



# **PROFILE OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT : SIERRA LEONE**

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## PROFILE SUMMARY

In January 2002, President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah of Sierra Leone declared that his country's eleven year civil war was finally over. Just a few days earlier the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) declared that more than 45,000 former fighters had handed in their weapons, marking the end of the government's disarmament programme. At the same time the Sierra Leone government, together with the UN and its implementing partners, intensified their push to resettle large numbers of IDPs (as well as returning refugees) and to phase out the IDP camps.

What had begun as a small incursion in 1991 by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) from neighbouring Liberia grew into a brutal campaign of terror against civilians that cost an estimated 50,000 lives and, at its height, forced almost half of the country's 4.5 million people to flee their homes (according to some UN agencies there were as many as 2 million internally displaced persons in Sierra Leone at the end of 2000, as well as several hundred thousand refugees in neighbouring countries).

By 2001, significant gains in the peace process resulted in improved security throughout the country, boosted by the full deployment of UNAMSIL peacekeepers in November 2001 and continued military support from the United Kingdom to the reformed national armed forces. This allowed for the return of some 45,000 IDPs to their homes of origin in 2001. At the same time humanitarian access increased greatly, 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 remained displaced in the country. According to the UN in the 2002 Inter-Agency Consolidated Appeal (CAP), many IDPs who had 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.

While the UN cited the relatively small figure of 247,590 registered IDPs in Sierra Leone as of November 2001 – the majority residing in managed camps – it was widely believed that the real number could be much higher, with many non-registered IDPs living in host communities (UN, November 2001). However, due to the large-scale resettlement programme, the UN reported in July 2002 that there remained just over 12,000 IDPs waiting to be resettled – the implication being that, officially at least, this was the total number of IDPs remaining in the country (UN DPKO, 31 July 2002).

### **Background and causes of displacement**

The conflict, initiated by the RUF, was initially confined to the southern and eastern areas of Sierra Leone, but within three years it had spread throughout the country. Rebel forces twice entered the capital: first in May 1997 when RUF and renegade government troops (ie AFRC) established a military junta for nine months, and thereafter in January 1999 when the rebels terrorized 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, according to the UN Security Council, hindered humanitarian access to most of the country. The Lomé peace agreement of July 1999 signed by the warring parties failed to end the violence – culminating instead in an escalation of hostilities by the RUF in May 2000, including hostage-taking of UN troops and further atrocities against civilians.

The conflict spread during the second half of 2000 across the border to Guinea, with the RUF attacking Guinean villages and camps hosting Sierra Leonean refugees – leading to armed activities by Guinean troops inside Sierra Leone. An outcome of this fragile security situation was 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 RUF terror.

Toward the end of 2000, the rebels gradually signaled willingness to re-enter the peace process. In November 2000, the Government and RUF signed a new ceasefire agreement at Abuja, which was reiterated in May 2001.

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 14 May. Although the RUF registered as a political party (RUFPP), the National Electoral Commission declared its leader Foday Sankoh as ineligible to contest the presidential elections because he was not a registered voter. As of September 2002, Sankoh remained in prison on murder charges related to an incident in May 2000, when a peaceful demonstration outside his Freetown home turned violent and at least 20 people died.

In March 2002, Sierra Leone's parliament ratified the creation of a UN-sponsored special court to prosecute those people bearing 'the greatest responsibility' for serious violations of international humanitarian and national law during the civil war (AFP, 21 March 2002).

Indeed, the widespread human rights abuses committed to differing degrees by all sides to the conflict have been the main cause of 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 by organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. Various organizations have also reported that counter-insurgency operations by troops loyal to the government have caused additional displacement and civilian suffering. 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.

#### **Conditions of displacement**

Improvements in the security situation in many parts of Sierra Leone by the beginning of 2001 coincided with insecurity in neighbouring Liberia and Guinea, resulting in large movements of IDPs, returnees and ex-combatants. The strategy towards the flow of displaced from the border areas, as documented by OCHA, has been to assist communities in hosting the displaced rather than adding to already overstretched camps or to create new ones. However, numerous 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. Even with the war over, shelter remained a priority need, with up to 90 percent of houses destroyed in many areas. According to the UN and NGOs such as MSF, the population in general is the most vulnerable to ill health in the world, with high levels of malnutrition and wide-ranging medical needs.

There have also been criticisms, most notably from MSF, of the government-led resettlement programme. MSF claimed that the government, with the UN, has practically been forcing people to return – pre-elections and pre-planting season in order to avoid food aid dependence for another agricultural season; that in many cases return could not be described as voluntary because IDPs were not given the information to make an informed decision; that inadequate support during both the transit and rehabilitation phases meant that IDPs were returning in neither safety nor dignity; and that in some cases resettlement was taking place to areas considered by the UN as too dangerous for its own staff (MSF, 12 April and 21 May 2002).

Another major cause for concern has been the lack of adequate protection of Sierra Leone's internally displaced populations. One reason for this is the collapse of the national law enforcement system. Large parts of the country had for a long time been without police presence, and the national army was disbanded after its involvement in the 1997 military coup. Civilians outside rebel-held areas received some protection from civil defence militias and the West African ECOMOG forces. However, as reported by Human Rights Watch, 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. 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 RUF rebels regularly abducted children, and both Amnesty International and Save the Children reported that the use of children as combat soldiers both by RUF and pro-government forces continued

during 2000. According to SCF, 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. More than 5,000 parents reported their children missing in the wake of the rebel attack on Freetown in January 1999 (UN 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 demobilized or released by the RUF and CDF militia by the end of 2001.

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

### **Humanitarian response and constraints**

At the end of 2001, the humanitarian community in Sierra Leone consisted of nine UN agencies, in addition to the human rights and civil affairs sections of UNAMSIL's peacekeeping mission, some 46 international NGOs, over 200 national NGOs and hundreds of community-based organisations, as well as government bodies – principally the National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (NCRRR), which was later renamed the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA).

Overland delivery of humanitarian aid was extremely difficult during the conflict. Looting of aid supplies was 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. The July 1999 peace agreement improved humanitarian access and enabled the UN and NGOs to undertake aid delivery and assessment missions to previously inaccessible areas. Following the signing of the peace agreement, the UN Security Council deployed a peacekeeping force to Sierra Leone (later referred to as UNAMSIL), part of whose mandate has been to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance (UN SC, 22 October 1999).

However, in March 2000 OCHA reported that there was safe access to only five of 12 districts – excluding about half of the population from humanitarian assistance. Escalated rebel activities in May 2000 further restricted delivery of humanitarian assistance and humanitarian operations in most areas of the northern and eastern provinces ceased as the conflict worsened. Towards the end of 2001, gains in the disarmament process and the full deployment of UNAMSIL – a total of 17,500 troops – contributed to the creation of new opportunities for humanitarian organisations, as well as the Government of Sierra Leone, in previously inaccessible areas. In March 2002, UNAMSIL's mandate was extended for a further six months – although the imminent downsizing and ultimate withdrawal of the mission raised anxieties in some quarters (IRIN, 2 July 2002; UN SC, 5 September 2002).

The humanitarian community remained concerned 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 UN Consolidated Appeal for 2002 called 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 represented a 10 percent increase on funds appealed for in 2001 due to improved accessibility to the north and east of the country where critical humanitarian needs were found (UN, November 2001). The 2001 Consolidated Appeal was relatively well-funded – a total of 80 percent of the US\$74 million requested.

*Updated September 2002*

# CAUSES AND BACKGROUND OF DISPLACEMENT

## Background to the conflict

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### 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 led 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 Lomé 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 UNOMSIL; 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 UNOMSIL 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 Gbatata 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).

## **Civil war declared over following the full deployment of UNAMSIL and the completion of disarmament (January 2002)**

- Full deployment of UNAMSIL in December 2001 (17,500 troops) increases security, freedom of movement and encourages return of IDPs and refugees
- More than 45,000 former combatants hand in their weapons by January 2002
- President Kabbah officially declares the war to be over in 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)

"At a festive ceremony at Lungi Garrison today which included a bonfire of nearly 3,000 weapons turned in during the disarmament process, President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah declared the disarmament of combatants concluded and the war in Sierra Leone at an end.

'Today, we are happy that those flames of war have been extinguished, and that now we are about to watch the flames of peace destroy some of the implements of war,' he told a large crowd at the garrison parade ground.

Participating in the ceremony were the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), Ambassador Oluyemi Adeniji, President John Kuffuor of Ghana, Vice President of Liberia Moses Blah, Nigerian Defense Minister Theophilus Danjuma, and Libyan Minister for African Unity Ali Treiki.

Also present for the day's events was Revolutionary United Front (RUF) interim leader Gen. Issa Sesay and other RUF officials, as well as Government ministers and UNAMSIL military and civilian leadership, as well as peacekeepers. Over 1,000 school children and residents of the area attended as well.

In his address, President Kabbah paid special tribute to the contributions made by the United Nations 'to respond to the major challenges of our times in the areas of peacekeeping, humanitarian relief, the protection of human rights and the administration of justice.'

'Your overall response to those challenges has been extraordinary,' the President said. 'This is reflected in the operations of UNAMSIL, in the activities of such agencies as UNHCR and UNICEF, and more recently in the decision to establish the Special Court.'

Ambassador Adeniji, who also addressed the gathering, commended the leadership of the RUF and the Civil Defense Force (CDF), 'who committed themselves to see the disarmament process through to the end.'

He noted that 'while this day symbolizes an end, it also symbolizes a beginning-a new beginning for more than 46,000 men and women of this nation,' referring to the ex-combatants. He appealed to the international

community for support for the reintegration programme, because the 'financial resources required face a serious shortfall.' (UNAMSIL, 18 January 2002)

### **Regional efforts to maintain peace in Sierra Leone (2002)**

- Ministers from the three Mano River Union countries meet in March 2002 to strengthen security along their common borders
- Later the same month a summit of the three countries is held in Rabat, Morocco
- West African regional grouping ECOWAS pledges to mobilise international support for the reconstruction of Sierra Leone

"Ministers from Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone agreed on Thursday to implement plans to strengthen security along their borders and revive their long-dormant economic grouping, the Mano River Union, the Sierra Leone News Agency, SLENA, reported on Friday.

The ministers of foreign affairs, security, internal affairs, defence and justice ended their two-day meeting of the union's Joint Security Committee, with a timetable to implement the security measures.

They called for a committee of legal experts, chosen by the justice ministries, to meet in Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, on 13 March. That committee will develop mechanisms for handling dissidents threatening the three governments, and submit a list of suspected dissidents residing in each other's countries.

A Technical Committee of the joint security body was given the mandate to implement the first phase of the deployment of a Joint Border and Security force along the common borders.

On 25 March, the Guinean and Liberian ministers of defence and security will meet in Conakry, the Guinean capital. The two countries have recently been blaming each other for supporting armed anti-government dissidents. Both have denied the claim and relations had deteriorated to a low ebb. The latest meetings are a sign that there could be a thaw.

Last week Moroccan King Mohammed VI organised a summit of the Mano River Union in the capital, Rabat, to ease political tension that has pitted Liberia against Guinea and Sierra Leone." (IRIN, 8 March 2002)

"The west African regional grouping ECOWAS on Thursday pledged to mobilise international support for the reconstruction of Sierra Leone, ravaged by several years of bloody war.

The executive secretary of the 15-member Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Mohammed Ibn Chambas, made the pledge at a formal ceremony for the accreditation of the Sierra Leonian envoy to the organisation, the ECOWAS statement said.

The new envoy is Joe Blell, Sierra Leonian ambassador to Nigeria.

The successful completion of the disarmament process as well as next month's elections in Sierra Leone have restored hope for peace there, Chambas said in a statement.

The Community, established in 1975 and which worked relentlessly to restore peace to Sierra Leone, will remain engaged with developments in that country to ensure restoration of normalcy, the statement quoted him as saying.

Four west African ambassadors from Benin, Mali, Nigeria and Senegal were accredited to ECOWAS at a similar ceremony last March 19.

The accredited ambassadors are the third tier of the Mediation and Security Council of ECOWAS, behind the Foreign Affairs and heads of state and government of the Community.

ECOWAS members are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ivory Coast, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo." (AFP, 4 April 2002)

### **Sierra Leoneans go to the polls to re-elect Ahmad Tejan Kabbah as President (May 2002)**

- Ahmad Tejan Kabbah re-elected for a five year term in UN-assisted general elections, winning 70 percent of the vote
- Kabbah's Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) wins 83 out of 112 contested parliamentary seats

"Sierra Leoneans, some with hands hacked off by rebels and others far from destroyed homes, voted on Tuesday in elections to give the West African country a fresh start after a decade of war.

Crowds had waited well before dawn to take part in a poll made possible by the deployment of the biggest U.N. peacekeeping force to disarm over 47,000 rebels and pro-government militia fighters.

'I used to vote with my hands, I did it today with my toe,' said Lamin Janka, 43, whose hands were cut off during a 1999 rebel attack on Freetown. 'This is going to be a new beginning of life after 10 years of war.'

Some 50,000 were killed in the country of 5.4 million during the war, which started in 1991. Many were mutilated, raped or robbed and a third were driven from their homes.

Despite stone-throwing and scuffles between President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah's supporters and rival parties, the campaign was among the most peaceful since independence from Britain in 1961.

But fresh fighting in a closely linked civil war in neighbouring Liberia has sent a shiver through Sierra Leone and highlighted the chronic instability of an area that is among the world's poorest despite its mineral riches." (Reuters, 14 May 2002)

"After receiving 70 per cent of the vote, Ahmed Tejan Kabbah has been re-elected for a five-year term as President of Sierra Leone in the general elections, which were conducted with wide-ranging assistance from the United Nations.

The National Electoral Commission announced official results on Sunday afternoon and President Kabbah was sworn in on the same day.

President Kabbah's Sierra Leone's People's Party won 83 seats of the 112 contested in Parliament in last week's elections.

The UN Mission in the country, known by its acronym UNAMSIL, carried out a wide range of security tasks, as mandated by the Security Council in resolution 1389 adopted in January. That resolution also authorized UNAMSIL to undertake election-related tasks as set out by Secretary-General Kofi Annan in his report of 13 December 2001.

Those tasks include logistic support to the National Electoral Commission as well as the provision of wider security and deterrence throughout the period of preparation for the elections, the polling period itself, and the period immediately after the announcement of the election results. The Mission was in part mandated to

assist in the transport of electoral materials and personnel, especially to hard-to-reach areas, and to facilitate the free movement of people, goods and humanitarian assistance throughout the country." (UN News Service, 20 May 2002)

## **Main causes of displacement**

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### **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 boarders 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, [\[external link\]](#)*

## **Escalating violence in Liberia continues to threaten peace and security in Sierra Leone (2002)**

- UNAMSIL asks Liberian government to help prevent cross-border attacks on Sierra Leonean villages
- Security is beefed up on Sierra Leone side of the border with Liberia
- 50 armed Liberians are captured while looting Sierra Leonean villages
- Both Liberian army and rebels are involved in the attacks
- Tension rises with increasing number of Liberian refugees crossing the border

"The force commander of the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), Lt-Gen Daniel Opande, has asked the Liberian government to monitor its side of the border to prevent cross-border attacks against Sierra Leonean villages, the UN said in a statement on Wednesday.

At a meeting with Liberia's Defence Minister, Daniel Chea on Tuesday, Opande stressed that the UN was doing everything in its power, in collaboration with the Sierra Leone Armed Forces, to police the Sierra Leonean side of the border, the UN statement said.

He requested the same from the Liberian authorities, emphasising that 'peace in one of the Mano River Union countries without peace in others is no peace at all'.

Opande toured several Sierra Leonean border towns to assess the security impact of a current influx of Liberian refugees. He also spoke to some of the refugees, who said they had fled their homes when the Armed Forces of Liberia warned of impending attacks by rebels, the statement said.

The refugees also said Liberian troops were demanding money from them before allowing transit through a border area into Sierra Leone.

Opande later visited that area, known as the Dar-es-Salaam crossing point, where refugees corroborated the allegations of extortion and harassment by Liberian troops, the statement added.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), an average of slightly more than 100 refugees are crossing the border from Liberia into Sierra Leone daily." (IRIN, 30 May 2002)

"Sierra Leone has captured some 50 Liberian troops looting its villages and has sent reinforcements to beef up security along the porous border, the former British colony's army chief said on Monday.

Both West African countries have been embroiled for over 10 years in a regional war centred on their diamond-rich borders but while Sierra Leone's elections last month marked the end of its brutal civil war, fighting has intensified in Liberia.

Northern-based rebels trying to oust President Charles Taylor have neared the southern capital Monrovia, feeding fears the conflict could again threaten the peace created in Sierra Leone with the help of the United Nations' biggest ground force.

Brigadier General Tom Carew, head of Sierra Leone's British-trained army, said groups of Liberian troops had looted Sierra Leonean villages near the frontier. He said 50 had been captured, disarmed and handed over to Sierra Leonean police.

'Within the past few weeks many of the AFL (Armed Forces of Liberia) fighters who have been searching for food have entered these villages and put civilians at gun point, stolen their food and in some cases taken money from them forcefully,' he said.

Carew told Reuters he had sent reinforcements to key border towns to ensure security and that his forces were mounting joint helicopter patrols in the area with U.N. peacekeepers who have helped disarm over 47,000 fighters." (Reuters, 3 June 2002)

"13. The escalating conflict in Liberia is increasingly affecting the stability of the areas along the border in Sierra Leone. On several occasions, elements from both the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) and Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) raided Sierra Leonean villages while foraging for food. There is concern that such incidents could increase as the rainy season approaches. A number of Liberian soldiers have also approached UNAMSIL and Sierra Leone army deployment locations to seek refuge from the fighting in Liberia. In addition, the Government of Sierra Leone has expressed concern about the possible existence of armed Liberian elements among the large number of refugees fleeing into the southern and eastern districts of the country.

14. The Sierra Leone army has reinforced its deployments in the border areas to prevent incursions by both LURD and AFL elements. However, the effectiveness of the army is limited by logistical shortcomings, which are likely to be aggravated by the rainy season. UNAMSIL has also increased ground and air patrols in these areas to deter incursions. The UNAMSIL Force Commander met with the Liberian Defence Minister at Bo Waterside on 28 May and urged him to take measures to prevent AFL incursions. My Special Representative has also met with the leaders of Senegal, Nigeria, Ghana and Mali, as well as the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS, to draw their attention to the threat posed by the conflict in Liberia to the progress achieved in Sierra Leone." (UN Security Council, 19 June 2002)

"Sierra Leoneans are increasingly concerned about the rising number of Liberian refugees in the country. This is causing increased tensions between the refugee and the local communities. The host communities fear a repeat of their experiences in 1991, the start of the Sierra Leone war, when they shared their resources with the rebels who mostly came in under the guise of refugees. Adding to these concerns, significant numbers of refugees who are crossing into Sierra Leone, often at border points where there is nobody to monitor or register new arrivals, are not being accounted for." (UN OCHA, 30 June 2002)

*For political analysis, including the impact on Sierra Leone of the situation in Liberia, see 'Sierra Leone after elections: Politics as usual?' International Crisis Group, July 2002 [\[External link\]](#)*

### **Root causes of war in Sierra Leone remain unaddressed, warns Human Rights Watch (July 2002)**

- Despite new optimistic phase, HRW cites culture of impunity, corruption, weak rule of law, poverty, and unequal distribution of natural resources as ongoing causes for concern that must be addressed to sustain peace in Sierra Leone
- HRW makes particular mention of the important potential of both the Special Court and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in preventing a return to war
- The international community must prevent the war in Liberia from once again engulfing Sierra Leone, says HRW

"After ten years of brutal civil war, the people of Sierra Leone went to the polls on May 14 and re-elected President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah and his Sierra Leone People's Party for a further five-year term. That the elections could be held nationwide and were conducted peacefully indicates that Sierra Leone has entered a new, more optimistic phase after the years of conflict, destruction, and abuse. Yet, the peace remains fragile. Deep-rooted issues that gave rise to the war—a culture of impunity, endemic corruption, weak rule of law, crushing poverty, and the inequitable distribution of the country's vast natural resources—remain

largely unaddressed. The new government, with the support of the international community, must take urgent steps to tackle these problems if Sierra Leoneans are not again to be plunged into the misery and destruction that blighted so many lives in the 1990s. In particular, those responsible for the gross abuses of the past must be brought to justice before the new Special Court for Sierra Leone; the Truth and Reconciliation Commission should expose the causes of the war and recommend safeguards against their recurrence; a fair justice system must be rebuilt to underpin the rule of law; and the process of reforming the police and army to inculcate respect for human rights must be completed. And in the wider region, the international community must take steps to prevent the resurgent conflict in Liberia from again engulfing Sierra Leone." (HRW, 11 July 2002)

# POPULATION PROFILE AND FIGURES

## Global figures

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### Approximately 12,000 registered IDPs remain to be resettled (July 2002)

- Following massive resettlement of IDPs during 2001-2002, only 12,000 remain to be resettled as of July 2002
- This number does not take into account unregistered IDPs, and those absorbed into mostly urban areas
- Sierra Leone government aims to finish the resettlement programme by October 2002, after which time IDP camps will be formally closed

"There now remains little more than 11,000 IDPs to be formally resettled. With the onset of the rains, this group, principally comprising IDPs residing in the Tonkolili District and IDPs in Western Area camps from Mile 91, have the option to resettle in July, if they wish, or in late September / early October. Those choosing to resettle in late September will continue to receive support in their camps or host community areas.

A small number of IDPs (less than 1,500) who originate from one of the border chiefdoms in Kailahun, remain to be resettled. They too will continue to reside in their camp areas in the Western Area where they will receive ongoing support until facilitated resettlement can be offered. It is hoped that this can be done in September/ October completing the resettlement of IDPs in Sierra Leone.

As the camps have been vacated an internal consolidation process has been undertaken and some camps in Bo and Kenema have been closed. Once resettlement has been completed throughout the country all IDPs camps will be formally closed." (UN DPKO, July 2002)

### 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
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>661,590</b>	<b>271,500</b>	<b>130,000</b>	<b>1,800,000</b>	<b>2,863,090</b>

"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)

**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**

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**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)

## **Disaggregated figures**

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### **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

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### **Fragility of security situation in border areas highlighted as civilians are abducted by armed men from Liberia (July 2002)**

- 46 Sierra Leoneans are abducted by armed Liberians, later identified as LURD rebels or their affiliates, in Kailahun district in eastern Sierra Leone
- Those abducted include infants and the elderly
- Abductions coincide with Britain's continuing withdrawal of troops from Sierra Leone

"The whereabouts of 46 Sierra Leoneans abducted by unidentified men from Liberia over the past two weeks remained unknown, Margaret Novicki, spokesman of the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), told IRIN on Monday.

Armed men abducted 18 people on 25 July from Kokobu in Kailahun District in eastern Sierra Leone. That was one week after 28 were taken in another abduction in the same location. 'There were women among the abducted, whom the attackers may have used as porters to carry their loot,' Novicki said.

Kailahun borders on Liberia's Lofa County, plagued since 1998 by fighting between Liberian pro- and anti-government forces. Sierra Leonean troops have been beefed up in the area and UNAMSIL was continuing its border patrols, using helicopters and other troops, Novicki added. She said it was difficult to tell who was responsible for the cross-border raids.

Meanwhile Britain on Sunday withdrew 200 troops from Sierra Leone but left behind 120 to continue training the country's armed forces. The troops were among 1,000 Royal Marines sent to Sierra Leone in May 2000 to help government forces battle rebels. The marines have been gradually withdrawn following the end of Sierra Leone's 10-year civil war." (IRIN, 29 July 2002)

"The 20 villagers abducted from the border villages of Sanga (02), Kolu (15) and Manduvuluhun (03) on July 16 still remain missing (assumed to be within Liberia). The villagers were abducted by a group of about 35/40-armed men with small arms and a rocket launcher. The group rounded up the villagers and took 31 hostages with them; three out of the villagers had managed to later escape and returned to report the incident. Their captors were originally thought to be AFL but it is now clear from SLP / RSLAF debriefs of the few that have so far returned that their captors are LURD or a LURD affiliated militia group from the Liberian village of Masambulahun in north Lofa County (4kms south west of Kolohun). The abducted range in age from 02 to 62 years." (UNOCHA, 31 August 2002)

### **Culture of impunity must be addressed in order to sustain improved human rights situation, says Amnesty International (May 2002)**

- International community must stay engaged long-term in Sierra Leone in order to consolidate progress already made, says Amnesty International
- Particular attention and resources should be focused on rebuilding and strengthening the judicial system, and restoring confidence in the rule of law

- Another priority must be to address the culture of impunity surrounding the issue of sexual violence against women and girls, says AI

"The conflict between government forces and the armed opposition Revolutionary United Front (RUF) was officially declared over in January 2002 and significant progress has been made in ending human rights abuses and providing protection and assistance to civilians.

'In the post-conflict period, the international community must sustain a long term high level of investment in Sierra Leone, in order to consolidate the progress already made,' Amnesty International stressed. 'In particular, increased attention and resources should be devoted to rebuilding and strengthening Sierra Leone's justice system.'

Amnesty International delegates in Sierra Leone are carrying out an assessment of the needs of the justice system, including the police force, prosecution services, national courts and detention facilities. As a result of the protracted conflict, the judicial system has collapsed and institutions for the administration of justice, both civil and criminal, are barely functional. Throughout the country, the system lacks the necessary financial support, equipment and personnel with appropriate training in international criminal law, including judges, prosecutors and lawyers.

'Restoring confidence in the rule of law and the justice system throughout the country is crucial to achieving reconciliation and durable peace, ending human rights abuses and providing justice to the victims,' the organization said.

The high incidence of sexual violence, widely acknowledged to have been perpetrated by all sides during the conflicts in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone has led to a high level of tolerance for such violence among the civilian population in the region. The improved human rights and security situation in recent months is an opportunity to address the culture of impunity surrounding the issue of sexual violence against women and girls. Respect for the physical and mental integrity of women and girls must be the priority now." (AI, 1 May 2002)

### **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 that caused their displacement in the first place (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 NCRRR 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)

## **Women and children**

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### **Extensive abuse of West African refugee and IDP children reported (February 2002)**

- Joint UNHCR/ SC-UK team assesses nature and extent of sexual violence and exploitation of refugee and IDP children in three Mano River countries
- Interviews reveal wide-ranging sexual abuse of vulnerable children
- Exploiters are said to include humanitarian aid workers
- 

"This assessment was initiated by UNHCR and Save the Children-UK (SC-UK) due to growing concerns, based on their field experience, about the nature and extent of sexual violence and exploitation of refugee children and other children of concern to UNHCR (1) in the countries of the Mano River Sub Region (2) in West Africa.

The purpose of the assessment was primarily to gather further information, primarily through consultations with children, about the scope of the problem in the countries concerned and the responses of the different actors: UN agencies, governments, NGOs, refugee and internally displaced person (IDP) communities and the children themselves. This would inform the development of an action plan for UNHCR and the child protection agencies to better address the problem.

The report of the assessment is not yet finalised. However, given the serious nature of the findings and in the interest of the protection of the children themselves, UNHCR and SC-UK are releasing this summary of the draft assessment report in advance in order to inform the humanitarian community about the problem and to allow agencies to review their own practices in this area.

The general findings of the assessment team indicate high levels of risk and vulnerability, with respondents reporting incidents of sexual abuse within family settings and the wider context of the camp and surrounding communities. In addition, from the interviews and group sessions conducted with 1,500 adults and children, the team also received allegations of abuse and exploitation against 67 individuals based in a range of agencies responsible for the care and protection of refugee and IDP communities. The agencies that are possibly implicated in some way include UN peacekeeping forces, international and local NGOs, and government agencies responsible for humanitarian response. The assessment mission was not intended as an investigation and was therefore not conducted with the methodology that would have been required if this had been the purpose. Further evaluation of the overall findings is required in order to clarify the extent of the problem and UNHCR has assumed responsibility for following up on investigatory issues." (UNHCR/ SC-UK, February 2002)

### **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)

### **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)

### **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**

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## **National security forces still face serious shortcomings (September 2002)**

- Despite the return to relative peace in Sierra Leone, the country continues to face serious security challenges
- These include the problem of large numbers of ex-combatants; unemployed youths in urban centres, tensions in diamond-producing areas, still-weak law and order systems, and disarray within the former RUF-turned political party (RUFP)

"2. The security situation in Sierra Leone has remained generally stable. With the exception of raids on border villages by armed elements from Liberia, occasional clashes between youth groups in Kono district and Tongo Fields and the non-indigenous population of these diamond-rich areas, and a crimedriven riot in Freetown on 18 July, no major incidents threatened the country's stability during the reporting period. The presence of UNAMSIL has continued to underpin the stability that has prevailed since the elections of 14 May. In addition, deployments of the Sierra Leone army and police forces to some parts of the country have further reassured the population and added momentum to the gradual return to normality.

3. The qualitative improvement in the overall security situation is manifested in the freedom of movement that is now possible throughout the country, the revival of commercial activity in previously economically dormant areas and the remarkable progress made in resettling displaced populations in all districts except the border areas. Returning refugees are also opting to proceed directly to their areas of origin rather than stay in transit camps.

4. However, while the prevailing calm is encouraging, there remain some serious security challenges that need to be addressed urgently in order to ensure sustained stability in the country. In particular, the 24,000 ex-combatants who are still awaiting reintegration opportunities are becoming increasingly restless and often resort to street protests. Some of them are reportedly being recruited by both the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) and the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) to fight in Liberia. The confirmation of these reports would be cause for serious concern, as this would pose a threat to Sierra Leone's stability, both in the near future and in the longer term.

5. The large numbers of unemployed youths who are mainly concentrated in urban centres throughout the country present another long-term problem. In this context, the violent incidents that occurred in Freetown on 18 July underscored the volatility of the city. Recently, the Sierra Leone police removed one potential source of insecurity from the capital by evicting some 500 former Civil Defence Forces (CDF) combatants who were occupying a hotel. However, unless economic activity is rapidly revived and employment opportunities are created in the near future, the concentration of unemployed youths and frustrated former combatants in the urban areas could become a source of further instability.

6. Despite the Government's ongoing efforts to regulate diamond-mining activities, security remains a concern in the diamond-producing areas of the country. Competition for access to these resources continues to create community tensions. While the arrangements put in place by the Government of Sierra Leone for issuing diamond-mining licences through chiefdom officials are a positive step, they have not yet succeeded in curbing illegal mining. In addition, the local government structures in these areas are yet to be fully installed, and the police personnel and resources are sparsely deployed. Thuggish youth groups are attempting to fill the vacuum created by the absence of firm Government control. These groups have been particularly assertive in Kono district and Tongo Fields, where, as mentioned above, they have attempted to expel residents who originally came from other districts.

7. The challenges faced by the Government in the efforts to consolidate its authority in the provinces go beyond the diamond areas. Although Government officials have been deployed to the districts and most paramount chiefs have returned to their areas, the district administrations still lack adequate capacity to deliver basic services to the population. Furthermore, the effectiveness of the administration of law and order in the districts continues to be hampered by logistical challenges, as well as by the inadequate

strength of the police force and the limited coverage of the judicial and penal systems. This is a very serious gap, considering that the primary objective of the deployment of UNAMSIL throughout the country was to facilitate the restoration of State authority.

8. A major objective of the disarmament process in Sierra Leone was to dismantle the military apparatus of CDF and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and encourage the latter to transform itself into a political party that would pursue its interests through a democratic political process. By all assessments, the military structures of RUF inside Sierra Leone have crumbled after disarmament, and the movement has formally transformed itself into the Revolutionary United Front Party (RUFPP). However, the prospects of keeping the recently formed RUFPP in the mainstream of the democratic process are now uncertain. There are indications of disarray within the party, and its influence has continued to decline following its poor performance in the elections of 14 May. Citing financial difficulties, the party has closed some of its main offices in the districts, and its Secretary-General, who was also its candidate in the presidential elections, resigned from the party on 13 August. The implications of these developments for the country's stability remain unclear, and UNAMSIL is closely monitoring them. The current RUFPP leaders, however, have said that they take these developments as a challenge to reorganize and ensure their party's survival. UNAMSIL also continues to monitor CDF, whose local command structures have remained intact in some areas where, in the absence of the police force, they have continued to usurp the enforcement of law and order." (UN Security Council, 5 September 2002)

### **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
- In July 2002, Britain withdraws 200 troops, leaving 120 to continue training the armed forces

"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)

"Britain on Sunday [28 July] withdrew 200 troops from Sierra Leone but left behind 120 to continue training the country's armed forces. The troops were among 1,000 Royal Marines sent to Sierra Leone in May 2000 to help government forces battle rebels. The marines have been gradually withdrawn following the end of Sierra Leone's 10-year civil war." (IRIN, 29 July 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 militis 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 an 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 chief's, 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

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### **Assistance and protection needs of returning IDPs, as well as returning refugees, are not being met, reports MSF (April 2002)**

- MSF claims that the rushing of the repatriation process, motivated by a political agenda, is endangering the health and security of hundreds of thousands of people
- Guarantees of safe passage, facilitation of transport and care for the most vulnerable have not been upheld, according to MSF
- MSF further says that relief packages given to IDPs and returnees in areas of return are inadequate

"In advance of the May 14 elections in Sierra Leone, internally displaced persons and recently repatriated Sierra Leonean refugees are being sent back to their regions of origin. However, the rushing of this repatriation process is endangering the health and security of hundreds of thousands of people. Guarantees of safe passage, facilitation of transport, and care for the most vulnerable have not been upheld.

The entire 15,000 inhabitants of Blama, a camp for the displaced near Kenema, were sent home last weekend. These displaced had registered to leave after the elections on the official lists drawn up by the government and the United Nations. However, the population was suddenly sent home, stopping at transit sites set up in Daru and Segbwema - a two-day walk from Kenema - and then on to their villages. There is no government protection and no UN representatives are present along the route. In addition, no assistance or medical facilities have been set up along the route by the authorities or the UN.

This week just over 6,000 displaced persons from Mile 91 camp have had to leave for Makeni without any assistance. Pregnant women have had to walk because they had not managed to register on the list. One of them gave birth under difficult circumstances upon arrival. This population expected to get the aid promised them at the transit sites. Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) teams have visited a number of transit sites where there is a lack of water and medical facilities. Relief packages that are being distributed for their return - two months worth of food, cooking utensils, soap, plastic sheeting, and two blankets - is little adapted to their re-installation needs (e.g. no tools or seeds). These repatriated must then walk a further two days, or sell their goods to pay for transport, to reach their home region, and from there, their chiefdom. Some of these chiefdoms are situated along the border with Liberia, an area that UN agencies consider too unsafe for their own expatriate staff.

Displaced persons have departed Blama and Jembe camps, in some cases leaving behind children so that they can continue with their schooling. Parents have paid expensive school fees and know that there are not yet any schools in their home villages. UNHCR does not consider that they have an obligation towards these children, as they should have returned home with their families. These children are therefore without assistance or protection.

Motivated by a political agenda, the haphazard and rushed repatriation process for some 250,000 people is jeopardizing the protection and assistance that these people are due. The promises made to this population in order to encourage them to return home voluntarily, have not been kept.

This situation is especially troubling in light of the recently published UNHCR survey of sexual exploitation of displaced persons and refugees in the region that highlighted the vulnerability and lack of protection of this population.

MSF has set up emergency medical posts in Segbwena and Makeni to help the most vulnerable. In Makeni and Matotoka, the MSF teams are providing drinking water to the displaced." (MSF, 12 April 2002)

### **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)

## Health

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### **War has pushed Sierra Leone to the brink of an HIV/ AIDS epidemic (July 2002)**

- Survey reveals 4.9 percent of Sierra Leoneans of reproductive age are HIV positive (5 percent signifies an epidemic)
- The situation has been exacerbated, if not caused, by the civil war: the widespread sexual abuse of women and girls by various parties, the increase in commercial sex work, the destruction of the health care system, and the mass exodus of skilled health workers

"Officially at peace since January 2002, the West African country of Sierra Leone is struggling to put a decade of unspeakable brutality behind it and start healing. The wounds sustained by the nation of approximately 5.4 million people tell a story often heard in conflict-ridden sub-Saharan Africa; a story of mass killings, rape, abduction, and diseases running rampant.

But few conflicts, even in Africa, have been so deeply traumatizing as Sierra Leone's, with women and girls being systematically targeted and the arms and legs of suspected enemies amputated by machete in the thousands. Now, as the country limps toward peace and reconciliation, a major obstacle of just such efforts was recently detected in the bloodstreams of 4.9 per cent of Sierra Leoneans of reproductive age: the HIV virus. The survey, carried out by the US Centre for Disease Control (CDC) in March/April 2002, effectively identified the country as being on the brink of an epidemic, which is defined by a country crossing the five-per cent line of HIV prevalence.

'Thousands of women and girls were abducted, kept in captivity, raped and abused by the warring factions,' says Dr. Mamadou P. Diallo, UNFPA's representative in Sierra Leone. 'As a result of the war, two out of every five Sierra Leoneans were displaced and the health system destroyed. The only thing left standing in Sierra Leone after the war is hope.'

HIV/AIDS spreads much faster in areas of violent conflict because many levels of security are breached simultaneously by the conditions that follow in war's wake. Post-conflict situations also pose significant pitfalls due to large numbers of combatants demobilizing, many with no other livelihood than the soldier's, and the introduction of peacekeeping forces into local populations - Sierra Leone has the world's largest peacekeeping force in UN history, UNAMSIL, estimated at 17,500 troops.

'Communities are uprooted by conflict and people lose the immediate security as guaranteed by family and friends. At the same time, they lose food security, health services as well as their livelihoods. When you lose those, you lack the most essential means of protection against infection with HIV. Especially

destitute women and girls are at risk because many resort to commercial sex work as a survival strategy or become victims of sexual exploitation or trafficking,' Dr. Diallo explains.

According to Dr. Diallo, the country has long witnessed a precipitous increase in promiscuous sexual behaviour, in the number of commercial sex workers (CSWs) and of other risky behaviours among young people especially. Young people who feel they are left with few life options espouse such behaviours because 'they no longer believe in their own survival or a chance of a positive future.' He warns that the young generations needed to build a new future can easily be lost to the virus if measures are not put in place to protect their health and support positive, income-generating activities.

Exacerbating the condition and inspiring fears of a widening epidemic, a mass exodus of skilled professionals during the war has left Sierra Leone with a very limited number of health workers. But, Dr. Diallo notes, some optimism is warranted because 'the grass roots in the country still believe they can win the fight against HIV/AIDS locally', village by village, district by district, if provided with the information and means to do so." (UNFPA, 19 July 2002)

### **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 hospital/patient 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)

### **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)

### **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**

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### **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

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### **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)

## Shelter

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### **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

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### **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

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### **Returning IDPs face serious obstacles to achieving agricultural self-sufficiency (April 2002)**

- Sierra Leone's agriculture-centred economy requires adequate short- and medium-term assistance to help the transition from food aid dependency to agricultural self-sufficiency, says Refugees International
- RI highlights the problems of insufficiency of food rations for returning IDPs and refugees, the lack of agricultural inputs from agencies due to funding constraints, and the difficulties for returnees in starting agricultural production
- Longer-term, assistance is required to rebuild roads to improve market access, micro-credit support to small-scale producers, and community-based programs in support of cash crops

"Sierra Leone's conflict was rooted in high unemployment and lack of economic opportunity. Despite large-scale international involvement, the country's peace remains tenuous, while these conditions still prevail. Sierra Leone's agriculture-centered economy — farmers make up 85% of the population — demands that the international community respond with adequate short- and medium-term assistance to catalyze the transition from dependency on dry rations to agricultural self-sufficiency.

*Refugees International* is concerned about three problems related to food security for Sierra Leonean returnees: 1) the two-month ration may be insufficient; 2) many agencies cannot provide enough agricultural inputs to vulnerable families who return home due to a funding shortfall; and 3) the tens of thousands of returnees going home now and after the elections may be at a serious disadvantage in starting agriculture production for this planting season.

Due to the upcoming May 14th elections and the recent declaration that Sierra Leone is secure, the international community has expedited the return of refugees and IDPs to their places of origin. Because of these developments, there has been a push to return people in time to vote and to plant before the rains begin in June. The resulting repatriation process has been frenzied, with inadequate preparations for transport and emergency medical care en route. These difficulties underscore the need to ensure coordinated and well-funded support for returnee communities.

Approximately 250,000 refugees and IDPs will have returned by July to areas of the country that were thoroughly decimated by the war. Almost 90% of the infrastructure was destroyed, most wells were contaminated, few health clinics remain intact, and farmland that has not been worked on for 11 years is overgrown by bush. The majority of the displaced were from the agricultural districts of Kono and Kailahun. While Kono is most known as the country's source of mining activity, before the war farmers made up more than 70% of its rural population.

To help in the transition home, all returnees receive a two-month food ration with the idea that as rations run out returnees will avail themselves of transitional agricultural programs to sustain them before the first harvest in October. However, refugee returnees from Guinea who had returned to Kailahun reported to *RI* that they had to sell some of their rations to supplement their UNHCR travel allowance. Transportation from the drop-off point in one chiefdom of Kailahun (Daru) to their homes in the interior of Kailahun costs double what UNHCR has provided. Situations like this have raised many aid workers' concerns that a

two-month food ration is inadequate. One international aid worker stated, 'Normally I don't support food handouts but the situation is dire. These people need more than a two-month supply.' UNHCR may ask donors to support a four- to six-month ration for refugee returnees who are going home after the planting season. If the food rations for refugee returnees increase, agencies must increase the food package for IDPs to ensure parity.

Regardless of whether food rations are increased, transitional agricultural programs — such as provision of seeds-and-tools and food-for-work — require additional funding and should target a wider range of people than are currently registered. A number of agencies are already facing shortfalls in these programs to cover the vulnerable caseload, and have not registered additional returnees and farmers who are able to procure their own seeds but may still need food assistance until the first harvest. Though the Ministry of Agriculture, supported by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), had planned on agencies to provide seeds and tools to 50% of the vulnerable caseload, agencies can only provide for 20 to 30%. For instance, one agency had planned to cover 17,000 vulnerable households but only received funding for 7,500 families. FAO aims to reduce this shortfall, but only received funding for half of its 2002 consolidated appeal for \$1.2 million for seeds and tools. Thus, FAO predicts that tens of thousands of vulnerable households will not receive seeds-and-tools assistance. Other transitional agricultural shortfalls include the fact that even agencies with enough food in their pipeline for food-for-work programs lack the necessary tools to carry out these programs.

Returnees arriving now and after elections may be especially vulnerable. Most agencies offering seeds-and-tools programs completed registration last month so that communities could prepare their lands before the start of the rainy season. However, returnees could still take advantage of this type of support for the second planting season this fall. An international NGO reported to *RI* that '500 to 1,000 IDP returnees are arriving daily in Koidu, Kono District, and no one is giving them seeds and tools.' A UN representative added, 'The best plots of land will already be taken, so returnees arriving in later months may not have adequate land for agriculture.'

A final cause for concern for all returnees is the upcoming July to September hungry season before the first harvest. While some people feel that traditional coping mechanisms will be adequate, in September 2001 World Vision found that the global malnutrition rate for children under five years of age in Kono was 17%, and severe acute malnutrition was 4.7%. Although Sierra Leone's prior insecurity and lack of health care could account in part for last year's high malnutrition rates, these figures still indicate of the impact of the hungry season. Therefore, agencies must monitor food security and provide vulnerable group feeding to get through this period.

While the afore-mentioned support is vital to ensure short-term food security, additional assistance to revitalize the agricultural sector must begin now. This assistance should include rebuilding of roads to improve market access, micro-credit support to small-scale producers, and community-based programs that support cash crops such as coffee, cocoa, and palm oil." (*RI*, 22 April 2002)

### **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

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### **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

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### **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

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### A total of some 230,000 registered IDPs resettled since April 2001 (July 2002)

- IDPs have been resettled in four phases, starting in April 2001, in accordance with the Sierra Leone government's resettlement strategy
- A total of about 52,000 IDPs were resettled in the first two phases, ending in February 2002
- When virtually the entire country was officially declared 'safe for resettlement' by March 2002, Phase Three of IDP Resettlement took place in March and April 2002, with some 158,000 IDPs registered to resettle
- Resettlement was suspended due to elections in May 2002, and recommenced in June with Phase Four, during which approximately 11,500 IDPs were resettled
- As of July 2002, just over 12,000 registered IDPs were still to be resettled - some to the few remaining 'unsafe' chiefdoms in border areas

### "Background

The Government of Sierra Leone Resettlement Strategy was developed in consultation with partner agencies and approved in December 2000. Since then NaCSA (formerly NCRRR) have worked in close collaboration with humanitarian partners to plan and implement the Strategy.

Under the Resettlement Strategy each IDP family are provided transportation to their chosen area of resettlement, a two-month food ration for their family and a non-food item package. Once in areas of return support is provided through community-based programmes mainly comprising shelter projects, seeds and tools distributions and food for work initiatives provided by a range of agencies.

Responsibilities	Principal Resettlement Agencies
Coordination	NaCSA and OCHA
Transportation	IOM with support from UNAMSIL & PAE LWF
Health care	MSF-H, MSF-B, SL Red Cross, Ministry of Health & IOM
Food	WFP, CARE, World Vision and CRS
Non-Food Items	ICRC, CARE with support from UNHCR

### Early Phases of IDP Resettlement in 2001

Areas under secure government control were first declared safe for resettlement in January 2001. This set in motion the resettlement process for IDPs within Sierra Leone with the first phase of resettlement taking place between April to June 2001. As the peace process in Sierra Leone advanced and disarmament was completed in each district, the country rapidly opened up creating the appropriate environment for a phased approach to resettlement. The second phase of resettlement therefore took place between Dec 2001 and February 2002 to Kambia and Port Loko districts.

PHASE	DATE	RESETTLEMENT AREAS	TOTAL RESETTLED
Phase 1	April 2001	Freetown & Western Area	

		Two chiefdoms in Port Loko District 12 chiefdoms in Kenema District Southern Province	42,000
Phase 1	June 2001		10,000
Phase 2	Dec 2001	Kambia District Port Loko District	3,000
Phase 2	Feb 2002		4,000

Note: These number have been rounded up for the purpose of general information provision

### **Phase 3 of IDP Resettlement – April 2002**

The third phase of resettlement, beginning on 28 March, has been the most complex. With the completion of the DDR process and the formal recognition of the end of civil war, President Kabbah declared virtually the whole country “safe for resettlement”. (Now only eight chiefdoms in Kailahun District, marking the border with Liberia and Guinea, are not yet considered suitable for resettlement.) Consequently resettlement was possible to all six newly accessible districts in the country, but the eight border chiefdoms in Kailahun. A total of 158,360 people registered to resettle. As many IDPs were expressing a desire to resettle immediately, but, it was logistically impossible to move all IDPs at the same time, a dual programme was developed running facilitated (transport provided) and voluntary resettlement (no transport assistance) in parallel.

Voluntary resettlement ran throughout the month of April with distribution of resettlement packages in 17 separate centres in the six districts of return. At the same time 12 facilitated movements were run concurrently resettling IDPs to Bombali, Kono and Kailahun Districts. During April an estimated 100,000 people were resettled under the voluntary programme and a further 30,000 benefitted from facilitated resettlement. Of those receiving transport 9,563 people were moved from Bo and Kenema camps by UNAMSIL Banlog trucks.

### **Phase 4 of IDP Resettlement**

Resettlement activities were suspended during the month of May for the elections, so the remaining 24,000 people waiting to return home were scheduled to be resettled in June. However, a shortfall of NFI in-country, together with the on-set of the rains made conditions for resettlement of the full caseload at this time difficult. It was decided, therefore to offer three further phases of resettlement; one in June, an additional phase in July when the NFI stock is in-country and for those not wanting to resettle until the rains have abated, a final phase towards the end of September, early October.

The fourth phase of resettlement was undertaken last month in June from the Western Area Camps to Koidu, Magburaka, Makali and Masingbi. Under this phase 2,237 families and approximately 11,500 individual beneficiaries were resettled. Of this number a total of 4,031 people received transportation from UNAMSIL and IOM.

### **Completing IDP Resettlement**

There now remains little more than 11,000 IDPs to be formally resettled. With the onset of the rains, this group, principally comprising IDPs residing in the Tonkolili District and IDPs in Western Area camps from Mile 91, have the option to resettle in July, if they wish, or in late September / early October. Those choosing to resettle in late September will continue to receive support in their camps or host community areas.

A small number of IDPs (less than 1,500) who originate from one of the border chiefdoms in Kailahun, remain to be resettled. They too will continue to reside in their camp areas in the Western Area where they will receive ongoing support until facilitated resettlement can be offered. It is hoped that this can be done in September/ October completing the resettlement of IDPs in Sierra Leone.

As the camps have been vacated an internal consolidation process has been undertaken and some camps in Bo and Kenema have been closed. Once resettlement has been completed throughout the country all IDPs camps will be formally closed.

#### **Ongoing Returnee Resettlement Programme**

Since the beginning of the year UNHCR has been gradually resettling returnees, who are hosted in temporary settlements, to their home areas. In March UNHCR also began repatriating refugees from Guinea and Liberia, assisting them to return directly home. Since March over 30,000 returnees have been resettled and close to 16,500 Sierra Leonean refugees repatriated (8,500 from Guinea and 8,000 from Liberia). UNAMSIL have supported this programme providing the much needed trucking capacity.

Presently close to 20,000 returnees continue to reside in temporary settlements or the host communities in Barri Cheifdom. Assistance will continue to be offered to those interested in returning to their home areas. The repatriation process from Guinea, however, has for the meantime, been suspended so that resources and efforts can be channelled towards responding to the current emergency influx of refugees from Liberia.

It is estimated that about 150,000 refugees continue to seek asylum in the sub-region, who will require facilitated repatriation and resettlement assistance when suitable conditions prevail." (UN DPKO, July 2002)

#### **MSF criticizes resettlement process in Sierra Leone (May 2002)**

- MSF charges that people's basic rights have been trodden on - by the Sierra Leone government, the UN, and its implementing partners - in a process that more closely resembles eviction than resettlement
- MSF criticises the return of IDPs (and refugees) to areas with no infrastructure and no basic social services
- MSF also warns of the danger of disease and malnutrition in areas of return

"When talking of the current resettlement exercise, it must be clear that at this point it is a logistical program and not a true program of resettlement. This is due to a lack of respect for the basic rights of the people to be able to choose their fate, and to be treated with dignity at each stage of their return. These issues have presented themselves in different ways and are the results of a number of problems.

For the majority of the people returning to their homes today in Sierra Leone, they are going back to nothing. Their houses have been burned to the ground and entire villages destroyed. There is often no safe drinking water available, no medical facilities, no schools and no jobs. This is especially true in the harder-hit rural areas on the eastern and northern parts of the country, where also the bulk of the re-settlers are being sent. Today in Sierra Leone very few projects are in place for installing basic services in many of the areas where the displaced are being resettled.

Due to the way this program is being carried out, people's basic rights – to choose when to go home, to be transported there, to be given appropriate and sufficient supplies to make the transition – are not being protected. This has resulted in a process that more closely resembles eviction than resettlement.

The problems are found at every step of the way, as various agencies, primarily the UN and their implementing partners, have not taken up their responsibilities. The aftereffects of such a slipshod program will continue to be felt for months. As the rainy season begins we can expect the spread of waterborne diseases, such as cholera and shigellosis, due to the lack of water and sanitation in most of the resettlement

areas. There is also the risk of malnutrition as people are given insufficient food to cover the ensuing hunger gap, and there is no adequate agricultural plan in place to cover their needs." (MSF, 21 May 2002)

## **Geographic distribution of IDP resettlement (March 2002)**

### **" Nationwide resettlement**

The third phase of resettlement has now finally begun. With the declaration of 'safety for resettlement' in all but nine chiefdoms in early January, the humanitarian community have been challenged to facilitate the resettlement of over 120,000 IDPs across the country. Due to forthcoming elections there can be no facilitated resettlement between the April 30 and the end of the election period. The National Electoral Commission will allow registered voters to transfer their vote from one district to another up until the end of April. To ensure that the resettlement process does not disenfranchise any resettling IDPs, there will be no facilitated resettlement between the end of April and the 20th May. The final stages of the resettlement process will therefore be executed in two phases. Phase three will continue throughout the month of April and phase four will complete the resettlement process in late May and June.

### **Voluntary Resettlement**

A voluntary resettlement programme will run alongside the facilitated movement. This has been set-up to allow IDPs who wish to return home now and not wait until their facilitated move after the elections, to do so and benefit from their resettlement package. Voluntary Distribution Centres have been established in the six districts of return from where resettlers can collect their resettlement package throughout the month of April.

### **Distribution Centres**

Bombali: Makeni, Kamakwie  
Tonkolili: Yele, Makali, Masingbi, Magburaka  
Koinadugu: Kabala  
Kenema: Kenema, Niawama, Mano Junction  
Kono: Sewafe, Koidu  
Kailahun: Segbwema, Daru

### **Registrations**

Registrations for the final phases of resettlement were undertaken in all camps and host community areas across the country in the middle part of March. All resettlement partners participated in the process, which was completed in the final week of March. This data is now being processed in order to support the movement and resettlement package distributions.

### **UNAMSIL support and the first moves to Kailahun**

UNAMSIL are supporting the resettlement programme in the East of the country through the use the Bangladeshi Battalion trucking fleet. The first moves under the third phase begun in the last week of March with the movement of 207 people from the Bo camps to Daru and Segbwema. The Kailahun resettlement preparation is now continuing throughout the month of April, moving resettlers from the Kenema and Western Area Camps & Host Community areas. The operation is due to be completed on April 28.

### **Phase three of resettlement - concurrent operations across the country**

Complementing the Kailahun operation are four additional movements of IDPs, which will run concurrently throughout the month.

#### *Kailahun Operation*

Kenema Camps to Kailahun District (UNAMSIL) 3 - 21 April

Western Area Camps to Kailahun (IOM) 20- 26 April

Host Communities to Kailahun (IOM) 27-28 April

#### *Kono Operation*

Kenema Camps to Kono (IOM) 9 - 29 April  
Bo Camps to Kono (IOM) 7-28 April  
*Bombali and Koinadugu Operation*  
Western Area to Bombali & Koinadugu (IOM) 6-19 April  
Bo & Kenema Camps to Bombali (NaCSA) 20 April  
*Kenema Operation*  
Western Area Camps to Kenema (IOM) 20- 26 April  
Host Communities to Kenema (IOM) 27-28 April  
*Tonkolili Operation*  
Bo & Kenema Camps to Tonkolili (NaCSA) 25 April

#### **Fourth and final phase of IDP resettlement**

The fourth and final phase of resettlement will recommence as soon as the elections have been completed. Dates for this will be confirmed by mid April.

Western Area Camps to Kono  
Host Community Areas to Kono  
Bo Camps to Kono  
Western Area Camps to Tonkolili  
Host Community Areas to Tonkolili  
Host Community Areas to Bombali " (UN OCHA, 31 March 2002)

#### **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 Lungi 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)

## HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

### Limitation of access caused by the conflict

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#### **All but two of country's 149 chiefdoms officially declared "safe" (August 2002)**

"The National Resettlement Assessment Committee met on August 22 to review recommendations made from the Kailahun District Assessment Committee to evaluate the security situation in the last remaining eight chiefdoms in the district to be classed as "safe" for assisted repatriation. The following chiefdoms were declared safe for assisted resettlement: Penguia, Kissi Teng, Kissi Karma, Dia, Luawa and Upper Bambara. Malema and Kissi Tongi remain unsafe for resettlement." (UN OCHA, 31 August 2002)

#### **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

## Government response

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

- Sierra Leone government's resettlement strategy published in December 2000 and revised in October 2001
- Returning refugees assisted by UNHCR to be given assistance in parity to that offered to registered IDPs
- All but two of the country's 149 chiefdoms are officially declared 'safe for resettlement' by August 2002

"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)

## International political response

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### Largest UN military mission in the world plans to downsize (2002)

- Full deployment of UNAMSIL takes place in November 2001 - with a total of 17,500 troops deployed around the country
- In March 2002, the UN Security Council extends UNAMSIL's mandate for a further six months, and the mission prepares to downsize
- Fears are expressed in Sierra Leone that UNAMSIL's withdrawal would return the country to war
- UN Secretary-General stresses that the capacity of national police and armed forces must be strengthened in order to avoid a security vacuum

"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)

"The United Nations is to start downsizing its military presence in Sierra Leone in December, the UN force Commander, Lt-Gen Daniel Ishmael Opande, told IRIN on Thursday.

The force is the largest UN military mission in the world, consisting of 17,500 troops and military observers from more than 37 countries. Another 322 international and 552 national civilian staff work within the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL).

'I have some ideas on how the downsizing will occur, but it is not yet finalized,' Opande said. 'We hope to start withdrawing the troops from December. It will be a phased withdrawal to avoid creating a security vacuum in Sierra Leone, but will depend on the situation in the country.'

As part of preparations for eventual downsizing, the UN secretariat dispatched a military team to Sierra Leone from 9 to 14 June to help UNAMSIL draw up the withdrawal proposals." (IRIN, 28 June 2002)

'The world cannot maintain the UN forces here forever. Sooner than later we have to go,' Margaret Novicki, UN spokesperson in Freetown, said. The downsizing of the UN Mission in Sierra Leone, UNAMSIL, is likely to begin in December, she added.

UNAMSIL is a multi-million dollar operation. 'Frankly, there are other priorities as well competing for the same funding,' said a humanitarian worker.

The UN Security Council extended the mandate of UNAMSIL by six months on 28 March 2002. The force, the largest UN military mission in the world, literally runs Sierra Leone's security. During elections in May it deployed 11,000 troops in 200 high-risk areas throughout the country. International civilian police were also provided to help the local police develop operational plans for the elections.

UNAMSIL polices cities and villages, conducts border patrols, and provides logistical support to government forces. Officials fear that its withdrawal would create 'a serious security vacuum'. However, diplomats say the longer the force stays the more dependent Sierra Leone's own security becomes. 'It is like baby-sitting,' said an African diplomat. 'The sooner you let the baby take the first step the better.'

At a meeting on 27 June in Kenema between UN and government officials, district officials repeatedly pleaded that pulling out the force 'would return war to Sierra Leone'. UN officials tried to allay their fears. [...]

The Security Council is expected to discuss in September detailed proposals for downsizing the troops. However, Annan told the council in his 19 June report on Sierra Leone: 'A crucial element in planning the anticipated adjustments is the strengthening of the capacities, accountability and loyalties of both the police and army of Sierra Leone, in order to avoid a vacuum.' (IRIN, 2 July 2002)

"...the successful completion of the disarmament process last January and the stability prevailing since the May presidential and parliamentary elections have created new circumstances that now make it possible to consider adjustments to the size and composition of UNAMSIL. However, in order to ensure that the process of downsizing the Mission does not jeopardize the progress achieved so far in stabilizing Sierra Leone, steps must be taken to minimize the remaining threats, and support for the consolidation of peace in the country should be maintained, as called for by the Security Council in its resolution 1400 (2002) of 28 March 2002. The task of downsizing the Mission, while at the same time consolidating the peace and addressing the remaining security challenges, will be a delicate one requiring careful assessment and balancing. To this end, specific benchmarks that should guide the envisaged drawdown of UNAMSIL have been identified.

13. The paramount concern in implementing the adjustments to the Mission will be to avoid creating a security vacuum in the country. Consequently, progress in building up the capacity of the Sierra Leone police and army will constitute the key security benchmark that should determine the pace of the drawdown process. The other benchmarks will consist of priority tasks aimed at minimizing the security challenges described earlier, and include completing the reintegration of former combatants, consolidating State authority throughout the country and restoring effective Government control over diamond mining." (UN Security Council, 5 September 2002)

### **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 extend 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 Lomé 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)*

## **International donor response**

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### **US Government provides more than US\$ 37 million for humanitarian assistance in Sierra Leone (June 2002)**

- US government channels US\$37 million through various agencies to fund programmes in the fields of agriculture and food security, health and nutrition, water and sanitation, shelter, and coordination and logistics

Sierra Leone - FY 2002
USAID\$32,861,817
USAID/OFDA \$6,635,391
AAH/USA: Nutrition, Water/SanitationWestern Area and Northern Province \$1,151,678
Africare: Agriculture, HealthTonkolili, Kailahun \$799,999
CRS: Agriculture, Health, ShelterNorthern, Eastern, Southern Provinces \$1,184,579
FAO: AgricultureCountry-wide \$200,000
MERLIN: Health, Water/SanitationFreetown, Tonkolili, and Kenema Districts \$412,172
IMC: HealthPort Loko, Kambia District \$390,912
UN OCHA: Coordination, InformationCountry-wide \$300,000
WVI: AgricultureKono District and Southern Province \$995,173
WVI: HealthKono District \$700,878
WFP: Air SupportCountry-wide \$500,000
USAID/FFP\$26,226,426
CARE: P.L. 480 Title II Food Assistance - 6,530 MT \$6,650,334
CRS: P.L. 480 Title II Food Assistance - 12,900 MT \$7,900,700
WVI: P.L. 480 Title II Food Assistance -9,060 MT \$6,009,000
WFP: P.L. 480 Title II Food Assistance - 7,200 MT \$5,756,392
STATE/PRM*\$4,336,648
ARC: Micro-credit \$1,036,648
UNHCR: Refugee Support \$2,840,000
IFRC: Refugee Support \$460,000
Total USG Humanitarian Assistance to Sierra Leone in FY 2002 \$37,198,465

*\*These contributions are in addition to State/PRM's unearmarked contribution to UNHCR for Africa, totaling \$20.1 million to date in FY 2002. (USAID, 12 June 2002)*

*For full report, covering Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea, [click here](#)*

### **Assistance from African Development Bank includes resettling IDPs and improving their living standards (June 2002)**

"The African Development Bank Group (ADB) has approved debt relief amounting to US\$ 42.81 million in end-2000 net present value terms (about US\$ 99 million in nominal terms) to Sierra Leone, which reached its decision point on March 20, 2002 under the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. With this debt relief, Sierra Leone will be released from up to 80 percent of its annual debt service obligations to the ADB during the interim period and will thus have more resources for poverty reduction.

The main objective of the ADB Group's assistance strategy in Sierra Leone is the improvement of governance, revival of the economy, extension of social services and consolidation of peace. This strategy relies on a programme that focuses on improving the living standards of the most vulnerable groups, such as the returnees, refugees and the most vulnerable victims of war. It also involves resettling the displaced population and designing long-term development programmes. This programme will be achieved through the adoption of measures to enhance growth, provide opportunity for the poor to participate in income-generating activities and better service delivery to the poor." (ADB, 12 June 2002)

### **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, €7 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 (€1 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

*Up-to-date summaries of CAP requirements and contributions can be accessed on the financial tracking system of the UN OCHA ReliefWeb [\[external link\]](#)*

"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
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>88,624,925</b>

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
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>88,624,925</b>

" (UN November 2001)

## **Selected activities of UN agencies (2001-2002)**

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### **WFP food aid still essential in Sierra Leone (2002)**

- WFP provides food rations to some 400,000 people in Sierra Leone, more than half of them children
- Food aid is essential for people returning to their devastated home areas
- WFP offers food-for-work projects to help restart farming communities

- Ex-combatants also benefit from WFP food aid and food-for-training programmes

"Adama Kamala adjusts her breast with the stumps of her forearm to feed her baby boy.

Rebels belonging to Sierra Leone's feared Revolutionary United Front (RUF) hacked off Adama's hands with a machete in January 1999, as they launched an offensive on the capital Freetown.

'I asked them: why are you cutting my arms? They said: so you can go back to your president and ask him to give you a new pair of hands,' says Adama.

Adama was 14 at the time. Now after three-and-a-half years in a special camp, she is home again in Masiaka, about 56 km from Freetown.

Sierra Leone's brutal war was officially declared over in January 2002 under a UN-brokered peace deal, allowing aid workers to start resettling people like Adama, who were displaced by the conflict.

'I have no alternative but to forget and get on with the future,' she says, standing amid the ruins of her old home and life.

## **NO LOOKING BACK**

There has been precious little peace and stability in the Mano River Union countries for the past 10-years. Fighting still simmers in northern Liberia, the Parrot Beak area of Guinea was a no-go area until 2001, while Sierra Leone's conflict lasted 11-years.

Now that a fragile peace at last has taken hold in one of the three countries, Adama and thousands of other Sierra Leoneans cannot afford to look back: their country ranks as the world's poorest, while its roads & basic infrastructure are virtually non-existent.

'The entire fabric of Sierra Leone's society needs to be rebuilt - and fast, if peace is to survive,' says Ramin Rafirasme, regional spokesman for WFP which provides food rations to some 400,000 people in Sierra Leone.

As thousands of people return to their shattered towns and villages, food aid is more essential than ever to building a peaceful future:

WFP rations help re-settlers like Adama pick up the pieces of their old lives.

The agency's food also gives hope to Sierra Leone's next generation, reaching over 200,000 children through free school lunches and supplementary feeding of the severely malnourished.

Food for work projects, together with seeds and tools provided by other humanitarian agencies, are also helping farming communities lay the foundations for producing their own food.

## **TARGETING EX-COMBATANTS**

Most significantly, however, WFP food aid has been targeted at ex-combatants, who handed over their weapons under the UN peace deal.

The agency has supported all the former soldiers' food needs in demobilisation camps, while food-for-training programmes have enabled the wounded to learn new skills to smooth their re-integration into society.

'It's food for peace,' says Rafirasme, 'If peace doesn't pay for ex-soldiers, they might pick up their arms again and Sierra Leone would fall back into West Africa's all too familiar cycle of violence and despair.' (WFP, 3 September 2002)

### **UNICEF and partners rehabilitate the education sector (2002)**

- Education facilities are scarce, especially in the newly accessible areas
- UNICEF, among others, is supporting the expansion of primary schools, supplying equipment and learning materials, and refresher training for teachers
- UNICEF, in collaboration with the government and NRC, continues to support specific education programmes in primary schools for children who did not attend school due to the civil war, or for other reasons

"Availability of education services is identified by many returning IDPs and refugees as a criterion for their return to their home areas. Education also plays a crucial role in successful reintegration of child ex-combatants. Yet, availability of education facilities, particularly in the newly accessible areas, is limited. UNICEF is supporting expansion of primary schools with renovations, supply of teaching/learning materials and furniture, and refresher training for teachers. In 2002, priority is being given to schools in Kambia, Kailahun, Kono and Bombali districts. Rehabilitation is nearing completion of 11 schools in Kenema, Port Loko and Pujehun Districts that began in 2001. Six schools in Kambia District should also be completed by end-June. While assessments for 28 schools in Kambia, Kailahun, Kono, and Bombali have been completed, funding is available for only 18 schools at this time. Five thousand furniture sets are being supplied to schools in Kono, Kailahun, Bombali, Kambia and Koinadugu Districts. UNICEF is also partnering with Ministry of Youth, Education and Sports (MYES) and several NGOs on a Teacher Development Initiative in 14 schools in rural Western Area to increase child-centred, participatory teaching and to integrate peace education, HIV/AIDS, human rights and girl education in the primary school curriculum. UNICEF also continues to support non-formal primary education (NFPE). Learning and teaching supplies were distributed to 269 centres catering to some 30,000 children. An evaluation of the NFPE programme is currently in process.

UNICEF in collaboration with MYES and Norwegian Refugee Council continue to support the Rapid Response Education Programme (RREP) and Complementary Rapid Education for Primary Schools (CREPS) programme for children who did not attend school due to the civil war or other reasons. The RREP is a six-month programme designed to enable children to make the adjustment back into the formal system. Some 180 classes are currently operating in Kambia, Kailahun, Kono, Kenema, Bo and Port Loko Districts. The CREPS programme targets over-age (10-14 years), out-of-school children. It provides a 6-year primary education in just three years. Currently, 160 CREPS classes are running in Kenema, Kailahun and Port Loko Districts, benefiting over 6,760 children. In the coming months, it will expand to Kambia and Kono Districts. An additional 440 classes are planned to start in September to benefit a further 17,000 children who otherwise might not have an opportunity to receive primary school education." (UNICEF, 29 May 2002)

### **UN sponsors forensic team to investigate human rights violations in Sierra Leone (June 2002)**

- UNAMSIL Human Rights Section, with OHCHR, facilitates the visit to Sierra Leone of an Argentinian NGO dedicated to forensic investigation of human rights violations
- One of the NGO's aims was to map the sites of mass graves, with a view to eventually supporting the activities of the Sierra Leone Special Court and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

"The Argentinian Forensic Anthropology Team (EAAF), a non-governmental organization dedicated to applying forensic anthropology to the investigation of human rights violations, is visiting Sierra Leone to carry out preliminary investigations into mass graves of people killed during the country's 10-year civil conflict.

The team, whose visit is being facilitated by the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) Human Rights Section and funded by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), is expected to map the sites of mass graves, assess the amount of the forensic expertise needed for further investigations, and give advice on preserving evidence. It will also advise the Government and the human rights community on the application of forensic anthropology to the Sierra Leone context.

The three-member team, which arrived on 17 June, is expected to complete its work within four weeks. Its report will propose guidelines for carrying out future investigations in support of the activities of the Special Court for Sierra Leone and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

According to team members, forensic anthropology involves using methods and techniques from traditional archaeology, physical anthropology and medicine to solve legal cases. EAAF was founded in 1984 to investigate human rights violations in Argentina. It has also carried out work in many other countries, including Philippines, Chile, Bolivia, Brazil, Uruguay, Peru, Venezuela, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Panama, Croatia, Bosnia, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and South Africa.

The team's visit was organized following preliminary information gathered by UNAMSIL's Human Rights Section on grave sites in different parts of the country and subsequent discussions with the office the Attorney-General and the Ministry of Justice, which expressed the need to seek professional expertise on mapping grave sites and preserving evidence.

At a briefing held yesterday at UNAMSIL Headquarters in Freetown, the Chief of the Human Rights Section, Mr. Rodolfo Mattarollo, said the team would spend the first week holding consultations with officials from Government of Sierra Leone, UNAMSIL and non-governmental organizations. The next two weeks will be devoted to fieldwork and a workshop will be organized during the team's fourth and final week in Sierra Leone." (UNAMSIL, 20 June 2002)

### **Humanitarian agencies in Sierra Leone act on issues of sexual abuse of refugee and IDP children (June 2002)**

- OCHA reports that several humanitarian agencies in Sierra Leone have developed action plans to respond to issues of sexual exploitation of vulnerable children
- In May 2002, the government, UN agencies and NGOs launched a set of humanitarian standards of accountability, while UNHCR produced a framework of remedial measures to combat child abuse in the region
- These actions come in the wake of a UNHCR/ SC-UK report in February 2002 that exposed the sexual abuse and exploitation of refugee and IDP children in West Africa

"Several humanitarian agencies in Sierra Leone have developed action plans to respond to issues of sexual exploitation of vulnerable children, according to the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), which also reported that a national coordinator for sexual exploitation and abuse is to be recruited. The coordinator is to be based in the OCHA office in Freetown.

In its May 2002 humanitarian situation report, OCHA reported that a committee coordinating the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse was preparing a Mapping Roundtable to generate an inventory of resources and procedures already in place, identify best practices and locate gaps.

A set of humanitarian standards of accountability put together by the government, UN agencies and NGOs was launched on 10 May, while the UN refugee agency, UNHCR, has drawn up a framework of remedial measures to combat child abuse in the region, OCHA said. 'Measures include increasing security and international presence in the camps, identifying and assisting refugee girls who are most vulnerable [and] education campaigns,' the report said.

In February, UNHCR and Save the Children-UK reported that refugee children in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone were subjected to sexual abuse and exploitation, reportedly by employees of the United Nations, national and international NGOs, local security forces and a wide range of other individuals.

The UNHCR/SCF report said the exchange of sex for money or gifts appeared widespread. The victims were mostly girls aged 13 to 18, while the most vulnerable group comprised orphans and children separated from one or both parents. The perpetrators 'are often men in positions of relative power and influence who either control access to goods and services or who have wealth and/or income,' the report said.

'Exploiters appear to be able to pay for sex when and with whom they want, and to do so with impunity, since the people they exploit are not able to complain about their situation for fear of their source of basic survival being removed,' added the report, titled 'Note for Implementing and Operational Partners on Sexual Violence & Exploitation: The Experience of Refugee Children in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.'" (IRIN, 6 June 2002)

*The UNHCR/SC-UK report may be accessed in the list of sources. See also the section on 'Physical Security'*

### **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)

### **Numerous agencies provide assistance to IDPs 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, Bumpah 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 Bumpah, 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 Bra maia, 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)

## **Selected activities of international NGOs and international organisations (2002)**

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### **World Vision launches shelter project for devastated Kono district (August 2002)**

- World Vision launches shelter project as many thousands of IDPs and former refugees return to their areas of origin
- Diamond-rich Kono district has suffered a particularly high level of destruction, with shelter now a priority need
- Shelter project is based on a community approach, with local materials used for construction

"World Vision has launched a shelter project in Kono district, eastern Sierra Leone as a step in contributing toward the resettlement needs of thousands of families who were displaced by the war in Kono district. They are being repatriated following the official conclusion of disarmament of the warring factions by the United Nations Armed Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) in December 2001 and an official declaration that the war is over, made in January 2002 by the President of Sierra Leone, Alhaji Dr. Ahmad Tejan Kabba.

Justin Bangura, the representative of the government's National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA), an arm coordinating all resettlement and rehabilitation activities, said in his statement at the launching, 'NaCSA is delighted to have World Vision volunteer to undertake shelter rehabilitation in Kono - World Vision's traditional area of operation. The level of devastation in Kono can hardly be surpassed by any region.'

Kono district has fourteen chiefdoms and a pre-war population of over 500,000 people. The district is rich in diamonds. Mining companies used to invest huge capital in diamond mining in the district prior to the war in 1991. The blessing of diamonds in the district seemed to have turned into the fuel that propelled and prolonged the war as the district changed hands among warring factions.

The National Director for World Vision Sierra Leone, Leslie Scott, said to the returnees at the launching ceremony, 'If World Vision should help the people of Kono start their lives again, we should give them a roof over their head - that is what the shelter programme is all about.'

World Vision is using a community-based approach in this shelter project: families in the communities access local materials, such as bush sticks and mortar made out of mud, in constructing their shelters. World Vision on the other hand provides them with corrugated iron sheets for roofing, along with roofing nails.

At this launching, World Vision stepped out in seed faith to assist the devastated people of Kono with shelter. Kono is a traditional operational area for World Vision since the programme started in Sierra Leone in 1996. The traditional internally displaced chiefs have been in constant touch with the World Vision office in Freetown appealing for support for their people as they resettle in the district." (WV, 6 August 2002)

### **MSF treats neuropathic pain of amputee IDPs (July 2002)**

- In a camp for amputees in Freetown, MSF established a clinic and treatment programme for neuropathic pain
- MSF publishes article describing the work of two medical workers in the pain clinic

"During Sierra Leone's violent decade-long war, the warring parties used amputation, especially of arms, as a means of terror. In a camp for amputees in the capital city Freetown, Médecins Sans Frontières established a clinic and a treatment programme for neuropathic pain.

[...]

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) is an emergency medical relief organisation that runs around 500 medical relief programmes in over 80 countries worldwide. It responds to humanitarian crises where there is broad abuse of freedom, and where violence and war lead to social injustice. For several years MSF provided surgical support to the main government hospital in Freetown, Sierra Leone. This article describes the work, beginning in early 2000, of an anaesthetist (PL) and a local community health officer working for MSF surgical programme in a pain clinic in the Murray Town Amputees' camp in Freetown." (MSF, 1 July 2002)

*For full article [click here](#)*

### **Merlin fights lassa fever in Sierra Leone (1996-2002)**

- Civil war in Sierra Leone has exacerbated the spread of the deadly Lassa fever virus, which is endemic to certain areas of the country
- Merlin runs various health care projects in Sierra Leone, including a Lassa fever project in the eastern province

"Years of conflict in Sierra Leone have created conditions favourable to the spread of Lassa Fever. Health services that might once have been able to identify and treat the disease have been destroyed, thereby increasing the risk of a major outbreak. Between December 1996 and April 1997, over 500 severe Lassa Fever cases were admitted to the Kenema Government Hospital during the largest epidemic ever recorded since the discovery of the disease in 1972. Up to 40% of all hospital admissions in Kenema district during this four-month period were due to Lassa Fever.

Merlin began working in Kenema district, eastern Sierra Leone in 1996. In its fight against Lassa Fever in the district, Merlin has taken a holistic approach:

treatment services have been re-established and supplied with Ribavirin, the anti-viral drug needed for severe cases;

imaginative ways to control the number of rats have been promoted. These include working with children and their parents to write and teach songs which can be used to inform communities of simple measures such as cutting down bushes around their huts and storing food off the ground.

During the period of conflict in Sierra Leone, Merlin maintained a constant presence in the country. Only short periods of the most intense fighting hampered our operation. Now that peace has come to the country, Merlin is increasing healthcare activities in Eastern Province. Our integrated approach to preventative and curative health services includes an enlarged project focussing on Lassa Fever.

Lassa fever does not respect international borders. As a result Merlin works in neighbouring Liberia where there are also high levels of the disease. However ongoing insecurity, especially in Lofa County, the heavily forested rural area adjoining Sierra Leone, prevents access to the vulnerable populations there.

But Lassa Fever is by no means the only threat to people's health within the region. Malaria, diarrhoea, pneumonia and malnutrition are all prevalent health problems. Improving the diagnostic capabilities in rural West Africa and increasing our understanding of the effect of these diseases on the at-risk population will lead to better preventative and curative health services. Therefore the collateral benefits to a focus on Lassa

Fever will be felt throughout the entire region, as well as amongst health professionals that wish to increase their understanding of viral haemorrhagic fevers in general." (Merlin, 8 May 2002)

### **Church World Service partners tackling crisis of internal displacement in Sierra Leone (2002)**

- Numerous church organisations are engaged in IDP response in Sierra Leone
- Projects are in the areas of food security and agriculture, health and medical services, sanitation, peace building and reconciliation, and blacksmith training

"Sierra Leone, which for many years had enjoyed relative peace and economic prosperity since its independence in 1961, plunged into a rebel war which has lasted for more than 10 years. Reflecting the cyclical nature of this conflict many Sierra Leoneans have been displaced several times in the course of the war. By one estimate there are at least 146,513 internally displaced persons in camps.

Added to these figures are a large number of non-registered IDPs who lived with host families or in hiding. The UN system registered an IDP caseload of 341,205 by mid-November 2000 and approximately 1 million IDP Sierra Leoneans had not been registered. Of these figures, children constitute a large share of the IDPs and as many as 1.8 million children may at sometime have been displaced since the outbreak of the war, thus making them extremely vulnerable.

#### **Assessment:**

CWS partners Brethren Relief & Development Agency Church of the United Brethren in Christ in Sierra Leone (UBC) UBC, Council of Churches of Sierra Leone (CCSL), and Baptist Convention of Sierra Leone (BCSL) are among the members of the Action by Churches Together (ACT) International network responding to this crisis. Among their responses include food security & agriculture (tools, seeds, seedlings, animal husbandry, fishing); Health & medical services; sanitation; peace building & reconciliation; and blacksmith training.

#### **Emergency Appeal:**

The completion date for this response is December 31, 2002.

CWS is seeking \$100,000 in denominational support for the efforts of CWS partners.

Details of the response, including full budget figures, are available at the Action by Churches Together (ACT) International website: [www.act-intl.org](http://www.act-intl.org) " (CWS, 18 March 2002)

### **IOM provides return and reintegration assistance to Sierra Leonean IDPs (2002)**

- IOM is requested to assist in the return transportation and resettlement of IDPs in all areas declared safe under the government's resettlement strategy
- From the beginning of resettlement operations in 2001 until June 2002, IOM has provided transport to more than 37,000 IDPs from camps back to their areas of origin
- Other project activities include IOM supervised registration and manifesting of IDPs, medical pre-embarkation examinations, escorting and post-arrival follow up and referral

"The improved security situation in the countryside, the return of civilian authority in areas previously under the control of the Revolutionary United Front, the holding of free and fair elections and the overcrowding of Internally Displaced Persons camps in and around Freetown, prompted UNOCHA and the Government of Sierra Leone, through the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA), until 10th March 2002 known as the National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation

(NCRRR), to request IOM's assistance in the return transportation and resettlement of IDPs in all areas declared safe.

From the beginning of resettlement operations in 2001, until the end of Phase 4 in June 2002, the project provided safe and orderly transportation assistance to a cumulative total of 37,617 Sierra Leone IDPs who requested facilitated return transport from IDP camps to their areas of origin, or to settle in sites declared safe for resettlement by the Government and UNAMSIL. Project activities also included the IOM supervised registration and manifesting of IDPs as well as medical pre-embarkation examinations, escorting and post-arrival follow up and referral. The resettlement of IDPs from camps in and around Freetown in their locations of origin and areas declared safe for resettlement opened up opportunities for increasing the local transit camp capacity for accommodating additional returnees and refugees from neighbouring countries, in particular Guinea and Liberia.

### **Project Description:**

IOM's intervention is based on years of experience world wide in reintegration activities including (but not limited to) registration, transportation, documentation and processing, health screening (and assistance in reconstruction of health services, emergency health intervention, pre-reintegration health screening, as well as training of community health personnel). The organization is also experienced in providing IDP and returnee transport to home villages (or villages of choice), training skills for alternate form of livelihood, provision of basic tools needed to restart self-sustenance, employment and professional activity. In addition IOM provides specialised transport assistance to war disabled and amputee IDPs.

In Sierra Leone in the period under review, IOM Freetown worked closely with UNOCHA and NaCSA, who maintain responsibility for the coordination and leadership of humanitarian assistance including IDP issues in Sierra Leone. To avoid gaps and duplications, IOM also coordinated its activities with other IDP resettlement package providers such as WFP, CARE and ICRC who provided food, non-food items and other benefits in IDP camps and in resettlement sites.

IOM assumed responsibility for the inter-agency IDP registration/manifesting, the safe and orderly transportation of IDPs who voluntarily expressed their desire to return to their places of origin or to the areas declared safe for resettlement. The places of return and the new settlement sites were identified and secured by the Government and UNAMSIL. Receiving communities were also sensitised (by NaCSA) of the impending arrival of the IDPs in order to avoid inter-community tension. Prior the IDP movements, IDP representatives were taken by NaCSA to visit to places of destination in order to ensure that they were well informed of the conditions in the proposed reception communities.

IOM utilized local resources through renting trucks and buses from local transporters. However, whenever available, IOM also utilised UNAMSIL trucks for which only fuel and administration costs were incurred. In the Phase 4 resettlement, during June 2002, all movements were carried out with transportation from UNAMSIL's Banlog 2 division, who communicated and performed extremely well in conjunction with the IOM teams and executed operations in a highly professional manner.

IDPs to be moved were registered by the IDP Resettlement Committee under the supervision of IOM for the purpose of transport and logistics planning. The registration data was also shared with partner agencies, which provided assistance such as non-food and food items. All returnees received from other agencies an emergency reintegration kit, which includes basic agricultural and domestic implements, the contents of which are coordinated with other agencies to ensure complementarity.

Pre-embarkation medical assessments were conducted as standard IOM procedure for all movements. Those who were not medically fit for travel were deterred from travelling and supervised in the camps until such time that they were well enough to move. Medical escorts were provided as required, and passengers who needed medical follow-up were referred to appropriate health service providers, either public or private.

Close liaison was also maintained with concerned Sierra Leone Government Ministries and counterparts that authorized and facilitated the relocation exercise. This was extended to other potential and actual implementing partners at the local, national and international level, as well as the donors represented in Freetown. IOM identified possible synergies between this emergency transportation project and the activities of partner agencies already operating on the ground.

In coordination with other inter-agency partners, particular attention was given during the course of the operation to the needs of vulnerable groups, single mothers with children, the elderly, and the infirm. Passenger manifests were shared with the ICRC and Save the Children for family tracing purposes.

In close cooperation with the Norwegian Refugee Council, IOM Sierra Leone transported war wounded amputees from amputee camps in and around Freetown to newly constructed houses located in their areas of resettlement. During the period under review a total of 300 amputee IDPs were provided with IOM resettlement transport assistance. Further movements are projected from the Freetown area to other parts of the country where new amputee houses are being constructed. The Norwegian Refugee Council Project objective of providing dignified accommodation for amputees in their areas of resettlement is facilitated particularly through continued IOM specialised transport assistance." (IOM, 6 August 2002)

### **ICRC, with National Society, distributes aid to returning farmers (June 2002)**

- ICRC and Sierra Leone Red Cross Society carries out distribution of seed, farm tools and other essential items to more than 40,000 vulnerable farming families in eastern Sierra Leone
- Farming families are those returning to their homes after the fighting ended, and who urgently need assistance to resume food production

"Over the past two months the ICRC has successfully carried out a massive distribution of seed, farm tools and other items essential for the survival of over 40,000 vulnerable farming families in the Kono and Kailahun districts of eastern Sierra Leone. Working in cooperation with the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society, the ICRC began planning this operation in June 2001. The objective was to boost the limited resources of farmers returning to their homes now that the fighting has ended, and provide them with the means to resume food production as soon as possible.

'Since we returned to our devastated homes, this is the first time we have been helped by a humanitarian organization' were the grateful words of acting section chief Tamba Nyandemo of Dangbaidu, in Sandor chiefdom in the Kono district. At every distribution site, section chiefs or village headmen had to endorse their own people before they joined the queue.

Some 20,000 families in Kailahun district and nearly 23,000 in Kono received the farming package consisting of 20 kg of upland seed-rice, 20 kg of inland valley swamp seed-rice, 10 kg of groundnut seed and one large hoe. In all, over 700 tonnes of upland rice, 700 tonnes of swamp rice and over 300 tonnes of groundnut seed were distributed and sown in six chiefdoms of Kailahun district and seven of Kono. In addition to the seed and the farm tools, 13,383 of the poorest families in Kailahun and 11,810 in Kono also received tarpaulins, blankets, mats, kitchen sets, buckets, mosquito nets, mugs, soap, and used clothes.

The registration of beneficiaries was carried out by community representatives, who were selected in cooperation with section chiefs. The seed and tools were distributed on a priority basis to families who had returned to the area after the previous planting season; the other items were given to the neediest.

The ICRC worked in close cooperation with the Sierra Leonean agriculture ministry and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization to procure seed meeting the ministry's standards. In addition, an agreement was reached with the World Food Programme to provide beneficiaries with one-month food rations to ensure

that the seed was planted and not eaten. This distribution, which was the largest ever undertaken in eastern Sierra Leone, should help meet the ICRC's 2002 objective of reducing the suffering of the most vulnerable people." (ICRC, 28 June 2002)

## **References to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement**

### **Known references to the Guiding Principles (as of September 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

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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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