

When the State Fails



WHEN THE STATE FAILS

Studies on Intervention in the
Sierra Leone Civil War

Edited by
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This book is dedicated to 'real people of Sierra Leone':
the workers, peasant producers and the youth.
It is your action that will determine the destiny
of a once proud nation.



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Preface

The idea for this collection came from the Nordic Africa Institute (NAI) via the head of research, Dr Cyril Obi. As a collective, we are grateful to the institute for the opportunity to create space for Sierra Leonean voices. It is true that Sierra Leoneans and others have published extensively on the war (Richard 1996; Abdullah 1997, 2005; Zack-Williams 1999, 2001, 2002, 2006; Bangura 2000; Bundu 2001; Gberie 2004; Adebajo and Rashid 2004), but the opportunity to meet and compare ideas and experiences has helped us to develop our reflections on the state of affairs in the country.

The aim of the collection is three-fold: first to provide space for Sierra Leonean voices, in particular those within the country, to reflect on the nature and impact of post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding; second, to focus on the role of external interventions in post-conflict reconstruction; finally, to stimulate capacity building among those young researchers working in the area of peacebuilding. Though each individual was asked to tackle specific issues such as the role of regional actors, international actors such as the United Kingdom and the United Nations, and the role of security outfits such as Executive Outcomes, Sandline International and the Gurkhas, we make no apologies for overlapping discourses, as this is inevitable in such a project. Some contributors have tackled issues such as the implications of the war for women, the promotion of democracy, security reforms and the question of youth.

An initial workshop was held in Freetown in 2006 to establish the modality and methodologies to drive the project. This was followed by another meeting in Uppsala by a much smaller group of the team looking at the major issues surrounding the pending general elections due in July 2007. The latter meeting resulted in the publication *The Quest for Sustainable Development and Peace: The 2007 Sierra Leone Elections* (Policy Dialogue No. 2, published by the Nordic Africa Institute).

One common thread holding the contributions together is the assertion that the civil war was not caused by greed or squabbling over the country's diamonds. Though the political elite may have suffered from 'chronic kleptomania', it was the lack of political space and the ailing economy that drove young people into the bush and challenge for state hegemony. Diamonds may have prolonged the

war, but it was not the primary cause of conflict. Prior to the war, diamonds and other minerals (gold, platinum, chromites, iron ore, bauxite, rutile) had been mined for over fifty years (Zack-Williams 1995), accounting for over 70 per cent of foreign exchange earnings by the late 1970s. A significant percentage of the best stones were smuggled out of the country by organized foreign groups (including Lebanese dealers) and their Sierra Leonean accomplices, through routes that were well established in the period of the monopoly of the colonial mining company, the Sierra Leone Selection Trust (SLST), via Monrovia, the Liberian capital. This illegal export was the first part of a trade connecting illegal miners in Sierra Leone and cutters in Europe and the USA. Whilst these routes changed many times, by the early 1950s Lebanon and Monrovia had emerged as the two most important routes for illegally exported diamonds from Sierra Leone (Van der Laan 1965); in particular, cutters wanted a shorter route to the source that would involve fewer intermediaries and this gave a premium to the Monrovia market. Furthermore, the fact that the US currency was legal tender in Liberia, as well as being a currency free from restrictions and carrying a premium against other currencies, gave Monrovia an added premium. Proximity to the Sierra Leone deposits and the premium of the US dollar was not all that accounted for the triumph of the Liberian market. Liberia's diamond trading laws can be traced back to the 1930s, with an amendment in 1955 in anticipation of the reform around the Alluvial Diamond Mining Ordinance in Sierra Leone (1956), which brought the monopoly held by the SLST to an end by legalizing corporate and individual mining. The export duty imposed by the Liberian authorities was 9 per cent on the declared value of the stone, compared to 7.5 per cent in Sierra Leone, which should have been a disincentive for dealers to smuggle the stones from Sierra Leone across the border. Indeed, the real export duty imposed by the Liberian authorities was between 1 and 2 per cent, thus producing an anomaly:

according to the statistics no diamonds were imported into Liberia, so that the Liberian exports had to be considered as "domestic merchandise". The existence of small diggings and with negligible production until 1957 gave a certain basis for clinging to this delusion. (Van der Laan 1965: 129)

According to Van der Laan, it was clear that the success of the Monrovia market was based on the supply of diamonds from Sierra Leone, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire and the Central African Republic (*ibid.*), and the president of Liberia stated that Sierra Leone diamonds

formed a large proportion of the increased exports (Moyar 1960). Moreover, it is ironic that De Beers Diamond Corporation, which ran the Government Buying Office in Freetown, decided to set up an office in Monrovia in order to mop up the good stones that were being smuggled into the Liberian market.

So what is this point of this narrative? Simply to point to the fact that the marketing of Sierra Leone diamonds always favoured Liberia, and there was no need for Charles Taylor, the Liberian warlord, to try to upset the *status quo ante* in order to obtain diamonds from Sierra Leone. There is a consensus among these writers that it is the mismanagement of the economy, which stemmed from the growing authoritarian nature of the state, and politics which emasculated the emerging 'civil society'. This air of intolerance and widespread corruption impacted upon the economy as skilled individuals started voting with their feet, and economic decisions were based not on rational criteria, but were designed to satisfy a plethora of patrimonial networks, leading to the delegitimization of the state.

Abbreviations

ACC	Anti-Corruption Commission
ADB	African Development Bank
ADMS	Alluvial Diamond Mining Scheme
ACPP	Africa Conflict Prevention Pool
AFDSL	Action for Development Sierra Leone
AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
APC	All People's Congress
AU	African Union
CCFSL	Concerned Citizens and Friends of Sierra Leone
CCYA	Centre for the Co-ordination of Youth Activities
CCMS	Co-operative Contract Mining Scheme
CDF	Civil Defence Forces
CESPA	Centre for Economic and Social Policy Analysis
CGG	Campaign for Good Governance
CISU	Central Intelligence and Security Unit
CIVPOL	Civilian Police
CODISAL	Coalition for Democracy in Sierra Leone
COMBOs	Community-Based Organizations
CSLRD	Concerned Sierra Leoneans for the Restoration of Democracy
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DACO	Development Assistance Coordinating Office
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Re-integration
DELCO	Sierra Leone Development Company
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DiCorWaf	Diamond Corporation West Africa Limited
DISECS	District Security Committees
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EFA	Education for All
ENCISS	Enhancing the Interaction and Interface between Civil Society and the State to Improve Poor People's Lives
EO	Executive Outcomes
ESO	Establishment Secretaries Office
FAWE	Forum for Africa Women Educationalists

FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office (UK)
GCPP	Global Conflict Prevention Pool
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
GSG	Gurkha Security Guards
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
HRMO	Human Resource Management Office
ICTJ	International Center for Transitional Justice
IDA	International Development Association
IFES	International Foundation of Electoral Systems
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
IGAP	Improved Governance and Accountability Pact
IMATT	International Military Advisory and Training Team
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGOs	International NGOs
ISU	Internal Security Unit
JSDP	Justice Sector Development Programme
MFR	Management and Functional Reviews
Marwopnet	Mano River Women's Peace Network
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MDRI	Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative
MEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NACSA	National Commission for Social Action
NANGOs	National NGOs
NSCG	National Security Coordinating Group
NDI	The National Democratic Institute
NDMC	National Diamond Mining Company (SL Ltd)
NEC	National Electoral Commission
NEW	National Election Watch
NEWMAP	Network of Women Ministers and Parliamentarians
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NOSLINA	National Organization of Sierra Leoneans in North America
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
NPRC	National Provisional Ruling Council
NRS	National Recovery Strategy
NRA	National Revenue Authority
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ONS	Office of National Security
ONS	Office of National Security

OSD	Operational Support Division
OSLIN	Organization of Sierra Leoneans in Indiana
PBC	Peacebuilding Commission
PBF	Peace Building Fund
PETS	Public Expenditure Tracking Survey
PIVOT	Promoting Information and Voice for Transparency in elections
PMDC	Peoples Movement for Democratic Change
PPRC	Political Parties Registration Commission
PROSECS	Provincial and District Security Committees
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
QIPS	Quick Impact Projects
RSLAF/AFRSL	Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SALWACO	The Sierra Leone Water Company
SAP(s)	Structural Adjustment Programmes
SDPS	Service Delivery Perception Survey
SECG	Search for Common Ground
SLG	Sierra Leone Government
SLIHS	Sierra Leone Integrated Household Survey
SLP	Sierra Leone Police
SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party
SSD	State Security Division
SSR	Security Sector Reform
SSRC	Security Sector Review Committee
SSRP	Social Security Reform Programme
SLSC	Sierra Leone Community in Southern California
SLNC	Sierra Leone–Norway Cooperation
SLSEP	Security Sector Reform Programme
STTT	Short-Term Training Teams
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UDP	United Democratic Party
UK/MOD	United Kingdom Ministry of Defence
ULIMO	United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNCIVPOL	United Nations Civilian Police
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women

UNIOSIL (later UNIPSIL)	UN Integrated Office in Sierra Leone
UNOMSIL	UN Observer Mission in Sierra Leone
UPP	United Progressive Party
USAID	United States Aid Agency
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFD	Westminster Foundation for Democracy
WSSD	World Summit for Social Development



Part I



Introduction: The Failure of a Democratic Experiment

Tunde Zack-Williams

At independence in 1961, Sierra Leone had all the legal trappings of a functioning state: a democratically elected parliament by universal franchise, a relatively independent judiciary, an executive consisting of elected members of parliament, and a relatively efficient civil service. However, this attempt at nation-state building was not rooted on firm foundations, as soon became clear six years after independence in 1967: following a closely fought general election, the ethnic schism that had threatened the constitutional talks in London reappeared when the army commander stepped in to prevent the opposition APC, which appeared to have won the elections, from succeeding the ruling SLPP. This event, which brought to an end the experiment in democracy (Collier 1970), had a far-reaching effect on the country's political and economic trajectory: not only did the coup help to entrench violence into the body politic of the nation, but by the outbreak of the war, political violence and thuggery had become normal, to the extent that terms such as 'party thugs', 'election by unopposed' (forcing opposition candidates to withdraw through threat of, or actual, violence) had entered the political lexicon. This widespread violence weakened the zeal of the people to challenge rogue politicians, with many people exiting politics, thus paving the way for dictatorships to silence a large section of civil society and other counter-hegemonic forces. The whole political process under Stevens and his successor, Joseph Momoh, was punctuated by the constant declaration of states of emergency as a mechanism for taming the opposition through mass arrest and managing the crisis of the one-party state (Zack-Williams 1985). Not surprisingly, by the time war broke out in March 1991, Sierra Leone had become a failed state where vital social and political institutions had either collapsed or had ceased to function, and the economy had been bankrupted through neo-patrimonial politics and kleptocracy (see Chapter 1). However, the *coup de grace* for the Sierra Leone economy was the government's excessive expenditure in hosting the annual conference of the OAU, a move that left the country chronically indebted. The above raises the question about the sustainability of a 'fictive' or 'soft' state like Sierra Leone, which is formatively functional

but reproductively dysfunctional (Kandeh 1992). Furthermore, it was clear that Sierra Leone was in deep crises: the neo-patrimonial mode of accumulation was in tumult, as resources for its reproduction diminished. Experiencing a sense of hopelessness and inter-generational betrayal, the country's youths were looking for the way out, but without a viable corpus of intellectuals to lead the struggle for national renewal, they turned to 'lumpen leadership', which turned their legitimate cry for change into an orgy of violence.

By contrast, the leadership of the imperialist centres saw the plight of Sierra Leoneans as simply a failure on the part of the governing class to develop and reinforce the institutions which were bequeathed at independence. In their view the *raison d'être* of post-conflict reconstruction is a return to the equilibrium of the Weberian state of rational-legal authority, with clear lines of authority and responsibility, above all a state where the market is supreme and the channel to this neo-liberal state is the liberal peace, a theme to which Kandeh returns.

STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

The book is divided into two parts: Part I deals with the nature of multinational interventions, the various forms of international actors, such as the United Nations and ECOMOG, and looks critically at the liberal peace and attempt to recreate a Weberian state. Chapter 1 sets the context of the entire volume by considering the imperative for multilateral intervention as well as discussing and identifying some structural explanations of the conflict. The chapter starts with an explanation of why Charles Taylor tried to export the Liberian conflict to Sierra Leone by looking at the role of the Sierra Leone government as a peace broker in the civil war in Liberia. Though Taylor's intervention was the spark which ignited the conflict, this was not a sufficient condition for conflict; there were other underlining historical factors which precipitated the war. In his discussion of the role of ECOMOG in peacekeeping in Liberia, Zack-Williams argues that Charles Taylor's initial design on Sierra Leone was not the country's diamonds, but the need to seek revenge because the Sierra Leonean president allowed ECOMOG aircraft to utilise his country's airport in order to bomb Taylor's front-line troops, thus denying them the capture of Monrovia, the Liberian capital. This explanation questions the much vaunted 'greed not grievance' thesis as a causation of the war, and as Gberie and others are at pains to point out, diamonds in exchange for arms came much later in the civil war. In short, diamonds may have prolonged the war, but they were not the cause of the conflict. Other interventions examined

are the role of Sandline International, the Gurkhas, Executive Outcomes, the United Nations peacekeeping force (UNAMSIL) and the British paratroopers. However, not all the interventions in the war came from outside, there were also the military coups of 'roving banditries' (Moncur 1993) such as the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), which forced the civilian president to flee to Guinea in both 1996 and 1999.

Kandeh's chapter on intervention and peacebuilding (Chapter 4) takes a critical view of the nature of the Sierra Leone state and in particular he questions the attempt to implement neo-liberal solutions by transplanting the best practices of Western societies to the alien environment of Sierra Leone. Drawing attention to the major differences between the Sierra Leone state and its Western Weberian orthodoxy, Kandeh points to the absence of a sizeable middle class, in addition to the preponderance of a politically marginalized peasantry and 'the dominance of a political class whose mode of accumulation is incommensurate with both democracy and development', all pointers to the possible hindrance to the neo-liberal project. He argues that perhaps it is too early to describe Sierra Leone's post-conflict experience as a success, given the fact that Western investment in post-conflict development in Sierra Leone may serve as a yardstick for other post-conflict situations in Africa. Kandeh, like the other contributors, has drawn attention to the contributions made by the international community, and the government of the United Kingdom in particular, to the reconstruction and peacebuilding efforts in Sierra Leone.

Commenting on Collier's (2007) work, Kandeh offers a caveat that whilst non-landlocked Sierra Leone fulfils two of Collier's 'traps', these are only superficially relevant to understanding the impediments of social and institutional progress. He warns:

Bad governance explains, but is not explained by, conflicts and natural resources. Armed domestic conflicts over natural resources occur in a context of bad governance and, contrary to some erroneous narratives of the Sierra Leone conflict, including Collier's, the country's armed rebellion was not caused by diamonds but by a mode of governance that is antithetical to both the developmental aspirations of society and the global neo-liberal agenda. It is the persistence of a predatory governance logic that poses the greatest threat to post-conflict peacebuilding in Sierra Leone.

Kandeh points out that whilst two successful post-conflict elections have been conducted, these elections have not delivered significant

changes in governance practice in Sierra Leone, and the socio-economic conditions of the mass of the Sierra Leonean people have not improved significantly. Furthermore, quoting Samuel Huntington, Kandeh observes that democracy can be safe in the hands of elites only if they believe that they have an interest in promoting it or a duty to achieve it. The question that Kandeh poses is whether or not such elites are to be found in Sierra Leone, since we know that they are absent in many parts of the world. In short, are the political classes in Sierra Leone (and Africa in general) committed to democracy and market reforms, which all tend to run contrary to their mode of accumulation? He warns that democracy and the free market demands functioning states that can perform basic tasks, and without such a set up peace and development are not achievable. The reality is that only a few African states could be said to have this capacity, thanks to the mode of accumulation and the effect of neo-liberal conditionality under the SAPs. Kandeh poses the paradox:

The cultural particularity of neo-liberalism and the centrality of welfare provisioning in state and peacebuilding raises the question of whether liberal-pluralist democracy and a self-regulating market economy are, in the short-run, best suited to sub-Saharan Africa.

Furthermore, he notes:

States do not become sustainable democracies as a result of external intervention and it is far better to embed institutions in the histories, cultures, needs and interests of mass publics than in the 'best practices' of the West because neither the socio-economic conditions prevalent in Africa nor the mode of accumulation characteristic of its governing elites are particularly conducive to the liberal governance promoted by Western countries and donor agencies.

For Kandeh, the way out for Africa is the social democratic alternative or the 'developmental state' with 'embedded autonomy', though he argues that their realization is even more distant and remote. He then traces the history of and functions of peacebuilding by the United Nations, initially under former Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali and his successor Secretary-General Kofi Annan. The main thrust of peacebuilding being to bring together the various relevant actors to mobilize resources for post-conflict recovery support institutions and sustainable development. In his conclusion, Kandeh

observes that the failure of external intervention to lift Sierra Leone out of poverty can be attributed to the 'gross mismanagement of donor resources by political incumbents, top bureaucrats and their associates': *plus de choses changent, plus ils restent le même.*

Michael Kargbo's chapter (Chapter 3) is a case study of the United Kingdom's effort at peacebuilding and strengthening of democracy in Sierra Leone. Britain as the former colonial power had strong historical ties with Sierra Leone going back to the American War of Independence, when slaves who fought on the side of the British were promised freedom. At the end of the war, some were taken initially to Nova Scotia in Canada where they were promised land, others sailed across the Atlantic heading for London. Following the campaign by philanthropists such as William Wilberforce, Fowell Buxton and Granville Sharp, these Black Poor, as they were known in Elizabethan England, were settled in the Province of Freedom, Sierra Leone in 1787. In 1791, the settlement was taken over by the Sierra Leone Company and in 1808 Sierra Leone became a Crown Colony. However, there were two further developments which helped to focus attention on Britain's relationship with Sierra Leone during the conflict. First, New Labour under Prime Minister Blair and Foreign Secretary Robin Cook had just launched a new 'ethical foreign policy' and the Sierra Leone theatre of war was one of the early places to test its merit. Second, Prime Minister Blair's father had taught at the local university, which engendered special affinity for this little corner of Africa. Finally, New Labour came to power with a promise to address development issues in the less developed countries and set up a special department within the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Department for International Development (DFID), with a Secretary of State and a seat in the Cabinet. It is through DFID that much of Britain's efforts were channelled.

As Kargbo argues, the interest shown by New Labour was in marked contrast to the preceding period under the Tories when, in line with the politics of neo-liberalism, Africa was treated with benign neglect. Indeed, the debacle in Somalia which resulted in the death of US service personnel and their bodies dragged through the streets of Mogadishu had signalled the end of intervention by Western forces based on peace enforcement. According to General Sir David Richards, the man who led British forces into Sierra Leone in 2000 to rid the country of the remnants of the AFRC and the West Side Boys, he asked Prime Minister Blair and Foreign Secretary Cook if he could return to Sierra Leone to finish the job off, thus bringing the war to a speedy end.

The intervention did not win universal approval in Britain, as Kargbo reminds us, with the Left accusing New Labour of 'being stuck in the mire of the Whiteman's burden', though it was an attempt by the government to match foreign policy pronouncements with actions, and to make amends for the Sandline fiasco, when the government was accused of breaching UN embargo on the sale of arms to Sierra Leone. There were two important consequences of the British Intervention. First, militarily, British intervention was decisive in bringing the war to an end. Whilst the troops of ECOMOG fought valiantly against the rebels, they lacked the organization, superior weaponry and air power which guided British intervention. Second, British intervention and its success boosted the morale of the large contingent of UN troops (UNAMSIL), who had assembled in the country, some of whom had been abducted by Sankoh's fighters. The speed, with which the rebels were routed enabled the disarmament process to resume. British intervention was not confined to the military arena, it also involved security sector reforms, including the police, training of a new national army, and the fire and prison services. There was also British support for the health service, justice sector reform, building the capacity of the National Electoral Commission and the fight against corruption with the setting up of the Anti-Corruption Commission.

In Part II, Sylvia Macauley (Chapter 6) looks at the relationship between gender, conflict and the role of women in nation rebuilding. She points out that by establishing a link between gender, conflict and the role of women in nation rebuilding one should be able to identify the significance of 'gender for a more informed analysis of conflict and peacebuilding, in general, while emphasizing the need for such a transformative approach to alter the balance of power in gender relations'. Gender balance had not been addressed by successive post-colonial regimes, as women continue to be over-represented among the illiterate population, the poor, and victims of abuse, including state sanctioned genital mutilation. The phenomenon of powerful women in public life (such as Mrs Constance Cummings-John, Madam Ella Koblo Gulama, and Madam Honoria Bailor-Caulker), so characteristic of the late colonial period, seems to have disappeared in the post-colonial period.

War inevitably tends to place extreme stress on social relations, including gender relations, and women's subordinate status may be worsened by the failure to match increased economic responsibilities with 'increased power in decision making and resource allocation' (El Bujra and Piza-Lopez 1994: 181). Women and children as weaker members of society tend to be victims of a disproportionate level

of violence, including gender-related crimes in the case of women (ibid.). Among other factors, the impact of war on a woman will also be determined by her socio-economic status and her ability to buy her escape out of the war zone. Thus poor rural women in Sierra Leone were some of the worst victims of the war: victims of sexual attack, their houses and possessions burnt by rebels, they could not easily escape the war zone as refugees to neighbouring countries or abroad. Sylvia Macauley warns that in order to restore the dignity of women the state has to be more pro-women if the nation is to avoid a repeat of a conflict characterized by gender-based violence with all the humiliating consequences for women.

Not only did women participate in the war as fighters, but thousands of young women and girls were abducted by rebel leaders and many were transformed into sex slaves as wives of commanders. By the end of the war, many of them had become teenage mothers and were stigmatized as 'rebel wives', facing rejection by their parents, their communities and headteachers, who would not have them back in their schools for fear of the corrosive effects on their girls. Large numbers of women lost limbs, became refugees in neighbouring countries and were separated from their families, but women were also more than victims of the war. Women were proactive in forcing the regimes of Captain Strasser and Major Maada Bio to give in to democratic demands for elections before a peace treaty was signed with RUF leader Foday Sankoh. This move was led by Women for a Morally Engaged Nation (WOMEN) and donors who held that a speedy return to democratic pluralism was a *sine qua non* for peace in the country.

Poor governance ranks high on the list of causal factors. Others include 'greed not grievance', conflict over natural resources (Collier 2000; Kaplan 1994), crisis of youth (Abdullah 2005; Richards 1996; Peters 2006), and the crisis of patrimonial rule and economic decline (Zack-Williams 1999). One important aim of external intervention was to quickly return Sierra Leone back to democracy whilst building sustainable peace through structural reforms and institutional capacity building. It is this issue of peacebuilding democratic consolidation that Marcella Macauley addresses in her contribution (Chapter 2). She points out that the making of the Sierra Leone debacle started well before the war; furthermore, the country's leaders had long lost their legitimacy in the eyes of their people due to bad governance. She draws attention to the fact that in international circles there is a widespread belief that financial support can help strengthen democracy in former non-democratic state like Sierra Leone, resulting in the establishment of a global policy network ready and able to

deliver democracy across the globe. In Sierra Leone these agencies adopted a pincer approach: democracy promotion and peacebuilding within a framework of post-conflict reconstruction. In this task, they were aided by some 60 non-governmental organizations as well as global civil society, such as the UNDP, the UNHCR, the UNO, UNESCO, and the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission. She poses an important question about ownership of democracy: is it the people's prerogative or is it that of the international civil society and their allies in the NGO community?

That security sector (in the broad sense to include the judiciary and parliament) reform has been top of the reform agenda is not surprising, given the fact that the sector had been bastardized by successive administrations, including Albert Margai, who introduced ethnicity within the armed forces and the civil service, and Siaka Stevens, who was contemptuous of democracy and downgraded the army, whilst boosting the 'palace guards' – the ISU/SSD. Similarly, Momoh's reliance on the Ekutay was also at the expense of parliament and the cabinet. The coup of 1992, like all such previous interventions, was an attack on democracy, which also destroyed the command structure of the armed forces. In his analysis of the security sector, Osman Gbla (Chapter 5) undertakes a critical examination of the role of external actors, especially the British and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) initiatives in security sector reform programmes. Gbla argues that the role of these external actors could only ensure national ownership and sustainability if they took into consideration the socio-cultural, economic and political realities of Sierra Leone. Furthermore, he contends that security sector reform/reconstruction programmes for countries in transition from war to peace and democracy should also endeavour to factor in their conceptualization of those aspects of external actors' contributions that may add to insecurity. He also discusses the theoretical and conceptual issues bordering on post-war reconstruction, including security sector reform as well as the background to Sierra Leone's security sector reform programme. The crux of his analysis is to locate the role of external actors, especially the contributions of the British and ECOWAS, in this programme. Gbla's concluding section then provides an outline of suggestions and recommendations for the sustainability and national ownership of these reforms. Drawing attention to Ebo's caveat, Gbla observes that a reformed security sector, efficient and democratically governed, and based on transparency and accountability, is a major tool for conflict prevention and sustainable human development.

As noted earlier, the alienation of youth has been identified as a

major causal factor in the events leading to war. The country has a very youthful population with a median age of 17.5, and 44.5 per cent of the total population of 5.1 million is under fourteen years of age. Youth played a major role in the civil war as there were many child soldiers fighting on both sides; many more were victims who were abused by adults and other young people; thousands lost educational opportunities, not just because the war destroyed their towns, villages and educational institutions, but because of economic and political mismanagement of the affairs of state, to the point that one can talk of a 'lost generation'. Thompson's chapter (Chapter 7) is a cross-sectional survey of youth organizations with the aim of eliciting data on the effectiveness of measures to address youth marginalization. The single design paradigm was adopted as the basis for generating both quantitative and qualitative data and to qualify concepts, clarify associations between selected variables, and reach the desired interpretations. The study's investigation was carried out by means of a limited literature study and an enhanced empirical investigation. The literature review was specifically designed to establish the theoretical basis for research and to locate it in the context of the peacebuilding process, including current efforts to promote human rights, good governance, and social and economic development. The study assesses the issue of youth marginalization in a milieu of turbulent political, economic and social upheaval for young people in the country. The chapter ends with a list of recommendations, which policy makers can ill-afford to ignore.

The chapter by Zubairu Wai (Chapter 8) deals with the role of the Sierra Leone diaspora in post-conflict peacebuilding. Wai castigates those researchers who seek to study the war, its causes and the struggle for sustainable peace, whilst at the same time ignoring the role of the diaspora in their analysis. He observes: 'From the day the insurgency spearheaded by Revolutionary United Front (RUF) started in Sierra Leone it was apparent that the Sierra Leone diasporas were implicated in, and destined to play a major role in, the emerging conflict'. Not only did sections of the diaspora fight alongside the 'international brigade' that invaded the country in 1991, but:

At different times during the war, various individuals in the Sierra Leone diasporas, either by themselves or through transnational networks and diasporic organizations, played roles that affected, in diverse ways, the dynamics of the conflict and the parties involved in it This trend has continued in the post-war period, whereby through series of political, economic and social engagements, the Sierra Leone diasporas continue, in numerous

ways, to influence and impact the peacebuilding and post-war reconstruction efforts in the country.

The Sierra Leone diaspora had become a useful constituency before, during and after the war, largely due to transnational migration and, indeed, members of the diaspora continued to play leading roles as spokespeople for both sides in the war. For example, Omrie Golley, a London-based lawyer, acted throughout the war and after as political adviser and spokesperson for the RUF and was one of their chief negotiators; others, such as Cecil Blake, obtained sabbatical leave from university work in the United States to serve for a short while as information minister in the first Kabbah administration. Remittances from the diaspora became invaluable in sustaining relatives and friends in Sierra Leone. The diaspora Underground Railroad became major escape routes out of the war zones, and out of the country. The diaspora played a major role in keeping the plight of Sierra Leone in the news and in lobbying for action, particularly after the first invasion of the capital in 1996. As we have noted above, in Britain, New Labour was sympathetic to the plight and willing to respond to the cry of the people of Sierra Leone. Indeed, there were Sierra Leonean political activists within the Labour movement in Britain who lobbied the government for action to bring peace to the country. In the United States, the National Organization of Sierra Leoneans in North America (NOSLINA) lobbied members of Congress and temporary stay was given to refugees from Sierra Leone. Wai draws attention to the fact that diasporic interventions assumed diverse forms and were channelled through local (home-town and region of origin), national or transnational networks of individuals, organizations and institutions. This clearly reflects the cosmopolitan nature of the diaspora.

1

Multilateral Intervention in Sierra Leone's Civil War: Some Structural Explanations

Tunde Zack-Williams

INTRODUCTION: STATE FRAGILITY AND EXTERNAL INTERVENTION

This chapter examines the various modes of external intervention in the civil war, starting with Charles Taylor's support for the RUF as well as those of the regimes in Burkina Fasso, Libya and Côte d'Ivoire (Gberie 2005). This will be followed by an account of the government's struggle to defeat the RUF and how its inability to do so led to the introduction of mercenaries, such as the Gurkhas, Executive Outcomes, and Sandline International, as well as regional and international peacekeepers such as ECOMOG and UNAMSIL. In locating causal factors, it will be noted that conflict over diamonds was not the cause of the war, though this later prolonged it.

Between March 1991 and February 2002, when the war was declared over by President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, Sierra Leone went through a period of civil strife which resulted in the death of between 70,000 and 75,000 people (Kaikai 1999; Sawyer 2008); thousands more were injured, including at least 600 amputees who survived the carnage; and over half of the population was internally displaced, with thousands seeking refuge in neighbouring countries (Lord 2000). Other features of the war included: the recruitment and utilization of child combatants by both sides, which triggered off a series of external interventions, ranging from the efforts of neighbouring countries, regional peacekeepers, private mercenaries, the former colonial power and UN peacekeepers (Peters and Richards 1998; Musah and Fayemi 2000; Zack-Williams 2001a, 2006; Abdullah 2005; Keen 2005). The nature and ease with which these multilateral interventions occurred is symptomatic of the 'soft' nature of the Sierra Leone state and 'the absence of a hegemonic ruling class and a lack of relative autonomy by the postcolonial state' (Kandeh 1992: 31). This also points to the fragility of the governing classes, in

particular their inability to either transform society or to deliver the national project of social, economic and political development by mobilizing the energy of the people in a milieu of peace and security. According to Kandeh, this 'softness' paradoxically reflects both the inability of the state to address and satisfy the needs of the mass of the population, and the ability to pursue objectives rather than those of the dominant classes, in other words, a hegemonic void, thus inviting authoritarianism, unproductive and parasitic mode of accumulation (Kandeh 1992).

The fragility of the Sierra Leone state is historical: there existed not only the problem of subjugating a variety of ethnicities, but also the problem of irredentism created by colonial intervention and the artificiality of colonial borders, cutting across ethnicities and lumping together previously antagonistic groups. The arrival and development of the ethnocentric settler community further complicated the colonial equation, as a faction from this community sought separation and independence. Though this tension between the Creoles and the indigenous people appeared to have been settled by the time of independence, thanks to various court rulings in Britain, ethnicity and regionalism emerged in the wake of the constitutional conference in Britain in 1960, when a split in the United Front coalition saw the emergence of a northern based party, the All People's Congress (APC), under the leadership of Mr Siaka Stevens.

Furthermore, unlike the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), which had built a powerful political base among the chiefs, the APC took a radical stance on social issues, which put the party in opposition to the chiefs, who cherished their positions as elders and custodians of culture, politics and land. No serious attempt was made to mobilize the energy of the people; instead they depended on the chiefs to rein in disloyal individuals, thus marginalizing the people further from the centre of politics, in a local version of 'indirect despotism' (Mamdani 1996).

THE ORIGIN OF THE CIVIL WAR

The war started as a spillover from the Liberian civil war, which had started some two years earlier. There were long-term and immediate causal reasons for the war. One long-term factor was the sense of alienation felt by the mass of the Sierra Leonean people towards the uninterrupted autocratic rule of the APC from 1968 to 1992, when they were removed from power by a military coup of young officers (Zack-Williams and Riley 1993; Zack-Williams 1985, 1990, 1997). The APC was founded on the eve of the country's independence in

1961, following a split within the ruling elite, which was to continue throughout the post-colonial era reinforcing the bifurcated nature of politics (Bangura 2000). Given the close connection Siaka Stevens and some of his colleagues had with organized labour (he was a mine worker organizer), it was not surprising that the party appropriated the trappings of a progressive political association: the party symbol was the rising sun, the party colour was red; and it had strong commercial and diplomatic relations with China and the Soviet bloc. Many party cadres, including members of security forces, were trained either in Eastern Europe, Cuba or China (Zack-Williams 1985).

Independence in 1961 was followed by general elections in 1962 in which the APC made modest gains, but it was able to take control of the capital, Freetown, in the municipal elections. In 1967, the APC was able to unseat the ruling SLPP, but was prevented from assuming power by an unwelcome intervention by the country's army commander, Brigadier David Lansana, on the advice of the defeated prime minister, Sir Albert Margai, thus bringing to an end the experiment of democracy in Sierra Leone (Collier 1970). Lansana's intervention also helped to politicize and create ethnic tension. As Bundu has observed:

The success of the All People's Congress (APC) in the general elections of 1967 turned Sierra Leone into a beacon of democratic change in Africa in a way that no other country could claim to be. Regrettably, it was short-lived. The promise of a smooth transition of power suddenly turned into a nightmare. Siaka Stevens, the new prime minister, had barely taken the oath of office when he was overthrown in the nation's first ever *coup d'état* on March 21, 1967. The *putsch* marked the beginning of the country's constitutional degeneracy from which, to this day, it is still to recover. (2001: 40)

No sooner had Stevens been detained in State House, than Lansana was removed from power by a group of young officers, who appointed one of their numbers, a Major A. T. Juxon-Smith, to lead the new junta. In the following year, a group of non-commissioned officers removed the young majors from power and summoned Mr Siaka Stevens to return from exile in neighbouring Guinea where he was organizing his military return to power. This 'bizarre story' marked the beginnings of Stevens' first premiership (Stevens 1984: 233). Furthermore, as we shall see presently, the consequence of the events of March 1967 was not just 'constitutional degeneracy', but also the rise of personal rule as well as economic decline. Thus a

land once described as the 'Athens of West Africa' was transformed within thirty years of independence to a wretched state, at the bottom of the Human Development Index (Zack-Williams 2002).

Stevens' victory in 1967 was due largely to the economic mismanagement of the economy by Albert Margai's regime, in particular the policies that almost bankrupted the state-controlled Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Board (SLPMB), which impacted on most rural households in the country, creeping political authoritarianism, and accusations of corruption and ethnicity (Sawi 1972; Cartwright 1970). APC's reign started off as a coalition government, but within two years opposition members within the government had been eased out, and at least one of the policies of the SLPP, which Stevens had condemned (declaring the country a republic), was quickly rushed through the House of Representatives with little or no consultation. One important mode of political control was through a series of patrimonial networks, which has been labelled the *shadow state* (Reno 1995). By the late 1970s, the one-party state became established as the activities of the oppressive state apparatus were intensified. Opposition members who refused to join the ruling party were either silenced through imprisonment or forced into exile, with Stevens initially becoming very dependent on his Cuban trained 'praetorian guards', the Internal Security Unit (ISU), later called the State Security Division (SSD), which contested national security functions with the national army, an organization of which the government was most distrustful.

Given this mode of governance, legitimacy was premised on the extension of the shadow state. However, following the oil shock of the 1970s and 1980s, and the poor performance of the domestic economy, the country experienced major balance of payment problems, which propelled the country to the International Financial Institutions' (IFIs) sponsored structural adjustment programmes, which, in turn, exacerbated national misery. The initial reaction of Stevens and his party was to raid the diamond industry by bringing in 'Bigmen' with external resources, including Jamil Said Mohammed, an Afro-Lebanese businessman, who sat in Cabinet meetings and was later accused by Stevens' successor, Joseph Momoh, of plotting his overthrow. The demise of 'Jamil', as he was fondly referred to by the party faithful, saw the arrival of Russian-born Israeli Shaptai Kalmanovitch and his Israeli-based empire, LIAT construction and finance company. Though he won contracts to construct low-cost housing, Smillie et al. (2000) have noted that his main interests were in diamonds and perhaps drugs. Kalamanovitch's brush with the Israeli legal authorities saw his untimely departure from Sierra

Leone and he was promptly followed by another Israeli, Nir Guaz, known as 'The Skipper', who owned the N. R. SCIPA group of companies. SCIPA soon set up a diamond buying office in Kenema and Freetown and as a sweetener provided loans to the Sierra Leone government to overcome external arrears, which pleased the IMF (Smillie et al. 2000). By 1991, as the storm of the civil war was gathering strength, the new cargo cultists had to abandon their milking cow, Sierra Leone. By the late 1980s, the state owned National Diamond Mining Company (SL) Limited had been informalized as diamond resources were shared among party stalwarts and the chiefs in the diamond rich districts (Zack-Williams 1995).

The growing economic crisis and challenges from counter-hegemonic forces, such as the labour and student unions, produced their anti-theses of growing political authoritarianism and repression of the civilian population as the government became paranoid with regular accusations of plots and coup attempts, which resulted in the declaration of a permanent state of emergency as a prelude to a crackdown either on political opponents or rivals in the diamond field. In one such case an army corporal was one of several people arrested and tried but then freed. He later became a rural itinerant photographer as well as dabbling in radical student politics, which eventually took him to Benghazi in Libya and Accra in Ghana for military training (Gberie 2005). This marked the beginnings of the foray of rebel leader Foday Sankoh into the politics of the nation. APC's neglect of the south and southeastern areas produced major problems for the party and, in order to survive, APC's deputy leader, S. I. Koroma, soon turned the ability to win elections into an art form as party members were either returned unopposed or 'won by the announcement' (vote and result stealing).

By the end of the 1980s, the affects of poor governance and kleptocracy were now coming home to roost. The economy continued to perform badly as the country became more and more dependent on aid and the imported staple rice, which rose from 68,000 metric tons in 1980/81 to 136,000 metric tons in 1985/86; food aid increased from 10,000 metric tons in 1974/75 to 21,000 metric tons a decade later (Zack-Williams 1990: 23). The effect of this new dependency was not only immediate, with its impact on the balance of payments, but it had a long-term effect on taste transfer, as much of the imported rice was accounted for by US PL480, which had negative effects on locally produced rice (ibid.: 23). Between 1970 and 1985 the average rate of growth per capita dropped by -0.9 per cent (1970-75), -0.7 per cent (1975-80), and -5.6 per cent (1980-85) (UN 1985). Not only was there a steady deterioration in

the price of the country's major exports, but this continued throughout the 1980s, with Sierra Leone failing to fulfil its export quota in a number of areas. In 1977 the price of cocoa was £3,000 per ton, but fell to just £600 in 1986; the total volume of cocoa exported fell from 12,500 metric tons in 1983 to 8,600 metric tons in 1986. Similar slippage is recorded for all export items including diamonds, which fell from 2 million carats in 1970 to 595,000 carats in 1980 and a derisory 48,000 carats in 1988 (Country Report 1989). Much of this leakage or loss was due to the smuggling of minerals such as gold and diamonds and other produce through the Liberian market, where the US dollar was legal tender. Thus former minister of finance, Tommy Morgan, observed:

We know that diamonds exported from Sierra Leone to Antwerp, Tel Aviv and other places come to \$160 million annually. All this can come into our national income if we stop smuggling, if we imposed the right measures. (Zack-Williams 1990: 25)

By the beginning of 1990 it was clear to even the most casual observer that Sierra Leone's economy and society were in deep trouble and that the country had entered a major crisis, as indicated not only by the worsening balance of payment figures, but also in terms of expenditure and incomes. For example, between 1980 and 1985 the average percentage change of government receipts was 5.4 per cent compared to 46.67 per cent in expenditure (UNECA 1985: 58). The result was that teachers and other government employees went for months without salaries, while Freetown was without electricity for the best part of a year due to the scarcity of foreign exchange with which to purchase oil and spare parts for the generator.

The 'softness' of the Sierra Leonean state is indicative of the inability of its leaders to impose discipline upon the elites, and to stem smuggling and illegal dealings in gold and diamonds. What is also clear is that the weakened and already vulnerable people of that country could not effect regime change under the one-party system as they were warned by the APC's secretary-general that in a one-party state any call for political pluralism would be potentially treasonable. In 1985, Stevens, who had presided over the country's affairs for the best part of twenty years, decided to step down in favour of his Force Commander, Major General Joseph Seidu Momoh, his kith and kin, rather than his heir apparent, Mr S. I. Koroma, who had helped Stevens establish the party. Stevens was distrustful of his long-term lieutenant, in particular he feared that Koroma might turn on him and bring him to account for his stewardship. By contrast,

Joseph Momoh was a phlegmatic character, lacking any shrewd political skills and with no political base within the party. It was not long before Momoh abrogated power to 'the Ekutay', a Northern ethnic cabal, which became a major source of patronage, thus further alienating those from the south and eastern parts of the country (Zack-Williams 2001). These areas remained loyal opposition strongholds throughout the period of APC dictatorship.

ENTER THE RUF: THE VOICE OF THE YOUTH?

Given the neglect and violence perpetuated on the people of the Eastern and Southern Provinces, it is not surprising that challenges to APC rule came from this area. It is true (as we shall see presently) that there were other geo-political factors in the east and southeast regions which hastened the uprising against the APC: both Kono and Kenema in the east remained major sources of diamonds, yet they were characterized by poor infrastructure and the alliance between the APC's shadow state members in these areas did not go down well with the rank and file, who benefited very little from alluvial diamond mining (Zack-Williams 1995).

The abysmal economic, social and political conditions help us to understand some of the long-term grievances that the people of this region in particular, and Sierra Leone as a whole, held against APC's 'charismatic dictatorship'. In 1987 Momoh declared a State of Economic Emergency under which the government assumed wide powers to crack down on corruption, including gold and diamond smuggling, as well as the hoarding of essential commodities and the local currency. The aim of these policies was to counter the thriving parallel market, to which the formal banking sector had lost millions of *leones*. Momoh went further in applying the International Monetary Fund's conditionality than his predecessor. Indeed, after the IMF had unilaterally abrogated the agreement in 1990, due to the government's inability to continue payment of the debt, Momoh embarked upon a 'shadow programme', that is conditionality without the loan to cushion the worst effects. However, it was not long before these policies started taking their toll, as prices of basic commodities soared to astronomical heights and inflation ate into savings and wages. Those on fixed incomes perished, as an already dwindling middle class was decimated – those who could not vote with their feet that is. Momoh's position in the Congress was never as omnipotent as Stevens'.

Whilst Momoh, the 'ethnic upstart', was acceptable to large sections of the Northern elites and the Freetown establishment, his

rise to power seems to have upset the 'old brigade', who saw him as harvester of the fruits of their labour. Included in this group was his deputy and former SLPP stalwart, Francis Minah, who allegedly used Momoh's growing unpopularity as the basis for organizing a *putsch*, which resulted in Minah's execution for high treason. It is important to note that Minah hailed from Pujehun District, one of the areas that would define the front line of the civil war. Minah had also been involved in the notorious Ndogboyosi conflict, 'a rural rebellion in the mid-1980s against the All People's Congress Government of Siaka Stevens' (Riley and Max-Sesay 1995: 122). Nonetheless, Minah's execution incensed many people from the Southern Province, who felt that it was all a plot by Northern zealots who wanted to deprive them of power, as Minah was expected to succeed Momoh to the presidency. In one swoop, Momoh became alienated from two of the most powerful ethnic groups in the country, the Temnes (the ethnic group of rebel leader Foday Sankoh) from the northern and central areas of the country and the Mendes from the south. Together, these two groups account for around 60 per cent of the total population. Momoh's insensitivity reached new heights when he called for 'ethnic corporatism' in a speech delivered to the Ekutay Annual Convention at Binkolo, Bombali District, which was broadcast by the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service. Indeed, by the time of this 1990 broadcast, in which he urged all of his subjects to form themselves into ethnic cabals, Momoh confirmed what many political pundits had been alluding to: mainly that power had shifted from parliament and the cabinet to the Ekutay (Zack-Williams 1991, 2001). The consequence of the growing influence of the Ekutay in the affairs of state was to further worsen inter-ethnic relations among the elites and to hasten economic decline. By 1991 the first UNDP Index for Human Development put Sierra Leone at 165th out of 165 countries. Momoh's control of state affairs soon started to slip away; and the Eastern Province, Kono District in particular, continued to retain its notoriety as the 'Wild West of West Africa', with a semi-permanent lawlessness in the diamond mining areas (Harbottle 1976).

The immediate spark that triggered the civil war was ostensibly a spillover from the uprising in Liberia (Gberie 2005), which had been started by an invasion of forces led by Charles Taylor, a fugitive from a US penitentiary, whose main aim was the overthrow of the Liberian military dictator Master-Sergeant Samuel Doe. The latter had seized power in 1980 in a bloody military coup, which saw the death of the president and large numbers of the ruling Americo-Liberian establishment. Despite his transformation from a military

officer to a civilian president, Doe ruled the country with a reign of terror that has been described as the 'the most brutal subaltern dictatorships to emerge in Africa' (Kandeh 2004), showing no mercy to opponents and accused of favouring his ethnic group, the Krahn. The bloodletting that resulted from the encounter between Doe's forces and that of invaders led the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to set up a peacekeeping force (ECOMOG) to help bring peace to Liberia. Sierra Leone, a neighbour of Liberia, continued to play the role of honest broker, until it allowed its civilian airport in the capital, Freetown, to be used by Nigerian Alpha jets to strafe troops loyal to Charles Taylor as they were about to capture the Liberian capital.

Taylor now accused the Sierra Leone authorities of duplicity and swore revenge for this act of 'betrayal'. Taylor, who had met former corporal Foday Sankoh in Ghana in 1987 and in Libya in 1988 (Gberie 2005: 52), decided to support Sankoh's long-term ambition to challenge APC rule. Gberie has given prominence to the Libyan encounter and the decisive role of Libya's Colonel Gaddafi in aiding Sankoh's 'revolutionary project' in Sierra Leone. Thus he observes:

Sankoh's rage and spite, however, would never have threatened society beyond perhaps the occasional case of anti-social conduct – which the police, however weakened and by inadequate resources and institutional corruption, were well equipped to handle – had it not been for the geopolitical adventurism of Libya's Colonel Gaddafi and the mix of enthusiasm and opportunism of few university radical "radicals". (Gberie 2005: 48–49)

In March 1991 a group of fighters including Liberians, Burkinabes and exiled Sierra Leoneans attacked the town of Bormalu, Kailahun District, in the southeastern corner of the country, close to the Liberian border. The war soon spread throughout the provinces, which were always disconnected from the capital, to the point that whilst people in the provinces were subject to rebel brutality, those in the capital continued to deny the presence of any rebel activities. Government forces proved no match for the rebels, who continued to push west and south, aiming for the capital. As the rebels moved in the interior, they continued to recruit children into their armed movement, transforming them into child combatants. The latter were quickly socialized into violence and in order to bind them to the RUF, they were encouraged to perpetuate widespread violence on the civilian population, including members of their family.

THE CAPTAIN'S COUP

The by now enfeebled APC government of Major General Joseph Momoh could not marshal its troops against the ragtag army of the RUF, partly because the army, although a tool in suppressing opposition to the party, had been starved of resources, the more politically loyal 'palace guards', the State Security Division, being favoured. Many young people had to fight at the front with few resources and they made large sacrifices. After one major engagement with rebel forces, in which a number of their comrades died, a group of young officers led by a 27-year-old captain, Valentine Strasser, decided to strike in order to remove the moribund regime of Joseph Momoh. The naïve approach with regards to the challenges facing them in forming a government, which the youthful junta demonstrated, is not unlike that described by Ademoyega, one of the plotters of the first coup by young officers that removed the federal government of Alhaji Tafawa Balewa from power in Nigeria (Ademoyega 1981). Like the perceived valiant Major Nzegwu, the group of young soldiers toyed with populist and socialist ideas and established the National Provisional Revolutionary Council (NPRC) (Riley 1997), emulating the 'revolutionary' style and rhetoric of Ghana's Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings, but without showing any comprehension of the specificity of the Sierra Leone situation. In their first broadcast to the nation they accused the Momoh regime of running a corrupt administration, enjoying a life of luxury in the capital whilst young soldiers were losing their lives and being operated upon without anaesthesia. They naively promised to bring the war to a quick end. Once the euphoria of the Captain's coup was over, it became clear to the junta that the existing army could not defeat the rebels. To achieve this, the strength of the army was expanded to some 14,000 fighters, this time by recruiting what Ismail Rashid has called 'lumpen youth' (Rashid 2004), many of whom were hired thugs in the service of politicians from the ruling APC government. The junta tried to introduce order, particularly in the capital, as well as mobilize a brigade of workers to clean the filthy and neglected city on certain Saturdays. This 'revolutionary act' was class-and-gender loaded, as it was the poor and women ('the idle bodies') in particular who were seized by the military to undertake these unpaid chores.

The main aim of the rebels at this juncture was to occupy vital economic installations in order to have a stranglehold on the country, thus questioning the legitimacy of the APC regime and their military successors. To fulfil this aim, the RUF rebels moved in on the mining district of Kono, where they were able to repulse a very

weak local defence, and then quickly moved on to attack the bauxite and rutile mines in the Moyamba and Bonthe Districts. In considering the occupation of these major economic arteries, the 'greed not grievance' theorists have failed to answer the question as to why the bauxite and rutile mines were taken when it was not possible for the rebels to mine and extract minerals from them. Was this a peculiar form of greed? The actions of the rebels during this occupation points to some of their underlining motives: mining installations were destroyed and a number of local and foreign personnel were abducted, which gained maximum international publicity for the rebels.

The leadership of the junta shared a commonality with the leadership of the RUF (Abdullah 2004; Gberie 2005; Kandeh 2004; Peters 2006; Rashid 2004): the fact that they were recruited from an urban/rural background, many of them being deprived of a basic education, meant that there were a number of factors that bound them together. Thus, as we shall see presently, following the military coup that ushered in the rule of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, Johnny Paul Koroma, leader of the coup, quickly called for a united 'peoples' army' linking the RUF with the fighters of the AFRC. Of more immediate concern was the emergence of 'sobels', 'soldier-rebels' or what David Keen has called "'sell game": a strangely co-operative conflict', as soldiers on the government side not only co-operated with the rebels in looting and pillaging, but fought on both sides in the civil war (Abraham 2004). The junta's anti-corruption drive and the relative success in reducing inflation from three figures when they seized power in 1992 to double figures by 1994 endeared the leadership to the international financial institutions (IFIs), who seemed to have forgiven 'Strasser the executioner' who killed 22 officers and civilians on charges of plotting his overthrow.

However, the RUF's occupation of Kono District and its rich diamond deposits posed a major threat to the existence of the junta, particularly with the growing threat of Sobel activities and the fact that the RUF, under the supervision of Liberian warlord Charles Taylor, was now exchanging diamonds for arms and ammunitions. The coup itself had destroyed the command structure of the army, as many senior officers had been forced to leave it or put under arrest. In order to rescue the diamond fields in Kono, the junta decided to employ the services of private military companies, initially that of the Gurkha Security Guards (GSG), working through the British weapons manufacturer J&S Franklin. The remit of GSG was to provide protection for the activities of the US-Australian mining concern, Sierra Rutile, with one of the largest deposits of rutile in

the world, and to provide training for the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces in pursuing the war against the RUF. As Musah has observed, in an example of the weakness of the Sierra Leone state, the training of the country's future defence units was left in the hands of a private commercial company composed solely of foreigners – James Maynard, Andrew Myres (both British) and Canadian Colonel Robert Mackenzie (Musah and Fayemi 2000). According to Musah, there were other private military companies who were seeking opportunities in Sierra Leone, including: Defence Systems Limited, Control Risk Group, J & P Security Limited, Rapport Research and Analysis Limited, and Group 4. However, GSG's time in Sierra Leone was cut short when 'sell game' took place as the company's strategic plan was revealed to the RUF, resulting in the death of its leader, Colonel Robert Mackenzie.

The departure of the GSG saw the entry of a new private military company, Executive Outcomes (EO), a military security outfit from South Africa that had been involved in the Angola civil war and that was connected with mining interests in Africa. An agreement to provide services was signed by the company and the military leader Captain Valentine Strasser in 1995. Up until this time, the RUF had been intransigent, refusing to negotiate either with Momoh or Strasser who were seen as usurpers of RUF victory. The aim of the junta and EO did not strongly coincide: the former was seeking strategic advantage in the war, whilst the latter 'hoped to be able to influence internal politics as a leverage to pry financial and mineral concessions on the cheap from an enfeebled government' (Musah 2000: 88–89). At the height of its activities in the country, EO employed 300 fighters and also trained special forces within the army. EO was able to push the rebels out of the diamond fields in Kono, but as a major drain on the already poor exchequer. For example, between May and December 1995, the government paid EO some US\$13.5m. The contract was promptly renewed by the civilian regime of Ahmed Tejan Kabbah in 1996, and for 20 months work in the country EO reaped a fee of US\$35.2m as well as mining concessions in diamonds and other minerals for its mining offshoot, Branch Energy (*ibid.*). In late 1996, the IMF decided to pull the plug on the activities of EO, as they argued that the company was a major drain on the country's meagre foreign exchange earnings. The company left Sierra Leone in January 1997 after consolidating its 'mercenary field brigade, Lifeguard Systems, to protect Branch Energy's possessions in Koidu' (*ibid.*: 92).

The problem of security bedevilled the new civilian regime, in particular the phenomenon of Sobel, which had been introduced

into the army by the mass recruitment of déclassé elements. Mindful that many of the old guards were die-hard APC loyalists, Kabbah decided to disband his army and became dependent on an arm of civil society, the ethnic hunters, the Kamajors. This move on the part of the new president, and the fact that a number of army personnel were now incarcerated in the notorious Pademba Road prison, created widespread resentment in the army.

The nation's worst fear came to pass in May 1997 when a group of young officers staged a coup to remove President Kabbah's government from office. They chose as their leader Major Johnny Paul Koroma, who had been imprisoned, accused of plotting to overthrow the government. Koroma was one among hundreds of prisoners, including dangerous criminals, released by the plotters. Koroma invited the RUF fighters to enter the capital in order to form a united fighting force, 'the People's Army' (Zack-Williams 1997). In the eyes of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), as the junta called itself, the Kamajors were a threat to national unity and a tool in sectional divide as it sought to usurp the role of the army 'as custodians of state security and defenders of the constitution'. However, the reign of the AFRC was short-lived as in February of the following year they were driven out of the capital by Nigerian-led ECOMOG forces, with a rump of the army calling itself the West Side Boys deciding to camp outside the city limits, near Waterloo, where they engaged in banditry and intimidation of the civilian population.

SANDLINE INTERNATIONAL, THE UN EMBARGO AND THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT

The expulsion of the AFRC from the capital was the signal for the government of Alhaji Ahmed Tejan Kabbah to return triumphantly to Freetown from exile in Guinea Conakry. The issue of national security was foremost in Kabbah's mind as he contemplated his return to power. We have drawn attention to how the Kamajors were transformed from a section of civil society to the core national Civil Defence Forces (CDF), and during his period in exile Kabbah's administration 'courted the services of EO's partner – Sandline International' (Musah 2000). Meanwhile, the undisciplined army was reduced in size, whilst the number of those enlisted in the Kamajors and the other elements of the civic defence force, the Kapras, Tamaboro and the Dorso saw their ranks increased. The problem for President Kabbah was that the CDF was not fully trained to take on the RUF and its external and internal allies.

With this in mind, Kabbah was introduced to Sandline International by the former British High Commissioner, Mr Peter Penfold, who had struck a good relationship with the government of President Kabbah and was later crowned honorary traditional chief in Sierra Leone. According to Musah (2000), the main link with Sandline was Penfold's friend, Rupert Bowen, a former British diplomat and intelligence operative, who was now Sandline's representative in West Africa. Following rebel leader Johnny Paul Koroma's decision in July 1997 not to hand power back to Kabbah, a plot was hatched to dislodge him through an invasion of Sierra Leone involving Momodu Koroma, a government minister, Rakesh Saxena and Samir Patel, representatives of the Jupiter Mining Company, and Tim Spicer, who represented Sandline International. The fragility of the Sierra Leone state referred to earlier in this chapter is evident in the conspicuous absence of any significant number of local players and the wide role that Sandline was expected to play in the country's security, which included:

- working with ECOMOG on a strategy for the invasion of the capital;
- providing weapons, transportation and food for the coalition, and training and equipping 40,000 Kamajor fighters, many of whom were still in Guinea.

Musah (2000) has argued that both Saxena and Sandline had separate deals with the beleaguered government of Kabbah, who was desperate not only to rid his country of the AFRC, but also keen to create a new viable defence force, and should he succeed, then the influence of the two mining outfits would have increased tremendously in the mineral industry of Sierra Leone, with Jupiter Mining expected to capture mines controlled by Diamond Works/Branch Energy. Apparently, the interwoven military network was not too pleased with Kabbah for obeying his IFI paymaster who had demanded an end to EO's costly operations in Sierra Leone. According to Musah:

the network did not take kindly to the abrupt termination of the EO contract in 1996 by President Kabbah, who was under enormous pressure from international donors to send the mercenaries packing. According to Michael Grunberg, EO warned Kabbah that his government would be overthrown within 100 days if he carried out the decision to expel them. Kabbah was overthrown on the 95th day after EO's exit! Indeed there is evidence to suggest

that LifeGuard, the security wing of EO and Sandline into which many EO personnel were absorbed after EO officially left Sierra Leone, was responsible for supplying a shipment of arms ... to the AFRC in Sierra Leone. (Musah 2000: 100–101)

Sandline International's intervention in the effort to return Kabbah to power, which became known as the 'arms to Africa Affair', tested the New Labour government's 'ethical foreign policy', as the government (specifically officials in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office) was accused of contravening the UN embargo on arms shipment to Sierra Leone (Porteous 2008). The significance of this affair is twofold: first, the event drew New Labour and 'Prime Minister Tony Blair into the African arena for the first time' (ibid.: 33); second, it foreshadowed New Labour's intervention in 2000 to rid the country of the last vestiges of the West Side Boys and the RUF.

Whilst these various private military outfits continued to offer their services to the Sierra Leone government in exchange for cash and mining concessions, the main co-ordinated military opposition to the RUF and its allies remained the Nigerian-led ECOMOG forces. Unlike UNAMSIL, which was a peacekeeping force, ECOMOG tried to enforce peace, which inevitably brought the commanders of the two forces into conflict: the UNAMSIL commander, Indian Major-General Vijay Jetley, accused the Nigerian commander of ECOMOG, Brigadier-General Maxwell Khobe, of receiving 'up to 10 million dollars to permit the activities of the RUF' (Gberie 2005: 168) and Nigerian troops of being involved in diamond mining when the rebels struck Kono District (Gberi 2005). The Nigerians retorted by accusing Jetley of racism because he failed to consult his deputy, Nigerian Brigadier-General Mohammed Garba, and instead sought advice from other Indian commanders. In the end, Jetley was replaced by a Pakistani commander.

Meanwhile, the government of President Kabbah signed the Conakry Peace Plan with the AFRC leadership in October 1997, brokered by ECOWAS the agreement committed the latter to hand over power in 1998. In 1996 the Abidjan Agreement was signed under the auspices of the UN, ECOWAS and the OAU, the first time the protagonists had come together to sue for peace. Despite Gberie's observation that 'The RUF, composed of all semi-illiterates at best and illiterates, [who] could not articulate their grievances and demands at the Peace Talks in 1996 and 1999...' (Gberie 2005: 13), Kabbah failed to show leadership qualities by exploiting the RUF's weaknesses and unpopularity within the country and impose his will

on the rebel leadership, particularly at a time when the RUF only controlled a small area in the country.

By the time of the January 1999 invasion of the capital, the RUF was occupying two-thirds of the country, with the government's authority only existing in the urban areas. Amid growing concern about the atrocities emitted upon the civilian population by both RUF thugs and the ECOMOG forces, there was demand for peace at all cost. In particular, US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright dispatched the Revd Jesse Jackson, President Clinton's Special Envoy to Africa, 'with very little bureaucratic influence or power in Washington to West Africa to do their dirty job' (Gberie 2005: 157). The dirty job that Gberie refers to involved the dragooning of the by now weakened Kabbah to conclude a Faustian pact with Sankoh and his bunch of hallucinating young thugs (who had adopted titles such as 'brigadier' and 'colonel'), whereby the RUF thugs were given total immunity from prosecution for all the atrocities perpetuated on the populace. The Lomé Accord was more than the RUF could have expected to win on the battlefield and that emboldened the leadership to further illusions of grandeur and recalcitrant behaviour.

The agreement gave Sankoh (who was ridiculously equated with the revered Nelson Mandela by the poorly informed Jesse Jackson) and his henchmen all that they could have asked for, including immunity from prosecution and ministerial positions in the cabinet. Sankoh was also given overall charge of the mineral resources in the country as Chair of the Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development (CMMRD) and given the substantive position of vice-president of the country. The generosity of the Lomé Accord to the RUF must have blown them off the reality radar. However, the United Nations, through Secretary-General Kofi Annan, made it clear that it would not accept such a settlement insisting that those responsible for the worst atrocities should be charged with human rights abuse. Not only did Sankoh take his time before returning to Freetown from Lomé, but shortly after his return to the capital he disappeared, only to reappear in South Africa, which was contrary to UN resolutions putting an embargo on the movement of the leadership of the RUF and AFRC. The general feeling was that Sankoh, who at the time had embargoed all mining activities in his country (except those mined by his RUF operatives), had gone to South Africa as Chair of the CMMRD to sell some of his haul of diamonds in exchange for weapons. He was soon thrown out of South Africa and declared a *persona non grata*.

Clearly, Sankoh was not satisfied with the coalition arrangements, which had been forced on the RUF by the international community, and in May 2000, as the last Nigeria-led ECOMOG troops left the country, Sankoh and his fighters decided to go for broke by staging a putsch designed to oust Kabbah from power and to install the RUF as the sole political organization in the country. In this attack, Sankoh's fighters killed several innocent civilians as unarmed citizens came out to protest against the RUF action. The mayhem unleashed by the emergency attracted a direct reaction from the international community, in particular Britain, which had invested morally and financially in the country. To worsen an already bad situation, Sankoh's fighters managed to ambush and captured a number of UNAMSIL troops and their armoured personnel carriers. This was a massive humiliation, which could have had serious implications for UN peace-keeping missions. In order to rescue the reputation of the UN Peacekeeping Mission, Prime Minister Tony Blair decided to send in an elite regiment of paratroopers under the guise of rescuing British and European Union nationals from the country. The paratroopers were able to quickly secure the international airport at Lungi to the north of the capital, thus relieving the pressure on UNAMSIL.

In the ensuing battle, the West Side Boys, who refused to release captured British troops unless their demands were met, were wiped out, which impacted upon RUF morale. The defeat of the West Side Boys was quickly followed by the securing of the capital and the capturing of Sankoh (who had gone into hiding following the putsch) with a haul of diamonds as he tried to make his way to the Nigerian High Commission. Gradually, some 16,000 UNAMSIL troops were able to move into the interior as more and more RUF troops were demobilized by UNAMSIL, exchanging guns for training and resettlement packages. This soon paved the way for the demobilization process to start in earnest and by May 2000 UNAMSIL announced that some 24,000 of the 45,000 combatants that were thought to be fighting on the side of the RUF had been disarmed; and by February 2002, around 72,490 combatants from both the RUF and CDF had been disarmed, and the end of the war was announced by the RUF and the government.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided a useful background to the events leading to the civil war as well as the various types of interventions that occurred during the war. Looking at both the long-term and

immediate causal reasons, attention has been drawn to Sankoh's determination to end APC rule, a task he had embarked on for years, which included military training in Gaddafi's Libya. Also, the role of Charles Taylor as he sought revenge for what he saw as Sierra Leone's duplicity in allowing its airport to be used to bomb his troops as they were about to capture the capital has been considered. It was noted that the first invaders constituted an 'international brigade' of Burkinabese, Liberians and exiled Sierra Leoneans. Attention was also drawn to the role of private military companies, fighting mainly on the side of the government in return for cash remuneration and mining concessions. Fundamental to their activities as a fighting force were their interests in gaining mining concessions. This obsession, as has been noted, is the direct result of the 'soft' nature of the Sierra Leone state, which as the successor to the colonial state, which was created by the bourgeoisie of the centre, cannot act against the interests of the bourgeois class.

2

International Actors and Democracy Promotion in Post-Conflict Sierra Leone: Time for Stock-Taking

Marcella Macauley

INTRODUCTION

Like many states battered by civil conflicts, Sierra Leone presents unique challenges for democratization and peacebuilding, which no doubt warranted external intervention by various actors for promotion of sustainable democracy. The intervention was necessary to secure peace, and then to rebuild the institutions responsible for upholding democratic governance and the rule of law, which had collapsed under the weight of bad governance and the 11 years of anarchy. In retrospect, when the war was declared over, the country represented ‘an anatomy of state collapse’ (Musah and Fayemi 2000: 81). It had suffered from a severe and brutal internal strife. Commenting on the nature of the conflict, Ayissi and Poulton (2000: 3) affirm that:

In March 1991 an armed conflict was ignited in Sierra Leone becoming one of the nastiest wars the world has witnessed in the last five decades. The conflict began as a rebel incursion at the border between Sierra Leone and Liberia. An unknown group calling themselves the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) claimed responsibility for the attacks and affirmed to save Sierra Leone from its corrupt, backward and oppressive regime. But the revolution turned horribly wrong. After the first outburst of violence the country turned from a stable, corrupted and mismanaged state, into a scene of frightening brutality, one of the greatest human tragedies of the twentieth century.

Furthermore, the country exhibited high levels of poverty with weak state institutions as a result of the consuming quality of violence. The crisis and degree of violence were indeed enormous. In an attempt at documentation, by the end of the conflict in 2002 over 500,000

Sierra Leoneans were refugees, with thousands more internally displaced. Approximately 215,000 women were subjected to sexual violence, over 72,000 ex-combatants needed to be reintegrated into society, more than 300 towns and villages were destroyed, together with over 340,000 houses. In addition, about 80 per cent of the social services needed rehabilitation (Baker and May 2004: 36). The public administration and the economy were highly fractured especially in the provinces.

The judiciary showed similar signs of collapse. By September 2000, there were only 15 presiding magistrates as against 4.5 million people in Sierra Leone. The state of the security institutions was equally worrying; some 900 police officers were killed during the conflict (Kamara 2010). To exacerbate the security dilemma, the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) had capitulated and after years of antagonistic relationships had joined forces with the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in 1997 under the umbrella of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC). This became an obstructionist regime characterized by arson, abduction, amputation, rape and murder.

However, the making of the Sierra Leonean debacle started well before the outbreak of the civil conflict in 1991. Indicators for pre-conflict decline have been attributed to such factors as the over-centralization of the state machinery, with political power concentrated in the hands of a small section of the elites in the country. This made access to resources impossible for non-political affiliates, leading to political exclusion and the marginalization of rural dwellers, women and youth. Factionalism and ethnic politics became rife; this resulted in the lack of access to justice, education and economic opportunities. In the event, corruption became embarrassingly high and successive governments in power failed to address the situation.

Within a theoretical framework, post-conflict democracies, as the term implies, have suffered from severe internal strife and exhibit glaring signs of poverty with weak state institutions as a result of the consuming quality of violence. Within such states, there exist ethnic, religious and other communal divisions which have been the cause of tension and violence in the society. The political leaders have lost credibility in the eyes of their people due to bad political governance and 'the continued existence of the state becomes questionable and illegitimate'. As with state institutions, infrastructural networks and social services have grossly deteriorated. The GDP per capita and other critical economic indicators are dismal (see concluding chapter). To further aggravate the situation, corruption is rife with limited opportunities for upholding the rule of law (Rotberg 2004: 4).

Theorists of international relations in the 1990s were ready to label such countries as ‘failed or collapsed’ states, hence displaying traits of the world’s least promising candidates for institutionalizing democracy (Plattner 2005: 8).

Invariably, due to the degree of violence and the debilitating effect of armed conflict, post-conflict states are poised to reconstruct and restructure at all cost. The scenarios present the opportunity for revitalizing old institutions and systems or to open up to innovative strategies from external agencies. In Sierra Leone, reinstituting democratic principles and the respect for human rights after an 11-year civil war certainly required external interventions to boost local actions. Sierra Leone falls within the category of a ‘fragile’ state. It is not only a post-conflict state in transition, but also heavily dependent on donor assistance.

Essentially, the strategic intervention of international actors to address the challenge of democratic transition has so far been encouraging. The international community was highly determined to bring the state back on track and provided financial and technical resources to feed into the complex processes of democratic peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction efforts. In addition, funding assistance from external agencies enabled civil society organizations (CSOs) to crystallize around the parameters of pro-democracy movements and human rights activism to chart a promising democratic path. The Sierra Leonean case worked in tandem with international efforts to promote democracy as the globally acceptable political norm that has been propagated worldwide during the last 20 years but more so in the last decade. Within international circles, there is the belief that international political and financial support can help strengthen and even deepen democracy in former non-democratic states. As such, there has emerged ‘a far-reaching global public policy network’ assuming the responsibility of democracy promotion worldwide, with particular focus on new democracies that became part of the ‘Third Wave’ of global democratization. The rationale for this global venture, especially in the aftermath of war, lies in the fact that promoting democracy aids the adherence to international human rights norms, enhances the potential for good governance and provides the enabling political context for socio-economic development (Burnell 2000; De Zeeuw 2005). In Sierra Leone the network comprises the governments of major states such as the United States and the United Kingdom, together with their aid agencies. As such, multilateral donors, international organizations, international financial institutions, philanthropic organizations and non-governmental organizations have designed global, regional or

country specific programmes for democracy assistance. The challenge of this model, as Paris (2004) argues, is how to affect democracy without endangering the peace. In his liberal peace theory, he calls for the new peacebuilding strategy where institutionalization should precede liberalization. Market democracy encourages competition and conflict, and if the institutions for governing political and economic competition are missing violence can result (*ibid.*).

Thus international agencies working in Sierra Leone employed a two-pronged approach to democracy promotion and peacebuilding, carved within the broader framework of post-conflict reconstruction in a bid to secure peace. The UN through UNAMSIL deployed about 17,500 military personnel, the largest ever UN peacekeeping mission, with international agencies such as the UNDP, UNHCR and DFID particularly prominent in the reconstruction drive. Over 60 aid agencies and NGOs formed part of the reconstruction efforts captioned under the 4Rs: Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (Amurani-Phiri 2007). In May 2002, about 77 per cent of voters participated in the presidential and parliamentary elections (GoSL 2002), thus setting the stage for a period of democratic transition and better governance.

However, with a second post-conflict election in 2007, perceptions of the real achievements of democracy were mixed. Concerns were raised that the problems which predisposed the country to conflict were yet to be addressed. Questions remained on the issue of youth marginalization (see Chapter 7), access to resources, salaries that are incompatible with standards of living, appropriate transitional justice mechanisms such as reparations for war victims, corruption, poor service delivery and even the provision of basic amenities such as safe drinking water and power supply.

These trends have no doubt clouded the real achievements of peace and democracy building by several external actors. However, given these lapses, it is now imperative to critically analyse the role of foreign actors in promoting democratic values and to assess the impact of such interventions in light of growing societal concerns and internal challenges. In essence, this is the debate this research seeks to discuss. The enquiry will focus analysis on the assessment of the role of three international agencies, namely DFID, UNAMSIL and the UNDP. The analysis will seek to bring out the engagement of these three agencies in the areas of security, governance, justice, the rule of law, poverty reduction and civil society strengthening, which form the bedrock for democracy building in a post-conflict state.

DEFINING DEMOCRACY: A CONCEPTUAL DEBATE

According to Carothers (2002), developments in seven different regions in the last quarter of the twentieth century converged to change the political scenario across the world. The events include the fall of the right-wing authoritarian regime in Southern Europe in the mid-1970s, elected civilian governments replacing military regimes in Latin America in the late 1970s, and the decline of authoritarian rule in parts of East and South Asia in the mid-1980s. There was also the collapse of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe at the end of the 1990s and the subsequent breakup of the Soviet Union and the establishment of 15 post-Soviet republics. In Africa and the Middle East, the new world after the 1990s was marked by the decline of one-party regimes and a weak liberal trend respectively. Though the 'causes, shape and pace' of these trends varied considerably, it culminated in the global 'third wave of democracy' (Carothers 2002). Therefore, in order to assess democratic regimes, identify factors that promote their consolidation, examine the viability of democracy promotion in a post-conflict setting like Sierra Leone, together with its implication for socio-economic transformation and sustainable development, it is necessary to critically analyze democracy as a concept and verify what makes a regime, state or society count as democratic.

Democracy is one of the most elusive concepts in political science, but in practical terms the most sought after because of its universal acclaim. Quite recently, Francis Fukuyama's thesis on the end of history enjoyed worldwide enthusiasm, as he celebrated the triumph of 'western liberal democracy as the highest political form that humanity can aspire to' (Fukuyama 2002: 4). However, political theorists and international observers have disagreed on how to classify political regimes or the conditions for making and consolidating democracy. This can be attributed to the fact that the concept itself is highly contested and there is no universally accepted definition (Diamond 1999: 7).

Studies have shown that democratic regimes worldwide have displayed a considerable range of variations, which has given rise to various democratic sub-types around the world (Beetham 1994: 40). Diamond (1999: 64, citing Collier and Levitsky 1997) points out that Collier and Levitsky's analysis of some 150 recent studies on democracy identified over 550 democratic sub-types. Invariably, this highlights the seriousness of the conceptual disarray as many of these democratic sub-types denote diminished forms which erode the quality of democracy. As such, the concept of democracy has

provided opportunities for criticism due to its unprecedented global expansion and universal acceptability (Diamond 1999).

Democracy is a set of institutional agreements that allows for public opposition and establishes the right for participation in politics. Within this perspective democracy exhibits three essential conditions and these are extensive competition by contestants, including individuals, groups or parties for government; political participation that allows electorates to select candidates in free and fair elections; and civil and political liberties that provides outlets for citizen's expression without fear of reprisal. Implicitly, this forms the tenet of liberal democracy, taking into account not just the freedom to vote and contest for office but also the freedom to speak and publish contesting views. Similarly, Lindberg (2006) points out that civil liberties in a society relate to three democratic qualities: participation involving freedom of assembly from diverse groups; competition which goes beyond elections; and creating an opportunity for personal autonomy and economic rights in order to allow for independent alternatives within the social sphere. There also needs to be gender equality and professional and educational opportunities to stimulate competition and, finally, legitimacy of democratic government enabling such factors as the peaceful co-existence of various social organizations and the government's ability to tackle violence in society and ensure security for the populace (*ibid.*).

More precisely, most political theorists are agreed that democracy is a system for reaching political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote. More specifically, it is a system designed for the selection of leaders through competitive elections. This approach to democracy provides a reasonably efficient criterion by which democratic governments can be distinguished from others. However, though this institutional understanding of democracy is clear and simple to operationalize, consideration of democracy from this minimalist notion raises serious questions in practice. In recent democratic analysis, elections have not led to broader democratic consolidation in many new democracies, giving rise to 'illiberal' (Zakaria 2003) democratic regimes. As such, government performance is a key element for democracy building. By way of clarification, Zakaria (2003) has identified illiberal democracies, an eclectic mix of elections with authoritarianism where, in some cases, elections have paved the way for reinstating dictators. Thus, instead of greater legitimacy and more effective governments, which the tenets of democracy espouse, democratization in illiberal settings has resulted in 'more democracy but less liberty' (*ibid.*: 19, 162). Ultimately, the

non-electoral dimension of democracy is crucial in determining the nature of democracy. This has led to a renewed focus on the question of how democracies can be consolidated, taking into account the provisions for transforming people's lives and addressing a series of development related questions. Even if a government is elected through free and transparent elections, it can become inefficient, corrupt and irresponsible, which inevitably calls into question the issue of liberty and freedom.

ANALYSING DEMOCRACY IN THE SIERRA LEONE CONTEXT

Events in the country's political history have shown that protracted authoritarian rule and military dictatorships have not only denied the citizens the space for political expression but have equally pauperized the nation. Against this background, Sierra Leoneans have shown a yearning for democracy as an entry point for development and this quest has been manifested in the people's desire for multi-party democratic rule after almost 30 years of one-party rule and military dictatorships. To substantiate, the civilian *election's before peace* slogan triumphed over the National Provincial Ruling Council (NPRC) military junta's *peace before election* slogan and this forced the military junta to organize elections in 1996, the first multi-party elections in almost 30 years. During the elections the people of Sierra Leone confronted the bullets with ballots. The RUF attempted to forestall the electoral process by amputating the arms of registered voters and mounting attacks around the country; but after a runoff election Tejan Kabbah, a former UN bureaucrat, was democratically elected. Similarly, when the Kabbah government was ousted by the AFRC junta in 1997, civil society mustered a civil disobedience for nine months, demanding a return to democracy.

Attempting a synthesis, the people of Sierra Leone believe that a decade following the declaration of peace that brought an end to the war they should be able to enjoy the dividends of democracy, that is peacebuilding through an improvement in their living conditions. Within this perspective, democracy taking into post-conflict reform and government performance are intricately linked. The expectations of the majority of Sierra Leoneans have been thwarted as the provision of basic facilities is still a real problem. In the 2007 presidential and parliamentary elections the people, in a show of protest for the non-performance and mismanagement of state resources, voted the opposition APC into power. The people believed that the only alternative was to use their ballots so that their voices

could be heard and change of a political leadership that could not deliver the goods be effected. It is significant to point out that in a largely illiterate society this parochial perception of democracy undermines the deliberative aspect of democracy where government policies and actions can be questioned. The outcome of the 2007 August and September polls show clear signs of protest against the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP). In the capital city of Freetown, for example, all 21 parliamentary seats were won by the opposition party, the All People's Congress (APC). Although controversies abound on the cancelled votes in certain districts by the National Electoral Commission (NEC), the incumbent SLPP lost the elections to the opposition All People's Congress, a rare case in Africa's democratic experience.

EXTERNAL DEMOCRACY PROMOTION IN SIERRA LEONE

Although it remains a truism that the task of promoting and consolidating democracy faces a series of challenges, yet progress so far suggests hope for a democratic future. Today Sierra Leone is no longer a failed state, as four successful post-conflict (local and parliamentary) elections have been held, which both international and local observers have labelled as credible. Foreign agencies with the support of national partners have engaged with critical post-conflict issues to ensure that the twin concepts of peacebuilding and democracy building yield dividends. Notable areas where high marks have been scored include security sector reform, justice sector reform, public sector reform, and local governance and decentralization, together with mobilizing citizens for democratic participation. This trend can be traced to 1997 when President Kabbah launched the national Good Governance and Public Service Reform programme in partnership with the international community, specifically DFID and UNDP. The programme included such issues as devolution of state power, the increase of citizen's participation in governance through a rights-based approach, strengthening the capacity of the public sector to deliver basic social services, and reinforcing judicial institutions for safeguarding the rule of law and upholding human rights (GoSL 1997).

In terms of social security reform (SSR), the UK has taken a lead role through DFID, the UK- MOD, the FCO and IMATT, and has introduced a medium-term Sierra Leone Security Project (SILSEP) focusing on restructuring and equipping the security institutions to constitutionally and effectively perform their functions in modern state building. IMATT has trained and restructured the Republic

of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF), equally verifying and ascertaining the numerical strength of the armed forces. This is a long-term approach in ensuring that the military is democratically accountable and subject to civil oversight. Within the DFID restructuring programme, the main institutions targeted for security sector reform are the armed forces, police, parliament, the national intelligence service and the judiciary. Within this framework the Ministry of Defence was restructured; the police force was re-modelled to ensure a civilian controlled peace nationwide; the intelligent service was to promote accountability of the security agencies and proper coordination through the Office of National Security (ONS); and the judiciary was to ensure increased police supremacy, access to justice even for the poor and marginalized, and support for an Anti-Corruption Commission (Gbla 2007). In essence, the political space has been successfully demilitarized. The contribution of civil society groups should equally be recognized in mending the broken ties of civil–military relationships, which was essential in addressing the problem of mutual mistrust that had developed during the years of conflict.

Consistent with the objective of enhancing post-war law and order and promoting democracy, UNAMSIL in the immediate post-war period provided logistical support to the SLP, especially in areas where police stations had been destroyed. The United Nations Civilian Police (UNCIVPOL) also provided technical and logistical support. Furthermore, the Commonwealth Community Safety and Security Project (CCSSP) in 2003 made available 22 million pounds to support police activities. This covered the appointment of a British inspector general, the hiring of international advisors, increasing the numerical strength of the force, and the purchasing of equipment among other things (Hughes 2005). Programmatically, the SLP introduced the Family Support Unit (FSU), a department created to address all forms of abuses against women and children. These efforts are construed within the context of ‘Local Needs Policing’, an initiative geared towards reinstituting a human rights culture within the police force (Jalloh and Macauley 2005).

Within this perspective, the principles of democratic policing had been reintroduced at the community level. It is important to highlight that the police service in a state should operate within the ambit of the rule of law, in essence they should also be subjected to the law they are supposed to enforce and uphold. Democratic policing is responsive to the needs of individuals and community groups, creating opportunities for dialogue and transparency. This is the critical need that the ‘Local Needs Policing’ programme seeks to address.

In terms of justice sector reform, the support from DFID, through a three-year Law Development project, and the UNDP, through the Justice Rule of Law and Human Rights project, made it possible to realize a functioning court system throughout the country.

Currently, DFID is funding a Justice Sector Development Programme (JSDP), an initiative of the government of Sierra Leone, but managed by the British Council. It is a five-year programme that commenced operations in March 2005 in Freetown and the Moyamba District for an initial two-year phase. The programme focuses on improving safety, security and access to justice for the people of Sierra Leone, particularly the poor, vulnerable and marginalized.

In the main, the opportunities for reform had been overwhelming but largely externally driven. This chapter argues that international actors through their agencies, partners and networks have been highly instrumental in democracy promotion through their programmes and financial support. However, there is still a huge gap as there are few home-grown initiatives to complement and consolidate these efforts to build effective democratic institutions. In what follows, I want to analyse and catalogue the diverse intervention strategies employed by UNAMSIL, UNDP and DFID in their quest to reinstitute democracy and nurture peace in a context of overt poverty. It encapsulates their roles in reinstituting functional governing systems and security, together with the issues of poverty reduction, access to information, empowering civil society, justice, upholding the rule of law and multi-party rule. In the final analysis the challenges for institutionalizing democracy will be highlighted.

SECURITY FREEDOM AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION AS VIABLE COMPONENTS FOR DEMOCRACY PROMOTION: THE ROLE OF UNAMSIL

Prior to the advent of UNAMSIL, the national security architecture was uncoordinated with the primary security forces typified by low morale and unprofessionalism. As noted above, even the RSLAF had capitulated by joining forces with the military junta in 1997 under the umbrella of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC). The police force and other security components faced similar challenges. There was need for a security architecture that would maintain law, order and tranquility. If democracy was to be reinstituted, it required a peaceful atmosphere for people to associate freely, ensure political socialization and lay the foundation for the attributes democracy espouses; thus the nexus between security and democracy cannot be disputed.

On the 22 October 1999 the United Nations Security Council through Resolution 1270 (the UNAMSIL Mission Mandate) mandated UNAMSIL'S operation in Sierra Leone. The overarching goal of the mission was to ensure security and stability over the length and breadth of the country. In September 2004 the UN handed over security to the government of Sierra Leone and the achievement of the mission was remarkable. By the end of December 2005, when the last set of peacekeepers retired, the country could boast of a democratically elected government which exercised authority throughout the country. Attempting to catalogue some of the successes, UNAMSIL contributed immensely to the DDR process. Although the 'R' stage was questionable in terms of effectively and meaningfully reintegrating former combatants, over 75,000 of them, including some 20,000 child soldiers, were disarmed and demobilized (Amurani-Phiri 2007). The mission's role in the realization of a coordinated national security structure in Sierra Leone is also noteworthy. It was a mentor of professionalism to the National Security Council Coordinating Group (NSCCG), the Joint Intelligence Committee, the Joint Coordinating Committee, and the Provincial and District Security Committees (PROSECS and DISECS). All these are new institutions created to strengthen peace and security within the framework of a post-conflict recovery process.

The civilian police (CIVPOL) component of UNAMSIL, in partnership with the commonwealth team, has contributed proactively to strengthening the capacity of the Sierra Leone police. UNAMSIL's CIVPOL has played an enhanced role in assisting in the recruitment of new Sierra Leone police cadets. This was done by devising and delivering basic field training programmes; providing additional training to serving personnel; training Sierra Leonean trainers; providing advice on strategic and operational training; and devising and supporting a deployment plan for the police as a way of enhancing control in the entire country.

UNAMSIL'S POST-CONFLICT ELECTION SUPPORT

The presidential and parliamentary elections of May 2002 were the first post-conflict elections and a key determinant for opening the democratic space and provide the leeway for the exercise of civil authority across the country. Within this framework the mission's aim was to guide the peace process towards the creation of a national government that could exercise authority throughout the country after the 2002 elections. The input of the Political Affairs Department was quite significant in this direction because the scale

and complexity of the electoral process and the lack of the capacity of the National Electoral Commission (NEC) and other government institutions at the time had meant that substantial external assistance was necessary to support the process. UNAMSIL's electoral mandate enabled the Political Affairs Department to support each phase of the process, ranging from coordinating the electoral unit, providing capacity building and technical advice, to large-scale transport assistance (land and air), communications assistance, voter education and public information support.

Additionally, in terms of election security, UNAMSIL provided its existing security deterrent measures to support the 2002 elections and the process benefited from the disarmament of ex-combatants and the training and mentoring provided to the SLP to effectively manage the electoral process. As a result the electoral commission at the time was able to extend its coverage to areas previously under RUF control (in 1996) and this constituted more than half of the country's territory. Specifically, on polling day security was ensured at three levels first, the SLP with logistical and technical support from the Commonwealth and UNAMSIL civilian police (UN CIVPOL), UNDP and DFID provided support to the polling stations and the immediate environs. Second, the RSLAF patrolled the Liberian border and this was made possible with operational support from IMATT. Finally, UNAMSIL later introduced what was known as a 'blanket cover' through the temporary redeployment of 11,000 troops to some high risk areas and created opportunities to be on call in cases of emergencies (Sesay 2005).

Equally important was the contribution of the UN radio network in enabling the dissemination of information throughout the country. Before the outbreak of conflict in 1991, the electronic media was characterized by a near state monopoly. This was a major limitation and although the print media was largely privately owned it suffered from structural problems ranging from lack of technical expertise, low sales, poor equipment and sub-standard printing presses. In addition, the fact that the print media was Freetown based and only useful to the elite was a further problem. The media can be a powerful tool for awareness raising, but if information is not properly managed it can become a lethal weapon for undermining security. With this in mind, Radio UNAMSIL was created to first inform and make the public aware of the government's activities in the peace and stabilization process and also to build the capacity of local journalists, whose role in stabilization and democracy building could not be over-emphasized.

The achievements noted above are indicative of how an effective security design can enhance and ultimately create an opportunity for

democratic consolidation. It is therefore significant to assert that a meaningful reduction of poverty and overall development rest on a strong and efficient security system. A secure, peaceful and stable society provides an 'enabling environment' for the implementation of pro-poverty reduction programmes. The net effect is to create a positive atmosphere so that job creation becomes self-generating in line with sustained growth in the economy. UNAMSIL's contribution to security and stability in the post-war era becomes the platform for socio-economic and political processes unfolding in the Sierra Leonean state; such an achievement becomes a legacy for posterity.

RESUSCITATION OF A COLLAPSED STATE: A PRACTICAL SOLUTION

The UNDP's approach to a disoriented people and state was through emergency response programmes to enhance socio-economic and political rehabilitation. The consequences of state failure and the resultant effects of civil war, as in Sierra Leone, became the justification for this approach, as it highlighted the importance of governance as an imperative for peace, development, and even the avoidance of further conflict. The aim has been to make democracy work for pro-poor development. Therefore the Sierra Leone democratic governance programme is designed to 'support the initiative of government and the people ... for sustainable development and self-reliance. This is achieved through programme-oriented assistance to a whole range of partners based on national priorities' (UNDP's Mission Statement for Sierra Leone). Democracy is about empowering people to take decisions on their political and developmental processes; this was lacking at the dawn of peace in 2002. The UNDP thus assessed the road to sanity by introducing interim governance measures that would eventually efface the legacies of bad governance and decadence the country has experienced. The first major entry point was addressing the question of over-centralization by working out modalities for the reinstitution of local governance. Over-centralization of state power and resources has been put forward as one of the foremost causes of the war, as it had resulted in the marginalization of whole groups in the rural areas. Thus the prevailing governance structure was a barrier for any meaningful participation of the rural poor in the country's political and economic processes. Ultimately, development policies within such systems did not prioritize their needs. It is within such a framework that a decentralized approach to governance is commonly held

to be particularly important as post-conflict states move towards the stabilization phase, particularly if the governing structures are contested, as in the case of Sierra Leonea. Local councils, therefore, create the opportunity for service delivery and the strengthening of democratic values at the local level.

LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND DECENTRALIZATION

The GoSL, through the support from its major donor partners, embarked on a decentralization process in 2004 with the first local government elections after thirty-two years and following paramount chieftaincy elections in 2003. The strategic intervention of the UNDP, World Bank, European Union and DFID helped the government in formulating a local government policy which culminated in the enactment of the Local Government Act together with the elections in 2004 and consequently the establishment of 19 local councils across the country. In order to aid the process, the UNDP deployed decentralization specialists to the various ministries to help in the devolution plan. There was a consultant attached to the Ministry of Local Government and the Ministry of Finance. The task was to see how the fiscal devolution could be a reality.

The councils were faced with the task to deliver service with limited or no resources. The social sector, particularly health care, education and agriculture, were the major areas of intervention. The UNDP initiated a rural plan in this direction and, in terms of implementation, a pilot of one of the service delivery components was undertaken. An American non-governmental organization, the American Refugee Council (ARC), was contracted for this venture; some of the activities included health education and piloting primary health care in the north. The focus was how to address primary health care issues in the communities (*ibid.*). Tied to this point are UNDP's support to five city councils in order to undertake a sustainable waste management programme. This took the form of financing comprehensive plans on a cost recovery basis.

As Sierra Leone concluded the second local council election in July 2005, ushering a new set of councillors, there were major problems facing the councils, foremost among them was the financing of development projects. The process of devolution has been lopsided and the issues of tax collection and service delivery are still serious concerns. The outcome of the decentralization process so far has pointed to such issues as the limited capacity of councils in grappling with governance and democratic processes, lack of transparency in their actions and operations, and even slow devolution of authority

and resources from the centre. These developments undermine the high expectations of the people who were yearning for a change in their living conditions after the re-institutionalization of local government. Equally, for many of the agencies giving support, there has been some duplication of efforts and the lack of a coordinated and structured approach (taking into account proper needs assessment) to determine the sort of interventions needed by the councils. More importantly, the roles of the paramount chiefs and councillors are undefined. This is giving rise to unusual tensions in the localities and so far there is inadequate legislation to address the issue

THE JUDICIARY

Re-establishing a proper court system constitutes an important part of post-conflict transition in helping to secure community peace, as there needs to be impartial hearings of both civil and criminal matters. A major conundrum in the post-conflict era is how to reconstruct a justice sector with a human face. It thus became an area for interventions by the international agencies. As previously noted, the justice sector in the aftermath of war was in disarray. Against this backdrop, the UNDP's post-conflict response programme targeted strategic areas in order to bring about quick results. Foremost was the need to ensure the functioning of the magistrate courts, which had ceased to operate at the local level. As such, the physical structures needed rehabilitation for both visibility and access. The initial target was the police headquarters and the detention centres in the provinces. The next step was more tactical and involved the re-deployment of the police to ensure the government's control at all levels. DFID in collaboration with the GoSL undertook similar measures and refurbished the physical infrastructure of the courts throughout the country with the aim of improving justice delivery. Additionally, in 2003, 87 justices of the peace, clerks and bailiffs were trained and deployed to 18 locations in the country through the Law Development Project, again done in partnership with the GoSL (Gbla 2007).

Similarly, and focusing on the effective functioning of the magistrate courts, the UNDP set out on a quick fix measure to first rehabilitate the structures and then train retired civil servants residing in various localities across the country. Fifty-eight were trained at the Sierra Leone Law School for 3 months as justices of the peace and acquired skills in basic court administration. It is significant to point out that the salary structure in the pre-war period de-motivated magistrates and many more public officials; these

salaries were therefore augmented to make the profession more attractive. The second plan was to target graduates from the National Law School, ten of whom were recruited to serve as magistrates across the country and were trained for a year. The chief justice from the Gambia was contracted to provide the training in magisterial procedures and ten such magistrates were recruited. This brought the capacity of magistrates to 20, which enabled every district headquarters in Sierra Leone to have one magistrate, with the exception of Pujehun district. The UNDP continues to pay the salaries of the magistrates and provides transportation allowances as incentives to allow them dwell out of the capital city.

Some of the immediate issues the newly trained magistrates sought to address were the overcrowding of the national prisons at Pademba Road, Freetown, and the backlog of cases which needed prosecution. Each newly trained magistrate was given 33 cases to examine. These were not without challenges as data for some of these cases were missing. It was further identified that the prison officials lacked the capacity to manage the data of incarcerated persons. This presented a case for immediate intervention and the UNDP provided training for 45 senior and middle level prison officers on basic prison management. Logistical support in the form of vehicles was given to the judiciary and support was given to a justice sector coordinating secretariat located at the office of the chief justice. Their responsibility is to ensure the coordination of all donor's efforts and thereby avoid overlaps or duplication of efforts. As such, the initiative seeks to bring players together to review projects and, in accordance with policies, to re-design such projects to ensure coordination and interface. A more positive development is the justice sector strategy for Sierra Leone 2008–2010.

INSTITUTIONAL BUILDING AND REFORM

Like many other state institutions, the war accelerated the collapse of the public service and a battered public service presents serious obstacles to the formulation and implementation of policies that would enable the development process. As mentioned *inter alia* the institutional reform programme is encapsulated in the good governance and Public Service Reform agenda of 1997 initiated by the Tejan Kabbah government. In order to realize the objectives of the reform agenda the government with support from DFID established the Governance Reform Secretariat (GRS) as part of the Ministry of Presidential Affairs to coordinate all governance reform activities. The GRS has provided the organizational capacity for a programme

of reform in the public sector. The initial phase of the programme (2000–2004), which looked at restoring basic effectiveness in two provincial headquarters, has elapsed and the programme is now in its second phase under the auspices of the Public Sector Reform Unit. The process has taken into account developments in government policies such as the decentralization programme and poverty reduction strategy. The current programme now includes Management and Functional Reviews (MFR) across the full range of GoSL ministries; transformation of the Establishment Secretaries Office (ESO) into a modern Human Resource Management Office (HRMO); a records management improvement programme; development of a training policy and strategy for management and training for the Sierra Leone civil service; resuscitation of the civil service training college; development of a civil service law; and a review of pay and grading within the civil service (Reform Spotlight 2008).

In addition, the public procurement system which created opportunities for corrupt practices was an immediate area in need of restructuring. The UNDP supported the design of a procurement policy which led to the issue of the Public Procurement Act in 2004. A national public procurement authority was established and capacity building training through a consultant was provided for the institution. The training revolved around implementation and adherence to the Act. Plans are underway to declare 141 permanent secretary positions vacant within the Sierra Leone civil service. This is to ensure that the senior executive service is professional and impartial. The first five years will be internationally led with the UNDP providing all forms of remuneration. The process would also encompass training in change management, which would lead to an output oriented civil service.

DEMOCRATIZING AMIDST POVERTY: INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR POST-CONFLICT ELECTIONS

As mentioned, it remains undisputed that democracy has emerged as the preferred political system worldwide. Its tenets of rule by the people, demonstrated by the regular choosing of government through free and competitive elections, presents unique prospects for accountability, peace, stability and good governance, which non-democratic regimes hardly offer. However, the costs involved in democratizing a poor third world post-conflict state call for both financial and technical support so that elections can be held and a peaceful change of government be ensured. Rehabilitating and putting in place a functional governing system is essential to

kick-start the process after the degree of trauma that the country has experienced.

The UNDP and UNAMSIL, in particular, took the lead role in supporting the 2004 local government elections. The UNDP provided technical support and managed the donor basket fund for the 2007 presidential and parliamentary elections, with the largest contribution of US\$10m coming from the EC. For electoral reform of the electoral management bodies, that is the National Electoral Commission (NEC) and the Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC), a seven-step proposal was put forward which included restructuring of the NEC, taking into account re-profiling and recruitment, establishing the PPRC, and rebuilding the capacity of the NEC through 'bridge trainings'. Presently, three members of the NEC have been certified as 'bridge trainers' in Africa. Forty technical personnel were assigned to various departments in the NEC to cover the 2007 and 2008 local government elections. An information technology system was established and the NEC team was trained in Ghana. Support was also given to undertake the boundary delimitation process. It should be pointed out that the last time boundaries were delimited in Sierra Leone was in 1958. In addition, the procedures of the electioneering process have been digitized for periodic updating.

It is therefore evident from the above analysis that there were major gaps, political, administrative and technical, which needed support in order to manage the complex transition to democracy. However, it is not prudent enough to apply democratic principles partially or introduce reforms arbitrarily, as the technical capacities and institutions have to be established. By and large, the continued presence of expatriates and short-term projects do not necessarily support the complex democratic process. Institutionalizing democracy must therefore take a dimension that will foster local ownership and sustainability.

PROSPECT FOR DEMOCRACY BUILDING: EMPOWERING CIVIL SOCIETY FOR DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION, THE ROLE OF DFID

In addition to the fact that DFID has been a major bilateral donor in Sierra Leone's post-conflict reconstruction, its financial support in empowering local civil society organizations to oversee the democracy project must particularly be singled out. DFID has supported projects focusing on building effective institutions in accordance with the agenda of moving towards democracy as a globally accepted standard and opening up the democratic process

to dialogue in order to create space for citizen's voices to be heard. From this perspective it is clear that when there are more discussions there will be better awareness. Thus democracy promotion is seen as an integral part of DFID's mission. The strategy employed is to ensure accountability in the government's operations, which is a fundamental pillar of democracy building together with creating the opportunities that enable a human rights culture that seeks to reduce poverty. This is done through a programme-oriented approach that interfaces strongly with civil society groups and government.

The Campaign for Good Governance (CGG) is one of the leading civil society organizations that has benefited from DFID's support, and this has been done through a citizen's engagement scheme which promotes civil society groups to undertake public policy analysis; such an approach helps to strengthen non-state actors in monitoring public sector delivery and performance. Over the years, the CGG has created opportunities for citizens through open forums to dialogue with their elected representatives and in some instances through outreach sessions move parliamentarians to their constituencies so as to facilitate dialogue with the local people. In essence, the views of the people are not only factored in the ensuing political debates but the scheme has also addressed the age-old problem of the marginalization of the rural populace that has affected governance in the country.

A similar initiative to the work undertaken by the CGG is the Enhancing the Interaction and Interface between Civil Society and the State to Improve Poor People's Lives (ENCISS) programme. The thrust is to identify and provide support to representatives of civil society organizations and through partnerships embrace national and umbrella organizations together with local civil society groups and states. As such, the project seeks to expand and improve the interface between state and citizenry by increasing the capacity of civil society to engage in issues relating to poverty reduction and decentralization through effective monitoring of community related projects.

Undeniably, the CGG and the creation of the ENCISS programme are laudable ventures in capacitating civil society groups to dialogue with government and establishing independent monitoring of service delivery, the aim being to get people involved in the demand side of governance. Within this perspective, civil society is seen as the best actor to demand change from government.

In order to make the civil service responsive, lead reform and provide better consultation, one that will listen to the voice of the people and construct dialogue with respect to public financial management,

technical support has been given to the Ministry of Finance so that its operations can be more transparent. This drive is geared towards the accountability and transparency of its budget process in order to ensure its openness to civil society's scrutiny and comment.

DFID continues to support the conducting of public expenditure tracking studies to see the efficiency of government expenditure and to assess the level of service delivery from the perception of the people who are beneficiaries of the process. Through such mechanisms the demand side of governance is gradually realized, as the process is open to scrutiny. One such initiative is the service delivery and perception survey undertaken by the Centre for Economic and Social Policy Analysis (CESPA). The study was a civil society idea to complement the Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS). The aim was to first fulfil the Improved Governance and Accountability Pact (IGAP) between the GoSL and the donor agencies and next to assess whether the basic services in health, education and agriculture have benefited the people. Such processes, it must be emphasized, are mechanisms through which citizen's concerns are raised on issues affecting their lives, and opportunities are created to find alternatives for seeking redress or compensation for the consequences and actions of public officials.

DFID'S SUPPORT IN PROMOTING PARTICIPATORY AND TRANSPARENT ELECTIONS

As the preparatory stages of the 2007 presidential and parliamentary elections unfolded, there were glaring signs of voter apathy from the electorate: explicitly, the citizen's participation and interest in the process were relatively low. This was largely attributed to poor government performance and the view that elections were not necessarily bringing about the changes in leadership styles anticipated by the bulk of Sierra Leoneans. In addition, there were signs of potential violence, making robust voter education and electoral transparency necessary. DFID's 2006–2008 elections project on Promoting Information and Voice for Transparency in elections (PIVOT) was designed to improve the capacity of civil society and the media to engage with the electoral process in terms of providing information and monitoring for both the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2007 and the local government elections in 2008. The design is in accordance with ensuring free and fair elections as a crucial platform for consolidating peace and democracy.

The project, amounting to £3m pounds, supported such issues as free and fair elections, voter education and non-violence, and the

training of media personnel, and provided support to the National Election Watch (NEW) coalition to enable it to monitor domestic elections by, ultimately, fielding 6,100 observers in 6,163 polling stations. The National Democratic Institute (NDI) undertook international monitoring of the elections and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) trained political parties to produce better manifestoes which could then serve as documentary evidence for the purpose of engaging the question of accountability which remains a major challenge in governance. The 50/50 group through Oxfam mobilized and trained women as political aspirants and sensitized them to participate fully in the process.

Comprehensively, the strategic outcomes that were sought were four-fold: improvement in the capacity of national and local radio to develop quality programmes on electoral and other governance issues and to operate independently and effectively; the strengthening and funding of the coalition of national election observers; capacity-building of political parties to effectively plan and develop issue-based platforms; and addressing gender disparity surrounding elections by networking with local (CSOs) and political representatives in order to increase the number of elected women officials and improve their capacity to fill their roles effectively.

CIVIL SOCIETY'S INITIATIVES FOR SECURING DEMOCRACY: ENGAGING THE 2007 ELECTIONS

In evaluating the value of external actors in establishing democracy, perhaps the highest marks will be scored by the output from the emerging civil society now trying to secure the democracy project. Irrespective of the fact that the 2007 presidential and parliamentary elections were fraught with cases of violence across the country, CSOs stood their ground under the umbrella of a civil society action group for violent free elections. Through campaigns, a peace march, a candle light procession and discussion forums their voices resounded strongly against violence and in support of a peaceful democratic transition. There was also an inevitable change of leadership as the incumbent president had served for the two terms established in the constitutional provisions. The youths, who had previously been the avenue for perpetrating electoral related violence, had been transformed by May 2007 into ambassadors for dialogue and peace, thanks to the activities of the Centre for Coordination of Youth Activities, as seen in the 'youth runs' across the country with placards, banners and shirts displaying the slogan 'Shed No Blood for Power'.

In addition, civil society groups like the CGG and Hope Sierra Leone supported the voter education process as the provisions from the donor basket fund for the 2007 elections were not only inadequate but lacked the methodology for engaging rural communities. The foregoing are thus pointers that a formidable civil society is emerging to secure the democracy project.

Perhaps the most impressive of civil society's engagement of the democratic process was the role of NEW in the 2007 elections. NEW is a domestic non-partisan coalition comprising of about 347 civil society, national and international non-governmental organizations across the country. As domestic election observers, the coalition's overall objective was to observe each stage of the electoral process from boundary delimitation to polling.

Specifically, for polling day, three major objectives were established. First, each polling station set up by the NEC was to be observed. This strategic intervention was borne out of NEW's engagement with, and lessons learnt from, the observation of the 2002 presidential and parliamentary elections and subsequently the local government elections in 2004. The coalition members were of the opinion that those polling stations on the outskirts that were not part of the coalition's deployment plan would become targets for alleged 'box stuffing' and over-voting. Thus the question remains as how to curb election fraud in Sierra Leone in order to nurture peace and build the young but promising democracy. The second objective was to document all election related incidents and to forward such reports to the relevant authorities such as the NEC, the Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC) and the security agencies so that they could act swiftly. Third, samples from 500 representative polling stations across the country were to be collected. The feedback from the sample was to be sent through text messages to the database set up at the national secretariat in Freetown. The purpose of the representative sample was to enhance rapid but meaningful reporting within 24 hours after the close of polls. In the final analysis, NEW was able to accredit about 6,100 observers to fill the 6,163 polling stations in the first round of the elections, together with a similar but slightly less coverage in the presidential runoff on 8 September 2007. That NEW achieved its goals was quite astounding to international and local observers who watched the Sierra Leone post-conflict electoral processes unfold successfully amidst a series of concerns, fears, intimidation and high expectations.

One major obstacle in the path of democratic consolidation has been the lack of home grown initiatives, in order to sustain the democracy project. This is both the consequence of the external

nature of democracy promotion in Sierra Leone and the focalised nature of domestic governance institutions, such as the chieftaincy system. Not surprisingly, then, democracy faces a plethora of internal challenges ranging from peacebuilding, the nightmare of corruption, the ideology of ethnicity, and socio-economic recovery, to sustaining the on-going democratic institutional reforms. Within such circumstances, the task of consolidating democracy faces a deepening set of challenges and contradictions. The question thus is who really owns the democracy project. Is it the people, led by our political authorities, or the international community? Sierra Leoneans do not have a direct say in mapping the democratic agenda as this is set by donors and delivered by NGOs, largely from the North. Supporting the democracy project is quite expensive and international NGOs that have the contacts abroad are better placed to secure funds for their rather questionable projects. Such projects are characterized by failed programmes, payments to expensive foreign consultants and a lack of local expertise to move the democracy agenda forward. The people of Sierra Leone have demonstrated a quest for democracy through their participation in the two post-conflict elections; however, elections are not an end in themselves but a starting point. As such, this final section posits that internal political dynamics have serious repercussions for democratic survival.

Thus, although it was imperative that international intervention was required to boost local actions for democracy promotion, there are critical issues which still remain major internal challenges. Experts warn that no activities at the local level will succeed in the long-term without a national state structure. Within the governing systems there are limited internal capacities or supplementary approaches to institutionalize or alternatively consolidate the democratic processes exported. As such, most of the donor-driven projects become financially unsustainable as time elapses.

THE CIVIL WAR AND ITS IMPLICATION FOR DEMOCRACY BUILDING

Democracy needs a solid institutional base to stand on in order to keep political conflicts within the democratic framework. The legacies of a decade-long conflict still have an affect on building a functional democratic state. In March 1991, Foday Sankoh, an ex-corporal in the Sierra Leone Army (SLA), under the aegis of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), led an armed insurrection with the first attack on a police station in Bomaru Kailahun District. The head of state at the time, President J.S Momoh, dismissed the

attack as a small skirmish over trading transactions between some irresponsible elements from Liberia and Sierra Leone border guards (Alie 2000). Invariably this was the beginning of a national tragedy which unearthed the problems associated with prolonged years of one-party authoritarian rule, over-centralization of state authority, social exclusion and socio-economic malaise. The conflict assumed several dimensions and degenerated into one of the most bloody in the post-independence era in Africa.

In the first year of the war, the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) became rather frustrated. Those in the battlefield were irritated at the indifference of their commanders and political bosses to the poor conditions under which they operated, especially pay arrears. In 1992, young officers led by 26-year-old Captain Valentine Strasser appeared on the scene as the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) after ousting the Momoh regime. In Strasser's maiden speech, he condemned the oppressive, corrupt, exploitative and tribalistic rule of the APC and affirmed the NPRC's commitment to multi-party rule and an end to the conflict.

Unfortunately, under the NPRC the SLA, an institution sworn to protect the people's rights, degenerated into banditry and military duplicity. In the period prior to 1992, the army under the tutelage of both Stevens and Momoh had been transformed into an ethnicized and politicized praetorian guard of the ruling All People's Congress. In this vein, a distinction could not be made between the soldiers and the rebels and therefore the atrocities that were committed were attributed to 'sobels' (soldiers and rebels). By 1995 Sierra Leoneans were convinced that the military was colluding with the RUF to continue the war and using it as a pretext for stalling the democratization process and return of the country to civilian rule. By this time, the command structure of the army had collapsed, as the urge to recruit unemployed urban youth led to further indiscipline within the ranks of the military. After the Bintumani I and II national consultative conferences in the middle of the war, civilians opted for 'Elections before Peace'. The Bintumani conference, under pressure from civil society, urged the ruling NPRC to call for immediate general elections and the return of the country to civilian rule. Ahmed Tejan Kabbah won the elections amidst thirteen other presidential candidates. The elections did not yield the peace dividend hoped for by many Sierra Leoneans. However, as head of a civilian government, President Kabbah was open to peace negotiations with the RUF and this resulted in the Abidjan Peace Accord of 1996. Unfortunately, things went horribly wrong and the Accord did not take root. The war entered its 'bloodiest phase' (Sesay 2005: 1).

Less than a year after assuming office in May 1997, the Kabbah regime was promptly removed from power by a group of former army officers who were sympathetic to the moribund APC leadership. The coup leaders released all prisoners from the notorious Pademba Road central prison, including the rather restive and brutal Major Johnny Paul Koroma, who wasted no time in unleashing widespread violence upon the civilian population of the capital, which up to this time had been spared the brutality that had become commonplace for the rural masses. The coup leaders, calling themselves the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), soon invited the RUF to form a coalition and the merging of their fighting forces into what they called a 'Peoples' Army'. This saw the heightened emergence of local civil militia and their presence further compounded the civil carnage, leading to a security complex, including the government-backed Kamajors and the disbandment of Kabbah's own national army. It took an armed intervention led by ECOMOG to reinstate the Kabbah regime in February 1998 and this was widely acclaimed as a return to democracy amidst widespread euphoria. For a few months the government was able to extend its territory over vast swathes of the country, but this was short-lived. In January 1999, forces loyal to the RUF were able to breach the defences of the capital and bring further carnage to residents of the city as they embarked on a spree of arson, rape, amputation and murder. Though these forces were gradually pushed beyond the perimeter of the city, by the time of the Lomé Peace talks in July 1999, the rebels had gained the upper hand with their forces occupying some two-thirds of the country. Though a peace accord was struck in Lomé, the capital of Togo, it took another drama in 2000 for peace to be brought to this troubled land. In May 2000, as the last of the Nigerian-led ECOMOG forces left the country, rebel leader Corporal Foday Sankoh decided to unleash a putsch for total power. Not satisfied with his role as substantive vice president and Chair of the influential mineral resources committee, Sankoh thought this was an auspicious moment to move in for the victory that was denied him on the battlefield. It was the chaos that this coup produced and the plight of some 17,500 UNAMSIL forces (some of whom had been abducted) that led the British government to intervene in order to end the carnage and the humiliation of the UN forces. Peace finally came to Sierra Leone in February 2002, when both government and leaders of the rebels not in custody finally announced that the war was at an end.

Various academics and commentators have posited on the cause and nature of the conflict in Sierra Leone. Boas examines such factors as personalized rule that uses the law and other coercive

instruments of the state to further the leader's purposes, monopolizing power and denying or restricting the political rights and opportunities of other groups. Within this arrangement a patron–client relationship is developed, making it difficult to separate the public from private domain (Boas 2001). As mentioned, Alie (2000) recognizes such factors as the excessive centralization of the public administration in the capital with power concentrated in the hands of a few people, making it impossible for non-APC members to access resources. He mentions issues relating to ethnic politics, the neglect and misuse of youths and lapses in internal state security as further causes of the war. From a similar perspective, Zack-Williams (1999) argues that the casual factors are historical and points to the 'personalized and monolithic rule of the APC' which led to the eventual destruction of civil society and democratic accountability.

From an alternative standpoint, and trying to comprehend the phenomenal brutalities against successive regimes and the people of Sierra Leone from 1991 to 2002, Gberie (2005) argues that the RUF war can be explained better by pinpointing the criminal and mercenary aspects that enmeshed the movement's political aims which were predicated more on revenge rather than political liberation and on resource predation rather than an agenda for socio-economic emancipation. He regards the political explanations of the war as a means to obscure the economic agenda of the RUF and its atrocities but equally failing to capture the complexities of the underlying calculations that explain the role of outside influences such as the RUF's main backer, Charles Taylor (Gberie 2005).

Implicitly from the above perspectives, however, the war accelerated the collapse of the Sierra Leonean state not only in political and structural forms but ethnically as well.

THE STATE'S CAPACITY AND ITS IMPACT FOR DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION

Following from the latter analysis, it becomes clear that the elemental issue of a viable state as part of the institutional design for building and consolidating democracy is of paramount importance (Linz and Stephan 1996: 15). As such, the foremost challenge facing Sierra Leone's post-war situation is how to re-establish a sovereign and effective state in a country not only battered by more than a decade of civil carnage but also from prolonged one-party authoritarian rule and several military dictatorships.

The state, as Chesterman et al. suggest, is the 'medium through which political power is integrated into a comprehensive social

order' (Chesterman et al. 2005: 3). The crises and degree of destruction and trauma the Sierra Leonean state absorbed after the protracted conflict was devastating, particularly for a poor third world country. Almost a decade after the war a lot of social and economic problems have come to the fore. There is a growing concern that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission failed in its reconciliation mandate to facilitate genuine healing and reconciliation as prescribed by the Lomé Peace Accord of 1999. The TRC lacks sustained intervention at the community level to bring divided people together. It is only now that mechanisms have been put in place to address the reparation for war victims through the UN Peacebuilding Fund. Equally there have been no structural programmes for the return of displaced people to the capital after the war. Ex-combatants were successfully demobilized and disarmed but the reintegration process is a critical factor in bringing diverse social problems to the fore in a post-conflict setting. Consequently, the Sierra Leonean state requires a long period for healing and re-growth in order to reconstruct the state after the trauma the country experienced.

Mkandawire (1999: 124) notes that when democratic states are built on the ruins of authoritarian rule, considerable aspects of the previous state's institutions that continue to linger on due to social inertia and structural rigidities are retained. In 1978 Sierra Leone became a one-party state and for more than 30 years the APC party was the only space for political expression. This trait has lingered on in a democratic milieu. In both post war regimes of Presidents Ahmed Tejan Kabba (2002–2007) and Ernest Koroma, the ruling parties dominate the legislature. This is a concern for representation and accountability, but it is significant that most Sierra Leoneans are voting on ethnic and sectional lines. Furthermore, in terms of governance, the situation has not changed much: the old patriarchs are resurfacing in the political arena. In this vein, democratic elections have only recycled some politicians. Building democracy on these shaky platforms becomes problematic as the state lacks the capacity to supervise the entire social fabric. In some instances, if not carefully addressed the degree of state collapse in post-conflict states exacerbates rather than cures the consequences of state failure during the reconstruction process (Meierenrich 2004: 153).

CORRUPTION

It becomes oxymoronic to pose the question as to why Sierra Leone has never achieved a certain level of development irrespective of its vast natural resources and the huge donor support for post-conflict

reconstruction efforts that it has received. Corruption can be put forward as one of the principal reasons for this. As a governance issue, corruption describes 'the failure of institutions and lack of capacity to manage society by means of a framework of social, political and economic checks and balances' (Crossette 2004: 21.). It is becoming a major conundrum in Sierra Leone and like an insidious plague it has a wide range of effects on the society. The youths of the country, through an explosion of pop music, are criticizing the corrupt practices of politicians and public officials who are turning deaf ears to the songs of the youngsters. It is no small wonder that in the 2007 presidential and parliamentary elections the 'Ejection Notice' musical hit became so popular among the youth and was a campaign message for those sections of society that demand fundamental change in the country's affairs.

External donors and the government realized the continued implications of corruption on poverty alleviation and so called for steps towards its mitigation. This led to the setting up of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) in 2001, initially a largely ineffective institution, though its mandate has since been expanded, resulting in the successful prosecution of former Ombudsman Francis Gabiddon for corruption. The ACC 2002 report exposes its ineffectiveness, as no case was brought to trial during that year. In addition, since there are no penalties for failing to cooperate with the Commission, government ministries and departments simply ignore it. Corruption is a survival strategy for many Sierra Leoneans, with wage earners justifying it on the proviso that salaries are low in relation to the cost of living. Corrupt practices by public officials are rife. During the 2004 local government elections the European Union withheld €2 million, as the Electoral Commission had not accounted for the EC funds for the 2002 general elections (Hanlon 2004: 4). In a review of the health sector, the World Bank pointed out that only 5 per cent of pharmaceuticals reached the targeted beneficiaries in 2003, although some improvements have taken place in subsequent years (ICG 2004: 4). Furthermore, both the UN secretary-general, Kofi Annan, and the ICG have pointed to the government's 'inability or unwillingness' to gain control over illegal diamond mining. Mines monitors are poorly paid and become easily corrupted as such, with the result that only one-sixth of diamonds pass through official channels. Baker and May (2004) intimate that in an interview with a donor official he admitted that reforms in 2001/2 were mere facades. This is due to the perpetual tendency of high level public officials to continually undermine the structures and mechanisms that have been set up to improve accountability and transparency (ibid.).

Thus the debate on corruption in Sierra Leone cannot be divorced from political accountability and service delivery. The expectations of Sierra Leoneans are dampened as the past government failed to deliver even the basic utilities. There needs to be the political will to fight corruption at all levels. In 2008 there was a review of the ACC Act, and the subsequent Act has now strengthened the power of the commission, not just to investigate, but also to prosecute suspects. Sierra Leoneans who voted in their droves at the last elections are looking to the new regime of President Ernest Koroma to take a strong stand against corrupt officials, as the country is highly vulnerable to corrupt individuals within and outside the country, as the recent cocaine trials showed with Latin American drug barons seeking to establish a bridgehead for their nefarious trade in this fragile state.

POLITICAL CULTURE

Political culture refers to a political practice that is culturally legitimated and socially validated by local knowledge and thus embedded in the community's habit, custom and symbols regarding power, authority, participation and representation (Robinson 1994). Political theorists have identified a strong correlation between a positive political culture as a necessary correlate for the development and maintenance of democracy. The tenets for political culture as ingredients for liberal democracy encompasses among others the tolerance for opposing political beliefs and positions, more generally for social and cultural differences and a pragmatic as opposed to a rigid and ideological approach to politics. On the contrary, greed, political marginalization of women and youth, ethnic politics and patronage, which were the bedrock of political expression in the one-party regimes, are still visible. Like the past, Sierra Leonean politics remains polarized and ethnicized. Both the May 2002 and August/September 2007 election results clearly demonstrate the ethnic cleavages in voting patterns. Due to ethno-regional tensions, only two political parties are visible and acceptable in Sierra Leonean politics: the All People's Congress (APC) party, predominantly supported by the Temnes in the north together with the western area, and the Sierra Leone's People's Party (SLPP), maintaining its stronghold among the Mendes mostly in the south and east who happen to be the largest ethnic group. There is little or no room for other minority parties to make a mark. Such voting patterns mean that Sierra Leone is prone to a one party democracy as the executive and parliament tend to be dominated by a single party.

It is within such perspectives that Ottaway (2005: 2) argues that democracy can only be truly functional in established states capable of exercising authority over the entire country. Majority rule which the tenets of democracy espouse requires national unity, a population sharing a common identity and not one fragmented along ethnic lines. The tribal and regional divide is still manifest in all aspects of political life in the country. However, the emergence of the Peoples Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC) Party largely from the south-east and its alliance with the APC is a step towards bridging the regional and ethnic divide.

CREATING SPACE FOR WOMEN AND YOUTHS

The two groups that have suffered the most from systematic, economic and political exclusion in the country's history are Sierra Leone's women and youth. There still exists a hardcore of young men and women who happen not only to be jobless or without any reliable source of income but also junior school dropouts. These were the conditions that spawned the war and inflicted gross mayhem on Sierra Leoneans and such issues have not disappeared. It is important to point out that owing to their plight, young people were forcibly recruited to swell the rank and file of the RUF. Paul Richards underscores this point when he asserts that 'Rebel violence in Sierra Leone is no instinctive response ... but a mobilization of a small group angry at their exclusion from an opaque patrimonial system' (Richards 2004: 164).

The problems of youth marginalization and unemployment are key to Sierra Leone's democratic peacebuilding process. After years of neglect, unemployed and illiterate youths, some of whom are ex-combatants, become the reservoir for fuelling illegal actions by ill-motivated politicians as demonstrated in the 2007 elections. Politicians resorted to the use of former fighters as bodyguards. Such a development becomes an affront to the DDR and peacebuilding process that international and local actors are striving to consolidate.

Similarly, women and girls have been targets for abuse during the civil carnage, exploiting their vulnerability in order to dehumanize them. Politically, though policies exist, practical interventions to address the gender imbalance in political and administrative arrangements are still minimal. In the preparatory stage to the May 2004 local government elections, a broad formal consultation with 12,000 delegates was held at the local community level. One of the key recommendations was for special seats to be reserved for

women, youth and the disabled in the district councils. This is yet to be a reality. The TRC has recommended a minimum representation of women in the social and political life of Sierra Leone, but this is yet to be a reality (Hanlon 2004). With a new government in power, women are still pushing for a 30 per cent representation and demanding key appointment areas such as the speaker of parliament among the 30 per cent inclusion.

If democracy is 'rule by the people' there needs to be a consensus of who the people are, an agreement on nationhood as opposed to privileging a particular ethnic group, gender, or section of the community. National integration and democratic consolidation becomes questionable under the aegis of a single dominant ethnic party and a patrimonial political system, as 'national unity is the single background condition for democratization to start' (Baker 2004: 12).

POVERTY AND ITS RELATED SOCIAL PROBLEMS

As an affront to democratic peacebuilding, analytically and morally there is nothing more abhorrent than the persistence of mass poverty in a state. Sierra Leone has been ranked last in the UNDP Human Development Index for more than half of the period since the report was first published in 1990, although the 2006 index shows a slight improvement.

Substantially, however, poverty reduction and improving the living standards for the vast majority of Sierra Leoneans remain a developmental challenge. Economic stagnation and a lack of infrastructure are clearly affecting the reconstruction process and deepening the poverty track record. For most Sierra Leoneans, their lives are characterized by vulnerability and social exclusion; they not only lack income, but also access to health care, education, electricity, and safe drinking water. Sierra Leone's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) reveals that 80 per cent of the people live in poverty with 26 per cent food poor, not even able to afford a basic diet. Maternal mortality, infant mortality and fertility rates are among the worst in the world. The situation is further worsened by the rise in diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis (GoSL 2005).

With a human rights based approach, and consistent with the Millennium Development Goals 'to halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger by 2015', the former SLPP government of Sierra Leone (2002–2007) pledged a 'right to food' for all Sierra Leoneans by 2007. A pronouncement which is yet to be achieved. Moreover, agriculture is based on subsistence farming; there is a lack of appropriate farming techniques and modern technological

implements; the road network is poor, and there is insufficient public transport and communication facilities for transporting goods and services (CGG 2005). In essence, though poverty is an economic phenomenon, the obstacles for its alleviation are fundamentally political. These issues form the basis of the reconstruction process without which no visible transformation can be realized.

SUSTAINING DEMOCRACY BEYOND INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE

The fact that democracy is largely externally driven is itself a problem for its consolidation in the future. Democratization programmes ignore the issues of affordability and long-term sustainability. Donors have introduced processes which the governments in transitional societies like Sierra Leone cannot afford with their inadequate and already overstretched budgets. In Sierra Leone many normal state functions have been carried out by donor agencies. As the ICG Africa Report succinctly argues:

Rather than the government collecting maximum revenues, using them to pay for basic services, and then developing a plan to seek specific targeted assistance where funds are insufficient, it is outside actors (donors, INGOs or UN) that set policy and perform other state functions ... Such swapping of responsibilities means that the state does not build meaningful capacities. (ICG: 2004: 6)

In total, donor budget support to the government of Sierra Leone is 47 per cent with a lot more social and economic projects paid for by donor finance and channelled through NGOs or private entities operating independently from the government. Inevitably, a somewhat donor dependency culture has been established. Within this framework, who then pays for all the sophisticated democratic models introduced through post-conflict reconstruction efforts? Such circumstances create institutional gaps in the future when donors recede or change their agendas.

CONCLUSION: FINAL THOUGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite the international drive for states to embrace democracy as the global gold standard, it is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore the socio-political contexts in which post-conflict democracies are to flourish, and Sierra Leone is no exception. The expectation of

the populace is that democracy will ultimately usher in development, mainly as a peace dividend. Sierra Leone has moved beyond the initial preoccupation with peace and stability and what is needed now is a development agenda that can produce gradual results but show indications of success even in the short term. Frustration levels are manifestly high, as the unseating of the incumbent through the ballot box in the 2007 elections revealed. The outcome of the elections was a clear indication of protest by the people, as most of the problems that resulted from the war are still conspicuous – mainly corruption, ethnic cleavage and social exclusion.

In short, to suggest democracy does not have a future in Sierra Leone would be going too far, but there is a lot more to be done internally. For example, and using the 2007 elections as a benchmark, out of the seven political parties that contested, only three won seats in parliament. Notwithstanding, the elections were conducted in a relatively peaceful atmosphere. They were generally free, though in some cases not fair as there were allegations that some political parties could not access certain areas or use the national media, all bordering around ethno-political allegiances. Votes from 477 polling stations were invalidated as a result of alleged box stuffing. Furthermore, a host of reforms have been implemented in the security sector, the justice sector and the civil service, among others. The proliferation of media houses and newspapers is enhancing access to information and partially compensating for the lack of official transparency in the public quarter and, more generally, the freedom to express divergent opinions. With an emerging civil society and the reinstitution of local governance, the country's best hope for a democratic future is to consolidate these gains in a context of political stability.

Sierra Leone needs a national strategy for democracy and nation building; one that will take into account national characteristics inherent in the country; one that will examine more deeply the root causes of why the state's institutions collapsed in the first place; one that will generate and allocate resources to the democracy project, even when donor funding is drying up and there are emerging issues of donor duplicity. In view of this it is strongly recommended that donors should not undermine the development of an emerging civil society in Sierra Leone by channeling funds to their own national NGOs or creating parallel entities. They must continue their support in order to encourage local public opinion in policy processes. Equally, donor accountability is crucial to the process and an improvement in this direction is drastically needed. Donors should provide disaggregated information about funding for projects and

programmes and make such information available to government and citizens. It is only by using such processes that progress on democracy aid can be adequately tracked.

Furthermore, the dark side of democracy is when it fails to yield prosperity, at least in the medium term, as 'democracy must take up the challenge of development where dictatorship has failed'. The central question of what is to be done remains crucial for political renewal in the country. As one school of thought holds, there are no major preconditions for democracy except the willingness on the part of the nation's elite to govern by democratic means as culture, poverty or political history are not insurmountable obstacles. Again it is highly recommended that political leaders in Sierra Leone must avoid the 'spoils logic' defined by self-aggrandizement and unfulfilled promises. The focus on elections to the exclusion of other essential features of a workable democracy has vitiated the country's democratic politics. Sierra Leone requires strategic leadership, which entails vision, inspiration and determination in achieving set goals for the purpose of the national interest, stability and attaining sustainable development.

In an attempt at synthesis, external actors have laid a stable foundation, but there needs to be a commitment on the part of the government of the day to let democracy flourish. What the country is experiencing now is a partial recovery. Rebuilding the structures for monitoring is key for establishing ownership of the reformed processes and ensuring stability, as governance reform and democracy cannot be separated. Thus what is needed in Sierra Leone is a deepening collective oversight mechanism geared towards local ownership of post-conflict projects. This requires not just a country strategy but firm adherence to it by all stakeholders. Within the short and medium term, donors have introduced the programmes through various projects. Proactive steps towards institution building now need to be taken in order to consolidate the inputs of international actors in peacebuilding and establishing democracy.

3

International Peacebuilding in Sierra Leone: The Case of the United Kingdom

Michael Kargbo

When rebels of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) invaded Sierra Leone in March 1991 their stated aim was the removal of the All People's Congress (APC) government which had been in power since 1968. Their invasion precipitated the ousting of the APC government by young officers of the Sierra Leone Army in April 1992, but the conflict continued and in fact escalated. The RUF rhetoric unashamedly made references to the establishment of a more equitable and democratic Sierra Leone. Theirs was a campaign to create a political space for all Sierra Leoneans, which had been denied them for over two decades. The elections of 1996 encouraged by the international community led by Britain were meant to undercut the RUF's demands. The election of President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah in 1996 was, however, ignored by the RUF who reneged on the first attempt at a peace settlement brought about by the Abidjan Peace Accord of 1996. When an all-out war against them failed, the Kabbah government was forced to sign a peace accord with Foday Sankoh, the RUF leader in July 1999 in Lomé. The Lomé Peace Agreement brought the RUF to power and required the government of Sierra Leone to 'accord every facility to the RUF/SL to transform itself into a political party and enter the mainstream of the democratic process' and the RUF was to 'organize itself to function as a political movement, with the rights, privileges and duties accorded to all political parties in Sierra Leone'. Subsequent events would, however, prove that the RUF leader, Foday Sankoh, was not totally committed to democratic governance.

After decades of what one might refer to as a period of 'neglect', the UK government under Tony Blair militarily intervened in the Sierra Leone conflict in May 2000 to restore order and prevent the collapse of the largest peacekeeping operation undertaken by the United Nations. British military intervention in Sierra Leone later even merited mention as one of Blair's wars (Kampfner 2003). Critics, however, accused the UK government of being 'Stuck in the mire of the White man's burden' (Jenkins 2000: n.p.) but Operation Palliser, as it was known, was an attempt by the Blair

government to match foreign policy pronouncements with actions and to make amends for the Sandline debacle. The intervention itself came about barely a year after Tony Blair's 'Doctrine of the International Community' speech to the Economic Club of Chicago (Blair 1999). British military intervention led to greater stability and boosted the morale of the UN mission, thereby allowing the completion of the disarmament process and the official pronouncement of the end of the war in Sierra Leone on 18 January 2002 (Kargbo 2006). Such an intervention, however, has so far not been repeated in other African trouble spots like Darfur, where grave human rights abuses have taken place.

The UK government under Tony Blair saw the collapse of the Sierra Leone state brought about by the war and years of misrule as an opportunity to embark upon a peacebuilding mission that would emphasize democratic institutions laced with a neo-liberal economic agenda to prevent a relapse into war (Paris 2002). The aim was to remove the ingredients that would provide a fertile ground for the growth of disaffection and subsequent conflict. Democratic political institutions are therefore seen as the sure, if not the only, means by which conflict can be managed or avoided. But as Roland Paris notes, 'the process of political and economic liberalization is inherently tumultuous: it can exacerbate social tensions and undermine the prospects for stable peace in fragile conditions that typically exist in countries just emerging from civil war' (Paris 2004: 1).

This chapter will review the role of the United Kingdom in rebuilding the political institutions (or in some cases even creating new ones) destroyed by years of war and poor governance, and assess whether those institutions are succeeding in managing conflicts and consolidating democracy in post-conflict Sierra Leone. Particular attention will be paid to British support to combat corruption, security and justice sector reforms, support for civil society groups and the media to enhance their participation in the political process, and building the capacity of the National Electoral Commission. Issues of ownership and donor coordination and the impact of donor funding on post-conflict peacebuilding will also be addressed.

DEBATING THE CAUSES OF THE WAR IN SIERRA LEONE

While it would be erroneous to proffer a monocausal explanation for the outbreak of the conflict in Sierra Leone, it is however necessary to consider the relative importance of the tapestry of factors that led to the war. Several analysts have emphasized poor governance or patrimonialism and endemic poverty as the main factors that led to

the outbreak of war in Sierra Leone, considering the regional politics of insurgency as only an immediate precipitant. Richards has earlier argued that the war in Sierra Leone was the result of the 'crisis of the patrimonial state' (Richards 1996), and later offered agrarian explanations (Richards 2005); while for Reno, 'Sierra Leone's leaders faced armed opposition not only from citizens they [could] no longer patronize but also from army units they [could] no longer pay' (Reno 1997: 227). Boas argues that the 'basic reasons' for the wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone 'are to be found in the extreme version of neo-patrimonial politics' of these two countries (Boas 2001: 717). However, it is important to note that, as Bangura has contended, the Sierra Leone war 'does not have only one logic' and that the crisis in Sierra Leone is linked 'to the informalization of key industries like diamonds' (Bangura 1997: 133). Kandehe has argued that 'it is not uncommon for patrimonialism to thrive in the midst of a fiscal crisis' and thus 'state failures in Sierra Leone enhanced the role of political patrons and expanded opportunities for predatory appropriation' (Kandehe 2002: 179). It is also important to note that the use of power for the personal accumulation of wealth, which can be redistributed to supporters, is certainly not new in Sierra Leone. The practice started under Prime Minister Albert Margai (1964–1967) but gained prominence during the reign of President Siaka Stevens between 1968 and 1985, when corruption became institutionalized and accepted by the citizenry as part of Sierra Leonean life (Sesay 1999: 300). The lines between the private and the public were progressively blurred and the Krio saying *usai den tie cow nar de e go eat* ('a cow grazes where it is tethered') became the norm. Patrimonialism cannot therefore be seen as a crucial factor in seeking explanations for the outbreak of war in Sierra Leone, as it had become integral to Sierra Leone politics for many years and could in fact be considered a stabilizing factor. It is doubtful that Sierra Leoneans would have taken up arms to dismantle a system that had come to be fatalistically accepted as a part of Sierra Leonean political culture. However, patrimonialism may have also been part of the reason why the state proved unable to defeat the RUF, since it weakened state structures to the extent that they could not withstand the RUF onslaught. The inability of the government to broadcast its powers or authority to the eastern and southern districts of Sierra Leone made the defence of those areas against RUF attacks very difficult, if not impossible.

It is also my considered view that the role of Libya as the main centre of training for the core group of the RUF, Burkina Faso's facilitation of weapon delivery and supply of mercenaries, and

Charles Taylor's provision of a frontier from which to launch the rebellion and subsequent military support for the RUF is crucial in understanding the outbreak of the war in Sierra Leone. It is especially important in understanding why the RUF rebellion started in March 1991 rather than earlier. Without the support of Libya, Burkina Faso and Charles Taylor's Liberia, it would have been impossible for the RUF to launch and sustain their rebellion and score major military victories against government forces.

BRITAIN'S OBJECTIVES IN SIERRA LEONE

The promotion of peace is perhaps the most important overarching stated objective of Britain's current policy in Sierra Leone. This is manifested in a raft of peacebuilding activities, all geared towards not only ensuring that the current peace holds but also to avoiding those ingredients that will provide a fertile ground for the recurrence of conflict. British conflict management, resolution and prevention activities are ostensibly designed to promptly respond to any signs of conflict and to prevent the escalation of such conflicts into future full-scale wars. Initiatives such as the continent-wide interdepartmental African Conflict Prevention Pool are meant to promptly respond to conflicts not only in Sierra Leone but also elsewhere in Africa. It is significant to note that at its inception about half of its budget was taken up by Sierra Leone.

Secondly, the promotion of prosperity in Sierra Leone is considered a priority by British policymakers. This policy is based on the neo-liberal assumption that there is a close link between economics and politics and the mutually beneficial nature of international trade and foreign direct investment. The UK's DFID has funded three key studies on the private sector in Sierra Leone: Administrative Barriers to Investment, Review of the Legal Framework for Business, and Functional Review of the Ministry of Trade and Industry. These studies formed the basis for the formulation of a project memorandum and framework for the UK's support to the Ministry of Trade and Industries. This programme of support is geared towards the development of an integrated national private sector development policy, a review of all legislation affecting business and commerce, the implementation of priority programmes, and the promotion of a business culture in Sierra Leone. Financial support to the tune of £4.52m for technical cooperation lasting for two years has been earmarked for this programme (DFID 2005). DFID has committed a further £15m of support to remove administrative barriers to investment, and to develop a national private sector strategy and

‘support to business development’ initiative which provides technical assistance to new and expanding businesses (DFID 2007). Such support is aimed at creating an enabling environment for private business and make Sierra Leone very attractive for foreign direct investment. Despite this, Sierra Leone continues to score poorly in the World Bank’s ranking for ease of doing business. Sierra Leone was ranked 160 out of 178 countries in 2009.

In addition to these efforts, the UK government has been providing direct budgetary support, which accounts for a third of total UK aid to Sierra Leone, to augment the Sierra Leone treasury. So, foreign aid, ‘commercial diplomacy’, and the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries programmes are all instruments used by the UK government to meet this objective. Claire Short, then UK International Development Secretary, signed a Poverty Reduction Framework Arrangement agreement with the Sierra Leone government in November 2002 with benchmarks to be achieved by the end of 2003. The UK government made a commitment of £120m of support for socio-economic development in Sierra Leone for the period 2003–2006 (GoSL 2005). Paragraph 3.2 of the MoU clearly stated that:

So long as the GoSL remains on track in implementing its strategy to reduce the causes of conflict and poverty, and improve standards of governance, the UK government will commit itself to maintaining a substantial direct development programme to Sierra Leone over the next ten years. This will be maintained at least at the level of current expenditure, thereby providing a total of at least £120m of assistance over the three years. A significant part of this will be in the form of direct budgetary support, giving the government of Sierra Leone flexibility to allocate funds in line with its own set priorities. (GoSL 2005: 2)

Subsequent editions of this agreement followed until it was replaced by the multi-donor *Improved Governance and Accountability Pact* (IGAP) for *Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development in Sierra Leone* agreement signed in July 2006. The Sierra Leone government made a commitment to advance ‘ten critical governance and accountability reforms’ over the following year and the donors in turn pledged to ‘improve aid effectiveness, and strengthen harmonization and coordination in support of these reforms’, and to ‘implement the provisions of the Paris Declaration, especially those related to flexibility, ownership and harmonization’ (GoSL 2005). The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) process was to be the hallmark of progress along which the stated benchmarks would be

judged. What should be made clear at this point is that commitments were made by the UK to continue to provide substantial support to Sierra Leone while the government of Sierra Leone in turn pledged to meet agreed benchmarks within a timed framework. A DFID commissioned report has, however, cast doubts on the usefulness of such agreements and concluded that 'overall performance against the benchmarks has not been satisfactory' (Balogun and Gberie 2005: vii).

The UK government has also embarked on an ambitious programme of promoting democracy and 'good governance' in Sierra Leone. The issue of good governance as a foreign policy goal of the UK is not new. It gained currency in the aftermath of the Cold War when Western governments, partly for the sake of appeasing certain domestic constituencies and for pragmatic reasons that had to do with reducing aid budgets, decided to attach conditions to aid disbursements to the developing world. For DFID, governance is 'how institutions, rules and systems of the state – executive, legislature, judiciary, and military – operate at central and local level and how the state relates to individual citizens, civil society and the private sector' (DFID 2001: 11). The UNDP, with which the UK closely collaborates in Sierra Leone and which has been very visible in reconstructing the post-war Sierra Leone state, sees governance as 'the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels' (UNDP 1997). The UK government also subscribes to the World Bank's definition of good governance, which has been summarized by Leftwich as being 'an efficient public service, an independent judicial system, and legal framework to enforce contracts, the accountable administration of public funds; an independent public auditor, responsible to a representative legislature, respect for the law and human rights at all levels of government; a pluralistic institutional structure, and a free press' (Leftwich 1993: 610). The World Bank has identified three distinct aspects of governance: (i) the form of political regime; (ii) the process by which authority is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development; and (iii) the capacity of governments to design, formulate, and implement policies and discharge functions (Moore 1993).

The UK is of the view that 'conflict is more likely where governments rule against the consent of their people' and that 'governments which respect freedom of expression are more likely to provide transparency to be secure trading partners, ... more likely to accept their international obligations to fight the drugs trade or halt weapons proliferation' (Cook 2000). This belief guides British

policy on post-conflict peacebuilding in Sierra Leone and has therefore elevated the promotion of good governance to the top of the UK's current agenda in the country.

THE CONCEPT OF POST-CONFLICT PEACEBUILDING

Peacebuilding gained wider currency in 1992 after the publication of Boutros Boutros-Ghali's *Agenda for Peace* and has since spawned a voluminous body of research, both theoretical and empirical, to become an important topic in international relations and particularly relevant to bilateral and multilateral aid agencies that are actively involved in peacebuilding programmes in the world's trouble spots. Post-conflict peacebuilding has been defined as 'action to identify and support structures that will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid relapse into conflict' (de Zeeuw 2001: 11). Some authors have seen peacebuilding as the globalization of liberal market democracy from the core to the periphery – a kind of modern day *mission civilisatrice* (Paris 2004: 13). For Forman, Patrick and Salomons (n.d.), peacebuilding is a 'triple transition': a security transition from war to peace; a political transition from authoritarianism (or totalitarianism) to a more participatory form of government; and a socio-economic transition, including the rebuilding of economic capacities and, frequently, the movement from a controlled to a market economy'. But de Zeeuw (2005: 11) has lamented that 'the notion of neoliberal peacebuilding, characterised by the establishment of formal democratic processes combined with promotion of a market economy, has been accepted almost universally in spite of some reservations about its application strategies'.

DEMOCRATIC PEACEBUILDING

It has been argued that 'civil wars signify failed political systems that could not perform essential governance functions, thereby generating political insurgencies. The need, therefore, is not to go back to pre-crisis conditions but to move in a different direction' (Kumar 1997: 2). In Sierra Leone, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report pointed to years of bad governance as the major explanation for the outbreak of war in Sierra Leone:

While there were many factors, both internal and external, that explain the cause of the civil war, the commission came to the conclusion that it was years of bad governance, endemic corruption and the denial of basic human rights that created the

deplorable conditions that made conflict inevitable. Successive regimes became increasingly impervious to the wishes and needs of the majority. Instead of implementing positive and progressive policies, each regime perpetuated the ills and self-serving machinations left behind by its predecessor. By the start of the conflict, the nation had been stripped of its dignity. Institutional collapse reduced the vast majority of people into a state of deprivation. Government accountability was non-existent. Political expression and dissent had been crushed. Democracy and the rule of law were dead. By 1991, Sierra Leone was a deeply divided society and full of the potential for violence. It required only the slightest spark for this violence to be ignited. The commission traced the roots of these lapses through the post-independence period and into the colonial period. (TRC 2004: 4)

In most, if not all, post-conflict societies the reconstitution of legitimacy which entails the enlargement or the increase of participation and inclusiveness is seen as a critical factor in ensuring that such societies do not relapse into conflict. Democratization, which Kumar has defined as ‘the process through which countries develop institutions, behaviour patterns and a political culture that contain the exercise of power within limits established by representative institutions and the rule of law’, is often seen by donors as the natural course to follow, especially in terms of reconstituting legitimacy in countries emerging from conflict (Kumar 1998: 215). Democracy assistance programmes occupy an important position in post-conflict peacebuilding activities embarked upon by donors such as the United Kingdom. As de Zeeuw (2005) has argued, ‘The central aim of these “democracy programmes” is to foster political stability, create transparency in public affairs, enhance accountability between the state and its population and improve popular participation in (political) decision making’ (17). Yet in many countries the road to democratization has proved problematic and experience has amply shown that it is even more difficult for external actors to impose stable democratic institutions in societies just emerging from war/conflict (Carrothers 2002: 1). The assumption that a post-conflict Sierra Leone presents the best opportunity for the creation of a democratic polity, modelled on that of European and North American experience to the preclusion of other local forms of democratic governance, despite its long history of authoritarian rule, raises serious issues about the timing and suitability of such an approach (ibid.).

According to Brinkerhoff, the design and implementation of governance reforms in post-conflict states target three areas. Firstly, it

entails reconstituting legitimacy which has been eroded by years of conflict and this is often done by way of conducting democratic elections. Secondly, re-establishing security to ensure security of property and persons to allow reconstruction and economic activity features prominently as an important component of post-war reconstruction. And, lastly, efforts are made at rebuilding state effectiveness to ensure that state structures are better able to perform their most basic functions (Brinkerhoff 2005). In addressing the democracy and governance deficits of Sierra Leone, the UK government has targeted certain key areas: elections and electoral management bodies (NEC, PPRC, EOC), human rights and the local media, corruption, support to strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations' voter education, and election monitoring in the post-conflict elections of 2002 and 2007.

The organization of 'free and fair' elections is often considered a priority by donors such as Britain in helping post-conflict societies avoid conflict that often arise from bad governance. In Sierra Leone, greater emphasis has been placed on the conduct of free and fair elections. Elections are not only considered the best political instrument for the people of Sierra Leone to choose their leaders but they are also the means by which power can be transferred peacefully and a government legitimized. It is believed that 'elections will serve to broaden and deepen political participation and the democratic accountability of the state to its citizens' (Carrothers 2002: 8). The UK government has therefore provided technical assistance, mainly through the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, and material assistance to the National Electoral Commission amounting to £3m since 2000. This assistance led to the modernization of Sierra Leone's electoral laws, culminating in the enactment of the Electoral Law Act, the National Electoral Commission Act and the Political Parties Act, all of 2002. These acts created the following electoral management bodies: the Political Parties Registration Commission, the Electoral Offences Courts and the National Electoral Commission, with an independent budget and administration. For the 2007 elections, the UK government provided financial support towards the direct cost of the elections totalling £4m, as well as £1.8m for voter education and access to election information and £1.2m for national and international observers (British High Commission 2007). The British government was very clear about what they expected of the 2007 elections:

We support the wish of the people of Sierra Leone to exercise their democratic rights in a free, fair, peaceful and credible election.

And we support the wish of the people of Sierra Leone to see, at the end of the electoral process; a government take office that has been democratically elected by the people. (ibid.)

Before 2002 the National Electoral Commission was not independent of government machinery. It was part of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which made it more susceptible to political interference, thereby eroding the credibility of elections. The establishment of a sound electoral administration is a very crucial aspect of peacebuilding and in this the UK has been very instrumental. It provides support towards the creation of a strong politically independent and technically able electoral organization that is capable of administering and legitimizing the electoral process. The UK has been largely successful in empowering the NEC to be independent of government, though this may also be attributed to the steadfastness and commitment of the Chairperson, Dr Christiana Thorpe. Corruption and financial impropriety which characterized the previous NEC is now a thing of the past. Dr Thorpe was able to conduct largely free and fair elections that have been applauded around the world. These elections were seen by some commentators as a test of the UK's success in being a force for good and that 'it is upon Sierra Leone that the reputation of Britain's claim to be an active force for good in the world rests' (Cargill 2007: n.p.). Indeed, the elections were hailed a success and the transfer of power from the ruling Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) to the opposition All People's Congress (APC) was smooth and orderly.

The UK has also provided assistance to all political parties through independent organizations such as the Westminster Foundation for Democracy in order to make them more viable and democratic, thereby improving their electoral chances/competitiveness. DFID supported training programmes in organizational development and skills, and also support for election related activities, and there have even been allegations of secret financial and material support to the two main opposition parties, the All People's Congress party and the Peoples Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC). This assistance was geared towards creating a level playing field, as the opposition often cannot match the colossal resources at the disposal of the ruling party. Such help can also enhance their role in discharging crucial governance tasks such as oversight functions. During the 2007 elections the UK funded one party agent from each of the contesting parties in every polling station.

However, such help has proved politically sensitive and the former ruling Sierra Leone People's Party saw it as biased against

them even though such support was provided through independent organizations such as the Westminster Foundation and provided to all registered political parties. The UK government was also accused of working towards regime change in Sierra Leone, prompting the High Commission to issue a press release after the first round of elections denying preference for any political party but hoping that the elections would reflect the wishes of the people of Sierra Leone and looked ‘forward to working with the next democratically elected Government chosen by the people of Sierra Leone’ (ibid.).

It is important to also note the limitations of such assistance. Firstly, the training provided by the Westminster Foundation and other similar organizations is benchmarked on that of the experiences of more advanced democracies such as that of the UK, ignoring the fact that parties in Sierra Leone historically do not have a set of principles and are largely based on patron–client relationships (Carrothers 2007: n.p.). Furthermore, the parties in Sierra Leone tend to have ethnic or sectional leanings while notions of class and ideology evident in the UK are lacking. The 2007 elections gave a clear indication of the regional and ethnic leanings of all three main political parties. The All People’s Congress party did very well in the north and west of the country, winning all seats in the west and all but three in the north, while the Sierra Leone People’s Party and the Peoples Movement for Democratic Change party won 40 (out of the 43 that they contested) and 10 seats respectively in their strongholds of the south and east of the country. There is ample evidence that the mainly Mende south and east of the country voted overwhelmingly for the SLPP while the Limba and Temne in the north and west of the country voted for the APC (see www.necsl.org).

UK MEDIA PROMOTION IN SIERRA LEONE

Since the end of the war, Sierra Leone has made a declarative commitment to promote good governance by undertaking to reform all of its institutions. Among the institutions targeted for reform is the media. Realizing that the media has a major role to play in informing the public about the issues of governance, the government saw the need to provide a conducive environment for the free expression of opinion and the growth of media houses as an essential element of good governance. The nexus between the media and good governance is well articulated in the Amman Declaration, which states that ‘Free, independent and pluralistic media and good governance are inextricably linked and that one cannot exist without the other’ (Amman Declaration 2005).

The need for good information as a strategic instrument to promote good governance has also been well expressed by the Commission for Africa Report, which states that

One thing that has emerged from our consideration on issues of governance and capacity is the importance of good information and communication: the lifeblood of transparent, informed and open societies, able to debate, decide and implement successful reforms, measure their impacts and hold their governments to accounts. (Commission for Africa 2005)

Similarly, the director general of UNESCO, Koichiro Matsuura, has argued that without freedom of expression and media ‘democracy cannot prevail ... free and pluralistic media have a crucial role to play in the good governance of democratic societies by ensuring transparency and accountability, promoting participation and rule of law, and contributing to the fight against poverty’ (UNESCO 2005).

Despite its huge potential in enhancing good governance, the media in Sierra Leone remains challenged by the Public Order Act of 1965, which criminalizes libel, and the professional inadequacies of some media practitioners. Even though there have been many instances when the media has been a victim of the government’s vindictiveness, particularly when the actions of some top government officials including party functionaries have come under the spotlight of media scrutiny, in several cases some media practitioners have behaved unprofessionally. The government’s highhandedness and the unprofessional behaviour often exhibited by a large number of media practitioners has rendered this very important institution less effective in ensuring accountability and transparency in the governance of Sierra Leone.

The UK government has, since the end of the war, seen the need to provide support to the Sierra Leone media in order to enable them to more effectively perform their crucial role in the governance of the country. Price, Noll and De Luce have defined media assistance as ‘the form of journalism training, direct support to news organizations, efforts to aid media law reform, support for professional journalism and broadcast associations, support for developing financial sustainability of media outlets, and initiatives designed to transcend national, religious or ethnic barriers in the media’ (2002: 2).

The UK justifies its involvement in media assistance by arguing that:

the media can make a real difference to the lives of the poor and disadvantaged people, for example by: making people more aware

of their rights, making people more aware of political issues and options and helping to stimulate debate, drawing attention to institutional failings – corruption, inefficiency, cronyism, nepotism – which are detrimental to the common good and creating pressure for improved government performance, for example service delivery or in respect of human rights. (DFID 2001: 4)

Britain's media assistance programmes have focused mainly on upgrading the journalistic skills and expertise of journalists, promoting the economic viability of independent media, providing financial support to selected media houses, and promoting legal and regulatory reforms. But it is the upgrading of the skills and expertise of Sierra Leonean journalists and legal and regulatory reforms that have mainly attracted funding from the UK government's DFID. Such media development programmes have been focused on improving the professional standards of journalists through several training programmes, both short and medium term, run by the British Council and the Thomson Foundation. The short-term training is mainly practical, helping journalists to learn new skills that can be readily applied in their different media houses, while the medium-term training concentrates on theory and practice. While UK media assistance has considerably narrowed the skills gap of Sierra Leonean journalists and other practitioners, and aided the establishment of the Independent Media Commission with certain aspects of the legal framework modified, its inability to get the Sierra Leone government to repeal the obnoxious Public Order Act (1965) has discounted whatever gains that may have been made. The media is still constrained by this Act, which criminalizes libel, and bedevilled by the unprofessional behaviour often displayed by some of its practitioners, as well as facing the problems of business viability, particularly in the case of newspapers, in a largely illiterate country.

DECENTRALIZATION

In a speech, President Kabbah set out his government's policy on decentralization when he stated thus:

An important element of my government's programme is to move away from the highly centralized system of administration that we inherited from previous governments and to restore democratic governance at the local levels. The new local councils will have enough authority in decision-making as service providers to the people in their localities. The decentralized administration will

encourage and promote grassroots participation in decision-making and in the development objectives of the communities. (www.state-house-sl.org/speeches/speeches-bo-makeni.html)

Officials at the World Bank and government-funded Decentralization Secretariat have spoken of Kabbah's yearning for the past as a major motivating factor for the re-introduction of local government, playing down the role of donors such as the UK. But the rosy picture painted of local government before it was abolished by the APC government of Siaka Stevens sits uneasily with the independent analysis of Roger Tangri when he stated that:

With few exceptions, local government institutions in contemporary Sierra Leone – District Councils and Chiefdom Administrations – have been characterized by widespread and blatant corruption and nepotism and poor standards of bureaucratic performance and efficiency. District Councils have been notoriously ineffective. They have failed to meet the expectations placed upon them as agencies of progress in the provision of amenities and services at the local level. The basic weakness of the councils [was] symptomatic partly of limited human and financial resources and also absence of close government supervision. More crucial, however, was the criticism that there was little identification with the councils on the part of the chiefdom authorities and the ordinary people. The chiefdoms have remained the fundamental units of local attachment, and the strength and durability of this chiefdom identification provides a firm underpinning for the political arrangements based on the chiefdom.

Chiefdom institutions have also proved notoriously ineffective in responding to the felt needs of the rural population, and are today almost universally seen as having fallen into disrepute. (Tangri 1978: 169)

The World Bank, which largely funds the decentralization process in Sierra Leone, believes that post-war Sierra Leone presents the best opportunity for the re-establishment of local governance, arguing that:

The experience of South Africa and Indonesia seems to demonstrate that a time of major political change is good one at which to promote decentralization. South Africa's decentralization governance was associated with constitutional transformation from apartheid; Indonesia's with weak support for the post-Suharto

government of Habibie and demands for political and fiscal decentralization. Sierra Leone may be at just such a juncture. Settled social, political and bureaucratic structures can more easily capture a policy against their interests ... If there is the strong belief that decentralization will improve the access of the poor to services, then it may be best to move fairly aggressively and quickly, to set in motion a process that will be difficult to reverse. (World Bank 2003: 43–44)

The Local Government Act, which was passed in 2004, provided for partisan elections of local councils; decreed that 20 per cent of paramount chiefs in each locality would be un-elected councillors; and devolved the responsibility for primary education, primary health, agricultural extension, feeder road maintenance, etc., as well as responsibility for the revenue authorities to local councils during 2004–2008. The Act also gave local councils autonomy in human resource management and financial management, but under strict guidelines: inter-governmental transfers were to be based on a transparent formulae and the principle of equity was to be emphasized, but this also required transparency and accountability in the operations or running of councils. Ward Development Committees are designated as sub-district structures and were to be the smallest unit of public administration in Sierra Leone. But the Local Government Act is said to conflict with 40 other pieces of legislation and it is ambiguous on the relationship between chiefs and councils in key areas such as revenue collection (Jackson 2005).

While the decentralization process has been heavily driven by donors, particularly the World Bank, which subscribes to the view that decentralization can achieve good governance by enhancing greater public participation, accountability of the public sector and reducing corruption, which can be expected to lead to poverty reduction. The UK government, however, did not initially consider it a priority in its programmes in Sierra Leone, even though it believes that decentralization enhances good governance. It initially embarked on a process of resettling paramount chiefs through DFID's Community Reintegration Programmes with reconstructed homes and court barriers as a strategy to extend/regain control in the various districts in the countryside, particularly the border areas. But this project drew sharp criticism from both the paramount chiefs themselves and their subjects. On the part of the chiefs, they considered that the new houses were not befitting their status while their subjects wondered aloud whether they deserved such an opportunity having enriched themselves through extortion and bribery. Some commentators have

also questioned whether such programmes are helping to recreate the circumstances that led to the outbreak of war in Sierra Leone (Hanlon 2005).

But decentralization is now a very important new 'element' in DFID's programmes in Sierra Leone, and the UK has since contributed to the UNDP basket fund for the decentralization process. Local elections for district and town councils were held on 22 May 2004 with support from the UK, and the multi-donor support to the decentralization project has seen a rapid roll-over of the process throughout the whole country. While the decentralization process which saw the establishment of district, town and city councils is a major success for peacebuilding, it is doubtful whether it can effectively serve as a real mechanism for preventing future conflicts in the country. The inability of councils to generate local revenue and the corruption among officials has affected their ability to deliver services to their localities, and there is the strong potential for them to become mere tools of local and national elites.

RESTORATION AND STRENGTHENING OF THE RULE OF LAW

The function of the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) has in the past been primarily to keep law and order and, through the Cuban-trained Special Security Division (SSD), keep the ruling party in power. The post-conflict era opened a window of opportunity for the emphasis to shift to investigating and prosecuting criminals and preventing the occurrence of crime. A senior UK police officer, Keith Biddle, was seconded to the SLP as acting inspector general. His role was to create a well-trained and equipped police force that would not only be law abiding itself but one that would also desist from corrupt practices such as extortion and shielding wealthy criminals, which had become the hallmark of policing in Sierra Leone. The slogan 'a force for good' became the mantra for the 'new' post-war SLP. A major training exercise was undertaken by the Commonwealth Community Safety and Security Project (CCSSP), largely funded by DFID, which saw the training of over 9,000 Sierra Leone police officers. Britain also sponsored and continues to sponsor the training of Sierra Leone police officers at Bramshill Police Training College in England and funded the building or rebuilding of police stations around the country. DFID also provided £1.2m for a police communications network and £3.5m for vehicles, including 155 land rovers, 158 motor cycles, 47 medium carriers, 24 large carriers, 10 ambulances and 10 cars. A National Police Council has

also been set up with DFID's help, but the designation of the vice president as chairman of this council has raised concerns about its effectiveness and its susceptibility to political interference in Sierra Leone.

Despite these interventions the force is still struggling to come to terms with its new mandate as older officers all too often exhibit the tendencies of the past to the embarrassment of their superiors. The persisting poor perception of the SLP among the populace speaks volumes concerning the entrenched views of a force that has been known for its corruption and collusion with criminals (Standard Times 2007). An International Crisis Group report noted that 'There are serious questions about the capacity of Sierra Leone's police to manage internal security and its military to secure borders in a context of potential regional conflict ... Nor have the security forces yet earned civilian confidence' (ICG 2004: 13). However, in March 2004, Ginifer et al., reviewing the UK conflict prevention effort, concluded that 'the reform of the SLP [police] has made ground in making the police more accountable, professional, reducing corruption and beginning to restore a measure of civil society belief in law and order' (Ginifer et al. 2004: 13). A 2006 report from the UN Integrated Office in Sierra Leone also commended the 'developing professionalism of the Sierra Leone armed forces and police' (UN 2006).

LEGAL REFORM

The failings of the judiciary and the inaccessibility of justice were cited by the Truth and Reconciliation Report as a major contributory factor to the outbreak of war in Sierra Leone. The targeting of judges and magistrates by the rebels lends credence to this argument. In a recent survey in which people were asked what the government's priority in terms of finding justice in Sierra Leone should be, access to justice figured prominently with 50 per cent of respondents saying that access to justice through the courts should be the government's priority (TRC 2004). The impact of the war on the justice system necessitated interventions in re-establishing the operation of the rule of war and making justice accessible to the poor and marginalized in particular. The Law Development Project (LDP) was therefore conceived and set up with DFID support as an instrument that would work towards the restoration and strengthening of the legal institutional framework, including updating the country's legal code, the rebuilding or building of courts, and the training of court clerks and justices of the peace. Elements of the LDP and the

CCSSP were later incorporated into the Justice Sector Development Project (JSDP), which was designed in June 2002, approved in April 2004 and which commenced operation in March 2005. The first two years were designated as the inception phase of the project with funding of £6.9m out of the £25m committed by DFID over a 5-year period. The purpose of the JSDP is to 'support the development of an effective and accountable justice sector that is capable of meeting the needs and interests of the people of Sierra Leone, particularly the poor, the vulnerable and the marginalised' (Justice Sector 2005). The JSDP is managed by a consortium led by the British Council and had satisfactorily completed the inception phase by April 2007, but the implementation phase of the programme was delayed until after the elections. It has become DFID's largest single programme, but a JSDP Review Team Report found that DFID lacked adequate technical expertise to 'monitor and provide guidance to JSDP' (Bredemear et al. 2007).

DEALING WITH CORRUPTION

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission in its final report stated that 'Endemic corruption was a central factor that produced the dire conditions that made civil war inevitable', and that 'Sierra Leone remains in the grip of pervasive corruption, which, if not arrested, will sap the country of its life force and lay the ground for further conflict' (TRC 2004).

President Tejan Kabbah in a speech to parliament stated his recognition of the importance of putting in place measures that would prevent and punish corruption:

My government continues to work towards ensuring that transparency and accountability become integral parts of our public culture and ultimately of our national character. Whether it is considered as misuse of public power for private gain, or acts of operational dishonesty, corruption undermines democratic accountability and promotes chaos and instability in any society. This is why my government has been actively developing strategies, which will be implemented by the recently established Independent Anti-Corruption Commission. My government will continue to design and execute programmes aimed at increasing public awareness of the negative effects of corrupt practices by individuals and institutions. This is an effective way to enhance public and donor confidence in government's ability to use and manage resources efficiently. (Kabbah 2000)

For the UK government:

Corruption is a major obstacle to development and was a key factor in the collapse in government and public services before the war. Until transparent systems are in place and corruption is brought under control, it will be difficult for people to feel they are part of a just and inclusive society and for Sierra Leone to attract major external investment. (See Foreign and Commonwealth Office website www.fco.gov.uk)

An Anti-Corruption Commission (Anti-Corruption Act of 3 February 2000) initially made up of British and Sierra Leonean personnel was therefore set up with DFID's assistance, but after two years of operation the Secretary of State for DFID, Claire Short, while on a visit to Freetown in February 2002, remarked that the tradition of people seeking political office in order to line their pockets and those of their family, rather than to improve the life of their country, was still widespread and endangered the future. Furthermore she warned that this tradition of corruption had to be brought to an end. She concluded by pointing out that the UK government was committed to standing by Sierra Leone for the long term, provided that there was a strong mutual commitment to the building of a competent, transparent and incorrupt modern state (Dowden 2002).

The Anti-Corruption Commission has failed woefully in discharging a very crucial aspect of governance and a major plank of British policy in Sierra Leone, partly because of a lack of political will but also because of the inadequacies of the Act itself. The Anti-Corruption Act 2000 required all anti-corruption cases to be forwarded to the Attorney General's Office which then determined whether a particular case should be prosecuted or not. DFID's own reviews of the ACC have consistently painted a picture of inaction and inadequacies surrounding the operation of this very important institution. The Annual Review of 2006 in particular noted a 'lack of progress on the overall project goal of reducing corruption in Sierra Leone' and more importantly 'deterioration in the institutional capacity of the ACC to lead the fight against corruption' (Cutting and Otieno 2007: n.p.). The report apparently blamed the leadership of the ACC for its abysmal performance: 'the recent leadership and management of the organization has undermined any progress that had been made with previous donor support ... As a result the ACC has deteriorated in terms of capacity and in the morale of its staff from the previous period' and therefore recommended that DFID 'ends support to the ACC Sierra Leone' (ibid.). The lack of political will in the fight against corruption, the inadequacies of the ACC Act

itself, the obstructive tactics of the Attorney General's Office and the limited influence of the UK government over the government of Sierra Leone has resulted in the failure of a key UK policy goal in Sierra Leone. The failure of the ACC to prosecute high profile cases has reinforced the widely-held perception that public officials are very corrupt and corruption continues to be seen as a major threat to Sierra Leone's peace and stability (SDPS 2006). It was only latterly that the APC government of President Koroma pushed for the amendment of the ACC Act and prevailed upon parliament to pass the ACC Act 2008. This Act gave the ACC prosecutorial powers, provided for the declaration of assets by government officials and functionaries, and widened the ACC's investigative mandate to include family members and friends of government officials.

Table 3.1 UK financial support to the Anti-Corruption Commission

<i>Year</i>	<i>Amount in Leones</i>
2005	1,419,542,037
2006	1,174,333,108
2007	600,000,000
2008	215,299,950

SECURITY SECTOR REFORM

In the Sierra Leone context, security involves securing the lives of civilians from immediate and large-scale violence, and restoring the state's ability to maintain territorial integrity. The main objectives of a peacebuilding approach to security in Sierra Leone is ensuring the accountability of the security forces to both the civil authorities and civil society. As such,

- the security forces need to adhere to international and domestic constitutional law;
- there needs to be transparency in security related matters and the security sector; needs to adhere to the same principles of public-expenditure management as non-security sectors;
- there should be a clear hierarchy of authority between the civil authorities and the security forces (with mutual rights and obligations), with the former able to exercise political control and constitutional oversight of the security sector;
- there also needs to be a political environment conducive to an active role on the part of civil society so that it can monitor

the security sector and provide constructive input into political debate on security policies;

- the security forces need access to professional training consistent with requirements of democratic societies;
- a high priority should be accorded to regional and sub-regional peace and security by policy makers.

Through DFID support, Sierra Leone has embarked upon the setting up of defence and intelligence bodies and the professionalization of the security forces through doctrinal development, skill development, technical modernization and an emphasis on the importance of accountability and the rule of law. The International Military Advisory and Training Team (IMATT) headed by Britain provides short-term training to the new Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) while arrangements have been made for the provision of officer training in both Ghana and the UK. British military personnel also occupy executive and advisory posts within the RSLAF and the Ministry of Defence, often to the displeasure of RSLAF senior officers.

The IMATT programme, which is the flagship military assistance programme to Sierra Leone, entails much more than training: it deals with all aspects of security reform – including complete departmental overhaul to ensure appropriate civilian oversight and probity. This again has often elicited criticism from the top echelons of the RSLAF for its lack of local ownership and for the simple fact that junior ranking officers from the UK can wield so much influence within a Sierra Leonean force. *Operation Pembu*, which uses local material to construct barracks, has also been criticized for its lack of local ownership and the poor quality of houses built.

Security sector reform also involved the creation of the Office of National Security and the National Security Council as provided for in the National Security and Central Intelligence Act 2002. This body, though often plagued by accusations of ethnic patronage, has developed into an important part of the security architecture in Sierra Leone and has the potential to play a vital role in consolidating peace.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Post-conflict Sierra Leone faces several human challenges ranging from the loss of human lives to war traumas. In response to this the UK government has supported a number of human rights initiatives geared towards dealing with these challenges. But this is considered to be quite a sensitive issue in post-conflict peacebuilding as it often entails balancing the demand for justice and the need for reconciliation.

In order to address impunity and promote reconciliation, Britain has supported the setting up of the Sierra Leone Special Court (SLSC) to try ‘persons who bear the greatest responsibility’ for serious abuses during the course of the ten years of war in Sierra Leone, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to:

create an impartial historical record of violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law related to armed conflict in Sierra Leone, from the beginning of the conflict in 1991 to the signing of the Lomé Peace Agreement; to address the impunity, to respond to the needs of the victims, to promote healing and reconciliation and to prevent a repetition of the violations and abuses suffered. (TRC 2004: Sect 6(1))

The Special Court, however, receives more financial and diplomatic support from the United States, while the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is largely funded by Britain. Britain has cautiously supported the SLSC even though Peter Penfold, the UK’s former High Commissioner to Sierra Leone during the war, openly criticized its creation, and a serving senior British military official testified in favour of the indicted former head of the largely Kamajor-dominated Civil Defence Force, the late Chief Hingha Norman (Penfold 2002). The Special Court, though generally supported by the majority of Sierra Leoneans, has itself now become irrelevant to the people of Sierra Leone who simply see it as an opportunity for foreigners to make money (BBC 2007). Sierra Leonean lawyers in particular have questioned the hybrid nature of the court, especially when the government of Sierra Leone decided to nominate international staff to fill two of its four vacancies for judges instead of giving all four to Sierra Leoneans, and what they see as the large presence of international staff in key positions (Perriello and Wierda 2006). Similarly, the inability of the UK government to influence the Sierra Leone government into accepting and implementing the key recommendations of the TRC Report has made the commission’s work worthless, and its role in addressing the issues that led to the outbreak of conflict has thus failed. While Sierra Leoneans are very positive about the contribution of the TRC to reconciliation, there is a generally low awareness of the commission’s recommendations (*ibid.*). Efforts to set up a functioning Human Rights Commission, a key recommendation of the TRC Report, have been very slow. It took two years for the commissioners and the executive secretary to be appointed and the recruitment of other officials has only just begun (Suma 2007). The commission still lacks the institutional capacity to become fully operational and funding is not even guaranteed.

Table 3.2 UK financial support to the various peacebuilding institutions in Sierra Leone

<i>Details</i>	<i>Amount in UK£ Million</i>
Military Assistance	12.0
Security Sector Reform (Police)	4.7
Special Court	6.6
TRC	0.5
Private Sector Development	15.0
Justice Sector Development	25.0
Decentralization	8.0
Support for Civil Society	7.5
PIVOT Programme (Promoting Info. & Voice Transparency on Election)	3.0
Electoral Support (to the basket fund) for 2007 General and 2008 Local Government Elections	10.5
Civil Service Reform	4.0
2002 General Elections	3.0

CONCLUSION

Due to the historical link between the UK and Sierra Leone, the disastrous policies initially pursued by the UK government and the emerging consensus in Whitehall on the concept of joined-up government, Sierra Leone was prioritized in British peacebuilding activities in Africa. British peacebuilding activities in Sierra Leone have been considered a model for peacebuilding activities elsewhere. Sierra Leone could be referred to as a policy lab for the testing of the new thinking in Whitehall's international development and conflict management strategies. Some of the peacebuilding programmes are well coordinated with other donor agencies such as the EU, particularly in the area of electoral reform, thereby avoiding duplication and confusion. So far it has been judged a resounding success, particularly after the peaceful transfer of power from one political party to another, and hailed as a beacon for the rest of Africa's trouble spots. Indeed, on balance British policy objectives have broadly helped consolidate peace and democracy in Sierra Leone, but there is still a lot more to be done particularly in the area of addressing socio-economic problems. The necessary governance structures have been put in place and they are gradually maturing. What, however, needs to be done is build the capacity of those structures and institutions to enable them to deliver their core functions, particularly in delivering services to the poor and marginalized. More support for the decentralization process, for instance, is needed to enable the

reform process to progress further, particularly enabling councils to acquire the ability to locally generate revenue and embark upon development projects.

But there is the need for the UK to develop a comprehensive approach to peacebuilding and it is evident from my research that the UK government needs to improve upon the coherence of its peacebuilding interventions in Sierra Leone. It is fair to say, however, that measures have already been taken to address this and more co-ordination with other donors such as the EU is changing the whole spectrum of the UK's peacebuilding efforts in Sierra Leone.

There is also evidence of a disconnection between policy conceptualization and implementation in Sierra Leone and the UK should do more in obtaining the commitment of Sierra Leone's leadership to a reform process. This is perhaps one area in which the UK has been least successful in its interventions in Sierra Leone. The SLPP has taken a half-hearted approach to reforms that will dismantle the very structures that created the circumstances that led to the ten years of war. The APC government of President Ernest Koroma has made a commitment to the reform process and has so far taken measures towards this end. Whether this will be sustained is another matter. The UK government should take a long-term view, identify priorities and encourage the Sierra Leone government to vigorously pursue these. The MOU and the Improved Governance and Accountability framework should have been the major instruments that the UK could have used in getting the government to implement much need policy reforms but, as has been argued, 'donors tried a range of methods to accelerate progress including private diplomacy, public statements and conditional aid, but the fundamental problem remains weak capacity and weak ownership of some of the reforms' (Thomson 2007: n.p.).

There is also the perennial problem of local ownership of the post-conflict peacebuilding programmes in Sierra Leone. Britain should build on what exists locally and take local ownership seriously and not simply pay lip service to it. The security sector is one major area where problems of local ownership have become a major issue. But despite all these shortcomings Sierra Leone's post-conflict reforms have progressed enough to see an improvement in the country's indicators of political governance (voice, accountability and stability) according to recent indicators (<http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi2007>; <http://www.moibrahimfoundation.org/index/single.asp?countryid=39>).

4

Intervention and Peacebuilding in Sierra Leone: A Critical Perspective

Jimmy D. Kande

INTRODUCTION

Pacification via neo-liberal orthodoxy is reflexively promoted by the international community as an antidote to armed conflict and a model for development in post-conflict societies. This approach seeks to transplant the ‘best practices’ of Western societies to the rest of the world and envisions, in the words of Marina Ottaway, a ‘shortcut to the Weberian state’ or ‘an attempt to develop such an entity quickly and without the long, conflictual and often brutal evolution that historically underlies the formation of states (2002: 1,004). Whether such a forced transformation is possible in countries lacking the fundamentals of liberal pluralist democracy is doubtful. Low levels of material and social development, the absence of a sizable middle class, the numerical preponderance of a politically marginalized peasantry and the dominance of a political class whose mode of accumulation is incommensurate with both democracy and development may yet stymie or derail the liberal peace project in Africa. What happens in Sierra Leone, which has been prematurely advertised as an example of successful post-conflict peacebuilding, may have far-reaching implications for neo-liberalism in sub-Saharan Africa and other parts of the non-Western world

Sierra Leone has been at peace for about a decade – enough time to take stock of emerging post-conflict governance patterns. Domestic forces and power-brokers alone could not have rescued the country from dismemberment, and it took the coordinated intervention of the UN, UK and West African troops led by Nigeria to put an end to one of Africa’s most horrific post-independence armed conflicts. Elections were held in 2002, which were won by the incumbent SLPP, and in 2007, which the SLPP lost to the opposition APC, the party under whose watch (1968–92) and against whom the armed insurgency was launched. This alternation of political parties in power, the first in Sierra Leone’s political history, would not have been possible in the absence of donor intervention, a fact

underscored by the SLPP blaming the international community for its defeat. In addition to ending the war and sandbagging the SLPP into accepting the procedures and results of the 2007 elections, the international community, led by the UK and UN, has been actively engaged in several reconstruction projects and peacebuilding efforts in the country. What the flurry of post-conflict international activism has yielded and whether it is helping to build peace or recreate some of the very conditions that led to armed conflict and state collapse are the primary foci of this chapter.

Paul Collier has argued that the main reason countries like Sierra Leone have failed to develop is because they are caught in at least one of four traps: conflict, natural resource, land lock, and governance (Collier 2007). Sierra Leone is not land-locked but two (natural resources, conflict) of the other so-called traps are only superficially relevant to understanding the impediments of social and institutional progress in Sierra Leone. Bad governance explains, but is not explained by, conflicts and natural resources. Armed domestic conflicts over natural resources occur in a context of bad governance and, contrary to some erroneous narratives of the Sierra Leone conflict, including Collier's, the country's armed rebellion was not caused by diamonds but by a mode of governance that is antithetical to both the developmental aspirations of society and the global neo-liberal agenda. It is the persistence of a predatory governance logic that poses the greatest threat to post-conflict peacebuilding in Sierra Leone.

The dissonance between a neo-liberal global governance agenda and the interests of local political classes raises serious questions regarding the feasibility of this project in Sierra Leone and elsewhere in Africa. Neo-liberal hegemony at the transnational level, as Ian Taylor points out, is not replicated at the national level and this results in a 'disjuncture between the prescriptions of the liberal peace and the realities on the ground in Africa' (Taylor 2007: 555). Elections have not ushered any significant changes in governance practices in Sierra Leone and socio-economic conditions have not improved since the end of the war. The future of electoral democracy remains in doubt and a transition to liberal democracy is unlikely in the short term because of the lack of commitment on the part of the political class to its precepts. Democracies cannot endure, however, in the absence of leadership commitment to its norms, principles and outcomes and, as Samuel Huntington notes, 'democratic development occurs when political leaders believe they have an interest in promoting it or a duty to achieve it'. Such elites, we are reminded, 'are missing from many parts of the world', including Sierra Leone (1997: 10).

NEO-LIBERALISM AND PEACEBUILDING

Peacebuilding is a neo-liberal construct that is grounded in the idea that democracy and free markets can deliver peace and prosperity. As refinement of classical economic liberalism, neo-liberalism emphasizes privatization, a self-regulating market and a non-interventionist state as keys to economic development and social prosperity. The notion that society is the ultimate beneficiary of the material acquisitiveness of the entrepreneur gained currency as societies in Europe transitioned from feudalism to early capitalism and from absolutism to limited forms of democracy. This complementarity of economic and political processes in social transformation was critical to the emergence of capitalism and democracy in the West – with economic prosperity, a growing middle class and elite competition providing the impetus for democratization – but stands in sharp contrast to Africa, where economic (market reforms) and political (democratization) changes have been set in motion by donor pressures rather than by the unfolding of domestic processes.

As rationale for capitalism, classical liberalism became the hegemonic ideology of the West because it reflected and promoted the interests of the bourgeoisie. But why should such an ideology appeal to political classes in Africa whose mode of accumulation is predatory, unproductive and at variance with the logic of capitalist development? In Latin America and East Asia, political elites were less sold on political than economic reforms but their lack of enthusiasm for democratization was not uniquely dictated by their mode of accumulation, as is the case in much of sub-Saharan Africa. Africa's political classes are not committed to democracy and market reforms because neither conforms to their mode of accumulation and neo-liberalism may stand a far better chance in Latin America and Asia than in Africa partly because of the differential receptivity of ruling sectors to economic and political reforms.

A neo-liberal political order is impossible in the absence of an effective state. Democracy and free markets require states that can perform basic tasks, in the absence of which neither peace nor development is possible. Restoring and legitimating state authority is therefore critical to consolidating peace and promoting development in post-conflict societies. Putting states back together begins but does not end with the provision of basic security, the establishment of law and order, the extraction and allocation of resources, social service delivery and the legitimation of state power. Capacity has a resource and a performance dimension: states without much of a resource base can be more effective than resource-rich (but poor)

countries if they do a better job in social provisioning, which, among other things, can help build public support for state institutions. It is, however, difficult to generate support for public institutions that do not operate independently of the interests and agendas of political incumbents. Autonomous and effective institutions represent a threat to local political classes whose preference is to expand patronage networks as opposed to cultivating public support and strengthening public institutions.

The cultural particularity of neo-liberalism and the centrality of welfare provisioning in state and peacebuilding raises the question of whether liberal-pluralist democracy and a self-regulating market economy are, in the short-run, best suited to sub-Saharan Africa. European states had their absolutist past and some, like Sweden, are social democracies with effective states. States do not become sustainable democracies as a result of external intervention and it is far better to embed institutions in the histories, cultures, needs and interests of mass publics than in the 'best practices' of the West because neither the socio-economic conditions prevalent in Africa nor the mode of accumulation characteristic of its governing elites are particularly conducive to the liberal governance promoted by Western countries and donor agencies. The social democratic alternative or the 'developmental state' with 'embedded autonomy' may be more conducive models for Africa than what neo-liberalism has to offer but their possibilities are even more distant and remote.

As an outgrowth of neoliberalism, peacebuilding by the international community was first defined by former UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali as post-conflict 'action to identify and support structures which tend to strengthen and solidify peace and avoid a relapse into conflict.' The concept gained prominence in policy and academic circles in the post-cold war era and represents a more ambitious attempt at operationalizing UN functionalism or the idea that the eradication of human misery helps prevent wars and is a prerequisite for sustainable peace. Differentiating Boutros-Ghali's peacebuilding agenda from earlier efforts was the willingness to mobilize the international community as a 'third party' not only in the resolution of conflicts and civil wars but also in the reconstruction of war-torn societies. It is this non-military intervention by external actors to help war-torn societies establish conditions for lasting or sustainable peace that has come to define contemporary peacebuilding operations by the UN, donor countries and NGOs.

The Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (2000), otherwise known as the Brahimi Report, recommended a variety of peacebuilding tools that were adopted by the UN as a template of

how to reconstruct post-war societies. These include the creation of a fund for disarmament, demobilization and re-integration (DDR), the adoption of quick impact projects (QIPS), strengthening rule of law institutions, providing electoral assistance and creating a pilot peacebuilding unit. Five years after the publication of the Brahimi Report, Kofi Annan, Boutros-Ghali's successor, focused the world's attention on what he called 'a gaping hole in the United Nations institutional machinery', or the fact that 'no part of the United Nations system effectively addresses the challenge of helping countries with the transition from war to peace' (Anan 2000: 21). In pursuance of the goal of assisting countries' transition from war to peace, the secretary-general proposed the establishment of an intergovernmental Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), a peacebuilding support unit within the UN secretariat and a standing fund for peacebuilding. Based on voluntary contributions, the PBC was established by concurrent resolutions of the General Assembly and Security Council in December 2005 and held its first session in June 2006.

The main functions of the PBC are to bring together relevant actors, mobilize resources and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict recovery and peacebuilding; to support institution building and integrated strategies that foster sustainable development; and to provide information and offer recommendations on coordinating the activities of all relevant actors, developing 'best practices' and extending the international community's engagement in post-conflict recovery (General Assembly 2005). Sierra Leone and Burundi were the first two countries to receive funding from the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), which supports specific peacebuilding initiatives. The PBC first visited Sierra Leone in March 2007 to 'forge a relationship with stakeholders on the ground' and identify key issues (youth employment and empowerment, good governance, justice sector and security sector reform and capacity building) and strategies relative to Sierra Leone. Later, in December 2007, the PBC and the government of Sierra Leone reached agreement on a cooperation framework, after which \$35m was allocated to Sierra Leone. In all, fourteen projects to the tune of \$32m have been funded. Among the institutions, agencies and programs that have been supported by PBF funds, the following are noteworthy: National Electoral Commission, judiciary, energy and power, armed forces, police, Human Rights Commission, Anti-Corruption Commission, Office of National Security, water and sanitation project (Wilberforce barracks) and support for a youth enterprise development project.

UN intervention in Sierra Leone's conflict started with the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL), a monitoring

outfit that proved inadequate to the task of dealing with the country's rapidly deteriorating security situation. UNOMSIL was replaced by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), which was established by the UN Security Council in October 1999 and tasked with facilitating the implementation of the Lomé peace agreement. UNAMSIL grew into the largest peacekeeping operation in the world, with 17,500 peacekeepers deployed throughout the country. After surviving an inauspicious start, and with the help of British military intervention in 2000, UNAMSIL disarmed more than 75,000 ex-combatants, provided security and logistical support for the 2002 elections and helped rebuild infrastructure and deliver rudimentary government services to local communities. UNAMSIL successfully completed its peacekeeping mandate in 2005 and was replaced by the United Nations Integrated Office for Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL). UNIOSIL's mandate was to consolidate the gains of UNAMSIL, provide security for the Special Court of Sierra Leone (SCSL), help the government realize the Millennium Development Goals, strengthen human rights, improve transparency in government performance and promote free and fair elections. UNIOSIL played critical roles in ensuring democratic outcomes to the 2007 general, and the 2008 local, elections. Led by the secretary-general's special representative (SGSR), Victor Angelo, UNIOSIL provided robust assistance to national commissions and institutions, supported implementation of the Sierra Leone Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework and assisted in the work of the PBC. UNIOSIL's mandate ended in October 2008 and was replaced by a United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL).

The PBC represents the most recent affirmation of the UN's role as an important instrument of global governance. It is preceded, complemented and supported in this role by international financial institutions and bilateral donors. In the specific case of Sierra Leone, peacebuilding activities by the international and donor community have concentrated in the following areas: security, justice, poverty reduction and good governance. External interventions in these areas, and their impact on consolidating or undermining peace, are discussed in the rest of this chapter.

EXTERNAL DONORS AND ACTORS

Despite the massive infusion of external aid since the end of the war, Sierra Leone remains stuck at the bottom of the UN Human Development Index (176 out of 177), with an estimated 70 per cent

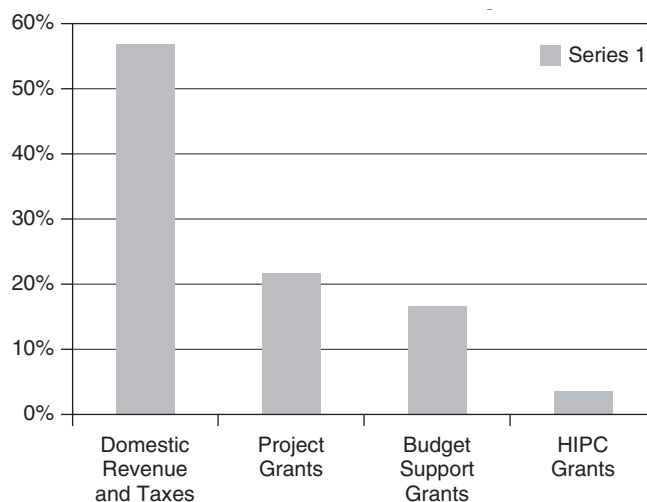


Figure 4.1 Government of Sierra Leone 2007

Source: Government of Sierra Leone Budget 2007.

of the population living in grinding poverty. External aid in the form of budget support, project grants and debt relief accounts for almost half of the government's annual budget (see Figure 4.1) and official development assistance (ODA) as a percentage of GDP rose from 17.64 per cent (\$257m) in 2003 to 24.98 per cent (\$304m) in 2005.

Aid as a percentage of GDP currently stands at 28.7 per cent (the fourth highest in the world) and per capita aid is estimated at \$62.15 (<http://www.nationmaster.com>). At both the level of state institutions and civil society, aid dependency has eroded the autonomy of internal actors and enhanced the policy leverage of donors.

The direct participation of the UN in the peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone encouraged other external actors to become involved. The United Kingdom, Sierra Leone's former colonial master, has been the most active bilateral donor and actor. The UK ranks as Sierra Leone's top donor, followed by the European Union, UN agencies and the World Bank (see Figure 4.2). The EU, World Bank and the African development Bank (ADB) have provided the bulk of multilateral ODA to Sierra Leone. The focus of the European Union in Sierra Leone has been on infrastructure, good governance and social goods. The European Union contributed \$42m in 2003, \$55M in 2004 and \$86m in 2005 to projects related to

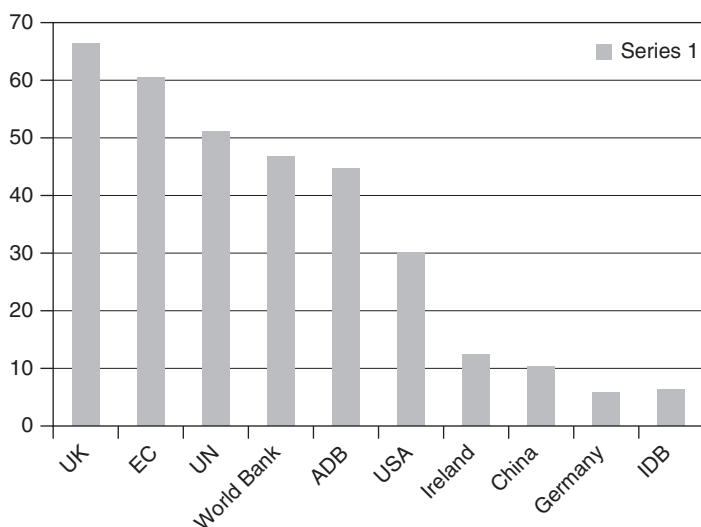


Figure 4.2 Top donors to Sierra Leone 2006

Source: Government of Sierra Leone (2007), DACO, Development Assistance Report 2006.

peacebuilding. Among the infrastructure projects funded are the rehabilitation of the Freetown–Conakry highway and the Pamelap–Kamakwie road. EU support has also gone into improving transparency and accountability in governance, decentralizing social service delivery and fostering a vibrant and autonomous civil society. Financial management, the efficient delivery of social services that can be equitably accessed and poverty reduction are the other priority areas of EU intervention.

The World Bank's Country Assistance Strategy (2006–9) for Sierra Leone builds upon the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy (2005) and existing programs on decentralization, economic reform, infrastructure and social sector development. Nine World Bank projects totaling \$244.6m are currently being implemented: Infrastructure Development Project (\$44m), National Social Action (\$35m), Power and Water (\$35m), Rural Development and Private Sector Development (\$30m), Health Sector Reconstruction and Development (\$28m), Institutional Reform and Capacity Building (\$25m), Basic Education Rehabilitation (\$20m), HIV/AIDS Response (\$15m), and the Bumbuna Environmental Project (\$12.5m). Prior to funding these projects, the World Bank established a multi-donor fund in the amount of \$34m to underwrite the country's disarmament,

demobilization and re-integration (DDR) programme. Some of the World Bank's assistance in the areas of education (SABABU project), health, capacity building and infrastructure development, have been in the form of grants rather than loans.

The infrastructure project of the World Bank seeks to rehabilitate major roads, port and airport facilities and support their efficient management; the National Social Action project continues the Bank's outreach to war-affected communities, with a focus on restoring infrastructure and building local capacity. The objectives of the power and water project include provision of a reliable supply of electricity for the residents of Freetown (the country's capital), improvement of water services Freetown, reforming the management and operations of the Guma Valley Water Company, provision of clean drinking water and basic sanitation for rural residents, and improving solid waste collection in Freetown. The rural development project is supposed to increase agricultural exports, rice and palm oil production and producer incomes while restoration of the basic functions of a health delivery system is the goal of the health sector project. The Institutional and Capacity Building programme seeks to establish a functioning local government and a transparent and accountable public bureaucracy and the goals of the basic education project are to assist the government in establishing education services and improving the capacity of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) to deliver basic education services. Slowing the spread of Aids and mitigating its impact are the main objectives of the HIV/AIDS project while the Bumbuna environmental project is aimed at minimizing the adverse environmental impact of the Bumbuna hydroelectric project, which is finally nearing completion.

Debt relief is an important area of external intervention promoted by international financial institutions like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the African Development Bank (ADB). Both the IMF and the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA) qualified Sierra Leone for debt relief under the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative, which in turn made the country eligible for further relief under the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI). Under the HIPC scheme, Sierra Leone's external debt was reduced by 81.4 per cent or \$994m. Participating in this debt reduction intervention were the IMF (\$125.2m), IDA (\$123.4m), ADB (\$43.4m), other multilateral creditors (\$48.1m), bilateral creditors (\$244.3) and commercial creditors (\$90.8m). Debt relief under both the HIPC and MDRI initiatives eliminated 90 per cent of the country's debt, reducing it

from roughly \$1.2bn to \$110m (ibid.). While debt relief has brought down the country's debt to sustainable levels, and is supposed to create the fiscal space necessary to facilitate the delivery of social services and improve performance, the average person does not stand to benefit because of the mismanagement of public expenditure and the rent-seeking behaviour of political incumbents and top bureaucrats.

The African Development Bank has been involved in Sierra Leone since 1969. Sanctions were imposed on the country from 1985 to 1991 after it defaulted on its financial obligations to the bank. The ADB's current interventions are in the areas of poverty reduction, economic reforms and debt relief. Aid from the ADB in 2006, excluding budget support, totaled \$28m and was distributed as follows: \$10.6m for economic recovery and rehabilitation, \$10.2m for rehabilitation of the health care system, and \$4.6m for the Bumbuna hydroelectric project. Budget support for the government increased the ADB's total aid to Sierra Leone in 2006 to \$44.6m (<http://www.afdb>). As Sierra Leone's largest bilateral donor, the UK has been spending upwards of \$70–80m a year in the country since 2000. The Department for International Development (DFID) is in charge of official British aid to Sierra Leone, a third of which goes into budget support (see Figure 4.3). A ten-year Memorandum of Understanding between DFID and the Sierra Leone government identified the following priority areas of intervention: corruption, reform of central and local government, public expenditure management, media reform, effective regulation of the diamond industry, security sector reform, sound macro-economic management and the development of a poverty reduction strategy. Over the past four years (2004–8), British assistance to Sierra Leone has focused on six main areas:

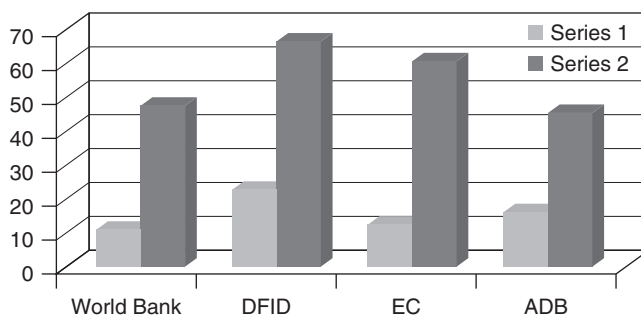


Figure 4.3 Budget support as a proportion of total aid

Source: Government of Sierra Leone, Budget Bureau, 7 March 2007.

governance, security and justice sector reform, health, education, water and sanitation and private sector development.

Promoting good governance has involved financial and technical support for the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and the Auditor General's Office, the civil service and public financial management, decentralization and citizenship monitoring of national and local elections. Enmeshed in governance are issues of security and justice and DFID has been actively involved in reforming, upgrading and funding these sectors. The British development agency has also, in collaboration with the World Bank, supported programmes designed to increase access to sexual, reproductive and child health services, while its budgetary support for the government has increased investment in education and made possible the introduction of free primary schooling. DFID and UNICEF are also funding a Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) programme to the tune of \$64m; a \$10m project to rehabilitate the Freetown water supply system is among the list of projects funded by DFID, with assistance from the World Bank. Lastly, private sector development and growth is an emphasis of DFID funding, with about \$30m assigned to this endeavor whose overall goal is to create a national private sector development strategy, remove administrative barriers to investment, and improve the energy sector.

Next to DFID in terms of level of bilateral financial support is the United States Aid Agency (USAID). Initially, USAID supported the DDR process and the 'Democracy Special Objective', which sought to broaden citizen, local and interest group participation on key national and local issues. The agency has also funded youth and gender initiatives designed to curb violence, safeguard human rights and facilitate community healing. USAID partnered with the National Democratic Institute and the International Foundation of Electoral Systems (IFES) to provide funding and assistance for transparent and credible local (2008) and national (2007) elections, civic and voter education, and increased participation of women and youths in the political process. The enhancement of democratic governance through decentralization and support for local government is the strategic objective of USAID in Sierra Leone for 2008.

Aid flows by sector are indicative of donor priorities in Sierra Leone. Over 50 per cent of external aid to Sierra Leone in the early post-conflict period went to the social sector (see Table 4.1). In 2003, 62.4 per cent of external aid was allocated to food, social and other humanitarian issues and from 2003 to 2005, this figure averaged out at 45.9 per cent. Aid for the agriculture sector has witnessed the sharpest decline, from 8.4 per cent in 2003 to 0.8 per cent in 2005

Table 4.1 Percentage aid flows by sector, 2003–2005

<i>Sector</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2003–2005</i>
Social	25.5	28.2	33.3	29.3
Infrastructure	5.4	8.6	18.5	11.3
Governance and Security	21.6	9.9	12.1	10.2
Agriculture and Natural Resources	8.4	1.7	0.8	1.9
Macroeconomic and Private Sector	20.4	43.4	29.3	30.7
Humanitarian and Food Aid	36.9	8.3	6.0	16.6
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: Development Assistance Coordination Office (DACO), 2003–5.

while the percentage of aid going into the macroeconomic (budget support) and private sector climbed from 20.4 per cent to 30.7 per cent of total aid during the same period. Aid flows to the security and governance sector also dipped from 21.6 per cent in 2003 to 12.1 per cent in 2005. Although infrastructure accounted for 18.5 per cent of total aid in 2005, this sector accounted for the largest spike in the sectoral distribution of aid in the period 2003–5.

Donor objectives are seldom realized by the projects they launch and fund. Oftentimes, the massive bureaucratic shakedown of these funds, coupled with excessive administrative and operational costs, limits the social and institutional impact of donor intervention. This is particularly evident in Sierra Leone where donor-funded reforms have provided new sources of capital accumulation for political incumbents and top bureaucrats.

SECURITY SECTOR REFORM

One of the most glaring and conspicuous areas of institutional breakdown in Sierra Leone was the security sector. The 1992 capture of state power by disgruntled young officers in the national army did not end the rebel insurgency, as renegade soldiers, many of whom had been recruited into the army by ousted APC patrons, switched sides to fight alongside insurgents. This deepened public distrust of the army had spawned the mobilization of local militias such as the Kamajors, who became partners in the counterinsurgency but were often involved in deadly skirmishes with soldiers suspected of moonlighting as rebels. In perhaps the most spectacular admission of the national army's incapacity to provide basic security, the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) outsourced the country's security to mercenaries (Executive Outcomes) who, it turned out, were more effective than the national army in prosecuting the counter-

insurgency. Armed hostilities had not abated when the NPRC handed over power in 1996 to a democratically elected SLPP government led by Ahmad Tejan Kabbah and what remained of the army was not supportive of the democratic transition. Under pressure from the IMF, Kabbah took leave of Executive Outcomes and his government predictably fell in a coup d'état a few weeks later. The shortsightedness and lack of strategic thinking by the IMF and the newly elected government helped produce the catastrophes that followed.

The anti-democratic posture of the Sierra Leone army, especially its pathologies and disconnection from popular sectors, derives from its colonial inheritance and its intense politicization since independence. A total of five coups (1967a, 1967b, 1968 1992, 1997) have succeeded in toppling incumbent governments and each of the last three has turned out to be more catastrophic than the preceding one. The 1997 coup destroyed what was left of the Sierra Leone army and the task of reconstituting the army after the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) was ousted in February 1998 by a Nigeria-led contingent of West African soldiers was first assigned to a Nigerian military officer. Lt. Col. Maxwell Khobe, the Nigerian who led the contingent that flushed the AFRC from power, was appointed head of the army by Kabbah. Khobe decided to re-train renegade soldiers for the new army rather than seek fresh recruits, a decision that did not sit well with the majority of Sierra Leoneans. Events, however, overtook these early preparations as the second attempt by renegade soldiers to overthrow the Kabbah government in January 1999 altered the trajectory of the Sierra Leone conflict. Nigeria pulled out after beating back the assault on Freetown and the UN and the UK became more involved, eventually taking over from Nigeria as guarantors of peace and security in Sierra Leone.

Since 1999, the UK has been leading efforts to reform Sierra Leone's security sector. These activities have mainly targeted the RSLAF, Ministry of Defence, Sierra Leone Police (SLP), Office of National Security (ONS) and the Central Intelligence and Security Unit (CISU). The objective of the UK's reform project is to provide assistance to the Sierra Leone government in developing a coordinated, affordable, depoliticized and sustainable security sector that is capable of meeting the basic security needs of the country. This has meant recruiting and training of the armed forces, restructuring the Ministry of Defence, providing equipment, transport and accommodation for soldiers, establishing transparent management practices and providing ongoing military advice and training. The size of the army has been reduced to 10,300 soldiers and officers, and the Ministry of Defence has ensured that soldiers are paid on time.

In 2002, the British transferred training and advisory responsibilities to the International Military Advisory and Training Team (IMATT) and this began a process of moving international personnel from operational duties to advisory work. Accommodation problems for soldiers, however, persist and a UK-funded housing programme (Operation PEBU) has been criticized for constructing mud barracks in Pujehun district and elsewhere in the country.

DFID has also helped the Office of National Security address some of its shortcomings, develop a security sector strategy and build its capacity for national defence planning and coordination. The CISU was revamped through staff training and improvements in the capacity of the unit to assess intelligence. Parliament passed the National Security and Intelligence Act of 2002 to provide an appropriate legal framework for the operations of the ONS and CISU. The police, like the army, atrophied during the war. Police officers bore the brunt of insurgent fury as many of them, sometimes with their families, were brutally murdered. Police offices were looted and razed to the ground and many areas of the country were not policed at all. The need to establish some kind of police presence throughout the country was, therefore, one of the initial objectives of early efforts to reconstitute the police force. DFID again took the lead in providing funds for training and advice, basic supplies (including uniforms), communications equipment and vehicles. The paramilitary Special Services Division (SSD) was renamed the Operational Support Division (OSD) and, at the request of former President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, the British head of the Commonwealth Police Development Task Force, Kenneth Biddle, was appointed inspector general of police. Biddle handed over the reins of the SLP to a Sierra Leonean, Brima Acha Kamara, in 2004 but not before developing the outlines of an improved senior management team and establishing an internal audit system to promote accountability. Despite donor assistance to the police force, there has been no discernible change in the conduct of police officers. Corruption is still rampant among top police officers and a recent case of cocaine trafficking spotlighted the role of the police in providing cover for clandestine activities that have the potential of threatening state security. Public perception of the police has not changed and the introduction of traffic monitors has not stopped police officers from extorting motorists on the flimsiest of excuses.

JUSTICE, RECONCILIATION AND PEACEBUILDING

The breakdown of the legal system was among the many casualties of state collapse in Sierra Leone. There was hardly any functioning

court system in the provinces at the height of the rebel insurgency as large swaths of the country came under rebel control. Government officials, including judges and magistrates, were frequent targets of rebel brutality. The renegade soldiers who orchestrated the 1997 coup had a list of judges they wanted to eliminate and one of Sierra Leone's finest lawyers, Pierre Boston, was viciously dismembered during the 1999 assault on Freetown. A spate of jailbreaks, starting in 1997, emptied the country's prisons (even former president Momoh escaped confinement during the 1999 assault on Freetown) of some of its worst convicts, including many on death row and those serving long sentences for collaborating with the AFRC junta.

To address the problem of impunity which constituted the hallmark of the Lomé Accord, and as part of the process of establishing the rule of law in Sierra Leone, President Kabbah requested the assistance of the United Nations in establishing a court to address some of the crimes committed in the decade-long insurgency. Both the magnitude of the crimes committed and the country's lack of capacity to conduct trials for such crimes were among the reasons given for requesting this assistance. On 14 August 2002, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1315, which authorized the secretary-general of the UN to negotiate with the Sierra Leone government on matters pertaining to the establishment of this court. Resolution 1315 limited the jurisdiction of the court to cases involving crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious violations of international law as well as crimes under relevant Sierra Leonean law committed within the territory of Sierra Leone. The court operates as an independent hybrid court and is not a subsidiary UN body, as in the case of the Yugoslavia and Rwanda tribunals. The Special Court of Sierra Leone (SCSL) began operations in 2002 and among those indicted are the former warlord and ex-president of Liberia, Charles Taylor, and some of the leaders of the warring factions in the country. Foday Sankoh, the RUF leader, died in prison before he could be arraigned before the court, while the leader of the AFRC, Johnny Paul Koroma, fled the country before he could be arrested and is widely believed to have been eliminated by forces once loyal to Charles Taylor in Liberia. Taylor also executed Sam Bockarie (alias 'Maskita'), another RUF leader indicted by the court. Hingha Norman, the Kamajor leader, perished while in the custody of the Special Court and prior to the conclusion of his trial. With three of the leading indictees dead, the court was reduced to prosecuting individuals who were not very high on the totem pole of insurgent (RUF, AFRC) and counterinsurgent (Kamajor) factions. The court has already returned guilty verdicts in June 2007 on Alex Tamba

Brima, Brima Bazzy Kamara, Santigie Borbor of the AFRC; and in August 2007 on Moinina Fofana and Allieu Kondewa of the Civil Defence Force, allies of the Kabbah administration. The verdict in the trial of Taylor, which is being conducted in The Hague for security reasons, is yet to be concluded.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was the other transitional instrument created after the war. It was a product of the Lomé Peace Accord (1999) between the government of Sierra Leone and the RUF and its main objective was to promote peace and reconciliation through acknowledgement and forgiveness of crimes committed during the country's armed conflict. Among the TRC's principal financial sponsors were the EU, the United States, Norway, Switzerland and Canada. The commission also received technical and administrative assistance from UNAMSIL, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ). The TRC issued a lengthy report in 2004 in which it concluded that 'many of the causes of conflict that prompted thousands of young people to join the war have still not been adequately addressed' (TRC 2004). In addition to providing a historical account of violations of international humanitarian law, the commission recommended strengthening the judiciary and the rule of law, improving citizen access to government information (especially the amounts being spent on social services and amenities), and making public officials disclose their financial interests and assets. The commission also called on the government to incorporate the Rome Statue of the International Criminal Court into Sierra Leone's legal system, establish a special fund for war victims, provide reparations for the survivors of sexual violence and take steps to stop violence against women. Most of the recommendations of the TRC have not been implemented.

Alongside establishing the Special Court and the TRC, re-establishing and strengthening the court system was a major priority for the international community in the early post-conflict period. DFID provided funds for the restoration of court buildings, including the Law Court building in Freetown, and, in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat, provided expertise to investigate and prosecute corruption cases. Most of the contracts to equip and modernize the operations of the judiciary went to business cronies who in many cases failed to fulfill the terms of their contracts. The judiciary remains politicized, understaffed and corrupt. A review of the sector by the World Bank and DFID addressed some of these shortcomings by funding a more comprehensive and integrated

scheme to cover the entire judicial system (courts, law, police, and the prisons).

The target goals of the current Judicial Sector Reform Strategy and Investment Plan (2008–2010) are to reduce crime and the fear of crime; improve satisfaction levels with local courts, paramount chiefs and local chiefs; expedite the adjudication of criminal and civil cases; and improve confidence in human rights and accountability. The achievement of these goals is supposed to yield safer communities, better access to justice and improvements in justice delivery. Building safer communities has focused on improving the investigative capacity of the police, strengthening the performance and supervision of chiefdom police units and promoting local community policing. The goal of making justice more accessible to the community is predicated on strengthening local courts, developing appropriate procedures for handling cases involving juveniles, and clearing backlogs and delays in criminal and civil cases. Strengthening the rule of law prioritizes issues of corruption and maladministration, human rights and enhancing the role and capacity of the office of the Ombudsman (GoSL 2007).

Despite donor intervention, corruption is still rampant in the justice sector. Judges are in the habit of handing down light sentences for well-connected defendants and, until recently, successive attorney generals have resisted efforts by the Anti-Corruption Commission to prosecute high profile cases involving government ministers and top civil servants. The government of Ernest Koroma's All People's Congress strengthened the power of the Anti-Corruption Commission, including power not only to investigate corruption and malfeasance in public office, but also to prosecute suspects. Perhaps most damaging to the morale of the judiciary is the creation of a three-tier salary structure for judges: those paid by DFID supported the Justice Sector Development Project (Le30 million a month or \$10,000); those partially paid by donor countries (Le12 million or roughly \$4,000); and the rest who earn Le3m (\$1,000) a month. This salary structure has created a situation in which Commonwealth-appointed junior judges receive ten times the salary of senior judges.

In sum, notwithstanding the efforts of donors to improve the delivery of justice in Sierra Leone, the judiciary remains a bastion of corruption. The public continues to have a very negative image of the judiciary, which is not good for the promotion of the rule of law. The government continues to resort to the Public Order Act (1965) as a tool to harass and victimize journalists and other critics. The traditional justice sector remains mired in corruption, with litigants

spending years and large amounts of money seeking justice. As in the other areas of intervention, donor funds have done more to improve the material lot of judicial personnel than promote justice and the rule of law.

POVERTY REDUCTION AND SOCIAL SERVICE DELIVERY

Bad governance and mass deprivation were the underlying causes of armed conflict in Sierra Leone. Almost a decade after the cessation of armed hostilities, Sierra Leone still finds itself at the bottom of the world's development rankings. It has one of the most lopsided and polarized class structure in the world, with the poorest 10 per cent of the population accounting for 0.5 per cent of national income (the worst in the world) as compared to 43.6 per cent for the richest 10 per cent (11th in the world); the poorest 20 per cent makes a paltry 1.1 per cent of national income while the richest 20 per cent account for 63.4 per cent of national income (6th in the world). 70 per cent of the population survives below the national poverty line and 26 per cent live in extreme poverty. Average life expectancy is 41.8 years, child mortality is 286 per 1,000 live births (the worst in the world), 34.8 per cent of the population are literate and 43 per cent lack access to clean drinking water. One out of every eight women die in childbirth (the worst in the world) and 46 per cent of child deaths are caused by malnutrition. Sierra Leone's Human Poverty Index rating is currently 51.7 per cent, compared to, for example, 3.0 per cent for Barbados (UNDP 2007). Poverty is heavily concentrated in the rural areas where 79 per cent of the population live below the poverty line compared to 15 per cent in Freetown, the country's capital (this figure, however, grossly underestimates the prevalence of hunger and lack of food security among urban residents).

Public perception that donor funds intended to alleviate the suffering of the average Sierra Leonean had been systematically misappropriated was a major factor behind the SLPP's defeat in the 2007 elections. Nothing significant was done to address social needs and the few projects launched by the National Commission for Social Action (NACSA) and the Ministry of Education were riddled with corruption, thus defeating their intended purpose. Education is a major area of donor support, and the SABABU project, which was launched by the former SLPP government to rehabilitate the country's education infrastructure, was supposed to construct and rehabilitate schools, equip them with furniture and textbooks, provide water

and sanitation facilities, train teachers and assist in building the capacity of the Ministry of Education. This project never lived up to its lofty billing and was dogged from its inception by allegations of malfeasance (interviews with the former ACC commissioned by the author in Freetown, February 2006).

Poverty reduction is one of the stated goals of peacebuilding in Sierra Leone. Donor intervention in poverty reduction has emphasized human development strategies that seek to enlarge the capabilities of individuals to lead full, productive lives. This involves improving access to health care, good nutrition, education, clean drinking water and expanding choices for individuals in the economy and in politics. To address problems of entrenched poverty in Sierra Leone, the government was instructed to formulate a Poverty Reduction Strategy, which was approved by the IMF and World Bank in 2005 as a framework for reducing poverty in the country. The three pillars – good governance, security and peacebuilding; pro-poor sustainable economic growth; human development – of the country's poverty reduction strategy are closely aligned with the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, providing universal primary education, promoting gender equality, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability and developing global partnerships for development. Poverty reduction assistance from donors has also taken the form of budget support to pay public sector workers and deliver social services.

The provision of clean drinking water and electricity is another priority area of donor intervention. The Sierra Leone Water Company (SALWACO) received donor funds to improve water supply in Freetown but failed to deliver on most of the projects for which these funds were disbursed. Corrupt ministers and bureaucrats have also hijacked the provision of electricity and the Bumbuna hydroelectric project, which has taken over thirty years to complete, is a monument to the unrelenting rapacity of successive governments in Sierra Leone. DFID, the World Bank and the ADB have recently provided additional funding, which has enabled the Bumbuna power station to commence supplying electricity to the capital. Salini Construction Company (SALCOST), an Italian company in charge of the Bumbuna project, has successfully completed some road projects (Bo–Taima, Masiaka–Makeni) and is currently working on the Masiaka–Taima road. The Chinese are re-paving the Bo–Kenema road and this represents their first involvement in a road project other than building the Mange Bridge in the north during the 1970s.

The failure of external intervention to lift post-conflict Sierra Leone out of poverty can be attributed to gross mismanagement of donor resources by political incumbents, top bureaucrats and their associates. Donors have contributed large sums to social provisioning but there is very little to show for this assistance. Funds earmarked for poverty alleviation, education, health and infrastructural development have done more to improve the material lot of politicians (members of parliament double as contractors) than the living conditions of the people. The plunder of donor funds by political incumbents since the end of the war is spectacularly reminiscent of the discredited governance practices that caused the war.

When all is said and done, the linkage between poverty reduction, democratic consolidation and peacebuilding cannot be overstated. Seymour Martin Lipset noted in a seminal essay that 'the more well-to-do a nation, the greater the chances that it will sustain democracy' (Lipset 1959: 56). Democratic breakdowns and authoritarian reversals are more likely to occur under conditions of persistent widespread poverty than in cases of rising prosperity. This explains why poor democracies are extremely fragile and why socio-economic performance is critical to their survival. Contrary to Samuel Huntington's thesis that rapid economic growth destabilizes democracies, Adam Przeworski et al., among others, have argued that 'rapid economic growth is not destabilizing for democracies (or for dictatorships)' and that fragile 'democracies are more likely to survive when they grow faster ... than when they grow slower' (Przeworski et al. 1996: 42). Sierra Leone's economy has been growing at an average rate of 6 per cent since 2002 but there has been no corresponding evidence of an improvement in the living conditions of its people. Economic growth that does not result in the amelioration of chronic poverty is not likely to promote democracy.

Shiraz Dossa indicts the promotion of neo-liberal orthodoxy as nothing short of the resuscitation of the 'white man's burden' or its 'civilizing mission' as development. According to this view:

It is striking that the development of the South became their priority just as the colonizers were leaving for home. Such passion was not in evidence during colonial rule. The 'civilizing mission' was recast as development, although its implicit racism was never jettisoned. In Europe's colonial repertoire, development was the new ace. (Dossa 2007: 887)

Thomas Pogge echoes this sentiment in noting that the 'affluent countries, in collaboration with the so-called elites of the developing

countries, are harming the global poor' by imposing 'a global institutional order that is manifestly and grievously unjust' (Pogge 2004: 390) Whether development, as concocted by foreign experts, represents a cure or a disease is ultimately answerable in terms of its impact on the human condition. In Sierra Leone and much of sub-Saharan Africa, 'development' has deepened poverty, increased inequalities, exacerbated social tensions and eroded state autonomy. Irrespective of developmental model, democracies that fail to provide basic welfare and eliminate mass poverty are not sustainable.

GOVERNANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Interventions in the area of governance have been geared towards promoting democracy at both national and local levels, building institutional capacity, decentralizing public functions and combating corruption. Donor support for the National Electoral Commission (NEC) and civil society organizations was critical to the democratic outcomes of the 2007 and 2002 elections. Sierra Leone has not organized free and fair elections on its own since 1967 and the 2002 and 2007 elections could not have taken place without donor support. That the incumbent SLPP, which won the 2002 elections in a landslide, lost the 2007 elections is testimony to the improved democratic quality of post-conflict elections. By changing its government through the ballot box, albeit for the first time, Sierra Leone confirmed its status as an electoral democracy but whether it can remain so without donor assistance, or mature into a liberal or social democracy, is doubtful and uncertain.

Presidential and parliamentary elections in 2002 and 2007 were followed by donor-funded local elections in 2004 and 2008, respectively. The 2004 Freetown municipal elections were won by the APC and served as early warning that the SLPP was rapidly losing support in the western area. The high number of unopposed candidates (mostly in the north) in the 2008 local elections has rekindled fears that the country may be sliding back into the violence and intimidation that characterized past elections. Back then, the APC stole elections by abducting opposition candidates and preventing them from filing their nomination papers, thus paving the way for the 'unopposed' election of its own candidates. Intolerance of political opposition by APC leaders may threaten the democratic quality of future local and national elections. An ominous development in the 2008 elections saw the banishment of an opposition candidate from his northern district by APC diehards offended by his identification with a party

other than their own. Such actions are painfully reminiscent of the intimidation and violence that excluded many Sierra Leoneans from political participation in the past, and sowed the seeds of armed rebellion as a means of changing the government.

Reconstructing local governance in the post-conflict period has emphasized decentralization and reform of local government structures. The Decentralization Secretariat, which is primarily funded by the World Bank, operates independently of the Ministry of Local Governance (where its offices are located) and commands superior resources (offices, equipment, emoluments, etc.) than the local governance ministry. As an example of a parallel Project Implementation Unit, the Decentralization Secretariat (the same holds for the Aids Secretariat and the Governance Reform Secretariat) may have actually weakened the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Local Governance – there is very little coordination between the secretariat and ministry, and staff of the secretariat are answerable to World Bank officials rather than to officials at the ministry. It is largely true that project implementation through existing structures has often resulted in massive corruption but it is not clear whether creating parallel agencies is the answer. Francis Fukuyama captures this predicament in his observation that donors often seem to be more interested in delivering social services than in creating local institutional capacities to deliver them (2005: 39). The displacement of institutional capacity by outside donors contradicts the capacity-building rhetoric of some of their interventions.

Decentralization has increased the stakes in the competition for political power at the local level but this has not led to any significant improvement in the performance of local institutions. While the resurrection of district councils (they were defunct for the previous thirty years) may have provided additional outlets for political representation and participation at the local level, district councillors, chiefs, treasury clerks and other local officials are members of competing patronage networks that feed from the same patrimonial trough. District councils are elected and are empowered to raise local taxes but they do not provide the social services they are supposed to deliver. Reviving these councils has in many cases resulted not in an improvement of local governance but in the decentralization of bureaucratic expropriation rent-seeking opportunities.

Corruption, mismanagement and abuse of power were already staples of local governance prior to the war. As symbols of traditional authority and custodians of the land, the institution of chieftaincy has a long history of working against the interests of local residents. Chiefs became agents of the colonial state and post-colonial

governments, often acting against the interests of their people, which triggered off insurrections against them in the 1950s in the Northern Province. Corruption of the chieftaincy system worsened after independence as successive governments sought to politicize the institution and deprive it of autonomy. Chiefs became clients of political incumbents and many were killed or forced to flee their chiefdoms during the armed conflict. Almost half of today's chiefs were elected after 2002.

The institution of chieftaincy is still revered 'up country' even though it has not functioned in the interests of local residents since the colonial era. To be eligible for election as a paramount chief, an individual must be a member of a hereditary ruling house, a provision that severely limits the pool of competent aspirants. Conflicts among ruling houses have occasionally taken deadly turns and some of the fighting in the rural areas during the early stages of the war involved score-settling reprisals by members of opposing ruling houses. Since chiefs are elected for life and exercise real power at the local level, the office of chieftaincy should not be restricted to members of ruling houses; maintaining this anti-democratic attribute neither advances the cause of democracy nor does it help make chiefs accountable to their people. Paul Richards, for example, thinks it is a bad idea to restore the institution of chieftaincy because the abuses of chiefs were among the factors that led to the war (Richards 2005). But chieftaincy, like the central institutions of the state, can be reformed; what has to be avoided is the restoration of public and local institutions in their previous forms, which is exactly what is happening in post-conflict Sierra Leone. Given the complementary interests and patronage networks that link local elites with those at the centre, it is not surprising that national and local institutions of rule feed off each other. Local structures cannot be expected to perform any better than national institutions and decentralization has so far failed to improve local governance and the delivery of social services.

Besides promoting democratization, decentralization and local governance reform, external donors have singled out corruption as a key governance problem that must be tackled in post-conflict Sierra Leone. The British government took the lead in helping the Sierra Leone government establish an Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC). This commission was supposed to investigate cases of corruption involving public officials and make recommendations regarding their prosecution to the attorney general and minister of justice. Valentine Collier, the first ACC commissioner, claims he was subjected to constant interference from top officials of the government and the civil service. Collier was later relieved of his

position on the grounds that the Anti-Corruption Commissioner no longer enjoyed the support of parliament.

The Sierra Leone government signed an Improved Governance and Accountability Pact (IGAP) with donors (DFID, ADB, EC and the World Bank) in July 2006. Under the terms of this agreement, donors were to re-commit themselves to increasing quality assistance to the country and the government in return was to take decisive steps in the area of governance reform – corruption, transparency and financial management, civil service, service delivery and elections. Whether the government is capable of meeting its own end of this agreement is open to question, but if the early actions of the current government are in any way indicative of what to expect, an improvement in governance is not likely in Sierra Leone's immediate future.

CONCLUSION

While external intervention is credited for the peace that is currently holding in Sierra Leone, building peace is a far more difficult undertaking than ending a war or demobilizing combatants. Ending the war provided Sierra Leoneans the respite needed to begin putting their lives back together, but the failure to address the inequities and abuses that stoked the country's armed conflict is a recipe for disaster. The problem, as Joseph Hanlon observes, is not just that 'the same old men who were responsible for the war are still in power'; what is also disconcerting is that the international community, especially international financial institutions like the IMF who prioritize the correction of macroeconomic imbalances over social policy, may be unwittingly contributing to recreating the conditions that led to armed conflict in Sierra Leone (Hanlon 2005). The domestic political class and the IMF were the two primary producers of human misery in Sierra Leone prior to the war and this has not changed in the post-conflict period. Both domestic and external factors that contributed to the war have not gone away and are likely to threaten the country's fragile peace especially after donor resources dry up and international oversight weakens.

Part of the problem is that the state is being restored in its previous form rather than transformed. Transforming the state requires a reconfiguration of political authority with an emphasis on decoupling state and government, distancing public power from private wealth, combating official corruption and promoting mass welfare. Not only does corruption incubate mass poverty and alienate the

public, it also threatens the country's fragile peace and security. All four sectors – governance, security, justice and social – targeted for reform by the international community are plagued by rampant official corruption and institutional capacity cannot be built when the resources needed to do so are siphoned-off by politicians and bureaucrats. Corruption not only derails the building of institutional capacity, it also negatively impacts the delivery of social services and directly threatens national security. The recent involvement of a cabinet minister and his brother in cocaine smuggling demonstrates the deep-seated criminality of elements of Sierra Leone's political class. In the final analysis, poverty eradication and improved governance are the surest means of consolidating Sierra Leone's fragile peace. A reconfiguration of state power and a re-orientation of development strategy is required if Sierra Leone is to break out of poverty and align its developmental goals with the needs, interests and aspirations of its people rather than with global capital. The political class bears the greatest responsibility for Sierra Leone's developmental impasse, not to mention the war and the state's functional retreat. Peace cannot be consolidated until corruption is brought under control, mass poverty eliminated and state power is exercised in the interest of the people.



Part II



5

The Role of External Actors in Sierra Leone's Security Reform

Osman Gbla

INTRODUCTION

Sierra Leone fits in very well in the current discourse on the role of external actors in post-war reconstruction, including security sector reform, especially in the context of post-Cold War international peacebuilding efforts in Africa. The country offers the appropriate case study of a West African state not only in transition from war to peace but also from authoritarian single-party and military dictatorship to multiparty democracy. As such, the realities of authoritarian and predatory politics as well as those of the legacies of war should guide post-conflict international peacebuilding initiatives, especially those of international actors. Oppressive and predatory rule, especially during single party and military dictatorship in the country, impacted negatively on the country's security forces by fostering the de-institutionalization of the security forces and an increase in violence (Gbla 2006: 79). This was the result of the politicization of the security forces coupled with inadequate resource provision for their operations, rampant corruption and a spate of coups. These and many other developments undermined the efficiency and professionalism of the national security agencies (Fayemi 2004).

The war that broke out in 1991 also seriously affected the security forces, especially the armed forces and the police, by disrupting the command structure and implanting a deep-seated mistrust in the minds of the people. As the war continued, for example, the conditions of the armed forces at the war front deteriorated largely because of inadequate support from the government. At the time, people also began to suspect that rogue elements in the army were joining forces with the rebels (sobels). This made the people distrustful of both the army and the rebels and they began to organize themselves into self-defence groups, the Civil Defence Forces (CDF), based on established hunting societies, in order to defend themselves against the army and the rebels. The confrontation between the CDF and army left behind a deep-seated mistrust of the army by the people.

Furthermore, Sierra Leone witnessed the unprecedented involvement of various external actors including bilateral, multilateral and sub-regional organizations in its post-war reconstruction programme. The country at one time had the largest number of UN peacekeepers in the world, numbering about 17,500. The withdrawal of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) peacekeepers in December 2005 saw it replaced with the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL). Prior to the active involvement of the United Nations and the British, the forces of the Nigerian-led Economic Community of West African States Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) were a significant presence (Fayemi 2004). Countries like Guinea and the Gambia in the West African sub-region were also visible in Sierra Leone's search for peace. Furthermore, in 2007, the international community contributed about \$18 million for the first round of the country's presidential and parliamentary elections. This unprecedented international interest in Sierra Leone's post-war reconstruction raises the issues of national ownership, sustainability of post-war reconstruction initiatives as well as the efficacy of the international community in its attempts at peacebuilding.

This background provides an appropriate starting point for analysing the role of the international community in peacebuilding in Africa in the context of post-Cold War international interventionism, especially with the initial call for African solutions to African problems. Against the backdrop of increasing international neglect of Africa in the post-Cold War era with regard to conflict resolution and management in particular, there have been calls for serious African efforts to manage and resolve these conflicts. Much earlier, in 1967, the Kenyan political scientist Ali Mazrui observed that, 'the peace of Africa is to be assured by the exertions of Africans themselves' (quoted in Adebajo 2002: 1). Similarly, Deng observed: 'Africans are recognizing that the world does not care much about them and that they must take their destinies into their own hands' (ibid.). Those urging for African involvement in maintaining peace and stability is concomitant with the corresponding desire of Western powers to avoid deploying their own men to peacekeeping operations in Africa. Led by the United States, the Security Council shamefully failed to act decisively in the clear case of genocide against 800,000 Rwandans in Rwanda between April and June 1994, despite having a UN military presence on the ground (ibid.).

The foregoing discussion then begs the question why is there an unprecedented interest by the international community in peacebuilding efforts, especially in security sector reconstruction/

reform, in African countries emerging from conflict in the post-Cold War era? Different scholars and practitioners of peacebuilding have provided various answers to this question. For scholars like Cooper and Pugh, the increasing interest in the security of poor states by members of the international community is due to their realization that personal security is a key concern of the poor in weak states. Cooper also believes that repressive or corrupt security structures can undermine the stability so crucial to maximizing the benefit of aid programmes (2004: 2). This reasoning reflects Ebo's assertion that a reformed security sector, efficiently and democratically governed and based on transparency and accountability, is a major tool for conflict prevention and sustainable human development (Ebo 2006: 71).

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL ISSUES OF SECURITY SECTOR REFORM/RECONSTRUCTION

In spite of the fact that post-war security sector reform (SSR) programmes are on-going or are in the process of being put in place in many African countries including Sierra Leone, Ghana, Nigeria and Lesotho, there is generally a misconception in most of these countries about the definitions of the security sector itself and security sector reform. The sector is often defined in a narrow sense to refer to the armed forces, the police, paramilitary and prisons. Institutions like parliament, the judiciary and civil society organizations are usually excluded in the security sector categorization. Furthermore, there is very little time and money invested in research aimed at creating a clear understanding of the configuration of the security sector as well as security sector reform. The search for a clear understanding of the security sector and its reform programme in Sierra Leone is one major objective of this chapter. Security sector reform as a publicly used concept is relatively new, made more pronounced and popular to a larger audience by Clare Short in 1998, the first secretary of state for DFID (Ball 1998). However, major elements of this concept, including reform of the defence forces, improvement in the democratic oversight of the armed forces and police reform, are in fact not that new.

Many scholars have provided various definitions of the security sector (Ball 1998; Hendrickson 1999; and Chuter 2000). One of the narrowest definitions of the security sector puts a premium on the provision of public security (Brzoska et al. 2008: 6). In this context it encompasses all actors and agencies authorized to threaten or to use violence in order to protect the state, its citizens or its external

environment. In its broadest context, the security sector refers to all those institutions that are responsible for protecting the state and the communities within it (*ibid.*). In this sense, it includes not only the formal security forces like the armed forces, police, and intelligence and paramilitary organizations but also civil institutions and non-armed state formations like parliament, the judiciary, the Ministry of Finance, the ombudsmen and civil society groups. This broader context also refers to those institutions entrusted with the protection of the state and its citizens – the military, paramilitary forces and intelligence services – and the civil authorities mandated to manage and control these agencies – parliament and civil society organizations and justice and law enforcement institutions – the judiciary, justice ministry, police and penal services, human rights commissions and ombudsmen, customary and traditional justice systems. Currently, non-statutory security forces can also be included – liberation armies, private security companies, guerrilla armies and ethnic militias. Indeed, given the prevalence of private and non-statutory actors in an increasing number of states, forces such as guerrilla and liberation armies, non-state paramilitary organizations, as well as private military and security companies, have to be considered as part of the *de facto* security sector or at least as important actors in shaping security sector governance (Ebo 2006). It is this broader definition of the security sector that this chapter will use in its analysis.

In Sierra Leone, the security sector reviewed includes the following categories: the armed forces, police, the Office of National Security (ONS), prisons, fire force, immigration and the Ministry of Justice (GoSL 2004). This definition excludes parliament and civil society groups, two major security institutions. The 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone clearly states that: ‘the security, peace and welfare of the people of Sierra Leone shall be the primary responsibility of government entrusted to the Armed Forces, the Police, public officers and all security agents to protect and safeguard the people of Sierra Leone’ (1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone Act No 6, Section 5(1)). Against this background, the security sector in Sierra Leone is all-encompassing, including all of those persons and institutions involved in protecting the state of Sierra Leone and the communities within it.

Security sector reform is usually viewed in the limited sense of the training and restructuring of uniformed security institutions such as the armed forces, police and the paramilitary. Efforts to capacitate civil oversight institutions like parliament and civil society are usually de-emphasized in this narrow understanding of security sector reform (Ebo 2007). This limited view obfuscates a clear

understanding of the main features of security sector reform, so this chapter situates it in the broadest perspective of governance. In this context, security sector reform includes efforts not only to retrain and restructure the formal security institutions but to also make sure that security institutions are accountable to the citizens under a democratic process. Security sector reform therefore requires a great deal of effort in empowering or enabling parliament and civil society groups to provide control or oversight functions over the security forces. The extended version of SSR emphasizes good governance, including transparent, accessible, accountable, efficient, equitable, checked and democratic input, output and process. The concept covers all institutions and actors that determine, implement or control the provision of public security or are able to undermine it (Brzoska et al. 2008). Heiner (2004) expresses this perspective in asserting that the objective of SSR is to provide security within the state in an effective and efficient manner, and in the framework of democratic civilian control. Kofi Annan, the former UN secretary-general, in an address to the World Bank staff in October 1999, echoed this view in making a strong case for security sector reform. Referring to good governance, Annan noted that another very important aspect is the reform of public services including the security sector, which should be subject to the same standards of efficiency, equity and accountability as any other service.

In this chapter, security sector reform is analysed within the context of post-conflict countries, especially those reconstruction initiatives that are under strong international tutelage (Brzoska et al. 2008). In such a context, the security sector is often characterized by the politicization, ethnicization and corruption of the security services, excessive military spending, a lack of professionalism, poor oversight and inefficient allocation of resources. As such, there is not only a need to restructure and capacitate the uniformed security institutions but to also enhance the capacity of oversight institutions and mend the broken relationship between civilians and the security forces. Two key principles are followed in this type of SSR: first, re-establishing security forces which are able to provide public security in an effective and efficient manner; and, second, in a framework of democratic, civilian control. What differentiates SSR in a post-conflict context from other contexts is the fact that it has to deal with the specific legacy of past conflict. This may encompass oversized armed forces, surplus weapons that need to be withdrawn, anti-personnel landmines that need to be cleared and large numbers of perpetrators that need to be prosecuted (*ibid.*). What is also noticeable in post-conflict SSR is the increasing need for

the immediate provision of public security, which may undermine or at least delay the tackling of longer-term issues of security sector governance. There is also the tension between external imposition and local ownership in post-conflict SSR. This is the case because in the immediate post-conflict period, international actors mostly provide physical security while efforts are made to rebuild local capacity. In this regard, the chapter argues that if the ongoing SSR programme in Sierra Leone is externally driven, with very little local input, then its sustainability and viability is in doubt. This view squares up neatly with Ball's (1998) assertion that: 'For security sector reform to take root it must be compatible with each country's particular circumstances and traditions.'

In considering the objectives of security sector reform in post-conflict contexts, those most frequently debated include: cost reduction through downsizing and its contribution to conflict prevention and resolution (Brzoska 2003: 3). No wonder, demobilization, small arms control and reintegration programmes are among the activities that most donors favour in the immediate post-war environment. This perspective presents SSR in the limited sense of capacitating the uniformed security forces, and critics have viewed this priority intervention as undermining the longer-term need for building strong oversight mechanisms for civilian democratic control of the security forces (Gbla 2006). Critics also point to the aspect of international actors ignoring the need for efforts aimed at addressing the underlying causes of insecurity in developing countries (Fayemi 200). Furthermore, the critics believe that SSR is married to an optimistic conception of the possibility for external manipulation of political and social forces, and that in most of its formulations it leaves out the requirements for major changes in the industrialized countries, such as an overhaul of their arms export policies (Cooper and Pugh 2002). For the proponents of the increased role of external actors in security sector reform programmes in post-conflict contexts, there is the general belief that, as countries emerge from the throes of war with weak economic and financial bases, there is a need for the resources, drive and capacities of external actors. They further believe that a reformed security sector spearheaded by sustained external intervention would address many concerns of potential investors and thus help to rebuild the economy (*ibid.*).

It is important to note that political interference in the armed forces had upset the command structure and raised questions about the loyalty of the officer corp. (For the factors leading to the war, see Chapter 1.) In 1992, the Strasser regime followed in the footsteps of the RUF by recruiting 'lumpen' elements from the urban

areas into the army, who soon showed their disloyalty by becoming 'sobels'. By the outbreak of the war, the command structure of the army had broken down and led to a loss of confidence in the armed forces. This forced civilian President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah to disband the army and become dependent on the Kamajor-led Civil Defence Forces for security. In turn, the army accused the government of giving preferential treatment to the CDF and further alleged that the growth of the CDF was an attempt to transform an ethnic organization (the Kamajors) into a national army. They cited the appointment of Chief Sam Hinga Norman, the head of the CDF, as deputy minister of defence as evidence of the strong political connection of the militia. The soldiers who seized power in May 1997 cited the privileged position accorded to the Kamajors as one of the major reasons for their action (Zack-Williams 1997). This particular justification needs further qualification as the actions of the coup-makers pointed to a desperate quest for political power and lawlessness. Thus, the coup did not only bring to the fore the widening rift between civilians and the armed forces but also the status of civil defence forces under the constitution of the state, which did not make provisions for their existence.

Also crucial in the discussion of the background to Sierra Leone's security sector reform programme (SSRP) is the regional dimension of the process. Firstly, as a country in a conflict-ridden Mano River Union sub-region, its SSRP must be analysed within a regional context in order to assess its prospects for sustainable peace and democracy. Like in any other sub-region in conflict, many of the fighters (both in the armed forces and the dissident groups that were used in the destabilization of Sierra Leone) were from neighbouring states like Liberia, Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire, and were taking advantage of common porous borders (Fayemi 2004). Secondly, most of the security forces in these West African states are noted for being in-disciplined, ill-motivated and poorly-equipped, with a very low capacity to protect citizens as well as common borders. Thirdly, some of the forces in the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), who were at the forefront of bringing peace and stability to both Liberia and Sierra Leone, were also culpable in acts of looting and human rights abuses. Against this background, a security sector reform programme in Sierra Leone could only be meaningful if it was supported by a regional approach that focussed attention on reforming the security forces of neighbouring states to ensure border security, to prevent the flow of small arms and to check the free movement of armed groups.

The involvement of international actors in Sierra Leone's post-war reconstruction in general, and security sector reform in particular, was unprecedented. In 1997, soldiers from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) entered the country in an attempt to enforce peace. Two years later the United Nations took over, deploying some 17,500 peacekeepers drawn from various countries. The British presence was very visible, especially with regard to restructuring the security forces, including the police and the military. Other international actors that played a role, albeit limited, in SSR included Canada, which participated in the International Military Advisory Training Team (IMATT), the UN Civilian Police (UNCIVPOL) and the World Bank. The involvement of these external actors in the country's post-war reconstruction, especially in security sector reform, was informed by a number of internal and external developments. Externally, the post-Cold War era witnessed an increasing interest by international development partners in security matters in developing countries. This interest was largely informed by their acknowledgement of the importance of linking development and security concerns. They particularly emphasized the crucial role that a well-governed, efficient security sector played in the provision of an atmosphere conducive for development (Heiner 2004). These partners also recognized the fact that, on the contrary, a poorly managed security sector can act as a spoiler of development efforts. One important criticism of the role of external actors in security sector reform in developing countries is the fact that whilst they acknowledge the need to reform security and governance institutions in recipient states, very little is done to address the problems related to the role of external actors in triggering insecurity in recipient states.

SECURITY SECTOR REFORM IN SIERRA LEONE – ANALYSIS OF PROCESSES AND MAJOR ACTORS

Security sector reform features prominently in Sierra Leone's peace support/reconstruction programme. The building of a strong national security apparatus is believed to be a deterrent against a relapse into conflict as well as a strategy to realize the vision of a peaceful, prosperous and progressive society (*Sierra Leone Vision 2025* 2003: 58). The inability of the government to halt the advance of the rebels during the war was largely attributed to the weaknesses inherent in the country's security sector. A cross-section of Sierra Leoneans therefore believed that any post-war recovery programme had to emphasize the need for putting in place a strong and effective security

system that was capable of protecting the nation and its people and for preventing the recurrence of conflict. These security sector reform concerns of the country squared up neatly with DFID's security sector interventions, which put a premium on efforts to support civilian control through disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, and military training initiatives.

Various peace agreements, government policies, development plans and international initiatives in Sierra Leone have over the years articulated the need for prioritizing SSR, all of which point to the fragility of the state. Articles 4 and 6 of the Abidjan Peace Accord of 1996 clearly spelt out that there should be disarmament and a return to barracks of all those units of the army not required for formal security duties (Abidjan Accord 1996). The implementation of this agreement was largely stymied by the intransigence of the RUF. Its leader, Foday Sankoh, for example, refused to allow the deployment of a 720-member UN peacekeeping force as provided by the agreement. The RUF members also objected to the SSRP directed at the army, under Article XVII of the Lomé Peace Accord signed between the government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) and RUF/SL on the 7 July 1999, which called for:

The restructuring, composition and training of the new Sierra Leone armed forces [which] will be carried out by the Government with a view to creating truly national armed forces, bearing loyalty solely to the State of Sierra Leone, and able and willing to perform their constitutional role. (Lomé Accord 1999)

The country's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) also emphasized the crucial role of a vibrant security sector in efforts to reduce poverty. Pillar I of the PRSP entitled 'Peace, Security and Governance' clearly states that a secure, peaceful and stable environment can lead to several positive outcomes, which could facilitate the implementation of anti-poverty programmes with maximum benefits to the poor (GoSL 2001). Sierra Leone is therefore noted for clearly recognizing the link between security and development by including security as a key pillar of its PRSP.

The Security Sector Review Report launched by former president Ahmed Tejan Kabbah in 2005 identified threats facing Sierra Leone and implications for its security policy that included bad governance, corruption, regional instability, lack of political will, weak and uncoordinated security system, social injustice and sub-regional insecurity. Accordingly, the security sector review for the country's PRSP had as its major objective the development of a national

security system for Sierra Leone that will ensure national recovery and the reduction of poverty in a safe, secure environment. It envisions a national security environment with well-trained, well-equipped and highly motivated security forces (GoSL 2005).

In his State Opening of Parliament Address on 22 May 1998, President Kabbah also reiterated his commitment to improving the security of the state. He remarked: 'I take the security of the country as my number one priority and intend to pursue this objective with all necessary vigour' (GoSL 1998). This pronouncement coming from the president, who also doubles as commander-in-chief of the armed forces and minister of defence, was supposed to be indicative of a commitment to security sector reform at the highest political level. President Kabba made several statements giving clear indication of a new approach to the conceptualization of security. This represented a significant departure from the previous exclusive and oppressive perceptions of security. The extent to which this presidential pronouncement has been translated into reality will be assessed in subsequent sections of this chapter.

The restoration of the democratically elected government of Kabbah in 1998 witnessed strong national and international resolves to promote security sector reform in Sierra Leone. Internationally, the process is being supported mainly by the United Kingdom through DFID, the UK-MOD, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the British-led IMATT. The experiences of other African countries like South Africa have also been very helpful. ECOMOG and UNAMSIL are also visible in the security sector reform process in the country. The main security sectors targeted for the reform process are the armed forces, police, justice, parliament and intelligence. The British were particularly interested in maintaining a stable democratic government by restoring all its functional machinery and social institutions.

Government and its international partners, especially DFID, were therefore poised to develop a coordinated national security strategy. As such, steps were taken to develop a strategy for Sierra Leone under the Sierra Leone Security Programme. The main aim of the programme was to establish the basis for a comprehensive national security policy that would provide an overarching framework for the main security agencies. The outcome of these efforts was the publication of the Sierra Leone National Security Paper in February 2000. The paper defines national security from a broad perspective and sets the context for the formulation of a policy by taking into consideration the main issues that had contributed to the deplorable states of the security forces in the past. The paper also considered

threats to national security, both external and internal. It also provided an analysis of the requirements in general terms for future security forces and agencies. The Security Sector Review Programme (SSRP) commissioned by President Kabbah was a response to the imperative for reassessing the security needs of post-war Sierra Leone and the future stability of the country. In setting the process in motion, the president directed the National Security Coordinating Group (NSCG) to coordinate the process under the chairmanship of the vice-president as chairman of the SSRC.

The SSRC produced a Security Policy Framework document to chart, direct and inform the review process and to develop ultimately a new national security policy. A secretariat drawn from the Office of National Security (ONS) under the leadership of the National Security Coordinator was mandated to manage the review process through a working group representing key stakeholders from government ministries, departments, agencies, academia, civil society and other representatives from Freetown and the provinces. In order to include as wide a selection as possible of people's opinions and experiences, wide ranging consultations were held among a variety of stakeholders through training workshops, focus group discussions, administration of questionnaires, as well as studying best practices from other countries. The methodology adopted in this exercise was therefore predominantly participatory and deliberative. Initial workshops were organized for the SSRWG by a Defence Advisory Team (DAT) from the UK and continued by a mentor appointed by the ONS. Countrywide consultative workshops were then organized and conducted by members of the SSR Secretariat and WG members on various dates in the provincial headquarter towns and Freetown in 2003. Other subsequent SSR processes followed. The first of these processes was the national Security Environmental Analysis (SEA). This involved the determination of the various factors that would shape the future security of the country within a specific time-frame. The process was marked by a series of strategic environmental review workshops in all the three regional headquarter towns. The other stage in the process was the development of a National Security Framework. This involved the crystallization of the national vision, threats, constraints and limitations, actions to be taken, expected outcomes, time-frames for outcomes, responsibilities, anticipated risks and linkages. The third stage of the process involved the development of the institutional security policy framework for individual institutions that had been assigned the responsibility for countering specific threats. The fourth stage of the process involved the gap analysis to determine the gap

between the current capabilities of institution and those required for meeting their assigned responsibilities.

The international development partners particularly DFID, who are supporting Sierra Leone's SSR, put a premium on governance and the need for democratic control of the security institutions of the state. The UK-led Africa Conflict Prevention Pool and Global Conflict Prevention Pool have adopted a holistic approach to conflict prevention and resolution in Africa by regarding security sector reform as one of their key programmes. In its post-conflict interventions, the UK has been strongly guided by the need to create effective and democratically accountable armed and police forces. In Sierra Leone, in particular, the UK is not only working with the armed forces and police, but also with the justice sector through its Justice Sector Development Programme (JSDP). As such, the thrust of the British-led SSR support targeted many security institutions in the country. First among these institutions was the Ministry of Defence, to ensure that the army remained accountable to the democratically elected government. The second security sector targeted was the police, particularly with respect to creating and sustaining a civilian controlled peace nationwide. The third sector emphasized was the intelligence service, to ensure that it was accountable to the government and its work coordinated by the ONS. The fourth sector identified was the judiciary, to underpin increased police effectiveness, provide access to justice for all and to give teeth to the Anti-Corruption Commission (*ibid.*). The security sector reform programme creates an opportunity for various stakeholders in the donor community, government agencies, security institutions, civil society groups and parliament to make input into the way forward for sustainable development in Sierra Leone (*ibid.*).

THE ROLE OF EXTERNAL ACTORS IN SIERRA LEONE'S SECURITY SECTOR REFORM PROGRAMME

Though it has been deeply committed to the process since 1998, Britain is not only the key player that has provided financial and other resources to the programme. For example, between 2001 and 2005 the British African Conflict Prevention Pool (ACPP) spent at least £90.6m on security and justice sector reform programmes or about 50 per cent of total ACPP spending during the period; Sierra Leone accounted for £87.2m or over 96 per cent of this (Ball, Biesheuval and Olonisakin 2007). Britain's main intervention in the country's security and justice sector reform programme is provided by the Sierra Leone Security Sector Reform Programme (SLSEP) and

the International Military Advisory and Training Team (IMATT). The British, through DFID and the FCO, played a pivotal role in restructuring the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) and the Sierra Leone Police (SLP), and in strengthening parliament, civil society and the justice sector in Sierra Leone.

RESTRUCTURING THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE ARMED FORCES (RSLAF)

By 1998, when the democratically elected government of Ahmad Tejan Kabbah was restored, there was evidence that the Armed Forces of the Republic of Sierra Leone (AFRSL) was due for serious reform and restructuring. There was a lack of discipline and professionalism in the armed forces, with low morale, poorly-trained and ill-equipped personnel, deplorable living conditions, rampant corruption, a lack of transparency and poor civil-military relations (Ebo 2006). Against this background, the armed forces restructuring and reform programme aims to create a truly national armed forces, bearing loyalty solely to the state of Sierra Leone, and being able and willing to perform their constitutional role and to also build a smaller but more robust and flexible RSLAF (GoSL 2005). In articulating his vision for the country's armed forces against the background of a post-war society, President Kabbah clearly pointed out that: 'the Army now needs to be better organised equipped and tuned to discharge its constitutional role effectively' (The Vision 1997: 5). He also confirmed that a responsible government had to assign the highest priority to policies that seek to ensure that its defence forces are adequately trained and equipped to protect its territorial integrity, to repel intruders and when necessary to put down civil disturbances (*ibid.*). Not surprisingly, the thrust of the armed forces' reorganization programme is the restoration of professionalism with the objective of re-establishing public and institutional confidence. The Draft National Security Policy Paper for Sierra Leone also envisages armed forces that are accountable to the people, with transparent and proper financial management procedures and an awareness of human rights and democratic principles. Among a series of programmes identified for realizing this objective are a vigorous, transparent recruitment process, provision of adequate and decent barracks accommodation, increased regimentation, realistic salaries and attractive retirement and resettlement packages.

The Sierra Leone government explored many options in its drive to restructure and reform the country's armed forces. One of its earliest considerations was the implementation of the Costa Rica model

of not having an army but a well-trained and well-equipped police force. This option was not popular considering the security threat posed on Sierra Leone by the Liberian conflict and the then volatile security situation in the rest of the Mano River sub-region. The government then requested the secondment of the Nigerian Brigadier-General Maxwell Khobe – as the country's new chief of defence staff (CDS). The late General Khobe led successful ECOMOG operations that flushed out the AFRC regime in 1998. As CDS, he was in theory answerable simultaneously to the Nigerian and Sierra Leonean governments (ICG 2000: 7).

ECOWAS/ECOMOG

In preparing a paper on armed forces reform and restructuring, the Sierra Leone government approached ECOMOG for assistance. ECOMOG recommended the establishment of a 5,000-strong armed force, consisting of a brigade headquarters, which would include a presidential guard, three infantry battalions, one light tank/reconnaissance battalion, one artillery regiment and one rapid deployment force to be made up of a paratroop battalion, a coastguard and an air wing (Gbla 2002). ECOMOG also recommended the upgrading of the navy and air force to fully-fledged services. Another laudable measure of the restructuring programme was the introduction and implementation of a new recruitment code that puts premium on merit, fair and equitable representation of all ethnic groups, and qualification. This latter aspect is very important as it provides a strong insurance against the recruitment of unfit individuals into the armed forces. It also provides a deterrent against those politicians working towards regime rather than state security. These developments also have the advantage of ensuring the recruitment of fresh hands and the vigorous screening of service members in the armed forces. The ECOWAS/ECOMOG role was very significant, not only in efforts to help demobilize the various fighters but also in the disarmament and putting in place of an armed forces recruitment code, and is indicative of ECOWAS's commitment to building peace and security in the sub-region. This was particularly important after considering that Sierra Leone partly became a victim of war after hosting the ECOMOG headquarters in the early struggle to end the Liberian war (Zack-Williams 1999). There was, however, very little effective coordination of the efforts of ECOWAS with those of the other external actors, including the UN.

The direct involvement of the British in Sierra Leone's armed forces restructuring programme, especially after 1998, witnessed

remarkable changes in the process. The British government through DFID articulated a security sector programme for countries that were prone to instability, with Sierra Leone serving as a pilot project. DFID, in close collaboration with the UK-MOD, has poured an estimated £21m sterling on the Sierra Leone project known as the Sierra Leone Security Sector Project (The Logical Framework of SILSEP III: I). SILSEP is a medium-term programme aimed at restructuring and equipping the security institutions to constitutionally and adequately perform their role in modern state building. Its major goal is the creation of sustainable peace in Sierra Leone to allow its government and people to make progress towards millennium development in a stable environment. Its specific objectives are: the establishment of effective and appropriate civil-control structures, an efficient army command and management arrangement, an acceptable defence policy and agreed budgets, the creation of an ONS capable of effective support to national security. SILSEP established a Security Sector Review Committee with the mandate to undertake a comprehensive security review of Sierra Leone. The review appraises the country's security situation and exposes threats to its sustainability.

Through the MOD-UK, the MOD Advisory Team (MODAT) and IMATT, the British introduced an RSLAF restructuring programme aimed at training, equipping and advising government forces. Crucial aspects of this programme are the integration of UK military advisers into Sierra Leone forces; close coordination with UNAMSIL and the SLP; and the enhancement of the combat effectiveness of the forces through ongoing advice and training. Since the signing of the Lomé Peace Accord in 1999, MOD-UK, MODAT and IMATT have been engaged in the training of future trainers of the AFRSL platoon commanders and sergeants under the Short-Term Training Teams (STTT). The training focused on key areas like international humanitarian law, civil military relations, the rights of the child, budget management and the understanding of regional and sub-regional security. The retraining of non-commissioned officers under the oversight of IMATT also features prominently in the British-led armed forces restructuring. Under this programme series of training were organised aimed at verifying and ascertaining the numerical strength of the force. The training is mainly in the areas of personal weapon training and physical fitness, battlefield first aid and the rules of armed conflict, health and hygiene. In further strides to facilitate the eventual transfer of leadership roles to Sierra Leoneans, an Infantry Training Advance Team (ITAT) from IMATT has been located at the Armed Forces Training Centre (AFTC) at Benguema. There is also the Horton Academy at the IMATT

Headquarters in Leicester Square on the outskirts of Freetown. The president officially opened the academy in 2003 and it provides the curriculum for the training of officer cadets in Sierra Leone and organizing junior staff courses for lieutenants and second-lieutenants of the RSLAF. Its establishment was timely and appropriate because when IMATT is finally phased out, it is the officer corps that will maintain the professional standards of the army. Training courses were introduced and implemented for recruits. Some of the training objectives envisaged included drafting policy document for recruiting and commissioning new entrants and human rights.

The provision of advice to the GoSL on the reorganization of the Ministry of Defence in Sierra Leone forms another very important component of the British contribution to Sierra Leone's RSLAF restructuring programme. The British government's appointment of military and civilian advisers to the GoSL is very instructive. The former was tasked to provide appropriate military advice to the GoSL whilst the latter was required to help develop a defence policy, a strategy for making MOD-SL a more efficient department, and to help put in place a cash budgeting system. In close working cooperation with the GoSL, these advisers are playing a crucial role in reforming the Sierra Leone MOD, which used to be a centrist and bureaucratic organization predominantly controlled by the military. This state of affairs had precipitated corruption, a lack of professionalism and the absence of inventiveness among the military members. There was therefore a need for reforming and restructuring the country's MOD to enable it to operate within the framework of a democratic Sierra Leone. In close working cooperation with the GoSL, the British in 2000 established the new Ministry of Defence with a mission to: 'formulate, implement, monitor and evaluate a strategic defence policy for the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces that is effective and fostered within a framework of democratic governance' (Mission Statement of the Sierra Leone Ministry of Defence).

The new MOD provides an environment where there is a closer working partnership between civilians and the military as a fully integrated team. In this new partnership arrangement, there are clear roles identified for both the military and the civilians. Unlike the past, civilians now occupy senior positions in the military administration. The director general, the equivalent of a UK permanent secretary, is for example a civilian. He is the Sierra Leone government principal adviser on defence matters with primary responsibility for policy, finance, procurement and administration. He is also the Principal Accounting Officer responsible to the minister of defence for the

overall organization, management and staffing of the department. He is personally responsible to parliament for the expenditure of all public money voted for defence. Additionally, the deputy minister of defence is a civilian. Unsurprisingly, the new MOD-SL plays a vital role in handling and consolidating democratic civil-military relations (GoSL 2003a: 9). The restructuring of the MOD also saw the introduction of a new budgetary structure based on the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF). The MOD's current budget consists of nine programme managers accountable to the director general who is the 'vote controller'. These programme managers are responsible for the management of their respective resources with guidance and oversight provided by the Finance and Budget Directorate.

Following the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, the AFRSL restructuring programme realized the need to reabsorb some elements of the AFRC, RUF and CDF into the military, provided they fulfilled the new recruitment criteria. This programme, popularly known as the Military Reintegration Programme (MRP), was designed to integrate the various ex-fighters with a view to enhancing post-war reconciliation. At the end of the DDR, 3,500 such ex-fighters were screened and reoriented to form part of the new Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF). In an effort to meet the logistical needs of the RSLAF, IMATT in close collaboration with DFID provided the army with 75 military land rovers, 25 military trucks, 7 ambulances, 2 helicopter support units and 8 armoured vehicles. Additionally, communication equipment was provided to facilitate intelligence network supervision (West Africa Update, 7 October 1999). Recognizing the crucial role of conducive accommodation in enhancing the efficiency of members of the RSLAF, the restructuring programme launched operation 'Pebu' ('pebu' is a Mende word meaning 'house'), funded jointly by the GoSL and DFID. The GoSL received £1.9m from the British government for this project. Some of the objectives of the project were to improve the living and working conditions of members of the RSLAF and enhance the redeployment formation of units. The project entailed the refurbishment of existing barracks and the building of new ones.

REFORM OF THE SIERRA LEONE POLICE

The SLP, like the RSLAF, was long overdue for reform and restructuring. The institution was for a very long time characterized by politicization, inefficiency, rampant corruption, poor conditions

of service and a lack of basic facilities and equipment. Additionally, the force was still operating under its antiquated traditional role of protecting the state, its people and property as narrowly defined in the 1964 Police Act. The Act defines the principal role of the police force as: 'the detection of crime and apprehension of offenders; preservation of law and order; protection of property and the enforcement of laws and regulations with which they are charged' (Gbla 2006). As such, it was very difficult for the force to respond to post-war security challenges without some major reforms.

This background compelled the government and its international partners to introduce and implement a far-reaching reform and restructuring programme for the police force. DFID and the FCO heavily supported the programme. Key areas of concerns included: defining the role of the police service, composition and training, mechanism for oversight, budget allocation and conditions of service (*ibid.*). In its determination to realize the restructuring programme, the government in 1998 invited a seven-member Commonwealth Police Development Task Force (CPDT). The Task Force was, among other things, required to help devise a plan for rebuilding the SLP; to advise the government on police practices, training, recruitment and human rights issues (*ibid.*). The recommendations and suggestions of the Task Force culminated in the SLP restructuring programme.

In his determination to promote the restructuring programme, President Kabbah appointed an expatriate, Mr Keith Biddle, from Britain, as inspector general of the Sierra Leone Police Force. Mr Biddle had a wealth of experience as he had served for over 38 years in the police service in Great Britain. His contribution to the SLP restructuring programme was immense. The government also released its Police Charter in 1998. The Charter, among other things, outlines the role of the SLP in relation to the government and people with emphasis on equal opportunity, professionalism and local needs policing. The Charter puts much emphasis on the following important aspects of the state of Sierra Leone and its people: police primacy in maintaining internal security, ensuring the safety of the people and their property, respect and protection of human rights, local needs policing and corrupt-free police force. Accordingly, the SLP Mission Statement prioritizes the following: provision of professional and effective service in efforts aimed at achieving a peaceful society, respecting human rights and freedom of individuals, honesty, impartiality, local needs policing, participatory and consultation with the people, accountability, transparency, reliability and caring.

Various actions and programmes have been taken by the SLP restructuring programme to realize the aforementioned principles and values. One such was the operationalization of the local needs policing concept. The concept stresses the need for involving the people through partnership with the police in the maintenance of law and order. There is now a Community Relations Department located in the police headquarters which is tasked to: work in concert with all divisional commanders to promote local needs policing, develop and implement various crimes prevention strategies with local unit commanders, and provide an efficient link between the police and the community. There is also a Complaint, Discipline, Internal and Investigations Department (CDIID) charged with the functions of receiving complaints from the public about issues of police indiscipline and corruption and taking the appropriate redress measures. The establishment of this department has done a lot in curbing police extortion and harassment of civilians. The restructuring programme also established the Change Management Department, which among other things aims to train members of the force to be efficient and productive, especially in managing their affairs. It also seeks to groom Sierra Leonean police officers for leadership positions following the British withdrawal from the country.

The former SSD has now been transformed into the Operational Support Group (OSD) with the following functions: to quell internal upheavals and to perform all operational duties including security. Finally, the restructuring programme has put in place oversight mechanisms to watch over the SLP. One such mechanism is the Police Council, the highest police body with power to provide civilian oversight of policing in Sierra Leone. Its membership include the vice-president as chairman, the minister of internal affairs, the inspector general of police; the deputy inspector general of police, the chairman of the Public Service Commission, a member of the Sierra Leone Bar Association, and two other members appointed by the president subject to the approval of parliament. There are also steps in the restructuring programme to appoint women to senior positions in the force.

PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT STRENGTHENING

The 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone gives considerable powers to parliament and its select committees to enable them to provide oversight functions over the country's security forces. Section 73(1) of this constitution establishes a legislature, which shall consist of

the President, the Speaker and Members of Parliament. Section 73 (3) of the same constitution further states that parliament may make laws for the peace, security, order and good governance of Sierra Leone. What is obvious from these provisions is that parliament is the principal agent for the general enforcement of democratic accountability in Sierra Leone. Accordingly, the day-to-day affairs of the executive are carried out with the assent and under the direction of parliament. The powers of the Sierra Leone parliament to enforce democratic accountability in general and security sector oversight in particular are many and varied.

The major instruments for exercising these powers include the oversight committees, popularly known as Watchdog Committees, established under section 93 of the 1991 Constitution. Their major objective is investigating and inquiring into the activities of the administration of ministries and departments. Some of the parliamentary committees entrusted with this responsibility include the Defence and Presidential Affairs Committee for the Armed Forces, the Committee on Local Government for the Police and Prisons, and the Transparency Committee, which addresses issues of impropriety and abuse of public office. In spite of the fact that there are the necessary legal instruments as well as the appropriate parliamentary oversight committees to oversee the security sector in Sierra Leone, the ability to discharge these functions is greatly hampered. In the first place, these parliamentary oversight committees are constrained by both logistical and human resources to effectively discharge functions. There are no office spaces with only few support staff including parliamentary clerks, currently only six in number, to service over 30 committees in parliament (Gbla and Jaye 2008).

In its attempt to enhance parliament's oversight capacity over the security forces, DFID is supporting a parliamentary capacity building project. The support targets the provision of basic equipment including photocopiers, stationery, and generators. It also includes support to enhance civil society engagement in security sector reform and particularly to linking them with the work of parliament. The British High Commission in Sierra Leone is, for example, currently funding the regular publication of a parliamentary update that provides information on the work of parliament to the people. This programme also place interns from the Centre for Development and Security Analysis (CEDSA) that are providing important research functions. Despite these changes, parliamentary oversight of the security sector in Sierra Leone faces many constraints including a shortage of trained manpower and resources.

THE JUSTICE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

In January 2002, Sierra Leone's civil war was officially declared over. However, years of an authoritarian political system, and in particular the eleven years of war, had adversely affected many state institutions, including the judiciary. In particular, the politicization and under-investment in the justice sector undermined operational independence and effectiveness and its ability to deliver justice. It is widely considered that this state of affairs contributed to the conflict and the highly fragile political and economic situation in the country especially in the late 1990s. The Truth and Reconciliation Report of 2004 clearly confirms this point in arguing that injustice and particularly the lack of access to the superior courts of justice by most Sierra Leoneans undermined the rule of law. Furthermore, Ebo has pointed to the archaic and gerontocratic nature of the justice system in Sierra Leone when he noted that:

The traditional (chieftaincy-based) system of justice operating in rural areas in parallel with the modern (common law) system, and which handles an estimated 80% of legal disputes submitted for adjudication in these areas, is male-dominated, prone to unfairness and marked by a perceptible lack of transparency and accountability. (Ebo 2006: n.p.)

Clearly, the justice sector in Sierra Leone was plagued by organizational and operational problems. These included insufficient skilled human resources; ineffective and inefficient sector communication, coordination and practices; a weak legislative and policy framework; poor pay and conditions of service; low staff morale; inadequate infrastructure and logistics. Additionally, justice sector organizations are perceived as unresponsive, inaccessible, unaccountable, unaffordable and corrupt.

In recognizing the crucial role of an effective justice system in promoting good governance, the country's security sector reform programme puts a premium on building a strong and effective legal system. The government believed that to achieve effective safety, security and access to justice there is a need for sector-wide rather than an organizational approach to justice sector reform. Accordingly, the government invited DFID to support the design of an integrated sector-wide programme. In June 2002, DFID conducted a mission to assess the situation. The mission was followed in December 2002 and August 2003 by stakeholder's workshops, which supported the sector-wide approach to justice sector reform. Additionally, a

Justice Sector Task Force comprising of key stakeholders was formed. This Task Force identified the majority of the issues, priorities and possible solutions that have been used to inform the design of this programme. The Justice Development Programme that evolved from this process aims to establish a peaceful and stable Sierra Leone through, among other things, improved security, improved governance and fostering of a just and inclusive economy and society. The GoSL in collaboration with DFID therefore embarked on a number of programmes aimed at improving the judiciary. These included law reform and the refurbishment of the physical infrastructure of the courts throughout the country in an effort to ensure justice delivery. The Law Development Project of DFID also assisted the GoSL in training and deploying in 2003, 87 justices of the peace (JPs), clerks and bailiffs to 18 locations in the country. The UNDP also agreed to provide a top up of Le10,000 daily sitting allowances for JPs working in the provinces in an attempt to improve the conditions of service for members of the judiciary.

INTELLIGENCE AND NATIONAL SECURITY

In close working cooperation with international partners, the GoSL is making efforts to put in place mechanisms for the effective coordination of national security and effective intelligence gathering. In 2002 it passed the National Security and Central Intelligence Act, which established the National Security Council (NSC) as the highest body for the consideration of security issues in the country. Its membership includes the president as chairman, the vice-president as deputy chairman, the ministers of finance, internal affairs, information and broadcasting, the deputy minister of defence, the minister of state presidential affairs, the nspector-general of police, the chief of defence staff and the national security coordinator who serves as secretary to the council. Its functions include considering and taking appropriate measures to safeguard the internal and external security of the country, ensuring the gathering of information relating to security and integrating domestic and foreign security policies.

The Secretariat of the NSC is the Office of National Security (ONS) headed by the National Security Co-ordinator appointed by the President under subsections (1) and (2) of Section 154 of the 1991 Constitution. The ONS has five different divisions: Secretariat to the NSC, Join Intelligence Committee, Joint Assessment Staff, Monitoring and Oversight and Security Coordination. To ensure the decentralization of the work of intelligence in the country, the National Security and Central Intelligence Act 2002 makes provisions

Table 5.1 Current sizes of major security sectors in Sierra Leone

<i>Security sector</i>	<i>Current size</i>
Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF)	9,000
Sierra Leone Police (SLP)	9,522

for the establishment of Provincial Security Committees (PROSECS), the District Security Committees (DISECS) and a Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC).

ASSESSMENT OF THE ROLE OF EXTERNAL ACTORS IN SIERRA LEONE'S SECURITY SECTOR REFORM

Sierra Leone's SSRP, undertaken in tandem with efforts to resolving the conflict, received tremendous international support especially from Britain, UNAMSIL and ECOWAS. Its focus on restructuring and equipping the country's various security institutions to constitutionally and adequately perform their roles in modern state building is a laudable initiative. Its specific objectives of reducing the threats of coups, enhancing democratic principles and human rights, containing external threats and ensuring civilian oversight are also very fine on paper. The various security sector policies, strategies and programmes in the country have attracted commendations as well as criticisms from various national and international actors focusing essentially on the realization of set goals and objectives. This section seeks to bring out the successes as well as the failures of the programme.

One of the major achievements of the security sector reform programme in Sierra Leone is the enhancement of the effectiveness of the security forces, especially the RSLAF and SLP. Before the restructuring exercise, the country's security forces were not only ill-trained but also ill-equipped and poorly paid with very low morale and esteem. The programme has over the years gradually changed this unfortunate situation by not only stepping up training and professional development in the forces but also enhancing their capacity to respond to any national security threat. The command structure and bureaucracy of the approximately 11,000 RSLAF have been restored and its combat readiness improved. The air wing of the force, for example, has one Mi 24 helicopter gunship whilst the maritime wing has one medium-sized, Chinese-built vessel that is actively involved in maritime patrolling as a coastguard (Malan et al. 2003: 99). The training of the forces in mortars, medium machine guns,

air defence and range management is very crucial. The restructuring of the RSLAF also saw the introduction and implementation of a fair, open and competitive recruitment procedure with opportunities for all sections of the country without compromising merit. The new recruitment policy provides an insurance against the formation of regional and ethnic forces for regime rather than for state protection. A full review of the pay, pension, allowance, holiday and resettlement packages has also helped to improve the living conditions of the force. These and many other developments have improved the self-confidence of the RSLAF, whose members previously suffered from a serious lack of confidence in their own professional military capability. Significantly, ordinary soldiers receive regular pay rather than being expected to live on the land, as was the case during the time of the NPRC and AFRC. In spite of this, operational effectiveness is still dependent on external advisers and although the armed forces have worked at improving public confidence it will take time and sustained efforts to escape the shadow of the past.

The security sector reform programme also has resulted in improving the efficiency of the SLP. In a bid to ensure a safe and secure environment, various strategic departments in the SLP were strengthened and given the available logistics to improve their efficiency in containing riots, civil unrest, domestic violence and economic crimes. One department that greatly benefits from this support is the OSD, which has been strengthened in terms of mobility and in the training of members. The SLP has also been restructured and has adopted a new approach to policing, known as local needs policing; this is coupled with the provision of new uniforms, vehicles and regular wages. These and many other developments have boosted the confidence of members of the SLP. The development of a strong senior management team and the establishment of effective systems for internal audit, accountability and transparency, as well as the general acceptance of the local needs policing concept, have all helped to improve support for victims of domestic violence. The creditable way in which the SLP carried out its duties during the 2007 elections in the country, in terms of providing security for both the voters and elections personnel, is a product of the new efficiency in the force. There are, however, still areas of concern with regard to the police, including the capacity of the force to meet its tasks nationwide considering the resources currently available to it, inadequate accommodation and a lack of communication equipment. Additionally, in spite of the remarkable success in enhancing the effectiveness of the security forces, the training programme is inadequate as it puts more emphasis on combat readiness. Although combat readiness is

a very important component, especially for the RSLAF, there is the need for more concerted efforts to restore public confidence in the security forces as well as to strengthen the capacities of other members of the security services such as the judiciary, parliament, prisons and the media.

Another outstanding achievement of the security sector programme in the country is the promotion of transparency and accountability in the operations of the security sector. This is visible in various proactive sensitization campaigns promoted by the various security institutions. In the RSLAF, there are the *Torch*, the MOD's newspaper, and the *Live By-Weekly Press Briefing*. In the SLP, there are the Media and Public Relations Unit and weekly press briefings to inform the public on police programmes and activities. Furthermore, the security sector reform programme witnessed the introduction and implementation of a transparent budgeting system for all ministries and agencies in the country including the security forces. Under the Medium Term Expenditure Framework budgeting system introduced in 2001, the MOD-Sierra Leone prepares its detailed plans and estimates for a three-year period. Through a series of screenings, the assumptions, plans and costing are scrutinized to ensure that they are both realistic and affordable. The approach provides programme managers with an opportunity to justify their resource requirements to senior managers.

The country's security sector reform programme has also succeeded not only in ensuring physical security but also in protecting the individual from unnecessary harassment by the security services. The Sierra Leone Police Charter clearly spells out the need for recognizing human rights, and this is accompanied by a series of training programmes on human rights and the law of armed conflict. The RSLAF is also putting a premium on such training. Additionally, the security sector reform programme has developed a service-level agreement, which is widely perceived to be a success. This agreement, among other things, calls for mutual partnership between the army and the police, on the one hand, and the navy in collaboration with the Ministry of Marine Resources, on the other. As such, the programme engenders complementary partnership among the security forces in order to deter external aggression. As a result, Sierra Leone's security sector reform programme can be considered as one of the most successful efforts at external intervention. It scored an impressive result in September 2004 when the government of Sierra Leone was able to take over countrywide security primacy from UNAMSIL. Indeed, the return of public safety was due to a combination of various factors including the DDR, restoration of civil

authority and, of course, security sector reform. Additionally, security sector reform in Sierra Leone clearly manifests the features of a participatory, decentralized and sector-wide approach with relatively sustained international support, especially that of the British through DFID (Ebo 2006).

Another outstanding achievement of Sierra Leone's SSRP is the enhancement of civil control of the security forces, especially the armed forces. Prior to the reform programme, the military was a self-contained institution with very little control from civilians. The reform process has, however, changed this situation as both civilians and military officers are now seen working together. The Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) and his team of over 13 military officers are now working side by side with the civilian director general and his civilian team. Although this new relationship is fraught with initial hiccups bordering on personality perceptions, it is the beginning of civil-military co-operation that will provide a joint civilian military MOD under the democratically appointed civilian political leader. Even in the budgeting process, the MOD like any other government ministry now adheres to budgetary procedures involving parliamentary oversight and approval. As is always the case, former military officers whose zones have been adversely affected by this new arrangement are not happy and could be potential spoilers of the security sector reform programme in the country.

Despite these achievements, the ongoing SSRP in the country has many failures. Prominent among these is the hurried training given especially to members of the RSLAF through the Military Integration Programme (MRP). As a large number of soldiers brought under this programme were drawn from various former warring factions with limited training and orientation, it has the potential for friction and destabilization. Other shortcomings emanate mainly from the predominant role played by external actors in the implementation of SSR, a situation that among other things questions its viability and sustainability. This has to do with the fact that the political impetus for reform came from Britain with Sierra Leone's strategic vision heavily directed by Britain (Ero 2003). This situation creates a series of problems, including the complex structure created for the Sierra Leone security forces. As the initial focus of the programme ignored the country's socio-cultural values, its outcome alienated some Sierra Leoneans that felt marginalized. It therefore precipitated the emergence of some resistance groups within the military that resolutely opposed the process. Furthermore, the dominance of external actors, especially in executive positions (for example, the British inspector general of police), stymied progress towards an

indigenous cadre of security personnel that would ensure peace and stability after the external actors had left. This is the case because Sierra Leoneans were relegated to the position of secondary actors.

The problem of efficient civil oversight institutions such as a vibrant civil society and parliament to oversee the security forces demands further strengthening of these institutions. Civil society groups in Sierra Leone are generally perceived as representatives of the voice of the voiceless as well as the challengers of government excesses. Unfortunately, the majority of these groups are fragmented, with very low capacity in terms of financial and other resources to provide oversight of the security forces in the country. Prior to the establishment of institutions like the CGG and the Centre for Development and Security Analysis (CEDSA), there were no civil society groups with an interest in the security sector. If security sector reform is to be meaningful, then serious efforts must be made to enhance civil society groups to provide oversight functions over the security sector in the country.

There are also looming fears that although the SSRP in the country has done a lot to enhance the combat readiness of the security forces, their capacity to take over the security of the state after UNAMSIL leave is very low. This is especially true of the current police force with its logistical problems and other constraints. As a post-conflict society with the potential for increased crime, there has not been a corresponding increase in the resources available for the security forces.

With respect to the role of external actors in Sierra Leone's SSRP, another area worthy of critical discussion is the level of coordination in the programme. Critics have pointed out that the external actors activities were largely ad-hoc with minimal effective coordination (Brzoska 2003). In this context, it will be worthwhile for Britain, as the main player, to deepen its collaboration and coordination efforts with other partners, including the World Bank and the United Nations, in order to avoid duplication and enhance the effective implementation of programmes.

On the issues of national ownership and the sustainability of Sierra Leone's SSRP, there are mixed reactions, especially from some Sierra Leoneans. There are those that acknowledge that although there is a modest national contribution, especially from the government in terms of support to meeting the running and maintenance costs of vehicles, support for the process is still dominated by external donors. Against this backdrop, most Sierra Leoneans agree that there is a need for the government to explore various national financial sources in order to be able to sustain the reform process after the

departure of the external actors. They also believe that for national ownership to be realized the inputs of Sierra Leoneans will be very crucial.

CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter I have examined Sierra Leone's SSRP in the context of a post-conflict recovery programme with strong international support. I have discussed the background and priorities as well as the successes and failures of the programme, and considered the view that the ongoing SSRP in the country should be owned and driven by Sierra Leoneans if it is to be sustainable. I have also argued that there is the need for effective coordination of the activities of the various international actors involved in the programme. An important argument in this chapter is the fact that the SSRP in the country should go beyond the limited objective of retraining and restructuring formal security institutions and should focus on strengthening the oversight capacities of parliament, the judiciary and civil society. Some of the constraints of the SSRP identified include a lack of national capacity, especially in terms of finance and logistics, mistrust of the security forces by the ordinary citizens, weak oversight capacity, especially that of civil society and parliament, external dominance, poor donor coordination and the sensitivity of the programme itself.

6

Gender, Conflict and Peacebuilding in Africa: The Sierra Leone Experience

Sylvia Macauley

INTRODUCTION

The violent nature of the conflict led researchers, initially, to a search for causal reasons (Richards 1996; Zack-Williams 1999; Alie 2000; Farnthorpe 2001; Abdullah 2004; Richards 2005; Hoffman 2006; Reno 2007). Others have sought to analyze the various local, regional and international actors and their respective roles (Gberie 2000; Williams 2000; Adibe 2003; Abdullah 2004; Fithen and Richards 2005; Gberie 2005; Richards 2006; Wessells and Davidson 2006; Hoffman 2007; Schumer 2008) as well as the various conflict resolution mechanisms employed (Kargbo 2000; Reno 2001; Olonisakin 2008). After the war ended, researchers turned their attention initially to the impact of the conflict (Kline and Mone 2003; Campbell 2002 Hoffman 2004; Humphreys and Weinstein 2006; Shaw 2007), more recently to the question of sustainable peace (Turay 2001; Dougherty 2004; Ferme 2004; Shaw 2005; Bell 2005/2006; Sesay 2007; Robson 2008). One major shortcoming of these studies, however, is the conspicuous absence of a gender perspective. Gender analysis focuses on social groups based on the sex variable and questions the way social roles and statuses are determined. Thus, how gender roles are utilized in the promotion of social cohesion becomes very important as does the gender-responsiveness of policies adopted in post-conflict settings. Consequently, by establishing a link between gender, conflict and the role of women in nation-rebuilding this chapter will illustrate the relevance of gender for a more informed analysis of conflict and peacebuilding, in general, while emphasizing the need for such a transformative approach to alter the balance of power in gender relations in Sierra Leone, in particular, and ensuring lasting peace.

SOCIAL PRECONDITIONS OF WAR

The root causes of the war go back over 40 years starting with the coups and counter-coups of the 1960s that eventually brought an

abrupt end to Sierra Leone's fragile experiment with democracy and led to the emergence of Siaka Stevens, the leader of the APC, as prime minister. The corrupt and authoritarian regime presided over by Stevens (1968–85) has been metaphorically described as 'the era of the plague of locusts' (Kieh 2005: 169–70). Under Stevens' rule, the decade of the 1970s was dominated by economic and political crises. The fiscal crisis started with the rise in global oil prices, which impacted on poor, oil importing countries. Whilst the price of the country's imports rose dramatically after the Arab–Israeli war of 1973, by contrast the price of its exports fell dramatically in the same period. Furthermore, inefficiency in production methods meant that Sierra Leone could not fulfill its quota in the production of agricultural goods (Zack-Williams 1990). Meanwhile, corruption became institutionalized.

Politically, the decade marked the beginnings of authoritarian rule, when power was systematically centralized under a single party, forcing alternative voices underground. In addition, the country witnessed a crackdown on civil society groups (for example, the labour unions and the press) in an effort to eliminate all civic opposition. Repression, intimidation and cooptation became the order of the day as state violence increased. With the formal opposition effectively silenced, forced underground or abroad, university students took up the mantle as the 'informal' opposition in the late 1970s and openly challenged the government on official corruption. In 1978 the country was declared a *de facto* one-party state.

GENDER DIMENSIONS OF CONFLICT

The war led to the loss of thousands of innocent lives, many more injured and half the population displaced. Many of the victims were women. However, some surveys have established that women were not just victims but were also perpetrators of violence, as they made up approximately 30 per cent of the combatants (Denov and Maclure 2009: 54; Pratt et al. n.d.: 21). Nonetheless, although a few men were also victims of sexual violence, women were the main targets for sexual assault according to Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) (2002). Of the female respondents who reported sexual violence 89 per cent were raped, 33 per cent gang raped, 15 per cent experienced sexual slavery, 9 per cent were forced into marriage, 4 per cent had objects inserted into their genitals, and 23 per cent were pregnant at the time of these abuses (PHR 2002: 2). Consequently, 51 per cent reported suffering bodily injury or physical disability while 43 per cent either contracted or feared they had contracted a STD/AIDS.

Twenty per cent suffered either a miscarriage or reproductive complications while 6 per cent became pregnant as a result of the assault (*ibid.*: 50). But Pratt et al. (n.d.) found that a much higher number (27 per cent) became pregnant as a result of the rape; however, due to abortions or death, only 15 per cent of the babies survived.

Over 2 million people were displaced by the war, half a million of whom fled to other countries as refugees. By 2000, Sierra Leone had become the leading country of origin for refugees from Africa, with neighbouring Guinea as the leading refugee-hosting country in Africa (Ojukutu-Macauley 2001). Seventy per cent of civilians were displaced for between 4 and 10 years (PHR 2002: 42). Not surprisingly, 89 per cent of respondents in the PHR survey (*ibid.*: 43) described their general health as either 'fair' or 'poor'. The psychological impact was even higher with 94 per cent describing their 'state of mind' as 'fair' or 'poor'. Even after suffering the sexual abuse, some survivors chose not to tell anyone about the incident. Among this group, the reasons frequently cited for not telling were 'feelings of shame or social stigma', followed by 'fear of rejection'. Sadly, the most common form of coping mechanism utilized was simply to try and forget about it (PHR 2002: 54).

As Turshen (2007) has observed, the burden of death in war has swung from 90 per cent among troops during the First World War to 90 per cent among civilians today. Since women and children make up the bulk of the civilian population in most developing nations, including Sierra Leone, the long-term consequences of conflict for this group is often greater, but with wider implications. For instance, war results in demographic changes such as an increase in the number of female-headed households which leads to increased responsibilities for women, resulting in increased poverty. Similarly, the disruption in food production and markets increases food insecurity, leaving women and children weakened and susceptible to disease (*ibid.*). In Sierra Leone, the widespread displacement left huge segments of the population more vulnerable to disease, all of which has contributed to very negative human development indices over the past decade. By 2002, Sierra Leone had a changing population base, lacked skilled human resources, possessed vulnerable groups that had been socially excluded, was experiencing shifting gender roles and also a breakdown of trust and erosion of social capital, all characteristics of a classic conflict state (World Bank 2008: 1) (see Table 6.1). The challenge of peacebuilding, therefore, remains a daunting but inescapable task if a return to war is to be avoided.

Table 6.1 Selected basic indicators of Sierra Leone in comparison with regional and global averages

	Human Development Index (rank)*	Human Poverty Index (rank)	Gender-related Devt. Index (rank)	Life expectancy at birth (years)	Adult literacy (% aged 15+)	Under 5 mortality level of educational mother	Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)**	Maternal mortality ratio (per 1,000 live births)**
						Low or no education	Secondary+	
Ghana	152	89	126	56.5	65	125	85	560
Nigeria	158	114	133	47.7	72	269	107	1100
Senegal	166	124	140	55.4	41.9	152	60	980
Liberia	169	109	142	57.9	55.5	151	119	—
Guinea	170	129	143	57.3	29.5	194	92	910
Sierra Leone	180	128	152	47.3	38.1	279	164	2100
Sub-Saharan Africa	—	—	—	51.5	62.9	—	—	—
World	—	—	—	67.5	83.9	—	—	—

*N = 182; Sources: UNDP, *Human Development Report*, 2009, **2007/2008.

ENGENDERING PEACEBUILDING

Peacebuilding, although often viewed in terms of structural rebuilding, it is also about processes, people and relationships, which means that significant consideration needs to be given not only to the specific cultural context but, more importantly, to gender. As de la Rey and McKay rightly argue, ‘peacebuilding is both culture-specific and gendered’ because, simply put, ‘peace as a process is about men and women and how they relate to each other’, keeping in mind that ‘people build peace utilizing processes that are meaningful within the contexts of their own culture’ (2006: 141–7). Such a gendered approach to peacebuilding will ensure that women’s unique issues are identified and addressed, as well as their processes distinguished from men’s and utilized. In this way, the basic needs of survivors will be addressed, women will not be excluded from the peacebuilding process, trust would be restored and the capacity of women enhanced. But, in addition, what Vayrynen describes as ‘essentialist’, which, ‘leave the modern foundations of peacebuilding unexamined and thereby run the risk of repeating and reproducing mainstream thinking and practices’ should be avoided, along with ‘an unquestioning acceptance of hegemonic forms of agency’ (2010: 150) from international institutions like peacebuilding missions. Furthermore, the mistakes in Angola, where the process started out as gender neutral instead of gendered (Steinberg 2008), and the D.R. Congo, where peacebuilding focused only on the national and regional levels but not the local level, should also be avoided (Autesserre 2007). Rather, unlike Vayrynen, who believes that ‘peacebuilding should engage with the local in the form of translation, not in the form of integration ... and local gender focus groups can act as “gender translators” between peacebuilding missions and locals’ (2010: 151), I would argue that for Sierra Leone, *both* translation *and* integration are needed in the peacebuilding process because, as Anderson (2009) puts it, peace is ‘a community affair that is best built from the bottom up’ (p. 194).

CAPACITY BUILDING

Capacity building is a multifaceted process which involves strengthening primary stakeholders for implementing their activities, fostering communication to deal with differences, and strengthening their capacity to participate in the political and socio-economic arena (Josiah 2002: 176). Politics and most issues related to the state are generally defined in masculine terms, thereby excluding women who

are often referred to as ‘mothers of the nation’. Not surprisingly, very few women become involved in the formal process of peacebuilding. But given that the end of war presents a ‘formative moment’ to begin constructing a new society, it is critical that a gender perspective be incorporated from the start. To ensure the full and equal participation of women in the political process has been a challenge in Sierra Leone. By the time major peace negotiations began to bring an end to the war that had impacted women’s lives so deeply, women were, once again, sidelined, as they were not represented at negotiations for the Abidjan Accord in 1996. Only one woman was involved in the ECOWAS Peace Plan in Conakry in 1997, and just two with the Lomé Peace Accord in 1999 (Lavallie 2002). But, although women were not involved in the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace, recommended in the Lomé Agreement, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was quite a bit more gender-sensitive with a 50/50 gender representation among the commissioners.

For the first 40 years of independence, only about 24 women were involved in local or national politics either as MPs, ministers, paramount chiefs or mayors (Lavallie 2002: 43). Various types of economic, social and cultural problems combined to hinder women’s participation, but since 2002 that number has started to improve, as Table 6.2 shows. After the first post-war elections in 2002, almost 8 per cent of parliamentary seats were held by women, and today that number has risen to 13 per cent. There is a similar trend with regard to ministerial positions and, furthermore, women are no longer relegated to the gender or social welfare ministries. One of the ministerial positions held by women for a while was that of Foreign Affairs

Table 6.2 Regional comparison of female participation in politics

	<i>Ministerial level (%)</i>		<i>Parliamentary election candidates (%)</i>		<i>Candidates for mayor and council chair (%)</i>	<i>Candidates for Local council (%)</i>
	2002 *	2009	2005 *	2009	2007 **	2008 **
Sierra Leone	7.8	13	13.0	14	5	17
Ghana		8		16		
Nigeria		7		23		
Senegal		29		18		
Liberia		14		20		
Guinea		—		16		

Sources: UNDP, *Human Development Report*, 2009; *HDR, 2007/2008; ***Concord Times*, May 14, 2008.

in addition to four female deputy ministers in Marine Resources and Fisheries, Trade and Industry, Information and Communications, and Social Welfare.

In 2008, the Political Party Registration Commission (PPRC), an independent body set up by the government, organized a two-day forum on gender and peacebuilding 'in a bid to empower female politicians ahead of the July local government elections' (*Concord Times* 2008b). As part of its mandate 'to promote political pluralism', the PPRC hoped that the forum would increase the participation of women, in this case at the local level. Thus, it would appear that the necessary political will does exist, on the part of the government, to bridge the inequality gap and bring about what the UNDP refers to as 'gender justice' (Dhar 2008), but the challenge is to ensure that implementation of gendered policies and programmes for nation rebuilding takes place not just at the national, but also regional and local levels as well.

While the numbers of women in the formal political process are minimal, women's groups and NGOs have been playing a major role in advocating gender equality as well as engaging in gender empowerment activities to ensure that politics and policies become more representative of the needs and concerns of all citizens. The leading organizations playing the role of 'gender translators' in this peacebuilding struggle are: 50/50 Group, Forum for Africa Women Educationalists (FAWE), Mano River Women's Peace Network (Marwopnet), and Network of Women Ministers and Parliamentarians (NEWMAP). Founded in 1998 to address the marginalization, subordination and discrimination against women, especially in public affairs, the 50/50 Group has been organizing seminars to inform and educate female candidates about the nature of politics in Sierra Leone, conducting workshops to sensitize men and women about female candidates, and has been an overall watchdog and advocate for gender equality. Responding to complaints of female candidates being intimidated, the 50/50 Group has criticized political parties for 'not doing enough to ensure women's empowerment in their political, economic and social endeavours' (*Concord Times* 2008f). They also condemned the 'socially entrenched structures that marginalize and exclude women' and called on the National Electoral Commission to 'create an enabling environment for more women to contest the forthcoming local council elections'. In March 2008, the founding president of the 50/50 Group lambasted the ruling APC party for levying Le250,000 (almost \$100) on candidates vying for local council elections, arguing that this was a strategy to discourage women from participating, given that they are not the breadwinners.

In 2007, the 50/50 Group won an amendment to the Constitution that would set aside 30 per cent of all elected and appointed political positions for women (*Concord Times* 2008g; Inter Press Service 2007). However, three years on, this appears more like a hollow victory (Table 6.2 reflects the challenges of implementation). The Campaign for Good Governance has also expressed frustration over the government's failure to enforce this policy (Kanu 2010a). Although the issue has been controversial in Sierra Leone, establishing a quota for women to enhance their participation in politics is not unusual. At present, there are similar quotas in countries like Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, Niger and South Africa, and there is evidence that such quotas have improved the representation of women in politics (UNDP 2010; Ndulo 2007; Tripp et al. 2006). In recognition of their peacebuilding efforts, the 50/50 Group won the Madeline K. Albright Award in 2007, with a purse of \$25,000, for their 'intensive skill training with women activists across the country, public education and voter outreach campaign designed to improve women's knowledge of and access to electoral process[es] and the creation of networking groups' (*Concord Times* 2007b). To date, the group continues to target women leaders and civil society activists across the country for leadership training (Kanu 2010b). In addition, the main opposition party, the SLPP recently took the positive step of developing a gender policy for their party (Kanu 2010c).

Another group of 'gender translators' that has made significant contributions towards peacebuilding in Sierra Leone is Marwopnet. Headquartered in Freetown, it is a network of women's organizations from Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone working for durable peace in the Mano River sub-region and for which it won the UN Human Rights Prize in 2003 (Dhar 2008: 140). In fulfillment of its objective to 'promote durable peace by integrating a gender perspective into peace, conflict resolution processes and into security and development mechanism at all levels in the Mano River Basin' (Marwopnet 2008), the Sierra Leone chapter has been organizing training sessions on capacity building and strengthening of women's organizations; conducting workshops for the wives of soldiers on their role in sustaining peace in Sierra Leone; holding consultations with women around the country on the TRC Report; and assessing community security apparatus and traditional early warning systems in the various districts from a gender perspective. To further its objectives of strengthening peace in the sub-region, Marwopnet fielded all-female observer teams in strategic areas of the country to monitor the 2007 elections process (*The Independent* 2007).

FAWE, a pan-African NGO founded in 1992 ‘to promote gender equity and equality in education in Africa by fostering positive policies, practices and attitudes towards girls’ education’, now operates in 32 African countries (FAWE 2010: 2). The Sierra Leone chapter, founded in March 1995 by 35 women, has been involved with much more than education in its efforts to help rebuild the nation and sustain the hard won peace. FAWE’s initial intervention was triggered off by the fact that a large percentage of the population (women and girls) had been displaced and deprived of an education as a result of their war experiences – mainly sexual violence through rape. Realizing that the Ministry of Education could no longer cater for the thousands of displaced children, FAWE started the Emergency Camp Schools Programme for Displaced Children in Wellington, in June 1995, with support from international partners like UNICEF, PLAN International, and UNHCR, and local partners like the Sierra Leone Association of Retired Teachers and local community members. Given the unique needs of its student population, 60 per cent of whom were girls, the school’s hybrid curriculum included guidance counselling, trauma healing sessions and psychological report cards (FAWE 2004: 1–11). Two months later, recognizing the continuing need to rehabilitate the hundreds of women and girls who had been physically or psychologically damaged by the brutal rapes or forced sexual slavery they suffered as ‘bush wives’ during their abduction, FAWE opened the more formal FAWE Girls Primary School in Freetown with 350 girls. There, these survivors received psychological counselling for post-traumatic stress and were also taught new income-generating skills to help with their rehabilitation. The success of this school was evident from the heart-wrenching testimonies of its grateful students and graduates as captured in the documentary *Worth the Risk* (2001). After the ministry closed down all displaced schools in 1998, FAWE sought and received permission to officially run its school in Freetown which was then renamed FAWE School for Girls (ibid.).

Another organization that has worked with the survivors of gender-based violence is the Sierra Leone Women’s Forum. They helped popularize the concept of counselling in the country and adapted Western therapeutic models to local practices by including storytelling, proverbs and singing in its treatments (Bouta et al. 2005). Female advocacy groups have not been alone in the struggle to build capacity with the goal of sustaining peace in Sierra Leone. The Campaign for Good Governance (CGG), a local NGO, the Canada Fund for Local Initiative and the UN Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL – renamed UNIPSIL in August 2008 when the mandate

changed from peacekeeping to peacebuilding) also trained female candidates for the July 2008 local council elections (*Concord Times* 2008c). In partnership with the Club of Madrid, an international NGO, CGG launched the African Women Leaders Project (AWLP) in 2007. The focus of this initiative was ‘to provide support to women leaders as well as to encourage women to take leadership positions in politics and public life’ (*Concord Times* 2007a). Support for their activities has come from President Ernest Koroma, as well as the National Democratic Institute

HEALTH

The discourse on peacebuilding has largely been focused on issues of security, democratic participation and economic development, with health being noticeably absent. One reason for this is the fact that post-conflict rebuilding has for a long time been the domain of men, which automatically gives men’s interests a prominent place at the table. With women being the primary caretakers of families, health is generally relegated the back burner by men, who fail to realize that such neglect of a basic need has a reverberating effect throughout society (Negin 2007: 20–1).

The health needs of post-conflict countries are usually enormous. In the case of Sierra Leone, the overall health status of its population immediately after the war was critical. The country was plagued by diseases for which commonly available cost-effective interventions were not being used due to (i) lack of financial and human resources; (ii) weak sector capacity; and (iii) poor and inadequate communications. Among these diseases are malaria, tuberculosis, leprosy, acute respiratory diseases, diarrhea, Lassa fever, onchocerciasis, cholera and other water-borne diseases. Another serious consequence of the civil war is that it crippled the already fledgling health care system. Although the war impacted on health delivery services in all districts, those such as Kailahun, Kono and Koinadugu, where fighting was prolonged and intense, were more badly affected. According to a Ministry of Health Report (2000), over 60 per cent of the peripheral health units (PHUs) were non-functional and another 15 per cent functioned only partially due to a lack of equipment, drugs and staff (many of whom migrated or were killed in the war). The expanded programme on immunization coverage also declined, dropping from 75 per cent in 1990 to only 40 per cent coverage in 1999. The war had also left the country with thousands of amputees, orphans, street children and psychologically traumatized women – many of whom had been brutally raped and/or had lost their children and

families. After the war, the ministry came out with a policy plan for responding to the challenges and rebuilding the nation's capacity for health care delivery. The stated vision was:

By the year 2015, the Ministry of Health and Sanitation shall have in place adequate, well-managed, efficient and motivated human resources for health and social welfare capable of providing equitable access and distribution of services leading to a healthy and productive Sierra Leone. (Ministry of Health 2006: 7)

Unfortunately, it does not appear that the country is on schedule to achieve this target by that date because, as Table 6.3 shows, there are only 3 physicians for every 100,000 people – the lowest in the sub-region – and only 42 per cent of births have a skilled health personnel in attendance – the second lowest in the region. In 2009, Amnesty International raised an alarm over the high maternal mortality rate, calling it a 'human rights emergency' (Smith 2009) and in 2010 the UNFPA released a 15-minute documentary film entitled *A Broken Calabash: Maternal Mortality in Sierra Leone* to raise awareness of the nightmare facing Sierra Leonean women of childbearing age. But, when the Sierra Leone government is spending only 7.8 per cent of its total expenditure on health (compared to Liberia's 16.4 per cent – another post-conflict nation) to rebuild a healthcare system that had been devastated by war, it is not surprising that the country ends up having the highest infant and maternal mortality rates in the world as well as the lowest life expectancy.

However, in response to these alarming statistics President Koroma launched a new programme in April 2010 (marking the country's 49th independence) that would provide free health services to vulnerable groups such as children under 5 years and pregnant women. This was in addition to a complementary programme to train traditional birth attendants, called Women's Initiative for Safer Health (WISH), spearheaded by the First Lady (Saffa 2010). As laudable as these initiatives are, reports indicate that the necessary planning was not done to endure successful implementation. Up to two weeks before the official start of the free healthcare programme, 70–80 per cent of the essential facilities needed were not ready. At the Koidu Government Hospital, for example, a major referral hospital for the entire Kono District, the resident doctor pointed out that they had no X-ray machine, no drugs store, an erratic electricity supply, inadequate doctors and nurses, beds without mattresses in the children's ward, and only one ambulance (Massaquoi 2010a). Not surprisingly, three months into the programme, there were

Table 6.3 Selected health indicators for Sierra Leone in comparison with regional countries

	Public health expenditure (% of total govt. expenditure)*	1-year olds immunized against TB (%)	Children with diarrhea on ORT (% aged <5)	Contraceptive prevalence (% of married women 15-49)	Children with skilled health personnel (%)	Physicians (per 100,000 people)
Liberia	16.4	—	—	—	—	—
Ghana	6.8	99	40	25	47	15
Senegal	6.7	92	33	12	58	6
Nigeria	3.5	48	28	13	35	28
Guinea	4.7	90	44	7	56	11
Sierra Leone	7.8	83	39	4	42	3

Sources: UNDP, *Human Development Report*, 2009*; HDR, 2007/2008.

already reports of financial and logistical obstacles to effective implementation (Horner 2010). At the Global Conference on Women Deliver held in Washington DC on June 7–9, 2010, which brought together 3,400 advocates, policy makers, development leaders and healthcare professionals from over 30 countries to discuss approaches to reducing high infant and maternal mortality rates, the deputy minister of health, Mohamed Daudis Koroma, acknowledged some of the challenges facing the free healthcare programme. He pleaded for more funding because, due to the country's porous borders, citizens from neighboring Liberia and Guinea were travelling through Kailahun and Kambia, respectively, to seek free medical care, thereby stretching their resources to the limit (Koroma 2010; www.womendeliver.org).

Another major social concern is the massive population displacement and breakdown in civil society engendered by the war, and the potential for the spread of diseases, including HIV/AIDS. The abduction and sexual abuse of young girls and women during the war resulted not only in unwanted pregnancies but also the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, thus re-emphasizing the human security dimensions of disease and the challenges to collective well-being. The World Bank, in partnership with UNAIDS, is funding the Sierra Leone HIV/AIDS Multi-Sector Project to respond to the growing epidemic as well as other sexually transmitted diseases. The emphasis of the project is 'on prevention among youth and women of child-bearing age, groups that are particularly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and that represent a large segment of the Sierra Leonean population', which includes the military and ex-combatants (Tejan-Jalloh 2002: 139). The goal of the project is to build institutional capacity to develop and implement a coordinated multi-sectoral prevention and care campaign, and support community-based initiatives from civil society organizations.

In 2005, a nation-wide survey, with a sample size of 8,450, was undertaken to determine the prevalence of HIV/AIDS. The gender breakdown of respondents was 58 per cent female and 42 per cent male. The national HIV prevalence was found to be 1.5 per cent with no significant difference between males and females overall (National Aids Secretariat 2005). As illustrated in Figure 6.1, while the total prevalence rate for males had gone down from 1.5 in 2005 to 1.2 per cent by 2008, the rate for females had increased from 1.6 to 1.7 per cent during the same period. This was due to the sharp increase in prevalence among females aged 24–34 and 40–44. Although these numbers are not too alarming for a post-conflict nation, the existence of other predisposing factors – displacement, increased

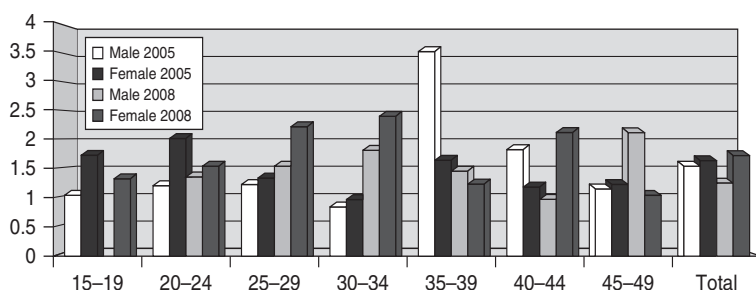


Figure 6.1 HIV prevalence (%) compared by age group and sex for 2005 and 2008

Source: *Sierra Leone Demographic and Health Survey 2008*, Ministry of Health and Sanitation (2009); *National Population-Based HIV Seroprevalence Survey of Sierra Leone*, National Aids Secretariat, 2005.

prostitution, intravenous drug use, social norms and traditions that encourage multiple wives/partners, low status of women – coupled with the poor social and health conditions suggest that if drastic action is not taken to arrest the situation, Sierra Leone could become a ticking AIDS time bomb in the West African region which, when it goes off in a decade or two, will replicate the devastating effects witnessed in the southern African countries in the decades following their liberation struggles.

While HIV may be the biggest health threat, there are other gender-specific health concerns that need to be addressed as part of the process of peacebuilding in Sierra Leone. According to the latest available figures, only 4 per cent of married women use contraceptives but we know that a lack of adequate spacing between births can be injurious to the health of women. Furthermore, only 42 per cent of all births are attended to by skilled health personnel (see Table 6.3). For the Northern Province, it is merely 27.4 per cent (Ministry of Health 2009: 122). Thus, the extremely high maternal mortality rate currently being experienced is not surprising (see Table 6.1) and has resulted in the country being described as ‘the most dangerous place in the world to be pregnant’ (Gorman 2009). Aggressive steps need to be taken, particularly at the local (rural) level, to remedy this situation, for without health security, peacebuilding becomes an elusive concept.

In addition to the health-related interventions, some social interventions also need to take place as part of the peacebuilding process. For example, there are some customary laws that make it difficult for women to control their sexual health or negotiate for safer sex. In Mende customary law, as one activist pointed out, ‘a man can

divorce his wife if she is found to be suffering from an STI. In the reverse situation, however, the woman cannot divorce the man and is expected to look after him, including providing sexual services' (Forster 2002: 148). It is at the local level that the medical and social sensitization campaigns are most needed as part of the rebuilding process.

EDUCATION

The war also placed additional burdens on an already weak education sector. The educational infrastructure in all districts was affected by the destructive effects of war, as school buildings and furniture were damaged or destroyed, and teachers killed or displaced, thus exacerbating an already bad situation. The migration to safe areas put additional stress on educational facilities in these areas, as well as traumatizing vast numbers of school children. Although not all schools completely stopped functioning during the conflict, the challenge has now become to ensure that post-conflict education not only meets the needs of nation rebuilding but that it is also gender-sensitive. For example, education has to be made equally accessible to both men and women, taking into account the educational needs of both genders. The first step in meeting this challenge is by encouraging the active participation of women in education. Teachers, both male and female, can play a tremendous role in peacebuilding and studies have shown that increasing the numbers of female teachers in the classroom is not just an effective strategy for improving gender equality but also for increasing the enrolment of girls – 'a highly significant step in transformation for gender-just peace ... [with] huge implications for the empowerment of future generations of women' (Kirk 2004: 51).

In 1993, Basic Education Reform was introduced under the 6–3–3–4 system (six years of primary, 3 years of junior secondary, 3 years of senior secondary, 4 years of tertiary) with the goal of providing basic (non-tertiary) education to the majority of the population (Wurie 2002). By the 2001/2002 academic year, the government had introduced free primary education 'whereby the fees for all students were paid for by government and books and teaching/learning materials also provided for the students' (ibid.: 162). In 2004, this free primary education was extended to include the junior secondary level by which every citizen was not just guaranteed nine years of free basic education, but it was also made compulsory (Education Act 2004). Not surprisingly, as shown in Table 6.4, half of the meagre 3.8 per cent of total expenditure that the government spent on education went toward the primary level.

Table 6.4 Public expenditure on education in Sierra Leone by level in comparison with regional countries

<i>Countries</i>	<i>Public expenditure on education (% of GDP)</i>	<i>Pre-primary and primary (% of PEE)</i>	<i>Secondary & post-secondary non-tertiary (% of PEE)</i>	<i>Tertiary (% of PEE)</i>
Ghana	5.4	39	42	18
Senegal	5.4	48	28	24
Guinea	2.0	—	—	—
Cote d'Ivoire	4.6	43	36	20
Sierra Leone	3.8	52	27	20

Source: UNDP, *Human Development Report*, 2007/2008.

As part of the reform, two new initiatives – the Rapid Response Education Programme (RREP) and Complimentary Rapid Education for Primary School (CREPS) – were introduced by the government to facilitate the re-entry into the formal school system of school-age and over-aged children, respectively, who had been deprived of an education as a result of the war. In addition, a number of non-formal primary education programmes were introduced at the local level to serve children in remote areas, as well as adult literacy centres for 18–40 year olds (Wurie 2002).

Furthermore, a five-year multi-million dollar project called SABABU Education Project, jointly sponsored by the African Development Fund, the International Development Agency and the government of Sierra Leone, commenced in 2002 to rehabilitate basic education. The project involved rehabilitating the physical infrastructures, and providing teacher training and textbooks. It is important to note that the teacher-training curriculum did include peace education and HIV/AIDS prevention education (Ministry of Education 2006a). Although the textbooks and supplies provided by the project were grossly inadequate, as one primary school head teacher pointed out, it was clear from the titles of supplementary readers provided that there was now a conscious effort not to reproduce gender-stereotyped attitudes through textbooks. A number of the textbooks had female central characters with indigenous names as evidenced from titles such as *Saffie's Mistakes*, *Kadie in a Hurry*, *Jeneba*, *Mary and the Map*, and *Satu's Journey* (Tucker 2006).

Despite these noteworthy efforts, some serious challenges still remain. As one government report revealed, while formal school fees have been abolished, basic education is still not free because many schools impose a variety of charges on students that poor families

cannot afford, eventually defeating the whole idea of free education (Ministry of Education 2006b). Furthermore, while the significant spending on primary education may have contributed to improved access and, thus, a sizeable increase to 65 per cent of female enrolment at that level, as illustrated in Figure 6.2, that interest is not sustained up the educational chain as female enrolment drops to only 22 per cent at the secondary level and takes a precipitous fall to just 1 per cent at the tertiary level.

Unfortunately, the report also revealed that despite the critical and unique role that teachers could play in moving the peacebuilding process forward, about 70 per cent of primary teachers were dissatisfied with their job for reasons ranging from late payment of salaries to poor working and living conditions (*ibid.*). Furthermore, only 32 per cent of the teachers at the primary level and 19 per cent at the secondary level are female (*ibid.*: 47). Of serious concern now is the fact that despite all the interventions Sierra Leone still has the lowest combined enrolment ratio for females (37.6 per cent) and the second lowest for males (51.7 per cent) in the sub-region with Liberia, a comparable post-conflict nation, having the highest at 48.6 per cent and 66.5 per cent, respectively (see Figure 6.3).

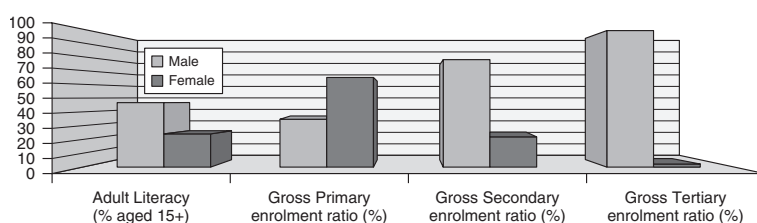


Figure 6.2 Gender inequality in education

Source: UNDP, *Human Development Report*, 2007/2008.

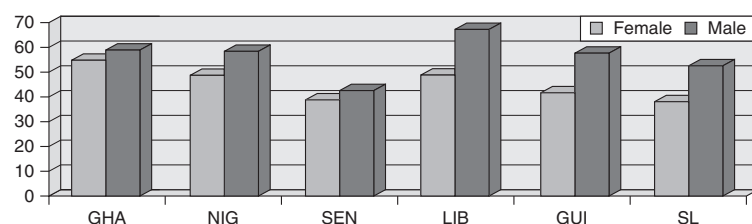


Figure 6.3 Combined gross enrolment ratio in education (%) by gender for select West African countries

Source: UNDP, *Human Development Report*, 2009.

Following the poor performance of junior and senior secondary school pupils in the 2008 Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) and West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) respectively, the government set up a commission in May 2009 to investigate the reasons. The Gbamanja Commission of Inquiry recently presented its report in response to which the government issued a White Paper in July 2010 agreeing to most of the commission's recommendations, which included, among other things:

- Modifying the 6–3–3–4 system to become 6–3–4–4, including a compulsory early childhood component.
- Making primary education free in both policy and practice.
- Reviewing the conditions of service of teachers.
- Phasing out the two-shift system.
- Establishing performance contracts for all heads of educational institutions.
- Criminalizing the sale of school materials supplied by government. (Ministry of Information 2010)

No details on the timeline and how the implementation of these recommendations will be funded have been published. Nevertheless, for any hope at successfully gender-sensitizing post-conflict education as part of nation rebuilding, the ministry will need to not only fully implement the commission's recommendations but also broaden the ministry's focus beyond primary education, encourage gender equity for teachers and greater access for girls and, finally, make the education of girls in rural areas a priority.

GENDER, RECONCILIATION AND TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE

To address the recovery and reconstruction of the war-ravaged country at the conclusion of the war, the government, in 2002, with the help of its international and national partners, adopted a two-pronged approach: a National Recovery Strategy (NRS) and a Poverty Reduction Strategy – with the aim of providing a quick-start to recovery. The objective of the NRS was to create the conditions that will consolidate peace and lay the foundations for longer-term development. It was intended to serve as a bridge between emergency humanitarian assistance – which, to a large extent, was being provided by NGOs and UN agencies – and longer-term government development programmes. This strategy included four elements, one of which was consolidating peace, promoting reconciliation and human rights.

CONSOLIDATING PEACE, PROMOTING RECONCILIATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Article XXVI of the Lomé Peace Agreement called for the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission 'to address impunity, break the cycle of violence, provide a forum for both the victims and perpetrators of human rights violations to tell their story, [and] get a clear picture of the past in order to facilitate genuine healing and reconciliation.' This was made possible through the Truth and Reconciliation Act of 2000 as a result of which the TRC was set up in 2002 with six commissioners, three of whom were female. There has been a lot of debate over the TRC with some scholars questioning the idea of truth-telling as a remedy for healing a wounded and deeply traumatized nation (Shaw 2005) and others questioning the concept of a TRC as a one-size fits all panacea for peace (Sesay 2007). Given the fact that post-conflict reconciliation requires the active participation of all stakeholders in addition to putting in place unique programmes, institutions and structures to address the 'scars' of war (ibid.), a further question concerns the ability of the government – now heavily dependent on external donors – to even implement a TRC successfully.

The commission presented its final report to the government in 2004. It found that although the majority of victims were adult males, over one-third were women who were specifically targeted and, thus, suffered some of the most brutal violations of their human rights. While one-third of the adult violations reported to the commission were against women, almost half of those violations targeted young girls (TRC 2004: paras 81–82). Due to the high number of gender-specific crimes that were committed, the commission recommended that it was imperative that the government take immediate steps to protect the human rights and dignity of all citizens because, although the war had ended, many of the women and girls still bore the scars of their horrible experiences. Many were saddled with the responsibility of caring for children that resulted from the rape and sexual slavery they suffered, in addition to being shunned by society for being the progenitors of 'rebel' offspring.

This recommendation is crucial because even though women constitute an estimated 51 per cent of the population, gender inequity and discrimination is still pervasive. Part of the explanation for this situation lies in the fact that Sierra Leone operates under a pluralistic legal system made up of Common Law, Customary Law and Islamic Law – the worst offender being Customary Law, which relegates women to status equal to that of a minor. When the high rate

of illiteracy is added to the confusion generated by this triad, the result is a denial of equal opportunities – not only in regard to their male colleagues but also against their female counterparts living in different regions or governed by different traditions and customs – particularly in the areas of family law, marriage and divorce (Nicol 2002: 59–60).

IMPLEMENTATION OF TRC RECOMMENDATIONS: GENDERED IMPLICATIONS

One of the specific strategies suggested by the commission for implementing the human rights recommendation is for the government to enshrine the right to human dignity in the Constitution and then develop programmes that will promote a general culture of human rights in the country. With funding from Britain's Department for International Development (DFID) and the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA), the Sierra Leone government reconstituted the Law Reform Commission (LRC) in 2003 to review and reform the laws of Sierra Leone.

It is ironic that Section 27 of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone, which enshrines the fundamental right to protection from discrimination, also contains a specific exemption from the issues of adoption, marriage, divorce, burial and inheritance – matters that are of great significance to women (Nicol 2002). Such matters are then subject to discriminatory application in a society where women face numerous barriers trying to access justice (Dale 2007). Since these were the areas where women were most disadvantaged, the LRC decided that its first priority was to identify, for elimination, the laws that discriminate against women as well as 'modernize' those dealing with sexual offences. After organizing a consultative conference of women's groups and other interested parties, the LRC recommended in 2004 that all laws that discriminate against women with regard to issues of marriage, succession, inheritance and access to commercial use of land should be removed. One proposed change to the marriage law, for example, stated:

that ... the rights and obligations of the parties to a marriage – be it Civil, Christian, Islamic or Customary – be harmonized so that the parties enjoy equal rights; that the age of marriage without parental consent be reduced from 21 to 18 years and marriage below the age of 16 should be made illegal, parental consent notwithstanding. (LRC 2006: 4)

Apart from marriage, the commission has also tackled laws relating to domestic and sexual offenses. The laws on domestic violence, especially against women and children, were reviewed with input from UNIFEM and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs. In 2007, parliament approved and President Kabbah signed into law the new Domestic Violence Act, outlawing domestic violence and giving Family Support Units in the police the necessary tools to either mediate disputes or support women who decide to take criminal and civil action when their rights are violated. Two other gender-related bills that the LRC worked on were also signed into law that same year. The Devolution of Estate Act (2007) and the Registration of Customary Marriage and Divorce Act (2007) both establish the rights of women when it comes to inheritance as well as marrying and divorcing under Customary Law, respectively. The passage of these laws was a huge step towards improving the status of women, especially rural women, the majority of whose marriages are contracted under Customary Law. The commission has also drafted a bill on sexual offences that 'seeks to codify and modernise the law of rape, including marital rape, and makes comprehensive provisions to deal with sexual offences, arranging or facilitating child prostitution and pornography' (LRC 2006: 4).

Unfortunately, as is the case with other good intentioned laws and policies, the failure to successfully implement them has been the greatest obstacle to progress on the peacebuilding front. Domestic violence continues unabated. Ironically, in Kenema recently, the women's leader of the Peoples Movement for Democracy (PMDC) party, one of the opposition political parties, had to abort a training she was facilitating on gender equality and domestic violence to respond to the call for help from another woman who 'breezed into the hall with a battered face and broken arm' complaining that her husband had beaten her 'mercilessly and then dragged [her] with [her] belly on the ground' after accusing her of infidelity. As Mrs McCarthy's account below reveals, the government has a long way to go with respect to sensitization on and implementation of the gender bills:

We immediately stormed the hospital where one Dr. Momoh requested the sum of Le30,000 just to examine the lady. But after some arguments as to why the lady should pay for that service, the doctor reluctantly worked [sic] around his table looking for a pen and paper; he then decided to write a note back to the police without properly examining the woman. (Massaquoi 2010b)

According to statistics from the National Family Support Unit, of the 1,543 domestic violence incidents against women reported in 2009, 759 were still being investigated, 386 pending, 106 resolved out of court, and one dismissed, with no convictions (Jean-Matthew 2010). Furthermore, there are increasing reports of women being raped around the country: in Kono, where victims were as young as 12 years (Kanu 2010d); in Pujehun (*Concord Times* 2009a); and at the SLPP Headquarters in Freetown (*Concord Times* 2009b). To make matters worse, of the 927 rape cases reported in 2009, not a single suspect was convicted (Jean-Matthew 2010). Not surprisingly, women are still finding it impossible to inherit property left by their deceased husbands (*Concord Times* 2009c).

At a higher level, steps need to be taken to strengthen the Ministry of Social Welfare, which is charged with leading implementation, and the Family Support Units of the police. The Ministry of Social Welfare, for example, has the largest portfolio of any government department but the smallest budget. In 2006, its budget was \$500,000, which mostly covered staff costs. The ministry is supposed to have offices and social workers operating across the country, but it does not have the capacity to carry out significant projects. Social workers often go unpaid, and without transport or communication allowances struggle to attend to their communities. In addition to lacking financial resources, the ministry suffers from poor internal communication of information. The director of gender, for example, never even received a copy of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report. Finally, the ministry has little clout in the government, which is generally male dominated and little interested in 'women's issues'. Many of the ministry's functions should be carried out by other government agencies with oversight and coordination from the ministry: unfortunately, the ministry is currently not exerting such oversight and in practice most programmes required by its mandate are not being effectively carried out. Real financial and human resources need to be put into the ministry to strengthen its position in the government and to build the morale and capacity of its staff to tackle its work.

The Family Support Units of the police are potentially a very positive force for implementation of the Domestic Violence Act, and many people within the FSU are eager to work on this issue. Like the Ministry of Social Welfare, the FSU needs support in terms of skills building and funding. Now that the FSU has the law it needs to prosecute domestic violence, its staff need to be trained in investigation and prosecution as well as how to monitor cases. It is also important for the FSU to receive sufficient funding to follow up cases

(Alyson-in-Africa 2008). It is clear from the above quote that the blueprint for implementation has been established. One group that is already making use of this power is the Lawyers Centre for Legal Assistance which, two years after passage, realized that the technical language used might also be a barrier to implementation. Thus, in collaboration with the 50/50 Group and FAWA, they prepared five simplified handbooks of the laws as well as training materials which they plan to use to conduct public education and training programmes on the contents of the gender bills (*Concord Times* 2009d).

The issue of Customary Law also elicited another major recommendation from the TRC, recognizing the need to harmonize the current subjective and inconsistent interpretations by both individuals and the courts. The LRC is still working on reforming these laws. At the same time, it is recognized by all concerned that this is a major undertaking that cannot be accomplished overnight as customs differ between regions and ethnic groups. But there is no doubt that when completed this recommendation would go a long way towards improving the status of women in Sierra Leone.

Another recommendation that the TRC considered 'imperative' in helping to create a culture of human rights was the establishment of a Human Rights Commission (HRC), which 'can serve both as a watchdog and a visible route through which people can access their rights'. Such a commission, it was envisaged, should have the power 'to secure appropriate redress where human rights have been violated ... monitor legislation before Parliament ... [as well as] monitor how the government enforces constitutionally guaranteed political, civil, social, economic and cultural rights' (TRC 2004: paras 98–100). In response, parliament passed the Human Rights Commission Act in 2004, establishing the commission. Given its mandate, there was no doubt that an effective HRC would impact on the status of women in a positive way. Unfortunately, after its creation, it took over a year for the five members of the commission to be appointed, the head of which is female. Consequently, the commission did not become truly operational until 2007 and that was largely as a result of a one-year funding (June 2007–June 2008) received from the UN Peacebuilding Fund (King 2008). Although the government bears the primary responsibility for funding the commission's activities, it is the financial support from the PBF and the Office of the High Commission for Human Rights, through UNIOSIL, that has kept the commission going. For instance, government's budgetary allocation to the commission between 2007 and 2009 was a total of only 519 million Leones or \$163,333, even though the commission's budget for 2009

alone was \$2.5 million (HRCSL 2008: 18–19). With such a major handicap, it is not surprising that recently one of the commissioners publicly expressed his institution's fears over what he described as 'the widening gap and gross inequality between men and women and the widespread discrimination against women' (Tarawallie 2010a). Given this weak level of financial support from the government, it appears that the commission will have to remain dependent on external funding in order to have a chance at achieving its vision of 'a Sierra Leone where a culture of human rights prevails, the people respect the rule of law and live in peace and dignity' (HRCSL 2008: p.11) Though seemingly late, the commission was finally able, in 2010, to start educating and training its staff and civil society organizations on monitoring the implementation of human rights policies such as the TRC recommendations pertaining to women and the details of the 2007 gender bills (Tarawallie 2010b; 2010c)

Perhaps the TRC recommendation that would contribute the most to sustaining peace in Sierra Leone, if implemented, is the one for a reparations programme, for there can be no expectation of a genuine reconciliation or lasting peace if the victims' needs are not effectively addressed. The categories of victims the TRC identified as being in most dire need of urgent care and which should therefore benefit from the reparations include: amputees, war wounded, children, victims of sexual violence and war widows. As it turns out, women constitute a significant percentage of each of these categories and they have suffered either a 50 per cent reduction in their earning capacity and primary care-giving ability as a result of their amputation; are unable to have children because of damage done to their sexual organs from being gang raped; have had to take on extra responsibilities as head of household after the death of their husbands; or have been ostracized because of the sexually transmitted disease they have to live with or the child that resulted from the rape whom they now have to raise. The reparations programme would address these specific needs by providing things like free and accessible health care, monthly pensions counselling, psychosocial support, free education for the children of war widows, skills training, microcredit projects as well as community and symbolic reparations (King 2006: 259–65).

As critical as this issue seems for building and sustaining peace, the greatest obstacle to its implementation, as the Human Rights Commission Chair pointed out, is that the government lacks the necessary financial resources (King 2008). Although the special unit within the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA) with a six-person Advisory Committee to handle reparations, as

recommended by the TRC, was finally set up in 2007 and has since been doing preparatory work for eventual implementation of reparations, there is neither a woman nor are any organizations working for women's rights represented on the Committee (Amnesty International 2007). Furthermore, the Special Fund for War Victims, which the TRC recommended be set up within three months of the publication of its report in October 2004, was established five years later, in December 2008, thanks to a one-year, \$3m funding grant from the PBF. Nevertheless, by the end of 2009, a total of 29,733 victims had been registered, most of whom received a one-time allowance of 300,000 Leones (\$100). A comprehensive review of this one-year project, however, found that not all victims had been identified and registered; that the one-time payment is a far cry from the long-term pension plan called for by the TRC; and that there was a lack of financial commitment on the part of the government who contributed only \$246,000 or 8.2 per cent of the total cost of operations during year one (Suma and Correa 2009). The report also warned the government against depending on international donor funds to keep the programme going as that would be tantamount to abandoning 'its state duty to repair victims of human rights violations'.

Given the apparent lack of commitment by government to implement the reparations called for by the TRC, members of civil society, on their own initiative, organized a series of symposia around the country in March 2007 to remember the victims of the conflict. One significant outcome of these events was the establishment of 23 March (the day the first shot was fired that started the war) as National Victim's Commemoration Day (Amnesty International 2007). This symbolic reparation, however, fulfils another one of the TRC recommendations.

GENDERED IMPACT OF EXTERNAL ACTORS ON PEACEBUILDING

Despite the government's halfhearted approach to the problem, some civil society organizations, as well as local and international NGOs, have adopted a proactive stance by nudging the government along or, when necessary, forcing their hand on some issues. Search for Common Ground (SFCG) in Sierra Leone, a US-based international NGO in the field of conflict transformation, has made giant strides in this area. SFCG operates two main programmes: Talking Drum Studios and the Community Peacebuilding Unit. The first collaborates with Independent Radio Network to produce programmes for distribution to some 18 radio stations across the country with

the goal of increasing civic participation, particularly among marginalized groups. Two of its most popular programmes are *Atunda Ayenda* ('Lost and Found'), a radio soap opera which addresses a range of social issues of particular concern to youths, and *Unity Boat*, 'a local language drama series [which] promotes themes of reconciliation, non-violence and conflict resolution' all essential aspects of peacebuilding.

The second project undertaken by SFCG is the Community Peacebuilding Unit (CPU), the focal point of which is Community Radio Outreach. With help from SFCG in the training of station managers and local journalists, communities in Tombo, Mile 91, Makeni, Kabala and Kailahun have launched successful community radio stations where social and political issues, including those affecting women, are regularly discussed and debated. Such community radio stations, which are popping up all over the country, are contributing significantly to sensitizing locals, especially in the remote areas, about not only women's issues but also a culture of peace and human rights (Ojukutu-Macauley 2006).

The major external actors (and funders), the World Bank, UN and DFID, are also sponsoring numerous programmes and projects that time will not permit a thorough examination of in this chapter. Despite their laudable efforts, this heavy involvement of external players in post-conflict Sierra Leone raises the question of whether there is national ownership of the peacebuilding agenda or whether it is externally driven.

CONCLUSION

The 11-year civil war that resulted from decades of bad governance and economic mismanagement had devastating consequences for the society in general, and women in particular. Serious damage was done to the country's infrastructure but even graver harm was done to the physical and psychological health of women who are the backbone of the society. Not surprisingly, women played an active role in bringing the conflict to an end so that they could start to rebuild their shattered lives and families. Although the guns have been silent for over eight years, the high levels of gender-based violence has continued unabated. Women continue to be raped, even at gunpoint (*Concord Times* 2008e) and suffer from domestic abuse (UN IRIN 2007). Female candidates for local council elections continue to face harassment from their opponents (*Concord Times* 2008a) and a radio programme even discussed the problem of female candidates in various parts of the country being refused their party

symbol as a strategy to thwart their candidacy (Independent Radio Network 2008). Human rights officials lament the fact that some men have started complaining publicly that there has been too much emphasis given to women (King 2008). This suggests that the goal of empowerment of women and improving the general culture of respect for human rights has not been achieved. Despite the passage of the three landmark gender-related bills in 2007, women's status remains unchanged and even the president had to concede, three years later, that gender inequity is still rife in the country (Tarawallie 2010d). As the lynchpins of the family, post-conflict peacebuilding and long-term development depends a lot on the welfare of women. Consequently, if the country is to avoid a recurrence of the gender-based violence that characterized the war, government needs to do a lot more to help women restore their dignity as well as those community values that clearly broke down during the war. This could be done by increasing sensitization programmes nationwide on gender issues, investing in and fully implementing the reparations recommended by the TRC, and incorporating gender and peace studies into the curriculum in schools, starting at the primary level. Six years after the TRC recommended it, the first draft of a peace curriculum that would be test-piloted in selected schools was presented to the minister of education for review (Kamara 2010). Although advances by the government have been slow, the good news is that improvements have been noted in some areas, thanks to the involvement of civil society groups, NGOs and external funding partners of the government like DFID and the UN. In June 2010, the president launched a national gender strategic plan which, he promised, would address the problem of gender inequality – including achieving the 30 per cent quota – and other abuses against women (*ibid.*). Only time will tell whether this latest promise will be fulfilled, thereby giving birth to a newly rebuilt, gender-sensitive and peaceful nation.

7

Youth Marginalization in Post-War Sierra Leone: Mapping out the Challenges for Peace

J. D. Ekundayo-Thompson

INTRODUCTION

Post-war Sierra Leone is grappling with a number of challenges including that of creating an environment for sustained economic and social development and creatively responding to the needs of the young people. Pervasive poverty, the bane of the majority of Sierra Leoneans, contributes to vulnerability which may lead to conflict if not strategically addressed. Junne and Verkoren (2005: 2) argue that while economic development is not a guarantee against violent conflict, a lack of development can fuel the resumption of violence especially in situations where there are large numbers of unemployed young males. Forty-eight per cent of the population are under the age of 38 and over 70 per cent of the population are unemployed or underemployed (*Sierra Leone Telegraph*, 8 February 2010). Many young people joined the fighting forces, some voluntarily and others through abduction and conscription, and unleashed a reign of terror on unarmed civilians resulting in deaths, mutilations and wanton destruction of property both public and private. Of the 71,000 fighters who were demobilized, almost 7,000 were child soldiers.

Although the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme was acclaimed as a success, large numbers of ex-combatants were not part of the reintegration process. According to Grant (2005: 445), 1 in 8 ex-combatants did not make it to the reintegration phase. Besides, members of the Civil Defence Forces (CDF) did not see themselves as targets for the DDR programme as they only fought 'in self-defence' (UNOCHA 2004). With perhaps as many as 100,000 youths involved in the war, these former combatants now swell the large pool of urban unemployed, and their presence in the street depicts an uneasy peace and a potentially explosive situation.

During the conflict the youth underwent radical transformation, which was the climax of pre-war political (GoSL 2005: xv). This

was apparently the climax of a process of pre-war violent political socialization. Involvement of young people in acts of political violence and thuggery during pre-war electioneering campaigns in the 1970s and 1980s in favour of political parties were part of the reasons for the stigmatization of youths as thugs. Their participation in acts of political violence did not, however, result in any improvement of their material condition at the end of the war, as they were soon abandoned by the politicians.

CONCEPTIONS OF YOUTH

The notion of youth has generated a good deal of debate as evidenced by the literature which is enriched by differences in perspectives and definitions. These include the developmental or life stage concept, that is the transition from childhood to adulthood. Youth is a situational constituted and configured perception, and therefore differs according to time and place. The following perspectives on youth are discernible in the literature: developmental/life stages; psychological, social and physical; somatic/psychosocial; situational/contextual/cultural. The concept of youth is culture-bound, with the age ranging varying from one culture to another. Although these definitions tend to convey a notion of mutual exclusivity which does not exist in reality, they are important in recognizing the shift from mainly traditional conceptions to more inclusive perspectives. The definition of youth should therefore 'be constantly negotiated and adapted to the contexts they are actualized and generated within' (Christiansen et al. 2006: 12). Furthermore, youth could be perceived as socially influential in one context and marginal or obsolete in other contexts (*ibid.*).

In the current post-war peacebuilding and development efforts, youth in general are playing socially useful roles especially within civil society and community-based organizations, but their role in the civil conflict, especially as combatants, has been criticized and attempts to glorify their role have been rejected (Bangura 1997).

YOUTH MARGINALIZATION

The issue of youth marginalization is examined in the context of the poor performance of the national economy which the rebel war exacerbated. In the midst of an abundance of natural resources including mineral, agricultural, forestry and marine resources, Sierra Leone has been at the bottom of the UNDP's Human Development Index

(HDI) ranking. Unemployment, an indicator of a poor performing economy, is very high among the youth (>60 per cent). High unemployment coupled with high illiteracy, especially among women and girls, seem to consign the youth to the margins of the mainstream economy and of society. Poverty, illiteracy, and inadequate and inappropriate education result in a situation of unemployment and disempowerment. There is a correlation between illiteracy and poverty: illiterate youths tend to be poor and poor youths are, in general, illiterate. Poverty assessment data indicate that 65.2 per cent of male youths were illiterate in English and 49.1 per cent were innumerate. Of female youths, 68.3 per cent were illiterate in English and 95.5 per cent innumerate. (GoSL 2003: 40). In a country where English is the official language, a significant number of youths could be left out of the communication process, resulting in their dependence on others for interpreting and transmitting information. Marginalization can, therefore, be both political and economic.

A study was conducted in 2007 to examine and address the issue of youth marginalization in post-war Sierra Leone. The aims of the study included the following:

- to explicate the concept of youth marginalization;
- to describe the characteristics and causes of youth marginalization;
- to define 'effectiveness' as applied to youth policies and programmes in Sierra Leone;
- to assess the nature and level of youth participation in determining and executing the measures to address youth marginalization;
- to recommend measures to increase the level of effectiveness of youth policies and programmes.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study was predominantly a cross-sectional survey of youth organizations to elicit data on the effectiveness of the measures to address youth marginalization. The single design paradigm was adopted as the basis for generating both quantitative and qualitative data and to qualify concepts, clarify associations between selected variables, and reach the desired interpretations. The investigation was by means of a limited literature study and an empirical investigation. The purpose of the literature study was to establish the theoretical basis for the research and to locate it in the context of the peacebuilding process, current efforts to promote human

rights, good governance, and social and economic development. The literature study took account of the emerging perspectives on the definition of youth (see, for example, Christiansen et al. 2006).

A stratified sampling technique was used to select the respondent. This was informed by the fact that the population of 206 youth organizations have different programme orientations and foci. Nine categories of organizations, based on their programme/project orientation and target groups, were identified. These categories though not mutually exclusive formed the strata into which the organizations were assigned. The simple random sampling technique was then used to select subjects from each stratum. A sample of 103 organizations representing 50 per cent of the population was drawn.

CONTEXT OF YOUTH MARGINALIZATION: AN OVERVIEW

This section examines the issue of youth marginalization in the contexts of the turbulent political, economic and social situations in Sierra Leone. It does so against the backdrop of the general decline which the country had witnessed over three decades. The effects of the decline in contributing to, and exacerbating, the problem are analysed. It informs the empirical investigation, contributes to its results, and provides a basis for policy-relevant recommendations.

GENESIS OF YOUTH MARGINALIZATION IN SIERRA LEONE: STATE ATROPHY

The recent political history of Sierra Leone provides justification for the country's inclusion in the ignominious list of failed states. State failure or state collapse refers, in general, to a situation where legitimate authority had either virtually or completely ceased to exist leaving a vacuum to be filled (Zartman 1995; Fukuyama 2005). Zartman posits that state collapse is a specific and narrow phenomenon which is identifiable and which has a political causality with far-reaching social and economic implications (1995: 2). The withering away of the Sierra Leone state and its subsequent collapse in the 1990s had its causes in a dogged refusal of the political class to learn the art of governance, and a penchant for patrimonial traditionalism.

In his identification of the causes of state collapse, Zartman (1995) identified the inability to perform the functions of state as primordial. The antecedents of the collapse of the Sierra Leone state were seen, first, in the erosion of legitimacy by the state's misuse

and abuse of the people's sovereignty; second, by the imposition of the one-party state; third, by the inability to maintain social order, resulting in coups d'état; and, finally, by the inability to defend the country's territorial integrity, resulting in its subjugation by rebel forces and their rogue collaborators from neighbouring Liberia. The collapse of the society was a direct consequence of state collapse, and the innumerable societal problems including youth marginalization that ensued.

Various aspects of the issue of collapse of the Sierra Leone State have been examined by a number of writers including Kaplan (1992); Zack-Williams (1999); Richards (1996); Kande (1999); Gberie (2000); Abdullah (2004); Bangura (1997, 2000); Rashid (1994, 2004); Abraham (2004); Reno (1995). Kaplan (1992) case studied Sierra Leone to indicate the extent of anarchy. Although the behaviour of the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) junta seemed despicable to many observers, their hold onto the reins of power seemed to have uplifted the spirit of the youth. What the NPRC rule exhibited was an incipient generational conflict because the youth saw in others, especially those in positions of authority, an explanation for their country's predicament. The lyrics of songs following the end of the conflict such as 'Borboh Belleh' and 'Corruption, Corruption', testify to this assertion. These issues have been addressed by some of the preceding contributors (Zack-Williams, Kande, Marcella Macauley and Sylvia Macauley) and will not detain us at this point.

Youth marginalization is attributed to a combination of factors including: poor governance, absence of social citizenship in the form of basic welfare, and high unemployment and urban rural poverty, as urban ruralization intensified. There is a high concentration of youths in the major towns and cities in search of a better life and an illusory escape from poverty. The Sierra Leone Integrated Household Survey (SLIHS) (Statistics Sierra Leone 2003/04) indicates the percentage of poor people by district (see Table 7.1).

The result of the participatory poverty assessment in the five poorest districts indicates that laziness (negative attitude to work) and illiteracy were two of the causes of poverty. Negative attitude to work is a consequence of youths' perception of work and an apparent lack of respect for the dignity in labour. Youths who have been to school and have acquired a modicum of basic education tend to look down on, even deride certain types of job, especially those which they consider menial and 'undignified'. Consequently, even with the availability of so-called menial jobs, the majority of the youth remain long-term unemployed. Agriculture (subsistence

Table 7.1 The poor by district

<i>District</i>	<i>Percentage of total poor</i>
Bo	64.0
Bonthe	85.0
Moyamba	68.0
Pujehun	59.0
Kailahun	92.0
Kenema	88.0
Kono	66.0
Bombali	89.0
Kambia	69.0
Koinadugu	77.0
Port Loko	82.0
Tonkolili	84.0
Western Urban	15.0
Western Rural	45.0
National	70.0

Source: Sierra Leone Integrated Household Survey, 2003/04.

farming), in which the majority of the rural population are employed, appears to be too labour intensive for the youth. This is evidenced by the sight of the old and infirm in the rural areas trying to eke out a living in below subsistence farming.

The high incidence of rural–urban migration and a preference for living in Freetown, even in the absence of ‘the bright lights’ and basic social services, explain why the incidence of homelessness is increasing. In Kroo Bay, the largest urban slum, for example, the population of more than 500,000 is living in abject poverty and squalor. In general, it is estimated that the average number of persons per room in extreme poor households is 9.5, 7.5 of whom are dependent household members (GoSL 2005: 27). Table 7.2 indicates data on poverty by age group.

Table 7.2 Incidence of poverty by age group of household head

<i>Age group of household</i>	<i>Incidence of poverty</i>	
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
15–25	62.8	67.4
26–35	64.1	69.1
36–45	70.7	70.3
46–55	71.6	68.6
56–65	74.0	66.5
66+	78.5	60.0

Source: GoSL, 2005: 28.

The majority of the youth in Sierra Leone fall into two categories according to the categorization of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (GoSL 2005: 23). These are the the poor (*po*) and the poorer (*po pas po*). Some of their characteristics are indicated below:

- Illiterate;
- Unemployed;
- Living in makeshift accomodation.

The correlation between education and poverty is indicated by the incidence of poverty among heads of households with formal education. The percentage of poor male-headed households without formal education is 74.5 per cent and for female-headed household is 72.2 per cent. The incidence of poverty decreases as the level of formal education increases (GoSL 2005 in World Bank 2007: 22).

MEASURES TO ADDRESS YOUTH MARGINALIZATION

Internationally Generated Measures

In the 1990s a number of world conferences were held in which the issue of youth featured prominently in their deliberations and conclusions. The outcomes of these conferences have influenced global and local-level measures and actions to address the issue of youth and the problems of youth marginalization.

Two conferences, the World Conference on Education For All (EFA) (1990), and the Millennium Summit (2000), are important in this discussion. While EFA addressed education as a basic human right, the Millennium Summit addressed a number of interrelated issues including poverty. Goal 1 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) seeks to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. The other six goals are related to the eradication of poverty, which it was thought would contribute towards achieving the other goals by 2015. Education was seen as an important tool for ending the marginalization of young people; conversely, a lack of education contributes to marginalization and according to Srinivasan (2000) the synergy between education and increased political participation and empowerment, for example, is comparatively well established.

The World Bank, the African Development Bank, DFID and the European Commission have consolidated their respective benchmarks into a single Progress Assessment Framework as part of the multi Donor Budget Support. The rationale for this was to ensure that implementation co-ordination and monitoring are facilitated and that costs of transaction in dealing with the individual donors

are reduced (GoSL 2007: 46). Other leading donors and regional organizations whose support are directly or indirectly linked to the process of addressing youth marginalization are the Islamic Development Bank, the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), the Kuwaiti Fund and the OPEC Fund.

The governments of Italy, Japan, China and the USA have assisted the government of Sierra Leone through budget support and support for specific projects and programmes including projects on youth. One of the key policies of the government is to promote youth development as a critical factor in maintaining peace and promoting pro-poor growth. This policy recognizes the fact that the youth constitutes about one-third of the population and that more than 60 per cent of them are unemployed. Generating employment opportunities for the youth is therefore a key challenge for post-conflict regimes in Sierra Leone. As a consequence, youth unemployment, one of the manifestations of youth marginalization, has been the focus of a number of global initiatives in the 1990s under the aegis of the United Nations, including the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD) in its Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action; the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond; the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth; the Lisbon Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes; the World Youth Forum of the United Nations System; and the Braga Youth Action Plan.

The WSSD addressed the issue of youth unemployment in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, calling for the problems of structural, long-term unemployment and underemployment of youth to be fully addressed in strategies to create employment. It recognized the need for young people to have access to knowledge and skills and specifically focused on equal access to education by prioritizing literacy, especially for girls, thus ensuring the participation of youth in planning and decision-making. Another manifestation of youth marginalization is social exclusion, that is a multidimensional process of progressive social rupture through social neglect or abandon or inter-generational rupture (Zack-Williams 2001a). Responses to social exclusion were among the proposals which the WSSD considered in 1995. Three areas of focus addressed were reduction in poverty, unemployment and the enhancing social integration. 'Social integration' has a number of implications including equal opportunities and equal rights for all. It is assumed that when people are socially integrated their life chances are improved. It also implies greater justice, equality, material well-being and democratic freedom.

But there are fundamental issues which need to be addressed when discussing the issue of social integration. If these are not addressed the symptoms rather than the causes will be the focus of attention. Why are people excluded? The answer may be located in the structures of society – political, economic and social, with the imperative for structural transformation of society.

REGIONAL INITIATIVES

At the African regional level a number of initiatives have been undertaken to address the youth question by focusing on the development of African youth for the renewal and development of the continent. The future development of Africa, even its destiny, is inextricably linked with the issue of youth. Prominent among the initiatives is the African Youth Charter. This is a framework for the rights, freedoms and duties of youth in Africa, which was adopted by the 1st Conference of the ministries in charge of youth, under the aegis of the African Union. The charter was also adopted by the 7th session of the Conference of the Heads of State and government of the African Union in Banjul, the Gambia in July 2006 (African Union Commission 2006).

The charter sets out the basic principles and legal framework ‘to support development of appropriate policies, programmes and activities’ for the youth. Specifically, it seeks to curb poverty and to develop the African youth through leadership and participation within the context of the African renaissance and prosperity. The charter addresses the following themes: youth leadership and participation; health and well-being; education and skills development; sustainable livelihoods; environment; peace and youth responsibilities.

NATIONAL MEASURES

The measures which have been taken to address youth marginalization at the national level are in conformity with the provisions of the African Youth Charter. Three categories of measures namely, policy, legal and programme are reviewed below.

Policy Measures

Sierra Leone National Youth Policy

The Sierra Leone National Youth Policy is a revised policy whose principal objective is to ‘mainstream youth activities and contributions and to highlight youth concerns as critical input in the development process’ (GoSL 2002: 2). The task was informed by the

preceding National Youth Development Policy of 1995, the results of the National Youth Conference of 2001 and the National Youth Forum of 2003. The government in partnership with key stakeholders and youth organizations initiated action in evolving the policy. The main features of the policy are:

- (i) definition of youth, as any Sierra Leonean within the 15–35 age bracket;
- (ii) provision of guidelines in respect of responsibilities of adults, the state and the private sector to youths;
- (iii) provision of guidelines on the responsibilities of youth to society;
- (iv) delineation of the specific role of the Ministry of Youth and Sports and its organs.

The quintessence of the policy is encapsulated in the following vision statement:

The National Youth Policy is anchored on the twin notion of youth empowerment and the creation of a responsible citizenry. Empowerment in a post-conflict context involves privileging and mainstreaming youth related activities in the overall process of national reconstruction. The ultimate goal is to reinvent the time honoured notion of dignity in labour, instill national consciousness and patriotism in our young citizens, so as to lay the foundation for the emergence of a responsible citizenry in the service of a one and indivisible Sierra Leone. (ibid.)

The policy underscores the relationship between youth capacity and national regeneration in a post-war situation. One of the nine goals and objectives of the policy is ‘to mobilize youths of all ages to replace the culture of violence with a culture of peace, dialogue and responsible citizenry through intensive campaigns, value education programmes and life skills training’ (ibid.). Other features of the policy with programmatic implications include: gender sensitivity; the fight against HIV/AIDS; dignity of labour; and facilitation of employment. The policy represents a comprehensive response to a complex web of problems in which youths are trapped. When the increasing incidence of violence is added to the cycle, its vicious nature can be discerned. The sources of these problems are multifarious, namely structural, war-related, environmental and poor socialization. Against the backdrop of these problems, reducing the number of marginal youth and increasing the number of

mainstream youth are described as ‘the major national challenge facing the nation’ (ibid.: 6).

The National Recovery Strategy (GoSL 2005) articulated the need for addressing youth issues as part of the post-war national recovery process. The process included the creation of a Ministry of Youth and Sports which launched the National Youth Programme in 2002, and which was described as ‘a comprehensive intervention that is founded on the dual principles of national recovery and the creation of responsible citizenry’ (GoSL 2002: 2).

Sierra Leone Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) is both a policy and programme framework for national reconstruction and development following ten years of armed conflict which was unprecedented in its brutality. A litany of problems characterizes the post-war situation which the policy and programme seek to address in the medium to long term. Increasing levels of poverty with 70 per cent of the population living in poverty, and the deteriorating plight of the youth are two of the problems needing urgent action given their potential for destabilizing the tenuous social order. The PRSP focuses on sectoral policies and institutional reforms to achieve: economic growth; provision of food security; provision of job opportunities; provision of basic social services and effective social safety nets (GoSL 2005: xii). Poverty reduction and improved human development are its overarching objectives. The pillars of the PRSP support the achievement of the MDGs. Promotion of good governance, security and peace constitutes the first pillar. Pro-poor sustainable growth for food security and job creation constitutes the second pillar. The third pillar is human development. The PRSP recognizes the issue of youth when it states that: ‘The youth ... underwent violent, radical transformation during the conflict. Those engaged in harmful activities are now part of society. Youth needs must receive attention in peacebuilding and poverty reduction’ (GoSL 2005: xv).

Education Policy

Basic education for all is the priority policy objective in the education sector. The New Education Policy of 1995, which initially articulated this policy, has been replaced by the Education Sector Plan of 2007. Accompanying this plan is the Education Policy 2010 (Ministry of Education Science and Technology) which has been issued in draft form at the time of writing this chapter. Part E, Chapter 1 of the Plan, is entitled ‘Children, Youth and Youth Employment’. It identifies the effects of the decade-long civil conflict on children

and youth. These include disability, illiteracy and lack of skills for employment. Youth unemployment and illiteracy have therefore become critical issues needing emergency action given their potential for disruption of social order.

The Education for All (EFA) National Action Plan proposes achievement of a 50 per cent adult literacy rate by 2015 is the policy goal. A number of strategies therefore have been mapped out towards this end. These include development of infrastructure, recruitment, training and remuneration of personnel, and learning materials production. In tandem with prioritizing adult and non-formal learning is the emphasis on technical and vocational education, targeting disadvantaged youth, including ex-combatants, and the 'large percentage of young persons'. Unemployed, underemployed and unemployable youths are caught in a quagmire. They do not have knowledge, skills and competencies that can help them break out of their unemployment through self-generated or paid employment opportunities. Those who are underemployed in the agricultural sector (up to 60 per cent) are not earning an income given the low productivity and incomes in that sector (GoSL 2005: 10). Those with skills lack the tools and resources to start their own business.

The Draft Policy for the Agricultural Sector of Sierra Leone also addresses the issue of youth. On mechanization, the policy objective is: to provide mechanical power to replace some of the labour required in agricultural pursuits, thereby increasing the productivity of labour, reducing the drudgery of agriculture, and encouraging youth to stay on the land (2005: 17).

Legal Measures

The legal framework for provision of education in Sierra Leone is established by the Constitution of Sierra Leone 1991, and the Education Act 2004. The Constitution of Sierra Leone sets out the educational objectives and the government's obligation for their realization. Section 9 (1 and 2) states that:

The Government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal rights and adequate educational opportunities for all citizens at all levels. ... The Government shall strive to eradicate illiteracy, and to this end, shall direct its educational policy towards achieving – a) free adult literacy programmes; b) free compulsory basic education at primary and junior secondary school levels; and c) free secondary education as and when practicable. (1991: 5–6)

The Education Act 2004 is the legal basis for effectuating the policy objectives. The 2009 National Youth Commission Act established the

National Youth Commission, to empower the youth to develop their potential, creativity and skills for national development and for other related matters. The Act makes provision for a Board of Directors as the governing body of the commission. Its membership includes one youth representative, a woman and a person with disability. The board is mandated 'to prioritise national youth issues and ensure that the commission adheres to the priorities' (2009: 3). The functions of the commission include the following: developing strategies for employment creation in collaboration with relevant governmental and non-governmental bodies, and developing a comprehensive national youth development plan consistent with national poverty reduction strategies. The establishment of the National Youth Commission is part of the overall government strategy to ensure that the youth question is effectively addressed. This strategy is articulated in the government's Poverty Reduction Strategy up to 2012, Agenda for Change.

Programme Measures

The National Youth Programme was developed in the context of the National Youth Policy, and as part of the national recovery strategy. The background to the programme (2003: 2) articulates a concern with the strategy of post-conflict recovery programmes in their focus on the economic dimension and its political implications. It views 'this mainstream approach' as inadequate because it 'excludes the majority of the youth population who are neither ex-combatants nor visible stakeholders in the political process, thus pointing to the need for a diverse perspective when dealing with youth issues.'

Education and Training Measures

The Division of Extra-Mural Studies of the University of Sierra Leone is implementing the Commonwealth Diploma in Youth in Development Work through distance learning. The aims of the programme are to:

- alleviate problems of youth in Sierra Leone by training them in the management of youth-focused programmes;
- encourage youth development workers to gain skills and knowledge while on their jobs;
- update skills of individuals engaged in youth work at various levels of operation;
- train a corps of personnel in handling programmes delivered at a distance;
- inculcate respect for core values of the Commonwealth such as democracy, human rights and peaceful resolution of conflicts;

- introduce the distance education mode within the course structure of the university.

Sixty youth leaders have participated in the programme since 2001. Fourteen modules on various topics including Youth and Health, Young, People and Society, Promoting Enterprise and Economic Development, Gender and Development, Conflict Resolution Strategies and Skills, are offered. In addition, the German Technical Co-operation (GTZ) is providing skills training opportunities for youth as part of the implementation of the 'Promoting the Development Potential of Youth and Young Adults in Sierra Leone' project, based largely on non-formal education, including skills training for employment or self-employment. Another empowerment project is the 'Enhancing the Socio Economic Status of Rural Women Through Functional Literacy and Micro-Credit' which integrates literacy and livelihood issues and practices. It is implemented by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST 2007).

INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION OF THE MEASURES

The policy and programme measures should be seen in the context of peacebuilding and peace consolidation. These processes have largely been influenced by external forces and factors. International interventionism was necessitated by the collapse of the state and the exigency of reconstruction of which restoration of civil authority was an integral part. The arguments for and against international interventionism are discussed by Kargbo, Zack-Williams, Gbla and Kandeh in this volume. It should be noted, however, that short-term intervention by the international community has ramifications for long-term sustainability and ownership of processes and outcomes.

MARGINALIZED YOUTH

In an article, 'Is the International Community Helping to Recreate the Preconditions for War in Sierra Leone,' Hanlon (2005: 459–72) warned that enough was not being done 'to redress grievances which triggered the war'. We now turn to look at the plight of the marginalized youth. The National Recovery Strategy (GoSL 2005) categorized youth as mainstream or marginal. These categories include female and male students, artisans, hawkers, sex-workers, drug addicts, illicit miners, ex-combatants and those living rough on the street (ibid.: 15). The emerging conceptions of youth are important in grounding this discourse in reality. The study which informs this chapter identified

two categories of youth namely, 'Y Youth', that is, youth at home, and 'X Youth', that is, youth in the street. Youth in the street are generally seen as part of the 'Generation X' youth, that is, those who are assumed to be helpless and lost. Both categories of youth (Y and X) are in the 15–35 age bracket, the official age group for youth in Sierra Leone. The former are at home and may be receiving parental care and support; the latter are in the street and are fending for themselves. Table 7.3 illustrates the main differences between the two categories.

Table 7.3 The two categories of youth in Sierra Leone

<i>Y: Youth at home</i>	<i>X: Youth in the street</i>
1. Receiving parental care and support	Fending for themselves
2. Have only civil society experience	Have para-military experience
3. No participation in combat during rebel war	Active participation as combatants
4. Participation in Education and Training (E & T) Programmes	No participating in E & T Programmes
5. Generally formal school completers	Generally formal school dropouts
6. Member of headed households	Heads of household
7. Generally do not have parental responsibility	Generally single parents
8. High chances for paid/self-employment	Low chances for paid/self-employment
9. Short-term unemployed	Long-term unemployed
10. Likely to subsist on/above poverty line (<i>Po</i>)	Likely to subsist below poverty line (<i>Po-pas-po</i>)
11. Less likely to be marginalized	More likely to be marginalized
12. Less prone to drug abuse	More prone to drug abuse
13. Less exposed to group culture	More exposed to group culture
14. Low/no vulnerability to negative peer influence	High vulnerability to negative peer influence
15. Less likely to be involved in physical and/sexual violence	More likely to be involved in physical and/sexual violence

Source: Field

The subjects of the study were youth in the category 'X Youth' – youth in the street. They have organized themselves into associations and are undertaking various activities. Two hundred and sixty associations were identified for the study. Over 70 per cent of the associations were formed after the war and their formation may have been influenced by the formulation of the National Youth Policy, and the development of the National Youth Programme in 2003. Category 'Y Youth' (youth at home) include youth who are in permanent places of abode and youth in institutions of care/training. There are institutions (e.g. Don Bosco Sierra Leone) which provide

training/residential programmes for youth, many of whom were formerly street children. Other organizations including Action for Development Sierra Leone (AFDSL), which offer rehabilitation and training opportunities to young people. AFDSL runs a youth drop-in centre in Wellington on the outskirts of Freetown, which is largely meeting the needs of former street children.

Profiles of the Respondents

Membership

More than 90 per cent of the respondents are members of organizations; of these, 60 per cent are social clubs and the others are service organizations. The membership ranges from less than 50 to more than 200.

Typology of Organizations

Five types of organizations have been identified. These are: membership; development; service; sports (mainly football); and social clubs

Nomenclature

The names of some of the organizations either indicate the activities in which they are involved or the locality in which they exist. Table 7.4 indicates the names of a sample of the organizations and their key activities:

Table 7.4 Organizations and their key activities

<i>Name of organizations</i>	<i>Key activities</i>
Youth Action International	Children and Women's empowerment
Scan Starr Football Club	Football
Congo Contractors Football Club	Football
Kodak Production	Photography
Pentagon Sports and Social	Sports and social
Popay's Gyming School	Gymnasium work out
Chin-Chin Youth Development Organization	Community development
Young Welders Organization	Welding
Old School Wash-Car Organization	Washing of motor vehicles
Belgium Car Wash	Washing of motor vehicles
M'cos Car Wash	Washing of motor vehicles
Deble (Devil) Hole Car Wash	Washing of motor vehicles
Wellington Car Wash Youth Organization	Washing of motor vehicles
Brima Lane Drivers Youth Organization	Driving of commercial vehicles

Source: Fieldwork notes

A number of organizations are named after the rendezvous of their members. It is a familiar, albeit a worrying sight in Freetown and its environs of so-called ‘area boys’ who group together at street junctions, corners and ghettos to while away the time or to debate topical social issues. The increasing number of meeting points called *ataya*¹ bases indicate the seriousness of the problem of youth marginalization. Table 7.5 indicates organizations which are named after the rendezvous of their members.

Table 7.5 Organizations named after the rendezvous of their members

<i>Names of organizations</i>	<i>Rendezvous</i>
Wilberforce Central Youth Organization	Wilberforce
Susan’s Bay Youth Organization	Susan’s Bay (Informal settlement)
Malamah-Thomas Youth Organization	Malamah-Thomas Street
Bottom Mango Youth Organization	Wilberforce Roundabout
Victoria Park Guys	Victoria Park
Kossoh Town United	Kossoh Town (Hastings)
Brookland Youth Development Organization	Brookfields
Congo Market Women Organization	Smythe Street Market (Congo Market)
Congo Contractors Football Club	Congo Town
Crojimmy Awareness Campaign	Crojimmy
Signal Hill Development Association	Signal Hill Road (Wilberforce)
King Naimbana Progressive Youth	Naimbana Street
Calmont Youth Organization	Calmout Road, Waterloo
Peacock Farm Youth Development Organization	Peacock Farm, Wellington
Rukupu Progressive Association	Rokupa Cemetery Area
Brima Lane Youth Development Organization	Brima Lane, Wellington
Kroo Bay Youth Association	Kroo Bay (Informal settlement)
Devil Hole Youth Organization	Devil Hole (settlement along the Freetown–Waterloo Highway)

The other names, listed in Figure 7.1, appear to reflect the fanciful illusion of the founders and/or their cryptic purposes.

Membership Size

The organizations are small in membership size and scope of their activities. Of the 73 organizations surveyed only one had a membership of more than 200 as Table 7.6 indicates.



Figure 7.1 Obscure names of some youth organizations

Table 7.6 Size of the membership

<i>Size of membership</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Less than 50 members	48	65.8
51–99	15	20.5
100–150	9	12.3
200 and more	1	1.4
	73	100.0

Functions of the Organizations

The organizations perform various functions as indicated in Table 7.7.

The two key functions which a majority of the organizations undertake are mobilization (72.6 per cent) and awareness raising (68.5 per cent). It would appear that these two functions do not demand high technical qualifications unlike others which require a high level of technical expertise. With one exception the other functions are more technical than activist. The exception is training in skills (38.4 per cent); some of the organizations are involved in low level skills training activities such as washing of motor vehicles and playing of amateur football. Given the educational level of the youth it is not surprising that they are less involved in the other functions.

Table 7.7 Functions of youth organizations

<i>Functions</i>	<i>No. of organizations involved</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Youth mobilization	53	72.6
Awareness raising	50	68.5
Training in skills	28	38.4
Policy analysis	5	6.8
Advocacy	16	21.9
Programme design	10	13.7
Programme implementation	19	26.0
Consulting	5	6.8
Counselling	14	19.2
Needs analysis	13	17.8
Evaluation of youth programmes	11	15.1

Youth Marginalization

Not surprisingly, 74 organizations (83.5 per cent) are either very familiar or familiar with the problem of youth marginalization. Only three organizations reported that they were not familiar. The forms and causes of youth marginalization also appear to be well known to them as indicated in Table 7.8.

Table 7.8 Forms and causes of youth marginalization

<i>Manifestation</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Social exclusion	36	56.3
Lack of political participation	31	48.4
Low level of political participation	18	28.1
Powerlessness	31	48.4
Stigmatization	12	18.8
Disempowerment	23	35.9
Discrimination	28	43.8
Isolation	14	21.9
Deprivation	32	50.0
Disadvantage	13	20.3
Impoverishment	12	18.8
Unemployment	55	85.9
Poverty	42	65.6
Vulnerability	23	35.9

Qualitative data generated during the study indicate the nature, forms and causes of youth marginalization. Solutions to the problem are also proffered. Some of the views of the youth have been produced verbatim so that their voices can be heard. Where necessary the views have been triangulated to increase the level of objectivity and to provide a more informed basis for generalization.

Box 7.1A

‘Youth are not included in the political sphere. They should be schooled and trained to enable them to participate and be empowered.’

‘Civil society should be active and should advocate for the youth to be empowered and not marginalized.’

‘Youths are not well equipped to implement programmes.’

Box 7.1B

‘Youth must be considered as important people in the society.’

‘Youths must comport themselves and be ready to learn and work.’

‘Youth must be ready to learn and have respect for the rule of law, and human rights’.

‘Youths are considered as uneducated and too young.’

Box 7.1C

‘Youths are only used as tools. They are not included in development processes.’

‘Youths do not take part in planning and organizing programmes.’

‘Youths always feel disowned by the community.’

‘Youths are the voiceless in the community.’

‘Youths are treated as non entities because of their low standard of education.’

Box 7.1D

‘Youths must be given opportunities to be educated and acquire skills.’

‘Youths must take part in politics and should be included in policy formulation.’

‘Youths are not included in the formulation of policies.’

Box 7.1E

‘Youth are seen as idlers and kids (too young). They also look low upon their educational standards as most of them only attain BECE [Basic Education Certificate, i.e. JSS 3] level.’

‘The level of illiteracy among the youth is very high.’

‘Until a foundation [legislation] against youth marginalization is passed and implemented, youth will always be marginalized, and unrecognized.’

The following are the key issues highlighted from the statements in the Boxes 1A–E.

Box 7.1F

- Exclusion from political process
- Lack of participation
- Lack of conceptual and technical tools
- Low community perception of youth
- Lack of learning and education
- Lack of respect for the rule of law
- Illiteracy
- Manipulation of youth
- Lack of legal framework for youth

Table 7.9 shows the specific causes of youth marginalization that were identified by the youth.

Table 7.9 Specific causes of youth marginalization (n = 73)

<i>Causes</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Absence of youth focused policies	32	50.0
Absence of youth-oriented programmes	36	56.3
Poor implementation of programmes	36	56.3
Illiteracy	32	50.0
Lack of school education	34	53.1
Lack of skills for employment	45	70.3
Negative attitude to work	16	25.0
Laziness	14	21.9

Contrary to widespread belief the youth are not of the view that negative attitude to work (25 per cent) and laziness (21.9 per cent) are among the causes for their marginalization. Rather there appears to be consensus on 'lack of skills for employment' (70.3 per cent), lack of school education (53.1 per cent), and illiteracy (50.3 per cent). The other causes are absence of youth-oriented programmes (56.3 per cent) and poor implementation of programmes (56.3 per cent).

It would appear that a significant proportion of the youth are not aware of the existence of the National Youth Policy and the National Youth Programme (Ministry of Youth and Sports 2003). However, the objectives of other programmes (by NANGOs, COMBOs, and INGOs) appear to be well known. The Youth Employment Scheme and a number of skills training, and income-generation programmes appear to be known. Knowledge about these programme may be due to the personal benefits which have accrued to the youth and/ their direct participation in them. Table 7.10 shows the aims of the programmes.

Table 7.10 Thrusts of youth programmes (n = 73)

<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Youth employment	39	60.9
Income generation	45	70.3
Job creation	36	56.3
Skills training	40	62.5
Capacity building	30	46.9
Values education	27	42.2
Literacy	22	34.4

Both policy and programme measures were found to be generally ineffective, as Tables 7.11 and 7.12 indicate. The term 'effectiveness'

in this study is understood to mean the ability of youth policies and programme to:

- (i) deliver on their objectives (82.8 per cent)
- (ii) produce the desired results (75 per cent)
- (iii) ability to foster good governance (67.2 per cent)
- (iv) quality of service delivery to youth (64.1 per cent)
- (v) ability to meet the needs of youth (62.5 per cent)
- (vi) improve the conditions of youth (57.8 per cent)
- (vii) ability to promote human rights (51.6 per cent)

Table 7.11 Effectiveness of policy measures (n = 73)

<i>Level of effectiveness</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Very effective	6	8.2
Effective	18	24.7
Ineffective	46	63.0
Very ineffective	3	4.1

Table 7.12 Level of effectiveness of programme measures (n = 73)

<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Very effective	6	8.2
Effective	18	24.7
Ineffective	40	54.8
Very ineffective	9	12.3

Assessment of the level of effectiveness of youth policies and programmes appears to depend on the level of participation of youth in the processes of formulating policies and/or developing programmes and their access to employment opportunities. Youth participation in general has been low as Table 7.13 indicates.

Table 7.13 Extent of youth participation in policy formulation (n = 73)

<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
To a very large extent	9	12.3
To a large extent	5	6.9
To some extent	35	47.9
No participation	24	32.9

Table 7.14 Extent of youth participation in programme development (n = 73)

Table 7.14 Extent of youth participation in programme development (n = 73)

<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
To a very large extent	8	11.0
To a large extent	10	13.7
To some extent	40	54.8
No participation	15	20.5

CAUSES OF MARGINALIZATION

Structural Causes

Society's structures, political, economic and social, largely account for youth marginalization. For over three decades Sierra Leone has been characterized by poor governance at the political and economic level, as manifested in poor social service delivery, ineffective policies and programmes, poverty and widespread disaffection of the population. Bad governance was a primary cause of war in which the youth played a destructive role, resulting in further marginalization.

Unemployment

Unemployment is very much related to absence of work (poor economic performance) and unemployability (lack of modern skills). The products of the school and education system cannot be absorbed by the economy given its inelasticity. Besides, the knowledge and skills of school leavers are generally inadequate and inappropriate for a dynamic economy that is highly dependent on globalization. This dependency is a factor for the vulnerability of the youth.

Early School Leavers and Dropouts

The youth are not staying in education long enough to be able to acquire relevant knowledge and skills. Whilst access to education is increasing, retention and learning achievement are decreasing. Early school leaving and dropout are due to a number of economic, social and cultural factors. Poverty, which is closely associated with the cultural practice of early marriage, severely constrains the education and life chances of girls in particular. On arrival at the age of puberty girls are initiated into adulthood. Initiation provides a licence for marriage and child bearing. There is a growing number of child/teenage mothers in Sierra Leone, which impacts on the vicious cycle of poverty. Early marriage implies early termination of schooling, unrestrained childbearing, an increase in household dependency, poor quality of life and further marginalization. The passage of the

Child Rights Act 2007 was a move to address a number of child rights-related issues including early marriage and female genital mutilation. The Act makes provision with respect to the minimum age of recruitment into the armed forces, the minimum age of marriage and the right to refuse betrothal and marriage.

CONSEQUENCES OF MARGINALIZATION: WASTAGE OF HUMAN RESOURCES

The study found that not only do youth lack knowledge about both the National Youth Policy and Programme, but also found evidence of low participation in their formulation. Youth constitute a vital resource for the development of the country and represent an assurance for the nation's continuity. Their exclusion from the social, economic and political processes would severely constrain the future survival of the nation. Harnessing the energies of the youth is a means of ensuring the country's perpetual succession and sustained development. Marginalization is a recipe for social unrest and intergenerational and class tension as reflected in the lyrics of genres such as 'borbor da oh' (criticizing the well-to-do for not being generous to the youth) and 'borbor belleh' (abusing the corrupt), which tend to criminalize the affluent and well-to-do as corrupt, irrespective of the sources of their wealth or reasons for their affluence. These songs are indicative of a potentially explosive situation. The youth in the street perceive the well-to-do as those who are responsible for their situations of poverty.

Marginalized youth represent lost labour, which is indispensable for development, especially in the agricultural sector. Already the migration of able-bodied young people to the urban areas is severely hurting agricultural production. The familiar sight of thousands of young people in Freetown hawking imported commodities indicates the severity of the problem and the consequences of wasted labour. Without people on the land achieving the policy objectives, the agricultural sector will be severely constrained. Attaining self-sufficiency in the production of food crops, increasing the production of cash crops for domestic use and export, and increasing the production of raw materials for industry will remain merely good intentions on paper without the necessary labour to work the land, and measures to alleviate poverty will be ineffective with the agricultural land uncultivated due to a lack of labour. Without foreign direct investment in the agricultural sector and lack of capacity to generate capital internally through large-scale agricultural production, the vicious cycle of poverty will be difficult if not impossible to break.

CONCLUSIONS

A number of measures to address youth marginalization have been initiated by the government in collaboration with its development partners. Policy pronouncements indicate that the government is committed to addressing the challenge of poverty and youth marginalization. Creating an enabling environment for foreign direct investment and generation of employment opportunities are key development priorities on which the challenges of poverty and youth marginalization are predicated. The development of the National Youth Policy in 2002 by the Ministry of Youth and Sports was a strategic attempt to address the issue of youth marginalization. However, the process was flawed as the participation of youths in both policy formation and implementation has been at a low level, which the young people have decried.

The National Youth Policy addresses a wide range of youth-related issues including education, participation, partnership and collaboration, empowerment, and peacebuilding. The objectives of the policy include the mobilization of youths of all ages to replace the culture of violence with a culture of peace, dialogue and responsible citizenry through intensive campaigns, value education programmes and life skills training. This inclusive approach widens the scope of intervention to include youth of all ages and not just youth in the policy restrictive age range of 15 to 35 years. This is important given the fact of heterogeneity and diversity of needs and interests of the youth. The emerging definitions of youth are providing an informed basis for re-thinking the concept of youth in Sierra Leone.

Concept of *Youth* in Sierra Leone

Although *youth* has a policy definition (people aged 15 to 35 years), there is a tendency to perceive youth as male, hence the reference to 'youth man' (male youth). Female youth seemed excluded from the category. There is also a tendency to regard youth as predominantly those in urban areas in view of their large numbers. Consequently, rural youth tend to lose out as they seem to have an attachment to traditional and community institutions and structures. These, by and large, regulate their behaviours and social standing. The provisions of the National Agricultural Policy, for example, emphasize the role of the rural youth. The policy definition of youth is inadequate. There is need for a re-definition to embrace the dimensions which are emerging from the literature. This way, policy, strategies and programmes would be better targeted and made more relevant. Youth is not a homogeneous category; the needs of the different

sub-groups should be identified and analysed if they are to be adequately addressed.

Youth Perceptions of Youth Marginalization

The data generated by the study indicate varied perceptions of youth marginalization. The long awaited National Youth Commission is now a fact in law with the enactment of the National Youth Commission Bill. The National Youth Commission Act is expected to provide a sound legal basis for youth activities in the country. These are based on the commonsensical explanations and the experiences and feelings of the youth about their life situations and seemingly low chances in society. The implied or expressed statements in Boxes 7.1A–E indicate these conclusions: youths are not well integrated into society's structure and processes. Traditional social structures, for example, and the culture on which they are founded do not regard youth highly and as such they are denied social space; structural transformation is not only necessary, but inevitable, given the current demographic transition.

The increasing incidence of rural–urban migration is proof of the determination of youths to escape not only from poverty but also from rural traditionalism. Youth marginalization appears to be a consequence of a rural exodus which exacerbates the problem of marginalization in urban settings. Over three decades the political participation of youth has been associated with violence, and this has resulted in the stigmatization of youth as political thugs. Political thuggery is again being used to resolve contradictions as the post-general elections in 2007 and local government elections in 2008 demonstrated. Political thuggery points to the misuse and abuse of youths in post-conflict Sierra Leone. The time bomb prophecy appears to be finding grounds for fulfillment.

Participation in Social Processes and Action

Since the end of the rebel war and following the rehabilitation and reintegration programmes the youths have been organizing themselves in social processes and action. This is evidenced by the associations and the activities in which they are involved. These organizations seem suitable entry points to engage the youth for various development purposes. Youth-community relations seem generally poor due in part to class differences in some neighbourhoods. The seemingly poor neighbourhood relations are exacerbated by the problems of generation gap or intergenerational rupture. The youths are accused of being disrespectful of the older generation whom they regard as the causes for their marginalization. The older generation

regard the youth as idlers and drug addicts. Regular police raids on 'ghettoes' in some neighbourhoods, to flush out drug peddlers and users, seem to lend credence to this perception. State policies and programmes designed to address youth marginalization have tended to focus on the 'youth in the street', while 'youth at home' seem invisible in the implementation of the measures, resulting in their further marginalization. The need for youth differentiation should be taken into consideration if all categories of youth are to be equitably targeted and served.

Unemployment and unemployability have tended to persist because youth pick and choose the type of work they do. This situation of ill-preparedness arises from the fact they do not stay long enough in school and, consequently, they are ill equipped to enter the labour market due to their lack of requisite knowledge and skills. In the absence of a structured transition from school to work, the youth lose out on employment possibilities. Furthermore, the increasing number of youth in the street has a potential for social disorder and state insecurity. For many, there is a time bomb perception; the time bomb can be diffused by constructively engaging the youth through programmes that arise out of and respond to their needs, but problems of overcrowding, informal settlement and ghettoization are the fuses of the time bomb.

Street children are an important segment of the youth as their numbers are increasing. Increasing levels of rural-urban youth migration partly account for the situation of overcrowding in Freetown and the rapid development of informal settlements (slums). The flight to the urban areas is primarily to seek employment opportunities and to escape from rural poverty and drudgery. However, employment opportunities in urban areas are limited and continue to dwindle due to the poor state of the economy. Even where there are opportunities for employment these cannot be accessed due to a lack of knowledge and skills. It is against this background that the government of Sierra Leone has prioritized the development of youth as a key strategy for post-conflict peacebuilding and poverty reduction. For the fiscal year 2008, the government budgeted Le 1.7 billion (ca. US\$566,667) – given the number and diversity of youth to be served, this amount seems a drop in the ocean of competing needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Improved Performance of the National Economy

The source of the problem of youth marginalization is the poor performance of the economy, which was due largely to poor

governance. The persistence of bad governance for over three decades has resulted in an environment of economic and political profligacy, sapping the energy of the people for the task of development. The environment for sound policy and programme development could be created with improved political and economic governance. Promotion of good governance is one of the pillars of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) in which the objectives of poverty reduction are clearly articulated.

Youth Differentiation

Youth do not constitute a homogeneous category, but a diverse group differentiated in terms of socio-economic status, ethnicity, regional basis and location. To adequately address the needs of the youth there is need to recognize the differences among them. Policies and programmes should take into account the factors of age and gender, 'Y and X Youth' and rural and urban.

Increasing the Relevance of Education and Training Opportunities

Development of education and training curricula should take into account the need to link school and the job market. Transition from school to work programmes should underpin a specific vocational curriculum that is organically linked to a generic education and training curriculum. Work experience and internship programmes should be part of education and learning processes in preparation for the world of work.

Access, Persistence, Learning Achievement

Illiteracy and poor education are factors for youth marginalization. Efforts to increase access to basic educational opportunities should be complemented with initiatives to get children and young people to stay in school longer and learn intensely. The Sierra Leone education system is characterized by high dropout and poor learning achievement at the post-primary level. Illiterate youth should be specifically targeted with literacy, adult and non-formal education programmes. The tendency of certain donors, agencies and partners to shift attention and resources away from non-formal (out-of-school) education would seriously imperil the post-conflict development process.

Mobilization and Organization of Youth

Youth organizations are suitable entry points for engaging the youth but this requires the building of their organizations to enable them to function effectively in addressing the needs of their members.

These organizations can be linked to a national forum in which all youth-related issues are articulated. Organization development should be accompanied by programme development and capacity development of the membership. Given the poor youth–community relations in some neighbourhoods, there is need for sustainably improving youth–community relations. Building community relations should be an exercise *in tandem* with building cohesive families and fostering family values. This should be done in the belief that strong families will make strong communities. Indeed, there is a need to re-visit the National Youth Policy and Programme. Effective implementation of the National Youth Policy and the National Youth Programme requires the active participation of the youth. A first step in the process of enlisting their participation is to provide information on the objectives and content of both the policy and the programme. To this end, popular versions should be published and discussions on them initiated. Strategies for implementation could then be worked out.

Increasing Level of Youth Participation

Youth participation in existing education, training and work-oriented programmes should be increased. To this end, programmes should be replicated at chiefdom and district levels to facilitate access and participation. This would require the provision of additional resources. Work-oriented programmes should emphasize self-employment to enable the youths to create jobs for themselves, thereby reducing dependency on government and eliminating the notion and expectation that government should employ everyone. Completers of work-oriented programmes should be supported so that they can start their own businesses. For this purpose, ongoing institutional support should be provided. The curriculum of all programmes targeting the youth should include values education and health-related content, for example HIV/AIDS preventive education. Values education should emphasize the work ethic and the dignity of labour.

National Youth Service

Schemes to recognize and reward excellence among the youth should be instituted, including work experience and internship as part of education and learning for the world of work. The government White Paper on education has addressed the need for technical and vocational education and training. The President's Award Scheme, which replicated the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, should be home grown and re-introduced. A compulsory national

youth service in which all school completers and graduates of tertiary education institutions would participate should be introduced. Participants in the scheme would be required to serve in any part of the country for a twelve calendar month period. This would enable the youth to know their country and interact with their peers from other parts of the country. The values of nationalism and patriotism would be transmitted and internalized in addition to those of community service and service to humanity. Participation in a national service programme should be part of the requirements for gaining a school or college qualification. Lessons can be drawn from countries which have a national service. NGO and civil society support should be enlisted in designing and implementing a national service programme or scheme. The need to harness the energies of youth toward productive purposes is more urgent now than ever before. Related to the recommendations for national service and a youth award scheme is an annual youth festival. This annual event would bring together talented youths in all categories to demonstrate their capacity for creativity and innovation. It would provide an alternative entertainment activity rooted in culture and education. The annual national youth festival could be preceded by competitive district and provincial youth festivals. The best of the district and provincial talents would participate in a national grand finale.

NOTE

1. *Ataya* is a *krio* word which means 'I'm tired' but it is also used to refer to the Chinese Green Tea which is widely marketed in Sierra Leone. *Ataya* base refers to the point where it is sold or to any place where youths sit and talk. *Ataya* (Chinese Green Tea) is a stimulant whose effect is hallucinating when consumed in a large quantity. It has a long-term injurious effect according to a psychiatrist Dr Nahim (pers. com.).

8

Conflict and Peacebuilding in Sierra Leone: The Role of the Sierra Leone Diasporas

Zubairu Wai

INTRODUCTION

From the outset of the conflict it was apparent that the Sierra Leone diasporas were implicated in, and destined to play a major role in, the trajectory of the war and the search for peace. This is not surprising since among the ranks of the rebels were Sierra Leonean exiles who had been recruited by the RUF from various countries in the West African region. These Sierra Leonean nationals had been ‘forced’ to leave the country at various times since the 1970s as a consequence of the crisis of the post-colonial period. The decade-long war itself, by engendering a process of displacement, forced migration and dispersion of people, opened up significant new avenues for Sierra Leonean diasporic formations, which in turn created possibilities for the latter’s involvements in the political and socio-economic life of the country. At different times during the war, various individuals in the diaspora, either by themselves or through transnational networks and diasporic organizations, played roles that affected, in diverse ways, the dynamics of the conflict and the parties involved in it. This trend has continued in the post-war period, whereby through a series of political, economic and social engagements, the Sierra Leone diaspora continues in numerous ways to influence the peace-building and post-war reconstruction.

These aspects of the Sierra Leone civil war have been ignored and largely under-researched both in academic and policy oriented studies. Even with the burgeoning literature on the Sierra Leone conflict there remains a paucity of research that systematically examines the role of the Sierra Leonean diasporas in that country’s conflict. Most of the studies on the war have been largely preoccupied with examining its root causes, the nature of violence and its effects on the state, society and people of Sierra Leone. Various, the war has been explained as: (a) a manifestation of ‘new barbarism’ brought about

by the resurgence of ethno-regional hatred and a neo-Malthusian cataclysm resulting from population pressures, resource scarcity and environmental degradation in the post-Cold War era (Kaplan 1993, 1994, 1996; see also Homer-Dixon 1991, 1994, 1999); (b) a crisis of neo-patrimonial rule of strong men and corrupt dictators, resulting in predatory accumulation, political disorder, state failure and warlord politics (Reno 1995, 1997, 1998; Richards 1996; Opala 1998; Kandehe 1999, 2002; Boas 2001); (c) a natural resource war caused by the economic aspirations (greed) of actors and their struggle over economic resources (diamonds); that is, a war caused by 'greed not grievance' (Berdal and Keen 1997; Keen 1998, 1999, 2005; Collier 2000; Berdal and Malone 2000; Smillie et al. 2000; Collier and Hoeffler 2000; Hirsch 2001; Le Billion 2001); (d) a lumpen revolt resulting from political grievance and revolutionary adventurism of disaffected youths (Abdullah 1997, 2004; Rashid 1997, 2004; Abdullah and Rashid 2005); (e) a revolt of excluded intellectuals (Richards 1996). Others have focussed on state complicity in the prolongation of the conflict (Abraham 2001, 2004); counter-insurgency strategies based on the emergence of Civil Defence Forces, especially the Karmajoi militia (Muana 1997); the criminalization of the insurgency (Kandehe 2005); the economic agendas in, and functions of, the war (Berdal and Keen 1997; Keen 1998, 2005); the UN peace mission in Sierra Leone (Olonisakin 2008); child soldiers (Pham 2005); and British policy towards Sierra Leone in relation to the conflict (Kargbo 2006).

By ignoring the role of the Sierra Leone diasporas in the conflict, existing studies have tended to miss an important aspect of that country's civil war, for the diasporas were implicated in the conflict from the very start and played very important roles in the conflict, as well as in the processes of peacebuilding and conflict transformation. The aim of this chapter, therefore, is to fill the lacuna in the existing literature on the conflict and elucidate a dimension of the Sierra Leone civil war that has so far remained ignored in existing scholarship. The chapter examines the relationships between the Sierra Leone diasporas and the state of Sierra Leone within the specific context of conflict and peacebuilding and the challenges and questions that arise therefrom. It explores the nature of these relationships by an examination of the numerous ways in which the Sierra Leone diasporas influenced the Sierra Leone civil war, the strategies they employed in engaging in the processes of peacebuilding in Sierra Leone and how these strategies impacted on the Sierra Leone society.

The term diaspora is an elusive and elastic concept. Its genesis is rooted in the Greek word *diaspeirien* meaning 'to sow or scatter

[seeds] across' (Brazier and Mannur 2003; Bercovitch 2007). Originally used in reference to the Jewish diaspora, to denote their experiences of displacement and dispersion from their original homeland, the term gained widespread academic currency largely through Africana scholarship in the 1960s, which increasingly appropriated it to describe the African experience of displacement and forced exportations to the 'New World' through slavery and the Atlantic slave trade. Today, largely as a result of the onslaught of globalization, ongoing processes of transnationalization brought about by revolutions in information technology, social and economic forces of global capitalism, conflict and war, which are accelerating the processes of interdependence, migration and displacements, diaspora has become 'a catch-all phrase', used increasingly in academic and policy making circles to describe, even if problematically, 'all movements, however privileged, and all dislocations, even symbolic ones' (Brazier and Mannur 2003: 3). For this reason, the term has become a source of controversy among and between scholars of various disciplines, making diaspora a rather elastic, imprecise and contestable term.

In this chapter, I use diaspora to refer to any displaced communities of people living in territories outside of their proclaimed or imagined 'homeland' or nation-state as a result of forced or voluntary movements, migrations, dispersions and displacements. These communities are not homogenous, but heterogeneous and hybridized entities whose experiences, according to Hall, are: 'defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of "identity" which lives with and through, not despite, difference' (1990: 235). These heterogeneous diasporic subjects are, as Brazier and Mannur suggest, 'defined by a traversal of the boundaries demarcating nation and diaspora' (2003: 5); traversals that, 'question the rigidities of identity itself' and represent 'the very parameters of specific historical moments [which] are embodied and – as diaspora itself suggests – are scattered and regrouped into new points of becoming' (ibid.: 3). Like the nation, these communities are 'imagined' and built around narratives that are imaginatively constructed by the diasporic subjects themselves (Anderson 1983; Hall 1990; Mishra 1996, 2007). Mishra uses the term 'diasporic imaginary' to convey the constructed nature of diasporic communities, which he defines as 'any ethnic enclave in a nation-state that defines itself ... as a group that lives in displacement' (Mishra 1996: 423). This concept implies that the constitutive moments of diasporas go way beyond the physical processes of migration, dispersion and displacement to include

(and more importantly) the conscious and unconscious processes of constructions and definitions, by the diasporic subjects themselves, of 'imaginary landscapes of dreams and fantasy' (Fludernik 2003: 1) which corresponds with their various desires and memories. These imaginary landscapes are often varied and contradictory, so that apart from moments when diasporic identities congeal (often times around specific landmarks, which are themselves varied and contested), no two dreams and fantasies of a diasporic imaginary can exactly be the same, which in turn means that no two diasporas can look exactly the same (Fludernik 2003).

Brazier and Mannur make the point that, unlike suggestions to the contrary (for example Urgo 1995), diasporas do not 'transcend differences of race, class, gender, and sexuality' nor can they 'stand alone as an epistemological or historical category of analysis, separate and distinct from these interrelated categories' (2003: 5). Diasporas usually reflect the fissures and divisions found in their home societies as well as the new points of becoming in the host societies, and are affected by their gender, race and class positions. These dimensions of a society always come into play during the processes of displacement from a homeland, migration to, and resettlement in a new environment (Al-Ali 2007). This is especially the case in conflict situations (which as Al-Ali points out, always have a gendered dimension, in that conflicts always affect men and women differently). These gendered dimensions of conflict affect processes of displacement and diasporic formations especially in relation to what has now come to be regarded as conflict-related or conflicted-generated diasporas, that is diasporas whose origins or emergence are linked to violent conflicts and forced migration (Al-Ali 2007).

In line with the foregoing, I define the Sierra Leone diasporas as the experiences of migrations and displacements, and the resulting socio-political and cultural formations of displaced communities of people of Sierra Leonean descent living abroad who consciously or otherwise define their ancestry as Sierra Leonean and who construct imaginary ties and attachments to the nation-state of Sierra Leone as a homeland (Wai 2008). JoAnn D'Alisera (2002) has suggested that the individual and collective identity of the Sierra Leone diasporic subject is constructed through the complex processes of negotiating the complexities of life 'here' (adopted homeland), 'there' (imagined homeland) and 'everywhere' (that is the transnational spaces and processes of moving back and forth between the two). These traversals of multiple positionalities, locations and experiences are very important and invariably are at the heart of the Sierra Leone diasporic formations.

Khalid Koser (2003, 2007) has suggested that a heuristic difference exists between what he regards as 'old' and 'new' African diasporas. The former, he maintains, are the earlier forms of dispersion of Africans as a result of the Atlantic slave trade, while the latter refers to the more recent migrations and dispersions in the colonial and post-independence period, especially in the last three decades, as a result of increasing political and socio-economic dislocations at home. He observes that 'it is usually more recent African migrants and not the early African migrants, who are [more likely to be] actively involved in the politics of their home countries' (Koser 2007: 242). It is this category of displaced Sierra Leoneans living abroad, who have to contend with the imperatives of the nation-state of Sierra Leone to which they claim ancestry and membership, that are the focus of this study. They are the ones who are more likely and have been actively involved in the politics of that country. And this involvement of the Sierra Leone diasporic subjects in the politics of that country is not unconnected to the fact that displacements create social spaces in which the constant struggle to negotiate difference and marginality in the adopted/host country, while traversing 'here' and 'there', actively plays out into the public and private arenas of diasporic life (D'Alisera 2002; Wai 2008). This, in turn, leads to a nostalgic re-presentation and re-enactment of collective memories which in the case of new diasporas, translates into imaginary visions of homeland and what it could be or how it should be.

The fact that these diasporic subjects negotiate difference and marginality 'here' does not, however, necessarily mean that they lack power to influence social processes 'there'. If anything, the location of diasporic subjects, at least in the case of the Sierra Leone diasporas, is sometimes directly linked with the power they wield back home (Wai 2008). It is this location that usually allows them to mobilize resources and create the necessary social networks through which they intervene in social and political processes in the homeland. Though a substantial number of Sierra Leoneans in the UK, for example, are undocumented and therefore constantly have to negotiate their position through marginality, they still wield enormous (real and/or imagined) power in relation to their political engagements with Sierra Leone; this is partly due to the way they are perceived in that country and partly due to the important economic role which living in the UK allows them to play in the lives of their families and communities in Sierra Leone. Moreover, the transnational spaces from which these diasporas engage in homeland politics betrays a privilege and gives them a leverage that allows them to intervene in the domestic politics of the homeland

without fear of retribution. This is especially true for those living in Western countries who are conscious of the power and privilege that their diasporic location confers on them.

DIASPORAS AND CONFLICTS

The growing recognition, both in academic and policy making circles, of the importance of diasporas in contemporary social and political life in their countries of origin (see, for example, Koser 2003, Mohan and Zack-Williams 2002; Smith and Stares 2007) has not been matched with serious thinking, especially in the field of political science, regarding the complex nature of diasporas and their role in politics. Much of the literature on diasporas, especially in relation to conflicts, has focused mainly on whether diasporas play a positive or negative role in conflicts. Much of the existing scholarship on diasporas tends rather unfairly to portray them 'as predisposed to disruption and conflict', rather than being seen as facilitators of 'peaceful cultural, political, trade, and commercial exchanges that can accord with the conceptions underlying the hopes of a new world order' (Sheffer 2003: 257). Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler (2000 and 2004) for example, in their econometric analysis of war economies, stress the negative and destabilizing impacts of diasporic groups on conflicts in their home countries. They conclude that not only does a large diaspora increase the risk of igniting conflict because of the resources they provide, they also are a substantial risk factor in the continuation or/and renewal of conflicts once they have stopped: 'by far the strongest effect of war on the risk of subsequent war works through diasporas. After five years of post-conflict peace, the risk of renewed conflict is around six times higher in the societies with the largest diasporas in America than in those without American diasporas. Presumably this effect works through the financial contributions of diasporas to rebel organizations' (Collier and Hoeffler 2000: 26).

This perspective is not only limited to Collier and his World Bank colleagues alone, but has in fact become, to a very large extent, the dominant view on diasporas and conflicts. Daniel Byman et al. (2001) insist that despite being separated by thousands of miles homeland struggles are keenly felt among diasporic groups, which they define as 'immigrant communities established in other countries'. These groups, they argue, 'frequently support insurgencies in their homelands' (ibid.: 41). They even suggest that 'reliance on diasporas to wage an insurgency may become an increasingly common phenomenon in years to come' (ibid.). Terrence Lyons (2004, 2007)

maintains that though there may be recognizable obstacles in the way of diasporic communities in relation to conflict in their countries of origin, they 'often play critical roles in conflicts over territory and identity. Diaspora remittances are key resources to a conflict ... and frequently have a particularly important role in framing conflict issues'. Much like Collier and Hoeffler (2000), Lyons concludes that,

diasporas often frame conflicts in ways that are uncompromising and categorical and this framing has significance for political strategies relating to the struggle. Parties directly engaged in the conflict in the homeland often are dependent on supporters in the diaspora for resources, access to international media, international organizations, and powerful host governments, thereby giving diaspora groups influential roles in the framing of debates and the adoption of strategies relating to conflict. Because of the particular importance of symbolic territory and a conception of homeland to diaspora identities, diaspora groups often contribute to prolonging and making conflicts more protracted. (2004: 21)

Responses to such negative perspectives on the role of diasporas in conflicts have led to what I regard as spurious debates, based on a false binary that is both problematic and self-limiting. The argument that diasporas have the potential to contribute positively to peace-building and development in their countries of origin has developed as a counter to the negative views of diasporas in conflict (Koser 2003, 2007; Van Hear et al. 2004). As Østergaard-Nielsen (2006: 2) points out, however, 'There are plenty of examples of both types of diasporas to support either view. Importantly, different interpretations of diasporas depend on the view of the beholder. Irresponsible long distance nationalists for some are freedom fighters for others'. I suggest that this imposition of a false binary on the interpretations of the attitudes of diasporas in relation to their home countries tends to miss the complex and often multiply contested nature of diasporic communities and subjects. Diasporas, I should stress, are not monolithic and homogenous groups, but a variety of fragmented entities, among whom, and within which, multiple and various overlapping (read contradictory) tendencies exist. The terrains in which these communities operate, and the spaces that they create for social and political action, are therefore necessarily contested and limited by certain socio-historical and practical political constraints.

The framing of the debate on diasporas and conflict in opposite binary terms diverts attention from the complicity of the state in

processes of displacements and dislocations, and instead holds it as the foundational basis in relations to which the attitudes, behaviours and actions of diasporas are judged. Most forms of displacement that result in diasporas emanate from some form of crisis in the countries of displacement or homeland (however imagined), and this is related to the internal dynamics and forms of power configurations there. The factors, forces and processes that lead to those crises or power configurations may be external in origin, but it is always the ways in which they manifest themselves in specific places that lead to migrations and displacement. What is now regarded as the 'new' African diasporas (Koser 2003, 2007), for example, emanated from, among others, the colonial imposition and the crises in the African state in the post-independence era, coupled with the forces of contemporary processes of globalization which are creating avenues for migration and displacements.

What this calls into question is the nature of the state and how it makes it possible for displacements which result in the establishment of diasporic communities: What is it about the state (or homeland) that forces people to leave? How do displaced communities perceive their home states, and what memories, visions or fantasies do they have in relation to that state that make them feel the need to get involved in conflicts or politics back home? I consider these questions to be very central to understanding the attitudes of diasporas towards homeland conflicts. Mention has already been made of the fact that the RUF insurgency in Sierra Leone is connected to a group of exiled student radicals who had been victimized by the state and had perhaps come to see armed rebellion as the only way of changing the political dynamics of an oppressive state. The events which led to their exile, and why they saw a need to start war in Sierra Leone, say not so much about whether diasporas contribute to peace or war, but rather raise important questions about the nature of the state, which are usually glossed over when issues of peace and war as it affects or relates to diasporas are understood from a state-centric perspective on the basis of which their attitudes are judged.

In fact, peace is typically defined not from the perspective of the diasporic groups under investigation, but as an *a priori* conception that privileges the state. The understanding of peace by the diaspora may sometimes be totally different from these *a priori* definitions. For example, when the military overthrew the regime of Ahmad Tejan Kabbah in Sierra Leone in 1997 and invited the RUF to join them in forming the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) junta, many in the Sierra Leone diaspora regarded this as an unacceptable political sacrilege that must be reversed by any possible means.

Peace therefore was understood in a specific way by those diasporic subjects: they wanted the removal of the AFRC from power, the restoration of democracy and the defeat of the RUF. Anything else was unacceptable and if that had to be achieved through further war and violence, so be it. An observer who understands peace merely as the absence of physical violence would see this as an example of the diaspora inciting and contributing to war, especially when they fail to pay attention to the specific history of Sierra Leone and fail to understand why some sections of the diaspora regarded the defeat of the RUF as central to achieving peace. The way in which diasporas understand peace and who determines the parameters of that peace are important questions that get sidelined when the debate about diasporas and conflict is framed in such dichotomous binary terms.

THE SIERRA LEONE DIASPORAS

From its inception, migration and displacement have been an important aspect of the socio-political, cultural and economic formations of Sierra Leone. What we now know as the state of Sierra Leone started as a reversed or repatriated African diaspora. In the aftermath of the Mansfield ruling in the *Somerset v. Stewart* case in 1772, the English abolitionist, Granville Sharp, and his colleagues convinced the British government to repatriate a group of freed slaves – who were disparagingly referred to as ‘Black Poor’ and who were being blamed for most social ills in London and other English cities – to the Sierra Leone peninsula, which the botanist, Henry Smethman, had recommended would support an agricultural settlement. In April 1787, a party of about 411 ex-slaves set sail for Sierra Leone under the charge of Captain T. Boulden Thompson and arrived in what would later become Freetown about a month later. These ‘original’ settlers established ‘The Province of Freedom’ and named it ‘Granville’s Town’ in honour of their benefactor Granville Sharpe. Between 1792 and 1800, two others groups of freed slaves (the Nova Scotians in 1792 and the Maroons in 1800) joined the original settlers and the settlement started to take a definite form.

With the abolition of the slave trade by the British parliament in 1807, the British government took over the settlement, and Freetown became a crown colony, functioning as the centre of British naval operation to suppress the trade in West Africa from 1808 onwards. Between this period and 1864, over 84,000 outbound captives en route to slavery were freed and resettled in Freetown (Wyse 1991). As a result of the cultural synthesis among these various groups, a distinctive community, the Krio (Creole), a creolized cultural and

ethno-linguistic group, emerged. Predominantly Christian – there was, however, a sub-group, the *Aku*, mostly of Yoruba Muslim descent – the *Krio*, who were highly educated with admirable managerial and entrepreneurial skills, had become very prominent and powerful within a few decades. They were employed as key players in the British colonial enterprise as administrators and civil servants not only in Sierra Leone, but in other British West African colonies, namely: Nigeria, Ghana (then Gold Coast), and the Gambia in the nineteenth century; and in the UK itself beginning in the 1900s, but especially after the First and Second World Wars. They also served as teachers, traders, doctors, lawyers, clergymen and missionaries, and established various diasporic communities in the coastal areas, and even interior, of the so-called ‘British’ West Africa (Wyse 1991; Alie 1990). However, with British patronage, and the privilege they enjoyed in the colonial system, this group adopted an attitude of superiority over the hinterland people who they regarded as uncivilized savages.

The British annexation of the hinterland lying adjacent to the colony of Sierra Leone as a protectorate in 1896 largely delimited the boundaries of the modern state of Sierra Leone. Partly because of the colonial imposition and the policies pursued by the colonial state, various processes of migrations and displacements took place both internally within Sierra Leone, and externally in the West African region, but these processes did not result in the establishment of significant Sierra Leonean migrant communities outside of the country. These established communities, which formed part of what could be regarded as the diasporas of colonization, were perhaps the first Sierra Leone diasporas. But even with political independence in April 1961, the patterns of migration still remained transient and did not result in the establishment of any significant diasporic communities.

However, the crisis in the post-independence state and its attendant political and socio-economic problems began to force a number of Sierra Leonean nationals to leave the country in search of greener pastures elsewhere. Beginning especially in the 1970s, when the crisis of the state started to become manifest, throughout the 1980s when the crisis deepened, up to the outbreak of the civil war in the early 1990s, which represented the height of that crisis, the number of Sierra Leone nationals living abroad increased steadily. The APC governments under the reign of Siaka Stevens (and also under Joseph Momoh) had become increasingly authoritarian, and systematically excluded, marginalized, harassed and persecuted the political opponents of the government. This shrinking formal

political space, coupled with the increasing economic hardships in the country, accelerated migration in the 1970s and 1980s and forced many people to leave the country. It must, however, be stressed that even with these trends, the volume of migration was still somewhat comparatively low.

The initial points of destination were principally the UK and the USA, and to a lesser degree the European Union countries and Canada (for those who could afford it); and a number of African countries, most notably neighbouring Liberia and Guinea, and to a lesser extent, the Côte d'Ivoire and the Gambia. Migration patterns reflected the class and gender realities in Sierra Leone society. Those from relatively affluent homes, who could afford both the visas and airfares, were more likely to end up in Western countries than their less fortunate compatriots, who under difficult circumstances went to neighbouring countries, especially to Liberia and to a lesser extent Côte d'Ivoire, which at the time were economically better off than Sierra Leone. The West generally attracted students studying in universities, middle-class professionals on short-term visitor's visas, and young people generally in search of economic opportunities. Once in the West, they either obtained legal resident status in their host countries and gained employment as skilled professionals in such areas as law, accountancy, medicine and education, or simply went underground as undocumented immigrants. Some married citizens of these countries or simply became naturalized citizens themselves. They worked to support their family members back home, even when studying at universities. This trend has continued to this day: diasporic support for families back home in Sierra Leone is a taken-for-granted and unquestioned obligation and responsibility.

The relationship between Sierra Leone and the Eastern European countries, especially during the years of Siaka Stevens (1968–85), but also during Momoh's presidency (1985–92), saw a number of Sierra Leoneans (especially those with political connections with the APC leadership cadres) leaving to study in the former Soviet Union and other Eastern European countries on scholarships provided by the governments of those countries. While some of these students returned home after their studies, others married Russians or other Eastern Europeans and took up residence in these countries. Others proceeded to seek legal resident status in Western Europe and in North America, especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War in the 1990s. It is interesting that in the 2007 presidential and parliamentary elections in Sierra Leone, some of these figures, who are now living in Europe or North America, were very instrumental in the APC's victory because of the financial

support that they provided and the resources they put at the disposal of that party.

Apart from those with family connections in neighbouring countries, migrations to other West African countries attracted mostly marginalized youths seeking a better life. Liberia became a natural point of destination for migrants (it is the only official 'English speaking' country that shares a border with Sierra Leone) as its economy was better than Sierra Leone's at the time. Though there were many Sierra Leoneans in honourable and professional jobs, many of these marginalized youths who were also largely uneducated or semi-literate ended up in straightened circumstances, being either jobless or doing all kinds of odd jobs in the Liberian cities. With time, they became notorious for crime and were blamed for most social ills, like petty theft, in Liberian cities, especially Monrovia, earning them the pejorative moniker 'Freetown Rogue'. To a lesser extent, this was true of migrants in Côte d'Ivoire as well. The RUF found in this group a ready constituency of recruits for their army for the insurgency. The Gambia, which shares the same colonial past with Sierra Leone, attracted short-term contractual teachers, while Guinea attracted migrant traders and those with close family or ethnic ties (sometimes these two were inseparable) in that country.

The outbreak of the civil war in the 1990s was a major catalyst for displacement and Sierra Leone diasporic formations. It forced a new wave of migrations, which were by far the largest and most extensive in the post-independence history of the country. It exponentially increased the number of Sierra Leoneans living abroad to such an extent that at some point during the course of the conflict, especially between 1997 and 1999, which could be regarded as the height of war and violence in Sierra Leone, over half of the country's population were either living abroad or were internally displaced persons and refugees in camps in neighbouring countries and elsewhere. In the West African region, they were concentrated predominantly in neighbouring Guinea and Liberia (Liberia was also at war and attracted fewer refugees relative to Guinea even though the latter is French speaking), and the Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria and Côte D'Ivoire.

In the West, which saw the numbers of Sierra Leoneans immigrants and refugees increase dramatically, the principal points of destination were the UK, the United States, the EU countries, Canada and Australia. While there have always been sizeable numbers of Sierra Leoneans living in the UK and USA, the war exponentially increased these numbers. According to the US Census Bureau (2000), for example, more than half of the legal immigrants

from Sierra Leone in the US entered that country after 1990. Though immigration to EU countries was not on the scale of either the UK or USA, those countries still attracted decent amount of Sierra Leonean asylum seekers and claimants of refugee status during this period. It was the same for Canada and, to a lesser extent, Australia, both of which granted special resettlement privileges to Sierra Leonean refugees with close family ties in these countries. These resettlement programmes were similar to the Priority 3 designation for refugees, through which thousands of Sierra Leoneans refugee displaced by the war gained admittance to the USA after 1995.

An important aspect of conflict-generated diasporas, Nadjé Al-Ali (2007) points out, is their temporality and transience, and a tendency 'to involve identities that emphasise links to symbolically valuable territory and an aspiration to return once the homeland is freed or conflict has subsided' (ibid.: 41). This holds true for those displaced Sierra Leoneans who were living precarious lives in refugee camps in neighbouring countries. Many had compelling aspirations to return, and indeed started returning as soon as the conflict started subsiding or the opportunity availed itself. For example, the majority of those who went to Guinea and the Gambia after the military coup in May 1997 (which led to a crisis of displacement), and were unable to make the forward journey to a third country in either Europe or North America which many had hoped for, started returning home immediately after the ECOMOG military intervention removed the AFRC from power in February 1998.

Similarly, towards the end of 1999, after the Lomé Peace Agreement, which laid the foundation for the end of the war, was signed, many refugees in camps in neighbouring countries started to return. An International Organisation for Migration (IOM 2004) estimate put the official figure of displaced Sierra Leone nationals living in refugee camps in 1999 at about 500,000. By 2000, it had reduced to about 400,000: 136,000 of these were in West Africa, of which 83,000 resided in Guinea, 37,000 in Liberia, 7,000 in the Gambia, and 2,000 each in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Nigeria. By the time the war was officially declared over in 2002, the official estimates for Sierra Leone refugees had gone down to about 141,000. This further reduced to about 70,000 a year later. In 2005, the official UNHCR estimates put the number of Sierra Leone refugees at about 40,000.

Though no accurate figure on the current size of the migrant population from Sierra Leone exists, the country still boasts of huge diasporas, estimated at about 800,000, that is about 15 per cent of the total population of the country.¹ The majority of these, it

already has been stated, left the country and/or were discouraged from returning as a result of the war and its social consequences. Today, the largest concentration of Sierra Leone nationals outside of the country resides in the UK, where it is estimated that over 100,000 Sierra Leoneans (including legally documented immigrants, middle-class professionals, students as well as 'illegal' and undocumented immigrants) live (IOM 2004); the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (2007) puts it at 60,000. The bulk of these immigrants are concentrated in Peckham, South London, though appreciable numbers reside elsewhere in London and the UK. In the USA, which also hosts a large Sierra Leonean immigrant population (estimated at between 60,000 and 80,000), the major Sierra Leone diasporic enclaves are in the Baltimore–Washington, DC metropolitan area and in Landover, Lanham, Cheverly, Silver Spring and Bethesda in Maryland; others include the suburbs of Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax, Falls Church, and Woodbridge in Virginia. Similarly, there are also appreciable Sierra Leonean immigrant communities in the Boston, New Jersey and New York metropolitan area; Philadelphia in Pennsylvania; Austin and Houston in Texas; Columbus in Ohio; and the Los Angeles metropolitan area. In Canada, Sierra Leone diasporic communities are found largely in Ontario; in the Greater Toronto Area, especially in Scarborough; in Winnipeg (in Manitoba); Calgary (in Alberta); and Vancouver (in British Columbia); while in Australia, they live mainly in Sydney, New South Wales.

THE SIERRA LEONE CIVIL WAR

In March 1991, a small band of insurgents calling themselves the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) attacked Sierra Leone from Liberia. The group, under the leadership of Foday Sankoh, an ex-corporal of the Sierra Leone military forces and with the support of Charles Taylor and his National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) forces (at the time also fighting for control of Liberia), quickly overran and occupied Bomaru and soon opened another front at Zimmi, a south-eastern border town with Liberia across from the Mano River Bridge. The RUF framed the reasons for the start of the war in terms of the need for removing from power the All People's Congress (APC) government (which had ruled Sierra Leone since 1968 and under the leadership of which the crises of the state had deepened), and the quest for social transformation that would enable the creation of a just, democratic and egalitarian society. Framed in such terms, their actions initially attracted support in especially Kailahun and Pujehun districts, which had historically been hotbeds

of opposition to APC rule. However, whatever initial support that the RUF enjoyed soon evaporated when the war degenerated into a protracted struggle of gratuitous violence and brutality, death and destruction, targeted at the very people its initiators had claimed they wanted to liberate.

The war itself, Joe Alie (2005) points out, 'brought into sharp focus the serious political [and economic] problems that had plagued Sierra Leone since independence in 1961 [and] ... dangerously exposed the weaknesses of the inefficient and highly politicised security apparatus' (ibid.: 51). It exacerbated some of the very reasons why some people had left the country, in the first place, in search of better opportunities elsewhere and became, as already noted above, a major catalyst for displacements, forced and voluntary migrations and Sierra Leone diasporic formations. It increased, by many folds, the size of the Sierra Leone diasporas not only in the West African region, but significantly in Europe and North America, and created opportunities, and the need, for diasporic involvement in political and socio-economic processes in the country.

The post-independence state had become a site of woes and misery as political and economic failures under the twenty-three year rule of the APC accentuated the pathologies originally introduced by the colonial state. The concentration of power in the hands of the APC with Stevens firmly at the helm in the 1970s had led to the homogenization of the formal political space and the alienation and exclusion of large sections of the population from the dominant networks of power. Within this homogenized reordering of the political and socio-economic spaces had grown complex processes and informal networks through which relations of power and influence, and access to wealth and resources, were mediated. With the rural-urban migration characteristic of the colonial and post-colonial political economy of Sierra Leone, there was a presence in cities of large numbers of uneducated and semi-literate and unemployed youths. Stevens and his followers in the APC found this group a particularly useful resource in their quest to consolidate power. They were initially used as thugs to harangue and intimidate the opposition through gratuitous acts of violence and other intimidating tactics. It was these groups that later become the hub of the RUF war machine. Similarly, they later made up the majority of the rank and file of the army after the war broke out in 1991 and the need to recruit more people into the army arose. Elections in Sierra Leone became a violent affair and broke the opposition so badly that by the time the one-party state was established in 1978, the opposition was a spent force.

With the official opposition silenced, radical youths (mostly unemployed and marginalized) and university students emerged as the unofficial and only formidable opposition to Stevens and the APC. The APC almost fell from power as a result of the student demonstrations in 1977. Stevens' response was a clenched fist reprisal and the further tightening of the political space. The one-party state came in the following year. The impact of negative external forces on the economy, such as the 1973 oil shocks and falling commodity prices, coupled with certain bad policy decisions made by the government, like the lavish hosting of the OAU conference in 1980 and the devaluation of the national currency, constrained and frustrated development efforts and led to an increasing constriction of the economy. These conditions, coupled with the exclusion of certain sections of the population from the dominant networks of power and wealth through marginalization in the economic and political spheres, created conditions susceptible to external meddling and internal strife. Radical students tapped into these frustrations and anger, and championed the cause of the neglected and marginalized sections of society. On university campuses and in the 'potes' of Freetown and other cities and towns in the country, revolutionary consciousness developed, as these groups raved against what unflatteringly came to be known as 'di system'. It is now well documented how this rising revolutionary proclivity and consciousness led to the quest for revolution and eventually the formation of the RUF (Abdullah 1997, 2004; Rashid 1997, 2004).

When Stevens retired in 1985, after having hand-picked his successor in the person of General Joseph Momoh, the head of the Sierra Leone military forces, the country was taken closer to implosion. Momoh lacked the charisma of Stevens, and inherited a centralized authoritarian state without having the character of a despot. He ended up being manipulated by some powerful forces within his own inner circle, further accentuating the conditions for an insurrection. The economic decline in the 1970s had reached full blown crisis proportions by the mid-1980s. With such economic decline, the IMF and World Bank intervened and subjected the state to severe austerity measures through structural adjustment policies which further exacerbated an already bad economic situation. It increased economic hardships for the citizenry while, at the same time, undermining and weakening the internal control mechanisms of an oppressive state that were already coming under considerable strain. This, as has been noted elsewhere, led to a severe brain drain as many middle-class professionals, trained and skilled artisans and ordinary people who could afford it left the country. Under both

internal and external pressures, Momoh started reforming the state. However, those reforms and changes did not prevent the war from occurring.

The war initially broke out in March 1991, which even though it was blamed on Charles Taylor and his NPFL forces, Foday Sankoh and the RUF claimed responsibility for. Then on 29 April 1992, one year into the war, young officers of the Sierra Leone Army, (SLA) fighting against the rebels, drove from the war fronts into Freetown and overthrew Momoh's government in a military coup, and set up the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) military junta under the leadership of Captain Valentine Strasser. The unpopularity of the APC, both domestically and abroad, initially translated into widespread popular support for the NPRC. There were high expectations that the NPRC would live up to its promises and clean up the mess caused by the APC, end the war, revive the economy, which had virtually collapsed in the mid-1980s, and act as credible referees in the democratization process. However, within a year of its rule, it had started to become apparent that it would be difficult for the NPRC to achieve these self-proclaimed priorities. Amidst increasing indiscipline in the army, accusations of collaboration between the army and the rebels they were fighting (some of which were unjustified), the intensification of RUF attacks across the country, increasing level of violence against civilians, and mounting accusations of corruption against junta officials, public perception of the NPRC regime changed and pressure, both at home and abroad, mounted on them to democratize the state and return the country to civil rule.

The NPRC announced a transition time-table in November 1994 which made provisions for an Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC), with the responsibility for conducting the elections; a National Advisory Council (NAC), responsible for advising the junta on policy issues and for drafting a new constitution; and the National Commission for Democracy (NCD), for voter and civic education. Presidential and parliamentary elections were scheduled for December 1995 and the handing over to a new elected civilian government by January 1996. The transition itself began in April 1995, with the lifting of the ban on political party activities; by June the INEC had registered thirteen political parties; and between December 1995 and February 1996 it had completed the registration of voters. The first round of the elections were held on 26 and 27 February and the second run-off, between Ahmed Tejan Kabbah of the SLPP and John Karefa-Smart of the United National People's Party (UNPP), in March 1996. The SLPP gained the majority of seats

in parliament and Tejan Kabbah, its presidential candidate, won the presidency.

Kabbah's new government took over on 29 March 1996 and continued the negotiations started by Brigadier Bio, who had met with Sankoh in the Ivorian capital, Yamoussoukro, two days after the elections. Bio and his NPRC colleagues had ousted Strasser in a palace coup in January 1996, for, as they claimed, wanting to derail the electoral process by imposing himself on the state. They then contacted RUF leader Foday Sankoh and agreed on holding peace talks without delay. The peace negotiations were to be held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, on 28 February 1996, that is, two days after the scheduled elections. When a second consultative conference (Bintumani II), held on 12 February 1996, decided to press ahead with the elections, it was the newly elected government that inherited the responsibility of negotiating with the RUF. Ten months of tortuous negotiations between Kabbah's SLPP government and Sankoh's RUF rebels produced a peace agreement, which was signed on 30 November 1996. The agreement put an immediate end to hostilities. For a moment it appeared as if the expectations that the elections would bring peace were being met.

However, any sense of optimism and excitement soon vanished as the peace process started to stall and unravel. First, implementing the peace accord proved much more difficult than negotiating it, as both the RUF and the government frustrated each other in its implementation. That mutual frustration emanated from pathologies of the peace process itself. For a rebel organization interested in power, for which they had fought for over five years, the Abidjan Peace Accord was an odd and problematic document at best. Its power sharing instruments were only limited to joint institutions created for the implementation of the accord and not sharing in government. No senior government (ministerial) positions were offered Sankoh and his RUF. The newly elected government not only felt confident that it had the people's mandate, but also that in a democratic system it needed to protect the constitution of Sierra Leone, which would have been violated if the RUF, a movement that refused to participate in the elections, was brought into government. Bringing Sankoh and his men into government under a power-sharing deal would have been much easier before the elections when the NPRC was in power. Another problem was that President Kabbah proved himself to be weak, wavering and indecisive. His weakness and indecisiveness, among several other factors, made it possible for his government to be overthrown in a military coup on 25 May 1997, thirteen months after the elections. Kabbah fled to Guinea and set

up a government in exile to garner international support. The coup makers, accusing the government of favouring the Kamajoi militia over the regular army, and accusing Kabbah of failure to consolidate the peace achieved in Abidjan, disbanded the Kamajoi militia and invited the RUF rebels to share power as part of the new junta's plan to end the war. The Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), as the junta named itself, sprung Major Johnny Paul Koroma out of prison and made him chairman of the rebel junta.

There was widespread domestic and international opposition to the coup and a call for the restoration of constitutional order in Sierra Leone. In October 1997, following the lead of ECOWAS, which had taken a similar decision earlier, the UN Security Council imposed sanctions against the junta. The sanctions included an embargo on the supply of arms and petroleum products and ECOMOG was mandated to enforce the embargo. Spearheaded primarily by ECOWAS, negotiations got underway and a peace plan was reached in Conakry in October 1997. Under the plan, Johnny Paul Koroma and members of the junta were granted immunity from prosecution in exchange for leaving power and disarming to ECOMOG. But the junta proved intransigent and several attempts at a peaceful settlement failed. As domestic and international pressures intensified, so did the junta's unyieldingness and brutality against civilians. The Conakry Peace Plan finally collapsed in February 1998 and ECOMOG, with the help of the British mercenary firm Sandline International and the pro-government Civil Defence Forces (CDF), especially the local Kamajoi militia and members of the Sierra Leone Army who were loyal to the government in exile and who had surrendered to ECOMOG to demonstrate that loyalty, started an offensive to dislodge the rebel junta from Freetown and from power. By 12 February 1998, ECOMOG had chased the rebel junta out of Freetown. Kabbah returned from exile on the 10 March 1998 and throughout this period, until the RUF invasion in January 1999, the security situation continued to deteriorate.

Regrouping along the Liberian border, with the help of Charles Taylor, who was now president of Liberia, the RUF began a fresh offensive in December 1998. The bulk of the AFRC forces who had, at the time of their routing from Freetown in February 1998, headed towards Kabala in the Northern Province, under the leadership of Captain S.A.J. Musa, former number two in the NPRC junta and chief secretary of state under the AFRC, started a fresh offensive against ECOMOG. As the RUF moved from Kono to Makeni (the provincial headquarter of the Northern Province) the AFRC forces under S.A.J. Musa's command moved from Kabala to Freetown. By

6 January 1999, they were already in control of half of Freetown, though Musa himself had been killed at Benguema, the main military training centre on the outskirts of Freetown. Kabbah again fled the city as the rebel soldiers burnt, looted and killed. At this stage of the conflict, it had become clear to everyone that perhaps there was no military solution to the conflict. Thus, though a Nigerian military operation removed the rebels from the city, a negotiated settlement was sought to the conflict. On 7 July 1999, a peace agreement was signed between the RUF and the government of Sierra Leone in Lomé, the capital of Togo. Under the terms of the agreement, the RUF received four full cabinet positions and four deputy ministerial positions. Foday Sankoh, in a capacity equivalent to the position of vice-president, was placed in charge of the natural resources of the country and post-war reconstruction by being appointed chairman of the Commission for Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development. The agreement granted 'absolute and free pardon and reprieve to [Sankoh and] all combatants and collaborators' guilty of atrocities and crimes committed during the war. It also provided for the setting up of a truth and reconciliation commission, a commission for the consolidation of peace, a DDR programme for demobilizing and disarming all combatants. It also provided for the restructuring of the army, transforming the RUF into a political party, and enabling access to RUF members for posts in the restructured army and bureaucracy.

In October 1999, the UN Security Council established the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). It incorporated its Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMIL), established in 1998 after Kabbah's return, into the new mission. Initially, UNAMSIL's capacity was put at a maximum of 6,000 troops and was gradually increased to almost 18,000 troops, the biggest UN mission in the world at the height of its operation. The primary responsibility of UNAMSIL was to help implement the peace agreement and carry out the DDR programme. UN peacekeepers started arriving in Freetown in November 1999, amidst RUF attacks on ECOMOG troops and their objection to the deployment of the UN. Masquita, the RUF's field command and deputy to Sankoh, warned against such deployments. In April 2000 they started abducting UN peacekeepers deployed to the country and by May of that same year were on their way to attacking Freetown. Pandemonium gripped Freetown at the real prospect of an imminent collapse of the peace process. With the threat of collapse, 800 British paratroops arrived in Freetown under the pretext of evacuating the British and other nationals from Western countries, but it was clear what their intentions were. In an

air and sea interventionist operation codenamed Operation Palliser, they deployed around Lungi, the international airport, and with the help of former AFRC junta chairman Johnny Paul Koroma saved the UN mission from collapse. Meanwhile, demonstrations called in Freetown by civil society groups to protest Sankoh's intransigence, turned violent when a standoff at Sankoh's residence resulted in the death of twenty protesters. An arrest order was issued for Sankoh and he fled and went into hiding. He was later capture and incarcerated. That event marked the beginning of the demise of the RUF.

There was another twitch: elements of the former AFRC, calling themselves West Side Soldiers (but popularly called West Side Boys), rejected their being homogenized with the RUF and started demanding a special peace accord with the government to accommodate their concerns, which they claimed were not met in the original Lomé accords. From their Okra Hills hideout, they started attacking villages and blockaded the highway to vehicular traffic. Eleven British soldiers and their Sierra Leonean liaison personnel were abducted by this group in August 2000. This led to a British military action against the West Side Boys that finally neutralized the group. This event eventually paved the way for the deployment of UN troops in the country beginning March 2001. Disarmament started two months later. The British International Military Advisory and Training Team (IMATT), which has been in Sierra Leone since June 2000, focused on retraining and restructuring the Sierra Leone Army. The UN concentrated not only on the DDR programme, but also on retraining the police. By early 2002, UNAMSIL announced the completion of the disarmament of about 75,000 ex-combatants. President Kabbah declared the war officially over in January 2002.

THE SIERRA LEONE DIASPORAS AND THE POLITICS OF CONFLICT AND PEACEBUILDING IN SIERRA LEONE

Arriving at 2002, however, was a tortuous process, one anchored on various false starts and reversals, as the war escalated and the quest for peace proved elusive (Abraham 2001). Before the crisis of 1997, resulting from the AFRC coup and its effects on the security situation in the country, the height of violence and insecurity was the period leading up to the 1996 elections, especially between 1994 and 1995. The NPRC had almost won the war in December 1993 and had declared a unilateral truce, in order, they claimed, to encourage the RUF to surrender and take advantage of a universal amnesty that had been declared for surrendering rebels. The RUF, however,

used this period to regroup, since, although routed in the towns, the combat efficiency of their fighting forces was still somewhat intact, the NPRC having been unable to sufficiently degrade it. During this period, the RUF altered its strategy and started launching guerrilla attacks against military, government and civilian targets. From now onwards the war took a very nasty dimension and it was during this period that various interested parties either got involved or intensified their involvement and interventions in the conflict in different capacities. The Sierra Leone diaspora was one of those interested parties that emerged as a recognizable political force in its own right during this period.

Diasporic interventions in the politics of conflict and peacebuilding are always a form of international or transnational intervention, for diasporas do not operate in a vacuum: they operate from transnational spaces and their political actions and interventions in homeland politics, as the case of Sierra Leone will demonstrate, are always determined or influenced by a combination of factors among which are their perceptions and understanding of the situation in the homeland, the political and economic opportunities in their host societies as well as in the homeland, the spaces that it allows them to create for political interventions, and the changing global and regional political landscapes and power configurations (Sheffer 2003). These interventions always take various forms, and are usually channelled through local, national and transnational networks of individuals, organizations and institutions. They are also always varied and often complex, contested and even contradictory. Diasporic activities are often also focused on the homeland, as they are targeted at the host societies (governments and populations of the countries) in which the diasporas reside. These interventions are always determined by diverse interests, sometimes overlapping and complementary, and other times conflicting and at variance with each other. Similarly, not all diasporic actions are altruistic; diasporas are self-interested and their actions are sometimes informed or dictated by personal political and economic interests.

Instead of attempting to give an exhaustive account of the various and multiple roles that the Sierra Leone diaspora played, which would be somewhat difficult because of the complex range of activities and their extensiveness, I will show how, and the areas in which, these interventions took place. The focus will specifically be on two important spheres, the political and socio-economic, where the impact of diasporic interventions was most obviously felt.

THE RUF AS A DIASPORA ORGANIZATION?

As noted above, it was the expulsion of a group of radical students from the University of Sierra Leone in 1984/85, and their subsequent exile in Ghana, that partly led to the quest for revolution and eventually the formation of the RUF (Abdullah 1997, 2004; Abdullah and Rashid 2004; Rashid 1997, 2004). It is also established that it was the support provided by the Libyan government that allowed this group, in collaboration with the network of other 'revolutionary' groups in Sierra Leone, to start military training in Libya in 1987/88 with the aim of initiating an insurgency in Sierra Leone, to overthrow the APC government, whose misrule and authoritarianism they blamed for the crisis in the state and its declining fortunes (Abdullah 1997, 2004; Rashid 1997, 2004; Abdullah and Rashid 2004; Gberie 2005). What is absent in, and needs to be added to, these accounts is the fact that when the bulk of those who had undergone insurgency training in Libya abandoned the idea of starting a revolution, the vacuum they left was filled by Foday Sankoh, a disgruntled former ex-corporal of the Sierra Leone military forces who had been jailed in the 1970s for his role in a coup against Siaka Stevens and who had been recruited in the students' informal revolutionary network in the country. Sankoh had to call on members of the Sierra Leone diasporas, especially those residing in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, for recruits for his revolutionary army. Thus, apart from those who still decided to stay the course after the majority of their comrades had left the movement (Rashid Mansaray, Mohamed 'Zino' Tarawally, Abu 'Buzer' Kanu and Foday Sankoh himself among others), almost every other Sierra Leonean who was in the original RUF fighting force that invaded Sierra Leone from Liberia in March 1991 was recruited abroad and trained in Liberia.

In 1990, at the height of the Liberian civil war, a training camp was established first at Cuttington University, in Suacoco, Bong County (about 120 miles north of Monrovia, the Liberian capital) and then later at Camp Nama near Gbarnga (when it became the headquarters of the NPFL) for would-be RUF fighters recruited in Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and other neighbouring countries. It was at this camp that Sam 'Masquita' Bokarie (his *non de guerre*), Morris Kallon, Augustine Gbao (who were recruited in Liberia) and Issa Sesay (recruited in Côte d'Ivoire) were trained. With the help of Charles Taylor and his National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), this group invaded Sierra Leone and started what would become one of Africa's most puzzling and complex conflicts.

To the extent that the RUF relied on these elements (the so-called

Vanguards, recruited and trained in exile) to constitute the backbone of its fighting force at the start of the insurgency, it can be regarded as a diasporic organization, in which the aspirations of these diasporic subjects found expression. The RUF could be seen as the vehicle through which these exiles sought to contest the state and bring into fruition their own specific understanding of what it should be; that is, realizing their own specific diasporic fantasies, desires and dreams in relation to what the homeland is and what it can become. Questions about how and why that quest ended the way it did should not be confused with the desires that instigated or produced that quest. Once the war itself started, igniting further displacements, the diasporas resulting from the war also got caught up in the same pattern and cycle of violence and war within which Sierra Leone was embroiled. While members of the diasporas were invading the country from Liberia, for example, others, especially those in North America and Europe, partly as a result of the misrepresentation of the war in the local and foreign media as an NPFL invasion of Sierra Leone, and partly as a result of the horrible nature of the war in neighbouring Liberia as reported on TV and in news reports, were organizing demonstrations against the rebels, who at this initial stage received very little support in the wider Sierra Leone diasporas. Even those who had initially been active in the organization preceding the RUF's formation opposed the war from its inception, failing to recognize and take responsibility for their own complicity in the unfolding drama of war and violence.

At various times during the war, different members of the diasporas were engaged in physical combat on opposing sides in the conflict. For example, when the AFRC took over in May 1997, some Sierra Leoneans displaced by the resulting political and security situation created by the AFRC's action joined the Civil Defence Forces, especially the Kamajoi militia, which opposed the coup and vowed to resist it militarily until the junta was ousted and constitutional order restored. These diasporic subjects entered Sierra Leone with the CDF as combatants, and were very active in the fight against the AFRC, which was reminiscent of the early stages of the Liberian civil war in the early 1990s when Liberian exiles, displaced by their own war and living in refugee camps in Sierra Leone, formed the anti-NPFL counter-insurgency group, United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy (ULIMO) and invaded Liberia from Sierra Leone with the support of the Sierra Leone government in order to dislodge the NPFL and thwart Taylor's designs. This takes us to an important point about the role of diasporas in conflicts. Anyone looking for evidence of the disruptive roles of diasporas in conflicts

would be quick to point at these examples as a clear-cut indication of what has, in my view, now become a pathologized rendition of the relationship between diasporas and homeland conflicts, if the actions of the diaspora are taken rather simplistically without placing them in their proper political and socio-historical contexts.

ECONOMIC ROLES OF THE SIERRA LEONE DIASPORAS

There is a strong, taken-for-granted assumption shared across Sierra Leone, that Sierra Leoneans living abroad, especially those living in affluent Western countries, should assist their families and communities back home economically. Aware of the economic situation back home, and the commonly accepted obligations that come with familial and community ties in Sierra Leone, members of the diasporas take these responsibilities very seriously too, and usually play the economic roles that are expected of them. During the war, with the virtual collapse of the formal economy, the diasporas became very significant economic players, providing economic assistance through remittances and development assistance, which helped to cushion some of the effects of the dire economic situation in the country during the war and ease the deepening socio-economic inequalities exacerbated by the conflict.

Almost every Sierra Leonean national living abroad that I spoke to confirmed that they regularly (sometimes several times a month) sent money home during the war. The bulk of these remittances comprised individual private support for families and friends. However, various diasporic organizations did provide economic assistance to various local communities in the country, especially to those districts where there was an affiliation. In fact, remittances and economic assistance were not only provided to Sierra Leone itself, but also to refugee camps and other Sierra Leonean migrant populations living in neighbouring countries. These groups were largely dependent on the economic support they received from their family members and friends living in affluent Western societies. When the AFRC took over in May 1997, for example, many refugees who left for neighbouring countries (mostly Guinea, Gambia, Ghana or Nigeria) to escape the crisis, did so because their friends or family members in the diaspora had asked them to leave and had provided the resources for the journey and supported their eventual residence in these countries.

Though no accurate data exist on the size and volume of the remittance flows during the war, it is thought that diasporic remittances expanded considerably during the war years as the size

of the diaspora grew, and they have remained a very important source of economic assistance to families for foreign exchange and investment in an economy that had virtually collapsed in the 1990s as a result of the effect of negative external economic pressures and bad internal policy choices, a situation that was exacerbated by the war. The amount of monies transferred is substantial and continually increasing. Recent estimates by the government of Sierra Leone put it at about a billion US dollars annually.

Remittance also played a major role in the resettlement programmes for Sierra Leonean refugees with close family ties in the countries accepting asylum seekers (especially the USA, Canada, and Australia). Many refugees were sponsored by their families in countries and refugee centres where the programmes were being administered. Others were encouraged to go to these countries and centres and, as the selection process was protracted and very slow, these refugees were sponsored financially by, and relied on, the economic assistance provided by their families in the diasporas. In this, an economic hierarchy could be seen within the Sierra Leone migrant communities; a hierarchy that somewhat replicates and mirrors the inequalities and asymmetrical material realities that characterize the global political economy. Those in affluent societies, predisposed to play better economic roles because of the economic opportunities at their disposal, were at the top of the hierarchy while those in poorer countries, who were more likely to be dependent on their more affluent compatriots, were at the bottom. Location therefore was important, as it impacted, at least in economic terms, on the roles the diaspora played in the conflict.

Remittances were not limited to personal economic assistance to families. They also included economic assistance to people and communities devastated by the conflict. Many diaspora organizations, provided humanitarian and relief supplies (containers of food, used clothing, medical supplies – both medicines and hospital equipment) to their compatriots living in displaced camps at home and refugee camps in neighbouring countries. The Concerned Citizens and Friends of Sierra Leone (CCFSL) in Ontario, Canada, for example, sent a container of used clothing, medical supplies and hospital equipment to Sierra Leone in the period after the removal of the AFRC and the reinstatement of Kabbah's government. The Concerned Sierra Leoneans for the Restoration of Democracy (CSLRD), an organization that was formed in the New York metropolitan area at the time of the AFRC coup, sent relief supplies that included food, medicine and used clothing for Sierra Leonean refugees in Guinea, especially those that were forced to flee to Guinea as a result of the AFRC's

action. While some of these materials were obtained through member donations, the bulk came from appeals to well-wishers and charitable organizations interested in what was going on in Sierra Leone. Where the diaspora organizations were not in a position to provide resources, their advocacy work and sensitization campaigns targeted the host countries where they resided and created space for the intervention of these countries through government or organizations (and even private individuals) in the situation in Sierra Leone. It was, for instance, partly because of the role of the CCFSL in Canada that the Canadian government initially considered, and eventually instituted and expanded the refugee resettlement programmes for Sierra Leonean refugees in Canada.

Remittances were, however, not a major source of funding, and hence not a factor in prolonging the conflict, as is the case with other conflict related diasporas. True, some diaspora organizations provided funds and other forms of economic and logistical support for opposing factions in the war. After the AFRC coup sent Kabbah and his government into exile, Tegloma, a Sierra Leone diasporic cultural organization, for example, committed financial resources towards the war efforts of the CDF and the Kamajoi militia, which were fighting to remove the AFRC and the RUF rebels. These contributions were never the main source of funding for the war, neither for the government nor the RUF. For example, such contributions pale into insignificance when compared to the contributions of the Canadian diamond mining company Diamond Works, which partially bankrolled the military involvement of Sandline International, the British mercenary firm that aided ECOMOG and provided training and guns for the CDF, in order to obtain lucrative diamond mining concessions.

POLITICAL INTERVENTIONS OF THE DIASPORAS

Politically, diasporic interventions in the Sierra Leone civil war took on many forms and occurred in various areas. These include, but are not limited to, advocacy and sensitization; the use of media and internet campaigns; political engagements; and participation in political processes. These political activities dovetailed into the economic sphere, and it is here, more than anywhere else, that the contested nature of the Sierra Leone diaspora, and the multiple tendencies found within it, was manifested in relation to the war.

Advocacy and Lobbying

For many in the diasporas, especially for those living in West, the initial problem with the war was what was perceived both locally

in Sierra Leone and internationally in diasporic circles as the limited knowledge, scant interest and poor media coverage in Western countries of what was going on in Sierra Leone. Many, especially in the diasporas, believed that one way of quickly resolving the problem was to get the Western governments involved in the search for peace. Many believed, however, that this would only happen if their citizens were informed about, made aware of, and encouraged to take interest in what was going on in Sierra Leone. Both within Sierra Leone and its diasporas, very little was known about the RUF and a lot of misinformation surrounded who they were, what they represented and why they were fighting. The majority of Sierra Leone nationals both at home and abroad were misinformed about the rebels and their intentions. Up to March 1996, when NPRC junta leader Brigadier Maada Bio met with Foday Sankoh in Yamoussoukro, the Ivorian capital for peace talks, many in Sierra Leone did not even believe that Foday Sankoh existed as a real person.

The rebel RUF itself did not help the situation: except for the occasional interview that its spokespersons gave to foreign news agencies like the BBC or VOA, the movement did not produce any meaningful and accessible political document that sought to explain, both to their compatriots and the world as a whole, who they were, what their positions were on issues, what they represented and why they were fighting. The basic document of the RUF and the monograph *Bush Path to Democracy* only really became available (not necessarily accessible) late in the war (Abdullah 1997). In addition, Robert Kaplan (1994) had published his damning, sensational journalistic nonsense of a 'coming anarchy' that he claimed to have detected in Sierra Leone, which, as a country, in his words was 'unsalvageable'! This pathological representation of what was going on in Sierra Leone initially dissuaded Western governments from getting involved in the war (Richards 1996).

It therefore made sense that the initial thrust of diasporic intervention and activity focused on advocacy and sensitization campaigns aimed at mobilizing political support among citizens and policy makers of host societies and lobbying their governments to take interest in what was going on in Sierra Leone, in the hope of getting these governments involved in the search for a solution to the problem. Such activities included public events like demonstrations, protest marches, information campaigns, conferences, workshops, meetings and public forums. Almost every Sierra Leone diasporic organization had advocacy and sensitization of the host country as part of its objectives. These activities were aimed at government officials in the host countries, targeted groups and organizations, as

well as ordinary citizens likely to take interest in what was going on in Sierra Leone.

When members of the Sierra Leone Peace Forum (SLPF) in the UK organized a march on 8 April 1995, for example, their intention was not only to draw attention to what was taking place in Sierra Leone, and 'show solidarity with their compatriots back home' but to also encourage the British government to get involved in the search for a solution. As stated in a letter addressed to the British prime minister, the organizers of the march felt 'that the United Kingdom can play a key role using its leadership and influence in the world to encourage a peaceful resolution' of the conflict in Sierra Leone. They urged the then prime minister, John Major, to double his efforts 'and do all in your power to help Sierra Leone enjoy peace once again' (*Focus*, Vol. 1, No. 5, April 1995). The march itself attracted over 700 Sierra Leone nationals resident in the UK and processed from the Sierra Leone High Commission in London to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The SLPF had earlier, with other such diaspora organizations in the UK, adopted a resolution that expressed 'our utter disappointment at the manner in which hitherto the International Community has shown unprecedented disregard for the tragic events taking place in Sierra Leone', and called on Britain, the UN, the EU, the USA and the Commonwealth to do all possibly within their power 'to arrest this most devastating period/event in our nation's history and to do all within its power to restore normalcy within a democratic setting to our country' (*Focus*, Vol. 4, No. 3, March 1995). Various other organizations which mushroomed in the diasporas, like Sierra Leoneans Acting For Peace (SLAP/UK), Concerned Sierra Leoneans (UK), the Movement to End Violence in Sierra Leone (UK/US), all campaigned in a similar vein and made similar calls.

When the organizers of the International Peace Conference on Sierra Leone (held in Oslo, Norway, 27–29 July 1995) organized demonstrations through the streets of Oslo to the Norwegian Foreign Ministry on July 27, their focus was to raise awareness in Norway about, and draw attention to, the situation in Sierra Leone. The conference had been organized by the Sierra Leone–Norway Cooperation (SLNC), a friendship organization linking the two countries, with funds provided by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to raise awareness about the situation in Sierra Leone, and to solicit the support of the Norwegian government in the search for peace and discuss the way forward for Sierra Leone. It attracted over 40 delegates representing more than fifteen Sierra Leonean organizations at home and abroad, especially Europe and North America.

In the aftermath of the AFRC coup, Sierra Leone nationals in the US organized a forum at the Sierra Leone Embassy in Washington DC. The forum was called to help coordinate opposition to the coup and galvanize support for the restoration of democracy. The forum sought to get the US government to intervene and help address the political and humanitarian crisis that had developed as a result of the coup to a speedy conclusion. About 1,000 Sierra Leone nationals in the USA, especially in the Washington DC metro area, attended the forum. The forum called for the coup to be immediately reversed and the ousted government reinstated. Four days later, a demonstration was organized in Washington DC against the AFRC. An estimated 2,500 people attended. At the State Department, the organizers, through John Leigh, Sierra Leone's ambassador in Washington at the time, appealed to the USA to 'work with other nations and international organizations to act decisively to end the crisis, by force of arms if necessary'. Similar rallies were organized in the UK, Canada, Gambia, Guinea, etc. In fact, throughout the war, these types of demonstrations were organized in different parts of the world with Sierra Leone diasporic populations.

Various diaspora organizations mushroomed during the period of the AFRC takeover to help coordinate diasporic response to the political and humanitarian situation in Sierra Leone. In the USA, for example, emerged the Concerned Sierra Leoneans for the Restoration of Democracy (CSLRD) in New York and New Jersey, the Sierra Leone Community in Southern California (SLSC), the Organization of Sierra Leoneans in Indiana (OSLIN), and the Coalition for Democracy in Sierra Leone (CODISAL) in the Washington DC metro area, among others. CODISAL, taking advantage of the opportunities that its proximity to the seat of US power provided, became very prominent in these campaigns and spearheaded, in collaboration with other organizations, the campaign to lobby the US government. After the removal of the AFRC from power by ECOMOG, the National Organization of Sierra Leoneans in North America (NOSLINA) was founded as an umbrella diasporic organization which would help galvanize and coordinate the relationships between different diaspora organizations. NOSLINA sought 'to pull together their financial, intellectual, technical and other acumen to contribute towards the promotion of Sierra Leone's interests in North America as well as to participate in national development'.

Kwame Fitzjohn, then general secretary of CODISAL, had taken the opportunity that a 'Friends of Sierra Leone Advocacy Day' at the US Congress presented to convene a meeting of representatives of Sierra Leone diasporic groups in the USA. NOSLINA resulted

from this meeting and became a major voice for Sierra Leone in the USA. In the aftermath of the RUF assault on Freetown in January 1999, NOSLINA collaborated with organizations such as Amnesty International, the Africa Faith and Justice Network and various church groups to lobby the Congressional Black Caucus, the US State Department and the House Subcommittee on Africa, among others, to respond to the humanitarian crisis in Sierra Leone. Partly through these efforts, Jesse Jackson, the US president's special envoy to Sierra Leone, in collaboration with Nigeria, ECOWAS, the UN and the government of the UK, helped to bring pressure to bear on the RUF rebels and the government of Sierra Leone to reach a negotiated settlement of the conflict. The Lomé Peace Agreement of July 1999 resulted from these negotiations.

To claim that international interests in the conflict grew mainly because of these interventions might be overstating the case for the efficacy of the diasporas' contributions to peacebuilding. For sure, the changes in Western attitude and their interest in the Sierra Leone crisis were informed by many considerations and factors, some of which had nothing to do with the diasporas but everything to do with Western political and ideological interests, and changing international public opinion about what these conflicts meant, especially for Western security. However, the fact that the diasporas also did play a role in drawing international attention to what was going on in Sierra Leone cannot be disputed. There were regular contacts between top government officials and policy makers in Western countries and members of the diaspora which impacted on how those governments viewed what was going on in Sierra Leone. In Canada for example, the diaspora, in collaboration with organizations like Partnership Africa Canada, worked to develop contacts with, and lobbied, senior government officials and policy makers in the Canadian government responsible for Africa. Representatives of Concerned Citizens and Friends of Sierra Leone (CCFSL), which was formed in Toronto in the wake of the AFRC takeover, for example, met with David Kilgore, the secretary for Africa in the Department of Foreign Affairs, on several occasions, and it was partly through these contacts and partnership that the Canadian government initially considered and later expanded the resettlement programme of Sierra Leonean refugees with close family ties in Canada.

Media and Internet Campaigns

Political campaigns were not limited to protest marches, public forums or conferences alone, but also included advocacy work through the creative use of the media and the internet. These outlets

were also used as avenues for political and social commentary on the war, sources of information and news, etc. The media and internet became part of the diasporic communicative spaces and avenues for networking. These spaces helped the diaspora articulate certain views and opinions regarding the conflict, while allowing them to keep in touch with events back home. One such media outlet was the online newsletter *Focus on Sierra Leone*, published in the UK. The other was the internet discussion forum Leonenet.

Leonenet, established in 1991/92, was the first major internet discussion forum and Sierra Leonean virtual diasporic communicative space to be established. Apart from aspiring to a virtual 'nation', contributing a symbolic dimension of that state's informal behaviour in the public sphere (Tynes 2007), and providing an important avenue for diasporic discussions and engagement with the political, socio-economic and cultural life of the country away from home, Leonenet's most valuable contribution was helping to provide and clarify information about the war, and especially the RUF. Some of the most important academic work on the war and especially on the origins and character of the RUF (those of Ibrahim Abdullah, Ismail Rashid, Patrick Muana, Yusuf Bangura, etc.) were partly encouraged and inspired by discussions which took place on Leonenet at a time when information about the conflict and the insurgents was limited and misleading at best

With regard to *Focus*, established in November 1994, its aim was to help sensitize the world and create awareness about a conflict that, according to its publishers, 'the international community did not care about' because it was 'another Kaplanesque manifestation of anarchy in some corner of dark Africa'. It was also intended to serve as a vehicle for the search for a negotiated settlement of the conflict. Through International Alert (AI), a London-based NGO working in the area of conflict resolution, which had had contacts with the RUF and was doing conflict resolution work in Sierra Leone, Ambrose Ganda, the proprietor and publisher of *Focus*, got involved in the conflict as one of the 'facilitators of peace' and established contacts with the RUF, much to the dislike of the then NPRC junta in Freetown, which labelled him a rebel collaborator, and his news-letter a front for RUF propaganda. *Focus* became one of the few media outlets that provided regular updated news, views and opinions on the war, information about who the RUF were and what they stood for.

Ambrose Ganda was one of the first Sierra Leoneans to meet with top officials of the RUF, at a time when most people knew very little about the rebel movement and, in fact, any form of contact with

the rebels was frowned on by the government and its supporters. In August 1995, through the offices of IA and Omrie Golley, another diaporic Sierra Leonean, who was then the director of the National Convention for Reconstruction and Development (NCRD), a Sierra Leone diaspora organization based in London, Ganda met with, and interviewed, Fayia Musa, one of the spokespersons of the rebel movement, and Philip Palmer, an RUF front-line commander and combatant with the rank of captain. These interviews were published in *Focus* and provided some information and useful insights into the RUF and its members, especially when there were confusions over who the rebels were and what they stood for (*Focus*, April 1995). In fact, *Focus* became a valuable source for information on the war, the parties involved in it, and the effects it was having on the country and its people. It made appeals targeted specifically at the international community, and issued position statements on the war and opinion pieces on the way forward in resolving it. Through the work of *Focus*, Ambrose Ganda became increasingly involved in the search for peace and one of the contact persons between the RUF, the government and other organizations interested in the conflict. In fact when Bio ousted Strasser in January 1996, it was through him that the RUF's Fayia Musa announced to the government that they, the RUF, were prepared for unconditional talks with the NPRC. Ambrose Ganda also became a contact person for many organizations interested in the conflict, and looking for ways in which prominent Sierra Leoneans could be used in helping to bring the RUF and the government to the negotiation table.

It should be pointed out that from the onset, there were contestations over media representations of the conflict and the parties involved in it and this intensified in the event of the AFRC coup in May 1997. Both supporters and opponents of the government sought to creatively use the media to discredit opposing sides in the conflict. In the immediate aftermath of the coup, for example, Dr Julius Spencer, a senior lecturer in the Department of English at Fourah Bay College, then on sabbatical leave in the USA, contacted the government in exile in Conakry to explore ways in which he could help in the fight against the AFRC/RUF junta. Together with Alie Bangura and Hannah Fulla, two other displaced Sierra Leoneans who had sought refuge in Guinea at the time of the coup, set up a radio station, FM 98.1, as the mouthpiece of the government in exile and a counter to the AFRC media machine in Sierra Leone, especially Freetown. The radio station was initially purchased with monies taken from the Sierra Leone UN Mission funds, which was later refunded by the British government, which also bought additional

equipment and provided logistical and financial support for the station when it became apparent that the station was doing a good job in countering the propaganda of the AFRC and was having a great impact in Sierra Leone. The radio station proved instrumental in the campaign for the hearts and minds of the people of Sierra Leone as it kept the people informed on what was happening and kept pressure on the AFRC junta. That much of the country was on a sit down strike for the entire nine months period that the AFRC was in power was a testimony of not only the will of the people to resist the AFRC, but also the influence and power of FM 98.1, which inter alia made the threat of an ECOMOG military action to reverse the coup imminent. When ECOMOG eventually decided to move against the junta and remove them from power, the station played a crucial role in that struggle; it became a major instrument for psychological warfare against the junta, broadcasting propaganda materials on ECOMOG's strength, the areas they had occupied, and how the military was crumbling in the face of ECOMOG's onslaught. In fact the initial announcement of the decision to move against the junta was broadcast on that station.

Conversely, the junta, with its control over the government media machinery in Freetown, did everything in its power and took every opportunity to discredit the ousted government as blood thirsty power hungry ethnicists, who would do anything, even annihilating the population, in order to be restored to power. Its astute and ebullient spokesperson, Aliou Kamara, never failed in echoing this and for pleading the case of the AFRC. Similarly, its supporters and sympathizers in the diaspora also set up internet sites, like NINJA, to spread disinformation about Tejan Kabbah and his government in exile, at the same time spreading favourable comments about the AFRC, to make them appear less brutal and friendlier than they really were. In the aftermath of the AFRC takeover, those local newspapers which appeared sympathetic to the AFRC, like *Expo Times*, were very critical of the ousted government, while defending the position of the AFRC.

The power relations within which contestations over the war occurred, especially in the aftermath of the AFRC coup, was asymmetrical. For example, the discursive power of the pro-Tejan Kabbah (problematically equated with pro-democracy) camp made it almost a taboo, in the diasporas as well as in Sierra Leone, to utter, print or broadcast anything that appeared, even vaguely, in favour of the rebel junta or critical of Kabbah and his government. To be pro-democracy meant support for the return of Kabbah and his government, even if by force. Anyone who did not share this

sentiment was branded a rebel collaborator or rebel sympathizer. At the Sierra Leone Forum in Washington DC, a day after the coup, for example, opponents of the coup confronted a group of people they accused of supporting or sympathizing with the coup makers. Police and secret service agents had to be called before the situation could be calmed down. Similarly, at the protest march organized a couple of days later, those thought to be sympathizers of the coup makers were confronted and almost manhandled by overzealous supporters of the ousted government. These types of incidents took place almost everywhere Sierra Leone diasporic communities existed. In Guinea, for example, where the government in exile was based, anybody suspected of ties with the AFRC, or perceived to be supporting or sympathetic to their cause, was targeted and humiliated.

The war was shrouded in misinformation and misrepresentations from the very beginning and it was therefore easy to discredit anyone, even when genuinely working for 'peace', as a rebel collaborator or sympathizer, a charge which at the time was very serious and carried with it a certain stigma, and in Sierra Leone in some instances led to certain death. On the government's side, this became the position of its supporters in the diasporas as well, and there was, as it were, a deliberate attempt to homogenize political discourse on the war, so that peace or working for peace only meant support for the government and its position. Anyone who held a contrary view was branded a rebel collaborator or sympathizer. What this ended up doing was shrink the space for genuine rational reflection and national discussion on the war both at home and abroad, and frustrated the efforts of those people who held divergent views from the government, but who nonetheless were interested in genuinely finding a peaceful solution to the conflict. Neutrality therefore became not only a rare commodity, but also an instrument, as it were, for both political piggy-backing as well as victimization, especially, of those who were critical of the government's positions.

Far from being homogenous, however, there were several voices and tendencies in the diasporas concerning the discourses and debates about the AFRC coup and the fate of Kabbah's government, though the dominant perspective sought to homogenize these discursive spaces by seeking to ridicule any view that deviated from the dominant perspective. First, and this was what became the dominant view and eventually won over competing alternatives, there were those who called for the 'immediate' reversal of the coup and the restoration of Kabbah's government at any cost (even by military action if need be). Second, there were those who favoured the reversal of the coup and the restoration of Kabbah's government

but only by negotiation and not military action. Third, there were those who favoured the coup and an eventual return to constitutional order, but who were opposed to military intervention and the return of Kabbah. There were also those who opposed both the coup as well as the return of Kabbah. For them, the AFRC coup presented a rare opportunity for a negotiated settlement of the conflict. They called for an interim government of national unity that would hold a sovereign national reconciliation conference at which every major stakeholder – the AFRC, the RUF, the ousted government, civil society organizations, etc. – would be represented. The way the issues were framed, especially by the government and its sympathizers, and the way that events unfolded during this period made it difficult for many Sierra Leoneans, both at home and abroad, to remain neutral. As the government and its backers saw it, one either supported the government in exile or the AFRC junta in Freetown.

Political Engagements and Participation in Government

Political engagements by the diaspora with the parties in the conflict took on many forms. They included accepting political appointments in government and advisory councils, and developing contacts with, and giving moral and political support to, the parties in the conflict, etc. They also included participation in political processes like the transition and democratization process, peace negotiations, developing contacts and sharing opinions and knowledge through networking with local actors in the homeland, or international organizations, groups and institutions working for peace. These engagements, as pointed out earlier, took on various forms, from the individual, to the collective through organizations and institutions. They were also national and transnational and involved domestic, regional and international collaborations.

It is important to point out that the war was underpinned by various competing interests, motives and intentions, and it was difficult to determine the real intentions of the various parties politically involved in it. This situation presented an opportunity for political piggy-backing, and various people (especially politicians), either by themselves or through organizations, both in the diaspora and home in Sierra Leone, sought to use it to further specific political goals and agendas, some of which were not entirely altruistic but based on self-interest. More often than not, and this was repeatedly the case throughout the war, most people with vested political interest in the conflict used the language of peace to hide their real political motives, or support, as it were, for the rebels in particular. For example, when the AFRC took over, many, both in Sierra Leone

and in the diasporas, also saw their action as an opportunity for the foregrounding of specific personal agendas and political interests and to reinvent themselves in the political landscape of the country, and therefore not only supported the junta, but also accepted political appointments in their administration. For example, Alimamy Pallo Bangura, Sierra Leone's former permanent representative to the UN, who coincidentally was visiting Sierra Leone when the coup took place, accepted the post of foreign affairs minister in the AFRC administration. Similarly, Alieu Kamara, another diaspora Sierra Leonean, became the spokesperson for the junta. Other such high profile Sierra Leoneans in the diaspora, like Abass Bundu, at that time resident in the UK, and John Karefa Smart, resident in the USA, were sympathetic to the AFRC, and sought to use their political and diplomatic contacts and influence to dissuade ECOWAS and the international community from intervening militarily to reverse the coup.

This was, however, not the first time since the inception of the war that members of the diaspora accepted political appointments in government, or saw a change in government in Freetown as an opportunity for foregrounding specific agendas and interests. When the NPRC took over in 1992, for example, many in the diaspora accepted appointments to various positions by the junta, and at times even lobbied for such appointments. Tejan Kabbah (who won the 1996 presidential elections, and whose overthrow was causing such serious political divide in the country and its diaspora) was, for instance, appointed chairman of the National Advisory Council (NAC), which was set up in November 1994 to advise the junta on policy issues and for drafting a new constitution. It was also on the recommendation of the NAC that James Jonah, a former UN under secretary political affairs, was appointed chairman of the Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC), the body created as part of the transition mechanism, with the responsibility of conducting presidential and parliamentary elections.

These two influential bodies, at least in relation to the transition, headed by two diasporic Sierra Leoneans and UN retirees wielded considerable power and had an overwhelming influence in setting the agenda for the country's transition programme in 1996. In fact, the transition itself was not only another area of diasporic political intervention and contestations, but could in fact be regarded as a diasporic affair. For starters, the two top political parties in the 1996 elections (the SLPP and UNPP) were headed by Sierra Leoneans from the diaspora. John Karefa-Smart returned home for the sole purpose of heading the UNPP and contesting the elections as its

presidential candidate. Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, upon leaving his position as head of the NAC, won the SLPP's leadership contest in 1996 through what many saw as a manipulated process, and became the presidential candidate of that party. James Jonah, another diaspora Sierra Leonean, was Chairman of INEC and chief returning officer in the elections. Other diaspora Sierra Leoneans like Sahr Stephen Mambu, of the National Republican Party (NRP), and Mohamed Yayah Sillah, of the National Alliance for Democracy Party (NADP), returned home to form their own parties; others joined already existing ones and contested as candidates for parliament.

Tejan Kabbah won the elections after a run-off between him and Karefa-Smart, and upon assuming the presidency he appointed a number of diaspora Sierra Leoneans to serve in his government. Maigore Kallon, a long time resident of Liberia, for example, became foreign affairs minister in the first Tejan Kabbah administration (1996–7). James Jonah, INEC chief, became Sierra Leone's permanent representative to the UN, and after the AFRC coup was overturned, became finance minister. Septimus Kaikai, a long-time resident of the USA, became presidential spokesman after the AFRC coup was overturned and Kabbah returned from exile in 1998, and eventually minister of information in the aftermath of the 2002 elections. Cecil Blake, a Sierra Leonean academic resident in the USA, and a very active member of the National Organization of Sierra Leoneans in North America (NOSLINA), which was founded in the wake of the AFRC coup, was appointed information minister in May 2001 during the transitional period and served in that capacity until after the first post-conflict elections in 2002.

Returning to the transition to democracy in 1996, it was another moment for diasporic political intervention and activism. The diaspora, with its multiple voices and positions, was central to the debates and controversies that marred the discourses about what transition to democracy and holding elections would mean and achieve for a country still at war. Two heuristic tendencies informed the debates: 'Elections before Peace' and 'Peace before Elections'. Some who campaigned for elections, saw in the transition an opportunity for a reconfiguration of the political landscape and an opportunity for some personal political aggrandizement. In this group were, of course, politicians who saw an opportunity to return to power. Others, however, frustrated at the failures of the NPRC, and enticed by the way the international community and especially the US and UK governments insinuated themselves in the transitions programme and framed the terms of the debate on what the

elections would mean, genuinely believed that elections would bring the war to an end. James Jonah, the INEC chairman, in league with the UN and powerful Western governments, loomed large in the process and because of the influential position he held, marshalled the pro-elections camp. On the opposite side, the 'Peace before Elections' campaign was principally driven by, but not limited to, supporters of the junta, especially after the palace coup against Captain Strasser by his deputy, Brigadier Bio, and his NPRC colleagues in January 1996. There were many Sierra Leoneans, at home and abroad, however, who, even when they did not support the NPRC, recognized the folly in holding elections 'in the face of so much displacement and insecurity in the country' as one Sierra Leonean in the diaspora put it at the time.

At the Oslo Peace Conference, this position was endorsed by representatives of a cross-section of the Sierra Leone diaspora attending the conference. This should not, however, be taken as a single diasporic voice, for even at that conference there were many different voices on the transition. As one delegate told me, John Karefa-Smart, then nursing a presidential ambition and planning to run in the elections, wanted the conference to adopt a position that supported the holding of elections and, in fact, used his time in Oslo to lobby the Norwegian government to support not only INEC's position, but also his presidential bid. While delegates applauded attempts by the NPRC to return the country to democratic rule, they expressed concern over the practicability of such a move in the prevailing security situation in the country, and instead called for a postponement of the elections, whilst a National Peace Conference was convened. Four people, Ms Renee Spring, Ambrose Ganda, Dr Columba Blango (all from the UK), and Dr Christian Webber (Germany) were designated as delegates to represent the position of the Oslo conference at the INEC's consultative conference on the electoral process, which took place between 15 and 17 August the same year. The consultative conference (organized by INEC to seek the opinion of the country on the way forward) only admitted diaspora Sierra Leoneans as observers. The consultative conference decided to press ahead with the elections, which was one of the most tragic decision made during the war years. Whatever happened after 1996 was directly connected to the outcomes of the elections. Little surprise that barely after 12 months in power, Kabbah was overthrown in a military coup.

The period of the AFRC and its aftermath were in fact the height of not only violence and war in Sierra Leone, but also of diasporic interventions and activities. Members of the diaspora pitched

themselves with opposing sides of the conflict – between the military–rebel alliance on the one hand, and the government in exile on the other. But the conflict was far more complex than that, and was not only about seeking appointments in the junta or winning the favour of the government in exile. It also involved a range of other activities aimed at raising awareness, and sensitizing host governments on what was going on in Sierra Leone and how they could be best suited to intervene. Whether in support of the government or the military rebel alliance, or whether just plainly working to find a solution to the problem without any particular support for either camp, everybody involved sought to justify and explain their actions as working for peace. Pallo Bangura, who became the junta's foreign affairs minister, believed he was working for the peaceful resolution of the problem. Hinga Norman, the deputy defence minister and coordinator of the CDF, who first went to exile in Liberia, and later invaded the country with his DCF and Kamajoi forces, was also working for peace, understood in terms of defeating the AFRC/RUF junta. Omrie Golley, too, used the language of peace to justify his involvement with the RUF. However, the fact that he later became their legal adviser, spokesperson, and arms procurer partly shows that he used the language of peace as a front to hide his real political interests in the conflict. The same could be said of Abass Bundu, a former executive secretary of the West African regional grouping ECOWAS, and John Karefa-Smart, an elder statesman and the runner-up to Kabbah in the 1996 presidential elections, who used the language of peace to hide their political and moral support for the AFRC/RUF junta.

POST-WAR ELECTIONS

While the number of diasporic organizations dwindled with the end of the civil war, diasporic interventions themselves have increased and stabilized into 'normal' socio-political engagements with the state in the post-war period. Sierra Leone's recent history, through which a large section of its diasporas emerged, has heightened consciousness among many Sierra Leoneans living abroad of their responsibility to their communities and homeland. Bad political leadership has, among other things, been blamed for the country's civil war in the 1990s (Zack-Williams 1999), and the Sierra Leone diaspora, especially those living in affluent Western countries, a large section of which was established during the war, but who are also largely insulated by their location abroad from retribution for their political views back home, are not only conscious of the power

and privilege that their diasporic location confers on them, but also aware of the possibilities of global power configurations in an era of globalization. These have emboldened them as they increasingly see themselves, even if problematically, as watchdogs against 'bad government' and custodians of democracy in Sierra Leone. In a way, the transnational spaces from which they operate and engage in politics in their homelands give them some form of political leverage that allows them to intervene in the politics of their homeland without fear of retribution.

The forces of globalization and transnationalism have made it possible for various types of social dialogue to take place between peoples of distant locales. As globalization shrinks the distance between here and there, the diasporas situated in the transnational spaces in-between increasingly grow in importance. As such, it is now commonplace for the concerns of diasporas and their views on issues in relation to homeland politics to filter into the national discourses and debates back home. With specific reference to the Sierra Leone diasporas, online Sierra Leone diasporic newspapers like *Cocorioco*, *The Patriotic Vanguard*, *The New People* (as well as discussion forums like Leonenet, Sierra Leone Discussion Forum, etc.), have ensured that local Sierra Leone events are extensively covered, reported, made accessible, discussed and critically analysed in the diasporas. It is common for Sierra Leoneans in the diasporas to publish articles not only on these internet sites, but also in newspapers in Sierra Leone itself. An important aspect of these articles, as contested and varied as they and the views they express are, is the boldness with which they intervene in the local social and political issues of Sierra Leone. The vantage point of being out of the country sometimes confers the privilege of being able to intervene in certain domestic debates without fear of retribution. Though the range of views expressed and the variety of subjects covered represent, to some extent, the diverseness in opinions, views and concerns of the diaspora itself, the boldness of the interventions make them difficult to ignore.

These articles, printed off the internet, or sometimes even published in the domestic press in Sierra Leone, generate some excitement and debate about certain issues which otherwise would be ignored. They also help in creating an idea of what the government's activities are and in some instances fan the flame of anti-government sentiments. As in the war years, these forums have provided virtual communities of Sierra Leoneans in the diaspora with avenues for ongoing diasporic engagement with issues pertaining to Sierra Leone, issues that range from the political and the economic, to the social and

cultural. Through this engagement, the Sierra Leone diasporas have been able to intervene in debates and discussions about especially the two post-war elections in Sierra Leone in 2002 and 2007 and what those elections might mean for democracy and development in that country.

These diasporic interventions became even more pronounced during the 2007 elections during which the ruling party, the Sierra Leone People's Party, lost to the opposition All People's Congress. The fact that in the run up to those election the leaders of the major political parties (the SLPP, the APC, and an offshoot of the SLPP, the People's Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC), led by lawyer Charles Margai, an erstwhile member of the SLPP and son of the country's second prime minister Sir Albert Margai and nephew of the first, Sir Milton Margai) at various times led delegations to solicit the support of Sierra Leoneans living abroad, shows how important the diasporas have become in the political life of the country. Indeed, there is an increasing recognition in political and socio-economic policy circles in Sierra Leone that the diasporas could and should play a significant role in social transformation, democratization and development in the country. Conversely, there is a rising awareness among the Sierra Leone diaspora itself that diasporic subjects and communities have a huge stake in the political and socio-economic life of the country.

It is paradoxical, however, that despite the increasing awareness among diasporic Sierra Leoneans about the role they could play and their increasing involvement in the politics of Sierra Leone, the diaspora as a political entity still does not have the vote in elections, unlike other West Africa countries. For members of the diaspora to vote, they have to be physically present in Sierra Leone during the voter registration period, as well as on polling day. That notwithstanding, all of the major political parties in Sierra Leone have branches in the diasporas. For example, there is a North America Branch of the APC, a Netherlands Branch of the PMDC, and a UK branch of the SLPP among others. These chapters have come to be seen as important entities in the overall structures of the political parties in that country and they played significant roles in the 2007 elections. Having a diasporic chapter of a political party to some extent indicates the amount of support the party enjoys, and the resources it can draw on. Due to the oftentimes favourable way in which the diasporas are viewed in Sierra Leone, having diasporic branches is a sign of a party's political prestige and clout. And these chapters, as the 2007 elections illustrated, help to mobilize much needed financial and material resources for the parties.

It is believed that it was largely the funds raised in the diasporas and the material and economic resources provided by these diasporic groups and organizations that in part won the 2007 elections for the APC. While the erstwhile ruling SLPP largely depended on internally generated funds and resources, the opposition parties', especially the APC's, financial bases were in part their diaspora chapters. The New Jersey chapter alone reportedly contributed over \$100,000 to the APC's election campaign. In addition to their economic role, the diasporas were instrumental in helping to decide on the issues central to the parties' campaigns and in helping to sensitize voters on those issues. But apart from what could be regarded as the auxiliary support roles that these diasporic chapters played on behalf of the home-based political parties, various diasporic organizations (social, cultural and ethno-linguistic groups) and individual diasporic subjects also engaged in the electoral process and in various ways were able to influence the terms of the debates locally and nationally in Sierra Leone. They also set the agenda of public discourse, suggested which issues the elections should be about, and helped in deciding the outcome of the elections. In fact, they were in some cases able to influence the decisions of their compatriots back home on which parties to support and which candidates to vote for in the elections.

It has been alluded to earlier that the diaspora contributed to the democratic process in Sierra Leone through participation in political party activities. Since voting only took place in Sierra Leone, some members of the diaspora went home to register, cast their votes, stood as candidates in the elections and campaigned for their respective parties. For example, Moijueh Kaikai, a former PMDC member (who is now a deputy minister of labour in the APC government) came from the UK to help organize the PMDC's election campaign and he was largely credited for the PMDC's success in the southern provincial district of Pujehun. The PMDC's publicity secretary, Mohamed Bangura, was a long-time resident of Canada who only went back home to Sierra Leone to contest the elections as a parliamentary candidate. The APC's presidential running mate, Sam Sumana, was also a long-time resident of the USA who only went home a couple of years previously. In fact, the diaspora factor was very central to the APC's overall election strategy and it greatly helped in that party's victory. A good number of the parliamentary candidates were people from the diaspora. Moreover, the APC's radio station, which was very crucial to its overall success at the polls, was bought by its diaspora chapters.

CONCLUSION

What I have tried to do in this chapter is to illustrate in a general thematic way, how and where the Sierra Leone diasporas intervened in the politics of conflict and peacebuilding in Sierra Leone in the 1990s. I have focused specifically on what I regard as the three most significant areas in which they intervened and how it impacted on the conflict. What I have not done, and have not tried to do, is to periodize the war into conflict, peacebuilding (and maybe post-conflict) for a number of reasons.

It must be clear from the preceding pages of this chapter that the complexities of the war and the diasporas role in it do not easily lend themselves to such a differentiation. As the conflict unfolded, even what appeared as peacebuilding efforts sometimes came off as conflict escalatory moves. As has been shown, peace was not always easy to define and became a hostage for both political piggy-backing as well as a tool for discrediting opponents. Similarly, these activities (conflict and peacebuilding) dove-tailed into each other and make it difficult to impose a separation of what was contributing to peace or war. I have therefore preferred only to identify and talk broadly about the areas in which diasporic interventions took place. Besides, such a separation would rely on a problematic binary logic that has succeeded in pathologizing diasporas in relation to their role in conflicts.

The range of diasporic activities and interventions, as outlined in the preceding pages of this chapter, was diverse, complex and extensive. Not always clearly articulated, and animated by various interests and desires, diasporic interventions were part of the overall dynamic of conflict and peacebuilding in Sierra Leone, and its political and socio-economic struggles. It should be pointed out, however, that most of the tendencies found in the diasporas were, to a very large extent, the reflections of the wider political tendencies and divides found in Sierra Leone society as a whole, and this should be understood within the historical, socio-economic and political contexts.

NOTE

1. These figures were provided by David Carew, Minister of Finance and Development, Government of Sierra Leone during the President's Holiday Makers (Diaspora) Get Together, State House, Freetown; 30 December 2007. Carew's explanation of how they arrived at this figure was that, the government estimates that there are 800,000 households in Sierra Leone, each of which has at least a member in the diaspora.

Conclusion

Tunde Zack-Williams

WHAT LESSONS IN EXTERNAL INTERVENTIONS

This volume has examined the causal factors, the background to the civil war and the effort at peacebuilding in the post-conflict period in Sierra Leone. In looking at the causal factors, we drew attention to long-term and immediate causal factors which led to war. Among the latter was the role of Liberian warlord Charles Taylor in aiding Foday Sankoh's Revolutionary United Front as a consequence for the perceived duplicity of Sierra Leone's President Joseph Momoh in apparently trying to broker peace under the auspices of ECOMOG, whilst at the same time allowing his country's airport to be used to bomb the position of the warlord's front-line troops at a crucial point in the civil war. Taylor sought revenge and with the help of Libya's Colonel Gaddafi, the RUF was born and sustained. However, it is doubtful if Taylor's intervention would have been so successful without other underlying long-term factors including: the marginalization of youth, patrimonialism and bad governance, deterioration of the economy and the general crisis of peripheral capitalism in Sierra Leone. By the time Taylor decided to show 'fraternal revolutionary solidarity' with Sankoh, Sierra Leone was a failing state, with crumbling social and physical infrastructure, a regime that could provide neither social citizenship, nor security for its people, with an alienated youthful population and an electorate that was at its wit's end with their tormentors. From this point of view, the RUF did not destroy Sierra Leone, this was accomplished by over a quarter of a century of APC misrule and dictatorship, during which positive and functional values were replaced by negative dysfunctional values: by devaluing education, abandoning financial and political probity to the scrap heap of history, whilst celebrating kleptocratic tendencies, through widespread misappropriation of state funds at all levels of public life.

The phenomenon of 'the decline of politics and the politics of decline' (Zack-Williams 1985), so characteristic of this period, was marked by the disenfranchisement of not just the peasantry, but the rest of society outside the narrow confine of the political class.

Local government was sacrificed to patrimonial rule in the form of politically appointed ('mis-management committees'), with people accountable to no one but '*de pa*' (Stevens) as the venerable leader was called. The net effect of this ugly practice was that future parliamentarians did not have the opportunity to practise the art of politics and management at a local or meso-level, with the result that the calibre of those catapulted on to the centre of politics in Tower Hill was markedly devalued.¹ Accompanying this form of political reproduction was the speedy decline of the economy and the standard of living of the mass of the people outside the coterie of the voracious and avaricious political class. The most disturbing point to note is that this abuse of the people's trust and the mortgaging of their future happened at a time when other nations, particularly those in Asia, were forging ahead with development. For example in 1961, Sierra Leone with a GDP per capita of \$142.92 ranked 74 out of 105 countries – well above South Korea (\$91.63), India (\$86.23), China (\$75.87) and Botswana (\$56.17). On the eve of the civil war, Sierra Leone had slipped to 173 out of 178 nations, with a paltry GDP per capita of \$189.15; only Tanzania, Uganda, Cambodia and Vietnam were lower. With the exception of Tanzania, all of these nations had been through prolonged conflicts.

That a significant number of young people joined the rebels should not have been surprising given the fact that many blamed corrupt politicians for the collapse of their educational opportunities and future prospects (Peters and Richards 1998). The surprise was the widespread violence unleashed upon a relatively quiescent population by Sankoh's forces, which has been blamed on their 'lumpen' nature (Abdullah and Muana 1998), that is the absence of any revolutionary or class consciousness that would have imposed discipline upon Sankoh's cadres. The widespread and wanton violence frightened potential support from the Left in the country, thus denuding the RUF of any significant intellectual support.

NEO-LIBERAL ORTHODOXY AND PEACEBUILDING IN SIERRA LEONE

Various contributors to this volume have drawn attention to the dominance of neo-liberal thinking as the guiding principles of post-conflict peacebuilding, or, according to Kandeh, as 'the antidote to armed conflict' in Sierra Leone. Indeed, the imposition of neo-liberal logic has been questioned in this volume, in particular its relevance to the Sierra Leone situation. It is important to note that the salient question is not whether or not neo-liberalism works, but who does it

work for? Or who benefits from neo-liberalism? A more significant question is whether neo-liberalism is compatible with the rule of the fractious, indisciplined political class that controls the state in Sierra Leone? For example, is the logic of the Weberian state (based on rational-legal principles), and seen as a 'best practice' of the West transferable to contemporary Africa in the hands of those who have appropriated 'gerontocratic patrimonialism' over functional democracy, by silencing the voice of the majority? As Kandeh has argued, it is at best doubtful if such a forced transformation is possible in a polity lacking the fundamentals of liberal pluralist democracy, or any semblance of an effective state. Despite this observation, it is important to note that no other option is on the table, notwithstanding the pan-Africanist alternatives, including the Lagos Plan of Action. Indeed, the inability of African states to address these alternatives is indicative of the extraverted nature of economy and society, having been hemmed in by colonialism, imperialism and more recently by neo-liberalism. This raises the question of Sierra Leone's ability to reduce poverty and fulfil its millennium goal target.

SECURITY SECTOR REFORM

In this volume, the security sector has been described in a broad sense to include not just the armed forces, police and prisons systems, but also to include parliament and the judiciary. This security sector, as Gbla has pointed out, has been ravaged not just by the war, but also by successive governments' policies of politicizing the armed forces, the judiciary and the civil service. In the case of the armed forces, political interference goes back to the days of Sir Albert Margai, which culminated in the first military coup by his force commander, Brigadier David Lansana. The manner of Stevens' succession meant that he had little trust in the ethnic neutrality of such sensitive institutions as the army and the judiciary, a paranoia which culminated in the one-party state in 1977 and the demise of civil society. The security of the citizen is paramount, and this has not been assured since the early days of independence, and the fear for the future of the nation is a major factor in outward migration, particularly for those skilled, mobile people who constitute the middle classes, upon whom democracy and economic progress are built. Wai has drawn our attention to the important role played by the diaspora as fighters and as peacemakers. The diaspora is an important source of sustenance for the population in an environment of state failure where remittances make all the difference between living and starvation. Sylvia Macauley's chapter on gender is a clear

reminder of the crucial role women played in bringing peace to the nation, but no nation desirable of development can relegate 50 per cent of its citizens to second-class status, as if their capacity to cope with over-exploitation was permanently elastic.

In conclusion, one is reminded of another academic visit to Sierra Leone. Towards the end of the civil war in 2001, a group of Sierra Leoneans sponsored by the Nordic Institute of African Studies held a seminar in Freetown, part of which was relayed over the state-controlled Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service. The discussion covered a wide range of issues including lessons to be learnt. Feedback from some of the listeners was that they thought the discussion helped to focus the nation's mind on what was to be done, not only to avoid another bloodbath, but to point the leadership in the right direction for progress and prosperity. However, some six years later, an elderly resident informed this author that during the broadcast in 2001, they were so overwhelmed with the discussion and policy recommendations that they never thought the leadership of the country would fail to learn its lesson, as corruption and injustice continue to plague the 'land of our birth'. Let us hope this time a lesson will have been learnt after reading this volume.

NOTE

1. The devaluation could not be measured in terms of the formal qualifications of the cohort, for the most corrupt Cabinet appointed by Stevens was full of Ph.D.s, forcing the wordy Stevens to construct a maxim: 'Nor to book make sense, nar sense make book', that is, book is not the product of sense, but sense is the harbinger of book.

Appendix 1

Historical Outline – the Making and Unmaking of Sierra Leone

500–400 BC	Hano the Carthaginian arrived in the Bay of Sierra Leone
AD 1364	First Europeans from Rouen and Dieppe visited Sierra Leone
1462	Pedro da Cintra visited and named the locality, Sierra Lyoa, Lion Mountain, because of the continuous roaring of thunder and the cloudy and undulating nature of the mountains along its coast
1435	European participation in the slave trade began with Gonzales Baldeza
1442	Papal Bull giving a monopoly of the trade in human cargo to the Portuguese
1562	Sir John Hawkins made his first journey to Tagrin Point in Sierra Leone carrying 300 slaves to the Spanish Island of Hispaniola; returning in 1567 and after combing the coast went away with another 150 slaves
1579	Sir Francis Drake arrived in Sierra Leone for supplies
1594	Captain Alvares de Almada tried to establish a colony in Sierra Leone, marking a new spirit of colonialism among European nations
1663	Charles II granted a charter to The Company of Royal Adventurers into Africa to foster trade on the Guinea Coast, with trading forts in Tassoh Island, later (1672) to become the Royal African Company of England
1664	Admiral de Ruyter who captured the slave fort Goree Island from the British arrived in Sierra Leone where he carved his name on a rock in King Jimmy harbour

1700	Sierra Leone was plagued by pirates including one Captain Roberts who was captured by the British in 1721
1785	The French obtained a political footing in Sierra Leone in the Gambia Island at the mouth of the Bunce creek
1772	Judgement of Lord Justice Mansfield that a slave on setting foot in England became free and could not be taken back into slavery; the foundation of the abolitionist movement in England
1787, Feb 27	The Black Poor from the streets of London sailed in the <i>Atlantic</i> , <i>Belisarius</i> , and <i>Vernon</i> from Portsmouth, arriving in May 9 1787; the founding of Sierra Leone and beginning of British influence in Sierra Leone
1792, Feb	Lieutenant Clarkson, brother of Thomas Clarkson, arrived with 1,131 freedmen and women from Nova Scotia
1799	Sierra Leone Company took over the administration of the colony, with its own coinage, appointment of the Governor and councillors
1800, Sep	Arrival of 550 Maroons and an escort of 45 soldiers
1807	Sierra Leone as a Crown colony, when the administration of the colony was handed over to the Crown in the wake of the abolition of the slave trade
1822	Sierra Leone became the headquarters of the 'West African settlement' to include the Gambia and the Gold Coast, with a 'Governor-in-Chief'
1863	An Executive Council set up to run the affairs of the colony; prior to this the colony was run by the Governor and a Legislative Council
1888	West African Settlement was dissolved and Sierra Leone became a distinct colony
1890	Frontier Police was set up as part of the state apparatus to maintain order
1893	Freetown became a municipality, with its own mayor, J.A. McCarthy, followed in 1895 by Sir Samuel Lewis, first African knight
1896	A Protectorate was created over the interior adjacent to the Colony of Sierra Leone

- 1898 Hut Tax war led by Bai Bureh of Kasseh; the uprising was followed by the setting up of the 1st Battalion West African Regiment
- 1899 First section of the government railway from Freetown to Songo Town was opened
- 1914–18 The Great War, which saw the importance of Freetown as a Port of Assembly for merchant ships awaiting convoy with a very busy harbour; railway construction is completed
- 1937 Native Administration system established
- 1946 District Councils and Protectorate Assembly set up
- 1951 Constitutional changes resulting in a unified government of both Colony and Protectorate; two years later local ministerial responsibility was granted and the leader of the party with the most seats in the legislative council was named the Chief Minister
- 1957 First parliamentary elections held won by the SLPP under the leadership of Mr (later Sir) Milton Margai
- 1960 Constitutional conference held convened in London by Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr Iain Macleod, and a date was fixed for the country's independence from Britain. National coalition split resulting in the birth of a new political party, the All People's Congress
- 1961, Apr 27 Independence day
- 1962, May General elections under universal adult suffrage
- 1964, Apr 28 Sir Milton died and after much squabbling in the party leading to divisions, he was succeeded by his brother Mr (later Sir) Albert Margai
- 1967 General elections were held and won by the APC, but before the leader, Siaka Stevens, could be sworn in, a coup by the Forces Commander denied him victory and the first peaceful change of civilian regime in Africa
- 1968, Apr 19 A coup by NCOs ended the 13 months rule by the National Reformation Council and Stevens was sworn in as Prime Minister as head of a coalition government
- 1970 Government took over majority (51 per cent) interests in Sierra Leone Selection Trusts in order

	to form the national Diamond mining Company (Sierra Leone) Ltd (DIMINCO)
1971, Apr 19	Sierra Leone became a republic within the Commonwealth
1973	Mano River Union treaty for economic co-operation between Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea was signed
1974	New Five Year Development (1974/5–1978/9) Plan launched, with emphasis on export
1975	Economic Community of West African States Treaty signed in Lagos, Nigeria
1977	University students demonstrated against APC rule with call for new elections during the visit of President Kaunda of Zambia
1978, June 14	Sierra Leone became a one-party state when Prime Minister Siaka Stevens was sworn in as the first executive president following a national referendum
1980	Sierra Leone hosted the Organisation of African Unity annual meeting, leaving the country with massive debts and the beginning of some of the worst economic problems in the country's history
1985	Force commander Brigadier Joseph Saidu Momoh became second executive president succeeding Stevens, as he was nominated by Stevens, by-passing his heir apparent and First Vice-President Ibrahim Koroma
1990	Demand for a return to multi-party democracy intensified and in 1990 President Joseph Momoh gave in supporting such a return
1991 Mar	War broke out when a band of rebels including exile Sierra Leoneans, Burkinabese, and Liberians attacked the south-eastern province of Sierra Leone
1992 Apr 29	Junior Officers calling themselves the National Provisional Revolutionary Council (NPRC) ended twenty four years of continuous APC rule, when Joseph Momoh was overthrown by a group of junior officers led by captain Valentine Strasser
1994	In an attempt to expand the army, the NPRC launched a recruitment drive from among the

- unemployed urban youth, setting the context for what became known as *sobel* (soldier/rebel) or 'sell game'. Sierra Leone also signed a Mutual Defence Pact with Nigeria
- 1995 As rebel activities spread to include the mining areas, the NPRC concluded a contract with the South African private security outfit Executive Outcomes (EO) to provide assistance with the country's security
- 1996 Jan Captain Strasser replaced by his deputy Captain Maada-Bio in a palace coup
- 1996 Feb and Mar First Presidential and parliamentary election held since 1967, which was one by the SLPP, the country's oldest political party, under the leadership of former UN bureaucrat Ahmed Tejan Kabba
- 1996 Sept Attempted coup, in which Major Johnny Paul Koroma was arrested
- 1996 Nov Kabba signed a peace treaty with Foday Sankoh, with proviso that EO should leave.
- 1997 Jan EO left Sierra Leone as a result of pressure from the IMF due to the cost of maintaining the military outfit
- 1997 Mar Foday Sankoh flew to Nigeria ostensibly to arrange arms delivery for his fighters and was promptly arrested at Murtala Mohammad Airport, Lagos
- 1997 Mar Sierra Leone renewed Mutual Defence Pact with Nigeria
- 1997 Mar Abortive attempt to remove Sankoh by field Commander Philip Palmer
- 1997 Apr Sierra Leone signed military training with the British government
- 1997 May Dissident elements of the Sierra Leone army staged a coup, which removed civilian President Ahmed Tejan Kabba from power. They released all the prisoners from the notorious Pademba Road Prison, including Major Johnny Paul Koroma, who went on to invite RUF leader to merge their forces in a 'peoples' army
- 1997 May ECOMOG forces landed at Hastings Airfield outside Freetown
- 1997 May RUF fighters moved into Koidu Town, Kono

	District at the heart of the country's diamond industry
1998 Jan	Kono retaken by government allies, the Kamajors
1998 Apr	Civil Defence Forces, including the Kamajors, placed under the command of ECOMOG
1998 Sept	President announced plans for new national army
1999 Jan	RUF enters capital with devastating consequences for the inhabitants
1999 May	Ceasefire agreement signed between Sankoh and Tejan Kabba at the instigation of Jesse Jackson, President Bill Clinton's Ambassador to Africa
1999 July	Lomé Accord signed by Kabba and Foday Sankoh in the Togolese capital was ratified by the Sierra Leone parliament
2000 Jan	UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan asked for the number of UN troops to be increased from 6,000 to 11,100
2000 Feb	After growing concerns over 'blood diamonds', De Beers gave assurance to prevent conflict diamonds entering the diamond trading industry, marking the beginnings of the Kimberley Process
2000 May	UN peacekeepers seized by RUF fighters; RUF fighters staged a putsch as the last Nigerian-led ECOMOG troops left Sierra Leone soil
2000 May	Sankoh captured
2002 Jan	Formal announcement of the ending of the war by President Tejan Kabba

Appendix 2: Minerals and the Mining Industry in Sierra Leone

Bauxite: The Sierra Leone Ore and Metal Company (Sieromco) was owned by the Swiss until the mines were occupied by RUF operatives. Now known as Sierra Minerals Holdings, it mines bauxite in the defunct Sieromco Bauxite Mine. It is a subsidiary of Global Aluminium and operates 322 sq kilometres in the south of the country. The lease covers an area of 321.7 sq km with project facilities at Gondama. Proved and probable bauxite reserves are 12.4m tonnes at 53.1 per cent alumina, which can be increased through prospecting and exploring. About 1.2m tonnes of bauxite are produced annually.

Chrome ore: Exported from Sierra Leone from the 1950s until 1963, when some 203,000 tonnes were exported at a value of £2,109,000.

Columbite: Also mined in Sierra Leone.

Diamonds: Koidu Holdings S.A., which is wholly owned by BSG Resources Ltd, is the largest mining company in the diamond industry. KH was granted a 25-year mining lease over the 4 sq km Koidu Kimberlite Project, consisting of 2 kimberlite pipes and at least 4 kimberlite dyke zones, in Kono District. It also holds the exploration licence for the Tongo Diamond Field Project, in Kenema District, and has applied for a mining lease to commence operations there. Reserves of deposits down to a depth of 500m are: 6.3 million carats at Koidu; and 3.2 million carats at Tongo. Kimberlite mining operations began in January 2004. In December 2007, there was a riot at the mine which resulted in the government temporarily suspending operations. The suspension has now been lifted to allow the company to recommence operations.

African Minerals Limited (AML) is a mineral and diamond exploration and production company focused on Sierra Leone. They hold eight prospecting licences (out of 38) covering 26,000 sq km, compared to an average for other licence holders of approximately 200 sq km. The company holds seven exploration licences

covering (out of 47) 2,100 sq km, compared to an average of approximately 50 sq km. They also hold one mining licence for alluvial diamonds in Kono, which is currently inactive. African Minerals completed an aeromagnetics survey in 2004 and subsequent exploration programmes and multi-element sampling analyses, which resulted in delineating five major mineralized finds: Gori Hills (nickel/cobalt); Lovetta–Soa Chiefdom (uranium); Nimini Hills (nickel); Laminaia–Loko Hills (gold); Sula Mountains (iron ore).

Artisanal mining: There are approximately 2,000 artisanal mining licences in force. Diamond exports – the value of diamond exports have grown exponentially since the year 2000 and now exceed \$140m per year, most of this from artisanal mining.

Gold: Mined continuously in commercial quantity in Sierra Leone since the 1930s And, like diamonds, much of it continues to be smuggled out of the country.

Iron ore: Iron ore was first discovered in 1926 and a concession was granted to the African and Eastern Trade Company by the Tribal Authority and a loan was provided for the development of the concession by the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund. A subsidiary, the Sierra Leone Development Company (DELCO) was set up in 1935 to exploit the ore, which it did until 1976, when the company left because the deposit had depleted.

Platinum: Following the geological survey of 1926–27, which discovered significant amounts of minerals in commercial quantity, mining became the life line of the colony, transforming it from one that was driven by agricultural export to one propelled by the export of minerals. Platinum was the first mineral to be mined in commercial quantity in Sierra Leone. In 1929 one mining licence was issued to the African and Eastern Trade Company and eleven prospective licences issued to European firms and individuals.

Rutile mining: Sierra Rutile Limited (owned by Titanium Resources Group (TRG), which are LSE-AIM listed) holds mining leases for 580 sq km, in which 19 separate rutile deposits have been identified; its probable reserves are 259 million tonnes at 1.48 per cent recoverable rutile. The company's production is approximately 80,000 tonnes of rutile per year increasing to 200,000 tonnes with the second dredge in place and 15,000 tonnes ilmenite; dredge D3 will add up to 40,000 tonnes to rutile production capacity. A foundation fund has been set up by the company to mobilize funds for community development projects.

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