



PROFILE OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT : SIERRA LEONE

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PROFILE SUMMARY

Summary

Significant gains in the peace process, resulting in improved security throughout the country, allowed for the return of some 45,000 IDPs to their homes of origin in 2001. The positive momentum looked set to continue: by January 2002, over 45,000 former fighters had handed in their weapons, and the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) declared the government's disarmament programme to be at an end (IRIN 7 January 2002). President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah then announced that the ten year civil war was over (UNAMSIL 18 January 2002).

Humanitarian access increased greatly in 2001, and recovery efforts began in the north and east of the country. However, fighting in neighbouring Guinea, and more particularly in Liberia, led to the premature repatriation of Sierra Leonean refugees, who remain displaced in the country. Many IDPs who returned to areas 'safe for resettlement' found a critical lack of basic community services and infrastructure, causing some to drift back to major urban centres (UN November 2001).

The UN cited a total of 247,590 registered IDPs in Sierra Leone as of November 2001 - the majority residing in managed camps - although it is widely believed the real number could be much higher, with many non-registered IDPs living in host communities (UN November 2001). An estimated 94,000 IDPs need to be resettled in 2002, according to the UN (UN OCHA 31 December 2001).

Conflict background and main causes of displacement

The armed rebellion was initiated by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in 1991. The conflict was initially confined to the southern and eastern areas of Sierra Leone, but within three years it had spread throughout Sierra Leone (Beattie 1998). Rebel forces have twice entered the capital; firstly in May 1997 when RUF and disloyal government troops (i.e. AFRC) established a military junta for nine months, and thereafter in January 1999 when the rebels terrorised and looted the capital before being driven out by Nigerian led ECOMOG forces. A violent retreat by the rebels caused a new influx of IDPs and hindered access of humanitarian assistance to most of the country (UN SC 4 March 1999). On 7 July 1999 the warring parties signed a peace accord, which envisaged permanent cessation of hostilities, the transformation of RUF into a political party and the creation of a broad-based Government of National Unity (UN SC 28 September 1999). However, escalated hostilities by the RUF rebels in May 2000, including hostage taking of UN troops, led to a breakdown of the peace process and continued suffering for the civil population (SC 31 July 2000).

The conflict spread during the second half of 2000 across the border to Guinea, including RUF attacks on Guinean villages and camps hosting Sierra Leonean refugees – leading to armed activities by Guinean troops inside Sierra Leone (OCHA 27 October 2000; 13 November 2000, IRIN 10 January 2001). An outcome of this fragile security situation has been additional internal displacement, as well as a return flow of Sierra Leonean refugees – many ending up in a situation of internal displacement as their home areas remained exposed to the RUF terror (WFP 5 January 2001; OCHA 10 March 2001).

Since the end of 2000 the rebels gradually signaled willingness to re-enter the peace process. Among others, the Government and RUF signed a new cease-fire agreement at Abuja on 10 November 2000, which was reiterated in May 2001 (UN SC 15 December 2000, paras.2, 22; 25 June 2001, para.11).

The completion of disarmament in January 2002, marking the official end of the civil war, paved the way for preparations for the country's parliamentary and presidential elections on May 14. The RUF continued to express their commitment to peace, and to proceed with the registration of their political party in order to contest the elections (UN OCHA 31 January 2002).

The armed conflict and the widespread human rights abuses associated with it have been the main causes for internal displacement in Sierra Leone. The civilian population has throughout the conflict been targeted deliberately by the rebel groups, and severe atrocities have been well documented (e.g. AI November 1998 & HRW 26 May 2000 & 5 June 2000). It has also been reported that additional displacement has been caused counter-insurgency operations by troops loyal to the Government (HRW 12 July 2000, OCHA 24 July 2000, HRW 7 July 2001).). Reflecting the cyclical nature of this conflict many Sierra Leoneans have been displaced and returned several times as the rebel forces have advanced or withdrawn.

Protection concerns

The internally displaced have not received adequate protection, among others, due to a collapse of the law enforcement system in Sierra Leone. Large parts of the country had for a long time been without police presence, and the national army, the Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces (RSMLF), was disbanded after its involvement in the 1997 military coup (UN SC 12 August 1998). Civilians outside rebel held areas received some protection by civil defense militias and the West African ECOMOG forces. However, the merciless atrocities by the rebel forces in January 1999 against civilians in Freetown revealed a situation of inadequate protection of civilians throughout the country (HRW 24 June 1999). During the 1999-2000 period when the "peace process" was still intact, there were reports of rebel abuses against IDPs even within areas apparently under government control (HRW 3 March 2000).

The Government has received support from the United Kingdom to re-establish a new Sierra Leonean Army, and approximately 3,000 troops had been trained by the United Kingdom military personnel by mid-December 2000 (UN SC 15 December 2000, para.30). These troops were during the first half of 2001 gradually deployed to the countryside, including regain of control over the Kambia district by June (UN SC 14 March 2001, para. 18; OCHA June 2001). In January 2002, with the war officially at an end, the United Kingdom announced it would keep 360 troops in Sierra Leone until the completion of elections scheduled for May 2002. The reformed Sierra Leone Army was renamed the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) and deployed throughout most of the country. (UN OCHA 31 January 2002)

Efforts have also been made to re-establish a national police force, and over 1,500 national officers had participated in various training programmes by end-2000 (UN SC 15 December 2000, paras. 43-44). The deployment of an advance party of Sierra Leone Police (SLP) officers to Koidu, eastern province, was announced in October 2001. (UN OCHA 15 October 2001)

The RUF rebels regularly abducted children, and it has been reported that use of children as combat soldiers both by RUF and pro-Government forces continued during 2000 (AI 31 August 2000; SC 31 July 2000, para.42). Children constitute about 60 percent of the IDPs and as many as 1.8 million children may at some time have been displaced since the outbreak of the war – making them extremely vulnerable (SCF 8 May 2000, p.93; 21 June 2001). More than 5,000 parents reported their children missing in the wake of the rebel attack on Freetown in January 1999 (OCHA 6 December 2000). However, there have been positive developments since the Abuja Meeting in 2001, with no further reports of large-scale abduction or conscription of children, and a total of 2,378 children demobilised or released by the RUF and CDF militia. (UN November 2001)

Women have also been exposed to grave human rights abuses by fighters on all sides to the conflict (UN CHR 1 February 2001; HRW 26 February 2001). A study by Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), published in January 2001, revealed the extent of war-related sexual abuse against IDPs (PHR 23 January 2002).

Shelter and health situation

Improvements in the security situation in many parts of the country, at the same time as insecurity in neighbouring Liberia and Guinea, have resulted in large movements of IDPs, returnees and ex-combatants. The strategy towards the flow of displaced from the border areas has been to assist communities to host the displaced rather than to add to already over-stretched camps or to create new ones (OCHA 2 October 2000;

NCRRR December 2000). However, humanitarian agencies have expressed concern at the limited capacity of host communities to absorb more people, in view of the poor infrastructure and lack of basic services (UN SC 23 May 2001, paras. 15, 16). Overall, shelter remains a priority need, with up to 90% of houses destroyed in many areas (UN November 2001). The population in general is reported to be the most vulnerable to ill health in the world, with high levels of malnutrition and wide-ranging medical needs (UN November 2001; MSF September 2001).

Return

By January 2002, the National Resettlement Assessment Committee had declared numerous chiefdoms throughout the country to be safe for resettlement (UN OCHA 30 November 2001, 31 January 2002). Some 45,000 IDPs had already returned to their areas of origin by the end of 2001 (UN November 2001). UNHCR repatriated over 5,400 Sierra Leonean returnees to their places of origin in Kambia district - part of a group of about 16,000 former refugees in Guinea who became displaced in their own country since their home areas remained unsafe (UNHCR 7 & 21 December 2001).

There are major obstacles for the return of the displaced, including destruction of homes and infrastructure, lack of social services and limited livelihood opportunities - making relocated populations continue to move from one area to another (UN OCHA 31 December 2001). IDPs have also expressed concern that local administration, police and justice systems should be in place before they return (NRC March 2001; RI 26 April 2001).

Humanitarian access and response

Overland delivery of humanitarian aid has been extremely difficult during the conflict. Looting of aid supplies has been widespread, especially when rebel forces twice entered Freetown. The rebel offensive at the beginning of 1999 made delivery of humanitarian aid nearly impossible outside the capital (UN SC 4 March 1999). The July 1999 peace agreement improved humanitarian access, and enabled the UN and NGOs to undertake aid delivery and assessment missions to previous inaccessible areas (UN OCHA 30 September 1999). Following the signing of the peace agreement, the Security Council deployed a peacekeeping force (UNAMSIL) to Sierra Leone. Part of UNAMSIL's mandate is to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance (UN SC 22 October 1999, 7 February 2000, 31 July 2000, 14 March 2001, para. 34; UNAMSIL 3 April 2001).

However, by March 2000 there was safe access to only five of 12 districts – excluding about half of the population from humanitarian assistance (OCHA 7 March 2000, sect.1). Escalated rebel activities in May 2000 further restricted delivery of humanitarian assistance (UN DPI 8 May 2000), and humanitarian operations in most areas of the northern and eastern provinces ceased as the conflict worsened (UN November 2000, pp.9, 11, 12). Towards the end of 2001, gains in the disarmament process and the full deployment of UNAMSIL - a total of 17,500 troops (IRIN 20 November 2001) - contributed to the creation of new opportunities for humanitarian organisations, as the well as the Government of Sierra Leone, in previously inaccessible areas.

The humanitarian community remained concerned, however, that new, large-scale influxes of people fleeing the fighting in Liberia could create a source of instability, partly because of the likelihood of their settling in still-volatile areas with limited humanitarian access, and partly because their arrival would seriously strain the capacity of relief organisations to address their needs (UN November 2001).

The situation in Sierra Leone has the status of "complex emergency". There is no "lead agency" for IDPs, but the UN Secretary General has appointed a Deputy Special Representative to act as the UN Resident Representative and the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC). A relatively well-staffed unit from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs assists the HC (OCHA 21 May 2001). Among the UN agencies, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, are implementing emergency programmes targeting IDPs (i.e. food aid, water and sanitation projects, primary health care and immunisation), but have until recently been constrained by the lack of access to rebel-held areas.

As of November 2001, the humanitarian community in Sierra Leone consists of some 46 international NGOs, over 200 national NGOs and hundreds of community-based organisations. The UN Country Team consists of 9 agencies, in addition to the human rights and civil affairs sections of UNAMSIL's peacekeeping mission. Five multi-lateral and bilateral donors and 11 diplomatic representatives are based in Sierra Leone. The major government body for humanitarian affairs is the National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (NCRRR).

The UN Consolidated Appeal for 2002 calls for a total of just over US\$ 88 million in funding - targeted primarily at the resettlement and reintegration of displaced populations, the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the infrastructure of basic social services, the continued provision of relief assistance to existing vulnerable groups, and ensuring the timely and integrated delivery of emergency relief to potential population influxes. The amount requested represents a 10% increase on funds appealed for in 2001, due to the recent accessibility to the north and east of the country where critical humanitarian needs were found (UN November 2001). As of February 2002, a total of 80.1% of the 2001 Consolidated Appeal was funded.

(Updated February 2002)

CAUSES AND BACKGROUND OF DISPLACEMENT

Background to the conflict

Chronology of significant events since independence (1961 - 2000)

1961: 27 April - Sierra Leone, which was founded as a haven for liberated slaves in the 18th century, receives independence from Britain with Milton Margai as prime minister.

1964: Milton Margai dies. Succeeded as prime minister by his half-brother, Albert Margai.

1967: Siaka Stevens - who in 1957 broke away from the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) to form his All People's party (APC) - is elected prime minister. However, he is prevented in a coup led by Brigadier Andrew Juxon-Smith from assuming his position.

1968: Stevens is returned to power in an army mutiny.

1971: Two assassination attempts on Stevens in one day. A March attempted coup suppressed with aid of Guinean troops.

April - Sierra Leone declared a republic. Stevens named president and head of government.

1973: Opposition SLPP does not contest general elections. Stevens, of the APC, is the sole candidate.

1976: March - Stevens re-elected to the presidency for a second five-year term.

1977: 1 February - Stevens, responding to student demonstrations, declares state of emergency which remains in effect for one year.

May - General elections holds a year earlier than schedule following more political unrest.

1978: June - Referendum approves a new constitution that provides for a one-party state. APC becomes the sole legal party.

14 June - Stevens in for a seven-year term as president. SLPP MPs join APC.

1981: Increasing opposition to government following scandal involving government officials and several cabinet ministers in the misappropriation of public funds.

August - State of emergency declared to suppress a general strike against rising prices and food shortages.

December - Stevens assumes temporary control of the Ministry of Finance, following a second financial scandal implicating senior civil servants.

1982: May - General elections take place. Serious outbreak of violence.

1983: May - violence between political factions in Punjehun District results in heavy casualties.

1984: January - Student demonstrations against food shortages and rising prices leads to riots. Four people are killed. Late in the year, teachers and council workers strike through to early in 1985 after the government fails to pay salaries.

1985: April - Stevens announces he would retire at the end of his mandate later in the year. Maj-Gen Joseph Momoh runs for president unopposed and is elected to replace the ageing Siaka Stevens.

November - Relations between Sierra Leone and Liberia are strained after Liberian President Samuel Doe accuses the Freetown government of involvement in an attempted coup in Liberia. Doe closes the border which is reopened in August 1986.

1987: January - Student demonstration against inadequate food allowances results in violence.

March - The government announces it has foiled a coup in which at least 60 people are arrested. In early April, Vice President Francis Minah is arrested and later charged with treason.

1989: Minah and five others are executed for plotting to assassinate Momoh and overthrow his government.

1990: Early in the year, there is widespread popular support for multiparty politics which Momoh rejects in June.

1991: The Constitutional Review Commission submits draft for a multiparty system of government.

March - About 100 fighters based in Liberia cross the border into Sierra Leone in an attempt to overthrow Momoh, who had been supporting a Nigerian-led West African peacekeeping force, known as ECOMOG, which was preventing Liberia's Charles Taylor from capturing Monrovia. The fighters who invade Sierra Leone eventually call themselves the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and include Sierra Leonean dissidents and Liberian fighters loyal to Taylor. They are led by Foday Sankoh, a former photographer and ex-army sergeant, who reportedly had spent time training in Libya with Taylor.

April - Government launches retaliatory raid against RUF rebels in Liberia. Midyear, the army - with Ghanaian and Nigeria help - recaptures several RUF-held towns in the east and south of Sierra Leone. The government troops were also helped by 1,200 Liberian soldiers who fled to Sierra Leone in September 1990.

23-30 August - A national referendum on a new constitution is approved by 60 percent of voters in a 75-percent voter turnout.

September - Legislation is introduced permitting formation of political associations and a number of political parties are granted legal recognition.

Former Doe supporters - the United Liberation Movement of Liberia (ULIMO) attack National Patriotic Front of Liberia forces in northwest Liberia, from Sierra Leone.

1992: 30 April - President Momoh flees the country after believing a coup is in the making when Captain Valentine Strasser and other junior officers of the Sierra Leonean Army (SLA), go to State House to complain about the poor conditions for soldiers at the front, including lack of food and pay. The presidency lands in the lap of Strasser who dubs himself "The Redeemer" and establishes the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC). At the time Strasser, 26, was the world's youngest leader. He affirms his commitment to the introduction of multiparty politics. Meanwhile, the RUF gains strength and some members of the SLA, angry over their poor conditions, join the RUF's campaign, if only to discard their uniforms to loot at night and then step back into them by day. They become known as soldier-rebels, or "sobels".

1 May - Strasser formally convenes the NPRC.

6 May - Strasser is sworn in as head of state.

December - Attempted coup mounted by former army officers calling themselves the Anti-Corruption Revolutionary Movement. Nine suspected coup plotters and 17 other prisoners convicted in November on treason charges are executed.

1993: March - Nigeria, which had peacekeeping troops based in Monrovia, moves two battalions to Freetown to support Strasser and his war against the RUF.

November - Government announces it has pre-empted a coup after four British of Vietnamese origin - alleged to be mercenaries - are arrested in Freetown.

December - Government ends state of emergency that had been in force since April 1992.

1994: January - Strasser launches an army recruitment drive, more than doubling the military's ranks to about 12,000. Some of the new recruits, however, are street children as young as 12 years old.

1995: March - Strasser invites the South African private security company Executive Outcomes (EO) to help the government fight the RUF, which is closing in on the capital and controls much of the country's diamond areas. EO begins by training government troops and then defends the capital alongside West African peacekeepers.

December - EO expands its operations into the countryside and retakes a number of key diamond areas from the RUF. EO also begins to collaborate with a rural pro-government militia, the Kamajors. EO troops provide training and logistical support for the Kamajors, which are commanded by Hinga Norman, a former army captain. The RUF suffers a number of defeats and initiates peace negotiations with Strasser.

1996: January - Brig-Gen Julius Maada-Bio deposes Strasser in a palace coup one month short of general elections. The RUF demands the suspension of the elections until peace talks are held. However, arrangements are too advance for the elections to be called off.

26 February - Elections are held despite intimidation by the RUF.

29 March - Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, who worked for the UN Development Programme for 20 years, wins the country's first relatively free and fair election. He gets 59.4 percent of the votes in a second round. His party wins 51 of the 80-seat legislature. Kabbah appoints Hinga Norman as deputy minister of defence and agrees to keep on foreign security companies. His close relationship with the Kamajors angers the army.

November - A peace agreement is signed in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, between the Kabbah government and the RUF, stipulating that EO leave Sierra Leone by January 1997. Public opinion had turned against EO because of the high fees it charged - US \$1.8 million per month - and its activities in the country's diamond areas. However, EO's affiliate company, Lifeguard, stays on in Sierra Leone through security contracts with several mining companies.

1997: January - Executive Outcomes formally withdraws from Sierra Leone.

March - Sankoh is arrested on an arms charge in Nigeria.

25 May - Major Johnny Paul Koroma topples Kabbah, who flees to Guinea. Koroma, who was over-promoted with the army expansion under Strasser, suspends the constitution, abolishes political parties and establishes the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), including members of the Sierra Leonean Army. Days of looting by soldiers follow the coup. An attempt by Nigerian troops, backed by some South Africans working with Lifeguard, to oust the Koroma junta fails. Nigerian troops and foreigners are briefly trapped in Freetown's Mammy Yoko Hotel in Freetown.

June - Koroma invites the RUF to join the junta.

July - The British company Sandline is hired by allies of Kabbah with the financial support of Indian-born Thai banker Rakesh Saxena. He offers to provide up to US \$10 million for a counter-coup in Sierra Leone in exchange for diamond concessions.

October - UN Security Council adopts a resolution imposing sanctions against the regime in Sierra Leone, including barring the supply of arms and petroleum products.

December - A meeting is arranged between Kabbah and Sandline. Saxena is arrested in Canada on charges of possessing a forged Yugoslavian passport.

1998: 13 February - Nigerian-led West African troops, backed by logistical and intelligence support from Sandline, and the Kamajors storm Freetown, ousting the AFRC/RUF junta. The RUF and AFRC, including members of the SLA, retreat to the countryside.

9 March - Nigerian-led peacekeepers return Kabbah to power.

October - High Court in Sierra Leone sentences Sankoh to death for his role in the 1997 coup. Kabbah makes repeated calls for rebel forces to surrender and offers amnesty.

1999: January - A mixture of RUF rebels and former Sierra Leonean Army troops launch an assault on Freetown, seizing parts of the city from ECOMOG. The peacekeepers retake control of the capital, but not before at least 5,000 people are killed and many neighborhoods lay in ruins. Thousands of other people are abducted by rebel forces. Many are used for forced labour, as sex slaves or terrorized into joining the rebel army.

April - Sankoh is temporarily released from prison and allowed by Kabbah to go to Togo for internal consultations with his field commanders in capital, Lome.

May - Rebels submit their peace proposal to Togolese President Gnassingbe Eyadema, who is leading regional mediation efforts to end the war. The RUF calls for Sankoh's release as a condition for negotiations to end the fighting.

July - Peace accord signed between government and RUF. Controversy surrounds a clause that provides a blanket amnesty following years of atrocities that included rape, mutilation and the killing of civilians. The accord also provides for the establishment of a unity government that includes members of the RUF and former AFRC junta. Sankoh becomes the country's minister for mineral resources, including diamonds.

August - Former SLA soldiers hold several UN officials, ECOMOG troops, journalists and others hostage. Most are released within a week. RUF commanders who were also held were freed a month later.

October - Sankoh and Koroma return to Freetown.

November - UN troops begin arriving to replace West African peacekeepers. Security Council expresses concern about ceasefire violations.

2000: February - UN Security Council expands size of the UN Mission in Sierra Leone, UNAMSIL, from 6,000 to 11,100 and revised its mandate to provide security at key locations, including government buildings and sites used in the country's disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programme. It is also to help law enforcement authorities. (Secretary-General Kofi Annan later asks for the troop strength to be increased to 13,000 and then to 20,500.)

April - Rebels attack UN forces in the east of the country, seize weapons and equipment.

May - More than 500 UN peacekeepers are abducted by the RUF. Sankoh, accused of obstructing the peace process, is captured by pro-government forces and imprisoned nearly two weeks after a demonstration by thousands of people who marched to his home in Freetown. At least four of the demonstrators are shot dead by RUF fighters. The abducted peacekeepers are eventually released. British troops arrive in Freetown to evacuate British nationals if security deteriorates. British advisers also arrive to provide support for the UN forces.

June - The Kabbah government ratifies a treaty to establish an International Criminal Court for Sierra Leone. The issue of trying child soldiers raises controversy because many were forced to join armed factions and to carry out atrocities.

July - The UN Security Council imposes an 18-month ban on the trade of uncertified rough diamonds from Sierra Leone to stem sale of the gems by rebel forces for arms. The last batch of detained UN peacekeepers rescued by UN forces.

August - West Side Boys hold 11 British troops hostage. They release five but keep the six others hostage. The RUF gets a new leader, Issa Sesay, to replace Sankoh.

September - British paratroopers attack the camp of the West Side Boys in the Occra Hills and rescue the detained British troops. One British soldier and 25 West Side Boys are killed. Most of the remaining West Side Boys surrender later. India announces its decision to withdraw its troops from UNAMSIL following a dispute with Nigerian officers in the force. Jordan also decides to withdraw from UNAMSIL.

November - Secretary-General Kofi Annan names Lt-Gen Daniel Opande, of Kenya, to replace Maj-Gen Vijay Jetley, of India, as commander of UNAMSIL. The Lome peace accord is revisited. Ceasefire agreement is signed between the government and RUF which is to be reviewed each 30 days. A taskforce of 500 British Royal Marines arrive in Freetown to reinforce British troops who are already training the Sierra Leonean military.

December - The British Ministry of Defence announces that 300 Gurkha soldiers are to help train the Sierra Leone Army. " (IRIN-WA 29 December 2000)

Historical outline of the first eight years of conflict (1991-1998)

- Conflict characterised by a breakdown in law and order – not a civil war between ethnic groups
- Rebels from the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) crossed the border from Liberia in 1991 and were by 1994 operating throughout Sierra Leone
- Elections and return to civilian rule lead by President Kabbah (February 1996)
- Signing of Abidjan peace accord in November 1996
- President Kabbah overthrown in a coup by the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) on 25 May 1997
- Anarchy following the coup causes Freetown residents to flee to interior regions
- Nigerian led ECOMOG troops initially told to enforce economic embargo following May 1997 coup, but later mandated to oust the AFRC/RUF junta
- ECOMOG defeats military junta and President Kabbah returns (March 1998)
- Hundreds of casualties and widespread looting as retreating rebels and soldiers terrorised civilians February/March 1998)
- Continued fighting involving ECOMOG and mobile armed groups in northern and eastern Sierra Leone (second half of 1998)

"It has been suggested that the war in Sierra Leone should be understood as a breakdown in law and order and not as a civil war [...]. A special feature of the Sierra Leonean conflict which distinguishes it from many other recent internal conflicts is that the fighting parties do not identify themselves with a specific ethnic group. Therefore it can be seen as a conflict not based on ethnicity [...]. Although relations between ethnic groups are held to be competitive, there is little ethnic strife in Sierra Leone [...]" (UNHCR November 1998, p.5)

"The conflict in Sierra Leone began in 1991 when rebels from the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) crossed the border from Liberia, allegedly with the support of the leader of the National Patriotic Front in Liberia, Charles Taylor. During the first two years of the ensuing rebellion, the government of Sierra Leone was successful in confining the conflict to the southern and eastern areas of the country, yet the harshness with which it dealt with alleged rebel supporters resulted in support for the rebels. [...] By 1994, it [RUF] was operating throughout Sierra Leone, and by early 1995 it seemed poised to enter Freetown and overcome the government. The rebel force had overextended itself, however, and with the help of foreign mercenaries the government managed to repel it." (Beattie 1998, p. 53)

"Throughout the course of the war, the RUF mutated from a handful of poorly armed dissidents to a much larger, highly mobile and destructive guerrilla force. It also slowly evolved into a recognized interlocutor in negotiations and, with the signing of the Lomé Peace Agreement in July 1999, a component of an otherwise elected government. While the RUF began with a more broadly based leadership, Sankoh has been the most visible leader of the movement from the outset. Eventually it was able to establish a semblance of a civilian administration in some areas under its control, while remaining primarily a coercive military organization. At its core was Sankoh as the 'director of ideology', as well as a War (and later Peace) Council made up of senior members of the movement. Often riven by internal dissent and rivalries, the RUF managed to retain a fairly high degree of cohesiveness through more than nine years of war." (Conciliation Resources September 2000, "The Revolutionary United Front")

"In February 1996 Sierra Leone's first free and fair elections in almost three decades returned the country to civilian rule. Voters defied outbreaks of violence and sabotage by the RUF to elect Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, a former UN technocrat and leader of the country's oldest political party, the SLPP, as president. Although RUF boycotted the elections. Mr Kabbah and RUF's leader, Corporal Foday Sankoh, signed a far-reaching peace agreement in November 1996 that provided, *inter alia*, for the transformation of the RUF into a political party. Peace remained elusive, however, with continuing violence variously attributed to rebels, soldiers or so-called sobels (soldiers by day, rebels by night). Growing discontent within the military and increasingly violent rebel attacks coincided with the emergence and increasing popularity of "Kamajors", a civil militia of traditional hunters." (EIU 1998, p. 40)

"Despite the cease-fire and peace agreement, fighting continued between government forces, foreign mercenaries, traditional militias or Kamajors and RUF fighters in the districts of Kenema, Kailahun and Pujehun. March and April [1997] ushered in further unrest in the Northern province. The conflict culminated on 25 May 1997, when President Kabbah was overthrown in a coup by the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) led by Major Johnny Paul Koroma. A coalition was then formed between the AFRC and the RUF, which collapsed in early 1998 when the AFRC was ousted." (Beattie 1998, p.54)

"ECOWAS [Economic Community of West African States] and ECOMOG [ECOWAS' Cease-fire Monitoring Group] have played key roles in recent political negotiations and military interventions respectively in Sierra Leone. As part of bilateral security accords, Nigerian forces and Guinean forces have been in Sierra Leone since 1995 to help the NPRC and, later, the Kabbah government to fight the RUF. The Nigerian and Guinean forces were in Sierra Leone at the time of the May 25, 1997 coup, and later reinforced ECOMOG's efforts to oust the AFRC/RUF.

Following the 1997 coup, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) called on ECOWAS to restore constitutional order to Sierra Leone. When their negotiations with the AFRC/RUF failed to achieve progress, ECOWAS imposed an economic embargo, which was later reinforced by an October 1997 U.N. Security Council global arms and oil embargo and restrictions on international travel by AFRC/RUF members and their families. ECOMOG enforced these sanctions with the permission of ECOWAS and the Security Council. With the failure of diplomatic efforts and the escalation of tension, ECOMOG's mandate was upgraded from sanction enforcement to actual military intervention to oust the AFRC/RUF." (HRW July 1998, p.36)

"In October 1997 the AFRC agreed to a cease-fire and six-part peace plan that provided the reinstatement of Mr. Kabbah as president within six months. However, crucial deadlines – including the disarmament of all combatants – were missed, and it became evident that the junta did not intend to honour the agreement. Instead, it was ousted from power by a military offensive of the Economic Community of West African States Cease-fire Monitoring Group [ECOMOG] in February 1998, and on March 10th Mr. Kabbah returned to the capital as president. Although Freetown was secured relatively quickly, the military intervention resulted in hundreds of casualties and widespread looting as retreating rebels and soldiers terrorised civilians in towns and villages throughout the interior." (EIU 1998, p.41)

[The ECOMOG operation in Sierra Leone received in July 1998 support by the UN Security Council, which] "Commends the positive role of ECOWAS and ECOMOG in their efforts to restore peace, security and stability throughout the country at the request of the Government of Sierra Leone, and notes the role of ECOMOG in assisting the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration plan adopted by the Government of Sierra Leone, including the provision of security and responsibility for arms collection and destruction." (UN SC 13 July 1998, para 5.)

"Despite the return of the democratically elected Government of Sierra Leone in March 1998, conflict continues to plague the efforts of the majority to recover the psychological, economic and humanitarian results of the junta period. The hostilities between ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) and junta elements have spread over a larger area of northern and eastern Sierra Leone. The persistent insecurity is not due to an expansion of territory by the rebels, as they hold very little ground in the traditional military sense. It is attributable to a strategy of using mobile armed groups which touch on still larger parts of the country. The rebels have systematically committed massive human rights [violations] including mutilations, sexual exploitation, and forced recruitment of child soldiers to wage a desperate and senseless campaign of terror on rural civilians. While pro-government forces control most of the arterial road networks and major population centres, junta remnants roaming the bush have presented a more formidable obstacle to the provision of humanitarian assistance" (UN December 1998, p.1)

"At the end of 1998, the security situation deteriorated rapidly, and on 6 January 1999, rebel forces entered Freetown. Several thousands of people were killed, countless atrocities were committed and many buildings destroyed. ECOMOG forces succeeded in stabilising the situation, and the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF agreed to a ceasefire agreement in May 1999." (FCO December 2000)

For a chronological overview of the civil war, see [IRIN chronology of significant events since independence \(29 December 2000\)](#)

The European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation has also available an analysis of the conflict dynamic, see: "Sierra Leone Real Battles Lie Ahead (September 2000)"

Continued conflict despite the signing of the Lome peace agreement (July 1999-May 2000)

- Peace agreement signed 7 July 1999 includes permanent cessation of hostilities, the transformation of RUF/SL into a political party and the creation of a broad-based Government of National Unity
- Provision for the release of all conflict-related prisoners and abductees and the resettlement of refugees and displaced persons
- UN not recognising amnesty provisions in accord
- Improved security situation reported between end of May and end of July 1999
- Reports during second half of 1999 that conflict between rebel forces undermines the stability and causes new displacements
- Reports by March 2000 of little progress in disarmament in the northern and eastern parts of Sierra Leone
- Peace process derailed as RUF attacks UN peacekeepers in May 2000

" [P]eace negotiations between the Government of Sierra Leone and RUF began on 25 May 1999 in Lomé, Togo, hosted and mediated by President Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo in his capacity as Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The proceedings were supported by a Facilitation Committee consisting of the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), ECOWAS and the Commonwealth of Nations under the chairmanship of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Togo, Joseph Koffigoh, assisted by my [the UN SG] Special Representative, Francis Okelo.

[...]

[On 7 July 1999 the] Lomé Peace Agreement was signed by President Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah on behalf of the Government of Sierra Leone and by Corporal Foday Sankoh on behalf of the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone, as well as by President Eyadema, President Compaore of Burkina Faso, President Taylor of Liberia, President Obasanjo of Nigeria and high-level representatives of Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, ECOWAS, OAU, the Commonwealth of Nations and the United Nations.

[...]

The agreement provides for the permanent cessation of hostilities, to be monitored at provincial and district levels through Ceasefire Monitoring Committees and, at the national level, through a Joint Monitoring Committee. Governance provisions include, inter alia, the transformation of RUF/SL into a political party and its access to public office; the creation of a broad-based Government of National Unity through cabinet appointments for representatives of RUF/SL; the creation of a Commission for the Consolidation of Peace to supervise the implementation of the peace agreement; the establishment of a Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development, to be chaired personally by the leader of RUF/SL, Corporal Foday Sankoh, with the status of Vice-President of Sierra Leone; and the establishment of a Council of Elders and Religious Leaders to mediate any disputes arising from differences in the interpretation of the agreement.

The agreement provides for the pardon of Corporal Foday Sankoh and a complete amnesty for any crimes committed by members of the fighting forces during the conflict from March 1991 up until the date of the signing of the agreement; a review of the present Constitution of Sierra Leone; and the holding of elections in line with the Constitution, to be directed by a National Electoral Commission. I instructed my Special Representative to sign the agreement with the explicit proviso that the United Nations holds the understanding that the amnesty and pardon in article IX of the agreement shall not apply to international crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious violations of international humanitarian law.

Regarding post-conflict military and security issues, the agreement stipulates the revision of the mandate of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG); a request for a new mandate for UNAMSIL; the

encampment, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants; the restructuring and training of a new Sierra Leone armed forces; and the withdrawal of mercenaries.

Concerning humanitarian, human rights and socio-economic issues, the agreement provides for the release of all conflict-related prisoners and abductees; the resettlement of refugees and displaced persons; the guarantee and promotion of human rights, including the establishment of a Human Rights Commission and a Truth and Reconciliation Commission; the safe and unhindered access by humanitarian organizations to all parts of the country; the security of humanitarian goods and personnel; and post-war rehabilitation and assistance to victims of war." (UN SC 30 July 1999, paras. 4-9)

In July 1999 it was reported that:

"The military and security situation in Sierra Leone has improved significantly since the ceasefire agreement took effect on 24 May and has remained generally calm since the signing of the agreement. While some, mostly minor, ceasefire violations have occurred, including reports of rebel raids on villages, the number of incidents of open hostilities has dropped considerably. ECOMOG, CDF and RUF and former Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) forces have generally remained within their areas of control.

RUF/SL and AFRC continue to dominate much of the Northern and Eastern Provinces. In the western parts of the country, their forces are concentrated in the areas west of the main highway from Freetown between Occra Hills, Port Loko and Kambia. The road to Guinea via Kambia is also controlled by RUF/SL and AFRC personnel, but they have assured UNAMSIL that an unhindered flow of traffic will be allowed." (UN SC 30 July 1999, paras. 24-26)

Towards the end of 1999, reports emerged both about fighting between rebel groups and atrocities against civilians:

"Deteriorating security conditions throughout the country have reversed gains in access and prevented further expansion of humanitarian activity despite commitments by all parties of the Lomé Agreement to allow unhindered access countrywide. In particular, during the October RUF/AFRC clashes at Makeni, humanitarian agencies were targeted for looting and harassment. Much of the stolen property has not yet been returned. A further result of the fighting has been the displacement of more than 1,500 civilians to Kabala and the suspension of assistance to vulnerable groups. Disturbingly high rates of malnutrition previously assessed in other areas of the northern and eastern provinces remain unaddressed." (UN SC 6 December 1999, paras. 21, 25)

"Progress in other areas of the peace process has been slow. There has been little progress in disarmament in the northern and eastern parts of the country, while rebel groups continued to interfere with humanitarian activities and UNAMSIL patrols and to harass the civilian population in those areas.

[...]

While there have been some improvements in the security situation, it generally remained tense and volatile. The security environment in the Lungi area improved significantly, mostly as a result of extensive UNAMSIL patrols, but tension remained around the Occra Hills area and in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. Cease fire violations there included ambushes against civilians, the maintenance of illegal roadblocks, movements of RUF troops from the Makeni area to Kono in the early part of February, and obstruction of peacekeeping operations." (SC 7 March 2000, paras. 6 & 10)

The security situation worsened dramatically in May 2000:

"In early May, the peace process rapidly deteriorated, following a series of RUF attacks on UN peacekeepers. The RUF, claiming that UNAMSIL was forcibly disarming its men, destroyed the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) camps in Makeni and Magbruaka and took 500 UN Peacekeepers hostage in Makeni, Magbruaka and Kailahun." (UN July 2000, p.3)

For more information about the peace process, see the report by Conciliation Resources titled "Paying the Price: the Sierra Leone Peace Process" (September 2000), as well as the related seminar report

titled: "Sierra Leone Peace Process: Learning from the Past to Address Current Challenges" (27 September 2000)

Peace process derailed as security situation worsened dramatically in May 2000

- Several RUF attacks on UN peacekeepers, Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) camps in Makeni and Magbruaka destroyed and 500 UN Peacekeepers taken hostage
- RUF leader Chairman Foday Sankoh arrested
- Rebel advances in early July 2000 towards Masiaka, 40 kms from Freetown
- RUF attacks in Port Loko area by end-August 2000
- Military gains by pro-government forces diluted by dissension between the AFRC and the new Sierra Leone Army (August 2000)
- Issa Sesay designated an interim RUF leader RUF on 21 August
- RUF appearing as a less coherent rebel force during second half of 2000, and there are claims that RUF have come more directly under President Taylor's control

"In early May, the peace process rapidly deteriorated, following a series of RUF attacks on UN peacekeepers. The RUF, claiming that UNAMSIL was forcibly disarming its men, destroyed the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) camps in Makeni and Magbruaka and took 500 UN Peacekeepers hostage in Makeni, Magbruaka and Kailahun. Responding to the situation, the Government arrested RUF leader Chairman Foday Sankoh, as well as more than 100 RUF officials in Freetown. The brief deployment on 7 May of British troops and the demobilisation of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC)/ex-SLA and Civil Defense Forces in a new pro-government alliance helped to stabilise the situation in the Freetown area. This allowed the return of most UN and NGO civilian staff who were evacuated in the early days of the crisis. However, since May, insecurity has spread throughout the country leading to a steady influx of Sierra Leoneans into safer locations, including the Freetown and Lungi peninsula, Mile 91 junction and Port Loko town as well as Forecariah, Guinea. Although all the detained UN personnel have now been released, 222 Indian peacekeepers remain surrounded by the RUF in Kailahun." (UN July 2000, p.3)

"The political and security situation continues to dominate humanitarian response in Sierra Leone since hostilities resumed in early May. In June, the rebel Revolutionary United Front (RUF), and an assortment of pro-government forces, battled for control of strategic towns in the northern province. Several skirmishes occurred in Masiaka, Kabala, Port Loko, Lunsar and Rogbere Junction. In some cases rebels have directly engaged the UN Peacekeeping Force, UNAMSIL. In early July, RUF attacked and dislodged the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) at Masiaka, 40 kms from Freetown, compelling UNAMSIL forces to move in and re-take the key junction town linking Freetown to Lungi peninsula and the interior of the country. The fragile security situation deteriorated as the pro-government alliance of SLA, AFRC (forces loyal to the previous junta regime) and Civil Defense Force (CDF) militia weakened. Dissension between the AFRC and the new Sierra Leone Army diluted military gains by pro-government forces, and resulted in the fall of the strategic town of Lunsar. Loss of control over the AFRC faction (also known as the West Side Boys) prompted the Government to call on the AFRC to surrender and give up their arms to UNAMSIL by 11th July. The West Side Boys rebuffed the order and instead withdrew into the Occra Hills. The security situation along the Freetown peninsula continues to be tense but stable. Routine patrols by UNAMSIL troops, spot checks on vehicles, and cordon and search operations mounted by the peacekeeping force have intensified lately. The Southern Region and Kenema District are also calm. The Makeni, Magburaka, Lunsar, Kambia, Koidu and Kailahun areas are still inaccessible to humanitarian agencies." (UNICEF 28 August 2000)

"Due to the re-installment of UNAMSIL MILOBS and the appointment of a new SLA Battalion Commander for the troops based at Port Loko, the security situation within the town improved in the past

few weeks. However, on 23 August, the RUF counter-attacked, pushed the SLA back to Port Loko and engaged the NIBATT II position (to the East of the town) for two hours. On the following day, the SLA pushed back northwards. NIBATT II suffered two casualties and the pro-government fighters also had two wounded in action. RUF casualties were unknown at the time of writing. The SLAs are deployed to the North, towards Mange Bridge, and with the CDF have been active against the RUF around the Bridge." (OCHA 27 August 2000)

"Although the May crisis rendered some provisions of the Lome Peace Agreement invalid, there is a near complete consensus among international and local stakeholders that the Peace Agreement can still effectively provide a framework for the resumption of peace talks. However, the detained RUF leader Mr. Foday Sankoh has been widely accepted as being an unreliable partner in peace, following his role in sparking the May hostilities.

As a result, the RUF on 21 August designated an interim leader, Mr. Issa Sesay. UNAMSIL has established informal contacts with Mr. Sesay in order to secure the release of stolen UNAMSIL weapons and reach an agreement on the cessation of the hostilities, as pre-conditions to the resumption of peace negotiations. However, these contacts are yet to produce a meaningful political dialogue with the RUF, who continue to insist on the release of their leader, Mr. Sankoh. Meanwhile some Force Commanders, in particular in the north, appear not to respect Mr. Sesay's authority as the interim leader of the RUF. Not surprisingly, some RUF elements seem bent on maintaining hostilities within the country." (UN November 2000, pp.11-12)

"The rebel force [RUF], meanwhile, has splintered into four different factions. First there was a highly public falling out between Sankoh and one of his most fearsome field commanders, Bockarie. He fled to Liberia in December 1999 and has since been involved in training a new rebel force, allegedly out of the Liberian army base in Gbatala and with the aid of a former South African army colonel, Fred Rindle, who previously helped the Unita rebels in Angola. Towards the end of June, troop movements were reported from Liberia into Sierra Leone's diamond areas. The Liberian government hotly denies any involvement and continues to state its commitment to peace in Sierra Leone. Second, the AFRC/RUF alliance disintegrated when the former coup leader Johnny Paul Koroma announced he would be working with the Kabbah government." (EPCPT September 2000)

"There appear to be splits within the RUF. These are not new. In April 1997 one group of senior RUF members denounced Sankoh's leadership because he did not support the Abidjan Accord. They were taken prisoner and tortured. Some never reappeared. It is unclear whether the RUF now operates cohesively as a single unit. Junior members were sent to sign the November 2000 cease-fire, for example. It is uncertain exactly who has authority to represent the movement and ensure that it adheres to a peace agreement.

With Sankoh's imprisonment, the RUF appears to have come more directly under President Taylor's control. Issa Sesay has been announced as 'interim leader', although it is not clear on whose authority. The 'interim' nature of the appointment is presumably meant to indicate that Sankoh remains in theory the overall leader despite his imprisonment. Sesay's appointment appears not to have total support but is most likely backed by President Taylor. Some leaders, such as Dennis 'Superman' Mingo, have opposed Sesay's more moderate line, while there are reports that Sam 'Mosquito' Bockarie may be trying to exert more influence after disagreeing with Sankoh and taking refuge in Liberia. But Bockarie's position is uncertain since it was reported in January 2001 that Taylor had expelled him from Liberia, probably to distance himself from visible connections with the RUF.

Further confusion has fuelled uncertainty about who speaks for the RUF. On 22 November 2000 media reports quoted RUF spokesperson Gibril Massaquoi as alleging that the RUF was divided over the cease-fire signed earlier in the month, and the majority of combatants no longer took orders from Sesay. This was later denied. The RUF appears broadly divided into two commands. The eastern command has two main brigades, one centred around Kono and Tongo diamond areas to secure those resources and the communication routes to Liberia. The northern command, with four brigades, is located in the Magburaka,

Makeni area. The division poses difficulties for obtaining full RUF acquiescence to any peace agreement." (ICG 11 April 2001, p.16)

See also: "UN Peacekeeping mission (UNAMSIL) to facilitate implementation of peace agreement (2000)" [Internal link]

For more information about the peace process, see the report by Conciliation Resources titled "Paying the Price: the Sierra Leone Peace Process" (September 2000), as well as the related seminar report titled: "Sierra Leone Peace Process: Learning from the Past to Address Current Challenges" (27 September 2000)

For further information about the progress of the peace process or the UN mission (UNAMSIL), see the regular reports by the Secretary General to the Security Council.

Relatively stable security situation since signing of cease-fire agreement in Abuja on 10 November 2000

- Concern expressed by the UN in March 2001 that the RUF leadership in the East showed few signs of being ready to demobilise
- Reported in April 2001 that RUF was reluctant to allow Government of Sierra Leone (GOSL) administration establish after UNAMSIL deployment to new areas
- Agreed at meeting in Abuja in May 2001 to continue the cease-fire, and to move the peace process forward
- Rebel commitment to ceasefire and disarming confirmed at meeting in Freetown on 15 May 2001
- Agreement to deploy the UN peacekeeping forces (UNAMSIL) to the diamond-producing areas in the east
- Reported in mid-June 2001 that the fighting factions continued to support the peace process and that a total of 3,855 combatants had disarmed in Port Loko, Kambia, Wilberforce (Freetown) Daru and Lunsar
- Clashes between CDF and RUF in the Kono district halted following intensive discussions between UNAMSIL and the local commanders of the two groups

"After intensive consultations between the Government, ECOWAS and UNAMSIL, a meeting with RUF was convened at Abuja on 10 November [2000], which resulted in the signing of a ceasefire agreement between the Government and RUF. The agreement provided for a monitoring role for UNAMSIL; full liberty for the United Nations to deploy throughout the country; unimpeded movement of humanitarian workers, goods and people throughout the country; the return of UNAMSIL weapons and other equipment seized by RUF; the immediate resumption of the programme of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; and a review of the implementation of the agreement after 30 Days." (UN SC 15 December 2000, para. 2)

"The Government of Sierra Leone has established its own indirect contacts with RUF, primarily through traditional leaders and relatives. However, the slow pace at which RUF is implementing aspects of the Abuja Agreement, which were intended to build confidence and pave the way for a political dialogue, has not helped to remove the deep apprehension about the rebels' intentions.

In its contacts with UNAMSIL and through public statements, the RUF leadership has continued to indicate that the rebel movement will not disarm unless the present Government is replaced by an inclusive interim

government when its term of office expires on 28 March. They have also demanded that both the Sierra Leone Army and the Civil Defence Force be disarmed and that imprisoned RUF leaders be released.

[...]

During the reporting period, the ceasefire continued to hold in the country and the military and security situation remained relatively calm. However, UNAMSIL continued to receive reports of fighting at the border areas with Guinea, and of the Guinean military operations against RUF positions in the Kambia district in response to rebel attacks across the border. Attempts by the Sierra Leone Army to move towards RUF positions in the area of Mange Bridge also created some tensions locally." (UN SC 14 March 2001, paras, 7, 8, 17)

"[...], while some divisions of the RUF are still committed to brokering peace and engaged in active negotiations, the leadership in the East shows few signs of being ready to demobilise. Indeed, in recent contacts the RUF have become increasingly bellicose in their statements. As the Government has deferred elections and extended their term in office, the RUF are no longer recognising Kabbah's Government as the legitimate ruling body in Sierra Leone. They claim that the ceasefire is now sham and are calling for the immediate dissolution of the present Government to be replaced by a representative interim Government until democratic elections can be held. President Kabbah has made it quite clear that the RUF have forfeited their right to a part in the political process and cannot and do not have any recognised political standing. Certainly, the ceasefire has arrived at a stalemate. Current stability is tentative and it is anticipated that the only way forward is for some decisive action to be taken on the part of either the GoSL or the RUF." (UN 23 March 2001, "Sierra Leone")

"[Reported by mid-April that] Contacts between the RUF High Command and UNAMSIL continue. According to UNAMSIL, the RUF continue to repeatedly press for the same demands, including the release of their leader, Corporal Foday Sankoh. However, of particular concern is their continued refusal to allow Government of Sierra Leone (GOSL) administration to follow UNAMSIL re-deployment until they [the RUF] are represented within an interim government. UNAMSIL Force Commander General Opande has stressed that the return of the SLP and government administration is non-negotiable. In this connection, the situation in Lunsar remains difficult and according to UNAMSIL, this pattern of behaviour is likely to occur in Makeni and Magburaka. NGOs should therefore be aware that the security situation is likely to remain tense in these locations until UNAMSIL and the GOSL are fully in control." (OCHA 19 April 2001)

"In Sierra Leone, some progress is being made in the implementation of the Abuja Cease-fire Agreement signed between the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) and the RUF on 10 November 2000. According to UNAMSIL, the cease-fire has been largely maintained, despite one isolated incident in April, involving a Civil Defense Forces (CDF) attack on RUF positions in the East. At a review meeting of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Committee of Six, also attended by representatives of the GoSL, the RUF and the UN, on 2 May [2001] in Abuja, both parties agreed to continue maintaining the cease-fire, and to take significant steps towards moving the peace process forward. In particular, the RUF agreed to withdraw from the border areas of Kambia and allow the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) to deploy there." (OCHA 21 May 2001)

"Rival forces in Sierra Leone's long-running war agreed on Tuesday [15 May 2001] to stop fighting and allow the UN mission in the country, UNAMSIL, to guarantee the free movement of people and goods nationwide.

The agreement was signed in the capital, Freetown, at a meeting called to hammer out a timetable for the simultaneous disarmament of Civil Defence Forces (CDF) and Revolutionary United Front (RUF) fighters. In a communique released at the end of the day-long session, chaired by the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, the CDF and RUF agreed that they needed to tell UNAMSIL where their fighters and arms were located." (IRIN 16 May 2001)

"The peace process in Sierra Leone, and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) program, have been gaining positive momentum in the last few weeks. Recent negotiations between the

principal parties to the 10 year civil conflict have led to the rapid disarmament of more than 3,500 combatants from both the RUF and pro-Government militia forces, the release of almost 600 child soldiers, and agreement to deploy the UN peacekeeping forces (UNAMSIL) to the diamond-producing areas in the east of the country to be followed by further disarmament of an estimated 24,000 remaining combatants. The Government and the UN, in consultation with the RUF and the civil defense forces, have agreed on a timetable to respond to these developments in as quick and realistic a fashion as possible given current UN troop strength and logistical challenges. While extremely welcomed, these recent developments and the rapid restart of the DDR program place a significant financial strain on the Government and on the remaining resources in the World Bank administered Trust Fund that supports the Sierra Leone DDR Program." (World Bank 12 June 2001)

"The reporting period [May-June 2001] saw the continued support of the fighting factions towards the peace process, notwithstanding the stall in the disarmament process earlier this month, as government authorities struggled to construct new Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) camps, to receive the sudden flood of ex-combatants waiting to hand over their weapons.

[...]

Since the recommencement of the DDR programme on May 18th a total of 3,855 combatants (until June 13th) have disarmed in Port Loko, Kambia, Wilberforce (Freetown) Daru and Lunsar. NCDDR reports that out of a total of 3,296 that have so far disarmed in Port Loko and Kambia, 3,249 have been demobilised and 2,953 have been discharged from the Port Loko demobilisation centre. (OCHA 16 June 2001)

"Nearly all of the decisions taken at the meeting held on 2 May in Abuja and at the follow-up meeting on 15 May in Freetown have been implemented. The disarmament of RUF and CDF in the Kambia and Port Loko districts and the withdrawal of RUF from Kambia were completed on schedule. The Sierra Leone army started deploying to the Kambia district on 29 May and completed the deployment on 31 May. RUF released a total of 591 child combatants on 25 May and a further 178 on 4 June. The process of releasing more children is ongoing. The clashes between CDF and RUF in the Kono district were halted following intensive discussions between UNAMSIL leadership and the local commanders of the two groups, who agreed to begin immediate disarmament in the district." (UN SC 25 June 2001, para.11)

The text of the Abuja agreement can be accessed through the source section below!

See also the analysis of the prospects for peace by the International Crisis Group issued in April 2001

UN Security Council extends ban on "conflict diamonds" from January 2002

"The Security Council, acting under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, decided this afternoon to extend, for 11 months beginning on 5 January 2002, the prohibition of all import of Sierra Leone rough diamonds except those controlled by the Government under the Certificate of Origin regime.

Adopting resolution 1385 (2001) by unanimous vote, the Council affirmed that at the end of those 11 months and in addition to its six-monthly review, it would review the situation in Sierra Leone, including the extent of the Government's authority over the diamond-producing areas, in order to decide on a further extension and, if necessary, to modify or adopt further measures.

By other terms, the Council decided also that the extension of the prohibition would be terminated immediately if the Council determined that it would be appropriate to do so. It welcomed reports that the Certificate of Origin regime was helping to curb the flow of conflict diamonds out of Sierra Leone." (UN SC 19 December 2001).

Security improves with full deployment of UNAMSIL and the completion of disarmament by January 2002

"The full deployment of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) has led to a secure environment, with increased freedom of movement, gradual return of refugees and a resurgence of economic activity in the provinces, Secretary-General Kofi Annan says in a just-released report." (UN News Service 18 December 2001)

"Disarmament of former fighters under the Sierra Leone government's disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programme has formally ended, UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) spokesperson Margaret Novicki told IRIN on Monday. Demobilisation was, however, continuing, she said.

According to Novicki, 45,449 former combatants handed over weapons to the authorities between 18 May 2001 and 6 January 2002. The collection of weapons not covered under DDR was still going on under a community arms collection (CAC) programme, she added." (IRIN 7 January 2001)

Main causes of displacement

Countrywide displacement caused by more than nine years of widespread conflict-related human rights abuses (1991- 2000)

- People have fled rural villages when being exposed by rebel offensives
- Massive displacements in 1998 caused by escalated violence and human rights abuses in northern and eastern Sierra Leone
- Substantial displacements as rebels entered the capital Freetown during January 1999
- Rebel attacks in selected areas continued to displace people by the end of 1999
- Major increase in internal displacement in the wake of escalated fighting since May 2000
- Human rights violations by all fighting groups continued by mid-2000, including extrajudicial executions, mutilation, torture, rape and sexual abuse, forced labour, abduction, use of children as soldiers, destruction and looting of civilian property

"Internal displacement is not ethnically or religiously based in Sierra Leone. It affects all groups and regions and is almost exclusively a result of gross and systematic violations of human rights and humanitarian law committed in the context of the civil war." (NRC March 2001, p.7)

"The conflict in Sierra Leone has caused massive human suffering in the rural provinces and cities. Pillaging of villages, extra-judicial killings, torture and flagrant abuses of human rights have characterised this suffering and prompted large-scale migration." (Beattie 1998, p.54)

"Those displaced have fled their rural villages, leaving behind their possessions. They have sought safety with relatives in the cities, depopulating the countryside and creating serious overcrowding and a strain on food supplies in urban areas. Given the magnitude of the looting in February [1998], continued instability in much of the country and the approach of the rainy season, it is clear that some communities will no longer be able to cope with the growing tide of displaced people." (UN June 1998, p.57)

"Population movements were fluid throughout the year. Some families were able to return to their home areas during 1998, but new population displacement occurred at other locations. Internally displaced Sierra

Leoneans primarily fled rebel-controlled rural areas in the east, north and northwestern regions of the country. By year's end, a new rebel offensive sent thousands of civilians fleeing. (USCR 1999, p.86)

"The AFRC [Armed Forces Revolutionary Council], which seized power in a military coup in May 1997 and which was joined by the RUF, was deposed in February 1998 by West African forces deployed in Sierra Leone. The government of President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, which had been elected in 1996, returned to Freetown in March 1998. Although security has since returned to the capital, Freetown, and much of the south of the country, the scale of human rights abuses committed by AFRC and RUF forces in the north and east of the country has escalated and taken on grotesque forms. From April 1998 reports emerged of civilians suffering mutilations such as crude amputations of their feet, hands, arms, lips or ears. Women and girls have been systematically raped. Hundreds of civilians, in particular children and young men and women, have been abducted by rebel forces. The violence has resulted in hundreds of thousands of Sierra Leoneans fleeing to neighbouring Guinea and Liberia or becoming internally displaced within Sierra Leone." (AI November 1998, "Introduction")

"[R]ebel offensive [in January 1999] brought to the capital the same class of atrocities witnessed in Sierra Leone's rural provinces over the last eight years and is the latest cycle of violence in an armed conflict that has claimed an estimated 50,000 lives and caused the displacement of more than one million Sierra Leoneans. Since launching the rebellion in 1991, the RUF has fought to overthrow successive governments it accuses of widespread corruption, nepotism, and mismanagement of the country's vast diamond and mineral resources. However, since its inception, the RUF has failed publicly and clearly to articulate an alternative political agenda and has consistently committed gross and large scale atrocities against civilians." (HRW 24 June 1999, Chapt.I)

"Since early October 1999, there has been an escalation of attacks on civilians by former rebel elements in the areas west of the Occra Hills, along the Lungi-Port Loko road, as well as around Kabala and in parts of Koinadugu. The attacks frequently involve rape, abduction and harassment, in addition to looting and destruction of property. The frequency of attacks on civilians continues to impede freedom of movement in many locations and to prompt the displacement of people." (UN SC 6 December 1999, para. 20)

"The persistent fighting in many areas of the country continued [during May-July 2000] to have a direct effect on the civilian population and resulted in human rights violations by all fighting groups. These include extrajudicial executions, mutilation, torture, rape and sexual abuse, forced labour, abduction and forced recruitment, use of children as soldiers, the destruction and looting of civilian property and massive internal displacement of persons. The fighting, as well as fear of both the RUF and the Government's helicopter gunship, have caused thousands of civilians to flee. Internally displaced persons, who mostly travel on bush roads, report that many villages are empty and/or burned, especially in the Makeni/Magburaka area.

Based on testimonies from newly arrived internally displaced persons at Mile 91 and in Port Loko, UNAMSIL has documented several cases of summary executions and some new amputations and mutilations of civilians by RUF. It is also alleged that RUF "Small Boys Units" have been ordered to execute deserters or RUF members unwilling to fight. Rape and sexual abuse of women and girls continue. Women — including lactating women with babies — and girls are often abducted, beaten and used for forced labour and as "wives". Medical professionals indicate that most women among the internally displaced persons have contracted sexually transmitted diseases, frequently as a result of rape. As noted in my previous reports, female victims often do not report the incident or seek appropriate treatment for lack of services or fear of stigmatization." (SC 31 July 2000, paras. 37-38)

Major new displacement after break down of the peace process in May 2000

- Human rights abuses being committed by the RUF continue to be a main cause for displacement

- Lack of food cited as one reason for leaving
- Additional displacement in the wake of counter offensive by Government loyal forces not protecting civilians when attacking military targets
- RUF placing civilians at unnecessary risk by deploying their forces in areas with a high concentration of civilians
- Estimated that at least one million Sierra Leoneans lived in unstable areas of the country by July 2000
- RUF attacks on villages in the north still reported in November 2000
- HRW testimonies of abuses taken place within Port Loko, Kambia, Makeni, Lunsar, Kono, Kenema and Kabala districts between May and November 2000
- Reported in May 2001 that continued clashes between RUF and elements of the CDF in the eastern part of the country had caused new IDP flows

"[S]ince May [2000], insecurity has spread throughout the country leading to a steady influx of Sierra Leoneans into safer locations, including the Freetown and Lungi peninsula, Mile 91 junction and Port Loko town as well as Forecariah, Guinea." (UN July 2000, p.3)

"Fighting since May has resulted in the forced displacement of much of the population in Sierra Leone's Northern province [...].

[...]

MSF has learned of various reasons for this displacement. In early May civilians in large numbers fled from Mange, Rokupr and Port Loko because of human rights abuses being committed by the RUF, including killings, rape, forced labour, abductions, armed robbery, arson and looting. Others, well aware of the RUF's dismal human rights record, left for fear of such violations.

Lack of food has been another reason for leaving their homes. The renewed fighting came at the beginning of Sierra Leone's "hungry season" when the rainy season crop is being planted and food supplies are at their lowest. Existing shortages were exacerbated by the cutting off of the roads -- and therefore food supplies -- between Freetown and towns in the Northern province.

In May in Makeni, a long-time RUF stronghold, lack of food caused some people to leave. However, many more left the town when it appeared that Government forces would attack, although a ground attack never materialised.

[...]

For most displaced persons interviewed by MSF, the main reason for their fleeing their homes was not the RUF nor the food shortages -- but, rather, bombings carried out by the two helicopter gunships controlled by the Sierra Leone armed forces. Most of the bombings took place during the first two weeks in June. Places bombed were Makeni and some surrounding villages, Magburaka, villages around Kabala in Koinadugu district, and Rokupr, Kambia and Mange in Kambia district.

[...]

In many cases actions by both sides contributed to the forced displacement of the population. In Kambia district, Kabala and along the route from Magburaka to Mile 91, people left their homes simply to avoid getting caught in the crossfire when fighting broke out between RUF and pro-Government forces. Displaced from Kambia district told MSF that they had fled bombings from the government gunship as well as anticipated and actual atrocities committed by the RUF.

[...]

The departure of people from major towns has had a ripple effect. After Makeni and Magburaka had emptied and were then looted, RUF soldiers went looking for food in the outer villages. The harassment that followed and resulting food shortages caused these villagers to flee." (MSF 14 July 2000)

"Human Rights Watch today [12 July 2000] expressed concern that the Sierra Leone government has caused civilian casualties and massive civilian displacement in helicopter gunship attacks against suspected rebel positions. The attacks took place during the months of May and June in the towns of Makeni, Magburaka and Kambia and have resulted at least 27 civilian deaths and some 50 wounded civilians, as well as the displacement of tens of thousands of civilians. Human Rights Watch called on the Sierra Leone government and its British military advisors to ensure that government forces respect international humanitarian law and take the necessary precautions to protect civilians.

[...]

Displaced civilians from Makeni, located some 120 miles north-east of Freetown, and Magburaka, located fifteen miles southeast of Makeni, have described several air attacks on public places, including crowded markets. The actions of the helicopter caused a massive civilian exodus which emptied entire towns and villages." (HRW 12 July 2000)

"Since the resumption of hostilities in May, the country has been plunged into a chain of military events characterized by RUF attacks on civilians, clashes between allied government forces, military confrontations between UNAMSIL forces and the RUF, and government military activities in RUF areas, resulting in civilian casualties and mass population displacements.

OCHA estimates that at least one million Sierra Leoneans live in currently unstable areas of the country including the RUF occupied territories in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. The people continue to be victims of an unconventional and unpredictable system of conflict that does not differentiate civilian targets from military targets. They are increasingly subjected to human rights abuses by RUF rebels and undisciplined elements of the government forces. Those who are strong enough are leaving in throngs either to other parts of the country or across the border to Guinea.

[...]

Various military operations in the east, including UNAMSIL's operation Khukri, triggered a significant population movement from the Tongo fields area into Kenema town during the week beginning 17 July. The estimated number of new IDPs range between 5,000-10,000. However, by the middle of the week, agencies on the ground reported that the situation was calm and the IDPs were gradually returning to their home areas. No concentrations at public sites or influxes into existing camps were observed, with the exception of Gofor makeshift camp (9 km south of Kenema) where about 784 new IDPs had settled. Majority of the IDPs are said to be staying with relatives and friends in Kenema town." (OCHA 24 July 2000)

"MSF has learned of various reasons for this displacement [from the Northern province]. In early May [2000] civilians in large numbers fled from Mange, Rokupr and Port Loko because of human rights abuses being committed by the RUF, including killings, rape, forced labour, abductions, armed robbery, arson and looting. Others, well aware of the RUF's dismal human rights record, left for fear of such violations.

[...]

RUF forces have been widely implicated in extra-judicial killings, rape, amputations, forced labour, flogging and looting. Through interviews of recently displaced persons, MSF received many reports of rape, killing, and amputations in Mange and Kambia in Kambia district and in Masiaka and Lunsar in Port Loko district. In Makeni and Magburaka violations such as looting, forced labour, flogging, and abductions were most common." (MSF 14 July 2000)

"RUF forces reportedly attacked at least three villages in the north, causing a new wave of displacement into Kabala. According to CRS that operates there, 9,000 new IDPs arrived to the town during the week. UNAMSIL reported that there are indications that RUF forces have started to mobilise their troops towards the Guinea border." (WFP 3 November 2000)

"Since the resumption of hostilities in May 2000, Human Rights Watch has taken scores of testimonies from victims and witnesses of abuses taking place within Port Loko, Kambia, Makeni, Lunsar, Kono, Kenema and Kabala districts. While our research suggests that the RUF continue to commit the overwhelming majority of atrocities -- including rape, murder, abduction, forced conscription, and

amputation -- we note with concern the rising number of serious abuses by the Civil Defense Forces (CDF, primarily the Kamajors and Gbithis) including rape, systematic extortion, looting of villages, commandeering of vehicles, recruitment of children, and torture and summary execution of suspected rebels. We have also documented RUF attacks on Guinean villages and civilians." (HRW 29 November 2000)

"The overall security situation around the country remained calm throughout the period [May 2001]. However, clashes continued between the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and elements of the CDF in the eastern part of the country despite the ceasefire. The fighting, which began in late April, has led to the internal displacement of several thousand civilians in the eastern town of Koidu.

[...]

On May 23rd, a team comprising OCHA, UNHCR and the UN FSO [Field Security Officer], undertook a security assessment mission to the newly accessed town of Koidu in Kono District.

[...]

While they could not confirm the presence of large numbers of returnees and refugees from Guinea and Liberia reported by the RUF, the team found some of the recently displaced populations from the latest fighting between the RUF and the CDF in the area. According to UNAMSIL and the IDPs interviewed, an estimated 3,000 IDPs from surrounding villages have taken refuge in the town, sleeping in two (unroofed) school buildings. The coping strategies of the IDPs are limited and the host population is not in the position to offer significant support. Many of them are said to be scavenging for fruits and nuts in the bushes. It is believed that once the fighting stops, the IDPs will most likely return to their villages." (OCHA 29 May 2001)

See also HRW's reports of RUF atrocities against civilians during the first months after the breakdown of the peace process in May 2000 (HRW 26 May 2000 and 5 June 2000).

New displacement as conflict extended across the Guinea-Sierra Leone border (September 2000 – May 2001)

- Rebels from Sierra Leone attacking villages inside Guinea after September 2000
- Claimed in November 2000 that Guinean troops had entered about three miles inside the Sierra Leone territory near the Kambia district
- Sierra Leonean refugees displaced in south-east Guinea repatriated to Freetown
- Reported that some returning refugees ends up in a situation of internal displacement because home areas are too unsafe for return
- RUF retaliating on civilians after being chased by Guinean forces
- Fighting in the border areas escalated during January-March 2001
- Reported in May 2001 that up to 30,000 civilians had been internally displaced as a direct result of military activities in the area

"Since early September [2000], at least 15 attacks against Guinean border villages have been carried out by armed insurgents, reportedly operating from the territories of Liberia and Sierra Leone. The Government of Guinea reports that 350 people have been killed during the incursions, when several military and administrative establishments were targeted. Responsibility for the attacks has not been established although UNAMSIL has received reports of RUF involvement." (UN SC 31 October 2000, para.5)

"The growing tension along the border areas of Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia is creating new emergencies, further stretching the capacity of the humanitarian system to respond. Thousands of Sierra Leonean refugees in Guinea and IDPs living in the border areas in Kambia District have been displaced

since the beginning of September following the instability in these areas and the subsequent harassment of Sierra Leonean refugees in Guinea.

[...]

While some of the returnees are being accommodated by relatives and friends, it is unfortunate that many will go from being refugees to being IDPs, as the main zones of return, including Kambia, Kono and Kailahun remain insecure. Humanitarian agencies are closely monitoring the situation and making necessary arrangements to provide for those who have nowhere to go." (OCHA 18 September 2000)

"An additional 6,000 refugees fled from Kambia immediately after the start of the border clashes in Guinea and are residing as IDPs with host communities in the Lungi area." (SCF November 2000)

"Reports reaching UNAMSIL indicate that about 50% of the RUF from Tongo area in the east have moved to the north and are fully engaged in the military operations in Guinea. However they say the Guinean army has established itself in the area over the past two weeks and appears to be successful in countering the rebels.

Further UNAMSIL report indicate that, during this period, the Guinean troops continued to bomb RUF held territories in the Kambia District and that the GOSL gunship has allegedly bombed several other villages inside Sierra Leone. On October 9th, the Kenyan battalion (KENBAT) of UNAMSIL that is deployed in Barbara and Bailor Wharf reported protracted shelling to the north at Kassiri, Tumbu, Kychom and some other locations. Similarly a Guinean helicopter gunship has supposedly bombed the Kakuna village, 30km northeast of Kambia, in the Tonkolimba chiefdom." (OCHA 27 October 2000)

"UNAMSIL reports the security situation in the country to be generally calm, during the reporting period but says clashes between RUF and Guinean forces along the Guinea boarder near Kambia continues. These incidents of intermittent shelling along the borders have resulted into fatalities; four civilians, fleeing from shelling at the Koya village, arrived in Babara and have been admitted at the Lungi hospital. One of them died earlier, from his injuries. UNAMSIL confirmed other sources to have heard the shelling on 6th November in Lungi. The Guinean troops are said to have entered about three miles inside the Sierra Leone territory, near the Kambia district whilst the RUF is retreating. They have dug up the road to Kambia, to prevent pursuit by the Guinean troops." (OCHA 13 November 2000)

"An additional 11,500 confirmed refugees moved overland to the Lungi areas where they are receiving community-based assistance." (UN SC 15 December 2000, para. 56)

"During the reporting period [November - December 2000], tensions has been high in the Forecariah and Kindia areas in south-western Guinea, where there have been several cross-border incursions.

[...].

[In the] Kambia district along the border where fighting has continued between rebels and Guinean force. On several occasions, the Guinean forces have had to shell RUF positions in Sierra Leone territory." (UN SC 15 December 2000, paras. 10, 22)

"Sierra Leonean refugees displaced in south-east Guinea continue to be repatriated to Freetown. Some will be able to go back as returnees to their areas of origin, if safety allows. People who are from rebel controlled territory will, however, come back as IDPs and be reinstalled on temporary settlement in areas of relative safety. WFP and the humanitarian community continue to increase contingency measure to deal with the possible large influx of returning refugees." (WFP 5 January 2001)

"During the reporting period [January-March 2001], fighting in the areas along Sierra Leone's border with Guinea escalated, in particular in January 2001. In response to cross-border attacks, Guinean forces intensified shelling and launched helicopter gunship attacks on suspected RUF positions deep inside Sierra Leone in the Kambia and Rokupr areas, causing civilian casualties and significant flows of internally displaced persons." (UN SC 14 March 2001, para. 22)

"Human Rights Watch has spoken with witnesses and victims from twelve attacks, all within areas under the control of rebels from the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). The attacks, which took place in the Kambia, Bombali and Koinadugu districts of the country, also caused serious destruction of property and resulted in the displacement of thousands of civilians. These attacks, five by helicopter gunship and seven using artillery, took place in and around the towns of Rokupr, Yeliboya, Makasa, Kakuna, Sabuya, Mambolo, Rokel and Kamakwie.

[...]

While many of the victims and witnesses interviewed by Human Rights Watch confirm the presence of RUF rebels in the area around the time of the attacks, none of the attacks documented seem to have accurately targeted RUF bases or areas of concentration. Instead the gunship rockets and artillery shells slammed into neighborhoods, marketplaces, restaurants and boat wharfs." (HRW 28 February 2001)

"Kambia district has been under attack by the Guinean militia and the RUF since the resumption of hostilities in May 2000, making it impossible for humanitarian agencies to operate there. Up to 30,000 civilians have been internally displaced as a direct result of military activities in the area." (OCHA 29 May 2001)

Rebels and pro-government militia attack civilians in the north of country (June 2001)

- RUF rebels and CDF militia kill at least 24 civilians in a series of attacks in the north of the country
- Hundreds of civilians are displaced as a result of the attacks

"According to [extensive interviews conducted by Human Rights Watch](#), both the government-allied civil defense force militias (CDF) and rebels from the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) have been attacking and killing civilians in the northern Kono and Koinadugu districts of Sierra Leone.

Human Rights Watch called on the United Nations to deploy peacekeepers to the region as quickly as possible.

'Civilians are being targeted in deadly battles of retaliation,' said Peter Takirambudde, Executive Director for Africa at Human Rights Watch. 'Neither the RUF nor the CDF make much effort to distinguish between military and civilian targets. The U.N. has to act immediately to stop these atrocities.'

Human Rights Watch has interviewed numerous victims and witnesses who described attacks by the CDF militias in June and July against the RUF-controlled towns of Worodu, Yiraia, Sukudu and Mansofinia. In the four attacks documented by Human Rights Watch, at least twenty-four civilians, including nine women and nine children were killed, and some nineteen more civilians, including eleven children, were wounded. In the most serious recent incident, on June 17, CDF militias, commonly known as the Kamajors or Donzos, killed at least twenty-one civilians in the town of Yiraia. In apparent retaliatory attacks in late June and early July, the RUF launched raids against surrounding villagers whom they accuse of supporting the CDF militias. The RUF killed at least three civilians, wounded several, and abducted sixteen people.

[...]

According to witnesses interviewed by Human Rights Watch, many villages have been burned and looted by both sides, and hundreds of civilians have been displaced as a result of the attacks, which took place from mid-June through the second week in July.

Witnesses claim many of the CDF militiamen currently moving into and launching attacks against RUF territory in Kono and Koinadugu Districts were, until April 2001, based in refugee camps in Guinea or around the Guinean border with Sierra Leone. While in late May 2001 the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) was able to facilitate the disarmament of 171 of these militiamen, hundreds more are currently operating in what has been an RUF stronghold since 1998.

Human Rights Watch is concerned that hundreds of refugees who have been returning to their villages in Kono and Koinadugu Districts from refugee camps in Guinea are at particular risk for retaliatory attacks by the RUF who may accuse them of supporting the CDF militiamen.

Since a ceasefire between the RUF and Government of Sierra Leone was declared in November 2000, UNAMSIL has been able to deploy and/or patrol in all RUF-controlled areas, and since May 2001, some 7,000 combatants from all sides have disarmed. While thousands of combatants in the RUF strongholds of Kambia and Lunsar have disarmed and some degree of governmental authority has been restored, those combatants in the diamond rich area of Kono have been reluctant to disarm, frustrating United Nations and government officials." (HRW 24 July 2001)

For recent political analysis, see reports by the International Crisis Group (ICG):

Sierra Leone: Managing Uncertainty, 24 Oct 2001, [\[external link\]](#)

Sierra Leone: Ripe for Elections? 19 Dec 2001, [\[external link\]](#)

POPULATION PROFILE AND FIGURES

Global figures

UN cites figure of 247,590 IDPs in Consolidated Appeal 2002 for Sierra Leone (November 2001)

Profile of Beneficiaries

COUNTRY	IDPs	REFUGEES	RETURNEES	HOSTS/ Other	GRAND TOTAL
Guinea	359,000*	111,000 Sierra Leoneans 81,000 Liberians	NA	300,000	851,000
Sierra Leone	247,590	9,500 Liberians	100,000	1,000,000	1,357,090
Liberia	55,000	70,000 Sierra Leoneans	30,000	500,000	655,000
TOTAL	661,590	271,500	130,000	1,800,000	2,863,090

"The table above indicates that more than **3 million war-affected persons will benefit from the combined efforts of United Nations humanitarian Agencies and NGOs through this Appeal, covering relief, rehabilitation, resettlement, repatriation and reintegration, as well as protection interventions.** In Sierra Leone and Liberia, IDPs reside primarily in managed camps, while in Guinea, most IDPs are in existing communities. Some refugees are also integrated into communities, particularly those located along the border areas of the four countries. **The focus for humanitarian agencies and partners will be to address the varying degrees of vulnerability in these countries.**" (UN November 2001, p. 7-8)

302,000 registered IDPs in camps and host communities by August 2001

Overview of IDP & Returnees in Sierra Leone as of August 04, 2001

REGION	CATEGORY	CURRENT IDP POPULATION	
		FAMILIES	POPULATION
NORTH	IDPs in CAMPS	1,224	8,763
	IDPs in HOST COMMUNITIES ¹	21,128	111,099
	RETURNEES ²	3,615	16,270
	SUB-TOTAL	25,967	136,132
SOUTH	IDPs in CAMPS	2,281	10,458
	IDPs in HOST COMMUNITIES ¹	1,816	9,532
	RETURNEES ²	4,101	18,456
	SUB-TOTAL	8,198	38,446
EAST	IDPs in CAMPS	9,737	55,698
	IDPs in HOST COMMUNITIES ¹	0	0
	RETURNEES ²	6,365	29,644
	SUB-TOTAL	16,102	84,232
WEST	IDPs in CAMPS	10,636	52,150
	IDPs in HOST COMMUNITIES ¹	0	0
	RETURNEES ²	1,752	7,997
	SUB-TOTAL	12,388	60,037
TOTAL	IDPs in CAMPS	23,878	126,950
	IDPs in HOST COMMUNITIES ¹	22,944	120,631
	RETURNEES ²	12,218	54,997
	GRAND TOTAL	59,040	302,577

1 - Host Community-IDPs in this context refers to IDPs living with communities that are formally supported by the Food Pipeline Agencies (WFP, CRS, CARE, World Vision).

2 - Returnees are Sierra Leoneans who were in Guinea or Liberia and have returned to Sierra Leone (presently living in Transit Camps, or in Host Communities). These Figures are from UNHCR's Statistics Situation Report as of August 04, 2001

Source: UN OCHA 30 August 2001

Only broad estimates available for the total number of IDPs between 1994 and 1997

- Reported numbers of IDPs in 1997 varies from 500,000 to 1, 5 million
- Total numbers between 1994 and 1994 varies between 700,000 and one million

"Although violence in Freetown and elsewhere produced new flight in 1997, the large-scale presence of RUF fighters and AFRC soldiers in Freetown meant that significant portions of Sierra Leone's interior

were notably more secure than in previous years. The return of hundreds of thousands of displaced persons early in the year, and a projected increase in agricultural production in many rural areas, produced relative stability in some areas.

By year's end [1997], UN agencies reported that some 157,000 internally displaced Sierra Leoneans were "relief dependent." This significantly understated the total number of internally displaced persons, however.

UNHCR, which had no significant presence in Sierra Leone after its international staff evacuated in June, reported that at least 1.5 million Sierra Leoneans were internally displaced as of November. The U.S. Department of State reported that 1.4 million Sierra Leoneans remained internally displaced at year's end. These and other reports were unverifiable.

Based on reports of the number of displaced persons who returned to home areas in early 1997 and the apparent effects of renewed fighting, USCR, in the absence of definitive reports, estimated that 500,000 or more Sierra Leoneans remained internally displaced at year's end. This estimate, like others, was speculative." (USCR 1998, pp.88 & 90)

Total figures for internally displaced population available for the period 1994 – 1996:

Year	Number of IDP	Source
End 1996	"estimated 800,000 or more"	(USCR 1997, p. 89)
End 1995	"at least one million persons"	(USCR 1996, p.65)
End 1994	"700,000 or more"	(USCR1995, p. 74)

Geographic distribution

More than half of all IDPs staying in 19 official camps (September 2001)

"Based on the census conducted by the office in February 2001, the total number of IDPs [both verified and non-verified] staying in Sierra Leone's 19 official IDP camps, since September 2001 is 126,959, i.e. 23,878 families. As at July 2001, 78,465 IDPs were staying with host communities in the Tonkolili District; 32,634 in Port Loko District; 7,971 Moyamba District and; 1,561 in Bo District, making a total of 120,631 IDPs in host communities. The total number of IDPs countrywide, after the first two phases of resettlement in April/June 2001 that relocated over 26,000 people stands at 247,590." (UN OCHA 30 November 2001)

Large number of IDPs have sought shelter in the Port Loko district (2000-2001)

- 25,000 IDPs registered in Port Loko by August 2000, and estimated that additional 60,000 IDPs lived with host families
- Estimated 35,000 new IDPs arrived in Lungi area between May and July 2000
- WFP survey in March 2001 found some 28,817 IDPs from Kambia sheltered in Kaffu Bullom and Lokomassama chiefdoms

"Within the Port Loko Township, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) has registered a total of 25,200 IDPs, of which 5,499 arrived between 18 July and 1 August. Upon registration, the IDPs are reporting to

the Police for further screening and security clearance. A significant number of the IDPs 10,831, have been absorbed into the local communities, while another 10,612 people have taken refuge in the camp. Due to the congestion in the camp, 3,241 of the IDPs have moved into the local primary school, while another 516 relocated to the Barracks. Meanwhile, WFP plans to undertake a re-registration and verification exercise in Port Loko town starting Tuesday, 8 August." (OCHA 7 August 2000)

"On 8 August, WFP verified the existence of 19,981 IDPs in Port Loko IDP Camp and the nearby public buildings used for the purpose." (WFP 18 August 2000)

"In the Port Loko area of Sierra Leone, some 70 miles (110 km) north of Freetown, the number of displaced persons tripled, according to UN estimates. At year's end, some 20,000 people resided in a camp for internally displaced persons at Port Loko. Another 60,000 displaced persons lived with host families in the area, constituting a heavy burden on the local population. Most fled between May and August as a result of renewed hostilities, continued banditry, and factional fighting in the area." (USCR June 2001)

"The most recent registration and verification exercises in the Lungi area indicate an IDP population of approximately 35,000 who arrived since May. They are spread between Kaffu Bullom and Loko Masama chiefdoms, and Tasso Island. The IDPs have benefited from a range of relief packages, including food aid, non-food items, and access to water, sanitation and health services. Additional registrations are planned for an estimated new caseload of 4,000 in Peppel Island where WFP plans a VGF distribution. The strategy for the Greater Lungi area is to continue supporting IDPs within host communities rather than encourage the creation of camps. WFP will develop FFW norms for fishing through the construction of boats, fishing nets and smoke houses for the IDPs in riverine areas." (OCHA 24 July 2000)

"The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), together with its partner Sierra Leone Red Cross (SLRC) distributed Non Food Items (NFIs) to over 2,000 newly displaced families (about 12,000 persons) from the Kambia district that are currently seeking refuge in the Lungi area." (OCHA 23 February 2001)

"The World Food Programme (WFP) recently carried out a registration in the Kaffu Bullom and Lokomassama chiefdom and confirms the presence of some 28,817 IDPs from Kambia in 15 villages in the chiefdom. Due to shelling in the Kambia area, border-crossing from Forecariah into Sierra Leone has ceased. The majority of the IDPs reside in the entry points of Bailor wharf and Babara in Lungi within host communities and in make shift shelters. Fleeing their homes using local fisherman boats, they were able to escape with some of their latest harvest (swamp rice), and meager belongings." (OCHA 10 March 2001)

More than 7,000 newly displaced people in the northern town Bumbuna (August 2000)

"More than 7,000 newly displaced people are reported to have arrived in Bumbuna, (northeast of Makeni) in the last week. MSF-B undertook a one-day assessment mission to the town on Monday, 7 August and reported that the new IDPs were in desperate need of humanitarian assistance, particularly food aid. About 20 mt of food aid will be required to address the current needs. At present, food can only be transported to the area by air. Efforts are being made by various agencies to find ways of responding to the immediate needs of the IDPs.

The IDPs interviewed by MSF said they fled from Makeni and Magburaka to escape RUF forced recruitments and continuing attacks. Some of them also fled due to the helicopter gunship attack in Makeni in June, and had been hiding in bushes until their arrival in Bumbuna." (OCHA 7 August 2000)

Substantial displacement in Kenema/Daru area as conflict escalated (July 2000)

- New displacement caused by fighting between pro-government forces and RUF rebels in the Tongo Field area
- Flow of IDPs to Daru and Kenema in the wake of UNAMSIL operation to rescue peacekeepers in Kailahun during the weekend of 15/16 July

"Thousands of civilians are reported to be fleeing insecurity in the Tongo Field area of eastern Sierra Leone, a humanitarian source in Freetown told IRIN on Thursday. 'An estimated 3,000-5,000, depending on who you talk to, have been displaced to Kenema,' an official of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said.

There has been no official registration, but some 1,200 internally displaced persons (IDPs) have settled in Gofor, south of Kenema, a possible location for a new camp. Several hundred others are staying with relatives.

[...]

There are also unconfirmed reports that up to 7,000 IDPs may be in the eastern town of Daru and surrounding areas. An inter-agency mission hopes to visit the area in the near future. OCHA said there were also no details of the state of health of these IDPs and, moreover, there is no road access to Daru.

The new wave of IDPs follows reports of recent fighting between pro-government forces and Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels in the Tongo Field area and the clashes between UN and RUF forces during last weekend's operation to rescue over 200 UN peacekeepers who had been blocked since May in another eastern town, Kailahun." (IRIN 20 July 2000)

"Following military operations by UNAMSIL to free surrounded Indian peacekeepers in Kailahun during the weekend of 15/16 July, approximately 5,000 to 6,000 IDPs arrived in Daru from around the town and areas near the main Pendembu-Daru road. A humanitarian inter-agency mission, consisting the International Medical Corps (IMC), ICRC, Save the Children Fund (SCF), the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and Oxfam, visited Daru on Friday 21 July to assess the situation of the IDPs. According to a report sent to OCHA by IMC, "Daru town was really crowded." The team estimated that the new IDP population was around 5,500 divided between Daru town (3,500) and Malema, (2,000), a village across the river northeast of Daru. Malema appeared much more congested.

[...]

"Various military operations in the east, including UNAMSIL's operation Khukri, triggered a significant population movement from the Tongo fields area into Kenema town during the week beginning 17 July. The estimated number of new IDPs range between 5,000-10,000. However, by the middle of the week, agencies on the ground reported that the situation was calm and the IDPs were gradually returning to their home areas. No concentrations at public sites or influxes into existing camps were observed, with the exception of Gofor makeshift camp (9 km south of Kenema) where about 784 new IDPs had settled. Majority of the IDPs are said to be staying with relatives and friends in Kenema town." (OCHA 24 July 2000)

Major influx of IDPs to Mile 91 area during June 2000

- Daily average of more than 1,500 IDP arrivals during first weeks of June
- By August 2000, 33,105 IDPs registered in 29 villages along the Masiaka-Mile 91-Magburaka stretch
- 28,000 IDPs identified in Mile 91 town in September

"On June 1, tens of thousands of Sierra Leoneans from the Makeni/Magburaka axis began arriving in a small town and strategic junction called Mile 91. Women and children formed the bulk of the new arrivals. The exodus was to continue over a two-week period, with a daily average of more than 1,500 arrivals

during the peak period. Those who had been waiting in nearby bush hideouts for a chance to return home also began the journey southwards as the conditions in their home areas remained dangerous and unclear.

Their stories are remarkably consistent - "leaflets were airdropped by the government helicopter gunship signaling a warning that Makeni would be bombed if the RUF did not surrender." The leaflets were followed by a bombing incident by the government gunship, reportedly provoked by the RUF, which claimed the lives of at least 15 civilians in the town, including two pregnant women. The IDPs suffered intimidation and assault at the hands of RUF rebels as they made their exit through RUF checkpoints. Upon arrival in Mile 91, many were weak, sick and desperate for food, shelter and medicine." (OCHA 24 July 2000)

"Mile 91 and the environs continue to play host to the bulk of IDPs displaced as a result of the resumption of hostilities in May. A significant development during this review period was the completion of a re-registration and re-verification exercise by CARE and WFP on 16 and 17 August. Preliminary reports confirmed a total population of 82,500 persons in Mile 91 town (including IDPs and the host population), more than twice our earlier estimates (see sitrep 25 July to 7 August). CARE is yet to determine the exact number of IDPs as most IDPs have fully integrated into the host community. In 29 villages along the Masiaka-Mile 91-Magburaka stretch, WFP registered and verified 58,947 persons, of which 25,842 represent the host population and 33,105 are IDPs.

[...]

Meanwhile, OCHA field coordinators have reported a recent trend of civilian movement from Mile 91 towards Makeni and Magburaka. When some of the women, (who were carrying bulgur and other food supplies) were interviewed, they said they were heading to Makeni and Magburaka to settle and to do "small business". The people did not appear concerned about the security situation in these areas. " (OCHA 27 August 2000)

"WFP verified presence of 38,691 IDPs in 29 villages around Mile 91. Food needs assessment carried out in Yonibana, one of the villages, indicated urgent food aid needs among the IDPs, as most are currently surviving on cassava leaves and palm oil. This is the second or third displacement in the last two years for most IDPs, especially those from Makeni, Magburaka, and Lunsar. WFP will start food distributions for the IDPs and 5,000 host families next week." (WFP 24 August 2000)

"In order to clarify the issue of numbers, in September, CARE successfully mobilized more than 100 relief workers representing 17 agencies to support a one-day re-verification exercise within the town. UNAMSIL provided security for this exercise and imposed a curfew, which prevented an influx from nearby villages during the exercise. The initiative led to a clarification of the number of beneficiaries, which came down to 28,000 for IDPs and 11,000 for the resident population."(UN November 2000, p.130)

Disaggregated figures

Children comprise approximately 60% of the displaced population (1998-2001)

- Reports in 1998 that the conflict had separated 10 000 children from their families
- 5,498 parents reported their children missing after January 1999
- 3,525 children separated from their parents reunified by December 2000
- 3,000 children living on the streets in Freetown
- 932 children released by RUF during a three-week period after 25 May 2001

"On November 20th [2000] the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children Affairs (MSWGCA), UNICEF, ADRA and other child protection partners launched a National Tracing Day, which will eventually take place on 2nd February 2001. The launching was to raise awareness about thousands of children and their family members who have been separated by the war. This day was simultaneously launched in Bo, Kenema, Daru and Lungi. The Minister, Ms Shirley Gbujama disclosed that 5,498 parents, who mostly lost their children during the January 1999 rebel invasion of Freetown, have put in tracing requests for their children. She said that nearly 10,000 children have been reported missing and added that 3,525 children separated from their parents have been reunified. UNICEF has agreed to support the MSWGCA for the training of 70 social workers who have recently been deployed in all the chiefdoms in the southern province and Kenema district." (OCHA 6 December 2000)

"Children have borne the brunt of the conflict in Sierra Leone. They comprise half the estimated 10,000 deaths and 700,000 of the nation's displaced population of 1.8 million at the height of the conflict, among them 9500 unaccompanied minors." (Beattie 1998, p.54)

"Up to 70% of the population has been displaced by the war at some time over the past decade, much of it on several occasions. Approximately 60% of these are children. Among those most at risk of serious abuse are the estimated 10,000 children who are separated from their families. These include approximately 3,000 children who are living on the streets in Freetown. Women and children make up the majority of displaced populations and around 10% find themselves performing sexual favours to obtain basic essentials like soap and kerosene for their family." (SCF 21 June 2001)

Some abducted/missing children from the Freetown area have been traced following the July 1999 peace agreement:

"According to UNICEF, at present an average of 10 to 20 children including abductees and child combatants are returning each week. The National Child Protection Network has been strengthened to deal with new challenges, especially in the Freetown area. With better access and security, tracing and reunification activities, which had been constrained in large sections of the country is also expected to see significant progress." (UN OCHA 12 July 1999)

"At least 100 children were among 200 people freed by AFRC rebels on 10 August [1999]. The abductees were released along with the last batch of hostages taken by the rebels on 4 August. Initial screening of the teenage girls revealed that eight of them were pregnant, while six others were nursing mothers. One girl had a five-day old baby. According to UNICEF, the children, who were mostly in tattered clothes appeared weak and haggard. The latest release brings to just over 250 the total number of abducted children officially released by the RUF/AFRC rebels since the signing of the Peace Agreement. The first set of 187 abductees was released on 16 July 1999 out of which 121 were children under 18 years of age. Ten of them were pregnant and breast-feeding girls between 14 and 18 years of age. Another group of 36 was handed over to UNICEF by ECOMOG on 6 August. By the time of writing, UNICEF and child protection partners had reunified about 75 per cent of the children with their families. Those remaining in interim care mostly come from the provinces and will be reunified as soon as access to their locations permit tracing activities.

[...]

The Government has called for the immediate and unconditional release of the many children and other civilians still being held in captivity, in accordance with commitments under the Lome Peace Agreement. UNICEF registered nearly 4,000 children as missing by parents in the Western Area after the RUF rebels invaded Freetown in January. By end of July, 865 had been traced and reunified while 3,120 still remain missing. Child protection agencies emphasize that the scale of this tragedy is much larger than that indicated by the above figures, which only reflect the greater Freetown area. It is safe to assume that large abductions also occurred in the provinces.

To support activities for child soldiers and released abductees, UNICEF has signed new project agreements with COOPI, IRC, and KDDO for support in psychosocial, family tracing, integration and foster care for UACs and child soldiers in the Western Area and southern and eastern provinces. The UN Foundation,

USAID, Japan, SWEDEN, Australia, New Zealand, and the German Committee for UNICEF are funding the programme.

Meanwhile, agencies have prepositioned supplies in the Western Area, Bo and Kenema in preparation for UACs and released children needing interim care. In Kenema, the Child Protection Committee identified two buildings at the RTI camp to house an estimated 2,000 children, including children associated with the fighting forces and the unaccompanied children. WVI is considering funding an emergency preparedness proposal to train social workers in their areas of operation." (UN OCHA 10 August 1999)

"The RUF have so far released a total of 932 children to UNAMSIL since May 25, when they entered into new negotiations with the government to end a brutal 10-year war. They have also promised to release a further 147 child-combatants from their base in the eastern diamond-mining town of Tongo Fields. The children have been released over the past three weeks, in the township of Makeni, Port Loko and Kailahun. The children, mostly boys ranging from 8 – 18 years are handed over to child protection agencies, who are helping them reestablish their lives. Although this is a very positive move, a recent report published by the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, has expressed concern over the use of child soldiers by the CDF. According to the report, up to 30 percent of CDF combatants in some areas are between seven and fourteen years of age." (OCHA 16 June 2001)

PATTERNS OF DISPLACEMENT

The dynamics between the armed conflict and displacement

Complex movement patterns of different categories of displaced during first half of 2001

- Many returning refugees end up in a situation of internal displacement as home areas is too unsafe for return
- Internally displaced people originating from safe areas are moving back to their homes

"The number of people on the move in Sierra Leone is overwhelming. Refugees are returning from Guinea. Some returnees are going directly to local settlements; others are moving to camps for internally displaced around Kenema and Pujehun in eastern Sierra Leone. Many returnees go to transit sites around the capital, Freetown, but then refuse to leave for fear of what they will find in their home communities. Internally displaced people originating from safe areas are moving back to their homes. Liberians fleeing the fighting in Lofa County are seeking refuge in Daru just across the border. Sierra Leonean refugees alleging recruitment by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in the refugee camps in Liberia are returning to Sierra Leone.

[...]

Refugees and displaced people originating from unsafe areas, mainly Kono and Kailahun in eastern Sierra Leone, have the option of settling in safe areas but most do not want to settle in areas that are not their homes. Many refugee returnees have simply traded their refugee hat for an IDP hat. Around Freetown, thousand of returnees from Guinea are living in transit camps and refusing to leave unless they can go to their places of origin. According to a refugee leader at the congested Lumpa transit center, 'I will never leave here unless I can return to my home in Kono. I do not want to move from one camp to another camp. We will stay here 5 years if we have to even though there are no schools in this camp.'

UNHCR finds itself in a difficult situation in assisting returnees in the three transit camps, now de facto IDP camps. UNHCR is working with the government to identify additional sites to transfer returnees from unsafe areas, but people do not want to leave. The UN Country Team and NGOs have yet to develop a long-range plan detailing how best to assist these refugees, most of whom will stay in these camps until their homes become safe." (RI 26 April 2001)

Many displaced move towards urban areas considered safe (2000-2001)

- People were fleeing from IDP camps around Freetown towards the capital itself as conflict escalated in May 2000
- IDP movement during 2000 towards the Government held town Bumbuna where emergency assistance was available

"Most returnees tend to settle in large cities and remain there as long as their areas of origin are unsafe. Returnees also assume that Freetown, in particular, offers greater safety and economic opportunities. As a result, cities like Freetown and Kenema host large numbers of internally displaced persons, returnees and ex-combatants, adding to a population which is already struggling with high rates of unemployment and scarce resources, placing a heavy strain on basic services, in particular water and sanitation. The capacity of

transit centres in the Freetown area has reached saturation point and many returnees are reluctant to move on, thereby obstructing the admission of new arrivals. (UN SC 23 May 2001, paras. 15)

"Thousands of people displaced by fighting in areas just outside the Freetown peninsula arrived in the Sierra Leonean capital during the past few days, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) quoted aid agencies based in Freetown as saying. On Wednesday, an assessment mission by UN humanitarian agencies to the outskirts of Freetown found that Waterloo and Grafton camps, occupied by people displaced during the rebel invasion of Freetown in January 1999, were emptying rapidly.

Up to 2,000 people were found carrying their belongings on foot along the road from Waterloo to Freetown. But on Thursday, many UN humanitarian agencies, as well as ICRC, reported that many displaced people had started to return to Waterloo, leaving some 20,000 to 30,000 in the environs of central Freetown.

[...]

'Most of the new arrivals are going to friends and families and some to existing camps,' a humanitarian source told IRIN. Approximately 400 to 500 people displaced by recent fighting in Newton and Masiaka (east and northeast of Freetown respectively) are in need of shelter, according to ICRC. Food aid and medical assistance are the most urgent humanitarian requirements in Freetown, according to aid agencies." (IRIN 12 May 2000)

"Rising above the limitations, WFP has [in Bumbuna] completed the first half of an emergency food distribution (10mt) to the families of 645 malnourished children, enrolled in the MSF-B Supplementary Feeding Program (SFP). They hope to target the remaining 1,100 beneficiaries shortly notwithstanding the hindered road access to the township. They describe the food situation in the town as frightening. Not only were the children malnourished but also WFP observed that the majority of the mothers receiving the food were skin-and-bone. MSF-B says that they register between 20-30 new patients into their SFP, weekly. According to them the surging malnutrition is mainly attributed to the fact that Bumbuna is the only accessible town in a largely rebel held territory, which unsurprisingly attracts IDPs from near-by villages in search of food and safety." (OCHA 13 November 2000)

Movement patterns in northern and eastern provinces outlined in comprehensive study (December 1999)

- Three categories of IDPs: IDPs originally from settlements within the same chiefdom; IDPs from other chiefdoms within the same district and IDPs from other districts
- Some IDPs may remain in urban areas despite improved security both due to access to food inputs and an inability to repair their homes

In October 1999, the Government of Sierra Leone, with financial support from the European Union, commissioned a two-month consultancy to assess and analyse conditions in the northern and eastern provinces of the country. This study includes some information about the movement patterns of the IDPs:

"The chiefdom analysis specifically differentiated between different types of internally displaced persons in order to establish clear demographic estimates and cross-reference data for further verification. These groups were:

- 1) IDPs originally from settlements within the same chiefdom (generally moving from rural areas to urban)
- 2) IDPs from other chiefdoms within the same district
- 3) IDPs from other districts

Each of these groups requires external support tailored to their specific needs. Some IDP 'group' and chiefdom targeting considerations, drawn from discussions with working group participants and other agency representatives, are presented below.

Group 1: IDPs from the same chiefdom

In stable, productive chiefdoms, there is a risk that the IDPs from the first category – those from the same chiefdom – have actually migrated to urban areas or formal camps in search of food. In some cases, such ‘IDPs’ have retained access to their original homes and farms within the chiefdom. A good example of this type of migration is the Blama Camp in Small Bo, where – according to working group participants – a portion of the current IDP population is from nearby settlements in Small Bo.

In other cases, IDPs originally fled their villages during attacks on the chiefdom. While these villages are now secure, some of these IDPs may have remained in urban areas both due to access to food inputs and an inability to repair their homes. An example of this type of migration can be found in Yele town (Gbonkolenken chiefdom), where a high proportion of current IDPs are from Gbonkolenken itself.

Not all IDPs from the same chiefdom would fall into the categories described above – in some chiefdoms, the main town is a safe haven and all other villages in the chiefdom are too insecure for return.

However, in those stable, secure chiefdoms (rating a ‘1’ or a ‘2’), with high levels of IDPs from within the chiefdom, agencies should consider targeting these IDPs only in their original home settlements. If necessary, these agencies should also consider implementing complementary housing repair projects to support return. This type of targeting could promote resettlement and prevent further population migration.

Group 2: IDPs from the same district

Contingent on security conditions, it is possible that the second group of IDPs from other chiefdoms within the same district may be more likely to return home in 2000 than the third group from other districts. Agencies may wish to further investigate the origins of this group of IDPs. For those who are originally from currently secure chiefdoms, resettlement agricultural packages may be far more appropriate than provision of support within the host chiefdom.

Group 3: IDPs from other districts

The third group of IDPs from other districts is typically from Kono, Kailahun and Koinadugu. Many have been displaced for a number of years and have moved several times. Agencies targeting this group may wish to further investigate two important program considerations:

- Access and rights to land – particularly ‘in-kind’ rental fees
- Labor compensation rates – it is possible that IDPs working on farms for the resident population may be paid significantly lower wages than local laborers." (GOSL December 1999, sect. 4.2.2)

PHYSICAL SECURITY & FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

General

Rebels as well as pro-government forces extorting "taxes" from fleeing civilians (July 2001)

"Human Rights Watch [...] strongly condemns the continuing practice of both pro-government and rebel forces to extort "taxes" from fleeing civilian populations. All witnesses interviewed by Human rights Watch reported that they had been forced to pay a "tax" to pro-government Civil Defense Forces (CDF) before entering the town of Mile 91, and civilians who fled through RUF-held territory described how they were forced to hand over personal belongings and money at RUF-controlled territory.

'It is unconscionable that pro-government and rebel forces are stealing the last possessions from frightened, fleeing people,' said Takirambudde. 'The government of Sierra Leone needs to act immediately to stop theft and extortion by forces loyal to the government, particularly the Civil Defense Forces.' " (HRW 12 July 2000)

Many of the displaced in camps continue to be exposed to the same protection threats as those causing their displacement (2000-2001)

- Inadequate capacity to protect IDPs in camps and no systematic training programmes for camp managers and officials
- UN report points at need to make Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement better known
- No collaborative protection strategies to assist IDPs at risk

"Human Rights Watch has documented numerous rebel abuses committed during the months of January and February 2000 in Port Loko district, an area allegedly under government control, 40-65 kilometers from Freetown. The abuses include fourteen cases of rape (including of girls as young as 11 years old), 118 cases of abduction of villagers, and three murders, as well as several cases of mutilation, forced labor, massive looting, ambushes, and the training of child combatants. A sampling of witness testimony is attached.

Most of the victims were civilians living in camps for internally displaced people, who were attacked when they ventured out to get food, wood and/or water. Several of the attacks occurred less than one kilometer from checkpoints manned by ECOMOG [the West African peacekeeping force], Sierra Leonean Army soldiers, and/or UNAMSIL peacekeepers." (HRW 3 March 2000)

"Camp management is complex, difficult and expensive. Donor support for this activity has been lean. Agencies are not very keen to take on camps due to these constraints. We propose that new camps be managed on the basis of partnership between national and international NGOs. A lead agency may need to be identified for overall coordination and management of IDP issues - to maintain good standards and ensure quality service delivery. While some camps are relatively well maintained, others are in deplorable condition. At present, there are no systematic training programmes for camp managers and officials. Sensitization on beneficiary rights and agencies' constraints and limitations is lacking. The guiding principles for assisting IDPs need to be widely disseminated and sensitization workshops organized for all

stakeholders. Protection issues for IDPs are not being addressed. Human Rights organizations will need to be supported and encouraged to follow-up on all protection issues relating to IDPs." (OCHA 25 June 2000)

"While the presence of UNAMSIL peacekeeping forces suggest an intent to protect the civilian population, the reality is that they are not deployed throughout the country and do not have access behind rebel lines, where some IDPs are trapped. There are no collaborative protection strategies to assist IDPs at risk. Lack of access prevents legal bodies, ICRC and human rights agencies to respond adequately and promptly to human rights violations and the day-to-day protection needs of IDPs. In some cases, agencies have advocated for increased UNAMSIL presence and patrols in areas of high IDP concentration such as Mile 91. They also have insisted in separating the IDP camps from the DDR camps. The OCHA and NCRHR have undertaken the ongoing monitoring of the relief and protection requirements of the IDPs the needs being addressed."(UN November 2000, p.130)

"One of the features of massive displacement in the Sierra Leone conflict is the RUF's consistent practice of deliberately targeting the civilian population. These violations take different forms, such as massive indiscriminate attacks, killings of civilians, mutilations, torture, sexual abuse, abductions as well as destruction and looting of civilian property. All of these acts create large flows of displaced persons and at the same time violate the rights of those already displaced.

[...]

In this climate of law-lessness, displaced persons have been particularly vulnerable and have suffered direct attacks on their camps and have often been the target of forced recruitment campaigns by the RUF. Participants reported that as recent as May 2000, RUF attacked the Waterloo IDP camp in the Western Area." (NRC March 2001)

"In spite of recent progress, the situation of internally displaced persons and returnees in Sierra Leone continues to be a major cause of concern. Reports from internally displaced persons and returnees indicate that, until recently, armed groups have committed serious breaches of international humanitarian law against the civilian population in Sierra Leone, including rape and the destruction of homes. These allegedly occurred while Guinean forces were in pursuit of RUF combatants who had carried out operations in Guinea. UNAMSIL and human rights non-governmental organizations have been able to document some violations committed in the Kambia district. There have also been reports of villages being attacked from the air, causing large-scale civilian casualties." (UN SC 25 June 2001, para. 52)

IDPs concentrated in Mile 91 area face fragile security situation (June-November 2000)

- Large numbers of displaced entering strategic town of Mile 91 create a security risk
- UNAMSIL reinforce their presence after request from humanitarian agencies for improved protection
- Reports of calmer security situation during August 2000

"Security in Mile 91 remains a major constraint and concern. The town is on the dividing line between opposing forces and close to the Sierra Leone Army base Camp Charlie. Fighting in the surrounding area, sometimes among militias linked to the government, threatens the people seeking refuge and reduces the aid that can be provided." (MSF 19 July 2000)

"At Mile 91 and surroundings, security conditions are less than ideal. The area is prone to rebel attacks having suffered 13 attacks since 1994. The Commander of the UNAMSIL Guinean battalion deployed in the area told OCHA that his forces were equipped and ready to defend the town and protect the civilian population. However, he conceded that the large numbers of people entering the town presented a security risk, and would make it more difficult for them to control the military situation, as the area remains close to

the frontline. Rebel groups reportedly attacked a village just ten miles outside Mile 91 on Thursday, looting houses and abducting people to carry looted items.

If the IDPs are to remain in the Mile 91 area, humanitarian agencies would like to see a reinforced security system that will ensure the protection of both the displaced and aid workers who are serving them, especially during distributions of food and other essential commodities. There is every indication that armed groups are presently desperate for food as the "hungry season" approaches, and would attack civilians for such supplies. Failing adequate security for the area, agencies would work closely with government authorities to relocate the IDPs to a safer location." (OCHA 10 June 2000)

"Concerned about the security situation in the Mile 91 area, agencies intensified negotiations with UNAMSIL, the government and other relevant stakeholders for improved access to beneficiaries and better security conditions in Mile 91 itself. UNAMSIL has responded positively by agreeing to increase the troop strength in Mile 91 from the present three Companies of Guineans and Nigerians (about 300 personnel) to one full battalion. It is however not clear when the additional troops will be deployed. The latest military operation of UNAMSIL to secure the Freetown - Masiaka highway, if successful, could further improve road access to the provinces." (OCHA 24 July 2000)

"The situation in the town and surrounding areas remained calm throughout this review [8-27 August 2000] period. Meanwhile, the deployment of INDBAT II at Mile 91 was completed on 16 August. They replaced one company of NIBAT, who have re-deployed to Rokel Bridge (replacing JORBAT) and two GINEBAT companies who have returned to their Battalion HQ at Bo. The presence of the additional UN troops has boosted the confidence of the resident and IDP populations as well as aid workers on the security situation in and around the town. The Indian peacekeepers have assured relief workers that they would do their best to ensure adequate security for all humanitarian operations in the area." (OCHA 28 August 2000)

"Agencies were left with only two options: either to move the IDPs to locations away from the frontline and easier to access; or call for an improvement of the security situation. The latter option was favoured and the humanitarian coordinator negotiated with UNAMSIL to provide troop reinforcement in the area. UNAMSIL responded positively, and by August, one full battalion of Indians had been deployed at Mile 91, with a view to guaranteeing the security of the town and increasing active patrol of surrounding villages. With the security situation improved, there was greater confidence on the part of agencies to expand programmes to required levels.

After extensive discussions, agreement was reached not to establish a big IDP camp in the town, but rather to establish a small and manageable transit center, which would provide temporary shelter for those IDPs occupying public buildings. NCRRR, CARE, AFRICARE and other agencies contributed resources to enable CARITAS establish the center, which was completed in six weeks and now accommodates about 4,000 IDPs. Agencies continue to maintain the strategy to encourage accommodation of IDPs within host populations as much as possible by providing rehabilitation support for host families."(UN November 2000, p.130)

Women and Children

Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) study shows widespread war-related sexual abuse against IDPs (January 2002)

- PHR study indicates that war-related sexual violence, perpetrated mainly by RUF combatants, has been widespread among IDPs in Sierra Leone

- The majority of abuses reported occurred between 1997 and 1999, when the RUF controlled large areas of the country
- Approximately 13% of household members reported one or more incidents of war-related sexual violence

"The findings of this study, the most comprehensive population-based assessment to date of war-related sexual violence and other human rights abuses in Sierra Leone, indicate that combatants have committed widespread human rights abuses and international crimes against IDPs in Sierra Leone including: abductions, beatings, killings, rape and other forms of sexual violence, capturing for less than 24 hours, torture, forced labor, gunshot wounds, serious injuries, and amputations. Such quantitative findings contribute considerable insight into the nature and extent of human rights abuses among IDPs in Sierra Leone, i.e., the frequency of specific human rights abuses, the identity of the alleged perpetrators, the impact of these experiences and the most urgent needs identified by the victims. Furthermore, a rigorous approach to sampling enables the findings to be generalized to the larger IDP population. In order to gain insight into individual experiences of human rights abuses of Sierra Leonean women and their families, the PHR study included qualitative assessments of abuses as well.

A striking 94% of 991 households randomly surveyed reported among its members at least one of these serious abuses during the past ten years of conflict. The majority of abuses reported by participants in the PHR study occurred between 1997 and 1999 and, when known, were attributed primarily to forces from the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). The study's primary focus on abuses of women and girls stems from the historical neglect of these sexual crimes committed against women from previous reports of human rights abuses in Sierra Leone.

The PHR study indicates that war-related sexual violence experiences perpetrated by armed combatants (primarily RUF) are, indeed, widespread among IDPs in Sierra Leone. Approximately one of every eight household members (13%) reported one or more incidents of war-related sexual violence. Nine percent (94/991) of respondents reported war-related sexual violence. A striking 53% of respondents reporting "face to face" contact specifically with RUF forces reported experiencing sexual violence, compared to less than 6% for any other combatant group. One third of the women who reported sexual violence reported being gang raped." (PHR 23 January 2002)

Experts travel to Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia to assess women's experiences during and after war (January 2002)

- Experts examine issues of displacement, sexual violence and the exploitation of women in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia
- Assessment is part of first-ever full-scale study on the impact of armed conflict on women and their role in peace-building

"Independent experts Elisabeth Rehn, former Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, member of the Organization of African Unity Panel of Eminent Persons to investigate the genocide in Rwanda, today begin a mission to Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia to assess the impact of conflict on women and women's role in the peace-building process. This is the last in a series of field visits by experts to countries affected by conflict. Experts will publish their findings in a global report, sponsored by the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), scheduled for release in Spring 2002.

[...]

It is estimated that over 3 million people are currently displaced in the Mano River countries of Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia. Women and their dependent children are approximately 75% of those displaced and have suffered severe consequences to their health, nutrition, education and well-being.

[...]

During their week-long visit to the Mano River countries, experts will look closely at the issues of displacement, sexual violence and the exploitation of women. They will address problems such as unwanted pregnancies, HIV/AIDS, orphans and widowhood. Experts will visit women living in camps for refugees and internally displaced peoples and will speak to representatives of human rights and women's organizations, as well as with female ex-combatants. Meetings are also planned with high-level government officials, including H.E. Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

'Widespread human rights violations in the Mano River countries has fractured communities, displaced families and left people traumatized,' said Ms. Johnson Sirleaf, former candidate for the Liberian presidency. 'Women and girls have been the most affected by the conflicts and we want the world to know about it.' " (UNIFEM 21 January 2002)

UN Rapporteur visits Sierra Leone (August 2001)

- UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women calls for more donor support for Sierra Leonean women, especially IDPs

"The UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Radhika Coomarswamy, has called for more donor support for Sierra Leone's women, particularly those who are internally displaced. She made this appeal at the close of her weeklong visit to Sierra Leone. She said that the social conditions of women had deteriorated during the past decade of civil war and criticised the donor community for "not responding appropriately" to the needs of women. She further expressed dismay over women's sexual exploitation, rape, drug abuse, discriminatory laws on inheritance and female genital mutilation." (UN/OCHA 31 August 2001)

Reports of women being exposed to grave human rights abuses (2001)

- Young girls abducted by rebel forces, raped and forced to become sexual slaves
- Human Rights Watch reporting rape by RUF rebels and AFRC soldiers, and to a lesser extent by Kamajor militias since the collapse of the peace agreement in May 2000

"Human rights assessment missions conducted by the human rights section of UNAMSIL in the aftermath of the resumption of conflict in May reported several cases of rape and sexual abuse of women, a hallmark of the Sierra Leone conflict. Five women from Kampa (near Rogberi Junction) were abducted by RUF elements and raped in May. Three of the women interviewed were lactating at the time of the incident and two had to leave their babies with family members. The women were beaten with rifles. During a period of three days, six different men had raped one of the women who were interviewed. Two different men raped another of the women twice. In Makeni, a nurse reported that 20 cases of rape, including of girls under 18, had been treated in April and May at the local clinic. Another government health worker had treated 19 cases of rape of girls under 18 in the Mile 91 area. Medical sources indicated that most women IDPs had contracted sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), frequently as a result of rape.

[...]

The Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights on contemporary forms of slavery, Ms. Gay J. McDougall, in her report to the Sub-Commission of 6 June 2000 (E/CN.4/Sub.2/2000/21) stated that she had participated in a mission to Sierra Leone in June 1999 at the invitation of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Lomé Peace Agreement had brought about a relative reduction in many of the worst abuses. Notwithstanding, the sexual assault against women and girls continued unabated. Indeed, that pattern of violation had escalated in the context of the resumption of armed conflict in May 2000. All the fighting forces, especially the rebel RUF militia, had

committed crimes against the civilian population, including widespread rape, sexual assault and mutilation of women. Many of the rapes took place when the victims were abducted and forced to become sexual partners of their captors. Girls as young as 10 years old, were abducted by rebel forces and forced to become sexual slaves." (UN CHR 1 February 2001, paras. 15, 27)

"The violence has affected thousands of girls and women of all ages. While members of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC; the renegade members of the Sierra Leonean Army who led the 1997 coup, now sometimes also known as the West Side Boys) have been the most common perpetrators, members of the civil defense forces - the biggest and most powerful of which is the Kamajors - and the loyal Sierra Leonean Army have also been implicated.

Following the 1999 Lomé Peace Accord, there was a marked decrease in most human rights violations - except sexual violence, which continued unabated. From the signing in July 1999 to the May 2000 collapse of the accord, Human Rights Watch documented some one hundred cases of rape by rebel forces. Since the collapse of the peace agreement in May 2000, Human Rights Watch has received consistent reports of rape by RUF rebels and AFRC soldiers, and to a lesser extent by Kamajor militias.

There are no official statistics on the numbers of girls and women who have suffered sexual violence during the war. This is due both to under-reporting because of cultural factors, fear of retaliation, and lack of faith in the criminal justice system, and to a lack of resources devoted to the problem on the part of the relevant government ministries. While it is common that women know the perpetrators of these violations, very few have dared to bring charges, for fear of reprisals against them and their families. However, those girls who have either been released or managed to escape rebel captivity indicate that the overwhelming majority are sexually abused. According to one 1999 study, there were 1862 female victims of sexual abuse seen for medical treatment and counseling in one program treating victims raped and/or abducted during the January 1999 offensive against the capital Freetown. Of these, according to information received from Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) in March 2000, 55 percent reported having been gang raped and 200 had become pregnant.

[...]

In particular, very little effort has been made by the Sierra Leonean Army, Sierra Leonean Police and UNAMSIL to protect women and girls from attack by rebel groups. For example, in the months following the signing of the Lomé accord, Human Rights Watch documented scores of abductions and rapes of girls and women by AFRC and RUF rebels within villages around the western towns of Masiaka and Port Loko. The attacks occurred within the context of food raids and against public transport vehicles along a major highway. While the rebel activities were well known by UNAMSIL, ECOMOG (prior to their withdrawal), Sierra Leonean Police and the Sierra Leonean Army, there was no effort to arrest and prosecute the perpetrators. Several women were in fact abducted less than a mile from UNAMSIL and SLA checkpoints.

The UNAMSIL human rights section is currently providing human rights education to Sierra Leonean Police units. The British army is training 3,000 members of the Sierra Leonean Army, and includes education on the laws of armed conflict and child protection within their training curriculum. There is, however, no specific training to any military or police force with regard to women's rights, including women's rights to equality and bodily integrity." (HRW 26 February 2001)

No large-scale abduction or conscription of children by rebel forces was reported in 2001 (November 2001)

- A total of 2,378 children have been demobilised or released by the RUF and CDF
- 60% of released and demobilised children have been reunited with their families
- Most vulnerable children are girls who have become fighters, sex slaves, "wives" to commanders and camp followers

- Many girls feel reluctant to leave rebel group because they believe their past sexual abuse will identify them with the fighting forces

"Since 2001 there has been no large-scale abduction or conscription of children by the rebel forces. However, following the Abuja Meeting in 2001, a total of 2,378 children have been demobilised or released by the RUF and CDF. With increasing access to districts formerly under rebel control, the family tracing has increased with about 60% of released and demobilised children having been united with their families. Although this is an encouraging sign, there remain many thousands under rebel control. With a rising number of children being released comes an increasing demand on services such as education and skills training to provide hope for the future.

Amongst children who have been affected by conflict, the most vulnerable is the girl child. Girls who have been abducted have either become fighters, sex slaves, 'wives' to commanders or camp followers. Girls make up only 8% of the total number of children released and demobilised since 1999. This had dropped even more, to 3%, in the most recent phase of demobilisation. These girls feel reluctant and fearful to leave the rebel group because they believe that their past of sexual abuse and lack of upbringing would quickly identify them with the fighting forces. Many child mothers believe that their only option is to return to their commanders who will provide certain security for them (albeit in an abusive situation) rather than face the ultimate rejection by their families and home communities. Their abduction and subsequent abuse, compounded by a reluctance to be released now that they are 'married', shows their understanding of an underlying attitude to females that puts the girl child in a low status category in society, and ultimately places them at high risk. The girls lack access to basic services including food, education and medical care in the impoverished communities to which most of those reunified are expected to return.

Over 4,400 children from the fighting forces have been provided with immediate care in 13 interim care centres and through alternative care mechanisms. For those who have been reunified through family tracing and mediation programmes, education and skills training opportunities have been made available. In mid-2001, nearly 700 children were still in alternative care awaiting family tracing in newly accessible areas. Following the expansion of the DDR programme into rebel-held areas, child protection agencies are gradually accessing thousands of separated children (including abductees and child combatants). Child protection agencies will continue to expand their presence into newly accessible areas in order to provide emergency interim care to separated children and carry out family tracing and reunification.

Reintegration of separated children and children from the fighting forces are now operational in all accessible areas. However, the children face a considerable challenge in returning to their homes where there is a total breakdown in services for children. A coordination mechanism between the child protection network and the education sector has thus been established to develop a common strategy and approach to education reintegration of children from the fighting forces in new areas. Access to education is seen as the key to successful reintegration. The Child Protection and Education sectors work closely together to increase access to schools for all children." (UN November 2001)

Children exposed to human rights abuses and abductions (1999-2001)

- Sharp increase in children requiring protection during 1999
- More than 2000 children abducted just in Western Area
- Protection of children at the forefront of peace negotiations in Lomé
- Reports of reluctance by rebels to release abducted children by the end of 1999
- Use of children as combat soldiers both by RUF and pro-Government forces continued during 2000

"Horror at the atrocities inflicted on Sierra Leone's children has focused attention on those killed, mutilated or abducted in the war, as well as on child soldiers, some of whom have themselves committed human rights abuses. Less attention has been given to the far greater number of children displaced by the fighting. The shortage of accurate information about numbers of displaced children, and their circumstances, is a major barrier to their effective protection. It is possible, however, to give a general picture of their situation.

Children's rights to survival and development

The impact of Sierra Leone's civil war on children's survival has been disastrous. One in every three Sierra Leonean children dies before their fifth birthday. The country has the highest maternal mortality rate in the world. Around 3,000 women – many themselves still under the age of 18 – die in childbirth each year. Average life expectancy in Sierra Leone stands at 35 years. This is the lowest in the world by a considerable margin.

Displacement causes families and whole communities to suffer long-term or permanent fragmentation. This reduces the ability of families to cope with difficult circumstances and makes children especially vulnerable.

[...]

Just as the direct physical impact of inadequate nutrition is an important threat to children's rights to survival and development, so too is the psychological impact of war and abuse. In Sierra Leone, children have been mutilated, raped or subjected to other violent acts. They have witnessed the death or suffering of family members. Some have committed acts of violence against others. Children who have had such experiences often display severe emotional and learning difficulties that can affect them throughout their life.

This is also true of children affected by displacement itself. In some rural communities, adults hiding from RUF raids in the bush with their children felt compelled to terrify their children into perpetual silence out of fear that the sound of their voices might attract RUF patrols. In 1997, children from bush camps asked to draw pictures of themselves were unable to do so or portrayed themselves without arms or a mouth." (SCF 8 May 2000, pp. 99-100)

"This year [1999] marked a range of extremes for children in Sierra Leone. During the peak of the crisis in January, children suffered more than at any other stage of the war. Thousands were displaced, abducted and abused, while many others suffered amputations and mutilation and witnessed the violent deaths/mutilations of family members--sometimes at the hands of child soldiers their age. The number of missing children rose to more than 4,000 just in the Western Area with well over half of these attributed to abductions (60 percent of them were female). This sharp increase in children requiring protection occurred while agencies were nearly paralysed by looting and insecurity. At the same time, access to these children was difficult. Likewise, when children were found or handed over, insecurity in many areas prevented them from being physically reunited with their families who were trapped behind the front lines.

The extreme suffering of children in Sierra Leone in 1998/1999 finally pushed the international community to take notice of this forgotten crisis. This placed the protection of children at the forefront of peace negotiations in Lomé. High-level visits by the UN Secretary General, his special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the OHCHR, as well as the Executive Directors of WFP, UNICEF and several key Donors all highlighted the problems of children. The Lomé Peace Agreement contained specific chapters and annexes that required all sides to respect the rights of children thus making it the first international peace agreement to formally address these critical needs.

A factor which facilitated implementation was the large degree of awareness of child protection issues created by local advocacy efforts, as well as the various high level visitors to Sierra Leone. Each visitor was seized by the violations of child rights in Sierra Leone and this was expressed numerous times and in

strong terms to all sides in the war. This high level advocacy for children bolstered advocacy at the national and local levels. At the time of writing, 1,677 children had returned from the fighting forces, of which 622 were officially handed over by the rebels and 120 by ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). The others were able to escape and return on their own." (UN November 1999, pp. 3-4)

Other UN reports issued by the end of 1999 points out that the rebels were showing great reluctance to release abductees:

"Commitments entered into under the Lomé Agreement and subsequent reaffirmation notwithstanding, both RUF and AFRC have shown great reluctance to release adult and child abductees. Only some 1,000 adults and children have been released so far. Considerable numbers are still in captivity. For instance, more than 2,000 children are registered as missing from the Western Area since the rebel incursion of January 1999. Child fighters, including abductees, were still being sent into combat as recently as October, when a number of 15-year-old boys were injured in combat with other AFRC elements." (UN SC 6 December 1999, para.22)

"There were no noteworthy releases of abductees during the reporting period, in spite of efforts by the Committee for the Release of Prisoners of War and Non-Combatants chaired by UNAMSIL. On 22 December the Committee issued a press release drawing attention to the lack of progress in this area and appealing to the leadership of RUF and AFRC to ensure the release of all abducted persons without further delay." (SC 11 January 2000, para 19)

Abducted children being used as child soldiers:

"More than 5,000 children under the age of 18 have fought in Sierra Leone's internal armed conflict that began in 1991. They have been recruited by both the armed opposition and forces allied to the government. Most of the children fighting with rebel forces were abducted and forced to fight. Many have become perpetrators of human rights abuses themselves, killing and mutilating under the influence of drugs, alcohol or simply out of fear. A similar number of children, both boys and girls, have also been used by rebel forces to carry goods and cook. Girls have been raped and forced into sexual slavery.

"Childhood has been a casualty of this long and brutal conflict", said the human rights organization."Former child combatants may not be able to regain their youth but they can reclaim their lives if concerted action is taken immediately."

Since 7 July 1999 when the government of Sierra Leone and the armed opposition Revolutionary United Front (RUF) signed a peace agreement in Lomé, Togo, efforts have been made by the United Nations (UN) and non-governmental organizations to disarm and demobilize child combatants. However, the political and security situation in Sierra Leone deteriorated in May 2000 and these programs have been suspended. The recruitment of children as combatants by both rebel forces and government-allied forces has continued." (AI 31 August 2000)

"Both the Revolutionary United Front and pro-Government forces continue to use children as combat soldiers. RUF has engaged in fresh recruitment of children. At Makeni, both children and adults were put under pressure by RUF fighters to join them. RUF troops are reported to have killed two boys and a young man on 31 May at Maforay village near Port Loko, after they refused to join their fighting forces. Government-allied forces are also reported to use child soldiers in combat. On 12 June, in a demobilization of alleged child soldiers in Government-allied forces at Masiaka, only 13 children out of 135 handed over were serving as combatants (nine were with the Civil Defence Force and four with AFRC). I urge all fighting forces to immediately release all child combatants among their forces and to cease the recruitment of children as combatants." (SC 31 July 2000, para.42)

"During the reporting period, close to 1,000 abducted and separated children have been released. A large majority (over 870) of them were released by RUF. The released children are now in the care of child-

protection agencies. RUF has established a regional committee on the release of child combatants that liaises directly with UNAMSIL and the child-protection agencies in the area. Family reunification has been relatively successful. UNAMSIL, through its public information facilities and initiatives in civil affairs, is ensuring that information and messages about the reunification and reintegration of children reach all sectors of the community." (UN SC 25 June 2001, para. 56)

National Protection Mechanisms

Britain sustains its support to reformed Sierra Leone army (2002)

- Britain will keep 360 soldiers in Sierra Leone until completion of elections scheduled for May 2002
- Sierra Leone Army is renamed the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) and deploys throughout country

"Britain will maintain its current troop strength in Sierra Leone at 360 soldiers through the completion of the elections. They will continue to strengthen the RSLAF for them to be able to handle single-handedly the country's external security.

[...]

The President of Sierra Leone, Alhaji Dr. Ahmad Tejan Kabbah opened the Ministry of Defense in Freetown, on January 21 2002. During the occasion, the President announced the renaming of the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) to the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF). The military is expected to reach a capacity of approximately 11,000 soldiers over the next couple of years. The newly formed army is currently trying to deploy throughout the entire country before the elections. With the exception of Bombali district, the RSLAF is now deployed in all parts of the country." (UN OCHA 31 January 2002)

Law enforcement system remains weak (1998-2001)

- Large parts of Sierra Leone without police presence
- Government plans launched in 1998 for reconstitution of the national military and reform of the police force
- 200 police killed during rebel attack on Freetown (January 1999)
- 44 police stations and posts functioning in Freetown, Bo, Moyamba, Lungi, Pujehun and Kenema by July 2000
- Increased presence of the Sierra Leone police in the Mile 91 area as a response to the IDP influx
- Over 1,500 national officers having participated in various training programmes by end-2000
- UNAMSIL police advisers and the Commonwealth team assisting in the establishing of a new regional police training school in Kenema

"The reform of the police force in Sierra Leone poses great challenges. As a result of the wanton destruction caused by the rebel war, many police stations in the country have been severely damaged or destroyed, and equipment vandalized. Parts of the country are without police presence, since many officers were killed or abandoned their posts during and after the conflict. Moreover, little or no training has been available for years, which has affected not only the skill level and capacity for policing but also the quality of leadership and planning. Notwithstanding the rapid expansion of the force over the last years, the police suffer from inadequate logistical support, lack of equipment, unattractive salaries and poor conditions of

service. No vehicles or other means of transport are available to ensure the effective mobilization of officers to prevent and investigate crimes. This situation is exacerbated by the breakdown of the general law enforcement system. Outside Freetown, the courts are hardly operational except for the magistrates courts in Bo, Kenema and Makeni, and detention facilities are in poor condition." (UN SC 16 October 1998, para. 32)

"On the political front, the Government, supported by the UN system and bilateral donors continue to take steps to extend its authority towards reforming and strengthening national institutions, with a view to increasing efficiency and eliminating corruption and duplication, as well as enhancing security and stability. In September, the Government outlined its plans to create a new national security system based on the reconstitution of the national military, the reform of the police force and the integration of the CDF [Civil Defence Forces]. Under this policy, the new armed forces comprising 5,000 troops will be brought under effective civilian management and constitutional control." (UN December 1998, p.11)

"[The Sierra Leone Police Force] suffered severely during the rebel invasion of Freetown, with some 200 officers being killed and many police stations destroyed. With donor assistance, the Government has made considerable progress in reconstituting a functioning police presence in the capital, but reversing the extent of the damage and the collapse of the police structure in most parts of the country will require substantial external assistance."(UN SC 4 June 1999, Para. 23)

"Commendable efforts are being made to establish an effective and democratic police force in Sierra Leone. The newly appointed Inspector General of the national police has initiated a number of important human rights-related investigations and is promoting the development of enhanced human rights sensitivity within the force. The United Nations is redeploying a small team of civil police advisers, who will coordinate with other international efforts to advise the Government of Sierra Leone and local police officials on police practice, training, re-equipment and recruitment." (SC 6 December 1999, para.23)

"At present, the activities of the Sierra Leone police continue to be limited to the western part of the country, in particular Freetown; and there are very small national police presences in Kambia, Port Loko, Lunsar, Bo and Kenema. However, the police still lack the necessary personnel, facilities and equipment to fulfil essential tasks. The destruction of the national police training school during the rebel offensive of January 1999 left the local police without the means to develop its human resources or to facilitate restructuring. An additional concern is the absence of acceptable detention facilities, which force the police to keep suspects under insecure and often inhuman conditions." (SC 7 March 2000, para 20)

"The ongoing hostilities are hampering effective implementation of the concept of operation of the United Nations civilian police advisers and the restructuring of the Sierra Leone police. The uncertain security situation has also discouraged donor countries and consequently aggravated the financial constraints on various projects and the police training programme. The local police, who are mostly unarmed, find it difficult to operate in the prevailing security situation owing to the large number of armed elements, particularly in Freetown.

Policing remains limited to Freetown, Moyamba, Bo, Lungi, Pujehun and Kenema. Despite the constraints mentioned above, the Sierra Leone police are playing a prominent role in the prevention of crime in those areas. They have mounted joint patrols and crime prevention efforts with the pro-Government forces and UNAMSIL, which has increased public confidence.

A total of 44 police stations and posts are functioning in Freetown, Bo, Moyamba, Lungi, Pujehun and Kenema. Nine are not operational because they are either destroyed or located in RUF-occupied areas. With the influx of internally displaced persons to Mile 91, the Sierra Leone police increased its presence in the area. Efforts to improve relations between the police and the public continued with the introduction of community policing projects. This process started in Lungi and will continue to the eastern part of the country." (SC 31 July 2000, paras. 43-46)

"The total strength of the civilian police component of UNAMSIL remains at 33 officers, drawn from 11 countries. With their assistance, some progress was made in enhancing the effectiveness of the Sierra Leone police during the reporting period. A new national police post was opened in Freetown and 45 police officers returned to Masiaka where a police station was also established. Efforts to renew the national police presence at Daru are also under way. However, accessibility remains the major obstacle there since the vital Kenema-Daru road remains closed.

At the same time, considerable progress was made in the training of senior Sierra Leonean officers attending refresher courses; altogether over 1,500 national officers have participated in various training programmes. The refurbishment of the Sierra Leonean Police Training School is under way [...]" (SC 15 December 2000, paras. 43-44)

"The activities of the UNAMSIL civilian police component continued to focus on providing advice to the Sierra Leone police force, assisting in the selection of new recruits, training, and providing technical advice in the restructuring of the police force. With the assistance of UNAMSIL police advisers and the Commonwealth team, a new regional police training school was opened at Kenema in the Eastern Province. The opening of another regional school at Bo is being explored. United Nations civilian police advisers have also proposed projects intended to improve the conditions of service of the local police to be financed from the United Nations Trust Fund for Sierra Leone. These include a police post near Kissy in the western area of Freetown, refurbishment of a police station at Daru, rebuilding of a police post at Rogberi Junction and the repair of the Central Police Station facilities in Freetown." (UN SC 14 March 2001, para. 38)

Traditional institutions creating their own protection forces (1994-2001)

- Local self-defence militias emerged during the 1990's as a response to the national army's ability to protect them from the RUF
- The "Kamajors" from the Mende people considered the strongest group in the milita umbrella called the Civil Defence Forces (CDF)
- Reported in April 2001 that CDF consisted of some six different groupings, representing the main ethnic groups in Sierra Leone
- Reports of tensions between the CDF and the new Sierra Leone Army (SLA) in 2001

"The armed forces did not provide protection to the civilians nor did the RUF although it stated its intention to liberate the Sierra Leonean people [...]. The civilian population had been targeted by both fighting parties since the beginning of the conflict and the lack of protection became evident. This led in early 1994 traditional institutions such as local paramount chiefs, men's secret societies and traditional hunter/warriors to initiate their own protection of the civilian population [...]. According to the US Department of State Country Report on Sierra Leone, three civil defence groups were active: Mende Kamajohs, Temne Kapras and Koranko Tamaboros. Like the RSLMF [Republic of Sierra Leone Military Force], they were not fully under government control [...].

[...]

The *Kamajors* are said to have around 17.000 members.[...] Most of these 'brotherhoods' were formed as [...] Unlike the RUF, the *Kamajor* militia relies heavily on Mende traditional mysticism,[...]. Moreover, the *Kamajors* are said to maintain close relations with local chiefs, and as such enjoy considerable popular support.

[...]

The *Kamajors'* close alliance to the government of President Kabbah is reflected by the fact that Samuel Hinga Norman, the Kamajor Movement National Coordinator holds the place of deputy defence minister within the Kabbah government." (UNHCR November 1998, pp. 7 & 14-15)

"Reliable reports are being regularly received of poor discipline within the Civil Defence Force. In various locations throughout the country they have been accused of harassing the local population and engaging in extortion. It has also been reported that the initiation of new members, including children between the ages of 15 and 17, occurred near Magburaka during the third week of July. ECOMOG has established a complaints procedure to investigate any allegations of harassment of the local population by ECOMOG troops."(UN SC 12 August 1998, para. 43)

"Currently [April 2001], the CDF consists of some six different groupings, representing the main ethnic groups in Sierra Leone. The most powerful, however, are the Kamajors. These were originally a guild of hunters among the Mende people in the southeast of the country. They defended their villages and hunted game with home made shotguns. As RUF and army looting intensified, traditional chiefs, many supporting the SLPP, which is regarded as a Mende-dominated party, recruited young men to be initiated into the Kamajor movement to defend their communities. The success of the Kamajors, supposedly equipped with extraordinary spiritual powers, stimulated similar defence forces, also purportedly traditional in nature, in other parts of Sierra Leone. These were loosely organised under the CDF umbrella.

On balance the CDF has been highly successful at protecting some communities, particularly when supported by good logistics and elite troops such as the South African military company Executive Outcomes. The CDF alone, however, is generally unable to resist a concerted RUF attack. Over time, the CDF has evolved into a force which itself contains the seed of destabilisation. The mistrust and hostility that has existed between CDF and army for six years has not evaporated with creation of the 'new' SLA. Towns like Lunsar have been lost to the RUF reportedly because of fighting between the coalition of forces that support the government. Some CDF commanders admit they now exist to guard against the SLA as much as against the RUF. CDF fighters are bitter that they receive fewer rations and weapons than the SLA. They argue the CDF stayed loyal to the democratic government and fought the RUF in the bush while the SLA colluded with the rebels. That loyalty, they argue, should be rewarded." (ICG 11 April 2001)

SUBSISTENCE NEEDS (HEALTH NUTRITION AND SHELTER)

General

Major movements of internally displaced persons, returnees and ex-combatants causes heavy strain on basic services (2001)

- Movements of the displaced cause a strain on already weak health institutions (2001)
- Most returnees tend to settle in large cities and remain there as long as their areas of origin are unsafe
- Capacity of transit centres in the Freetown area has reached saturation point
- Spontaneous movement of refugees and internally displaced persons may regain momentum when the rainy season ends in September 2001

"Health care is sorely in need of extra support in areas of Sierra Leone faced with large numbers of returnees and displaced people, according to a World Health Organization assessment mission last week [February 2001].

[...]

Almost 17,000 returnees have now moved into Lokomassama chiefdom, inland from Lunghi, adding to between 10,000 and 15,000 people internally displaced in recent months from Kambia.

The returnees are being resettled in existing villages under a new model of community absorption which the government and UN agencies hope will avert dependency problems associated with camps and improve conditions for host communities. With the displaced, they have increased the chiefdom's population of more than 50 per cent and, though food distribution and community facilities such as schools and public latrines are being supported thanks to special rehabilitation and building projects, health facilities and staff are not receiving the same attention.

WHO's mission found health buildings in sore need of repair and with poor staffing levels. One community health officer serves the whole chiefdom, has only been paid his salary for three out of the past 6 months and has no fuel for the aged and unreliable motor-cycle which is his only means of transport. The 12 other health posts are run by nurses or midwives, who have received little in the way of updating or training in recent years." (WHO 20 February 2000)

"Considering the number of Returnees currently residing in these communities, humanitarian agencies are concerned over the host population's capacity to absorb more people. They say one of their greatest challenges in carrying out their duties is distinguishing between the host populations and IDPs." (OCHA 10 March 2001)

"The scenario of the health system is still that of a system affected by the war where recent returnees are putting additional burden. Although some new health facilities have been renovated and reopened since the beginning of the year, the percentage of functional Primary Health Units (PHU) is still low. Data collected on the ground shows that in the six accessible districts (Bo, Western Area, Moyamba, Bonthe, Bo, Kenema) and in accessible chiefdoms of Port Loko districts, only a total of 266 PHUs are functioning. Considering the very few facilities functioning in inaccessible districts, it can be estimated that the level of functionality is still around 40%, compared with the pre-war situation." (OCHA 21 May 2001)

"Most returnees tend to settle in large cities and remain there as long as their areas of origin are unsafe. Returnees also assume that Freetown, in particular, offers greater safety and economic opportunities. As a result, cities like Freetown and Kenema host large numbers of internally displaced persons, returnees and ex-combatants, adding to a population which is already struggling with high rates of unemployment and scarce resources, placing a heavy strain on basic services, in particular water and sanitation. The capacity of transit centres in the Freetown area has reached saturation point and many returnees are reluctant to move on, thereby obstructing the admission of new arrivals.

[...]

Overall, there is a limited capacity in Sierra Leone to deal with the growing influx of returnees and internally displaced persons. It is feared that the local infrastructure and basic services would not be able to cope with a mass influx, brought about by an optimism that the situation could improve significantly in the near future. Although the rainy season is likely to slow movement, once the rains start to subside in September and as the situation continues to stabilize it is possible that the spontaneous movement of refugees and internally displaced persons will regain momentum. This will require careful and comprehensive planning on the part of the Government of Sierra Leone and the international community." (UN SC 23 May 2001, paras. 15, 16)

Concern that large influx of various war-affected people in Daru town may cause a deteriorating humanitarian situation (May 2001)

"A joint NCRRR/OCHA assessment mission to Daru on 22 and 23 May [2001] concluded that while the current situation there could not be characterised as a humanitarian emergency, the threat of a rapid deterioration is real due to the concentration of a complex range of war-affected population groups in the town – from IDPs and resettling IDPs to returnees and refugees.

International NGOs and UN Agencies are providing support to cover needs in education, child protection and health. At present, only three international NGOs are based in the town including IMC, SCF and NRC. UNHCR and UNICEF support some of their activities. The water and sanitation situation is poor, given overcrowded camps and settlements. UNAMSIL is supplying some water to the residents and the displaced." (OCHA 29 May 2001)

Health

Sierra Leone population most vulnerable to ill health in the world (November 2001)

- High infant and child mortality rate of 170 and 286 per 1,000 respectively
- High maternal mortality rate of 1,800 per 100,000 live births
- 34% of children stunted for their age; 10% wasted, and 27% underweight
- Malaria, ARI and diarrhoeal diseases are consistently the top causes of morbidity
- Levels of immunisation coverage are unacceptably low
- Displacement creating conditions for potential outbreaks of cholera, measles and yellow fever
- HIV/AIDS represents major threat

"Sierra Leone's population is the most vulnerable to ill health of all populations in the world (State of the World's Children Report 2000). The high infant and child mortality rate of 170 and 286 per 1,000 respectively and the extremely high maternal mortality rate of 1,800 per 100,000 live births (Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey - MICS 2000) shows that the women and children are highly vulnerable. The conflict, wide scale social disruption, population displacement, economic collapse, poverty and very poor

living conditions along with limited access to quality health services are the major factors contributing to the current high mortality and morbidity.

Malnutrition levels remain very high, with 34% of the children stunted for their age, 10% wasted and 27% underweight (MICS 2000). Pockets of severe wasting have been identified in the areas that became accessible to humanitarian agencies in 2001. The caseload in the Therapeutic Feeding Centres (TFC) is high, with over 500 children per day receiving treatment and over 2,000 per day registering for supplementary feeding programmes. Although no figures are available, it is assumed that the level of micro nutrient-deficiency is high due to the high prevalence of diarrhoea, malaria, measles and acute respiratory infections (ARI).

The high maternal mortality is largely due to lack of services to manage emergency obstetric care, harmful traditional practices, inadequately trained staff, a weak referral system and high hospitalpatient costs. These problems are set within the social context of acute poverty and low knowledge levels.

Malaria is a major concern. The MICS 2000 showed a very high prevalence of fever (46% of children had a fever in the two weeks prior to the survey) and that 30% of under-five are taking anti-malarial treatment every two weeks. Although this indicates some access to services, the current emphasis is on curative rather than preventative measures. With only 15% of children sleeping under bed nets, a huge increase in usage is required to make an impact on the incidence of malaria. This situation highlights the fact that community level health promotion is currently the weakest area of the health system.

The morbidity data is not available for the whole country, although malaria, ARI and diarrhoeal diseases are consistently the top causes of morbidity in several district reports.

The decline in immunisation coverage (from 75% to 32% between 1990 and 2001) is being reversed but the levels remain unacceptably low. There are significant regional disparities. Much of the Northern and Eastern Provinces have not had reliable routine immunisation services for over a decade. The National Immunisation Days (NID) in the campaign to eradicate polio have been able to obtain access to the rebel held areas, reaching 87% coverage. A survey is currently underway to verify reported immunisation figures.

Although there have not been any significant outbreaks of disease in 2001, the poor environmental sanitation conditions, poor housing and overcrowded living conditions, resulting from displacement, has created a growing potential for outbreaks of cholera, measles and yellow fever. Yellow fever has the potential to spread from neighbouring countries into areas where continuous surveillance is currently impossible to sustain.

HIV/AIDS represents a major threat that is heightened by the fact that it is not perceived to be a threat by society. Although no national study has yet been undertaken, it is estimated that the prevalence is in the region of 6% (MoHS reports). While the prevalence has increased, the knowledge has remained low. There has been a collapse in the health education and community mobilisation services as well as a reduction in access to schools. Only 42% of children of school going age are enrolled in school and 70% of the population is illiterate. Thus there is very little information on HIV/AIDS and related topics, few structured opportunities to receive information messages and even fewer opportunities to debate and discuss the information amongst peers. The MICS 2000 showed that understanding of HIV and related issues is very low; 46% of females between 15 and 49 had not heard of AIDS (22% in urban and 56% in rural areas). The percentage of females who knew three ways of preventing HIV infection varied from 2% in the North to 43% in the East. " (UN November 2001)

HIV/AIDS on the increase, but awareness remains low (October 2001)

"Until recently, the problem of HIV/AIDS in Sierra Leone has not received much attention. The Government of Sierra Leone, donors, and NGOs concentrated on dealing with the emergency needs of the war-torn country. AIDS education/awareness programs and counseling and medical care for people living with HIV/AIDS are almost non-existent. In the past months, there has been a realization that HIV/AIDS will be one of the biggest challenges facing post-war Sierra Leone. There is an urgent need for the international community to provide additional funding for HIV/AIDS education, counseling, condoms, and health care." (RI 25 October 2001)

MSF reports enormous medical needs in current, and former, RUF territories (September 2001)

- Returning refugees, many becoming IDPs, have wide-ranging medical needs
- Many former RUF territories had been without support for up to three years
- Ten years of civil war have almost totally destroyed the health care system

"With the ongoing demobilisation and disarmament of troops involved in the long civil war in Sierra Leone, a fragile calm exists in Sierra Leone. However the return of the population to their homes is bringing the possibility of following crises for the country.

[...]

Since September 2000, over 50,000 refugees have returned to Sierra Leone from Guinea, but an estimated 85,000 still remain there. Many returnees have now become Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), as their homes are still unsafe. In both the current and former rebel-held territories the medical needs are enormous.

[...]

Medical needs in the areas currently or formerly controlled by the RUF rebels are considered enormous. Some of those areas had been without support for up to three years. Nine years of ongoing civil war have almost totally destroyed the health care system in Sierra Leone. The vaccination rate is low and epidemics of malaria, yellow fever, lassa fever, cholera and measles have broken out in recent years. The secondary health care is virtually non-existent." (MSF 24 September 2001)

Health of IDPs and refugees in the Lokomassama chiefdom found to be "safe" (March 2001)

- Additional support was recommended for maternal and child health services as well as family planning

"The Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MOHS) carried out an assessment in the Lokomassama chiefdom with some of its partners to check on the health status of both IDPs and Returnees. They reported the overall health status of the IDPs/Returnees is generally safe and that all 12 identified Primary Health Units (PHUs) in the chiefdom were coping well with clinic attendance. They report a lack of Environmental Health Officers in and a lack of supportive supervision and monitoring of primary health care activities at all the PHUs. Additional support was recommended for maternal and child health services as well as family planning. The disease pattern remains the same with malaria and ARI on top of the list. The recently rehabilitated Lungi and Port Loko Government Hospital serving as referral hospitals immensely buttresses the health situation in the Port Loko district. The International Medical Corps (IMC) is supporting the hospitals." (OCHA 10 March 2001)

Health survey in Kenema reveals severe effects of disruption of the health infrastructure (January 2001)

- Kenema District host to over 80,000 internally displaced persons
- Relative low percentage of infants under the age of one year indicates a high death rate in this group
- Febrile illness most common cause of death
- Causes of death were indicative of the disruption of the health infrastructure rather than the direct impact of war

"Since the breakdown of security in the Northern and Eastern Part of Kenema District in September 1998, the district has been host to over 80,000 internally displaced persons (IDP's). Most of the IDP's are from insecure areas of Kenema, Kono and Kailhaun Districts. This has added pressure to the already stretched social and health services and facilities of the district. In addition, in various parts of the district, a number of health facilities have been damaged or destroyed.

This disruption of health services across the district is assumed to have had a very severe effect on the health of the resident population and the IDP's. The conflict in the country has led to a number of health agencies establishing programs in Sierra Leone. In Kenema district, the main agencies providing support to the District Health Structure are MERLIN, MSF-F, GOAL, ICRC, Africare and IRC.

[...]

[The survey] was designed to enable the estimation of relevant health indicators for the population that could be used as reference figures for the Ministry and all agencies working in Kenema District. The survey was carried out by two IRC staff and five Ministry of Health staff between 10-14 January 2001.

[...]

A striking feature of the demographic profile of the survey population was the relative low percentage of infants under the age of one year. It was found that only 3% of the population was under one year of age. This can be partially explained by the high death rate in this group revealed in the survey. Over 30% of the deaths recorded were under the age of 1 year. In addition, there may be issues related to decreased fertility, perhaps attributable to the conflict situation.

The Crude Mortality Rate (CMR) recorded in the study is 3.7 per 1000 per month or 44 per 1000 per year. This is nearly twice that reported by UNICEF for 1999 in Sierra Leone and three times that of the average for Sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) of 303 per 1000 live births is believed to be among the highest recorded rates in the world. Unfortunately, the estimated Maternal Mortality Ratio of 1900 per 100,000 live births is not a reliable figure due to the sample size of this study. With an annual fertility of 45 / 1000 / year and an annual mortality of 44 / 1000 / year, the sample population had essentially no growth during the year 2000.

The results regarding cause of death were fairly predictable with febrile illness topping the causes of fatalities (40%). It seems reasonable to assume that many or most of these cases can be attributed to malaria along with some of the unknown cases that listed convulsions as a cause of death. Diarrheal disease was the second most common cause of death followed by respiratory infections. It is therefore imperative that these three conditions be managed efficiently and expediently in the peripheral health units. In fact, treatment of fever and diarrhea would be an extremely efficient method to reduce morbidity and mortality of mothers, given the fact that 4 women aged between 15-45 years of age died due to diarrheal diseases and 7 died due to febrile illness. Appropriate and timely treatment of these three conditions could also have a positive impact on the staggering IMR. WHO and the MOH&S have been preparing to implement and IMCI (Integrated Management of Childhood Illness); certainly some training and support program of this sort is needed.

[...]

Deaths due to violence were found to be comparatively rare (5 reported) as most of the district did not experience direct conflict during the recall period. The causes of death were indicative of the disruption of the health infrastructure rather than the direct impact of war. This is consistent with the relative stability of residence of the interviewed population during the recall period; only 3% of households moved to their current location since Jan 1st, 2000." (IRC 3 February 2001, pp. 3, 7, 8)

Survey of mental health impact of fighting in Freetown (2000)

- MSF survey included at least 37 % IDPs and included all suburbs of Freetown
- Findings indicates high levels of traumatic stress

"This report is based on a mental health survey of persons in Freetown, Sierra Leone in May 1999. Several months earlier the city saw fierce fighting that left more than 6000 people dead, an untold number injured and mutilated, and tens of thousands homeless. Many of those affected had gone through similar experiences before, and had fled to Freetown for its relative safety.

[...]

The survey was conducted after receiving the permission of the appropriate authorities, during the first two weeks of May 1999, four months after the atrocities in Freetown. Because everyone in Freetown had been subjected to traumatic experiences, both Internally Displaced Persons (IDP's) and residents were included in the sample.

[...]

In total 91 (37%) respondents were recently displaced; only 66 (27%) were residents. The others (37%) could not be placed in one of these categories. A possible explanation is that many people had been displaced in earlier years. About half (52%) of the respondents were female (Confidence interval 95% level: 46.4 - 56.8).

[...]

A high percentage of respondents directly experienced at least once an event threatening their physical integrity, either by maltreatment (39%) torture (16%) or amputations (7%). 40% of the respondents have seen their houses burned down; 33% were taken hostage. The percentage of people reporting abduction is, in contrast to the above, relatively low (7%). The relatively low report on rape (2%) should not be misinterpreted. Rape is, as in most other countries, a taboo topic. Rape victims usually do not report this crime to avoid serious repercussion from their family or to evade the stigma communities and society impose on these victims.

The dire food situation is by far the highest life threatening experience, as it was reported by almost all the respondents (99%).

[...]

The survey among respondents from all suburbs of Freetown indicates high levels of traumatic stress among the population surveyed. Every indicator (experienced events, Impact of Event Scale and Physical Health) points in the same direction.[...]

The responses on the second section appraise the traumatic experiences of the respondents. The high percentages of certain events (starvation (99%), witnessing wounded people (90%), having lost someone close (at least 50%)) result in a clear conclusion that most respondents living in all parts of Freetown have experienced at least one traumatic experience. It is likely they have been subjected to many more." (MSF 11 January 2000)

It is advised to consult the complete report for further information.

Nutrition and food

Chronic food deficit in many parts of the country (2001/2002)

- 2001 production of domestic rice - the country's staple food crop - was only 23% of the national requirement
- High levels of malnutrition are predominant among women and children in many parts of the country
- In 2002, food aid agencies will continue to address the chronic food deficit affecting vulnerable groups such as IDPs and refugees

"Like poverty itself, the food security situation, especially of women and children in Sierra Leone remains poor. In 2001 the production of domestic rice, the country's staple food crop was "... only 23% of the national requirement of 523,000 MTs..." Most households do not have access to adequate food supply due to both low domestic production (farm inputs and technology are inadequate and rudimentary) and very low income due to bad road networks to market farm produce to buy food. Also, livestock populations and fish production have reduced significantly.

Daily per capita supply of calories is estimated to be about 76.4% of the 2,663 Kcal recommended for the developing world. Protein intake is estimated to be about 66% of that for developing countries. Therefore, it is not surprising that the mean percent underweight (27%), stunted (34%) and wasted (9%) children living in the country over the last decade has been relatively high. High levels of malnutrition predominant among women and children in the especially war ravaged rural Eastern, Southern, and, perhaps for now urban, Northern Provinces respectively. Thus, there is persistent food under utilisation which, coupled with its low availability and poor accessibility, has resulted in food insecurity in Sierra Leone.

In 2002, food aid agencies will continue to address the chronic food deficit affecting vulnerable groups such as IDPs and refugees, and resume the long-term recovery process for an estimated one million people throughout the country. Instability in the region will continue to pose a threat to the recovery of the country, with a potential of high levels of returnee and refugee influxes. Food Pipeline Agencies (FPA) are predicting that overall in the country, 947,000 beneficiaries will require 88,029 MTs of food aid." (UN November 2001)

ACF carries out food security assessment on IDPs in Daru (July 2001)

- About 50% of population of Daru are IDPs, refugees and returnees
- Population has adopted numerous coping mechanisms to overcome food shortages

"Action Contre la Faim (ACF) carried out a food security assessment on IDPs, returnees and refugees, in Daru area from June 18 - 20. They report that even though Daru is highly populated, it is not over crowded. The present population including local residents stands around 8,000 - 10,000, of which approximately 50 percent constitute IDPs, refugees and returnees. About 90 percent of the population in Daru are reported to be inhabitants of Kailahun district who prefer staying in Daru, fleeing from hunger and a basic lack of medical services in their villages. They report that the current food situation is relatively secure but in the event of any massive influx there will be a strain on local resources. Returnees/refugees have adopted various coping mechanisms including, farming, palm fruit harvesting, selling their labour and petty trading. This has greatly helped to sustain their food rations."

(UN OCHA 10 July 2001)

Nutritional status of IDPs in camps found to be better than in local communities (April 2001)

- Regular food distributions in the camps show an impact
- ACF nutrition survey in Port Loko find similar prevalence of malnutrition in IDP camps and in the town (December 2000)

"Previous assessments carried out by health agencies confirm that the nutritional status of camp residents is marginally better off than that of the local communities. This difference is attributed to the regular food distributions in the camps. According to Merlin there are significant and preventable public health issues that need to be addressed. For example, they say 20 percent of beneficiaries in the Therapeutic Feeding Centres (TFC) during the month of March had a primary diagnosis of Tuberculosis (TB) and a secondary diagnosis of malnutrition. Lack of access to clean water resulting in increased risk of diarrhoea and the need for community health education on infant feeding practices has also worsened the crisis. Health agencies are currently looking into ways of emerging from this crisis." (OCHA 19 April 2001)

"ACF conducted two nutrition surveys in the Port Loko area in December 2000. The first was in the town itself and the second in the camp (see table of results below).

The prevalence of malnutrition in the town and camp are similar and not unduly elevated, however mortality rates are alarming. The main causes of mortality are ARI, malaria and measles, while malnutrition also contributes to these high death rates (ACF 12/00).

The results corroborate the general impression of poor sanitation, overcrowding and lack of access to health facilities in the country. There have been considerable further displacements since December and it is likely that there has been a deterioration in the nutritional status of the populations. The authors of the survey stress that the results cannot be extrapolated to the area at large and indicate that much of the area to the north and east remains inaccessible due to insecurity (ACF 12/00).

Table of results for ACF surveys in Port Loko town and camp (December 2000)

	Port Loko town	Port Loko camp
Acute malnutrition(<-2 z scores)	3.8 %	3.7 %
Severe malnutrition (<-3 z scores and/or oedema)	0.3 %	0.9 %
Crude Mortality Rate	1/10,000/day	1.3/10,000/day
Under five Mortality Rate	3.1/10,000/day	4.1/10,000/day
Measles vaccination coverage*	76 %	48 %

*Determined from vaccination card and mother/carer report

[Original source: ACF December 2000, "Nutrition survey Port Loko, Sierra Leone"]

[...]

In February 2001 ACF conducted post distribution monitoring in the displaced camps in Free-town to look at the reliance on food aid and to assess the livelihood strategies of the displaced populations. The survey indicated that the middle and better off families which represent 50 % of the total camp population, do not rely on food aid but use it as an additional source of income. The remaining poor households do have a stronger reliance on food assistance and are often forced to borrow from the richer groups. The loaned food is paid back in kind or with money and this forces poorer households into a vicious cycle of borrowing and repaying debts that prevents them from being able to use food aid for their sole consumption (ACF 02/01)." (ACC/SCN April 2001)

Water and sanitation

Civil war caused substantial damage to water and sanitation facilities (2001)

- Only two out of 42 raw water treatment plants constructed before the war are functional by end 2001
- Waterborne diseases are among the main causes of child morbidity and mortality
- Water and sanitation facilities in communities hosting IDPs are overloaded

The ten years of rebel war have reversed the gains made during the Water and Sanitation Decade in the 1980s. Only two (in Lungi and Bo) out of the 42 raw water treatment plants constructed in the 1970s are operational. Less than 70% of the structures (wells and gravity schemes) constructed during the water decade are operational today due to vandalism and neglect. In the newly accessible districts, most water sources are likely to be contaminated. The recent assessment in Kambia District revealed that 80% of the wells are contaminated and in two chiefdoms only 5% of the wells are operational.

Cholera and other diarrhoea diseases are among the main causes of child morbidity and mortality. Severe outbreaks of diarrhoea, *Shigellosis* are very common during the rainy season (June to October). Basic hygiene practices are inadequate in the majority the communities.

A 1994 study put the waste generation rate of garbage in Freetown at 0.4 kg/capita/day. The overall quantity generated today has increased threefold due to population movement to Freetown on account of the war. The Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MoHS) has recently increased its transport capacity but is finding it hard to keep up with increasing demand.

The movement of displaced persons from RUF-held areas to government-controlled zones overloaded the water and sanitation facilities for the host population. Some 129,000 persons are currently receiving WATSAN assistance delivered in IDP and refugee camps nation-wide by seven agencies. (UN/OCHA Nov 2001)

New influx of displaced after May 2000 created additional pressure on water and sanitation facilities

- Urgent need to improve access to safe water and sanitation facilities for IDPs in Mile 91 area (July 2000)
- Efforts by UNICEF and Caritas to improve Watsan facilities in Mile 91 Transit Camp during 2001
- People fleeing to Tasso Islands face deplorable watsan conditions (May 2000)

"Access to water and sanitation closely follows the provision of shelter, especially at the peak of the rainy season. The water and sanitation situation in the Mile 91 area has been a problem for some time. There is an urgent need to rapidly improve access to safe drinking water and sanitation to stem the spread of diseases. Bloody diarrhea (Shigella) has claimed the lives of at least 10 people in less than two weeks, among them, children under five years of age. Getting the watsan situation quickly under control will significantly reduce the burden on health facilities and potentially save lives. UNICEF has begun with a programme to clean and chlorinate the town's 408 traditional wells, while constructing additional wells to fill the gap. Efforts are also underway to construct 100 latrines, which the IDPs would have direct access to.

UNICEF plans to support WATSAN activities in the new transit camp and will act as the lead agency coordinating all WATSAN activities for the Greater Mile 91 area." (OCHA 24 July 2000)

"Conditions on Tasso Island are described as "deplorable" by the International Medical Corps (IMC). The normal population of some 2,400 has been boosted to 9,000-10,000 by the arrival of displaced which has had a chronic impact on shelter, health and watsan facilities, IMC's Rabih Torbay told OCHA. The few wells on the island are unprotected, there are only a handful of latrines, and an outbreak of cholera is feared. "Water and sanitation are just unbelievable. We chlorinate the wells weekly, but that is not enough as they are unprotected," he said. Plastic sheeting is also in short supply. IMC rebuilt the island's clinic last year and are planning to provide support with drugs and staff, supplementary feeding and health education from 1 June. The last major influx of some 1,000 new IDPs arrived on Tasso last week. They had fled from between Waterloo and Masiaka and included people from Pepel, Port Loko and Lunsar." (OCHA 26 May 2000)

"UNICEF, in collaboration with Caritas continues to provide Watsan facilities for more than 4,000 displaced persons in the Transit Camp in Mile 91. They continue to support the construction of ten new wells in Mile 91 and four in Yonibana. Meanwhile, the MOHS recently conducted a survey of water points in Mile 91. They discovered more than 600 wells in the township, 294 of which currently have some amount of water. Of these, only 30 wells provide a perennial water source. According to the Watsan experts, the issue of safe drinking water for the Mile 91 population (estimated to be 5 times its normal population) is not as acute as initially reported. They have deepened most of the wells in the township." (OCHA 29 May 2001)

Shelter

As IDPs and others return to areas of origin, shelter is a priority need (2001/2002)

- Up to 90% of houses destroyed in many areas
- Lack of houses and other social facilities in recently accessible areas is deterring IDPs from returning to their areas of origin
- Numerous constraints to the reconstruction of houses

"Shelter is one of the priority needs of the total population, as this sector has been the worst affected during the last ten years of civil conflict in Sierra Leone. In many places, up to 90% of the houses have been destroyed. To deal with the situation, no major initiatives have been taken to reconstruct houses, considering the extent of destruction. As the disarmament and demobilisation process for ex-combatants continues in one district after another, several rebel-occupied areas have been declared safe. As a result, a large number of IDPs, returnees and ex-combatants have started to return to their areas of origin. Though some displaced people get shelter assistance, many of them build mud houses by their own efforts. These houses are often not suitable for long-term living, due to unhygienic conditions and heavy rains.

As the peace process moves forward, the majority of the displaced people, who have been living in camps and other neighbouring countries are interested to return to their areas of origin and get involved in the national recovery process. However, as no houses and other social facilities such as health care, education, safe water and sanitation, are available in the recently accessible areas, most displaced persons do not wish to return to their areas of origin, posing serious difficulties in the resettlement and re-integration process, as many of the displaced will continue to depend on relief assistance in different camps and host communities.

In most of the recently accessible areas, no initiatives have been taken by any agencies to reconstruct the destroyed houses. On the other hand, building materials, skilled labour and construction tools are also not

available in the communities. Transportation to the newly accessible areas is a problem, as the roads have been damaged badly during the conflict. Although some people have skills to start reconstruction, they do not have necessary means to apply their skills in the national recovery process and for their livelihoods. Although some are busy in small-scale agriculture, most of them do not have jobs.

Having considered the above prevailing issues, it is essential to provide shelter assistance to communities on a priority basis. In this respect, innovative building materials production skills should be provided to the communities through skills training, so that their community members will be able to produce low cost building materials from locally available resources for the re-construction of permanent houses which will improve the living conditions of the general population. Through transferring innovative reconstruction skills, it will also provide opportunities to the community members to generate income in order to support themselves." (UN November 2001)

ACCESS TO EDUCATION

General

Access to education is low (November 2001)

- Only 42% of primary school-going age children attending school
- Only 30% of older population literate
- Considerable regional disparities exist with regard to access to education
- Enrolment figures hide the disruption in education that many children have endured as a result of conflict and displacement

"Little or no education significantly increases vulnerability, especially for females. With only 42% of the primary school-going age children attending school and only 30% of the population older than 15 years literate, the majority of Sierra Leoneans are disempowered. The provision of education to all children is a major challenge to the Government. Although the conflict destroyed and forced many schools to close, there was only 59% school enrolment prior to the conflict. Thus the provision of education has to rebuild destroyed schools, retrain teachers, provide educational material and significantly expand the whole system. There are 2,676 primary schools, of which only 1,500 are operational.

There are considerable regional disparities, with access to education and the quality of services lowest in the northern and eastern provinces. Enrolment ranges from 75% in the Western Areas to 28% in the Northern Province and the teacher/pupil ratio ranging from 23:1 in the Western Areas to 82:1 in the Eastern Province. To encourage enrolment, the government plans to eliminate tuition fees. The elimination of tuition fees for classes 1 to 3 has more than doubled the enrolment (currently 419,463) from pre-war levels and further increases are anticipated with the progressive elimination of fees for the older years, classes 4-6, starting in September 2001. This rapid increase, although very important, puts an extra strain on the system especially with regard to raising the quality of education.

Enrolment figures hide the disruption in education that many children have endured as a result of the conflict, school closures, and displacement. It is estimated that 500,000 children are significantly older than the class that they left. While some will not mind being over-age pupils, others will need to use the Complementary Rapid Education for Primary Schools (CREPS) programme to have three years condensed studies to be able to return to the formal system in the right year group." (UN November 2001)

Access to education for war-affected youth essential for peace, says Refugees International (July 2001)

- Increased number of demobilised child soldiers has strained capacity of child protection agencies
- As many as 10,000 children have been directly involved in the conflict and will require special assistance
- Education and training opportunities essential for both former child combatants and war-affected children

"In a country where peace has yet to be institutionalised, quickly rehabilitating the education system is essential. War-affected children and youth, particularly former combatants, must be enrolled in schools or training programs as soon as possible, enabling them to learn from other children and relearn community values. Education allows children to regain a sense of normalcy in their lives. In order to assist over-age students in their quest for education, there must also be whole-hearted support for catch-up educational programs.

The increased numbers of demobilized child combatants in Sierra Leone has strained the capacity of child protection agencies to respond to their needs. These children are accommodated in NGO-supported Interim Care Centres (ICCs) for up to six weeks until they are reunited with their families or can be placed in foster care. The children are given the opportunity to enrol in formal education or skills training programs. As fighting forces release increased numbers of child combatants in the coming months, reintegration programs, especially education, will have to be expanded. In all, as many as 10,000 children have been directly involved in the conflict and will require special assistance if the situation in Sierra Leone is to normalize.

[...]

Non-combatant children are also in desperate need of education. International organizations estimate that 70 percent of school-aged children have had limited or no access to formal schooling for the past 10 years." (RI 7 July 2001)

Widespread destruction of schools in 1997 and 1999

- Some 300 schools destroyed or damaged after coup in May 1997
- January 1999 invasion of Freetown and its environs left more than 70 percent of school buildings destroyed or badly damaged
- Returning IDP children and ex-child soldiers further strain the weak educational capacity

"According to the Ministry for Youth Education and Sports (MYES), the 1997 coup and the 1999 rebel invasion of Freetown resulted in the destruction of 70% of the schools." (UN November 2000, p.79)

"Even before the May 1997 coup d'état, primary school enrolment was 45 percent with high drop-out rates due to parents inability to bear the cost of sending children to school. The May 1997 coup resulted in a complete closure of schools, the loss of 1-2 school years for children and some 300 schools destroyed or damaged." (UN December 1998, p. 45]

"The new school term has begun in Sierra Leone [October 1999]. In the capital, Freetown, 60-80 children are crammed inside each classroom. The classrooms are separated by a wooden screen and the noise unbearable, but the children inside are glad to be there. They had to stay away from school for five months in the beginning of the year. When the RUF retreated from their attack of Freetown in January 1999 their school was shot at and all the furniture stolen.

[...]

Before the war started in 1991, 2,500 schools were in operation. This has dropped to around 600. The rebel forces damaged many school buildings, stole and destroyed furniture and even used some of them as barracks. Many buildings were damaged by shrapnel and even direct hits by gunfire and bombs. In exceptional cases, schools were reduced to rubble. Storerooms were looted and school records, registration and academic reports were burnt.

Many other schools are simply run down because there is no money for repairs or equipment. In the past, Sierra Leone was said to have one of the best education systems in Africa. Now, some schools can't even afford chalk, never mind books and pens. The government's lack of resources means that very little is spent

on education. Many teachers have fled the country and those left are being paid a pittance. There are not enough trainee teachers coming through the system.

The eight-year conflict has taken its toll. Displaced people are sheltering in many of the schools. And schools are taking on more and more children as many displaced children and ex-child soldiers return to their home villages, many of them severely traumatised. It is hardly surprising that in many schools the standard of education is not very high. Much of the teaching is limited to songs, the alphabet and numbers. However, there is a determination to rebuild the system to what they had before the war." (Christian Aid 21 October 1999)

"With the possibility of access to the whole country, there is an urgent need to rehabilitate schools in areas of high population concentrations in the country. As a priority, schools must be constructed to accommodate out-of-school children in displaced camps and in areas where there are large numbers of displaced persons being supported by the local population. At the same time, more teaching and learning materials will be needed to assist the children's return to school. Some IDP communities have taken the initiative to establish their own schools, but are forced to work without basic materials which lowers effectiveness." (UN OCHA 12 July 1999)

"The January rebel invasion of Freetown and its environs left more than 70 percent of school buildings destroyed or badly damaged and many children unable to attend school due to lack of facilities and materials. At the same time, most of the activities planned for 1999 had to be modified due to several constraints. The devastation caused by the war severely weakened the formal structure. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports relaxed some of the requirements to enable pupils attend school. Temporary schools for the displaced were encouraged. As only 25 percent of the funds required to meet the sector's objectives were received, the capacity to carry out activities for both Formal and Non-Formal Education was limited. However, funding received during the latter part of the year-enabled progress in bringing education to newly accessed areas in the country." (UN November 1999, p.5)

ISSUES OF SELF-RELIANCE AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

General

IDPs utilize various coping mechanisms during period of displacement (November 2001)

- Many IDPs have been living in camps and host communities for extended periods of time
- IDPs have developed their own community structures and support networks
- Still, many IDPs remain vulnerable such as female-headed households, the disabled and the elderly
- Many IDPs who have been temporarily displaced have not been formally registered and receive no formal support

"Capacities

Many IDPs within Sierra Leone have been living in camps or host communities, some for extended periods of time, where they receive both food assistance and other basic services such as health and education. Whilst many may not have access to land, most basic needs are being met. Displaced populations have developed their own community structures and support networks. Many IDPs have developed sophisticated coping mechanisms and maximise the relief support they are receiving either through petty trade or other productive activities.

Vulnerabilities

Displacement, however, breaks down community structures leaving families dislocated and dispossessed. This exacerbates vulnerability, particularly amongst female-headed households, the disabled and the elderly, and some are unable to rebuild community structures elsewhere. Whilst relief aid meets basic needs, it can also create dependency. Rather than supporting their coping mechanisms, this creates expectancy and can render some groups unable to harness opportunities to rebuild their lives.

Many individuals and their families who have been temporarily displaced have not been formally registered and therefore receive no formal support from relief agencies. This group is particularly vulnerable, as they receive no special targeted assistance." (UN November 2001)

Detrimental impact of the civil war on the agricultural sector (2000-2001)

- Domestic cereal production in 2000/2001 estimated to be only one-third of national requirements (May 2001)
- Survey reveals that 372,727 of an estimated 439,090 farm families need emergency assistance
- Farmers have lost their productive resources including seeds, implements and other capital assets
- Resumption of hostilities in May 2000 made it only possible to provide 46% of the targeted number of beneficiaries with agricultural inputs
- Decline in the availability of fish caused by displacement of fishing families and looting and destruction of their properties
- More than 500,000 IDPs expected to be dependent on emergency food aid throughout 2001

"The [FAO] Mission was unable to visit all the regions of the country due to insecurity. However, visits were made to the South West, Southern and part of Eastern regions, where discussions were held with MAFE officials, chiefs, farmers and their leaders. While at Kenema the Mission also held discussions with farmers' representatives from Kailahun district, inaccessible otherwise. The security situation in the North, North-Central, North-West and (most of) Eastern regions was very fluid and therefore these regions were inaccessible to all international agencies.

The Mission found that the agricultural sector has been extensively disrupted throughout the country, including even the Southern region where relative peace now prevails. Over the years, farmers have lost all their productive resources including seeds, implements and other capital assets. There has been large-scale destruction of infrastructure and rural institutions. As most rural farm families were displaced, availability of labour for planting and harvesting is a major constraint. Also, farmers' holding capacity for whatever small harvest is low due to financial constraints and the fear of looting by rebels. Practically all the farmers are dependent on Government and NGOs for the supply of seeds, and thus planted areas are highly determined by the capacity of these agencies to assist them. Due to shortages of seeds and other inputs, average rice area per farm has declined from about 0.80 hectare normally to about 0.60 hectare in the current year. Thus, the shortage of tools, fertilizers and labour adversely affected food production in 1999." (FAO 4 February 2000, sect. 1)

"The nine-year civil war has devastated agricultural infrastructure and resulted in the displacement of many farmers, while youths who used to work the farms are now actively involved in the war. Early rains, coupled with recurrent floods caused significant damage to upland rice in the year 2000. Due to the resumption of hostilities in May, agencies could only provide 46% of the targeted number of beneficiaries with agricultural inputs.

The shortage of seeds and tools coupled with incidences of crop pestilence and disease had a negative impact on overall food production, resulting in a 329,000 MTs food gap between production levels and consumption requirements for the 1999/2000 marketing year. The expected cereal production for 2000 will meet less than 30% of total national requirements in 2001, worsening the overall food security situation. Furthermore, the livestock population has been decimated, resulting in shortfalls of meat and other animal products. The displacement of fishing families, as well as the looting and destruction of their properties, has also led to a decline in the availability of fish, and subsequent high prices. This contributes to a decline in the supply of animal-based protein, worsening the nutritional status of vulnerable populations, particularly women and children.

[...]

The food security situation in Sierra Leone is expected to deteriorate in 2001 due to the combined effects of insecurity, internal displacement, regional instability and insufficient agricultural activity. The May hostilities interrupted this year's planting season, displacing farmers before they had the chance to harvest their crops. In addition, insecurity hampered the delivery of agricultural inputs to vulnerable farm families in over half of the country. In many areas where seed inputs were delivered, Food Pipeline Agencies were unable to provide food for seed protection. As a result, many families consumed the seeds, as access to food was limited. The cumulative effect of these factors is expected to be a decline in local production, increasing the food deficit in Sierra Leone. It is safe to assume that tens of thousands of people in Sierra Leone, particularly women and children, are already malnourished and vulnerable.

More than 500,000 IDPs and 110,000 refugee returnees are expected to be dependent on emergency food aid throughout 2001." (UN November 2000, pp. 27, 37)

"A crop survey carried out jointly by FAO, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Marine Resources (MAFMR) and NGOs estimated domestic cereal production in 2000/2001 to be 31% of national requirement resulting in a shortfall of 359,928 MTs. The recovery of this shortfall demands the employment of the resettling population in farming.

[...]

The EU/FAO supported vulnerability survey shows that there are 439,090 estimated farm families in the entire country of whom 372,727 are considered to be vulnerable and in need of emergency assistance. Up till now, only 115,109 farm families have been targeted by humanitarian agencies and FAO. There is still a critical gap of 257,618 farm families to be catered for immediately if food shortages and malnutrition among women and children in the country are to be averted for the current farming season." (OCHA 21 May 2001)

ISSUES OF FAMILY UNITY, IDENTITY AND CULTURE

General

Displacement in Sierra Leone has severely affected family and community links (2001)

- Rupture between displaced families and their original communities
- Displacement has exposed rural communities to new life styles and undermined traditional authorities

"Participants [at an IDP workshop] agreed that forced displacement in Sierra Leone has severely affected family and community links in various ways, most obviously through family separation. Fortunately, several organisations are involved in family re-unification. Displacement has also exposed rural communities to new life styles and undermined traditional authorities. Access to education is limited, often forcing adolescents into premature adulthood away from their families.

Displacement often leads to a rupture between displaced families and their original communities. The creation of new community links in areas of reception is not an uncomplicated process. Participants described how this process has proven the most successful in areas where the host community has been actively involved and has also benefited from IDP support programmes. The example of Lokomasama Chiefdom in Port Loko District has already been mentioned. In other places, the displaced have been able to integrate and create new community ties through every-day activities such as religious worship, local trade, search for social services and inter-marriages. This process could however be more complicated when there are ethnic differences between IDPs and host communities." (NRC March 2001, p.7)

IDPs in Yurika area and Kakum Island seeking refuge among host communities with common ethnic and cultural background (2000)

- Host population of 3,506 sheltering 4,042 IDPs in the Yurika area
- Majority of these IDPs are of Susu tribal origin
- Insufficient capacity of host population to provide for the displaced
- IDPs joining their hosts in carrying out their normal economic activities

"An inter-agency assessment carried out on in October [2000] by OCHA, WFP, NRC, Council of Churches in Sierra Leone (CCSL), CARITAS, Community for Action Progress (CAP) and FAS (Food Aid Secretariat) in the Yurika area and Kakum Island, in the Lokomassama chiefdom confirms the presence of some 5,100 IDPs, fleeing from ongoing cross-boarder fighting in the Kambia district. The team verified 4,042 IDPs living in 426 households in the Yurika area that has a host population of 3,506. They report that the majority of these IDPs are of Susu tribal origin and have chosen to seek refuge in this area due to the common ethnic, cultural and social backgrounds they share. A good number of this population is subsistent farmers and traditional fishermen. This does not however reflect on their way of life; food is scarce and their fishing gears are in very bad shape, needing extensive repairs. The little food that is available is costly; rice (per cup) - Le 600; tuber (per pile) - Le 200; palm oil (per 33cl bottle) - Le 600.

Agricultural activities are greatly hindered by lack of resources and inputs. All other facilities are insufficient in the area. Basic facilities are totally absent in the vicinity and the host population is ill

prepared, especially during this "hungry season" to provide for its strangers. The few available houses are overcrowded. The only access to the area is by boat. The IDPs are currently cooperating with the host population in their agricultural and mat weaving activities, for very little remuneration, or are engaged in wood selling or hired labour. The team says that safe, drinking water is readily available as lift pumps are located in the village but warns that this facility will soon diminish if the area is not given instantaneous attention.

Kakum Island

On Kakum island the team registered 1,058 IDPs in 185 households. They disclose that the entire host population consists one-third of the IDP population and that the island is made up of about 20 houses, all of which are severely leaking. In order to cope with the influx, a 123-booth makeshift camp was established that maintains 1,200 people.

Developing a coping strategy, the IDPs joined their hosts in carrying out their normal economic activities; fishing, wood selling, salt processing and backyard gardening. These people seek their daily bread under much duress, having no tools to work on a vast fertile land. Food security is extremely low, with every basic need including drinking/cooking water coming all the way from Targrin or Freetown. Surprisingly though, the team observed that malnutrition was not apparent among children. Rice is hard to come by and people depend mostly on banana, cassava or potato porridge.

Prior to this assessment, these IDPs haven't received any humanitarian consideration or assistance. They do their cooking in shifts. The island is completely devoid of essential facilities such as medical and watsan. There is not a single toilet on the island, which if not given due attention will promote an epidemic." (OCHA 13 November 2000)

PROPERTY ISSUES

General

Substantial destruction in the Kambia district caused by RUF occupancy and bombing by the Guinean military (2001)

- Basic infrastructures totally destroyed in the Gbinleh Dixon, Magbema and Samu chiefdoms
- Greatest level of damage to buildings was sustained in the northern parts of Gbinleh Dixon, close to the border with Guinea, and in Kambia Town and Rosino

"As a result of RUF occupancy and sustained bombing from the Guinean military much of the Kambia district has suffered considerable displacement and destruction. Whilst the whole district has been affected, principal findings from the assessed settlements reveal clear concentrations of damage where rehabilitation needs are the greatest (see Annex 3 – Damage Overview [available from the map section!!]). When examining overall destruction to housing, agriculture, schools and health clinics and coupling this with greatest levels of displacement, Gbinleh Dixon, Magbema and Samu chiefdoms have been most intensely effected. In these chiefdoms basic infrastructures have been totally destroyed, whole settlements have been deserted and most economic activity has ceased and is only now being re-vitalised. Briama and Mambolo have sustained lesser levels of disruption, whilst Tonko Limba has remained basically intact in terms of destruction. The greatest level of damage to buildings was sustained in the northern parts of Gbinleh Dixon, close to the border with Guinea, and in Kambia Town and Rosino, both former strongholds of the RUF. Agricultural activities were most severely disrupted along the Greater Scarcies River in Samu and Mambolo Chiefdoms. Generally, there are very few government services throughout the District and there is little access to healthcare or educational facilities.." (OCHA/Kambia Humanitarian Task Force June 2001, p.2)

See also "Damage overview of Kambia District" in the map section.

Returnee women who have lost their husbands face problems in reclaiming property (2001)

"Of particular concern are single women returnees. *RI* [Refugees International] heard estimates that as many as 50 percent of refugee and displaced returnees are single women. Sierra Leonean property law discriminates against women in that women are unable to inherit property. This presents a huge obstacle to the development prospects for a large part of the Sierra Leonean population-women who have lost their husbands and male relatives during the fighting. Several single displaced women expressed their concern to the *RI* team: "I am returning to my home after all these years, and I do not know how I can begin to rebuild my life. My home has been destroyed and my husband and brothers were killed in the fighting. The government is giving us a piece of plastic sheeting. How can I build a home for my children? How can I find a job?" (RI 26 April 2001)

Widespread destruction of homes and property by the rebel forces (1999-2001)

- Nearly 6000 homes and residential buildings within the greater Freetown area destroyed after rebel offensive in January 1999

- In areas of hostilities between the Guinean military and RUF forces in the Kambia district it is estimated that over 80% of the villages have been destroyed
- Assessment of villages in Ribbi, Bumpeh and Kongbora chiefdoms revealed that out of 3,246 houses (prior to 1999), 2,653 were totally destroyed
- The Wesleyan Church reporting that 86 Primary schools, 5 secondary schools, one hospital and five health center have been vandalized and looted

"Rebel forces were [...] responsible for the deliberate widespread destruction of civilian property and public utilities in Freetown and other locations, such as Makeni and Kambia. In the centre of Freetown, about 20 per cent of the housing stock was destroyed, with as much as 90 per cent destroyed in the eastern outskirts of the city. Some public facilities appear to have been deliberately demolished, including police stations, the Pademba Road prison, the Nigerian High Commission and UNOMSIL headquarters. The residences of human rights activists, lawyers, journalists and Government officials were also targeted, as well as churches, mosques and hospitals." (UN SC 4 March 1999, para. 27)

"As the rebels withdrew from the capital they set entire city blocks and suburban streets on fire. Housing authorities registered the destruction of 5,788 homes and residential buildings within the greater Freetown area. Within the eastern suburb of Calaba Town, the authorities calculated some 80 percent of residential structures had been left in ashes, and within densely populated Kissy the estimate was over 65 percent. According to the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Transport, extensive damage to at least eight of Freetown's factories, set ablaze by retreating rebels, has resulted in the loss of over 5,000 jobs. Embassies, government buildings, churches, mosques, and historical landmarks were also targeted, including Freetown's Big Market, built in 1802, and the Holy Trinity Church, built in 1877." (HRW 24 June 1999, chapt.I)

"In preparation for resettlement in the camps, NCRRR and OCHA spearheaded an interagency needs assessment mission from 6th – 9th February [2001] in the Koya chiefdom. The multi-sectoral assessment involved other agencies and covered 57 villages from 19 sections within the chiefdom. [...] Initial findings reveal massive destruction of almost all the villages in the chiefdom. There were very few houses available on sight with deplorable Watsan facilities." (OCHA 23 February 2001)

"CARE conducted an assessment in 135 villages from seven sections in Ribbi, Bumpeh and Kongbora chiefdoms. Initial findings of the assessment, which was aimed at evaluating levels of destruction and needs, showed that out of 3,246 houses (prior to 1999), 2,653 were totally destroyed. Reconstruction of 1,869 destroyed houses is currently ongoing. CARE is planning supporting these villages with Non-Food-Items (NFI) and construction tools. Similarly, in the Kaiyamba chiefdom, CARE gave GTZ (a German organisation) 14 bundles of zinc to roof a primary school in Yawyema." (OCHA 8 May 2001)

"Twenty-five homes have been burned down and property worth millions of leones looted in the coastal towns of Kassiri and Kychom, in Sierra Leone's Kambia District, the state-owned news agency, SLENA, reported on Wednesday [10 January 2001].

It quoted fleeing residents as saying the destruction occurred when Guinean troops attacked fleeing RUF fighters who are believed to be behind the string of recent cross border raids into Guinea. However, the agency reported, "There are conflicting reports as to who actually caused the destruction."

Quoting witnesses, SLENA reported that Thursday's attack forced most of the chiefdom's inhabitants to flee. SLENA quoted an unnamed source as saying that shortly after the Guinean left the RUF resurfaced and then "pounced on the civilians, especially [those] of the Susu tribe". The Susu are mostly found in Guinea and the RUF accused them of acting as spies on the rebels." (IRIN 10 January 2001)

"There have been dozens of civilian deaths and injuries and extensive destruction of homes. Some towns and villages, for example Kassiri and Kychom, have been repeatedly taken and retaken by opposing forces.

In some cases villages have been completely destroyed and are now deserted, adding to an already very large number of internally displaced people in Sierra Leone." (AI 4 May 2001)

"Pre-assessment findings [in the Kambia district] indicate that Gbinleh-Dixon and Samu have sustained the most destruction as a result of hostilities between the Guinean military and RUF forces. In some case villages have been deserted and over 80% of the villages have been destroyed. Water and sanitation facilities are limited and access to fresh water supplies is problematic, the majority of the villages visited depend on streams and swamps as their main source of water. In terms of education there are at most one or two primary schools found in the villages, but hardly any secondary schools." (OCHA 16 June 2001)

"A decade of fighting in Sierra Leone has left 90 percent of the buildings damaged or destroyed in the eastern district of Kono, particularly in its main town, Koidu, World Vision (WV) reported on Saturday. Homes, schools and clinics are among the buildings affected. WV reported that health care and schools were "practically non-existent" in Kono and that people were surviving on bananas and wild yams. " (IRIN 19 June 2001)

"Thousand of houses have been burnt down by rebels and health facilities, schools and other public infrastructure were looted, vandalized and others burnt. In the case of the Wesleyan Church [operating in the northern province and in the western areas of Sierra Leone, all her 86 Primary schools, 5 secondary schools, one hospital and five health center were vandalized and looted. Ten vehicles, five motorcycles, three computers, conference center, office equipment, headquarters office buildings in Makeni were looted/vandalized.

The roads are in a terrible state of disrepair. Community infrastructure has been vandalized. Rice and groundnut and other agricultural produce looted, leaving the farmers with no seeds to plant. People continue to be displaced and the UNHCR is repatriating thousand of Sierra Leonean refugees from Guinea, adding to the already swelling number of displaced persons in Freetown and its environs." (ACT 15 February 2001)

In October 1999, the Government of Sierra Leone, with financial support from the European Union, commissioned a two-month consultancy to assess and analyse conditions in the northern and eastern provinces of the country. This study provides detailed information about destructions of physical assets both in rural and urban areas. See:

[Annex F/3 to Sierra Leone Chiefdom Vulnerability Analysis - Rural Destruction Assessment November 1999](#)

and

[Annex F/4 to Sierra Leone Chiefdom Vulnerability Analysis - Urban Destruction Assessment November 1999](#)

See also "Damage overview of Kambia District" in the map section.

PATTERNS OF RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT

General

An estimated 94,000 IDPs to be resettled in 2002 – with many challenges still ahead

- IOM to support next phase of resettlement of IDPs from the Western Area to the northern region, scheduled for February 2002
- NRC begins housing project in various parts of the country
- Difficulties in motivating people to actually stay in relocated communities

"A proposal for transportation (estimated at \$25,000) has been put together for the resettlement of IDPs in the Western Area camps, Mile 91 and host communities in the Tonkolili District, scheduled for February next year. An estimated 94,000 IDPs need to be resettled in the course of 2002. IOM will support the next resettlement phase of IDPs from the Western Area to the northern region in February 2002. Since last year, IOM has relocated over 28,000 Sierra Leonean refugees by boat from Guinea. They have also since April, resettled 12,885 IDPs from the Western Area IDP camps to safe areas in the provinces.

NRC has acquired a total of 26 plots of land in Moyamba, Bo, Kenema, Mile 91 and Masiaka, for their housing project. They have received from the Ministry of Survey, Lands, Housing, Country Planning and the Environment site plans for 30 plots of land, ten each in Benguma, Rokel and Hastings in the Western Area. NRC is still waiting on the Ministry to provide similar land plans for the sites at Lumpa, Grafton and Leicester road.

[...]

The main activities during the last quarter of the year included multi-sectoral inter-agency assessment missions. Assessments have been completed for Port Loko, Koinadugu, Kambia, Kono and Bombali Districts. Kenema and Kailahun assessments were postponed due to stall in the disarmament process a month ago. Bonthe assessment is scheduled to take place in January. Although certain areas have not yet been officially declared safe for resettlement of IDPs and returnees, the compelling needs drive agencies to move ahead and start operations in these areas. Declaring areas safe for resettlement and relocation of the IDPs is easy compared to getting the people to actually stay in the relocated communities. This remains the biggest challenge so far as majority of the relocated population keep swinging from one area to another, especially in the camps, in a bid to look for a better life. The people claim to have no facilities in their villages to return to which has made it very difficult to re-introduce certain facilities, especially in areas of health and education in the newly accessible areas. Humanitarian agencies have formed various committees to look into ways of motivating people to stay in their home areas after resettlement." (UN OCHA 31 December 2001)

NRC resettles IDPs from Port Loko camp (December 2001)

"From December 11th - 13th NRC resettled over 1,480 IDPs from the Port Loko IDP camp, in collaboration with WFP, ICRC, IMC and PAE. The remaining population, some 2,500 people hailing mostly from Buya Romende, Marampa and Sanda Magboloton Chiefdoms, would be relocated early next year. NRC hopes to completely demolish the camp by March 02 and the site would be used as a way-station for refugees from Guinea." (UN OCHA 31 December 2001)

Sierra Leonean returnees who became IDPs finally go home (December 2001)

- UNHCR repatriated over 5,400 Sierra Leonean returnees to their places of origin in Kambia district by end of December 2001
- These were part of a group of about 16,000 Sierra Leoneans from refugee camps in Guinea who lived for up to a year in transit near Freetown

"UNHCR on Monday organised the first convoy for Sierra Leonean returnees who had been living in host communities north of Freetown, to their place of origin in Kambia district (northwest of Freetown).

A total of 485 persons boarded 25 trucks together with their belongings for the nearly three hour trip homewards. Nine other returnees, including 7 pregnant women and 2 sick children, made the 85-kilometre journey by car. Initially some 800 people were registered to go on the convoy but UNHCR soon found out that an additional 675 had jumped the gun and returned to Kambia themselves, probably in order to check up on their property and ready things for the return of their relatives.

Many of the passengers were in tears as they boarded the trucks, joyful to finally see their home areas after more than ten years of cruel war that left many dead, caused huge displacement, and separated numerous families.

Some of the Sierra Leoneans UNHCR transported Monday first arrived over a year ago on foot after leaving their refugee camps at Forecariah in neighboring Guinea. Others were repatriated on UNHCR- / IOM-chartered boats. Because they could not immediately return to Kambia due to fighting, the returnees were assisted by UNHCR at sites on the Lungi Peninsula. Kambia district was recently declared safe following the UN-monitored demobilisation process, deployment of the Sierra Leonean army, the restoration of government activities and the return of paramount chiefs." (UNHCR 7 December 2001)

"UNHCR has now repatriated over 5,400 Sierra Leonean returnees to their places of origin in the Kambia district, northwest of Sierra Leone. They are part of a group of about 16,000 former refugees who had returned from Guinea over the past year and had been assisted by UNHCR in local hosting communities in the Lokomassama chiefdom, north of Freetown." (UNHCR 21 December 2001)

More than 100 teachers return to the north and east of the country (December 2001)

"Over 100 primary and secondary school teachers were sent back to the north and east of Sierra Leone in a 'repatriation exercise' carried out by the Sierra Leone Teachers Union (SLTU) on Friday.

The exercise was the second of its kind, with a third scheduled for January 3, 2002, the SLTU's secretary-general Davidson Kuyateh said.

A first group of 40 displaced teachers and their dependants were last week taken back to the diamond-rich region of Kono, in eastern Sierra Leone.

The teachers had fled their schools in 1998 after they came under attack from rebels." (AFP 28 December 2001)

Chiefs return to Koinadugu district (December 2001)

"Five paramount and regent chiefs from the northern district of Koinadugu on 1 December returned home for the first time since war broke out in the region more than three years ago. The United Nations Mission

in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) coordinated the return and provided transport from Freetown to the town of Kabala.

At a ceremony held in Kabala Town Hall on 2 December to welcome the chiefs, the Koinadugu District Officer, Mr. Sheku Kamara, thanked UNAMSIL and UNDP for facilitating the relocation of the chiefs, as well as other local Government authorities who have since returned to the town. He said the move would enable the district authorities to resume effective operations in the area." (UNAMSIL. 3 December 2001)

Numerous chiefdoms declared safe for resettlement (2001/ 2002)

- National Resettlement Assessment Committee declaring numerous chiefdoms safe for resettlement
- IDPs and returnees voluntarily returning to safe areas

"The National Resettlement Assessment Committee met recently and has agreed to declare all of Kono District, all of Kenema District, with the exception of Lower Bambara and Malegohun chiefdom, and one chiefdom in Kailahun, Jawe, safe for resettlement. The National Resettlement Assessment Committee have scheduled a meeting for February 13, at which time they will review the situation of those chiefdoms not yet declared safe for resettlement." (UN OCHA 31 January 2002)

"Five of the 11 chiefdoms in Tonkolili District have been declared safe for resettlement: Yoni, Kholifa Mabang, Gbonkolenken, Kalansongia, and Sambaia Bendugu. The remaining six chiefdoms not declared safe for resettlement are to be reviewed later in the light of disarmament in Bombali District and pending SLA deployment. The only remaining chiefdom in Kambia District - Tonko Limba Chiefdom, has been declared safe for resettlement. A reasonable number of IDPs and returnees have been voluntarily returning to the Tonko Limba chiefdom, which has now fulfilled all other criterion put forward in the resettlement document. The three remaining chiefdoms not declared safe in Port Loko District: Sanda Magblonthor, Buya Romende and Marampa, have also been declared safe for resettlement." (UN OCHA 30 November 2001)

Improved security allows for return of some 45, 000 IDPs in 2001, but return process encountered problems (November 2001)

- Significant progress in peace process enabled the return of some 45,000 IDPs to homes of origin
- Deterioration of security situation in region led to the premature repatriation of refugees who are now IDPs
- Tight two-month time frame did not allow for adequate planning amongst principle actors
- Information to IDPs about resettlement was not comprehensive

"The significant progress made in the peace process, in particular, the disarmament and demobilisation programme during 2001, has altered the operating environment for humanitarian interventions. Increased security within Sierra Leone has enabled the resettlement of some 45,000 internally displaced persons. It has also permitted the delivery of essential humanitarian assistance, and the commencement of recovery efforts in the North and East of the country, where little or no assistance had been provided for a number of years.

However, the deterioration of the situation in neighbouring Guinea and Liberia has led to the premature repatriation of Sierra Leonean refugees, who remain displaced within the country. The instability within Liberia in particular, has resulted in the influx of Liberian Refugees. Hundreds of thousands of Sierra Leoneans still remain displaced, straining the scarce resources of those who host them. Adult and child ex-

combatants, abducted women, war wounded and amputees also require reintegration assistance. Community-based rehabilitation initiatives will also be a key focus of the humanitarian community to ensure the peaceful reintegration of all population groups.

[...]

Resettlement: The first phase of the NCRRR Programme was successfully completed, facilitating the return of some 45,000 IDPs from camps around the country to their homes of origin. However, the tight two-month timeframe following the declaration of areas as 'safe for resettlement' did not allow for adequate planning amongst the principle actors. Critically, sensitisation of, and provision of information to the displaced communities regarding resettlement was not comprehensive, causing misunderstandings and confusion. It is essential that camp communities are properly engaged in these processes to ensure their full cooperation and participation.

It is critical that community rehabilitation and reintegration programmes commence immediately following the declaration of an area as 'safe for resettlement'. In most areas of resettlement, basic community services are virtually non-existent and infrastructure has been severely damaged.

Resettling populations need urgent support and basic service provision to ensure that they do not drift back to major urban centres in search of adequate shelter, economic opportunities and health and education services.

Whilst there is a clear commitment on the part of agencies to support areas of resettlement, their ability to respond effectively has been hampered by limited financial, human and material resources. This highlighted the need for improved planning and increased donor liaison and resource mobilisation at the field level.

Preparedness: The accelerated progress of the disarmament and demobilisation programme, as well as UNAMSIL and SLA deployment, enabled access into districts in the north and east of the country. Coinciding with the time when communities are at their most vulnerable during the peak of the hungry season, the situation required the immediate response of humanitarian agencies to mitigate further vulnerability. This underlined the need for flexibility and contingency planning in order to respond appropriately to emerging needs as a result of political and security developments.

Temporary settlement of refugee, returnee and IDP communities: Over the past year, the humanitarian community has reviewed the way in which services are provided to displaced populations. Following the success of the Lungu model, it was hoped that all returnee-displaced populations would be integrated into host communities. However, this practice has met with some constraints and is contingent on the hospitality of the host community. It also requires close monitoring and sustained assistance of agencies. Relocating returnees from transit camps in the capital to host communities in the provinces proved to be problematic. This was mainly due to the ease of access to basic social services in the camps. In addition, political elements have encouraged the returnees to remain in the capital in order to influence the political landscape." (UN November 2001)

Multiple needs to facilitate return to the Kambia district after Government regains control (June 2001)

- About 30,000 registered IDPs expected to return to Kambia

"Overview of priority interventions

While there are clear priority areas of intervention the needs throughout the District are great. The recovery process will be a long one, which will require considerable resources and commitment from all stakeholders. In the short term, however, it is vital that immediate humanitarian interventions are made in the form of;

- healthcare
- watsan provision

- emergency shelter support (particularly in the rainy season)
- seeds and tools distributions
- food distributions for vulnerable families

These immediate interventions must then be followed by longer-term recovery projects focused on the rehabilitation needs of communities and targeted at priority areas.

- **Health** – Immediate rehabilitation of intact health facilities should be undertaken so that some basic services are available in the major towns of Kambia, Rokupr and Mombolo at a minimum. This should be accompanied by mobilisation of the Ministry of Health employees to return to the District and the supply of essential drugs and basic equipment to Ministry of Health clinics.
- **Watsan** - A key priority will be to ensure that the existing facilities are returned to working order as quickly as possible by chlorinating all contaminated wells targeting areas of highest population density and greatest destruction first. This should be followed by a rehabilitation programme and construction of water and sanitation facilities in schools and health centres.
- **Education** - An immediate rehabilitation programme of schools in key centres of population should be prioritised. At the same time teachers must be encouraged to return to their locations and a longer term rebuilding and resourcing programme developed for the entire District.
- **Food Security** - Supplementary and Therapeutic Feeding Programmes should commence to address malnutrition among the most vulnerable groups. School feeding should commence and Food for Work commence to support all community reconstruction programmes, to encourage productive activity and stimulate the recovery process.
- **Agriculture** - Immediate assistance in the form of seeds and tools for spontaneous returnees (both refugees and IDPs) and farming communities so that they can resume basic economic activity. This should be accompanied by immediate assistance of germplasm (planting materials) for cassava and groundnut production and livestock and a more long-term reconstruction programme of farming infrastructure in the District (stores, drying floors and markets centres).
- **Shelter** - Immediate shelter assistance in the worst hit communities. As a medium term assistance there is a need for permanent shelter delivery (zinc-coated corrugated iron roofing, wire nails, roofing nails, cement) Provision of technical advice in construction technology and town/community planning
- **Child Protection** - Provision of recreational opportunities for children and learning and teaching materials to the schools. Family tracing and reunification (FTR) activities and family/community mediation should be established and social workers should be deployed in Kambia District as soon as possible to meet the counselling and support services that many children will need. In the longer term skills & vocational training centres for young girls and boys should be established and specific interventions targeting the needs of disabled children. ." (OCHA/ Kambia Humanitarian Task Force June 2001)

Chiefdom	Expected IDP Return Loko- Masama ⁵	Expected IDP Return Port Loko IDP Camp ⁶	Expected IDP Return Western Area Camps ⁷	Total Estimated Return - Refugees, Returnees & IDPs
Bramaia	-	Chiefdom Breakdown Unknown	7	116
Gbinleh Dixon	120		33	299
Magbema	2,901		128	9,149
Mambolo	2,366		51	2,955
Masungbala	-		86	889
Samu	23,072		38	24,073
Tonko Limba	29		145	530
TOTALS	28,488		208	488

(OCHA/Kambia Humanitarian Task Force June 2001, pp. 2-3, table 3)

Returnees face very difficult living conditions (April 2001)

- Estimates that as many as 50 percent of refugee and displaced returnees are single women

"One internally displaced man living in Waterloo camp outside Freetown told *Refugees International*, 'The government has told those of us coming from safe areas that we must return home. Our name has been crossed off the distribution list, and we will no longer receive food if we do not leave. We want to go home, but the rains will soon begin. My whole village has been destroyed. There are no hospitals or schools for my children. I am happy that the government is moving us, but I am also very worried about my family's future.'

Refugees returning to safe areas echo these same concerns. Several NGO workers predicted that displaced and refugee returnees would go home to receive their repatriation kit and, finding their homes destroyed and no social infrastructure, would end up back in Freetown. The international community has yet to provide the massive amounts of reconstruction assistance that will be needed in order to ensure that these returnees will be able to begin their lives again after spending years in camps.

Of particular concern are single women returnees. *RI* heard estimates that as many as 50 percent of refugee and displaced returnees are single women. Sierra Leonean property law discriminates against women in that women are unable to inherit property. This presents a huge obstacle to the development prospects for a large part of the Sierra Leonean population-women who have lost their husbands and male relatives during the fighting. Several single displaced women expressed their concern to the *RI* team: "I am returning to my home after all these years, and I do not know how I can begin to rebuild my life. My home has been destroyed and my husband and brothers were killed in the fighting. The government is giving us a piece of plastic sheeting. How can I build a home for my children? How can I find a job?" (RI 26 April 2001)

Return of local administration and deployment of UN peacekeepers needed to facilitate return (2001)

- Participants at NRC workshop in Freetown express need for local administration, police and justice systems to be in place before return
- IDPs want to be provided with accurate information on conditions in return or resettlement areas
- Claimed that IDPs tend to return when UNAMSIL are deployed to their home areas (2001)
- Some 30,000 IDPs now sheltered in Lungi may return when Government regain control of their home areas in Kambia (May 2001)

"Acceptable safety conditions in the place of return could be ensured through the early (re-) establishment of different forms of state presence. Participants particularly stressed the need for local administration, police and justice systems to be in place before return is initiated. Long-term safety could be enhanced through regular community meetings on peace building and reconciliation. Also, sufficient access to social services such as water, health care, shelter and food was seen as a condition for sustainable return and more permanent conditions of safety.

[...]

Several participants underlined the importance of providing both IDPs and host communities with frequent and accurate information on conditions in return or resettlement areas in order to facilitate their active participation and management of the proposed durable solutions. Also, IDPs themselves should be given the possibility to assess conditions in return or resettlement areas, and they should be formally included in return/resettlement committees set up by the authorities or the international agencies." (NRC March 2001, p.5)

"The Mission's present experience is that internally displaced persons and refugees tend to react fast to news of UNAMSIL patrols and deployment and many plan and commence their return to their homes as soon as UNAMSIL has deployed there.

[...]

As part of the agreement reached between the Government and RUF during their meeting in Abuja on 2 May 2001, RUF agreed to withdraw from Kambia district, which borders Guinea, and enter the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programme. Their withdrawal would be followed by the deployment there of the Sierra Leone Army and frequent patrols by UNAMSIL. The Sierra Leone Army would therefore be able to ensure the security of the border, which could result in the establishment of conditions conducive to a return of refugees to that district but, more importantly, would also enable some 30,000 Sierra Leonean internally displaced persons now at Lungi to go to their homes in Kambia. In principle, this would also enable other refugees in Guinea to return to Sierra Leone by road through the Kambia district. " (UN SC 23 May 2001, paras. 19-20)

Returning refugees integrated into IDP programmes (2001)

- By May 2001 about 55 000 Sierra Leonean refugees had returned from Guinea to Sierra Leone, 20 000 spontaneously, while about 35 000 had been assisted by IOM
- Significant number believed to have returned to places in the areas under RUF control
- Returnees temporary settled in areas under Government control
- Convoys from Freetown to the provinces and to temporary resettlement sites organised by UNHCR

"In Kenema, UNHCR has registered over 4,000 former refugees who returned on foot since the beginning of March. As a result, they have increased their presence in the area to help deal with the spontaneous

arrivals. Agencies are concerned about the increasing influx of returnees from Daru into Kenema. They say the relocated returnees are moving from the Jembe and Gerihun camps into the already overcrowded Nyandama and Lebanese IDP camps in the Kenema township. The Jembe and Gerihun sites have reached their full capacity of 5,000 and 2,500 persons respectively. However, it is anticipated that the Gerihun camp could take another 2,500 persons once dense forest has been cleared. NRC, the camp manager of the Gerihun camp, reports that a total of 400 houses have been constructed, and road maintenance is ongoing. Returnee teachers in the Jembe transit centre have initiated classes for 895 children in the camp." (OCHA 19 April 2001)

"A large majority of refugees come from areas which remain under the control of RUF and which therefore cannot yet be deemed safe for the purpose of return. At the same time, all efforts are made to ensure the temporary settlement of returnees in areas under Government control and to integrate them into the programmes established by the Government for support to internally displaced persons. A phased approach to the return of refugees to Sierra Leone would therefore be preferable to ensure adequate and sustainable reintegration.

With the deterioration of the situation in Guinea and Liberia and the gradual improvement of the overall security situation in Sierra Leone, Sierra Leonean refugees have begun to make their way back to Sierra Leone spontaneously. Since September 2000, more than 55,000 Sierra Leoneans have returned from Guinea. About 35,000 of these have returned by boat from Conakry since December 2000, with the assistance of the International Organization for Migration. The remainder returned spontaneously on foot through Kambia, Kabala, Kono district, Kailahun, Daru and Kenema. A significant number are believed to have returned to places in the areas under RUF control. In addition, refugees from Liberia have returned to Sierra Leone at border crossings near Zimmi.

Reports on the treatment of returning refugees in RUF-controlled areas vary. As returnees crossed through RUF-controlled areas in Kailahun and Kono, they were, according to some reports, subjected to human rights violations, including detention, abduction, forced recruitment and labour (especially of young men), robbery and rape. In addition, there are reports that RUF has tried to prevent refugees from leaving its area of control in the hope that this would attract humanitarian assistance. There have also been reports that the rebels allowed returnees to pass unhindered, or provided assistance.

[...]

The capacity of transit centres in the Freetown area has reached saturation point and many returnees are reluctant to move on, thereby obstructing the admission of new arrivals. To deal with this situation, UNHCR is organizing convoys from Freetown to the provinces and to temporary resettlement sites. Several of these sites are being expanded and others are in preparation. However, the use of camps for temporary resettlement could perpetuate the dependence of returnees and internally displaced persons on outside assistance. Humanitarian agencies are therefore working towards making available arable land, providing jobs and building ties with neighbouring communities." (UN SC 23 May 2001, paras. 12-14, 15)

Improved opportunities for return (end-2000 - 2001)

- Freetown, Port Loko, Kenema and Pejehun districts declared safe return areas (January 2001)
- Estimated that approximately 50 percent of the 57,000 IDPs in camps located in the western areas are coming from districts now declared safe
- IDPs originating from the safe areas will receive WFP assistance for four months
- Reports of some spontaneous return in Port Loko and Bumbuna areas by end-2000

"The Government has declared Freetown, Port Loko, Kenema and Pejehun districts safe for people to return to, which launched the start of the IDP resettlement plan. IDPs originating from the above locations will receive WFP assistance for the next four months, after which time food aid will be ceased. It is

estimated that approximately 50 percent of the 57,000 IDPs in camps located in the western areas are coming from districts now declared safe. WFP will, however, continue to support war-affected communities through food-for-work and food-for-agriculture activities." (WFP 12 January 2001)

"The Western Area Resettlement Committee has declared the region "sufficiently safe" for the resettlement of IDPs and returning refugees, OCHA said. The presence of local administrators, UNAMSIL and the police, and unhindered access for humanitarian staff are evidence that the location is safe. Since May, there have been no hostilities in the area between armed factions and residents. The committee is composed of the National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation; the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration; UNAMSIL, OCHA, UNHCR, the police, the city council, the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Housing, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and representatives of IDPs." (IRIN 12 December 2000)

"An inter-agency mission to Lokomasama chiefdom and the area's paramount chief have identified 49 villages where returnees from Guinea and internally displaced persons from Kambia in northern Sierra Leone can be resettled, UN News reported on Monday.

They are being located in Lokomasama because the designated entry points for returnees in Konakrydee and Babara, on the Lungi Peninsula, are overpopulated.

The World Food Programme (WFP) has distributed a two-week ration to 5,198 returnees and 23,002 IDPs from Guinea and Kambia, 80 km north of Freetown. A local NGO, IYYL, has been registering all arriving returnees and IDPs. WFP will provide food for another 300 in the Waterloo Transit Camp, in Freetown." (IRIN 3 October 2000)

"NRC reports small movements of IDPs from the Port Loko IDP camp back to the villages and areas around Rogberi Junction, east of Maforki chiefdom. They say up to 1,249 IDPs coming from the IDP camp in Port Loko and a few from Freetown have returned to this junction." (OCHA 6 December 2000)

"A WFP team observed that food security situation in the [Bumbuna] province has improved and that a large number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) seem to have returned to their homes to cultivate." (WFP 22 December 2000)

See also:

[A comprehensive resettlement strategy issued in December 2000](#)

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

Limitation of access caused by the conflict

Some successes in disarmament process lead to overall improvement in security situation (November 2001)

- Gains in disarmament process allow for basic conditions for resettlement of IDPs in some areas
- Instability in the sub-region risks jeopardizing the improving security situation in Sierra Leone
- Situation in some parts of the country remains volatile
- Poor roads and weak infrastructure also lead to problems with access

"Gains in the disarmament process and the deployment of UNAMSIL have contributed to the creation of new opportunities for humanitarian organisations and the Government of Sierra Leone in previously inaccessible locations. Opportunities exist for the establishment of basic conditions for the resettlement of IDPs, returnees and former combatants, as well as for the recovery of communities affected by the conflict. This translates into the need for the government to provide services ranging from maintaining law and order, to health, education and a conducive environment for the economic development of communities including returning populations.

However, the gradual progress in the peace process in Sierra Leone could be jeopardised by instability in the sub-region, particularly Liberia, as well as by failure of the international community to invest simultaneously in relief and recovery operations. A sudden large-scale influx of Liberian refugees and Sierra Leonean refugees to Sierra Leone could pose a serious source of instability, firstly, because they are most likely to settle in volatile areas with limited humanitarian access, and secondly, because their arrival would severely strain the capacity of relief organisations to address their needs. Security implications related to the possible presence of armed elements among those seeking asylum cannot be ignored, particularly considering the high mobility those elements throughout the sub-region.

The situation in some parts of the country remains volatile, requiring the deployment of civilian members of the Government, as well as law and order elements to ensure a sustainable security environment for relief workers and civilian populations alike. At present, humanitarian agencies are (a) assisting IDPs and returnees from areas that remain unsafe; (b) assisting with the resettlement of IDPs and returnees from safe areas; and (c) initiating relief and recovery assistance in newly accessible areas. Given the prevailing situation, the Strategic Goals outlined in the CAP for 2002 are expected to constitute the basis for sustainable development during the transition from relief to recovery in Sierra Leone, by contributing to the consolidation of peace and security as well as to the alleviation of poverty, the provision of basic social services, the revival of productive activities and commerce, the promotion of good governance and the fulfillment of basic human rights.

[...]

The main constraint to humanitarian actions over the past four years has been the lack of secure and unhindered access to all parts of the country. The highly volatile, unpredictable and rapidly evolving politico-military situation has necessitated rapid shifts in programmed interventions to address emerging humanitarian needs. However, resources were sometimes not available in-country at the time they were required. Lack of timely and adequate funding, and concomitant capacity limitations have also constrained humanitarian actions.

The poor and dilapidated infrastructure, mainly the road network, has limited the coverage and speed of humanitarian interventions, especially to newly accessible areas. In these situations, the humanitarian helicopter provides a means of delivering essential medication and limited quantities of food until rehabilitation efforts can be undertaken to improve accessibility. Local capacity in terms of human and material resources is also limited. While the efforts of the NRC are trying to address this, Government institutions remain weak and under resourced." (UN November 2001)

Some improvements in access during first half of 2001 as UNAMSIL was deploying to new areas

- UN considered it in May 2001 unlikely that RUF-controlled areas would be declared safe during the second half of the 2001
- RUF agrees to unhindered access to the town of Lunsar after UNAMSIL deployment in March 2001
- Western area and southern province declared safe for resettlement, but almost three-quarters of the north remains inaccessible to humanitarian agencies by March 2001
- RUF withdrawal from the Kambia District and return of Government control by end-May 2001

"UNAMSIL's US-trained 7th Nigerian Battalion comprising 776 peacekeepers completed their deployment on March 20th in the RUF held town of Lunsar. The RUF has agreed that all civilians, humanitarian agencies and UNAMSIL personnel would have complete freedom of movement in areas where UN peacekeepers are deployed, and that a five-kilometer weapons-free zone would be established around all UNAMSIL deployment areas. All RUF checkpoints along the road leading to Makeni would also be dismantled, subject to the approval of the RUF High Command.

[...]

The western area has been declared safe for resettlement. All the 14 chiefdoms in the Bo district have also been declared safe which makes the entire southern province safe. Six chiefdoms in the Kenema district remain unsafe. The Kono area is totally unsafe as well as Kailahun district, with the exception of Daru. Only four chiefdoms in the Port Loko district have been declared safe. Almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of the north remains inaccessible to humanitarian agencies except for recent improvement in security, which has allowed UNAMSIL and humanitarian agencies to visit the township of Makeni, Magburaka and Lunsar." (OCHA 31 March 2001)

"The RUF continue to man checkpoints on the approach routes to Makeni and Magburaka. Although most of them appear to be unarmed, it is generally believed that the combatants may still be in possession of some weapons in nearby hideouts. Most of these checkpoints have become a major source of income for the combatants who continue to tax civilian vehicles. However, NGOs and UN Agencies are largely exempted from such taxes, probably because the RUF is anxious to see the return of humanitarian agencies to the areas they control. UNAMSIL has advised humanitarian agencies to take adequate precautions when operating in these areas." (OCHA 8 May 2001)

"Despite RUF expressed willingness to guarantee safe access to beneficiaries and Humanitarian Agencies, there is no guarantee that safe access can be sustained in areas under their control without complete disarmament. Much will depend on the evolution of the political situation. It is unlikely that the criteria for declaring areas safe will be met in the RUF-controlled areas during the second half of the year. Agencies will, however, continue to expand operations in newly accessible areas to the extent possible." (OCHA 21 May 2001)

"There were no major security incidents between the Government and rebels during the week [12 January 2001], resulting in a relative calm situation in the country and an improved road access. Revolutionary United Front (RUF) has reportedly agreed to reopen all roads leading to areas under its control (i.e.

Bumbuna-Magburaka, Kabala-Mekeni, and the Kambia-Mange-PortLoko axis). The UN Humanitarian Coordinator met with the RUF leadership in Magburaka, to discuss the option of delivering humanitarian aid to rebel held areas. He reported that RUF is ready to allow humanitarian access, but that security concerns will have to be properly addressed prior to any such interventions." (WFP 12 January 2001)

"Meanwhile, persisting instability in some parts of the country and the sub-region continues to significantly impede access to an estimated 1 million Sierra Leoneans currently living in RUF-controlled areas. This notwithstanding, the Government, WHO, UNICEF and their implementing partners have succeeded in negotiating limited access to RUF-held areas, including Makeni, Magburaka and segbwema for the purpose of continuing the polio eradication programmes." (UN SC 15 December 2000, para.58)

"A key feature of the period under review has been improved access across the country. The deployment of UNAMSIL peacekeepers to Lunsar, Makeni and Kambia and patrols in the Kono area, together with the progress in disarmament, have opened up new areas of the country to humanitarian interventions. Humanitarian agencies and organizations are now operational in all of these areas, and an expansion of activities is planned." (UN SC 25 June 2001, para. 61)

"Following the RUF withdrawal from the Kambia District at the end of May the Government of Sierra Leone regained control of the District with the deployment of the SLA and the subsequent deployment of the SLP in early June, opening up the District after several year's under RUF control. The Kambia Task Force established in mid May was mandated to assess the humanitarian situation in the District, identify critical needs and plan appropriate humanitarian interventions to begin the recovery process. An inter-agency multi-sectoral assessment was conducted from the 14th-15th June in all seven of chiefdoms of Kambia." (OCHA/Kambia Humanitarian Task Force June 2001, p.2)

Concern that humanitarian assistance attracts the attention of armed groups in need of supplies (July 2000)

"The displaced populations at Mile 91 and Port Loko are vulnerable not only because they are near areas of continued fighting, but humanitarian goods meant for them are a magnet to the ill-supplied armies in the vicinity. Attacks followed both food distributions to the Port Loko displaced persons camp. At Mile 91, international food agencies have had difficulty bringing in food and supplies in part because of apprehension that it would create similar risks for the displaced population. Because existing clinics are over-stretched and there is the threat of epidemic, MSF is establishing an emergency health program for the displaced persons at Mile 91.

The proliferation of various ostensibly pro-government forces, often consisting of former rebel soldiers, has added to the security concerns of the displaced persons. These groups are largely untrained, badly equipped and short of food, and they have made travel in government-controlled areas extremely hazardous." (MSF 14 July 2000)

Humanitarian operations in most areas of the northern and eastern provinces ceased as war escalated in May 2000

- Sustained access to Government held areas such as Freetown, Bo, Moyamba, Pujehun, Kenema and Lungi
- Confrontations between UNAMSIL and rebels had a negative impact on access
- UNAMSIL support in areas of high IDP concentration, such as Mile 91 and Port Loko, was crucial to sustaining relief operations

- UNAMSIL air assets and military escorts facilitated delivery of humanitarian assistance to insecure areas in the north
- By end-2000 still impeded access to an estimated 1 million Sierra Leoneans in RUF-controlled areas.
- Civilians trapped in isolated villages in rebel-controlled areas face a desperate situation without access to humanitarian assistance

"The signing of the Lomé Peace Agreement raised hopes that the end of Sierra Leone's brutal conflict was in sight. The security situation deteriorated barely a year after. During the first quarter of the year, the peace process mostly remained on track, providing a more favourable working environment for relief agencies. The deployment by April, of about 7,000 of 11,100 UN peacekeepers approved by the UN Security Council further facilitated humanitarian access to a greater number of war-affected civilians, particularly in RUF-held areas. In areas where Disarmament and Demobilisation took place, agencies were operating smoothly, in support of the government's efforts towards relief and rehabilitation. However, in the wake of a full resumption of war in May, humanitarian operations in most areas of the northern and eastern provinces have ceased. The most affected are the northern towns of Makeni, Magbruaka, Kambia and the eastern district of Kailahun." (UN July 2000, p.4)

"Following reports of deteriorating humanitarian situation in Bumbuna and arrival of 7,000 IDPs, WFP will lead an inter-agency food needs assessment mission there from 18 to 20 August. Food security situation in the entire northern area is presumed to be critical, but only Bumbuna and Kabala are currently accessible, and even these only by air. WFP is very concerned about not being able to visit areas where serious relief need have been reported and is strongly advocating resumption of dialogue on humanitarian access between the warring parties." (WFP 18 August 2000)

"Security concerns [by end of August 2000] led WFP to suspend a planned assessment to the northern town of Bumbuna, where 12,000 people including 7,000 IDPs are being assisted. The mission will proceed as soon as the security situation allows it. The food security situation in northern and eastern provinces has been deteriorating and WFP is very concerned about the lack of access during the crucial hunger-gap period." (WFP 25 August 2000)

"UNAMSIL troop deployment facilitated the expansion of services to RUF-held areas during the first quarter of the year. However, difficulties between the RUF and UNAMSIL, including the hostage taking of peacekeepers in May, had a significant impact on the CHAP. UNAMSIL was no longer perceived as a neutral force, complicating its relationship with the agencies. Military confrontations often led to the removal of relief staff and the suspension of programmes. UNAMSIL rescue operations to free their personnel created some IDPs in the East. At the same time, UNAMSIL support in areas of high IDP concentration, such as Mile 91 and Port Loko, was crucial to sustaining relief operations. Emergencies developed in difficult-to-reach areas, necessitating the use of UNAMSIL air assets and military escorts, particularly for insecure areas in the north, eg Bumbuna, Kabala and Port Loko. Each case was reviewed by the Code of Conduct Committee and only implemented in the absence of other options.

[...]

The security situation in Sierra Leone and the sub-region remains precarious, unpredictable and unlikely to improve in the near future, unless the warring parties commit to a cessation of hostilities. Sporadic skirmishes between the RUF and Civil Defence Forces (CDF) continue in some areas of the country. The RUF is also effectively hindering movement throughout the country by cratering strategic roads. Humanitarian access to RUF-controlled areas is still repeatedly denied. Meanwhile, reports from these areas indicate that human rights violations are ongoing. However, in one positive development, the West Side boys -- who for months controlled the Okra Hills-Masiaka area outside the Freetown peninsula and thus the strategic highway to the rest of the country -- were in August successfully dislodged from their base following an operation by British forces to free 11 UK soldiers the WSB were holding hostage there.

[...]

Reaching some of the displaced with relief aid is proving extremely difficult in the present security environment [late 2000]. While agencies are able to support and sustain relief/rehabilitation programmes in areas such as Freetown, Bo, Moyamba, Pujehun, Kenema and Lungi, interventions in small Government enclaves surrounded by the RUF, such as Daru, Kabala and Bumbuna are intermittent and limited due to poor security and difficult road access. For civilians who are still trapped in isolated villages in rebel-controlled areas, the situation is even more desperate. Reports from these areas, which comprise half the country, indicate severe food shortages and the rampant and unchecked spread of disease as relief support is virtually non-existent." (UN November 2000, pp. 9, 11, 12)

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES

National government response

A comprehensive resettlement strategy issued by the Government of Sierra Leone in December 2000

- Returning refugees assisted by UNHCR to be given assistance in parity to that offered to registered IDPs
- A third of the country declared as safe areas by Government by the beginning of 2001

"The principles on which the resettlement strategy are based are:

The GOSL will only facilitate resettlement into an area when it is deemed that the area in question is sufficiently safe to allow for the protection of returnees

As far as possible support measures provided during the resettlement process will be standardised and in parity to avoid inter and intra-community tensions

As far as possible support for integrated resettlement, reconstruction and rehabilitation will be community-based incorporating resettling internally displaced persons (IDPs), repatriating refugees, ex-combatants with their dependants and existing resident populations

The geographical unit that will be used for assessing safety of resettlement and for resettlement planning will be the chiefdom.

All beneficiary groups are fully informed of the support they are entitled to and of the procedures for accessing them

Resettlement and reintegration programmes for IDPs refugees and ex-combatants are integrated as far as possible

Every effort will be made to ensure that there is close co-ordination of all aspects of assistance for the resettlement process occurs to ensure appropriate targeting and efficient use of resources

The resettlement process is closely monitored to ensure that appropriate interventions or adjustments are made for those beneficiaries failing to cope adequately during this transitional period

[...]

Registered IDPs

This population consists of those displaced people who have been registered and verified, and are currently receiving IDP support services. This will include spontaneous returning refugees whose areas of origin are not safe for resettling.

[...]

When their home of origin is declared safe for resettlement, these IDPs will enter into the resettlement programme [...]. This will include transportation for the most vulnerable and the receipt of a resettlement package, the potential for entry onto seeds and tools or other employment-based safety-net programmes and benefits from community rehabilitation and reconstruction targeted at basic service provision and income generation.

[...]

Unregistered IDPs

There is no clear information on the number of unregistered IDPs in the country. This population of IDPs has not been registered and so has not benefited from the support services provided to registered IDPs. Given the drive to phase-down IDP camps and support resettlement, the GoSL does not support the registration of new caseloads [...], unless there is a significant new displacement of people.

Despite this, unregistered IDPs are not excluded from support during the resettlement process. They will be eligible to enter onto seeds and tools programmes and/or other employment-based safety net / income generating schemes, as well as gaining benefits from community-based initiatives supporting the rehabilitation and reconstruction of basic services and the resuscitation of the local economy. It is also recommended that agencies consider providing non-food items to the most vulnerable members of the community in the resettlement area. This could be achieved through targeted distributions or through employment-based safety net schemes.

Although, this group will not be eligible for resettlement food rations, provision of food aid for vulnerable groups within this category may be provided through employment-based safety-net schemes, school feeding programmes, VGF rations in cases of food insecurity and, in cases where there is acute malnutrition, therapeutic feeding. The promotion of such interventions will be determined through food security and nutritional monitoring.

Refugees/Returnees

Refugees who repatriate spontaneously (without any UNHCR involvement or assistance) to a situation of internal displacement shall be considered as IDPs and included under relevant mechanisms for IDPs resettlement. For proper tracking purposes, their formal refugee status will be stated on their resettlement benefit cards. These returnees will not be entitled to benefit from UNHCR repatriation assistance, but will be included under community-based reintegration assistance by UNHCR and other agencies.

Sierra Leonean refugees returning under the framework of UNHCR assisted repatriation will be given assistance in parity to that offered to registered IDPs. Organised transportation will however only be provided in the context of a promoted return. This will consist of the provision of transport to the most vulnerable households [...]. In the case of food, a two-month food ration will be provided in their areas of return. This will be distributed at the chiefdom-level alongside resettlement food rations provided to resettling, registered IDPs.

In parity with registered IDPs, refugees will receive a resettlement package. In the case of shelter, ways will be found to ensure that those who cannot build on their own will be provided assistance to do so. Like other beneficiary groups, returnees will have the opportunity of entering onto seeds and tools projects and/or other employment-based safety net / income generating schemes, as well as gaining benefits from community-based initiatives supporting the rehabilitation and reconstruction of basic services and the resuscitation of the local economy.

Like the internally displaced, the decision as to when their homes of origins are suitable safe to allow their facilitated repatriation will be determined through the Resettlement Assessment Committees, for which UNHCR is represented at all levels [...]. Similarly, the planning for repatriation assistance within Sierra Leone will take place through the Resettlement Planning Committees [...]" (NCRRR December 2000, pp. 5-7, 9)

"With respect to the existing IDPs, the strategy is evolving as planned. The declaration of safe areas (about a third of the country) by the GoSL at the beginning of the year has paved the way for some IDPs to return home, necessitating increased support for resettlement and rehabilitation in the areas concerned, and the phasing-out of major relief programmes such as food aid for those who are registered in the programme. At the time of writing, over 40,000 of the 273,000 registered IDPs had registered for resettlement. More are likely to enter the programme as their places of origin are declared safe." (OCHA 21 May 2001)

Response by the UN system

UNAMSIL reaches full capacity (November 2001)

"The arrival of the last contingent of UN peacekeepers in Sierra Leone last week has brought the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) to its authorised ceiling of 17,500 troops, a UN official told IRIN on Monday.

The Nepali peacekeepers, which make up an 800-strong battalion, arrived last week in the capital, Freetown, and are due to be deployed to Moyamba District in southern Sierra Leone. 'All 800 will go to key areas in Moyamba including DDR reception centres and UNAMSIL facilities,' the UN official said." (IRIN 20 November 2001)

UN Peacekeeping mission (UNAMSIL) to facilitate implementation of peace agreement (1999-2001)

- Security Council decided in October 1999 to establish the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL)
- UNAMSIL mandated to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance
- 12,428 UNAMSIL troops deployed by 22 July 2000, but reduced to 10,356 personnel by March 2001
- Security Council decision in March 2001 to extended the mandate of UNAMSIL for six months and increased its military component to a strength of 17,500
- The first group of more than 4,000 Pakistani peacekeepers started arriving in June 2001
- By June 2001 UNAMSIL was preparing to deploy into the diamond-producing regions and some border areas in the Eastern Province

"On 22 October, the UN Security Council decided to establish a 6000-strong UN peacekeeping force for Sierra Leone in support of the Lomé peace agreement. According to the resolution, the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) will be deployed throughout the country for an initial period of six months. The bulk of the force will be drawn from ECOWAS countries while Kenyan and Indian troops will make up the rest. Under its mandate, UNAMSIL will monitor the ceasefire agreement of May 1999, support the implementation of the Lomé agreement and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance. The UN force will also help the Government disarm, demobilize and reintegrate combatants, including child soldiers; ensure the security and freedom of movement of UN personnel; encourage the parties to create confidence-building mechanisms; and provide support to elections held under the constitution.

Acting under chapter VII of the UN charter, the council authorized the mission to ensure its personnel's security and freedom of movement and, within its capabilities and areas of deployment, "to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence, taking into account the responsibilities of the Government." Members further commended ECOMOG's efforts towards the implementation of the Lomé accord, and stressed the need for close cooperation between the new mission and ECOMOG. Members also stressed the urgent need for substantial resources to finance the DDR process, and called on the international community to contribute generously to the trust fund established by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development." (UN OCHA 23 October 1999)

"An important milestone was reached in November when the UN Security Council established a Peacekeeping Force for Sierra Leone. In a further move to support the country's fragile peace, the Council voted for an expansion from 6,000 military personnel to 11,100 in February. This move has raised hopes that a precarious security situation will finally be stabilized, facilitating DDR and enabling humanitarian and development agencies to meaningfully assist needy populations. The first gain was reaped in February, when the successful deployment of UNAMSIL troops in the northern provincial capital of Makeni paved the way for agencies to undertake a comprehensive multi-sectoral assessment of needs in the area. It also

provided an opportunity for the UN to successfully negotiate with the RUF field commanders for the withdrawal of earlier (unacceptable) demands for agencies to channel all aid through the RUF humanitarian wing - the Organization for the Survival of Mankind (OSM). As a way of resolving the issue, the GOSL has invited the OSM Coordinator to join its National Commission for Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (NCRRR), while the UN has advised the RUF to transform the OSM into an independent NGO. Both proposals were accepted by the RUF.

Although the relationship between UNAMSIL troops and the RUF command is presently tense, causing the RUF to re-establish checkpoints in the Makeni area, the RUF has given assurances that aid agencies operational in the area would be granted free access. This has so far been maintained, but the situation remains volatile. This growing tension between the RUF and UNAMSIL troops is a cause for concern for the humanitarian community. The RUF's constant refusal to allow UNAMSIL troops to deploy in key areas, has not only dashed hopes of improved security conditions, but also raised concerns of a possible military confrontation between the two forces, which could potentially increase the risk to aid workers on the ground. An INDBATT convoy moving from Kenema to Daru was stopped on 23 February at Bendu Junction between Mano Junction and Segbwema and prevented from proceeding, despite lengthy negotiations with the direct involvement of Minister Mike Lamin. The RUF forces of 200-300 well-armed men took up defensive positions between Segbwema and Bendu Junction. After 24 hrs the INDBATT convoy was ordered to return to Kenema by the RUF combatants. Although UNAMSIL has so far refrained from forceful action against the RUF, it carries a "robust" chapter VII mandate to "take necessary action to ensure the security and freedom of movement of its personnel and to afford protection to civilians under imminent threat of physical violence." The Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) Oluyemi Adeniji, has warned the RUF leader that contravention of the Lome Peace Accord, such as the seizure of weapons from UN peacekeepers, mounting illegal road blocks and blocking the free movement of UN troops in the discharge of their mandate, must stop immediately or would "invite forceful response." Of the large number of ammunition, arms and vehicles seized from the Guinean troops by RUF elements, only two armoured personnel carriers had been recovered, both of them stripped of their mounted weapons. Meanwhile, Foday Sankoh continues to express the RUF's disappointment with regard to the current trend of events in Sierra Leone. In a 24 February letter to the Moral Guarantors and other key actors, Sankoh claimed that the RUF was not consulted about UNAMSIL's Mandate, which it considers "highly threatening." (OCHA 7 March 2000, sect.1)

"The strength of the military component of UNAMSIL as at 1 March had reached 7,391 military personnel, including 260 military observers (see annex). In accordance with the earlier plans, main elements of the force are currently deployed to Freetown, Lungi, Port Loko, Lunsar, Masiaka, Makeni, Magburaka, Kenema, Daru, Mile 91, Bo and Moyamba (see map). Successive efforts have been made to deploy also to Koidu and Kailahun, but these have been unsuccessful as a result of the refusal of RUF to allow UNAMSIL freedom of movement, in spite of various assurances from the RUF leadership that UNAMSIL would be able to move to those locations."(SC 7 March 2000, para.16)

"Since my last report, new troops from Bangladesh, India and Jordan have arrived in the Mission area, bringing the troop strength of UNAMSIL to 12,428, as at 22 July 2000. With the expected arrival of a Russian military aviation unit, the military strength of UNAMSIL would approach the ceiling set under Security Council resolution 1299 (2000)." (SC 31 July 2000, para. 29)

"On Friday, 4 August, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted a British-sponsored resolution to extend UNAMSIL's mandate until 8 September 2000 and to strengthen its capacity. The original six-month mandate was due to expire on Monday 7 August. The resolution said UNAMSIL's military component "should be reinforced through accelerated troop rotations, with further aviation and maritime assets, a strengthened force reserve, upgraded communications, and specialist combat and logistic support assets." According to the resolution, U.N. peacekeepers would help the Sierra Leone government to extend its authority over areas of the country under RUF control by deploying at key locations and main population centres. The Council also agreed that the peacekeeping force would "deter, and where necessary, decisively

counter, the threat of RUF attack by responding robustly to any hostile actions" or threat of imminent use of force.

The resolution calls on the U.N. force to maintain security around Freetown and at Lungi International Airport as a priority, to patrol main access routes to the capital, and to promote efforts to disarm and demobilise combatants. "Widespread and serious violations" by the RUF of the Lomé Peace Accord "constitute a breakdown of the prior generally permissive environment based on the agreement" and predicated on the cooperation of the warring parties, the resolution said. Until security conditions allow progress toward a peaceful resolution of the conflict, "there will continue to be a threat to UNAMSIL and the security of the state of Sierra Leone," it added." (OCHA 7 August 2000)

"The military strength of UNAMSIL as at 14 March [2001] stood at 10,356 personnel [...]. The relief of the Indian and Jordanian contingents was completed on 14 February 2001. The advance party of a third battalion from Bangladesh arrived in the mission area in mid-February and the main body and support units began to arrive on 9 March. The expected arrival of a Ukrainian Aviation Unit will also add military capability to the force. The Ukrainian Maintenance and Training Battalion is already in Sierra Leone and has begun training various contingents on the operation of armoured personnel carriers and other vehicles. After the arrival of these reinforcements, it is expected that the Mission's strength will reach about 12,700 military personnel by the end of March.

[...]

The Mission's updated concept of operations integrates military and civilian aspects and envisages the deployment, in successive phases, into RUF-controlled areas of UNAMSIL troops, United Nations civil affairs, civilian police and human rights personnel, representatives of humanitarian agencies, and government personnel and assets to establish and consolidate State authority and basic services in these areas. It is clear that the success of this concept will very much depend on the availability of United Nations military resources and, in equal measure, on the extent to which these mutually reinforcing efforts are coordinated between the actors involved." (UN SC 14 March 2001, paras. 34, 59)

"On Friday, The Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) for six months and increased its military component to a strength of 17,500, including the 260 military observers already deployed.

By a unanimous vote, the Council also demanded that the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and other military groups immediately cease their reported abuses of human rights, particularly the harassment and forced recruitment of adults and children for fighting and forced labour. It requested Secretary-General Kofi Annan to ensure that all human rights monitoring positions in UNAMSIL were filled." (UNAMSIL 3 April 2001)

"The first group of more than 4,000 Pakistani peacekeepers has started arriving in Sierra Leone. An advanced party of 265 men joined UNAMSIL on June 8th; the remaining contingent should have all arrived in the country by August 22nd. Meanwhile, UNAMSIL reports that there have been improved consultations between the Security Council and troop-contributing countries in seeking ways to strengthen peacekeeping efforts in the country. The Security Council working group on Peacekeeping Operations is considering establishing regional peacekeeping training centres to increase international cooperation for peacekeeping. The panel requests the Secretary-General to convene assessment meetings with troop-contributing countries at various stages of an operation. It also says countries providing troops should conduct reconnaissance visits to the mission area, and prepare contingency plans and exit strategies for volatile situations." (OCHA 16 June 2001)

"Since my last report, the troop strength of UNAMSIL has increased to 12,718 (as at 21 June) with the arrival of a third battalion and support units from Bangladesh, the Ukraine Aviation Unit and the advance party of the Pakistani contingent [...]. All 4,300 personnel from Pakistan are expected to be in the mission area by September 2001.

UNAMSIL is preparing to embark on the third phase of its concept of operations, which involves the deployment of United Nations troops into the diamond-producing regions and some border areas in the Eastern Province. With the arrival of the Pakistani contingent, a new sector will be established in the east by September." (UN SC 25 June 2001, paras.18, 21)

See also the section titled "Official Conflict Management" in the September 2000 report by the European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation for more information about the international and regional political response to the conflict.

The UNAMSIL mandate and updated information about their operation can be found at their [homepage](#).

For the full text of the Security Council Resolutions behind UNAMSIL, see:

(UN SC 22 October 1999);

(UN SC 7 February 2000)

(UN SC 4 August 2000)

(UN SC 22 December 2000)

(UN SC 30 March 2001)

National and International Coordination Mechanisms

Numerous national and international actors were operating in Sierra Leone in 2001 (November 2001)

- Humanitarian community consists of some 46 international NGOs, over 200 national NGOs and hundreds of community-based organisations
- UN Country Team is composed of nine agencies
- Number of government bodies deal with internally displaced people
- Assortment of humanitarian actors sometimes leads to conflicting ideas about what should be done in humanitarian field

"A consortium of humanitarian actors operates in Sierra Leone. They are diverse in scope and proliferating in numbers. The humanitarian community currently consists of some 46 international NGOs, over 200 national NGOs and hundreds of community-based organisations. The UNCT is composed of nine agencies in addition to the human rights and civil affairs sections of UNAMSIL's peacekeeping mission. Five Multi-lateral and Bi-Lateral donors and 11 diplomatic representatives are also based in Sierra Leone and form an integral part of the humanitarian community. Increased local representation from other major donors is strongly encouraged.

The major Government body for humanitarian affairs is the National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (NCRRR). Longer-term recovery and development issues are guided by the Ministry of Development and Economic Planning (MoDEP), and the respective sectoral or thematic Line Ministries. The National Recovery Committee (NRC) formed in mid-2001, with representation at the provincial, district and chiefdom levels, is a time-bound mechanism designed to link the short-term humanitarian response with longer term, more sustainable interventions. It also seeks to advance national recovery and restore civil authority throughout the country. The National Commission for Disarmament,

Demobilisation and Reintegration (NCDDR), parastatals, civil society and thematic peace building and governance groups are also key actors in the humanitarian arena.

This assortment of humanitarian actors with diverse, sometimes conflicting mandates and principles does occasionally provide a cause for contention. However, a sophisticated coordination structure exists in Sierra Leone comprising a wide range of thematic, sectoral and regional coordination bodies. These fora attempt to coordinate humanitarian interventions, develop policy and programmes and provide a platform for information sharing, active debate, discussion and consensus building.

[...]

To ensure improved coordination and linkages between peacekeeping and humanitarian interventions, a new post was created, combining the roles of UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General (Governance and Stabilisation), Humanitarian Coordinator, UN Resident Coordinator, UNDP Resident Representative and UN Designated Official. While there were concerns over the broad remit of one person carrying these multiple responsibilities, it has in fact brought a range of benefits. It has facilitated greater holistic planning, ensuring that all interventions are ultimately aimed at the same objective: to bring stability, restore civil authority and afford all Sierra Leoneans the opportunity to rebuild their lives in safety, dignity and pride." (UN November 2001)

Recent efforts to strengthen UN coordination (2001)

- Alan Doss appointed by the Secretary General to act as his Deputy Special Representative, the UN Resident Representative and the Humanitarian Coordinator
- Improved coordination between the food sector and nutritional agencies

"In a move to improve UN coordination in the country and facilitate better planning between UNAMSIL and the UN agencies, a new Deputy Special Representative to the Secretary General has been appointed for UNMASIL, who will also be the UN Resident Representative and the Humanitarian Coordinator. Mr. Alan Doss, a Briton, has made a familiarization visit to Sierra Leone meeting with the government and UN agencies." (OCHA 23 February 2001)

"To ensure that the UN agencies, INGOs and Governmental partner agencies are in a position to respond to the evolving situation in Sierra Leone, it is essential that coordination mechanisms are reinforced. The experience of the first quarter of 2001 has revealed the constraints posed by limited capacity on the ground. Greater emphasis will therefore be placed on specific aspects of OCHA's activities.

- Lead inter-agency missions into newly accessible areas and improve contingency planning to meet new and potential humanitarian needs;
- Increase support to National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (NCRRR) - There is a need to work more closely with NCRRR to help develop institutional capacity;
- Strengthen links within the sub-region both in terms of information sharing and sub-regional contingency planning.

With the inception of the Sierra Leone Information System, OCHA is also able to expand its role in information dissemination and data coordination using the newly developed Geographic Information System (GIS) capacity. This service, a joint project of OCHA and UNHCR, partly funded by Economic Community for Humanitarian Office (ECHO), has already played a crucial role in facilitating the resettlement programme.

[...]

Significant steps were taken to improve and standardise emergency food security and needs assessment methodology adopted by food pipeline agencies in Sierra Leone. Increased coordination between the food sector and nutritional agencies has taken place during the course of the year. Progress has been made in the

establishment of an inter-agency monitoring system and database. However, steps are yet to be taken as far as accurately targeting beneficiary groups and clear strategy for determining the continuation or phase out of food assistance to certain population groups." (OCHA 21 May 2001)

"Within the United Nations family, the new institutional arrangements whereby my Deputy Special Representative for Governance and Stabilization also serves as Humanitarian Coordinator have significantly contributed to stronger links between UNAMSIL, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations providing humanitarian assistance." (UN SC 25 June 2001, para. 64)

OCHA playing a main role in coordination (1995-2000)

- No overall UN lead agency for IDPs in Sierra Leone by end-2000
- Humanitarian Information Centre (HIC) established in July 2000
- Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) to be implemented during 2001

"While there is no overall UN lead agency for IDPs in Sierra Leone; OCHA cooperates closely with NCRRR, which has an overall coordination role for relief/rehabilitation interventions; to monitor, assess and advocate for improved support of IDPs. UN Agencies directly support activities aimed at addressing the needs of IDPs. Interventions are coordinated and harmonised through sectoral coordination committees, which meet on a regular basis. A camp management committee meets regularly to review needs, issues, and strategies for response." (UN November 2000, p.129)

"The coordination office in Sierra Leone was jointly supported by OCHA and UNDP until February 2000 when OCHA assumed full responsibility for the continuation of all its coordination activities, including the maintenance of regional offices. The arrival of international staff members seconded to OCHA by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) has further enforced the capacity of the NCRRR and OCHA regional coordinators, who are providing dynamic leadership in organising joint assessment missions and mobilising rapid response to new emergencies." (UN November 2000, p.71)

" By March [1999], the coordination structures in Freetown and other Government areas were functioning relatively well. [...] During the Lomé talks, under the guidance of the UN Humanitarian Coordinator, OCHA established a humanitarian radio link with the RUF Command in Kailahun. This facilitated the first UN-led inter-Agency Mission to Buedu immediately following the signing of the Accord, as well as subsequent access to Makeni and other areas under the former RUF/AFRC. Most of the work done up country takes place on an inter-agency basis." (UN November 1999, p.4)

"A Humanitarian Information Centre (HIC) was established in July 2000 with support from UNAMSIL, the UN Agencies and NGOs. The Centre has boosted OCHA's capacity to provide mechanisms for the system-wide exchange of information and analysis. These functions play a key role in facilitating the planning of humanitarian missions within the country, through the sharing of security-related information and guidance. [...]

Coordination demands necessitate that OCHA maintain its current staffing levels of five Freetown-based international humanitarian affairs officers, including the Chief, as well as national and support staff. International staff seconded to OCHA by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) have boosted coordination capacity and provided much needed support to national field coordinators in the regional offices of Bo, Kenema and the Western Area.

The expansion of the coordination framework will continue next year, concurrently with efforts to reactivate humanitarian access initiatives. With the support of donors, OCHA will implement a simple and user friendly Integrated Management Information System (IMIS), which will guide inter-agency efforts in

all sectors and geographic locations, while building the technical capacity of local partners. The MIS will be based on a thorough assessment by UNHCR and OCHA on specific areas of need. It will include the development of a Geographic Information System (GIS), and will draw primarily on data already collected by the humanitarian community and the GoSL. While UNHCR and ECHO are considering providing start-up funds, an appeal for the consolidation and continuation of the project is included in the 2001 CAP." (UN November 2000, p.32)

National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (NCRRR) designated by Government to coordinate humanitarian assistance (1999-2000)

- The NCRRR has established a Humanitarian Consultative Forum which meets fortnightly
- Urgent need to strengthen the capacity of NCRRR in emergency relief coordination (November 1999)
- Plans to strengthen NCRRR's capacity not carried out during 2000 because of lack of funding
- Limited Government capacity to deliver basic services

"In March 1998 coordination mechanisms established on behalf of the humanitarian community in Conakry were wound down and new structures established in Freetown in collaboration with the GoSL. In order to build upon the work carried by the technical committees which continued to function in Freetown and in rural areas during the period of junta rule, it was decided that the sectoral approach would remain in the most appropriate mechanism for the coordination of the activities of the humanitarian agencies.

In addition, it was determined that the humanitarian policy would be developed under the overall guidance of the National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (NCRRR), the designated body of the GoSL for the coordination of humanitarian assistance. In order to fulfil its mandate the NCRRR supported by UN-HACU established a Humanitarian Consultative Forum which meets fortnightly. Membership of this Forum has been restricted to maximise flexibility and enhance decision-making. Thus the Forum comprises 16 members namely the NCRRR, UN Agencies, the UN Office of the Special Envoy, donors and national and international NGOs. Participants in the Forum are responsible for transmitting policy decisions to the wider humanitarian community through the respective sectoral committees and the NGO coordinating bodies. It was subsequently decided that the line ministries should also be represented at the Consultative Forum to improve coordination within the Government." (UN June 1998, p. 8)

"Following the recent (September 19-22, 1999) joint multi-donor assessment mission to Sierra Leone, led by the World Bank, the Government is desirous of putting in place an institutionalised system that will rationalise and harmonise the complementarities among donors and establish an effective Aid Coordination as a precondition for the efficient delivery of services. A key sector that demands response is that of humanitarian assistance.

The existing humanitarian efforts in Sierra Leone, facilitated mainly by the UN HACU with the involvement of the NCRRR has in the past received fairly adequate donor support, as well as support and cooperation from the humanitarian community. NCRRR, working closely with UNHACU, has successfully implemented a broad-based coordination structure. However, there is an urgent need to strengthen the capacity of NCRRR in emergency relief coordination, to enable it provide overall strategic oversight in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of humanitarian programmes. Enhancing NCRRR's role in this area will also impact positively on its wider function of overseeing transition initiatives from short-term to longer-term programmes for rehabilitation and reconstruction." (UN November 1999, p. 57)

"Due to a lack of funding, plans to strengthen NCRRR's capacity to provide national leadership for the coordination of relief and rehabilitation efforts have not been carried out. This continues to be considered a

CHAP priority. In this CAP, OCHA aims to provide assistance to NCRRR and the Sierra Leone Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (SLANGO)." (UN November 2000, pp.6-7)

"Government capacity to deliver basic services continues to be limited. In addition, civil administration is virtually non-existent in areas under RUF control. Qualified civil servants and other professionals are among those returning from Guinea. However, to facilitate their return particularly to rural areas, substantial services will have to be reinserted into the communities. Agencies may also have to redirect substantial resources to training of local staff, particularly in technical sectors like health. Another continuing constraint is the apparent refusal of the RUF to allow the re-establishment of local government administration in the areas they control." (OCHA 21 May 2001)

Joint code of conduct agreed upon by UN Agencies and NGOs operating in Sierra Leone (1998)

- The Code of Conduct is a framework for international humanitarian action, achieved through consensus
- Basic elements drawn from General Assembly Resolution 46/182 and from legal instruments, including the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Encouraging common approaches to assessments and aid delivery
- A Code of Conduct Committee monitors the implementation of the Code of Conduct

"At the Special Conference on Sierra Leone held in New York on 30 July 1998, the UN Agencies and the National and International NGOs operating in Sierra Leone issued a Joint Statement describing the current operational environment and thanking the international community for their the [sic] vigilance and support. The Statement, which resonates deeper with time, called upon the international community to, *inter alia*:

Promote the respect of International Law, Humanitarian Protocols and Codes of Conduct in facilitating the efforts of humanitarian aid organisations to protect and assist civilians affected by the conflict;

Ensure the unhindered access of humanitarian aid agencies to those parts of the country currently inaccessible due to insecurity, in order to assess the humanitarian situation and provide protection and assistance to the civilian population as needed." (UN December 1998, p. 14)

"The Code of Conduct [...] represents a framework for international humanitarian action, achieved through consensus. Initially introduced during the junta period in 1997, and further developed in November 1998 to provide a robust and flexible basis for operations, the Code of Conduct has continued to stand the test of time, stimulating discussion and providing a vehicle for greater cohesiveness within the humanitarian community. It represents norms that all subscribing actors strive to achieve. Its basic elements were drawn from General Assembly [Resolution 46/182](#) and from recognised legal instruments, including the 1949 Geneva Conventions relating to the protection of victims of war; the two additional protocols to the 1949 Conventions dealing with the protection of victims of international armed conflicts and non-international armed conflicts; and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Advocacy to increase recognition of the humanitarian imperative of saving lives is an integral part of the CHAP. As the situation in Sierra Leone and the sub-region evolves and expands to include more actors and countries, adherence to the Code of Conduct becomes an even more critical safeguard for the neutrality of humanitarian intervention. The Code of Conduct also serves as an advocacy tool for gaining safe access to beneficiaries and for mitigating the effects of and preventing of human rights abuses against innocent civilians.

The Code of Conduct also serves as a dynamic coordination tool, prompting agencies to agree on common approaches to assessments and aid delivery. The **Code of Conduct Committee** -- comprised of representatives of the UN System, national and international NGOs, ICRC and donors with observer status -- monitors its implementation of the Code of Conduct and advocates with key stakeholders. The committee has become increasingly active in reviewing requests for military armed escorts and the use of military assets for humanitarian operations. They make informed recommendations and help identify viable options. While the Code of Conduct Committee possesses no decision-making or enforcement powers, most humanitarian actors understand and respect its recommendations."(UN November 2000, p.19)

For the text of the Code of Conduct, see the UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal 2001 (November 2000)

International Donor Response

US Government provides \$11.5 million for humanitarian assistance in Sierra Leone

"In FY 2001, USAID/OFDA provided \$11.5 million in support of humanitarian assistance programs in agriculture, health, IDP resettlement, nutrition, shelter, and water/sanitation [in Sierra Leone]." (USAID 3 October 2001)

For details access the full report in the List of Sources

IMF supports Government of Sierra Leone's economic program

"The Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved in principle a three-year arrangement for Sierra Leone under the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF)¹ for SDR 130.84 million (about US\$169 million) to support the government's 2001-2004 economic program." (IMF 20 September 2001)

European Commission assistance targets IDPs, among others (2001/2002)

- ECHO earmarks Euro 17 million for ongoing relief efforts for refugees, IDPs and local populations in conflict-affected areas in Mano River Union
- This follows a global plan worth Euro 5.1 million adopted in October 2001, earmarked largely for UNHCR operations
- The focus in Sierra Leone is on former refugees who have returned to their country but not yet to their home areas

"The European Commission has adopted a further substantial package of humanitarian assistance for victims of the crisis affecting Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia in Western Africa. In the 2001 Global Plan for coastal West Africa, drawn up by the Humanitarian Aid Office ECHO, €17 million has been earmarked for continuing relief efforts targeting refugees, internally displaced people and the local population in areas affected by the conflict.

[...]

In the global plan, significant funding has been earmarked for primary health care and measures to tackle malnutrition as well as for special needs (including child protection and support for handicapped people). Given the large number of displaced people in the region, there is a focus on providing shelter materials and basic non food items such as blankets and cooking utensils. Another priority sector is water and

sanitation with targeted actions aimed at boosting the availability of clean water, improving sanitation systems and promoting hygiene through education and training at the community level." (ECHO 22 January 2002)

"The European Commission has adopted a global plan worth €5.1 million for victims of the continuing humanitarian crisis in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia. While Sierra Leone has been the focal point of civil strife over the last 12 years, the conflict has directly affected the neighbouring countries. The situation in Sierra Leone has stabilised recently, with signs of progress towards a sustainable peace, but many people in the region are still displaced from their homes and there is a continuing need for humanitarian assistance. The bulk of the new resources have been earmarked for UNHCR operations. The money will be channelled through the Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO), which comes under the responsibility of Commissioner Poul Nielson.

[...]

In Sierra Leone, the focus is on covering the basic needs of up to 80,000 former refugees who have returned to their country, but not yet to their home areas. Some of these are going to host communities in safe chiefdoms of Sierra Leone while others are being placed in temporary settlements. In recognition of the fact that such an influx can put pressure on host communities, facilities being made available to the returnees - such as health care, water supplies, sanitation and education - will also be extended to local resident populations.

This latest decision complements the funding already provided this year to Sierra Leone (€11 million) and Guinea (€4.5 million) for a wide range of humanitarian actions targeting refugees, displaced people and other vulnerable groups." (ECHO 9 October 2001)

UN Consolidated Appeal for 2002 calls for a total of US\$ 88,624,925 in funding (November 2001)

- Aim of humanitarian interventions is to contribute to consolidation of peace and security, reduction of poverty and promotion of human rights
- Total request of US\$ 88,624,925 represents a 10% increase of funds appealed for in 2001
- Raise in request is due to recent accessibility to North and East of country where critical humanitarian needs found

"The aim of humanitarian interventions is to ultimately contribute to the consolidation of peace and security, the reduction of poverty and the promotion of basic human rights. The main priorities of the humanitarian community in Sierra Leone will be to: facilitate the resettlement and reintegration of displaced populations; to rehabilitate and reconstruct the infrastructure of basic social services especially in the health, education, agriculture, water & sanitation and shelter sectors; to continue the provision of relief assistance to existing vulnerable groups and to ensure the timely and integrated delivery of emergency relief to potential population influxes.

[...]

The 2002 CAP calls for a total US\$ 88,624,925. This represents a 10% increase of the funds appealed for in 2001, due to the recent accessibility to the North and East of the country, where critical humanitarian needs were found. In order to consolidate the current success in the peace process, attention must be paid to community reintegration efforts.

[...]

TABLE I
TOTAL FUNDING REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
2002 UNITED NATIONS CONSOLIDATED INTER-AGENCY APPEAL FOR SIERRA LEONE
BY SECTOR AND APPEALING ORGANISATION
JANUARY-DECEMBER 2002

SECTORS	REQUIREMENTS (US\$)
AGRICULTURE	2,474,000
COORDINATION AND SUPPORT SERVICES	8,282,137
ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND INFRASTRUCTURE	8,702,544
EDUCATION	3,196,100
FAMILY SHELTER AND NON-FOOD ITEMS	5,098,000
FOOD	29,790,268
HEALTH	7,163,536
MULTI-SECTORAL	14,959,111
PROTECTION / HUMAN RIGHTS / RULE OF LAW	5,875,162
SECURITY	699,067
WATER AND SANITATION	2,385,000
GRAND TOTAL	88,624,925

APPEALING ORGANISATIONS	REQUIREMENTS (US\$)
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATIONS	2,474,000
INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION	458,500
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION	16,364,676
OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS	1,260,009
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS	500,262
UN MISSION IN SIERRA LEONE	773,273
UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME	3,199,067
UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND	1,137,500
UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES	14,959,111
UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND	13,168,000
UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS / UN MISSION IN SIERRA LEONE	704,000
WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME	31,516,491
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION	2,110,036
GRAND TOTAL	88,624,925

" (UN November 2001)

80.1% of UN Consolidated Appeal 2001 was funded (as of February 2002)

- Of US\$ 74,200,544 appealed for in 2001, a total of US\$ 58,072,815 - or 80.1% - was funded by 21 February 2002
- At the launch of the UN Consolidated Appeal for 2002 (November 2001), 64% of 2001 Appeal was funded
- Only 24% of agricultural programmes funded through 2001 CAP (November 2001)
- Child Protection Programme received 73% (November 2001)

- 47% received for the Water and Sanitation Programme; 44% for the Health Programme (November 2001)

At time of writing (21 February 2002), 80.1% of the 2001 CAP was funded. Up-to-date summaries of CAP requirements and contributions can be accessed on the [financial tracking system of the UN OCHA Relief Web](#)

The following analysis is based on information available in November 2001:

"Of the US\$ 74,200,544 appealed for Sierra Leone in 2001, a total of US\$ 47,525,312 or 64% was funded through the CAP. Shortfalls in funding resulted in the further prioritisation of programmes and interventions, limiting assistance to only the most vulnerable areas.

Considerable shortfalls and delayed arrivals in food aid requirements during the first quarter of the year limited food aid assistance to life-saving and relief initiatives only. Food baskets for displaced populations were altered to address the shortfall. Over 3,400 Metric Tonnes (MTs) of assorted commodities were borrowed from partner food pipeline agencies in-country, and from the World Food Programme (WFP) in Liberia.

Only 24% of agricultural programmes were funded through the CAP. Partner NGOs were able to cover some of the shortfalls, especially for emergency seeds and tools programmes. However, not all the needs of identified vulnerable farm families were addressed.

The Child Protection Programme (CPP) received 73% of requirements, while the Education Programme received only 37%. No contributions were made towards the Youth Participation and Empowerment Project. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) was however, able to implement a few selected activities with from general funds and cross programme support from the 'Breaking the Silence' Human Immune-deficiency Virus / Acquired Immune-Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) Programme.

The Education Programme for formal and non-formal schools was able to begin the renovation activities in the latter part of the year when the funding was received. Only 16 of the planned 50 schools will be renovated. The increase in coverage of Complementary Response Education Programme (CREPS) and Rapid Response Education Programme (RREP) has been limited, with 11,000 of the expected 50,000 children in the two systems.

Some 47% of the total requirements for the Water and Sanitation Programme were received. Additional non-CAP resources were used in the first half of the year. The programme was able to benefit from a donation of hand pumps worth about US\$ 200,000. Only 44% of the facilities in the education and health institutions will be completed.

The Health Programme received 37% of the total amount requested. Additional funding was obtained from other sources to make up the funding gap. Health units that required limited rehabilitation were prioritised over those requiring complete renovation. The vehicles for the district health teams were not purchased. Two projects on nutrition, jointly appealed for by UNICEF and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) could not be implemented." (UN November 2001)

Donors reconfirm support for the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Program but pledges still insufficient (June 2001)

- Resources available for DDR from the Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) mechanism administered by the World Bank
- Agreed to link short-term assistance for ex-combatants and longer-term support for the resettlement of displaced populations

- Accelerated disarmament and demobilization may exhaust the DDR resources available by June 2001 before August 2001

"The World Bank has concluded a donors' conference on the Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) for the Sierra Leone Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Program in Paris. The purpose of the meeting was to update the donor community on the status of the DDR Program and to lay the basis for generating additional resources for its implementation.

[...]

The government also presented its strategy for accomplishing the reinsertion and reintegration of ex-combatants, the ultimate objective of the DDR program. The government and donors agreed that the transition from demobilization to reintegration should be bridged by a temporary reinsertion package, and that linkages between targeted short-term assistance for ex-combatants and longer-term support for the resettlement of displaced populations, the reconstruction of basic services and the rejuvenation of the economy would be strengthened. To this end, the government has prepared a three-year economic recovery and poverty reduction program, in consultation with the IMF and the World Bank. It was anticipated that debt relief under the HIPC (Heavily Indebted Poor Countries) Initiative for Sierra Leone would be in place by December 2001.

Donors asked the government to take a strong lead in coordinating reintegration and reconstruction efforts, in order to ensure complementarity among various partners' individual programs.

The Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) mechanism administered by the World Bank supports a comprehensive approach and government ownership of the peace process. In support of the DDR program, the government has to date disbursed and committed about US\$6 million from the MDTF. The government estimates that the DDR program will face a shortfall of US\$31.5 million in the next two years, subject to modification, based on information provided by partners at this meeting. The government projects that the program resources currently available will be exhausted in August 2001 if disarmament and demobilization continues at the current pace.

In general, donors expressed their support for the DDR program and the government's efforts to consolidate peace. Several donors congratulated the government, as well as the United Nations Assistance Mission to Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), for the considerable positive progress made since last May. Partners would now, on the basis of the information provided at this meeting, actively consider further contributions to the MDTF.

[...]

Prior to the Lomé Accord, the Government of Sierra Leone had developed a program to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate an estimated 45,000 combatants from the different forces that had been party to the civil conflict. The purpose of the program is to contribute to peace and to help restart positive social and economic development by reducing armed conflict and allowing individuals and communities to return to their homes and productive lives interrupted by the war. Specifically, the program addresses the needs of ex-combatants from the time that they voluntarily disarm to the UN peacekeeping force; through a brief encampment period where they are provided food and clothing, receive basic medical care, and are given identification cards; to the provision of support to return home and meet basic short-term needs; and the provision of basic training or other assistance to begin the process of social and economic reintegration.

The DDR Program is managed by the Government's National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (NCDDR), which works closely with several partner organizations in the implementation of the program, including UNICEF, the World Food Programme, and UNAMSIL. A World Bank administered Trust Fund, set up at the request of the Government to raise grant funds from donor nations for the program, finances the operations of NCDDR and supports partner organizations implementing DDR activities. While the DDR Program has suffered set-backs since its inception in July 1998, almost 23,000 ex-combatants have been disarmed and demobilized, and approximately 10,000 were receiving reintegration support as of mid-April 2001." (World Bank 12 June 2001)

"Currently, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme has a funding shortfall of 17.5 million for 2001 and 13.9 million for 2002. It is expected that the Government may run out of resources for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme by August of this year. While no pledges were made at the conference, many delegations responded in a positive manner to reports of progress achieved on the ground and to the plans presented by the Government." (UN SC 25 June 2001, para. 34)

IDPs in Western Area and Port Loko camps receive assistance for return or resettlement (March-June 2001)

- IOM providing transport for the IDPs to their home area
- Returnees are provided with shelter, food and water at "drop-off-points", where they also receive their resettlement packages of two months food rations and standard non-food items
- Resettlement packages distributed to 1,705 families in Port Loko in April
- Estimated that some 40,000 of the IDPs required assistance to return by mid-2001

"One key priority for humanitarian agencies and the government of Sierra Leone now is relocating IDPs from Western Area and Port Loko district camps. The IOM will be providing transport for the IDPs to their home area. The resettlement for this group is scheduled to finish by the end of April. Radio messages have intensified and posters/leaflets are now available in all the camps to further increase awareness on the process. Sensitisation will encourage the returnees to travel with minimal luggage, as the IDPs will most likely have to walk home with their relocation packages and belongings. It involves getting the support of local authorities and communities in these central points to receive and assist the IDPs to return to their homes.

IOM transports returnees

The International Office for Migration (IOM) will provide transport to the drop-off locations. Those staying off the main routes will have to walk a few more miles to reach home from the nearest drop-off sites IDPs from the provinces will receive NFIs and a two-month ration at the drop-off points. Those from the Western Area will receive their packages in the already identified distribution sites across the city and along the peninsular. IDPs from unsafe areas will continue to receive assistance, but at another site outside the camp, until their areas are declared safe. However, those from unsafe areas who would like to resettle in safe areas are given the opportunity to do so" (OCHA 31 March 2001)

"The resettlement process has finally begun. It formally started in Port Loko with the distribution of resettlement packages to 1,705 families (a total of 12,379 people) who wish to move from the camp back to their home areas in the lower part of Maforki Chiefdom. The assisted movement of people from the Freetown area began on April 17th with the transportation of 1,000 IDPs from the Approved School camp to Songo, some 50 km from Freetown. Transport will continue to 14 drop-off points in safe areas of the country through to the end of the first week of May. The International Office for Migration (IOM), which is providing transportation, carries out medical screening of all passengers prior to movement to ensure that everyone is fit to travel. Resettlers are received at the drop off points by inter-agency teams led by NCRRR and local community leaders. They are provided with shelter, food and water at these points, where they receive their resettlement packages of two months food rations provided by WFP, CARE, WVI and CRS and standard non-food items provided by ICRC and CARE." (OCHA 19 April 2001)

"A critical gap in transportation assistance to IDPs resettling in safe areas in Sierra Leone has been partially met through IOM's efforts in facilitating the movement of IDPs from the Western Area camps to safe areas of resettlement and/or return to their villages in Sierra Leone.

[...]

Provision of the resources requested by IOM under the framework of the West Africa Appeal to undertake this activity will enable IOM to ensure the orderly departure of IDPs presently in camps to safe areas. It is estimated that some 40,000 of the IDPs will require such assistance in the coming weeks and months." (OCHA 21 May 2001)

"NRC is making progress with its housing construction project for amputees at Masiaka and in the Lungi area. IOM has agreed to provide transport for the resettlement of the amputees and war-wounded. CARE has plans to construct 1,000 housing units in Moyamba district while CRS shelter reconstruction project in Koya chiefdom continues. In collaboration with the Saint Joseph Fathers, they have distributed building materials and FFW for 600 houses in six villages in the chiefdom. CRS is now in the process of delivering zinc sheets to homeowners that are ready to roof their houses. Meanwhile the EC/SLRRP has commenced a new programme, disbursing funds for 45 new projects countrywide." (OCHA 16 June 2001)

Selected National and International Operational Activities (2001/2002)

IDPs given assistance to rebuild homes and livelihoods (2001)

- Numerous organisations providing shelter and non-food items to IDPs and other needy community members
- Contingency emergency shelter stocks will be maintained in the event of deterioration of the security situation

"The **GoSL line Ministries, UNDP, UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, CRS, CARE, Action Aid, local NGOs, CBOs** and other **civil society organisations** are contributing to the provision of shelter and non-food items to the needy community members. They will work closely in implementation of the shelter programme.

[...]

In order to address the key problem of shelter, the following strategies will be adopted:

- The activities on shelter should be community-based, labour-intensive, low cost and involve effective community participation.
- Special attention will be given for full participation of women, youth, ex-combatants, IDPs and returnees.
- The production of building materials and reconstruction of houses should be environmental friendly.
- It will develop synergies or partnerships with other related organisations and agencies for effective implementation and resource mobilisation.
- It will be consistent with the National Recovery Committee's Plan of Action.

Contingency emergency shelter stocks will be maintained in the event of the deterioration of the security situation, resulting in mass population displacement." (UN November 2001)

"**CARE** completed VGF distribution to 2,158 vulnerable IDPs in Fakunya chiefdom, Moyamba District. Through its Rural Rehabilitation Project, it supplied CI sheets and construction kits to 878 families for the construction of 878 houses in 48 villages in Kongborra, Bumpeh and Ribbi Chiefdoms. It distributed 115 Mt. of Food for Work (FFW) rations to 12,960 beneficiaries from six chiefdoms within the district. Activities covered rehabilitation of 14 plantations and feeder roads, construction of a school, two clinics and 226 houses and five huts in Bumpeh, Bagruwa, Kori, Kamajei, Kowa and Dasse chiefdoms." (UN OCHA 8 August 2001)

"**CARE** is implementing a displaced basic needs project aimed at providing household utensils and roofing materials to 3,000 IDPs in Bramaia, Gbinleh-Dixon, Magbema and Samu chiefdoms, Kambia District. The package consists of Non Food Items (NFIs); kitchen sets, jerry cans and plastic sheets." (UN/OCHA 30 September 2001)

"**ICRC** and the **Sierra Leone Red Cross Society** have completed the distribution of shelter materials, blankets, sleeping mats, kitchen sets and soap to six IDP camps in Kenema District and a total of 7,716 families benefited from this assistance. **AFRICARE** has received FFAg from **WFP** and distributed them to 255 farm families in chiefdoms in the Kailahun District. It has received the first shot of FFAg from **CRS** and distributed them to 1,316 farm families in Dama, Guara and Koya chiefdoms in the Kenema District. It has also distributed 40 kg of seed rice to 12 villages in the eastern region and 140 kg to Bandajuma camp.

In Barri Chiefdom and Gerihun temporary settlements for returnees have started gradually in some of the villages. **AFRICARE** plans to distribute seed rice to returnees. The **Council of Churches in Sierra Leone (CCSL)** has conducted a comprehensive assessment of plastic sheets needs in all the IDPs camps and is meeting the priority requirements in the camps. **Bo-Pujehun Development Association (BPDA)** is looking for partners to provide items needed for shelter construction in Barri. **CCSL** and **BPDA** have distributed a total of 3,442 consignments of used clothing to the camps and will distribute additional stocks to over 6,000 children in the Chiefdom.

ICRC has distributed NFIs consisting of blankets, kitchen sets, mats, clothing and plastic sheeting to six camps in the region to a total of 7,716 beneficiaries." (UN OCHA 31 August 2001)

IDPs continue to receive emergency food assistance (2001/2002)

"The food security situation in Sierra Leone varies substantially by geographical areas, and Food Aid programmes are tailored accordingly, recognising relative needs and associated risks.

As large pockets of the country are still seen as unsafe for resettlement, people displaced from these areas will continue to require emergency food assistance.

[...]

Operational areas for food assistance are geographically divided between the four main food pipeline agencies, **WFP**, **World Vision International (WVI)**, **CARE** and **Catholic Relief Services (CRS)**. All coordination and policies relating to food aid are established through the Committee on Food Aid (CFA). The CFA is composed of senior representatives of WFP, CARE, CRS, WVI and ACF; major food aid donors (USAID/FFP, EU/ECHO); OCHA; FAO, and Government (NCRRR, MODEP/FAS). NCDDR, DFID, ICRC, UNHCR and CES/CFGB have observer status. The Committee on Food Aid and its technical coordination bodies, the National and Regional Technical Committees, continue to play crucial roles in responding to food aid issues. The CFA remains the policy making body for food aid within Sierra Leone. The CFA maintains close liaison with other coordinating and policy-making bodies, to ensure that food aid is integrated with and complementary to efforts of the overall humanitarian community." (UN November 2001)

CRS active in areas of food aid, agriculture and shelter (2001)

- CRS active in both rebel-held and government-held areas of the country
- CRS assistance focused on vulnerable populations - including IDPs, returning refugees and newly resettling populations
- IDPs living in Freetown provided with housing opportunities under the 'Grafton Transition Housing Project'

"With recent security improvements and progress towards disarmament, CRS recommenced activities within rebel-held areas of Sierra Leone in May 2001. Over the past three months, CRS has participated in various assessments in newly accessible areas of Kambia, Koinadugu, Bombali and Kenema Districts. Based on the findings of these assessments, current CRS interventions within these areas are being primarily targeted toward emergency food assistance and agricultural inputs for vulnerable rural populations.

In the North, CRS is working with local partner agencies, notably Caritas, to distribute seed rice to 2,000 vulnerable farming families in newly accessible areas of Bombali and Koinadugu Districts. Assessments showed that the food security situation in many parts of Koinadugu District is very poor. CRS is therefore also supplying food assistance to highly vulnerable populations within the District, to help them meet their basic food needs until the next harvest.

In the Eastern Province, assessments in newly accessible areas of Kenema District were conducted in the past month. Based on initial findings, 1,000 farm families are now targeted to receive seed rice and food support for the second rice cropping season.

In government held areas, CRS continues to provide support for displaced persons, returning refugees and newly resettling populations. Activities center on:

- **Emergency Food Aid:** New influxes of Sierra Leoneans and Liberians fleeing from the conflict in Guinea and, more recently, Liberia, have been placed in temporary resettlement sites over the past six months. Two of these sites are in CRS operational areas in the South. CRS is currently providing emergency food assistance to more than 9,000 refugees and returnees in the Southern Province, along with 30,000 displaced persons in Kenema District, in the East.
- **Agriculture:** For the main 2001 agricultural season, CRS and its implementing partners have provided seed rice and agricultural tools to over 8,000 additional farming families in vulnerable chiefdoms in the North and East. These crops should be ready for harvest in the next two months.
- **Shelter:** There is a massive need for housing in areas that experienced high levels of destruction during the course of the war. In response to this, CRS is working with DFID, the British overseas development agency, and USAID/OFDA to carry out housing construction projects in Port Loko District. Overall, these projects will construct or rehabilitate over 1,000 houses during the course of the year." (CRS 5 September 2001)

"CRS is targeting a total of 100 households in Grafton under its Grafton Transition Housing Project. Together with National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA) -formerly NCRRR, Sierra Leone Housing Cooperation (SALHOC), Ministry of Lands Housing Country Planning and the Environment (MLHCPE) and Caritas, they have formed a taskforce, whose primary responsibility is to provide overall management, supervision and direction during the implementation of the project. This project seeks to provide housing opportunities to limited numbers of IDPs living in Freetown whose situation have been described as 'homeless'. The land at Grafton was provided by the GoSL while CRS provided private funding for clearing, and surveying." (UN OCHA 31 January 2002)

MSF projects include health and medical care for IDP populations (2001)

- MSF active in recently accessible areas
- Wide-ranging activities include psychological support, nutritional and medical activities

"MSF first intervened in Sierra Leone in 1986 during a cholera epidemic. Today, the organisation is active in wide areas of the country and, with the current political situation, MSF is gaining access to populations previously beyond reach.

Activities extend from basic health care service to emergency surgery to psychological support and care for the war-wounded as well as nutritional and medical activities.

MSF programs are in key cities and towns, including Freetown, the countryside and in the IDP camps. In addition to medical and nutritional aid programs, MSF is monitoring the resettlement of the IDPs and providing surgical care as well as psychological support to the affected populations.

In Mile 91, a small town that was a focal point of IDPs who were trapped during the ongoing civil war, MSF activities have now expanded to cover the entire Tonkolili District, supporting health posts and hospitals, including providing emergency surgery.

The current situation has meant an expansion of MSF activity into RUF-held territories and MSF has been able to provide support to three health posts and the local hospital under the Tonkolili programme. As of June this year, MSF has also restarted activities in the formerly rebel-held Kambia.

MSF currently has active projects in the Tonkolili, Bombali, Kambia, Port Loko and Moyamba Districts as well as in Kenema and Freetown." (MSF 24 September 2001)

Displaced women and girls receive sexual and reproductive health care (2001)

"**Marie Stopes Society Sierra Leone (MSSSL)** continues to provide sexual and reproductive health services to vulnerable groups including displaced women, adolescent girls and children in the Western Area. In Freetown, MSSSL has identified volunteer community-based service providers, to help women prevent the hardship and distress associated with unwanted conception. The volunteers are currently undergoing training on Family Planning and Reproductive Health issues. With support from the EU, they are now considering reopening their health centre in Port Loko, which has been closed down since 1998. The centre, which is currently being refurbished, will provide outreach services to neighbouring districts. Services available at the clinic will include STI treatment, post natal and antenatal care, under-fives and family planning. They hope to extend their services to Bo and Makeni. Reproductive health facilities will be on hold for the meantime till the centre is fully equipped." (UN OCHA 15 October 2001)

WHO helps control epidemic disease (2001/ 2002)

"**Sierra Leone:** WHO has maintained a wide-ranging programme here despite repeated troubles and evacuations. In collaboration with international NGOs, and making use of 'pockets' of peace, the team is supporting local health authorities to monitor, prevent and control epidemic disease (including in 2000 outbreaks of shigella dysentery, Lassa and Yellow fevers) Projects addressing appalling infant and maternal mortality and the threat of HIV/AIDS are also underway and the Roll Back Malaria programme is being introduced. WHO has also been involved in negotiating with humanitarian cease-fires to allow polio vaccination in rebel-controlled area, and in guiding public health care for the many accumulations of internally displaced people." (WHO 13 August 2001)

ADRA providing trauma counselling for former child soldiers in IDP camp (2001)

"In Waterloo, ADRA Sierra Leone runs a camp for 26,000 people who have been driven out of their countries (sic). Former child soldiers who live in the camp receive psychological treatment and trauma counseling. ADRA Switzerland supports this Reintegration and Resettlement project together with Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

[...]

ADRA Sierra Leone is conducting several relief activities, including a "Family Tracing and Reunification Program" which cares for children who have lost contact with their relatives during the war. ADRA places these children in foster homes while trying to trace their relatives and parents. To date, 543 have been reunited with their families." (ADRA 4 October 2001)

Numerous organisations involved in rehabilitating the water/ sanitation sector (2001/2002)

- 8 national and 13 international NGOs working in the WATSAN sector
- UNICEF supporting various WATSAN projects - including water supply to about 2000 IDPs at Mile 91 transit camp

"A start has been made to rehabilitate the system and structures. The responsibility for water supply is being divided between the Sierra Leone Water Company (SALWACO) that will operate on a financially independent basis with the responsibility of urban water supply and the Water Supply Division (WSD), that will be a public service concentrating on rural water supply. With World Bank support, the water supply system in Freetown, Bo, Kenema, Lungi, and Moyamba have been improved and extended. The WSD has also secured funding from the Islamic Development Bank to construct 130 wells and 600 latrines in Moyamba and Pujehun districts.

Generally, there is low implementing capacity within the sector mainly relating to output capacity and user/community follow-up support. The WSD is working with inadequate financial resources and scarcity of trained human resources. The weakest part of the system is the cadre to carry out community organisation for community maintenance and personal hygiene improvement. This is compounded by the limited follow-up support and supervision capacity of the district and national headquarters. Eight national and 13 international NGOs work in the WATSAN sector. The sector partners have been assigned to the twelve districts for project implementation, with one organisation acting as focal point for Water Supply and Sanitation in each district. There is a positive sense for collaboration and coordination between the implementers. Valuable lessons have been learned in the field, which is improving implementation effectiveness." (UN November 2001)

"UNICEF has almost completed construction of the 53 new deep-wells in the refugee-relocated villages in the Lokomassama chiefdom. UNICEF is supporting the dewatering, cleaning and disinfection of 1,000 wells in Kambia; 65 wells have already been completed. Caritas' water-trucking, which is supported by UNICEF, is benefiting some 2,000 IDPs at the Mile 91 transit camp." (UN OCHA 15 October 2001)

Cause Canada providing training activities in IDP camps (2001)

- War-wounded IDPs at Grafton and Murray Town camps benefit from vocational skills training programs

"Cause Canada has engaged a total of 400 people from the Murray Town and Grafton camps in vocational skills training programmes, designed by the Sierra Leone Opportunities Industrialization Centre. The beneficiaries include 106 amputees and 195 IDPs with severe lacerations. The training, which comprises soap making, tailoring, arts and craft, gardening and horticulture, masonry, barbing, hairdressing, shoe

making and baking, will also cover basic business management skills. Cause Canada is also planning programmes for single parent mothers, agriculture, fishing and temporary shelter. They are currently promoting backyard gardening activities for 40 war-wounded people at the Grafton Camp. Meanwhile, NRC has almost completed constructing one of the amputee houses in Kissy, Freetown.

Cause Canada has enrolled in its adult literacy classes at Murray town and Grafton 60 and 70 adults, respectively. They have provided school furniture and teaching/learning materials for 150 primary school children, from both camps. They have also in collaboration with their partners trained 30 victims on drama and recreational activities. They recently concluded a workshop for over 80 participants from the Amputee and War-Wounded camps, including some of their host communities, on reintegration, community acceptance, self-esteem and HIV/AIDs." (UN OCHA 11 July 2001)

War-affected children, IDPs, given education and training opportunities (2001)

- Numerous organisations undertaking innovative educational programs for war-affected children
- UNICEF, through implementing partners, has designed the Community Education Investment Program (CEIP)
- NRC is implementing a Rapid Response Emergency Education Program (RREP)

"In response to the lack of formal education opportunities available to most students, the **Ministry of Education** and **various NGOs**, in collaboration with **UNICEF**, are undertaking several innovative educational programs for war-affected children whose education has been continually disrupted by the decade-long civil war. For example, to encourage schools to accept former child combatants, UNICEF, through its implementing partners, has designed the Community Education Investment Program (CEIP), in which participating schools receive learning, teachers, or recreational packages which each benefit 200 students. In addition, the **Norwegian Refugee Council** is implementing a Rapid Response Emergency Education program (RREP), targeting children between the ages of 10 and 14, who have had limited access to formal schooling. This program is a six-month crash course in literacy and numeracy so that participants can then be transferred to formal schools. The RREP thus far has targeted about 10,000 students-only a small proportion of the number of students who would benefit from this program." (RI 7 July 2001)

"The **Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)** has completed a two-week training for 14 teachers under the Rapid Response Education Programme (RREP), formerly of the Port Loko IDP camp. These teachers will in turn start RREP classes in four resettling communities in the Lower Maforki chiefdom, where over 900 children have been registered for the course. NRC/MYES (Ministry of Youth Education and Sports) are also planning an assessment mission to identify areas of high concentration of school-aged children and teachers, for the establishment of RREP classes in three chiefdoms in the Kambia district. The project will target children who have never been to school or who have missed out on education for a considerable period of time." (UN OCHA 8 August 2001)

Church organisations support communities to accommodate returnees (2001)

"The returnees are to be placed in villages in the safe areas around the southern and part of the eastern regions. However, urgent assistance is required to increase the capacity of the villages to absorb these returnees. ACT members in Sierra Leone – **Christian Aid, the Council of Churches in Sierra Leone, the Baptist Convention, the Methodist Church and the Wesleyan Church** - have been very active in responding to the basic needs of the affected population. This appeal from the ACT members includes the following components: provision of food and non food items, shelter, improvements of water and sanitation facilities, improvements of school and health facilities, provision of seeds and tools and also trauma counselling.

It should be mentioned here that the **Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sierra Leone**, working with the support of the **Lutheran World Federation Department of World Service (LWF/DWS)**, are currently finalising their program proposals to form part of this appeal. As soon as their proposal has been finalised, the appeal will be revised to include them. The estimated budget for the LWF/DWS programs is US\$ 900,000.

[...]

Description of ACT Member

Christian Aid (CA) was established in the mid 1940s and is the official agency of 40 Churches representing most of the denominations in the UK and Ireland. Its humanitarian work began in response to the needs of refugees in Europe and it fulfilled a representational role amongst churches in Europe recovering from the aftermath of the 2nd World War. It currently works in over 60 countries in partnership with local churches and other organisations. In Sierra Leone, Christian Aid is the accompanying agency for ACT. The agency maintains a Liaison Office in Freetown staffed by two expatriate personnel (Programme Accountant and Programme Support Officer) whose tasks are to liaise with and support a body of national partners located in different parts of the country. Principal amongst these is the Council of Churches in Sierra Leone (CCSL). For the past three years, Christian Aid has been the accompanying agency for CCSL's Relief and Rehabilitation Department, to which a Director, jointly recruited by Christian Aid and CCSL, is assigned.

Description of ACT Member's Implementing Partners

CCSL, in partnership with ACT International and its accompanying agency Christian Aid, has extensive experience in running emergency programmes for victims of the war in Sierra Leone. This experience includes supporting internally displaced people (IDPs), assisting returnee families to re-establish and rebuild their livelihoods, addressing the needs of especially vulnerable individuals and groups including unaccompanied children (UAC), widows and the disabled, and undertaking peace and reconciliation activities.

Historically, CCSL became involved in relief operations in 1990 following an influx of Liberian refugees into the country. A year later, as the military conflict spilled into Sierra Leone, CCSL refocused its work on the needs of IDPs. In 1997, internal restructuring created the Relief and Rehabilitation (R&R) Department with its base in Bo. During the January 1999 crisis, when most INGOs withdrew, the R&R Department was one of the few agencies to continue humanitarian operations. Using their accumulated experience, staff quickly responded to the emergency by setting up IDP camps and distributing food and non-food items. For the past three years, funding for the Department's relief and rehabilitation work has come through the ACT Appeal and from government sources, the EU and UN agencies including WFP and FAO. CCSL's R&R Department will implement all the activities detailed in this new relief and rehabilitation proposal for 2001.

[...]

Locations for Response

R&R Department's current areas of operations are four chiefdoms in Bo North (Valunia, Badja, Gbo and Selenga), two chiefdoms in Moyamba District (Upper and Lower Banta), two in Kenema District (Kandu Leppiama and Wandor) and two in Tonkolili District (Yoni and Gbonkolenken). If security permits, the Department intends to resume its operations in the other 2 chiefdoms of Tonkolili District where it was previously working in 1998 (Kafesimiria and Kalansogoia). The Department is also working in two IDP camps in Bo and is planning to intervene in a new transit camp for returnees, to be situated between Bo and Kenema.

All NGO operations are co-ordinated by NCRRR (National Commission for Resettlement, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction) who are responsible for the allocation of operational areas between the agencies. To date, this strategy has avoided duplication and enhanced integration of relief work.

[...]

GOAL & OBJECTIVES

Goal: To assist war-affected communities meet their most urgent basic needs and move towards self-reliance.

Objectives:

To assist 8,500 farming households (51,000 people) from war affected victims return to normal levels of food crop production by providing them with the necessary resources

To improve the capacity of communities in R&R's eight chiefdom (operational) areas to respond to the needs of returnees amounting to up 2,500 families (15,000 people)

To provide improved water and sanitation facilities to communities with a population of 3,000 people

To rehabilitate three primary schools and four court barriers designed to improve educational facilities and assist the reconstitution of local authorities. To facilitate income generation for 27 women's groups and diversification of food production for 2,500 farming families (15,000 people).

To increase community participation in decisions about their own development

To encourage unity in the communities and a peaceful reintegration of ex-combatants through sensitisation work in Gbonkolenken, Yoni and in the IDP camps in Bo.

To continue to maintain an emergency response capacity in the sphere of Non-Food Items (NFIs) for up to 10,000 families

To provide ongoing management for 12,000 residents of two IDP camps in Bo.

TARGETED BENEFICIARIES**Number and type of targeted beneficiaries**

The whole programme will benefit approximately 140,000 beneficiaries. Interventions will be targeted at returning refugees, IDPs, farmers that have returned to their villages and who need support to restart their food security activities and vulnerable people and village communities as a whole. The targeted population will vary according to the activities they are involved in.

[...]

Crisis assistance

12,000 IDPs living in two displaced camps in Bo will benefit from the camp management work and the food distributions

15,000 – 20,000 Sierra Leonean refugees returning from Guinea and Liberia will be hosted into a transit camp and receive NFIs. (A larger number of beneficiaries may be targeted should the flow of returnees intensify).

500 host community families, affected by the arrival of IDPs in their home areas, will receive assistance for agricultural production.

IDPs and host communities in areas of high IDP presence (Bo, Mile 91, Yele, Massengbeh) will benefit from a peace building and conflict resolution programme.

500 farm families and 2000 farm families in Falla Wandor (15,000 people including dependants) will receive agricultural inputs for food production.

(ACT 15 February 2001)

Response by the Lutheran World Federation Department of World Service (LWF/DWS) and the Church of the United Brethren in Christ (UBC):

"This is a revision of the Sierra Leone Appeal AFSL11 which was issued on the 15 February 2001. The revision basically constitutes an inclusion of two ACT members in the appeal whose proposals were not ready at the time the appeal was issued. These are the **Lutheran World Federation Department of World Service (LWF/DWS)** and the **Church of the United Brethren in Christ (UBC)**. For the sake of brevity, the information on the other four ACT members already in the appeal will not be repeated in this revision. The revision should therefore be read as whole with the original appeal document mentioned above.

[...]

REQUESTING ACT MEMBER INFORMATION

- **The Lutheran World Federation /Department of World Service (LWF/DWS)** Sierra Leone Program in collaboration with the **Evangelical Lutheran Church In Sierra Leone (Elcsl)**

IMPLEMENTING ACT MEMBER & PARTNER INFORMATION

The Lutheran World Federation – Department for World Service (LWF/DWS) started activities in support of programs in Sierra Leone in 1990 for Liberian refugees. The emergency program included food and non-food distribution, care and management of refugees and internally displaced. Due to the escalating war in Sierra Leone the programs had to be interrupted.

Based on the invitation of the ELCSL, the LWF/DWS fielded several missions in 1999, which resulted in plans for renewed support programs. One Logistics appeal, ALSL91 and one ACT appeal, AFSL01 were launched which resulted in renewed emergency and rehabilitation activities. This appeal is a continuation of the AFSL01.

ELCSL was established in 1988. It has currently a membership of about 2,300 in 15 congregations in all of the four administrative regions of Sierra Leone. It is an active member of the Council of Churches in Sierra Leone (CCSL). The ELCSL was also admitted as a member of the LWF in 1990 and is an ACT implementing partner in Sierra Leone.

In spite of loss and devastation incurred during the civil war, the ELCSL has been able to respond to humanitarian needs in collaboration with the CCSL and with the support of its international partners. Through these programs, the ELCSL has gained valuable experience of ecumenical collaboration and co-operation. This collaboration and co-operation will continue during the implementation of this program.

[...]

Goal

To support the re-integration of IDPs, returning refugees and ex-combatants to begin the process of rebuilding their lives and communities and thereby help to consolidate the peace process in Sierra Leone.

Objectives

Assistance to returnees and IDPs

Undertake local peace building

Support Infrastructure rehabilitation based on community initiatives Carry out skills training for generating self employment and promoting reconstruction

Undertake distribution of donated relief commodities.

TARGETTED BENEFICIARIES

Criteria for selection of beneficiaries will vary from one activity to the other. LWF/DWS will target the most needy in communities, as well as the most vulnerable, single women and elderly.

The government of Sierra Leone requested LWF/DWS in November 2000 to undertake the management of a new IDP camp under construction. The intention was to move IDPs from some unfit locations in Freetown to a new camp at Lumpa, some 30 km outside Freetown.

The Camp was constructed by Concern, Oxfam is providing water and sanitation facilities and LWF/DWS has the overall management responsibility including distribution of WFP food rations.

Secondment of personnel was offered by Church of Sweden Aid, who sent an emergency officer to cope with the situation. Funds are being donated by Church of Sweden Aid/Sida for the secondment and incurred expenses. Total capacity is 5,000 – 6,000 people.

Due to the great influx of returning refugees from Guinea, UNHCR established Transit Centers for returning refugees and it was also decided in January 2001 to change the emphasis of Lumpa from an ordinary IDP camp to a Transit Center for returnees from unsafe home areas. The first returnees arrived at Lumpa 24 January 2001.

5,000 farm families will be supported with seeds and planting materials for production and multiplication, as well as vegetable, roots and tuber crops production for supporting household income. Another 1,000 farm families recently returned from Guinea will benefit from short term agricultural assistance at Jembe resettlement area where the returnees will be taken after their temporary stay at the Transit Centers around Freetown.

Peace building efforts – 350 community leaders, cultural groups, religious and traditional leaders, youth groups and demobilised fighters will participate. Forty communities are expected to be reached with local peace building programs including training of trainer workshops, community awareness and capacity building for local conflict resolution and strengthening of local mechanisms for peace building. New communities are being built, bringing together former factional rivals, IDPs, refugees and victims of the civil war. Networking is on going with other organizations involved in local peace building initiatives. Schools will be rehabilitated including water and sanitation facilities. 50 ex-combatants and other war-affected youths will participate in skills training. Distribution of donated commodities to approximately 25,000 most needy people." (ACT 22 March 2001)

Sierra Leone Red Cross to play a major role in return and resettlement of IDPs (2001)

- SLRCS is reopening its provincial branches as the security situation permits
- SLRCS Primary Health clinics assisting IDPs in Freetown, Kenema, Bo, Moyamba, Matru and Bonthe as well as in Lungi, Mile91 and Kendeyella IDP camp, Bo
- SLRCS clinic in RUF-controlled Makeni was reactivated in February 2001

"National Society Context

The Sierra Leone Red Cross Society (SLRCS) programmes and priorities are based on its 1997-1999 proposal and budget and the fourth Pan-African Conference/Kampala declaration. The SLRCS is presently undergoing a major review of its structure and staffing needs in view of the operational set back caused by the January 1999 rebel invasion of Freetown with the resulting destruction of much of the National Society's infrastructure as well as the closure of many of the branches in areas presently not accessible. The SLRCS hopes that normality returns to the country again and that donor support will enable the Society to regain its pre-conflict activity level. The SLRCS considers itself in a unique position to positively influence the reconciliation, resettlement and rehabilitation of the victims of the conflict in order to actively support the successful implementation of the present peace agreement. As this process is only in the initial stage, the Society presently intends to limit its priorities to the following ongoing programmes, but expects to expand as soon as a more stable and clear picture is available, and will at that time review and revise its priorities:

Community Based Health Programme (CBHP).
Institutional Development.
Relief.

Priority Programmes for Federation Assistance

Disaster response: should the situation return to normal, the SLRCS and Federation will activate identified rehabilitation and resettlement programs targeting returning refugees and IDPs.

Disaster preparedness: the Federation will assist in the upgrading of the emergency first aid capability of the SLRCS by organising first aid training courses and first aid material. Previous programmes have already trained 350 emergency first aid volunteers in six districts, but it is envisaged to expand this programme to cover all 13 districts as well as to support the already trained volunteers.. Strengthening the SLRCS capability to respond to natural disasters and ethnic conflicts.

Health: the Federation will assist in the re-activation of the CBHP programme of training volunteers in environmental sanitation and prevention/control diarrhoeal diseases, and the provision of essential drugs to the SLRCS operational clinics.

Promotion of human values: in close co-operation with ICRC, the Federation will assist in rebuilding a positive Red Cross image through information and dissemination in connection with all ongoing programmes as well as through SLRCS staff and volunteers.

Institutional and resource development: The Federation will support the SLRCS in its present transition/restructuring effort at both headquarters and at the branches, by strengthening governance, leadership and capacity building and by generally upgrading the qualifications of staff and volunteers

through workshops training courses. It will also assist in the review of the priorities and support the planning capacity of the national society. It will assist the SLRCS in improving the institutional and organisational structures, systems and procedures and develop a financial management, accounting and audit system and support the resumption of activities of local branches.

[...]

The NS has 20 established and effective first Aid Posts manned by 180 trained staff and volunteers who can be mobilised to provide first aid services and evacuate casualties to the nearest referral posts in Western area, Bo, Kenema, Moyamba, Mile 91, Mattru Jong, Bonthe and Lungi.

[...]

In 1995 the SLRC embarked on its Community Based Health Programme (CBHP). Conflict in 1999 collapsed the CBHP programme and the SLRC reoriented their activities to that of emergency relief and emergency health. During 2000 the CBHP programme has once again started to target the rural communities, using the SLRCS clinic as centre for all activities and working in close co-operation with the community leaders and Red Cross health committees. Local volunteers (100 volunteers were trained in first half of 2000) are used for the Community Based First Aid, assisting with the treatment of minor ailments and accidents, which can be handled at the local level. Traditional Birth Attendants are trained (120 TBA in first half of 2000) and equipped to ensure safer deliveries, especially for areas without access to other health facilities as 70% of deliveries are done outside hospitals and most of these are done by TBA's.

[...]

The emergency clinics have been established in response to the new influx of IDPs we are seeing due to the present fighting in the North and East. This fighting also resulted in the closure of the SLRCS clinic, which was re-established in Makeni in January. The staff and equipment from the Makeni clinic are now assigned to the emergency clinic in Mile 91."(IFRC 2001, "Introduction", sects.1,2)

"The ICRC and the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society (SLRCS) have distributed relief supplies to about 12,000 internally displaced people who recently fled the fighting in Kambia district. More than 2,000 families staying in different villages on the Lungi peninsula received shelter material, blankets, sleeping mats, buckets, kitchen sets and soap. The distribution followed a careful assessment of needs and consultations with the local authorities, representatives of the internally displaced and other humanitarian organizations working in the area." (ICRC 22 February 2001)

"In addition to the six reactivated SLRCS Primary Health clinics in Freetown, Kenema, Bo, Moyamba, Mattru and Bonthe, three additional emergency clinics assisting new IDPs and returning refugees were established in Lungi (clinic constructed by the ICRC, staff provided by the SLRCS and medicine needs supported by the Federation), Mile91 (with medicine and support provided by the ICRC, and staff from the SLRCS supported by the Federation) and Kendeyella IDP camp, Bo (assistance managed by the SLRCS/Federation).

The SLRCS clinic in RUF-controlled Makeni was reactivated in February and saw a tremendous influx of patients due to the lack of other medical facilities in the area. Unfortunately, the clinic had to be closed down at the end of April due to the insecurity in the area. Staff and materials were transferred to Mile91, where an emergency clinic was established for the IDPs fleeing from Makeni and Magburaka." (IFRC 25 May 2001)

References to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement

Known references to the Guiding Principles (as of February 2002)

- Reference to the Guiding Principles in the national legislation
- Other references to the Guiding Principles

- Availability of the Guiding Principles in local languages
- Training on the Guiding Principles

Reference to the Guiding Principles in the national legislation

None

Other references to the Guiding Principles

None

Availability of the Guiding Principles

None

Training on the Guiding Principles

NRC training workshop: The Global IDP Project of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) organised a training workshop on the Guiding Principles in Freetown, Sierra Leone. The workshop was co-hosted by the National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (NCRRR) of the Sierra Leone government. The workshop was part of a wider NRC effort to promote and disseminate the Guiding Principles among government authorities, national and international NGOs, UN agencies, international organisations and the displaced themselves. More than one third of the 43 participants had travelled to Freetown from the provinces. One conclusion of the workshop was that the Guiding Principles are not sufficiently known and utilised in Sierra Leone, and that there is a great need for further dissemination and training.

Sources: National authorities, national and international NGOs, UN agencies, different IDP communities.

Date: 12-14 March 2001.

Documents:

[Report of the Workshop on the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, Freetown, Sierra Leone, March 2001](#)

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
CDF	Civil Defense Forces
CFA	Committee on Food Aid
CHAP	Common Humanitarian Action Plan
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CW	Concern Worldwide
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Office
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EFSL	Evangelical Fellowship of Sierra Leone
EIU	Economist Intelligence Unit
EPI	Expanded Programme of Immunisation
ERSF	Emergency Recovery Support Fund
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
HACU	Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Unit
HIV/AIDS	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
INGOS	International Non-Governmental Organisations
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IO	International Organisation
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
MTs	Metric Tonnes
NCRRR	National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NPRC	National Provisional Ruling Council
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OAU	Organisation for African Unity
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PHUs	Peripheral Health Units
RSLMF	Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SLRCS	Sierra Leone Red Cross Society
TFCs	Therapeutic Feeding Centres
UAC	Unaccompanied Children
UNAMSIL	UN Mission in Sierra Leone
UN-HACU	United Nations Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Unit
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOMSIL	United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

WVI	World Vision International
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