diamond exports. These reinforcements were followed by two military operations. The first was launched against the RUF's stronghold in Kailahun in order to extract UN staff trapped there. However, the second was launched against the 'West Side Boys', who were threatening to attack UNAMSIL. On those occasions, the UN militarily and successfully opposed the rebels, contributing in the increase of the UN credibility and thus changing the general climate.

Furthermore, in August, 2000 the UN Security Council decided to authorize UNAMSIL to 'deter and, where necessary, decisively counter the threat of RUF attack by responding robustly to any hostile actions or threat of imminent and direct use of force'. Accordingly, in November 2000, the combination of these various developments bore some fruits. The representatives of the Kabbah government, armed groups and international community entered into a final negotiation in Abuja, Nigeria. As a result of these negotiations, two "Abuja protocols" were added to the Lome Peace Agreement.

2.2 The First Abuja Ceasefire

The first Abuja Ceasefire Agreement was signed in Abuja on 10 November, 2000.⁸⁹ The following goals were included in the accord:

- A national commission for the consolidation of peace was to be established.
- A neutral monitoring group consisting of 700 troops was proposed.
- All RUF combatants would disarm, and amnesty would be granted.
- Efforts would be made to reintegrate RUF rebels into society.
- Foreign mercenary groups such as the government hired Executive Outcomes would leave the country after the establishment of the monitoring group.⁹⁰

However, Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration did not resume and fighting continued. In late 2000, Guinean forces entered Sierra Leone to attack RUF bases from which attacks had been launched against Liberian dissidents in Guinea. Then, the Economic Community of West African States facilitated the second Abuja agreement.

2.3 The Path to Abuja II

Resolution 1343 marked a turning point in the political management of the Sierra Leonean conflict. Within eight months, the links between diamonds and conflict on the one hand and Sierra Leone and Liberia on the other had been recognized. Accordingly, sanctions had been taken in order to address both the causes of the conflict and the detrimental role of the war perpetuating

⁸⁹ Mustapha Marda and Joseph J. Bangura, *Sierra Leone beyond the Lomé Peace Accord*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2010,9.

⁹⁰ Lartey E. T. Amanor, *A Historical Overview Of Ecowas Intervention In Sub-Regional Conflicts: The Case Of Sierra Leone*, University of Education, Winneba, 2015,13.

mechanisms.⁹¹ In many regards, these events impacted on the situation in Sierra Leone and more specifically on the relationship between Taylor and the RUF. First, the support that the Liberian President had granted to the RUF became too costly for him. This was due to the fact that he was himself facing a rebellion and thus needing all his military and financial resources to fight his own war. In addition to the international pressure which was rising, following the issuance of the Panel of Experts' report. As a result, in January, 2001, Taylor publicly renounced his support for the RUF and called on the Sierra Leonean rebel movement to lay down its arms. Two months later, the regional situation deteriorated with Liberia accusing its neighbours of supporting the rebels and losing its borders with Sierra Leone and Guinea.

In April 2001, the Joint Committee established by the Abuja agreement finally decided on a date for the implementation review. It was subsequently held in Abuja on 2 May, 2001, and completed by a further meeting in Freetown on 15 May of the same year.⁹² Abuja II agreement initiated a new phase for the resumption of DDR on a wider scale and in an effort to effectively reduce violence and chaos in the country. The agreement stipulated that the continued fighting between the CDF and the RUF in the eastern province should come to a halt. It also called for the simultaneous disarmament of RUF and CDF combatants and the extension of government authority to areas controlled by the RUF.

Consequently, in total, between May 2001 and January 2002, 47,076 combatants were disarmed (19,183 RUF, 27,695 CDF and 198 AFRC).⁹³ Meanwhile, UNAMSIL deployed the diamond zones including, Tongo fields

⁹¹ Marianne, Ducasse-Rogier, *Resolving Intractable Conflicts in Africa: A Case Study of Sierra Leone* Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael' Conflict Research Unit, September 2004,58.

⁹² Ducasse-Rogier, *Resolving Intractable Conflicts in Africa*,58.

⁹³ Ibid, 56.

and ultimately Kailahun (the RUF's stronghold) in August 2001, and Kono (the richest diamond region) in the beginning of 2002.⁹⁴ As disarmament progressed, the government began to reassert its authority in the various provinces, starting with the deployment of the new Sierra Leonean army, police force and the return of paramount chiefs. Subsequently, peace progressively appeared more attainable.

Thus, the disarmament programme was completed in January, 2002. The UNAMSIL celebrated the success of its disarmament programme with an arms-destruction ceremony held in the International Airport town of Lungi on January 17th, 2002, at which the force commander, Kenyan General Daniel Opande, declared the civil war officially over.⁹⁵ President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah was re-elected for the second time running as President and Head of the state. On July 12th, 2002, at the state opening of the new parliamentary assembly, Kabbah concluded:

“All Sierra Leoneans, at home and abroad, suffered considerable loss. Some lost their cherished and loved ones, others their belongings, and still others, their dignity and honour. The bitter experience of armed conflict will linger in our memories for as long as we need to remind ourselves of the mistakes that we should never ever make again.”⁹⁶

It is worth noting that in contrast to the previous attempts, the Abuja process did not involve the signing of any negotiated peace accord. Although the ceasefire agreement made reference to Lomé commitments, there was actually no further attempt to implement the 1999 accord in the following months. The strategy was indeed much more straightforward: the government

⁹⁴ Ducasse-Rogier, *Resolving Intractable Conflicts in Africa*, 58.

⁹⁵ Peter Pham, Lazarus Rising: Civil Society and Sierra Leone's Return from the Grave, *The International Journal of Not-for-Profit Law*, Volume 7, Issue 1, November 2004, 79.

⁹⁶ Inaugural Address on the Occasion of the State Opening of the First Session of the First Parliament of the Third Republic (Jul. 12, 2002), available at <http://www.sierra-leone.org/kabbah071202.html> (last accessed Oct. 25, 2004).

was considered as the sole legitimate actor to exert power, while the RUF was recognized as having the right to transform into a political movement and that its military structures had been dismantled to take part in the forthcoming elections. A series of actions were thus undertaken both to weaken the RUF and to support the government in order to change the military balance and compel the rebels to disarm. Indeed, the path to peace was a long one, but with the disarmament process over and the preparations for holding new elections, a genuine feeling of peace gradually spread throughout the country.

Conclusion

During the violent conflict, Sierra Leone swung between a weak and a failed state. The violent conflict led to changing dynamics across family and ethnic lines and created an unholy alliance of criminal network whose aim was to exploit the diamond resources. Sierra Leone was bedeviled by various groups: loyal and rebel soldiers with disaffected youths. It showed a state that was unable to protect itself against the outbreak of large scale direct violence. Thus, its inability to provide its own security led to its dependence on foreign mercenaries.

On the whole, several factors eventually contributed to end the war. Among these, one can cite the external intervention and committed response of the international community, including ECOMOG, UNAMSIL and the British army which was very important in coercing the warring factions to a negotiating table. UN sanctions on Liberia to reduce its arms for diamonds, support for the RUF, and the incarceration of the intransigent RUF leader, Foday Sankoh were also of great importance. These incidents persuaded the

RUF to accept and honour a peace plan. Subsequently, the Abuja accords provided a framework for a speedy disarmament process.

Indeed, the decade-long conflict resulted in bad effects on the country. The total number of casualties was conservatively estimated to some 70,000 people, who lost their lives in the fighting. Hundreds of thousands of others suffered amputations or were otherwise maimed, and some 2.6 million Sierra Leoneans were either internally displaced or refugees in neighbouring countries. What were the other effects of the war, and what was the impact of the war on the whole country?

Introduction

During the civil war, Sierra Leone was characterized by social disintegration, an autocratic rule and economic malaise. However, after years of mayhem, a discouraging series of failed peace deals and broken ceasefires as well as several military coups and assorted international interventions, order and peace had returned to the country in 2002. But despite the fact that Sierra Leone war was officially over since then, partly due to tensions and conflicts in neighbouring states, the situation had remained fragile and life was a struggle for the majority of Sierra Leoneans. The impact of the conflict had been unfathomable and the damage immeasurable. Sierra Leoneans were mourning the loss of loved ones and grappling with the emotional and physical traumas of the war. They were ready for change and aspired to live peacefully. Many of them left their hometowns in order to seek shelter from the horrors of the war and others remained in Freetown, hoping to find a better future in the city. Moreover, with no access to water, sanitation and electricity throughout much of the country, people had struggled just to survive. However after the war, the security and political environment, as well as the social and economic rehabilitation, progressed considerably throughout the country.

In this chapter, we will attempt to assess the impact of the war on Sierra Leoneans, especially children, women, refugees and displaced persons; the status of the disabled in general will also be described. The chapter will also consider the impact of the rebel war on the political and economic field and the interventionary measures taken by both state and non-state actors which could be adjusted to meet post-conflict challenges, namely through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Special Court organizations.

1.Impact on the Population

For eleven years, a people who used to live a simple and peaceful life were subjected to constant fear and trouble. During the war, for most of the time, there was total breakdown in security for the country's civilian population. They became targets of destruction and were used as labourers and human protection. They were humiliated and many had been left deeply traumatised. According to the government of Sierra Leone, an estimated 20,000 people were killed and thousands were injured or maimed. The UN estimated the number of deaths at 50,000.¹ Crimes against them mainly women and children included rape and sexual violence generally went unpunished; furthermore, they contributed to the culture of silence and impunity that prevailed. The massive violence to which they had been exposed had inevitably left many of them psychologically and physically scared. The war had been the cause of mass displacement of population, creating refugees and Internally Displaced Persons, and had also bad consequences on those who had been amputated.

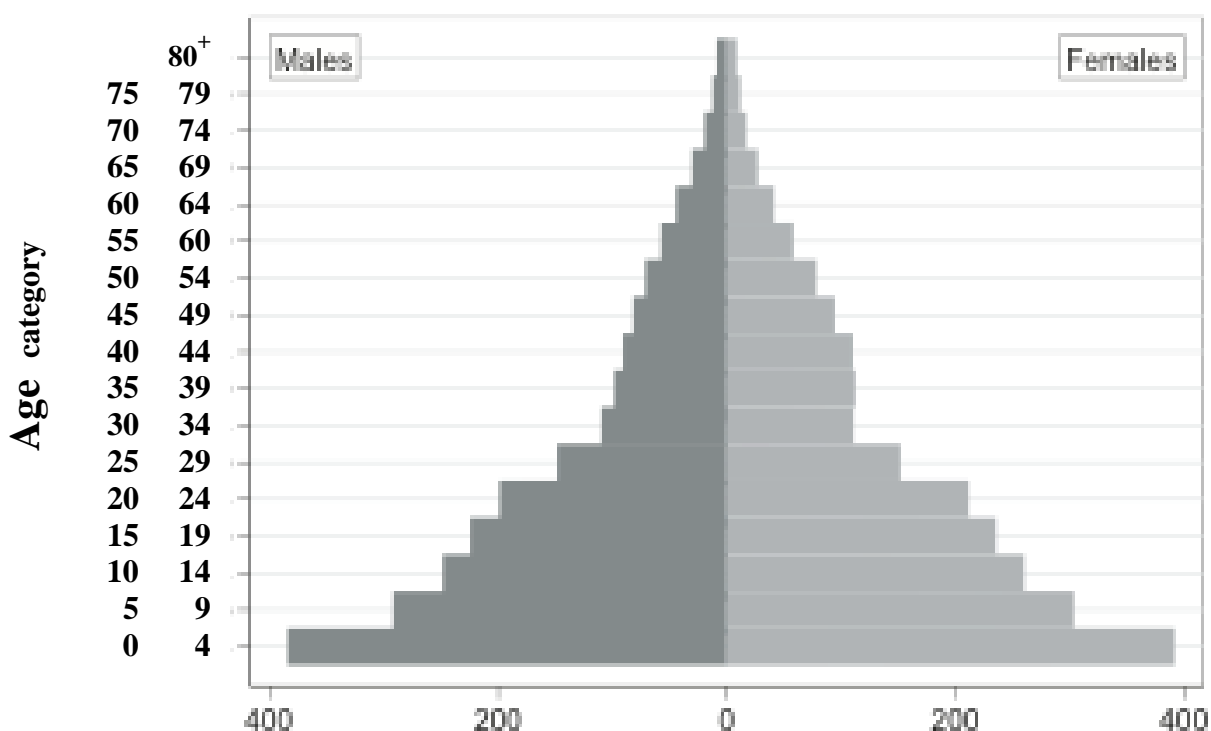
1.1 The Impact of the Conflict on Children and Women.

When the war was launched, children constituted the largest part of the population while adults formed a minority.² The graph below shows a considerable decrease in the size of the adult population between the ages of 29 and 79, which reflected the high adult mortality rate and results in low average life expectancy.

¹ UNIFEM 2004, quoted in *Sierra Leone Consolidating the Recovery and Reconstruction Process*, 25.

² The statistics used in Figure 1 emerge from population estimates maintained by the United States Bureau of the Census. The Bureau uses existing censuses along with health and other data collected by international NGOs. <http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/idbnew.html>.

Figure One: Population of Sierra Leone in 1991 (in thousands) divided according to age category and sex.



Source : US Census Bureau, International Data Base, available at the following website: <http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/idbnew.html>.

The conflict had a great impact on children. Physically some children were wounded in the war with guns, knives, axes and such like, which resulted in bodily injuries. Consequently, they experienced pain and other general discomfort to the extent that some of them needed help for the rest of their lives. Of particular importance in this category were those children who suffered amputations and mutilations from armed groups. Some estimates state that over 3000 children were kidnapped in a single incidence in Freetown.³ Their experiences had impacted negatively on their psyche and social development. At the end of the conflict, thousands of homeless children became physically and psychologically frightened.

³ *'Sierra Leone and the War that Indignified its People'* www.fardasl.org

Many of them did not know their real names and had forgotten the structure of family kinship, such as the relation to one's aunt or uncle.⁴ These children had chronic fear and anxiety, mainly fear of retribution and feeling of guilt. Many child soldiers faced moral breakdown when they lost contact with their community.⁵

A donor agency survey was carried out on the number of children so as to assess the levels of violence and psychological trauma experienced. This was after January 1999 invasion of Freetown. It shows that 71% of the children saw pictures of their worst experience in their minds; 94% thought about their worst experience even when they did not want to; 72% were plagued by nightmares and bad dreams; and 76%, unsurprisingly, worried that they might not become adults.⁶

Children had also been subjects to drugs which exacerbated their psychological, social and physical situations. According to Dr. Edward Nahim, the psychological impact of the drug had led many children to suffering from schizophrenia.⁷ Furthermore, many of these children had problems to do well at school and thus showed a decline in their performances attributable to their drug habit. Of particular concern were the adolescents in tertiary institutions whose schooling was affected.

⁴ Douglas, Farrah, *Children Forced to Kill*, Washington Post, 8 April, 2000.

⁵ Goodwin-Gil, Guy & Ilene, Cohn, *Child Soldiers: The Role of Children in Armed Conflict*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), quoted in Monique Ramgoolie Prosecution of Sierra Leonean's Child Soldiers : What Message is the UN trying to send? Princeton University, 2001, 49.

⁶ Plan Ireland, Children in Disasters Programme, "The Importance of Education in Disaster Rehabilitation – The Rapid Education Programme in Sierra Leone", 2000; available at the following website: www.plan-ireland.org/pdfs/childrenindisasters. In October 1999, Plan Ireland commissioned an assessment of the violence and psychological trauma experienced by 315 war displaced children at four IDP camps in or near Freetown. In July 2000, it also carried out a "rapid" assessment of the psychosocial conditions of children in Moyamba District.

⁷ Edward Nahim, "Sierra Leonean Psychiatrist and Commentator on Use of Drugs during the Conflict", TRC interview conducted at Kissy Mental Hospital, Freetown, 30 July 2003.

Since the conflict had caused the loss of breadwinners within families, children had been forced to become economic contributors and in some cases providers for their families. Many of them engaged in trading and other commercial activities in the streets of Freetown and other large towns. A “multi-indicator cluster survey” conducted in 2000 in Sierra Leone, indicated that 48% of children were found to be engaged in unpaid work and 10% of these children spent more than four hours a day on such tasks. Furthermore, in the same year, 72% of Sierra Leonean children were working in some capacities, namely domestic and agricultural work.⁸ Besides, they were used as labour in the diamond-mining industry before the war,⁹ and increased in number during the conflict. In the post-conflict period, many families also resorted to pledge their children as labour.¹⁰ Having inquired this worrying trend, the NGO World Vision made the following submissions to the Commission:

The war aggravated the involvement of children in mining activities. In Kono District and elsewhere, many children were captured and conscripted into the RUF and AFRC fighting forces. Those children captured... were forced to engage in mining activities, where they were used to provide slave labour. These child combatants and other abducted children were ultimately seeking fortunes for their commandos. Many of the children and youth who escaped capture by the RUF were later recruited by the CDF, the Kamajors. The children who were with the Kamajors were later to become miners too.¹¹

In its comprehensive survey produced in 2002, World Vision reported that 75%¹² of the children had to work in the mining industry for earning

⁸ Government of Sierra Leone; *Report on the Status of Women and Children in Sierra Leone at the end of the Decade*, November 2000, 60-61.

⁹ World Vision; Submission to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on the occasion of the TRC Special Thematic Hearings on Children, 16 June 2003 (hereinafter “World Vision submission to TRC”), 3.

¹⁰ The War-torn Societies Project (WSP-International): www.wsp-international.org/

¹¹ World Vision submission to TRC, 3.

¹² Ibid.

money, but only 3% were interested in mining.¹³ The World Vision survey also revealed that children did not gain benefit from their continued involvement in the mines. Describing the problems and difficulties associated with the use of children as miners, World Vision stated that:

[Children] were clearly not in the mines on their own volition. These children had limited access to health care and educational facilities... most of the benefits from their mining activities would only benefit the financiers, who were in places far away from the mine pits. Ultimately, these children would be abandoned at a time when it would be too late to acquire any skills or return to any formal educational institution... thereby making them social burdens putting much demands on society.¹⁴

The involvement of children in economic activities such as street trading, mining, domestic servitude and commercial sex work can be considered as an obstacle that prevented them from enjoying their childhood and benefiting from education. This fact was to affect them dramatically in the future, as it would determine their future livelihoods. In this context, it was underlined in the government report on their household survey:

Children who were working were less likely to attend school and more likely to drop out. This pattern could trap children in a cycle of poverty and disadvantage... Working conditions for children were often unregulated with few safeguards against potential abuse. In addition, many types of work were intrinsically hazardous and others presented less obvious hazards to children, such as exposure to pesticides in agricultural work, carrying heavy weights and scavenging in garbage dumps.¹⁵

Indeed, physical and psychosocial effects of the conflict had a definitive impact on Sierra Leonean children. They became outcast and

¹³ Government of Sierra Leone; *Report on the Status of Women and Children in Sierra Leone at the end of the Decade*, November 2000, 60.

¹⁴ United Nations Special Report; "The Impact of Armed Conflict on Children", available at the following web address: <http://www.un.org/special-rep/children-armed-conflict/>

¹⁵ UNAMSIL, August 2003,7.

vagrants who used to sleep in the streets without money and family care. In this context, the United Nations expressed:

In countless cases, the impact of armed conflict on children's lives remained invisible. The origin of the problems of many children who had been affected by conflicts was obscured. The children themselves might be removed from the public, living in institutions or as was true of thousands of unaccompanied and orphaned children, existed as street children or became victims of prostitution. Children who had lost parents often experienced humiliation, rejection and discrimination. For years, they suffered in silence as their self-esteem crumbled away. Their insecurity and fear could not be measured.¹⁶

Generally speaking, the overall development of Sierra Leonean children deserved careful psychological support and needed major intervention so as to take their rightful status in the world. The Sierra Leonean state was responsible of the improvement of the quality of their life. So, economic opportunities had to be provided to the youths and measures could be taken to address their social inclusion, especially as they constituted 2.5m of the population, including vocal number of ex-combatants.¹⁷ But children were not the only ones who suffered from violence and political thuggery, women also were subjected to different kinds of atrocities and cruelty.

Prior to the war, women were not given importance and great consideration by their society. Elizabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf argued in their report entitled "Women, War and Peace" that "women experienced violence because they were women, and often because they did not have the same rights or autonomy that men had".¹⁸ Overall, women were marginalized and deprived of political rights or authority. The

¹⁶ Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, *Women, War and Peace: The Independent Experts' Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peace-building*, United Nations Development Fund for Women, (New York, USA 2002.),13.

¹⁷ Rehn and Sirleaf, *Women, War and Peace*,13.

¹⁸ Ibid.

militarisation of societies during conflicts and the proliferation of small weapons led to more violence and sexual abuse against women. The escalating violence led to bad consequences which, according to Rehn and Johnson, continued to exist in the post-conflict period.¹⁹

During the conflict, as it was previously mentioned in Chapter Two, it was easy for armed combatants to treat women with disdain and macabre manner. They were immensely persecuted and their lives were broken and shattered by the loss of family members, the breakdown of family structures and the total loss of dignity. They suffered emotionally and psychologically to an incomprehensible degree. Binta Mansaray, who appeared as a witness before the Commission, made the following comment about the cruel irony of Sierra Leone's "revolutionary" war: "The 'Revolution' of the RUF was not at all redemption for women. On the contrary, the RUF committed unspeakable crimes."²⁰

In the Sierra Leone traditional society, women used to be protected and they were customarily not allowed to take up arms and to be involved in warfare, but armed groups who targeted women broke all taboos of society; women became combatants in the conflict and they were considered as persons flouting the rules and the cultural value system of the Sierra Leonean society.

On the other hand, in order to survive, a frightening high number of young girls were exposed to the mercy of their "clients" and were powerless to negotiate safe sex. They were extraordinarily vulnerable to

¹⁹ Rehn and Sirleaf, *Women, War and Peace*, 13.

²⁰ Ibid.

sexually transmitted infections, HIV/AIDS, early pregnancy and unsafe abortion.²¹ They lived on the edge of their society and lost opportunities for education, economic and political empowerment.

On the whole, women had been affected by the fact that their men, sons, husbands and fathers either took up arms voluntarily or were compelled to do so ; many of them had become household heads, not only responsible of themselves, but also providing the needs of both the extended family and the wider community as well. It is worthwhile noting that many women died and their stories remained untold. While peace had returned to the country, many of the wounds remained open. They were encountered by both physical and psychological scars. Many gave birth to children from their terrible experiences. Women and girls who were violated throughout the conflict were ostracised from society for giving birth to children of “rebels.”²² They refused to reveal their stories because they were afraid to be humiliated by their loved ones, families, friends and communities. They were punished and neglected by society because of the deeds that were committed against them. However with regard to custom and tradition, women had played a subservient role. The conflict eroded these traditional customs and practices that had placed constraints on women in the past and restricted their mobility. Overall, political, social and economic reforms were needed to offer women and girls an opportunity to have a better and comfortable life.

²¹Mansaray, “Women Against Weapons: A Leading Role for Women in Disarmament.” 139-162.

²² Government of Sierra Leone. 2005b

1.2 Internally Displaced Persons (IDP's) and Refugees

Among the consequences of any conflict is the massive migration of people that occurs as they try to flee from areas of violence to safe destinations. In the course of this movement, huge numbers of the population were uprooted. The latter usually fell into two categories: internally displaced persons²³ and refugees.²⁴

A major consequence of the Sierra Leone conflict was the forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of civilians from their homes and villages. The Commission recorded 8,397 violations of this nature, with women accounting for 3,128 (or 37,3%) of the victims. One female victim recounted her story of forced displacement to the Commission:

When the RUF rebels from Liberia attacked and occupied Jojoima town in 1991, we were harassed to the point that I could no longer bear. When two senior imams saw the rebels passing secretly, they returned and told us... we were all assembled in the centre of Gbogeima village... the rebels told the crowd that nobody would live any longer. They opened fire and a lot of people died. The firing on the crowd continued until there was a voice from the bush shouting about the arrival of the soldiers. When they heard that, the rebels ran into the bush. I then took my children with other relatives to Nyeyama.²⁵

²³ Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of, or in order to avoid the effects of, armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights, or natural or human made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised State border. See Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General, "Guiding Principles on Internally Displaced Persons", policy note, A56/168; 21 August 2002.

²⁴ In international law as applied by the Commission, a refugee is described as a "person who, as a result of a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his or her nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear is unwilling, to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country." See the Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees 1951, at Article I-A-(2).

²⁵ Madiana Kanneh, TRC statement, Jojoima, Kailahun District; 25 January 2003.

One strategy that the RUF used was the indiscriminate burning of houses and villages during which many occupants were burnt to death,²⁶ and other villagers had to abandon their homes when they heard of an impending attack and fled into the mountains.²⁷ Some fled to other villages and in some cases “Bondo houses”²⁸ for fear of what the armed forces would do, leaving behind them everything they possessed, causing them not only economic loss, but also the loss of security and an enormous trauma.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), there were approximately 50 million refugees, with 75% to 80% of them women and children.²⁹ As estimated by the UN, 1.6 million people were displaced in 1996 within Sierra Leone (the majority in Freetown and major provincial towns) and 370,000 became refugees in neighbouring countries. After the 1997 coup, 530,000 refugees fled Sierra Leone; a further 237,000 left as a consequence of the renewed hostilities beginning in February 1998. Further displacements occurred with a resumption of the fighting in 2000 as a result of bombs and helicopter-gunship raids by government forces.³⁰

On the whole, during the conflict in Sierra Leone, many children were separated from their parents because of the threat of attack and since the

²⁶ Mamie Mambu, TRC statement, Kpanda-Kemo Chiefdom, 16 February 2003.

²⁷ TRC confidential statement recorded in Fullah Town, Gbangbatoke, 4 March 2003.

²⁸ “Bondo houses” Bondo is an American made product invented in 1955 in Miami, Florida by inventor and entrepreneur Robert Merton Spink. Commonly used as a term to describe any type of automotive repair putty, the word Bondo is actually a trademarked name of a product from the company 3M (Minnesota Mining Manufacturing.) 3M and Bondo have many products that range from automotive care, fiberglass repair and/or based products, marine products as well as household and traffic products as well. From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

²⁹ More details on the global situation relating to refugees can be found at the UNHCR website : www.unhcr.org.

³⁰ Economist Intelligence Unit 2005.

conflict ended, they had not been reunified with their families.³¹ UNICEF described the situation that many children found themselves:

Particularly despondent recruited as young as seven and demobilised as teenagers. These children often were confused, and were frequently unable to tell the difference between fantasy and reality... one 10-year-old boy claimed he himself was twenty years old. Others gave conflicting and confused information about their places of origin or the last known location of their relatives.³²

They suffered related violations of an intensely harrowing nature, which had left both mental and physical scars. Consequently, many of them did not have access to social and economic resources that could possibly assist them to deal with their lives and heal the scars of the past.

During the conflict women and young girls constituted a large number of the refugees that fled to neighbouring countries. For instance, a victim who was forced to flee to Liberia after the death of her two sons recounted her experience to the commission:

I was in my village in 1991 when one morning a group of armed men dressed in rags attacked the village. They were shooting at random, and killing people and unfortunately for me my two sons Bockarie and Saffa Koroma were shot one morning and killed. The whole village could not withstand this so we finally went into hiding as far as in Liberia. After going through a lot of constraints for over four years we came back to settle in our village in 1996.³³

In September 2000, President Lansana Conté of Guinea made a public announcement accusing all refugees in Guinea of being rebels or harbouring rebels. Due to this speech, Sierra Leone's refugees, including children were attacked and violated by the Guinean authorities and civilians alike. Refugee camps were attacked and non-camp –based refugees were detained in mass. Many refugee children were raped and

³¹ TRC confidential statement recorded in Kono District, 7 December 2003.

³² UNICEF submission to TRC, 18.

³³ Fodei Saffa Koroma, TRC statement, Gbahama Kengo Section, 23rd January, 2003, quoted in Vol Three B, Women and the Armed Conflict in Sierra Leone, 146.

many were killed or died in detention due to the abominable conditions in which they were held. Many refugees fled back to Sierra Leone, but they suffered further violations such as abductions and sexual slavery at the hands of the armed factions.³⁴

Life in the refugee camps in Guinea was fraught with violations such as arbitrary arrest and detentions, police abuse and lack of freedom of movement. In April 2002, the (UNHCR) and Save the Children-UK issued a report on Sierra Leonean Refugees in Guinea detailing the violations which women and girls suffered from, while they were refugees in Guinea.³⁵ According to UNICEF, “Throughout their time in these camps, refugee girls as young as five became victims of rape and other forms of sexual violence at an astonishing rate considering the ostensible civilian nature of the camp.”³⁶

When the war ended, an estimated 1.2 million had been internally displaced and a further 800,000 were regarded by agencies as being in need of emergency assistance. A further 320,000 had been displaced outside the country's borders, 200,000 to Guinea and 120,000 to Liberia,³⁷ up to 500,000 refugees in Gambia, Ghana and Ivory Coast. At least 55 % of the refugees were women.³⁸ Women and girls reported how their names would be taken off lists for food and aid if they refused to have sex with peacekeepers and humanitarian workers. In fact, the Commission found the latter responsible of the exploitation and violation of women’s rights. In

³⁴ UNICEF submission to TRC,24.

³⁵ Save the Children – UK and UNHCR, “*Sexual Violence and Exploitation: The Experience of Refugee Children in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone*”, April 2002, quoted in Vol Three B, Women and the Armed Conflict in Sierra Leone, 146.

³⁶ Volume Three B Report of the Sierra Leone TRC, 308.

³⁷ *Sierra Leone Consolidating the Recovery and Reconstruction Process*, 28.

³⁸ United States Agency for International Development and Office of U.S., Foreign Disaster Assistance, *USAID/OFDA Situation Report*, No 1, 6 August 1996.

this regard, the Commission decided to prosecute them to make recommendations so as to avoid this kind of abuse taking place in the future.

Civilian refugees had accounted for more than 90% of all refugees.³⁹ As the conflict escalated, a massive number of educated Sierra Leoneans left the country, a fact that worsened the massive brain drain from the country. While many took refuge in neighbouring countries, a huge number settled in Europe and the USA. Many refused to return back as their memories of the conflict were bitter. This loss of human power had resulted in enormous economic loss for Sierra Leone. In 2005, the government estimated that 90% of those who were refugees abroad had come back and one million IDPs had been resettled.⁴⁰ UNHCR had assisted some 272,000 Sierra Leonean refugees who returned to their country of origin from Guinea and Liberia between the years 2000 and 2004.⁴¹

1.3 People Disabled by the War

The war had also bad consequences on those who had been amputated or disabled by the war. They can be considered as constant reminders and evidence of the atrocities performed. Amputees reported that they had not felt cared for by society in post-war Sierra Leone, and that they had been indeed the scars of the nation.⁴²

³⁹ Volume Three B Report of the Sierra Leone TRC, 214.

⁴⁰ *Sierra Leone Consolidating the Recovery and Reconstruction Process*, .28.

⁴¹ Stefan, Spertl and Machtelt De Vriese, 'From Emergency Evacuation to Community Empowerment: Review of the repatriation and reintegration programme in Sierra Leone', United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit, Geneva, February 2005 quoted in *The Role of Education in Peacebuilding, Case Study – Sierra Leone*, United Nations Children's Fund, New York, 2011, 43.

⁴² Victor E.M, Gbegba, and Hassan, Koroma, "The Psychological Impact of Civil War in Sierra Leone", Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, 2003,5.

For instance, women who had had their limbs amputated; had their future entirely compromised. They were unable to earn living and their husbands left them because they were incapable or unwilling to look after them. The transformation of their bodies had bad influence on their self-esteem. Many amputee women expressed their feeling of being incomplete, ashamed and not worthy of being loved. They were unhappy and refused to interact with other members of society. This had severe and negative implications for their continued development in both public and private spheres.⁴³

The loss of one hand for amputees could be compensated by exclusive use of the other hand. A stump could support a functional prosthesis for working or else an aesthetic one.⁴⁴ However, the concern was in the loss of touch that resulted in the loss of one of our five essential senses. This latter could deprive the maimed of external and proprioceptive information necessary to the building of the body schema.⁴⁵ This sensitive function of the hand could not be replaced and no prosthesis could alleviate its absence.⁴⁶ Such individuals could no longer feed themselves, dress, or go to the toilet without assistance. They found themselves a burden to a group who had already struggled for survival and were in a state of utter depression.⁴⁷

⁴³ Women's NGO Coalition submission to TRC, 11.

⁴⁴ Colp,R., Ranssohoff, N.S. 1983. "The Krukenberg Stump. Krukenberg's Operation, Indications and limitations". *J. Bone Joint Surgery* 1933; 15: 439-443.

⁴⁵ Irmay, F., Merzouga, B. and Vettorel, D. 2000, "*Treatment of double hand amputees in Sierra Leone*", *The Lancet*, vol. 356, Issue 9235:1072-1075.

⁴⁶ Colp, Ranssohoff, "The Krukenberg Stump. Krukenberg's Operation, Indications and Limitations", 439-443.

⁴⁷ Pearl Praise Gottschalk, "How are We in this World Now?" Examining the Experiences of Persons Disabled by War in the Peace Processes of Sierra Leone,(University of Victoria, 2007),30.

1.4 Health

Before the war, the health sector in the country was already in bad conditions. During the conflict, it was further devastated. In these circumstances, the health of children had been affected more than that of adults because of the former's innate vulnerability. Sierra Leone was estimated to have lost more than 50%⁴⁸ of health facilities due to armed-rebels' deliberate target of destroying them. Over 415 health units and equipment and supplies, including 15 main hospitals and 150 primary health centers had been completely damaged.⁴⁹ Medical supplies and laboratory services continued to crumble and the massive displacement of civilians during the civil war had tremendously undermined the already inappropriate healthcare system in the country. Cities in provinces were overwhelmed with civilians fleeing the violence, resulting in overcrowding, outbreak of diseases and the collapse of overburdened social services. The main health problem in Sierra Leone was malaria as well as other epidemics associated with poverty and poor hygiene, such as tuberculosis, typhoid, cholera and outbreaks of Lassa fever. Therefore, humanitarian and church organizations had to provide much of the healthcare in the country.

Indigent families found it difficult to access basic health care for themselves and their children. The situation was most acute in the rural areas where the greatest numbers and the poorest persons in the country resided. Thus, health care had become one of the casualties of the conflict. Women's health was badly affected, this was particularly true in the area of life-threatening pregnancies, lack of access to birth control measures and injuries, which arose from sexual violence. They suffered enormous mental trauma from the exigencies they had experienced and consequently,

⁴⁸ Gottschalk, "How are We in this World Now?"),40.

⁴⁹ Ginifer, *Armed Violence and Poverty in Sierra Leone*, 27.

became physically and psychologically scared. Women's groups reported that in many emergency situations, spontaneous abortions occurred as a result of the extreme mental and physical stress. Moreover, many women died because no immediate medical assistance and proper health care were available. Factors such as the destruction of family and community networks and support systems, poverty and the loss of livelihood lessened the capacity of women to take care of their own and their families' health.

Maternal mortality rate on the other hand, was exceptionally high, 1,800 per 100,000 live births.⁵⁰ Few births were attended by skilled personnel, and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) continued to be seen as a public health priority. A study carried out by UNICEF in 2003 revealed that 46% of infant mortality was attributable to malnutrition,⁵¹ which was spreading among people deprived of access to adequate food, clean water and health and sanitation facilities. Malnutrition continued to be a problem and contributed significantly to the high infant mortality rates in the country.⁵²

To meet deficiencies, in post-conflict reconstruction, Sierra Leone decided to restore basic services, but mental health was not included though a large number of people had suffered conflict-related stress and trauma. Kissy in Freetown was the only hospital that provided them with basic medical care. HIV/AIDS was another phenomenon which created a great pain for Sierra Leoneans.

The first case of HIV/AIDS in Sierra Leone was reported in 1987. Subsequently, the government established the National AIDS Council and

⁵⁰ Economist Intelligence Unit. 2005.

⁵¹ *Sierra Leone Consolidating the Recovery and Reconstruction Process*, 29.

⁵² WHO. 2004, *quoted in Sierra Leone Consolidating the Recovery and Reconstruction Process*, 29.

the National HIV/AIDS Secretariat. The latter coordinated the overall implementation of the national policy. A survey undertaken by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) in 2002 found that the HIV infection rate for adults was 1.4% in the country and 2.3% in Freetown.⁵³

In post-war Sierra Leone, the number of people infected by the virus had been increasing due to inadequate means of information broadcasting and lack of awareness concerning HIV/AIDS. In 2004, the HIV/AIDS prevalence rate was estimated at 7% for the general adult population and up to 25% for the military. The prevalence of the disease was augmented because of the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people, the breakdown of social structure, the lack of government ability to form a national policy for HIV/AIDS and society's reluctance to discuss the disease.⁵⁴

According to UNAIDS and the country's National AIDS Secretariat (NAS), at the end of 2006, the propagation of the HIV/AIDS in the country had lowered to 1.6%, and 48,000 Sierra Leonean were infected by the virus.⁵⁵ Consequently, the National AIDS Secretariat tried its best towards the implementation of programmes enhancing traditional leaders and parliamentarians to stimulate awareness-raising among their communities. Moreover, according to the secretariat, additional voluntary testing and counselling centres had to be built up. Workshops and training facilities, where people could openly discuss the means of transmission and

⁵³ UNAIDS. 2007, quoted in *Sierra Leone Consolidating the Recovery and Reconstruction Process, Country Assessment Report*, A report prepared by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) under the auspices of the AU/NEPAD Sub-cluster on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia March 2008,29.

⁵⁴ World Bank. 2004, quoted in *Sierra Leone Consolidating the Recovery and Reconstruction Process*,29.

⁵⁵ IRIN, 2007, quoted in *Sierra Leone Consolidating the Recovery and Reconstruction Process*,29.

prevention of the virus had also to be available in Sierra Leone. In fact, the civil war in Sierra Leone had not only caused health problems, aches, pain and misery to the citizens, but also a failure in the educational sector.

1.5 Education

After independence, Sierra Leone made of educational development its priority and vital issue in order to progress. However, this target was hampered by different conflicts, this West African country experienced. Many youths in taking up arms lost their formal education, and skills passed down from fathers to sons (as in agriculture). Many children did not go to school because schools were either destroyed or shut down. For instance, 117 primary, 70 secondary and 32 vocational institutions and one of the constituent colleges of the university were damaged.⁵⁶

In 1997 and for an entire academic year, children stopped schooling altogether due to the levels of tension in the country. By the end of the conflict, a significant number of school-going children had outgrown school age while others had lost two to three years of schooling.⁵⁷ Subsequently, a survey in 2001, entitled the National School Survey Report, identified 3,152 with a total number of 4,854 school buildings.⁵⁸ Out of these figures, the survey found that as many as 35% of classrooms needed full reconstruction, while 52% needed to be repaired or reconstructed. Only 13% were judged to be useful in the hard conditions in

⁵⁶ Jonah, *Economic Dimensions of the Conflict in Sierra Leone*, 5.

⁵⁷ Plan Ireland, Children in Disasters programme, "The Importance of Education in Disaster Rehabilitation – The Rapid Education Programme in Sierra Leone", 2000; available at the following website: www.plan-ireland.org/pdfs/childrenindisasters

⁵⁸ National School Survey Report (NSSR), 2001, as cited in World Bank, Project Appraisal Document for a Rehabilitation of Basic Education; 2003.

which they were found.⁵⁹ Consequently, 67 % of school-age children were out of school.⁶⁰

This lack of suitable schools was coupled with a shortage in teachers. The conflict also left in its wake extensive damage to teacher's accommodations, the provision of free education motivated teachers to go and teach in the provinces and remote rural areas. Therefore, at the end of the conflict there was not only an imbalance in the concentration of teachers in certain areas, but also an entire lack of skills or "brain drain" due to forced migration.

Though Sierra Leone was one of the first countries in the African sub-Saharan to have a university, Fourah Bay College, the country's literacy rate was rated as one of the lowest in the world. Sierra Leone was ranked 119th of 177 countries surveyed for the combined enrolment in primary, secondary and tertiary education.⁶¹ This, in fact, was partly due to the following reasons:

First, very low wages and poor conditions of work for teachers and other workers in the country's educational institutions. Schools were neglected and the quality of teaching was poor in most cases. Second, very high tuition fees and other costs, unaffordable by the poor families who formed the bulk of the country's population; many families in communities such as in Bo were unable to afford the cost of education for their children. Third, the closure during the civil war of all boarding homes that housed and fed thousands of students of primary, secondary and tertiary institutions at affordable costs by many average families and homes. Fourth, the general and chronic lack of electricity and water supply in the country, made study

⁵⁹ NSSR-SL report of 2001".

⁶⁰ Bankole Kamara Taylor, *Sierra Leone: The Land, Its People and History*, New Africa Press, Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, 2011, 155.

⁶¹ *Sierra Leone Consolidating the Recovery and Reconstruction Process*, 30.

facilities difficult for the majority of school-going children. Many students were studying only during the day. Those who could afford any source of light for reading and studying did so only on candle lights, paraffin lit lamps and, especially in the villages, cooking fires or other hazardous sources. Moreover, university students as well as lecturers and scientists did not have access to experiments or exercises that required electricity. In the entire country, the opportunity to have electricity supply in homes was generally insufficient. And finally, displacement of the population resulted in high levels of illiteracy.

Desmond Massaquoi recounted the conditions that had denied him his schooling:

I was attending Christ the King College when the war broke out; I was in Form Three. I went for holidays to my village Kanguma, near Serabu in the Bumpeh Chiefdom. Rebels attacked my village, burnt our houses, looted our property and killed some people. Amongst those killed were my father, my sister and her husband. These people were the ones paying my school fees... I want to continue my education but there is no one to support me as my sister and her husband who supported me are dead.⁶²

The war confronted children with the most brutal expressions of human cruelty at an early age and consequently shattered their childhood. Many of them ascribed their handicap to have access to education to the protracted conflict. In this context a child testified "... We were with them until we were taken away from them by the kamajors in 1996. Up to today, I did not get any education. I am a drop out in the village."⁶³

At peace time, there was an implementation of major policy measures, including the abolition of tuition fees and school feeding, a fact that led to a significant increase in primary school enrollment. The total number of

⁶² Desmond Massaquoi, TRC statement, Bo District, April 10th, 2003.

⁶³ TRC confidential statement recorded in Pujehun Town, 28th February, 2003.

pupils had tripled in less than four years. However, many dropped out of school after Grade One. This increase in the pupils' enrollment was faced by teachers' shortage in the educational institutions.

The Ministry of Finance staffing ceiling for all teaching staff supported by Ministry for Education, Science and Technology (MEST) amounted to 25,000 in Fiscal Year (FY) 2003. The total number on the payroll in December 2003 was 21,213, 15 % less than the ceiling and nearly 7 % less than the payroll total in September 2001. The ceiling was subsequently increased to 28,000 for FY 2004.⁶⁴ According to the National Recovery Committee, a total of 19,700 teachers were working in primary schools in May 2003. However, only 16,059 primary school teachers were on the government payroll in December 2003.⁶⁵ A total of 5048 secondary teachers at 240 schools were on the government payroll at the end of 2003. Nearly 40 % worked at 49 schools in Freetown and another quarter was at schools in Bo and Kenema Districts. Koinadugu District had only six secondary schools with only 55 payroll teachers.⁶⁶

As regards women, the literacy rate was worse for them. Many girls dropped out earlier and they constituted only 42% of pupils in primary education. The gap was progressively widening in later stages: females accounted for 19% university students.⁶⁷ Of those aged 10 years and older, only 39 % were literate.⁶⁸ The rates varied greatly by age, gender, and region. Half the male population was literate, compared to only 29 % of the female population. Literacy rates in the Western area were twice as high as

⁶⁴ KPMG, 2003, in Jeanne Beryl Harding & Augustine Tejan Mansaray, *Teacher Motivation and Incentives in Sierra Leone*, Senior Lecturer, Division of Educational Studies, INSEEMS, Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone, 2006, 5.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Government of Sierra Leone: MDG report for Sierra Leone. 2005.

⁶⁸ Statistics Sierra Leone 2004.

those in the other regions. Educational attainment across the population of Sierra Leone was low, with an average of less than 4 years of education completed for males (aged 15 years or older) and less than 2 years for females ⁶⁹ as mentioned in the table below:

Table Ten : Literacy Rates, 2004

Age/Gender /Region	Literate %	Illiterate %
10 years and older	39	60
Male	49	50
Female	29	70
Eastern Region	31	68
Northern Region	31	68
Southern Region	34	65
Western area	65	34
10–14-years-old	48	41

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone Population Census 2004, in *Education in Sierra Leone: Present Challenges, Future Opportunities*, 25.

On the other hand, in post-conflict Sierra Leone, many youths who failed at schooling believed they could not return to school because they were too old. They were designed to remain unqualified. Many of them were unemployed. They could be seen all over the country, many of them begging and stealing so as to earn their living. Youths remained cut of the stabilising ties of affection, intimacy and emotional support. Post-conflict education had to be recovered and teachers and pupils situation had to be improved.⁷⁰

In general, the war worsened the life of the people, maimed a lot of them, and made many more orphans, beggars, thieves and murderers.

⁶⁹ Government of Sierra Leone: MDG report for Sierra Leone. 2005.

⁷⁰ Ginifer, *Armed Violence and Poverty in Sierra Leone*, 27.

Accordingly, it would have been better if the restoration of the educational system in the nation had involved not only the construction and rehabilitation of damaged institutions, but also the provision of both teaching and learning resources including, teachers, materials, and classrooms.⁷¹ Therefore, to pave the way for Sierra Leone's children to have access to basic education became more costing, and the opportunity of education for all, arduous. This bad educational situation badly affected the Sierra Leonean economy.

2. The Impact of the War on Sierra Leonean Economy

In the post-conflict, Sierra Leone emerged in a very weak economic position. The network of infrastructure and public services was largely destroyed. For instance, the coverage of the devastation involved rural settlements, mines, banks, industrial concerns, roads, bridges and fund. The Government faced an institutional vacuum. Consequently, assisted by its donor partners, it responded with an ambitious program of institutional reform and economic development. The reforms aimed to foster economic growth while strengthening the institutional environment to promote better governance and lasting peace. In this section, we will attempt to examine the impact of the war on public infrastructure and whether the government attempted to elaborate any economic recovery programme.

2.1 The Impact of the War on Public Infrastructure

The war had massive impact on the country's infrastructure. Over 2500 villages and towns throughout the country and over 6000 private homes in

⁷¹ Sierra Leone TRC-Appendix2part1.

Freetown alone were destroyed.⁷² The limited feeder and trunk road networks were damaged. Several roads in and around Freetown and segments of the Freetown-Kenema highway linking the capital to the east of the country became in a weak state. The hardsurface road linking Freetown to Makeni and Kabena in the north were in a good shape.⁷³ Major rural areas became unattainable and restricted the movement of both people and goods. Moreover, large-scale destruction of economic and social infrastructure, including the mining sector, the production, distribution and marketing of agricultural commodities, took place. Generally, the Sierra Leonean economy substantially shrank and collapsed. A decline in the output of the mining sector in the late 1970s led to a slow down in GDP growth to less than 2 % per year.⁷⁴ A further decline took place in the late 1980s, primarily caused by poor macroeconomic and the fiscal management policies of the Government.

At the beginning of the war, the mining sector dominated by rutile mines and bauxite contributed about 8 % of GDP, 66 % of Foreign Exchange earnings, 14 % of wage employment and 8.5 % of Government revenue.⁷⁵ During the first half of the 1990's, before the siege on the rutile mines, rutile alone contributed over half the country's foreign exchange earnings. However, when hostilities broke out, including the invasion and occupation of Kono in 1992, the 1997-1998 military interregnums and the invasion of Freetown and its environs in January

⁷² Appendix 2, Part 4: Submissions, The Sierra Leone Civil Service - A Presentation to the TRC on Behalf of the All Peoples Congress (APC Party) Presented by Hon. Wusu B. Munu.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ *Education in Sierra Leone Present Challenges, Future Opportunities* Africa Human Development Series, The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank 1818 H Street, NW, 2007, 27.

⁷⁵ Appendix 2, Part 4: Submissions, The Sierra Leone Civil Service - A Presentation to the TRC on Behalf of the All Peoples Congress (APC Party) Presented by Hon. Wusu B. Munu.

1999, reversals of significant dimension occurred. Rutile exports decreased progressively from US\$78 million in 1990 to US\$55 million in 1994.⁷⁶ At the end of 1995, the government programmes encountered many difficulties and this was due to the rise of rebel activities which spread into the mining areas. RUF attacks and closure or seizure of bauxite and rutile mines, and disruptions of other economic activities, plummeted economic growth in 1995 leading to drastic consequences on economic activity and declined investment and income to their lowest levels. But despite these conditions, economic performance improved considerably with real GDP growth rising to 5% and inflation declining to about 6% in 1996.⁷⁷

However, the 1997 May coup and the RUF invasion of Freetown in January 1999 which was accompanied with massive socio-economic infrastructure destruction, led to real GDP plunging 20% in 1997, stagnating in 1998, and declining a further 8% in 1999. According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), Sierra Leone was in 1999 in a state of near total social, economic and physical destruction. The majority of industry was closed down and almost all of them had ground to a halt, resulting in further unemployment, and virtually all rural banks had been destroyed.⁷⁸ By the year of 2000, Sierra Leone national income per capita had rapidly depreciated to under \$140.⁷⁹ Armed violence led to a widespread destruction. It hampered the government's capacity to mobilise

⁷⁶ There was a number of variables, other than armed violence, which influenced poverty prior to the civil war. For example, some farmers withdrew from rice production to subsistence production because of the Stevens' administration policy of importing rice. Diamond production had been reduced to a trickle shortly before the outbreak of the civil war because of smuggling. Further government expenditure on welfare fell dramatically in the 1980s. Government corruption and economic mismanagement had a considerable impact on poverty in this pre-conflict period as well as armed violence during the conflict. Insights provided by Professor Zack-Williams to the author.

⁷⁷ ILO, 'Sierra Leone: The Terrible Price of Poverty and Unemployment', *World of Work*, No. 33, 2000, 2.

⁷⁸ World Bank, 17th July, 2001, 1.

⁷⁹ Ginifer, *Armed Violence and Poverty in Sierra Leone*, 17.

domestic resources and also reduced average household income. Moreover, many civilians in Freetown, for example, in 1997-1998, were unable to emerge from their homes because they risked being shot.⁸⁰ Except someone who appeared at night to forage for food and normal patterns of trade, including markets, were impossible to sustain. But business people were unable to trade for long periods and shopkeepers kept their shops closed much of the time and consumed their own stocks in order to survive or avoid being robbed by neighbours or combatants.

Diamond mine inaccessibility considerably reduced rural incomes and increased poverty in both rural and urban communities. Poverty was acute before the conflict.⁸¹ By 1990, it was estimated that over 80% of the population lived below the poverty line of US\$1 per capita per day. The conflict markedly exacerbated poverty levels and postponed prospects for development.⁸² During 1991-99, there were attempts to implement reforms, but these were held back by outburst of armed violence and the consequent political instability.

As far as agriculture is concerned, before the war, it accounted for about 45 % of GDP⁸³ and employed about 60 % of the labour force.⁸⁴ However, the war disrupted this situation drastically, undermining the country's rice food security. Rice import more than doubled from about US\$20 million in 1990, just before the advent of the war, to US\$50 million in 1996. It remained high until the end of the war, but Sierra Leone's rice productivity dropped to as low as below 35 % of the nation's requirements

⁸⁰ World Bank, 17th July, 2001, 1.

⁸¹ Victor Angelo, *Empowering Local Government for Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction*, Sierra Leone Human Development Report 2007, 11.

⁸² Special Report, *FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission to Sierra Leone*, 15 January 1997.

⁸³ Government of Sierra Leone 2005, 32.

⁸⁴ Ginifer, *Armed Violence and Poverty in Sierra Leone* 17.

during the war years.⁸⁵ Although the country had potential in the extractives sector (iron, diamonds, rutile, and oil reserves), agriculture continued to be the mainstay of the Sierra Leonean economy because the majority of the population was employed in this sector.

The country's needs in the different fields were immense and still growing. In the urban areas, the need for developing the road network in the populated areas and providing transportation and lorry parks with storage facilities, became part of the strategy to tackle congestion problems in Freetown and supply some of the urgent requirements of the major townships. The 2005 Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper of Sierra Leone stated that to overcome the major constraints confronting the country's economy, roads and the transport sector had to be improved and given a great importance because of the strong link that existed between them and the rest of the productive and social sectors. Did the government endeavour to take any other measures to get rid of Sierra Leone bad economic situation?

2.2 The Post Conflict Recovery Programme

Following the signing of the Lome Peace Accord in July 1999, the government, in collaboration with multilateral and bilateral donors, elaborated an economic recovery programme. It was supported by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) under the Emergency Post Conflict Assistance Facility, by the World Bank through the first Economic Rehabilitation and Recovery Credit, and by the United Kingdom and European Union. The economic recovery programme aimed at restoring

⁸⁵ Ginifer, *Armed Violence and Poverty in Sierra Leone* 17.

macroeconomic stability, rehabilitating the economic and social infrastructure and rebuilding the capacity for policy implementation.⁸⁶

The post war economic recovery benefited from large-scale reconstruction and rehabilitation activities, as well as improved economic management, including the implementation of key structural reforms. The real GDP recovered by 3.8% in 2000 following an improvement and expansion in economic activities.⁸⁷ The economy continued to recover with the consolidation of the peace process and the collection of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and disarmament in 2001. The annual growth rate in GDP was about 18 % in 2001 and 27 % in 2002, reflecting the post war expansion in trade and commercial activities and the rehabilitation of industries, but in 2003 and 2004, the growth rate slowed down a little, though it was high at 9 and 7 %, respectively.⁸⁸

Between 2000 and 2004, the total government revenues including both domestically generated revenues and donor grants, almost doubled in real terms, resulting in an increase in total government revenues from 19 to 21 % of GDP.⁸⁹ Estimates for 2005 and 2006 suggested that total revenues would continue to increase at this rate. Grants made up about 40 % of the total government revenues, and domestically generated revenues were stable at about 12 % of GDP between 2002 and 2004. With the increase in revenues, the total government expenditure also increased in 1997, almost doubled between 2000 and 2004. However, the government expenditure decreased from 29 % of GDP in 2001 to 25 % of GDP. The Ministry of Finance estimates for 2005 and 2006 suggested that government

⁸⁶ Government of Sierra Leone 2005.

⁸⁷ IMF. Selected Economic Indicators during the Postwar Years, 2000–04, 29-30.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 30.

⁸⁹ Ibid, 32.

expenditure would remain steady at about the 2004 level. The government expenditure had exceeded revenues in each year since 1996, with the deficit being more than 100 % of total revenues in 1997 and 1998.⁹⁰ Besides the economic field, the civil war had also impacted the country's politics.

3. The Impact on the Political Aspects

The history of Sierra Leone at post-independence was full with frustrating paradoxes. Its people entered independence as a number of tribes and interest groups with divergent aspirations. Thus, the people's disunity planted seeds of discontent and subsequently polarized the Sierra Leonean society, which was known by its instability, weak political system and poor quality of governance. What did the government do to realize political stability and good governance? Did the government confront any obstacles while performing its task?

3.1 The Impact on Political Structure and the System of Governance.

Although the war was officially declared over in 2002, and Ahmad Tejan Kabbah won a majority in the presidential elections, the government institutions remained weak. Since the beginning of the war, these institutions had been weakened due to the brain drain of a number of professionals. Those who remained in the Civil Service or other professions lacked the means to carry out their duties. However, this interruption competently provided an opportunity for the government and people to set fresh aims and preferences for the Sierra Leonean society. Thus, when the war was declared over, the government endeavoured to ensure political stability, good governance, accountability and transparency in order to

⁹⁰ *Education in Sierra Leone Present Challenges, Future Opportunities*,32.

enable the country to fulfill its political, economic and social aspirations. The Civil Service was strengthened to better manage social and economic development. Besides, an important consideration was given to strategic public administration that would be more accountable. Efforts were made to enhance pluralistic forces including civil society organizations, women and labour groups and to raise the flow of information on development policies and programmes.

At a national level, the capacity and flexibility of the Sierra Leonean state were undeniably greater than they were both before and during the civil war. The state had a greater ability to absorb risk and shocks. Key state institutions such as the armed forces and the police were better trained and equipped and became more responsive to their political masters. Besides, both the APC and SLPP had experienced a degree of internal reform with younger and more technically skilled members who had a great influence. An independent judicial system was also established and corruption was addressed. Consequently, it became possible for citizens to take the government to court.

However, unaccountability within government institutions was a problem that had to be solved. Therefore, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) had created an official organisation to tackle corruption. As Sierra Leone was highly dependent on foreign aid, and as anti-corruption measures continued to be a central donor's condition, the president affirmed his commitment to the cause and actual measures had been taken.⁹¹ On the whole, we can say that the key to Sierra Leone national peace, stability and development lay in good governance. There was an absolute need to reconstruct a new nation in which citizens would have

⁹¹ Government of Sierra Leone: MDG report for Sierra Leone. 2005.

equal opportunities and freedom of choice, in an environment in which service delivery would be transparent, accountable and auditable. The Sierra Leonean people had to form an environment in which healthy competition prevailed, and aggrieved persons and institutions had avenues for swift redress. Fair elections had to be also held by Sierra Leone leaders.

3.2 The 2002 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections.

Since its independence in 1961, Sierra Leone did not witness free and fair elections. The country had seven general elections and five military coups. In March 2001, UNAMSIL was deployed in rebel-held territory, allowing for elections to be held in May 2002. On 14 May, 2002, presidential and parliamentary elections were one of the primary peace processes in Sierra Leone, and were the first since the end of the civil conflict. At the time of the elections, approximately 17,500 UNAMSIL peacekeepers were deployed in the country and an estimated 400,000 people were still internally or externally displaced.⁹² Therefore, it was hard to organize elections under these circumstances due to the lack of experience of the National Electoral Commission.

Early on 14 May, there were widespread reports of voters with valid registration cards who were turned away because their names were not on the voters' lists. To solve the problem, the National Election Commission (NEC) issued an election-day, authorizing polling officials to allow voters with valid identification ID cards to cast their ballots at the location, where they had registered, regardless of either their names were on the voters' list or not. This decision illustrates the NEC's responsiveness to reported

⁹² European Union Election Observation Mission to Sierra Leone 2002, Final Report on the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections 14 May 2002, 1.

problems avoiding them the disenfranchisement of thousands of voters. As a result, over 2.3 million Sierra Leoneans (approximately 85 % of the eligible population) registered to vote. Thus, on 14 May, 2002, they cast ballots in the presidential and parliamentary elections. It was a significant increase over the 1.5 million citizens who registered to vote in the elections of 1996.⁹³

Women also took part in these elections. This was a positive shift in their involvement in public life. 18 women were elected to parliament, representing 14.5 % of the seats. The number of women elected to parliament represented a 60 % increase over the previous legislature.⁹⁴ A comparative percentage distribution of women's participation in the political leadership process between 1996-2002 is illustrated in the tables below:

Table Eleven: percentage distribution of women's participation in the political leadership process in 1996.

Political Activity or Position in 1996	Male	Female	Total	% Male	% Female
Voters (General Elections 1996)	-	-	-	-	-
Paramount Chiefs	139	10	149	93.3	6.7
Parliamentarians (1996)	75	05	80	93.75	6.25
Cabinet Ministers (1996)	23	02	25	92.0	8.0
Deputy Ministers (1996)	18	02	20	90.0	10.0
Presidential Candidates (1996)	15	00	15	100	0.0
National Electoral Commission (Chief & Provincial Commissioners 1996)	05	00	05	100	0.0

Source : From the archives of the National Electoral Commission.

⁹³ *Sierra Leone Consolidating the Recovery and Reconstruction Process, Country Assessment Report*,17.

⁹⁴ The Carter Center ,Observing the 2002 Sierra Leone Elections, Final Report, One Copenhill 453 Freedom Parkway , Atlanta, May 2003,32 www.CarterCenter.org.

Table Twelve: percentage distribution of women’s participation in the political leadership process in 2002.

Political Activity or Position in 2002.	Male	Female	Total	% Male	% Female
Voters (General Elections 2002)	1,172,313	1,155,661	2,327,974	50.4	49.6
Presidential Candidates (2002)	07	01	08	87.5	12.5
Deputy Ministers (2002)	07	03	10	70.0	30.0
Cabinet Ministers (2002)	18	03	21	87.7	12.3
Parliamentarians (2002)	106	18	124	85.5	14.5

Source: From the archives of the National Electoral Commission.

From the two tables above, we notice that:

- 1- In the 1996 General Elections, there was no female presidential candidate whereas in the 2002 general elections, there was one.
- 2- The ministerial positions were downsized from 25 in 1996 to 21 in 2002, but the number of female ministers increased from 2 in 1996 to 3 in 2002 which meant from 8% in 1996 to 14.83 % in 2002.
- 3- Concerning the deputy ministerial position, there was a downsized decrease from twenty in 1996 to ten in 2002, but the number of female deputy ministers rose from two in 1996 to three in 2002.
- 4- As regards the number of parliamentarians, there was an increase from eighty in 1996 to 124 in 2002, and the number of female parliamentarians increased from five in 1996 to eighteen in 2002.

Both UNAMSIL and the British troops provided significantly improved security environment. As a result, violence was reduced in both the election’s day and the campaign that preceded it. Consequently, people turned out in huge numbers and workers at polling stations demonstrated

competence and commitment.⁹⁵ Sixty- three polling stations were opened around the country to accommodate this special voting process which was conducted in a calm atmosphere that inspired confidence for the elections on 14 May.⁹⁶

The Carter Center's ⁹⁷ preliminary statement commended the people of Sierra Leone for the remarkable lack of violence during the process and for their patience and enthusiasm on the election day. It was a resounding victory for president Kabbah, who received just over 70 % of the ballots and his SLPP, which gained 83 of the 112 seats in parliament.⁹⁸ Since president Kabbah's government had overseen the end of the civil war, many voters perceived that a vote for Kabbah was a vote for continued peace and the ongoing commitment of the international community to Sierra Leone. 12 other seats were allocated to the country's paramount chiefs, a relic of the colonial system of indirect rule of the interior, compared with the 27 seats carried by the opposition APC whose standard bearer, Ernest Koroma, received slightly over 22 % in the presidential poll.⁹⁹

All of the seats won by the APC were in the northern and western regions whereas the SLPP secured all of the seats in the South and East, amplifying concerns about regional and ethnic divisions in the country. The SLPP's seats in the southern region were won with unusually high voter turnout rates of 99.4 % in Pujehun, 99.2 % in Bonthe and 95 % in

⁹⁵ European Union Election Observation Mission to Sierra Leone 2002.

⁹⁶ The Carter Center ,Observing the 2002 Sierra Leone Elections,26.

⁹⁷ The Carter Center strives to relieve suffering by advancing peace and health worldwide ; it seeks to prevent and resolve conflicts, enhance freedom and democracy, and protect and promote human rights worldwide.

⁹⁸ The Carter Center, Observing the 2002 Sierra Leone Elections,10.

⁹⁹ Pham , *Liberia and Sierra Leone*,70.

Kenema.¹⁰⁰ The former leader of the AFRC, Johnny Paul Koroma, drew just three % of the vote, although his People’s Liberation Party gained two seats in parliament. The RUF Party, the new political incarnation of the former insurgents, gained barely 1.7 % of the votes cast.¹⁰¹ By comparison, six parties were represented in the 80-member parliament elected in 1996.¹⁰² As a whole, new and smaller parties performed poorly, as illustrated in the following table:

Table Thirteen: Sierra Leone Election Results - May 2002.

Candidates	Parties	Presidential Election (%of votes cast)	Number of seats
Ahmad Tejan Kabbah	Sierra Leone People	70.06	83
Ernest Bai Koroma	All People's Congress	22.35	27
Johnny Paul Koroma	People’s Liberation Party	22.35	27
Alimamy Pallo Bangura	Revolutionary United Front	1.73	-
John Karefa Smart	United National People	1.04	-
Raymond Kamara	Grand Alliance	0.59	-
Zainab Bangura	Movement for Progress	0.55	-
Raymond Bamidele Thomson	Citizens United for Peace and Progress	0.47	-
Andrew Duramani Turay	Young People	0.2	-
Total		99.99	112

Source: www.electionworld.org/election/sierraleone.htm

¹⁰⁰ The Carter Center, Observing the 2002 Sierra Leone Elections,32.

¹⁰¹ Pham ,*Liberia and Sierra Leone*,78.

¹⁰² The Carter Center, Observing the 2002 Sierra Leone Elections,32.

The act of voting in the 2002 elections provided some hope for a better future for Sierra Leoneans. However, the following five years disappointed other participants. A woman of these participants felt "betrayed" because she risked so much to vote and then never received any of the promised benefits that would come from peace. In fact, the participants took part in the process of voting in 2002, but were disappointed by the results of their political involvement and did not intend to vote again. Overall, the presidential and parliamentary elections of May 2002 demonstrated the profound desire of the Sierra Leonean people to put the horrors of the past behind them and aspire for a future of reconciliation and democratic development. In this respect, if the victims of past abuses had chosen retribution and revenge, Sierra Leone would be drawn into the mire of violence, but the citizens of Sierra Leone opted instead for peace.

Indeed, the electoral process brought both aspiration and disappointment for participants. The majority of participants with disabilities commented that their ability to take part in the 2002 elections (through donor assistance) involved them in the political process that would determine the course of their country's history. Some double amputees were even assisted to vote with their toes and special security was provided to ensure their safety to and from the voting sites.¹⁰³ One of the voters testified "they took my hand so I couldn't vote again, but that only made me wanted to vote more."¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Appendix 2, Part 4: Submissions, The Sierra Leone Civil Service - A Presentation to the TRC on Behalf of the All Peoples Congress (APC Party) Presented by Hon. Wusu B. Munu

¹⁰⁴ Gottschalk, "How are We in this World Now?",40.

Having suffered atrocities through the scourge of a decade long civil war with the systematic manner in which people rights were violated, an urgent review of national law was needed to ensure that the government of Sierra Leone fulfilled its obligations in terms of international law. Accordingly, Sierra Leone employed two distinct related institutions to take a leading role to ensure peace, justice and reconciliation to its people.

4. The Judicial Reform Efforts

It is essential to promote and protect human rights in order to achieve stability and security which can contribute in the creation of an environment for cooperation, peace and reconciliation. In fact, there was a great progress in addressing impunity for gross human rights abuses committed during conflicts, notably with the Lome Accord which called for the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRC). The latter provided forums for both victims and perpetrators of human rights violations.

TRCs are bodies set up to investigate a past history of violations of human rights in a particular country, which can include violations by the military or other government forces or armed opposition forces. They are official forms of inquiry into events surrounding a massive abuse of human rights.¹⁰⁵ The general notion is that TRCs are modern tools for psychological, social and political healing, used by states to come to terms with their past, especially in situations where countries were emerging from dictatorship or conflict.¹⁰⁶ Though this mechanism of redressing past

¹⁰⁵ Priscilla B. Hayner, *Unspeakable Truths*, (New York: Routledge, 2001),14.

¹⁰⁶ Kevin Avruch & Beatriz Vejarano, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission: A Review Essay and Annotated Bibliography*, OJPCR 4: 2: 37-76(2002) available at: http://www.trinstitute.org/ojpcr/4_2recon.pdf

wrongs was relatively new in peacemaking and peace building processes, more than 20 commissions were established over the world.¹⁰⁷

TRCs served as viable transitional justice mechanism that brought the benefits of justice to victims of tragic political circumstances, such as repressions, massacres, and civil wars. They sought to contribute to transitional peace by creating an authoritative record of what happened; providing a platform for the victims to tell their stories and obtain some form of redress; recommending legislative, structural or other changes to avoid a repetition of past abuses and recognize who was responsible and provide some measures of accountability for the perpetrators.¹⁰⁸ In this section, we will examine the importance of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Special Court for Sierra Leone. How were they established? What were their objectives and achievements? Did these two institutions manage to promote healing in post conflict Sierra Leone?

4.1 The Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

4.1.1 The Establishment and Objectives of the TRC

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Sierra Leone was a project driven by civil society and an initiative, agreed upon by the conflicting parties during the 1999 Lome Peace Agreement. It was established in Sierra Leone as a part of a large process of peace building.¹⁰⁹ The TRC Act was passed in early 2000 and the Commission membership

¹⁰⁷ Kevin Avruch & Beatriz Vejarano, Truth and Reconciliation Commission: A Review Essay and Annotated Bibliography, OJPCR 4: 2: 37-76(2002) available at: http://www.trinstitute.org/ojpcr/4_2recon.pdf

¹⁰⁸ Quoted in Christie, Kenneth , *The South African Truth Commission*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 2000, 61.

¹⁰⁹ Article 9:2 states, "After the signing of the present Agreement, the Government of Sierra Leone shall also grant absolute and free pardon and reprieve to all combatants and collaborators in respect of anything done by them in pursuit of their objectives, up to the time of the signing of the present Agreement".

was appointed, but it was only in 2002 that eventually, the TRC was established by Mary Robinson, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. This delay was largely due to the continuing conflict, and a general understanding that it was unwise to begin a potentially contentious truth inquiry in the context of very fragile peace implementation and before significant demobilisation of combatants took place.

The Commission had been mainly funded by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights through the parliament Act voted in February 2000 (TRC Act 2000). It was composed of a committee of representatives of the civil society who listened and registered the testimonies. The commission was also composed of four national commissioners originating from Sierra Leone and of three non-nationals. To guarantee the transparency and independence of the Commission, the selection of the four national commissioners was coordinated by the United-Nations Secretary- General representative and the choice of the three non-nationals by the high commissioner of human rights and the special representative of the Secretary-General for Sierra Leone.

The objective of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was first to create an impartial and historical report on human rights and international humanitarian law violations in relation with the armed conflict in Sierra Leone, from the onset of the conflict in 1991 to the signing of the Lome Peace Agreement. Its mandate involved investigating the reasons, the nature and the extent of human rights violations and abuses as well as determining whether such violations were the output of deliberate planning, policy or authorization by any government, group or individual. The second objective of the commission was to provide the victims with their

needs, to improve healing and reconciliation and to prevent a repetition of the violations and abuses such as sexual abuse committed against women and children within the armed conflict. The commission pointed out:

Creat[ing] an impartial historical record of violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law related to the armed conflict in Sierra Leone, from the beginning of the Conflict in 1991 to the signing of the Lome Peace Agreement; to address impunity, to respond to the needs of the victims, to promote healing and reconciliation and to prevent a repetition of the violations and abuses suffered.¹¹⁰

4.1.2 The TRC Achievements

In May 2002, the TRC launched the recruitment of its staff and established its office of secretariat. The sensitiveness phase of its programme was concluded in October 2002. The first part of the testimonies took place from 4 December to 20th December 2002, and marked the real beginning of the commissions' task. During this period, over 50 statement-takers had been deployed throughout the country to gather a total of 1371 testimonies. A second part of the statement-taking phase had lasted from the beginning of February 2003 until 31 March, 2003. President Kabbah launched the most vital segment of the commissions' work on 14 April, 2003. Hearings of the victims, witnesses and perpetrators were held around the country until the 18 July, 2003. The young age of the victims led the commission to hold many of its hearings in "huis clos" and to conspire with the Child Protection Agency Network. A first evaluation of these elements granted the Commission to highlight information on more than 3000 victims.¹¹¹ In order to achieve the objectives of the TRC, the mandate was empowered to make recommendations on necessary reconstruction.

¹¹⁰The Government of Sierra Leone, "The Truth and Reconciliation Act of 2000", Part III – Functions of the Commission, para. 6(1). *Sierra Leone Web*, available at: www.sierra-leone last accessed, April 4th, 2005.

¹¹¹ TRC Trial Sierra Leone, 2014 trial-ch.org.

4.1.3 The TRC Recommendations

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommended that a certain percentage of lost income (under the Workers Compensation Act) be granted to the war survivors according to the type of their injury.¹¹² It also recommended non-monetary reparations. It endorsed that amputees should be supplied with free health care for life, prosthetic and orthotic devices, and physical and psycho-social restoration (especially for amputee children). As it was recommended:

The report shall...make recommendations concerning the reforms and other measures whether legal, political, administrative or otherwise, needed to achieve the object of the Commission, namely the object of providing impartial historical record, preventing the repetition of the violations or abuses suffered, addressing impunity, responding to the needs of victims and promoting healing and reconciliation.¹¹³

To achieve all these recommendations, the Commission used to refer to the National Commission for Social Action as the implementing body to monitor the Special Fund for War Victims (Article 24) as recommended in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The Special Fund for War Victims had to be established no later than three months after the handover of the Commission's report. The capital for this fund would be provided from the income generated from mineral resources, seized assets from convicted criminals of war and other available legal sources.¹¹⁴ The Lome Accord advocated that the "proceeds from the transactions of gold and diamonds should be public monies which should enter a special Treasury

¹¹² "The Commission determined that for certain benefits to be accorded to victims, the violation committed against the victim must constitute a 50% or more reduction in earning capacity. This can be the result of one injury or an aggregate of injuries that total or exceed the 50% benchmark. In making the decision to use the reduction of earning capacity as a cut-off point for some of the measures in the reparations program, the Commission was influenced by the practices employed by the Inter-American Court for Human Rights and the German Holocaust reparations scheme" (Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, 10:68).

¹¹³ The Truth and Reconciliation Act of 2000" (note 50), Part V – "Report and Recommendations", para. 15(2).

¹¹⁴ Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, 5:227

account in order to be spent on compensation for incapacitating war victims among other things". (Article 7:6)

Indeed, the Sierra Leonean government duty was to implement the recommendations requested by the TRC Act 2000 in a faithful and timely manner. However, according to some critics as well as some human rights organizations such as Amnesty International, Witness and Campaign for Good Governance, the government of Sierra Leone did not give great consideration to its legal obligations. Many of the recommendations of the Commission regarding political reforms, the improvement of good governance and the struggle against corruption were either ignored or rejected by the government. Although the endorsements concerning reparations for victims were accepted in principle, it had taken the government two years after the release of the report to think about the Special Fund for War Victims which was established in December, 2009. Though, the Sierra Leonean government provided victims with education, training skills and medical services, the most important recommendations for establishing a long-term peace were not respected. According to what was mentioned, it seemed that the inclusion in decision making in the Truth and Reconciliation process was not satisfactory to the majority of the participants. The latter stated that they were not consulted in the project design,"They invited us to participate in this Truth and Reconciliation thing, but nobody asked us to be involved in making the decision ".¹¹⁵

Many participants stated that they were "mistrustful of participating from the beginning" because it was a project "handed down from Geneva" and was not a local initiative.¹¹⁶ Most of them said that their involvement

¹¹⁵ Gottschalk, "How are We in this World Now?",48.

¹¹⁶ Ibid,49.

did not yield the reparations they had aspired. Effectively, the government and international partners saw that justice was necessary. As a result, in 2000 the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1315 requesting the Secretary-General to start negotiations with the Sierra Leonean government to establish a Special Court.

4.2 The Special Court for Sierra Leone.

4.2.1 The Establishment of the Special Court.

On 12 June, 2000, President Kabbah sent a petition to the Secretary-General of the United Nations Kofi Annan in which he requested the establishment of a Special Court as the following extract demonstrates:

[To] prosecute persons who bear the greatest responsibility for serious violations of international humanitarian law and Sierra Leonean law committed in the territory of Sierra Leone since 30 November 1996; including those leaders who, in committing such crimes, have threatened the establishment of and implementation of the peace process in Sierra Leone.¹¹⁷

President Kabbah's letter to the United Nations envisaged a court that would benefit from the strong enforcement powers of the Security Council. It included the limitations of the national justice system. It particularly requested the members of the RUF to be reliable in the proposed tribunal:

...[W]ith regard to the magnitude and extent of the crimes committed, Sierra Leone does not have the resources or expertise to conduct trials for such crimes... [A special court is required] to try and bring to credible justice those members of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and their accomplices responsible for committing crimes against the people of Sierra Leone and for the taking of United Nations peacekeepers as hostages.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Article I (1), Agreement between the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone on the Establishment of a Special Court for Sierra Leone, Freetown, 16 January 2002.

¹¹⁸ Letter dated 12 June 2000, from President. Ahmad Tejan Kabbah to the United Nations, addressed to the Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

On 14 August, 2000, the United Nations Security Council mandated the Secretary-General of the United Nations to prepare a report on the subject within thirty days because the Security Council recognized that in the special conditions of Sierra Leone, a credible system of justice and accountability for the very serious crimes committed there, would end impunity and would contribute to the process of national reconciliation and to the recovery and preservation of peace. Thus, on 4 October, 2000,¹¹⁹ the report was issued. The established court was to be of mixed composition, with both Sierra Leonean and non-Sierra Leonean jurists making up its three organs: the Chambers (or Judges); the Office of the Prosecutor and the Registry.

On 16 January, 2002, the UN and the government of Sierra Leone signed an agreement establishing the court. A contract was awarded to Sierra Leonean Construction Systems, the largest construction company in Sierra Leone, to build the establishment that would house the court. The first staff members reached Freetown in July 2002.¹²⁰ The cost for the Court was roughly U.S. \$104 million,¹²¹ comparing to that of the International Criminal Tribunal in Rwanda or Yugoslavia which each cost roughly U.S. \$120 million per year.¹²² The majority of the funding for the Special Court was obtained from voluntary donations from states and the court was in charge of increasing its own funds.¹²³

¹¹⁹ The "Report of the Secretary-General on the Establishment of a Special Court for Sierra Leone", UN Doc. S/2000/915.

¹²⁰ International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda Budget, 2006; International Center for Transitional Justice, 2007.

¹²¹ Gottschalk, "How are We in this World Now?", 58.

¹²² Ibid, 52

¹²³ Special Court Agreement, 2002.

4.2.2 The Objectives and Workings of the Special Court.

The Special Court operated under the principle of universal jurisdiction which applied to war crimes, crimes against humanity, slavery and torture.¹²⁴ The United Nations Commission on Human Rights specifically reminded all factions and forces in Sierra Leone of this principle, stating:

In any armed conflict including an armed conflict of a non-international character, the willful killing and torture or inhuman treatment of persons taking no Active part in the hostilities constitute grave breaches of international humanitarian law.¹²⁵

The Court stated that perpetrators of war crimes had to be held accountable for the country's lasting peace that had come through the restoration of a sense of the rule of law.¹²⁶ The Statute of the Special Court did not follow the example of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court by authorizing the Special Court to award reparations for victims of crimes within its jurisdiction, including restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition.¹²⁷

The Special Court in Sierra Leone had broad jurisdiction to indict citizens of Sierra Leone and other countries for crimes committed in Sierra Leone between November 1996 and 2002. However, the court was expected to prosecute only approximately 20 individuals who had the greatest authority and responsibility for committed crimes. The issue of the indictment and prosecution of the Liberian President Charles Taylor for his role in the atrocities committed in Sierra Leone was of great importance.

¹²⁴ *Special Court for Sierra Leone: Statement to the National Victims Commemoration Conference, Freetown, 1 and 2 March 2005* (AI Index: 51/002/2005), 1 March 2005.

¹²⁵ Amnesty International, *Sierra Leone: Ending impunity and achieving justice – Amnesty International's message to the National Victims Commemoration Conference*, AI Index: AFR 51/004/2005 (Public), News Service No: 045.

¹²⁶ Special Court Agreement, 2002.

¹²⁷ *Special Court for Sierra Leone: Statement to the National Victims Commemoration Conference, Freetown, 1 and 2 March 2005* (AI Index: 51/002/2005), 1 March 2005.

The first indictments were handed down in March 2003 against seven individuals, including the RUF's Foday Sankoh, former AFRC leader, former member of parliament Johnny Paul Koroma and leader of the Kamajors and Interior Minister Sam Hinga Norman.¹²⁸

4.2.3 The Involvement of Disabled People in Decision Making.

The majority of participants with disabilities stated that their experience with inclusion in decision making during the peace building process, was to a large extent crucial. Four specific areas regarding participation in decision making were important for them: the electoral process, the Truth and Reconciliation process, the Special Court, and engagement in peace conferences. For participants, inclusion generally meant the opportunity to be involved in the processes that affect their lives.

In the Special Court, participants were also concerned with consultation in the decision making process. The issue of safety was important for them when testifying. Many of them were "terrified" and "afraid" of revenge from aggressors if they came forward to express themselves. One participant reminded:

Nobody was really clear what the difference was in telling our stories to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission or the Special Court, they were set up side by side and we believed that what we told them was taken through an underground tunnel and reported to the Special Court. I decided it was only worth the risk if I knew that it would help justice come to Sierra Leone.¹²⁹

All those who testified at the Court were guaranteed safety through an anonymous testimony process, but most of them still scared for their physical and emotional safety. Thus, their protection was a key requirement

¹²⁸ Gottschalk, "How are We in this World Now?",62.

¹²⁹ Ibid,63

for their participation in the peace processes. One young female participant, who was raped and amputated in the war pointed out:

I expected that when I came forward and told the court what happened, then that would be enough to put him away forever and now look, there has only been something like eleven people actually gone to jail. It makes me feel very bad. I should not have gone to the Court.¹³⁰

The majority of participants were not satisfied with the bad results of the war, especially the disabled, because they were not consulted in deciding which peace processes were suitable for their country. In one case, a participant stated that he was "angered" because he was never consulted on whether this was the best process for sentencing the war criminals. This participant had been approached by the Special Court through the participants' community sensitization programme which sought to make the public aware of the mandate of the Special Court and enhance people who had survived the war to take part. He stated:

They began sensitizing us in the villages and telling us that we should come and testify and that it would bring us peace. What about our own ways of bringing justice?" Another participant stated, "The international people all tell us we need these things to bring peace but did anyone ask us, the real victims what we thought would best heal our wounds."¹³¹

Still, few participants had a positive perspective about their inclusion in the decision making process. Some of them pointed out that the ability to "exert political will after the war restored a sense of control and meaning to life and to the atrocity that occurred", and allowed them to "demonstrate their desire for peace."¹³²

¹³⁰ Gottschalk, "How are We in this World Now?",63.

¹³¹ Ibid,64.

¹³² Ibid.

Conclusion

It's noteworthy that as a consequence of the war, Sierra Leone had remained at the bottom of the global human development ladder, as measured by the UNDP Human Development Index. The Sierra Leonean government attempted to assist in the achievement of peace, but it depended too much on external actors. Besides, material and financial constraints had severely circumscribed its efforts. Furthermore, the damage of the economic infrastructure, especially the attacks on the mining and agricultural areas, had reduced public revenue to a minimum. The increased defense outlays made necessary by the war also absorbed much of the already reduced revenue.

In fact, for any future mechanisms of post-conflict transitional justice, the inclusion of compensation provisions for victims was crucial. Both the TRC and the Special Court espoused various methods of achieving reconciliation and accountability. In most cases, the creation of both TRCs and international tribunals was a response to times of conflict, oppression and systemic abuse. They were established in the hope of paving the way for a nation to jump from a hard situation and an authoritarian rule to an era of stability and to assist society in moving forward psychologically, legally, politically, culturally and in some cases, spiritually. In a broad sense, they were a way of dealing with past violence in the hope of securing higher objectives: peace, justice, reconciliation and accountability.¹³³

¹³³ Marissa Miraldi, *Overcoming Obstacles of Justice: The Special Court of Sierra Leone*, 19 New York Law School Journal of Human Rights 849, 855 ,2003.

To rebuild the Sierra Leonean economy, society and infrastructure, a vast array of national and international mechanisms had to be engaged. As the TRC Report noted, all the social sections had a responsibility to work towards a stable Sierra Leone. Tackling bad governance, corruption, intolerance, mass unemployment and poverty problems were a massive undertaking. There were also problems that the truth commission and international tribunal could indirectly hope to alleviate. The justice, accountability and reconciliation sought by the TRC and the Special Court had to be more than merely symbolic.

Indeed, peace processes were carried out in Sierra Leone in order to end the civil war, restore order and bring justice. On one hand, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission sought to provide a historical account of atrocities and promote reconciliation process. On the other hand, the Special Court was mandated with the task of trying war criminals in an internationally recognized court. When evaluated on these terms, the Special Court succeeded in rendering a measure of justice for some of the worst atrocities in Sierra Leone. Besides, the electoral process of 2002 was another process that sought to bring peace and stability to Sierra Leone. Overall, these processes were implemented and involved a wide range of war survivors, including persons disabled by the war.

General Conclusion

Since its independence, Sierra Leone had never experienced a truly democratic or accountable government, a succession of ineffectual leaders alternated with a series of several “big men”¹ who took their turns at attempting to knit a nation-state out of its fractured colonial heritage. Consequently, this tiny country gradually fell victim to continued coups, corrupt and a long period of bad governance. Siaka Stevens’ patrimonial system of governance that covered the period between 1968 and 1985 was characterised by political repression, economic mismanagement, corruption, rural isolation, ethno-regional rivalries and mismanagement of the diamond resources. The illegal exploitation of the country’s mineral resources to obtain weapons assisted to a large extent in the onset of the civil war.

Economic and political factors interacted closely: the pervasive corruption and lack of trust and accountability in public offices; the failure of the Sierra Leonean authorities to properly manage the country's huge economic and natural resources for the benefit of their society as a whole; the total absence of true democratic practices like free and fair elections. Besides, youth alienation coupled with unemployment and exclusion, and its subsequent radicalization culminated in the formation of the rebel movement. Thus, youths played a major role in the onset of the civil war.

Another factor was the security systems of the country, which were not only poorly managed, but also ill equipped, unprofessional and weak. This resulted in their failure to protect the lives and property of civilians and their inability to defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the

¹Ero, C, *The Legacies of Authoritarianism and Political Violence: Governing Insecurity* (Ed) by Gavin Cawthra and Robin Luckman, Zed Books, Vol1. 2003,234.

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country in the face of the Revolutionary United Front invasion on 23 March, 1991.

To defeat the RUF, Executive Outcomes (EO), the South African private security firm was introduced in 1994. EO was a product of the Strasser government's efforts to attack the RUF and support the SLA in military operations. As a military force, EO was highly skilled and easily able to outmanoeuvre and outperform the RUF rebels. It acted aggressively to conduct fighting operations throughout Sierra Leone. Another strength of EO was its ability to train and employ SLA soldiers and kamajors in their operations. As the Canadian General Ian Douglas, a UN negotiator, stated: "EO gave Sierra Leone a sense of stability during this critical time. EO was by far the superior military force in the country and quickly turned the military tide in favor of the government." The SLA also benefited from the training and expertise provided by EO.

ECOMOG was another external military intervention which aimed at safeguarding peace and security in West Africa. It intervened when conflicts arose. But, its units suffered from a variety of operational and tactical military weaknesses. Most ECOMOG troops were unfamiliar with the Sierra Leonean field and with jungle warfare. They often relied on the kamajors to conduct operations in the hinterlands. During most of the eighteen months deployment, ECOMOG had not sufficient soldiers to control Freetown. This inadequacy left the rest of the land in the hands of the rebels. Though plagued by many military weaknesses of its own, under-equipped and under-funded, ECOMOG as we have previously mentioned, was sufficiently powerful to restore the Kabbah's government to power and enable it to negotiate with the RUF rebels. Indeed, ECOMOG could do better if ECOWAS countries leaders fought for unity in the region, for a

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better financial and logistical support to the institution. Considering all the above cited facts, we conclude that ECOMOG was a necessary peacekeeping institution in West Africa.

The UN also assisted in the intervention. It sought to stabilize the country. To achieve this, it negotiated peace treaties, assisted in reforming the military and police, set up a legal framework to manage war crimes and oversaw elections. Peace agreements were brokered and concluded between the government and the main opposing warring factions. These included the Abidjan Peace Accord, the Conakry Peace Plan, the Lome Peace Agreement and the Abuja Ceasefire Agreement. However, the most comprehensive among all these agreements was the Lome Peace Agreement. It provided a cessation of hostilities; the transformation of the RUF into a political party; the creation of a broad based government of national unity; the holding of general elections; the encampment, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants; provision on humanitarian, human rights and socio economic issues. It also included the release of prisoners and abductees and the establishment of a truth and reconciliation commission to address impunity and human rights violations. Due to these substantive changes, Sierra Leone had not experienced significant violence since the signing of the Abuja Accord.

Like the UN, the British intervention was also strong in its enforcement ability and successfully deterred violence from the rebel fighters. Their involvement in Sierra Leone provided the perception of strength to curtail violence, dissuade spoilers and display commitment by the international community toward peacekeeping efforts. However, war would not recur after their departure because of the concurrent DDR and security sector reform of the RSLA forces by UNAMSIL. While the British

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forces helped in deterring violence, UNAMSIL altered the conflict environment by disarming rebels and training the RSLA security forces. In fact, the British provided a visible military threat and added an intelligence capability to the UN mission.

The strong presence of the United Nations peacekeeping troops and their strategy played a crucial role in the conflict. They enabled the Revolutionary United Front to adhere to the ceasefire agreements and subsequently began the DDR process which laid the foundations of peace in the country. It is also important to note that the DDR programme served as a catalyst to the whole peace process. However, the success of the implementation of the DDR programme could be credited to the political will of the various parties, especially the government, the support of the international community that provided the necessary funds and the cooperation of the armed groups.

On the other hand, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone was established to investigate and report the causes, context and conduct of the conflict. Its objective was also to provide a forum where both the victims and perpetrators could relate their experiences. Even though the commission suffered from lack of adequate funding and serious mismanagement and staff recruitment problems, it successfully gained the participation of major stakeholder groups including women, children, amputees and ex-combatants. However, the Special Court for Sierra Leone, as illustrated in the previous chapter, was established through an agreement between the Sierra Leonean Government and the United Nations in 2002 to prosecute those who were responsible of the atrocities committed in the civil war. Besides, the electoral process of 2002 was another process that sought to bring peace and stability to Sierra Leone.

General Conclusion

Indeed, peace processes were carried out in Sierra Leone in order to end the civil war, restore order and bring justice. Furthermore, post-war trauma caused by the brutalities of wartime experiences might be healed if all sectors of post-war civil society were taken into account and carried along in the reconstruction and reconciliation processes. Therefore, all hands were to be on deck to promote post-war reconstruction and peace building. Successful post-war peace building and reconstruction hinged largely on the availability of funds, support and commitment to the realization of complete disarmament, demobilization and the reintegration of former fighters.

It is worth mentioning that the attainment of peace in Sierra Leone was not only limited to the efforts of the international community alone. It involved a large number of local stakeholders, including members of the civil society (the Inter Religious Council, Women's groups, Trade Unions, etc) who were very instrumental in the search for peace and played a crucial role towards its attainment. Eventually, resolving the Sierra Leonean civil conflict involved a high level of diplomatic discourse in persuading the conflict parties to a negotiated settlement. However, it should be realized that the Revolutionary United Front and the other factions of the conflict would have never succumbed to a negotiated settlement of the conflict if they had not been forced to do so through military pressure from the government loyal forces, troops from the United Kingdom and the United Nations peacekeepers. In fact, efforts should not just be limited to prevent the conflict, but also to address the root causes of the conflict through initiatives so as to discourage bad governance, economic deprivation and exclusion.

General Conclusion

For a lasting peace and effective and sustainable reconstruction, Sierra Leone had to establish effective and accountable security agencies capable of providing the basis for broader socio-economic reconstruction and of protecting the security not only of the state, but also of its citizens and respond adequately to external threats and implement a comprehensive policy on the possession of small arms and light weapons that were the most common and favourite tools of destruction in Sierra Leone's civil war. Sierra Leone had also to provide its citizens with their basic needs, safety, justice and develop targeted programmes for youth employment to enhance their sense of worth and citizenship. It had also to encourage economic activities, promote its self-sufficiency, expand manufacturing, strengthen the mining sector and rebuild its infrastructure. Furthermore, the improvement of the educational sector and the learning environment are so essential therefore Sierra Leone had to build more schools and train additional teachers to guarantee access to education for more children. Health and economic empowerment as well as political participation for progressive development of women in the Sierra Leonean society deemed necessary to secure peace and achieve fruitful results in the aftermath of the conflict.

On the whole, the benefits of peace extended beyond the absence of violence. That is, peace involved the creation of those institutions and structures that encouraged greater resilience and fostered human development. Accordingly, encouraging peace through the development of the appropriate attitudes, institutions and structures that sustained peace, both reduced violence containment expenditure and stimulated the fulfillment of human potential. Moreover, Sierra Leone's recovery from

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economic meltdown, political and social turmoil depended to a large extent on how it managed its vitally important extractive sector, especially the diamond industry. Similarly the key to the country's restoration from this situation towards development and successful post-war peace building and reconstruction hinged widely on the availability of funds, support, good governance, good economy, transparency, justice and conflict prevention that fitted national interest.

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Appendices

Appendix A : Acronyms

AFRC: Armed Forces Ruling Council. A military junta established after a coup in 1997, which was driven from power by Nigerian forces operating under the umbrella of ECOMOG in February 1998. Troops loyal to the AFRC retreated to the countryside and continued to operate as armed opponents of the restored democratic government.

APC: All People's Congress. A political party formed by the late Siaka Stevens, which held power until a military coup in 1992.

CDF: Civil Defence Force. Officially a government-aligned militia force of about 40,000, the name is given to a number of local militias, most notably the Kamajors, who are in fact largely independent of government control.

ECOMOG: ECOWAS Cease-Fire Monitoring Group. Originally organized in 1990 to intervene in Liberia, it has evolved into an umbrella for various regional interventions in which Nigeria has played a leading role.

ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States. A regional economic grouping which has become a key diplomatic forum for organizing regional military interventions in Sierra Leone, Liberia and elsewhere.

EO: Executive Outcomes. A South African security company run by former members of the South African Special Forces. Employed by the Sierra Leone government in 1995-6, it decisively altered the military balance. Its contract was terminated under the terms of the Abidjan peace agreement in early 1997. EO has subsequently been dissolved, but some of its associates have recently worked for President Taylor of Liberia and have aided the RUF.

NPRC: National Provisional Ruling Council. A military junta established after a coup in 1992 chaired by Valentine Strasser. It ceded power to an elected government in 1996.

RUF: Revolutionary United Front/Sierra Leone. A revolutionary group formed by Sierra Leone citizens in Libya in the late 1980s and led by Foday Sankoh. It began its armed campaign in March 1991. It is particularly known for its use of terror tactics such as amputation and mutilation.

SLA: Sierra Leone Army. The armed force of the Sierra Leone government.

SLPP: Sierra Leone People's Party. A political party which held power immediately after independence and again since 1996. Regarded as having a power-base particularly among the Mende people, one of the country's largest ethnic groups.

UNAMSIL: United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, established by UN Security Council Resolution 1270 of October 1999.

Appendices

Appendix B

Year	Naional	International
1991	Start of civil war. Foday Sankoh and Revolutionary United Front (RUF) began campaign against President Momoh.	
	Momoh ousted in military coup led by Captain Valentine Strasser.	
1996	January – Strasser ousted in military coup led by Brigadier Bio. Ahmad Tejan Kabbah elected president	
	February, launches National Strategy For Good Governance.	
	November – Kabbah signed Abidjan peace accord with Sankoh's RUF.	Strong international support for Kabbah government. UK agreed assistance for governance reform and budgetary aid.
1997	Peace deal unravels. President Kabbah deposed in May by coalition of army officers led by Major-General Paul Koroma AFRC and RUF; Koroma suspended the constitution; Kabbah fled to Guinea to mobilize international support.	UK supported Kabbah's government-in-exile which developed 90-day programme for its return.
		October – The UN Security Council imposed sanctions against Sierra Leone, barring the supply of arms and petroleum products. A British company, Sandline, nonetheless supplied 'logistical support', including rifles, to Kabbah allies.
1998	February - Nigerian-led West African intervention force ECOMOG storms Freetown and drove rebels out.	July – Donor conference. Publication of the official Legg/Ibbs enquiry into the Sandline affair.
	March : Kabbah made a triumphant return to Freetown and, in May, launched development programme.	
	October: junta soldiers executed for treason.	
1999	January: AFRC soldiers and RUF seized parts of Freetown from ECOMOG. After weeks of bitter fighting they were driven out, leaving behind 5,000 dead and a devastated city.	February:– publication of House of Commons Select Committee report on Sierra Leone and Sandline. From April, international, mainly British assistance regained momentum in police, security sector.

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1999	July : Six weeks of talks in Lomé resulted in a peace agreement, under which the rebels received posts in government and assurances they would not be prosecuted for war crimes.	From July : Major international assistance for disarmament (DDR) programme began.
2000	February : Anti-Corruption Commission and Governance Reform Secretariat established.	Early 2000 : Post-conflict IMF and World Bank assistance approved.
	April/May: UN forces came under attack in the east of the country. Several hundred UN troops were abducted.	March: London donor conference For DDR programme. UK support For chieftaincy began.
	May : Rebels closed on in Freetown but RUF leader Sankoh was arrested.	May : 800 British paratroopers were sent to Freetown to evacuate British citizens and to help secure the airport for UN peacekeepers.
	August : Eleven British soldiers had taken hostage by a renegade militia group called the West Side Boys.	November/December : RUF fighters invaded SE Guinea.
2001	January : Government postponed presidential and parliamentary elections because of continuing insecurity.	February : Guinean forces defeated the RUF.
	March : UN troops for the first time began to deploy peacefully in rebel-held territory.	
	May :Disarmament of rebels began, and British-trained Sierra Leone army started deploying in rebel-held areas. Late 2001 Government /UNAMSIL took control of eastern diamond districts.	
2002	January : War declared over. UN mission said disarmament of 45,000 fighters was complete.	March : HIPC debt relief granted.
	May : Kabbah won a landslide victory in elections. Government launched National Recovery Strategy.	July:: British troops left Sierra Leone.
	June : Chieftaincy elections.	November : Paris donor conference.
2003	July: Rebel leader Foday Sankoh died of natural causes while waiting to be tried for war crimes	February : UK/SL long-term agreement was signed.
2004	March:UN-backed war crimes tribunal opened the Special Court to try senior militia leaders from both sides of civil war.	
	May: First local elections in more than three decades.	
	June : Special Court trials began.	

Appendices

Appendix C

The Cape Town Principles

The Cape Town Principles and Best Practices (1997) defines a “child soldier” as “any person under 18 years of age who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to cooks, porters, messengers and anyone accompanying such groups, other than purely as family members. The definition includes girls recruited for sexual purposes and forced marriage. It does not, therefore, only refer to a child who is carrying or has carried arms.”

Source: United Nations. 2006. Operational Guide to the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards. New York: United Nations.

http://www.unddr.org/iddrs/iddrs_guide.php.

UN Security Council Resolution 1325

UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) measures the advancement of women in all aspects of peace-building and “encourages all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependants.”

Source: United Nations. 2006. Operational Guide to the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards. New York: United Nations.

http://www.unddr.org/iddrs/iddrs_guide.php.

Definition of Disarmament

“Disarmament is the collection, documentation, control and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives and light and heavy weapons of combatants and often also of the civilian population. Disarmament also includes the development of responsible arms management programs.”

Source: United Nations. 2005. “Note by the Secretary-General on Administrative and Budgetary Aspects of the Financing of UN Peacekeeping Operations.” A/C.5/59/31, May 24.

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Definition of Demobilization

“Demobilization is the formal and controlled discharge of active combatants from armed forces or other armed groups. The first stage of demobilization may extend from the processing of individual combatants in temporary centers to the massing of troops in camps designated for this purpose (cantonment sites, encampments ,assembly areas or barracks). The second stage of demobilization encompasses the support package provided to the demobilized, which is called reinsertion.”

Source: United Nations. 2005. “Note by the Secretary-General on Administrative and Budgetary Aspects of the Financing of UN Peacekeeping Operations.” A/C.5/59/31, May 24.

Definition of Reinsertion

“Reinsertion is the assistance offered to ex-combatants during demobilization but prior to the longer term process of reintegration. Reinsertion is a form of transitional assistance to help cover the basic needs of ex-combatants and their families and can include transitional safety allowances, food, clothes, shelter, medical services, short-term education, training, employment and tools. While reintegration is a long-term, continuous social and economic process of development, reinsertion is a short term material and/or financial assistance to meet immediate needs, and can last up to one year.”

Source: United Nations. 2005. “Note by the Secretary-General on Administrative and Budgetary Aspects of the Financing of UN Peacekeeping Operations.” A/C.5/59/31, May 24.

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Definition of Reintegration

“Reintegration is the process by which ex-combatants acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income. Reintegration is essentially a social and economic process with an open time frame, primarily taking place in communities at the local level. It is part of the general development of a country and a national responsibility and often necessitates long-term external assistance.”

Source: United Nations. 2005. “Note by the Secretary-General on Administrative and Budgetary Aspects of the Financing of UN Peacekeeping Operations.” A/C.5/59/31, May 24.

Appendices

Appendix D

Abuja Ceasefire Agreement.

The Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF

Reaffirming their determination to establish sustainable peace, stability and security in Sierra Leone;

Also **reaffirming** their commitment to the Lome Peace Agreement of 7 July 1999, as the framework for the restoration of genuine and lasting peace to the country;

Desirous of adopting effective confidence-building measures so as to create a conducive environment for fresh application of the Lome Peace Agreement, which constitutes the most appropriate framework for the resolution of the conflict in Sierra Leone;

Welcoming the emergence of a new leadership within the RUF and noting its stated commitment to work towards the restoration of peace to Sierra Leone **Hereby Agree** as follows:

- 1.** To declare and observe a cease-fire and to halt hostilities with effect from Friday 10th November 2000 starting at 23:59 hours.
- 2.** The parties agree to refrain from committing any acts or carrying out any activities that might constitute or facilitate a violation of the cease-fire.
- 3.** They agree that the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone shall supervise and monitor the cease-fire. The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone shall also investigate and report on any acts of cease-fire violation.
- 4.** Both parties agree that UNAMSIL shall have full liberty to deploy its troops and other personnel throughout Sierra Leone including the diamond producing areas in the discharge of its responsibilities.
- 5.** The parties undertake, with a view to restoring the authority of the Government throughout the entire territory of Sierra Leone, to ensure free movement of persons and goods, unimpeded movement of humanitarian agencies, and of refugees and displaced persons.

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- 6.** The RUF commits itself to the immediate return of all weapons, ammunitions and other equipment seized by the RUF.
- 7.** The two parties agree to recommence immediately the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Program.
- 8.** The Government of Sierra Leone reaffirmed its commitment to accelerate the process of restructuring and training of the Sierra Leone armed forces open to all Sierra Leoneans eligible to enroll.
- 9.** The following shall constitute a violation of this Agreement:
 - a-** All illegal importation of arms, and other weapons of war;
 - b-** Any attack by one of the parties against the positions of the other party before, during or after the deployment of UNAMSIL troops;
 - c-** Laying of mines or incendiary devices after the entry into force of this Agreement, the refusal to disclose the existence of such mines or explosives and their location, and the deliberate refusal to cooperate by turning over the maps indicating such locations;
 - d-** Harassment or attacks, hostage taking, and seizure of arms and equipment belonging to troops serving under the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, or under the authority of the Government of Sierra Leone;
 - e-** Obstructing the activities of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone.
- 10.** The ultimate objective of the present Agreement is to ensure a cease-fire and to bring an end to the hostilities. Consequently, the parties agree to undertake with the participation of the ECOWAS Committee of six of the Medication and Security Council on Sierra Leone and the United Nations, a review of the implementation of this Agreement, thirty (30) days after its entry into force, to evaluate the timeliness of commencing fresh application of the Lome Peace Agreement.

Done at Abuja November, 2000.

Abstract:

Sierra Leone is among the African countries which plunged into a brutal armed conflict that lasted for a long time and had disastrous effects on the country. The war in this country was a product of a complex combination of both internal and external factors. The conflict went on for many years with the rebel forces which used terror tactics of various designs to instill fear and get recognition from the civilian population. Its inability to provide its own security led to its dependence on foreign mercenaries for security. Peace accords provided a framework for a speedy disarmament process. Moreover, external intervention and committed response of the international community, including for example ECOMOG, UNAMSIL and the British army were very important in coercing the warring factions to a negotiating table. As disarmament progressed, peace began to seem more attainable. Thus, the disarmament programme was completed in January, 2002 and the war was officially declared over. The conflict destroyed all economic activities and social and agricultural projects were vandalized or completely looted. Consequently, the crises left the country much more disenchanted. This interruption however, provided an opportunity for the government and people to set fresh goals and priorities for the Sierra Leonean society. Furthermore, they have to start all over again to rebuild their lives and rehabilitate the structures which served them well over the years. The core purpose of this work is to seek the origins and reasons that were behind the onset of the civil war in Sierra Leone and the efforts made to end it. Subsequently, it attempts to highlight the impact of the civil war on life in Sierra Leone and how Sierra Leoneans were displaced, brutalised and tortured, and the devastating effects of the conflict on the social, political, economic field and the infrastructure of the country as a whole.

Key words : Sierra Leone, civil war, terror tactic, child soldiers, intervention, peace, impact.

L'effondrement d'une nation: la guerre civile, la tactique et l'impact. Étude de cas: Sierra Leone. (1991-2002)

Résumé :

La Sierra Leone est parmi les pays africains qui ont plongé dans un conflit armé brutal qui a duré longtemps et a eu des effets désastreux sur le pays. La guerre dans ce pays était le produit d'une combinaison complexe de facteurs internes et externes. Le conflit a duré de nombreuses années avec les forces rebelles qui ont utilisé des tactiques de terreur de diverses conceptions pour inculquer la peur et obtenir la reconnaissance de la population civile. Son incapacité à fournir sa propre sécurité a conduit à sa dépendance à l'égard des mercenaires étrangers pour la sécurité. Les accords de paix ont fourni un cadre pour un processus rapide de désarmement. En outre, l'intervention extérieure et la réaction de la communauté internationale, y compris par exemple l'ECOMOG, la UNAMSIL et l'armée britannique, ont été très importantes pour contraindre les factions belligérantes à une table de négociation. Au fur et à mesure que le désarmement progresse, la paix commence à sembler plus réalisable. Ainsi, le programme de désarmement a été achevé en janvier 2002 et la guerre a été officiellement déclarée finis. Le conflit a détruit toutes les activités économiques et les projets sociaux et agricoles qui ont été vandalisés ou complètement pillés. Par conséquent, les crises ont laissé le pays beaucoup plus désenchanté. Cette interruption a toutefois permis au gouvernement et au peuple de fixer de nouveaux objectifs et priorités pour la société sierra-léonaise et de recommencer à reconstruire leur vie et à réhabiliter les structures qui leur ont été bien servies au fil des ans. Le but principal de ce travail est de chercher les origines et les raisons qui ont été à l'origine de la guerre civile en Sierra Leone et les efforts déployés pour y mettre fin. Par la suite, il tente de souligner l'impact de la guerre civile sur la vie en Sierra Leone et la façon dont les Sierra-Léonais ont été déplacés, brutalisés et torturés, ainsi que les effets dévastateurs du conflit sur le terrain social, politique, économique et sur l'infrastructure du pays on ensemble.

Mots clés: Sierra Leone, guerre civile, tactique de terreur, enfant soldats, intervention, paix, impact.

أخبار أمة: الحرب الأهلية، التكتيكات والتأثير. دراسة حالة: سيراليون. (1991-2002)

الملخص

سيراليون من بين البلدان الأفريقية التي عانت من الصراع المسلح الوحشي الذي استمر لفترة طويلة وكان له آثار كارثية على البلاد. كانت الحرب في هذا البلد نتاج مزيج معقد من العوامل الداخلية والخارجية على حد سواء. دام الصراع سنوات عديدة مع قوات المتمردين التي تستخدم التكتيكات الإرهابية من مختلف التصاميم لغرس الخوف والحصول على اعتراف من السكان المدنيين. أدى عدم قدرتها على توفير أمنها إلى اعتمادها على المرتزقة الأجانب للأمن. وفرت اتفاقات السلام إطاراً لعملية نزع السلاح بشكل سريع. علاوة على ذلك، كان التدخل الخارجي والاستجابة المترتبة من المجتمع الدولي، بما في ذلك على سبيل المثال فريق المراقبين، بعثة الأمم المتحدة والجيش البريطاني مهم جداً في إجبار الفصائل المتحاربة إلى مائدة المفاوضات. مع تطور نزع السلاح، بدأ السلام يبدو أقرب منالاً. وهكذا، تم الانتهاء من برنامج نزع السلاح في يناير كانون الثاني عام 2002، وأعلن عن انتهاء الحرب رسمياً. دمر النزاع جميع الأنشطة الاقتصادية والمشاريع الاجتماعية والزراعية خريب أو نحت تماماً. ونتيجة لهذه، الأزمات أصبحت البلاد أكثر فتوراً. في حين منح هذا الانقطاع فرصة للحكومة والشعب لتحديد أهداف وأولويات جديدة للمجتمع السيراليوني، وادركت أنها يجب ان تبدأ من جديد لإعادة بناء حياتهم وإعادة تأهيل الهياكل التي عملت بشكل جيد على مر السنين. الغرض الأساسي من هذا العمل هو السعي لمعرفة الجذور والأسباب التي كانت وراء اندلاع الحرب الأهلية في سيراليون والجهود المبذولة لوضع حد لها. بعد ذلك، يحاول تسليط الضوء على أثر الحرب الأهلية على الحياة في سيراليون، وكيف شرد أبناء سيراليون وتعرضوا للوحشية والتعذيب، والآثار المدمرة للصراع على المجال الاجتماعي، السياسي، الاقتصادي والبنية التحتية للبلاد ككل.

كلمات مفتاحية: سيراليون، الحروب الأهلية، تكتيك الإرهاب، الأطفال الجنود، التدخل، السلام، تاتير.