

**A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF POST-CONFLICT  
PEACEBUILDING IN LIBERIA AND SIERRA LEONE,  
2000-2013**

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**BEING A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF POST GRADUATE  
STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF A DOCTOR OF  
PHILOSOPHY DEGREE IN HISTORY AND STRATEGIC STUDIES,  
UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS**

**JUNE 2015**

**SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES  
UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS**

# CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the Thesis:

## A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF POST-CONFLICT PEACEBUILDING IN LIBERIA AND SIERRA LEONE 2000-2013

Submitted to the  
School of Postgraduate Studies  
University of Lagos

For the award of the degree of  
**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (Ph.D.)**  
is a record of original research carried out

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## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to the glory of God and the memory of my Parents Mr. and Mrs. Willie Iseghohi Akhaze. They were my greatest inspiration for academic pursuit. They were an embodiment of intelligence, selflessness, hard work, integrity, perseverance and farsightedness.

## ABSTRACT

This study examines the nature and structure of post-conflict peacebuilding in Liberia and Sierra Leone since 2000. It focuses specifically on peacebuilding process in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Previous researches on peacebuilding as a tool of conflict management have generated a lot of questions in academic circles. This is because there is a disagreement among experts on how peacebuilding works. The difficulty has been compounded by the fact that discussions on peacebuilding are often speculative, creating more confusion about the concept. Most of the existing studies on peacebuilding have focused on particular aspect of the subject, such as demilitarization, demobilization and related issues without discussing this in an integrated manner. This realization stimulated the need to understand the entire gamut of peacebuilding. It is against this background that this research examines the entire pillars of peacebuilding in Liberia and Sierra Leone with special reference to their similarities and differences. In addition, the study explores a wide range of issues involving disarmament, demobilization, democratization, economic restructuring and the reconciliation of war victims with the repentant rebels, the role of the local chiefs, individual and non-governmental institutions in peacebuilding in Liberia and Sierra Leone. In addition, the study discusses the problems militating against successful peacebuilding in both countries. The study adopts a historical approach, which relies on both primary and secondary sources of data collected by the researcher from Nigeria, Liberia and Sierra Leone to reconstruct the peacebuilding processes in both countries. Also, it adopts the comparative theory to explain the differences between cases that have striking commonalities. The study adopts “the progression towards positive peace theory” of analysis to explain the complex nature of post-conflict resolution in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The research demonstrates that only collaborative efforts of the government, private sector and civil societies can ensure successful peacebuilding in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The study reveals how several efforts aimed at resolving the crisis by both the governments of Liberia and Sierra Leone were frustrated by personal interest of the main actors, ethnic consideration and the domestic environment. A comparative analysis of the Liberia and Sierra Leone peacebuilding reveals that the intervention of multinational organizations such as the African Union, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and United Nations among others was decisive in achieving the present atmosphere of peace in both countries. The study recommends that governments should be more proactive in addressing issues of bad governance, corruption and greed to avoid a re-occurrence of violent conflicts.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A study of this nature requires the material, intellectual, financial, emotional and psychological support of others to accomplish. Therefore, I owe my deepest gratitude to all those who contributed in no small measure to the successful completion of this study. Equally worthy of appreciation are institutions and organizations that assisted me in one form or another in securing materials and other logistical support for the conduct of this research. I consider it an honour to have worked with my supervisors, Prof. Rufus Taiwo Akinyele and Dr. Paul Osifodunrin, I thank them most sincerely for their supervisory roles as well as for keeping me on my toes to ensure that the work was completed. Their suggestions and perspectives provided the impetus for the successful completion of the work. I honestly appreciate their support, assistance, patience, encouragement and advice.

I cannot find words to express my gratitude to my pioneer supervisor Prof. Blankson Eno Ikpe who made things very easy for me at the beginning of this research.

This thesis would have remained a dream had it not been for her willingness to assist and the readiness to reduce administrative bottleneck in my favour. I am eternally grateful for this gesture of goodwill. I also thank the incumbent Head of Department of History and Strategic Studies, Prof. O. A. Adeboye for providing me with the necessary environment to work as well as for her personal encouragement. I thank other lecturers in the department for their support, especially Professors Ayodeji Olulcoju, A. A. Lawal, O. A. Akinyeye, Ademola Adeleke (Associate Professor), J. G. N. Onyekpe (Associate Professor), P.O.M. Njemanze, Obi Iwuagwu, Irene Osemeka, Mr. M. O. Junaid, Mrs. O. T. Olawoyin. I also thank the Non-Teaching staff of the department as well as those of the School of Postgraduate Studies (SPGS), UNILAG for their

support. Special thanks to the incumbent Dean of the SPGS for his support. I am grateful to Dr. C.C.P. Nnorom, Prof. S.O. Akinboye for their intellectual contributions to this study.

I am indebted to my extended family members for their support and encouragement. The same appreciation goes to all the Postgraduate students in the department-past and present, especially Drs. ‘Yalo Idaewor, Uche Okwokwo, and Mr. John Nweze-Oluka, Mr. Eiguedo, O. Hysaint, Friday Aworawo, Mr. Ariyo Ayobade, and others too numerous to be mentioned. I also acknowledge the support received from the various research centres I visited, such as the National Archives, Ibadan (NAI), the Nigeria Institute of International Affairs, Lagos.

In particular, I must thank my loving wife, Mrs. Olufunmilayo Akhaze, most sincerely and affectionately for her patience and understanding. Also, my children Nehita Ricky Akhaze, Ehinome Ricky Akhaze and Esele Ricky Akhaze who had to contend with my absence from home. The assistance of the following friends cannot go unmentioned. They are Mrs. Bisi Olowogboye and Omolola Shadia for typing this work.

## **LIST OF SELECTED ABBREVIATION**

NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
INPFL	Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia
IGNU	Interim Government of National Unity
ULIMO	United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy
NPRC	National Provisional Ruling Council
SLPP	Sierra Leone Peoples Party
AFRC	Armed Forces Revolution Council
RUF	Revolutionary United Force
DDRR	Disarmament Demobilisation Rehabilitation and Reintegration
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNO	United Nations Organizations
AU	African Union
ACS	American Colonization Society
TWP	True Whig Party
MOJA	Movement for Justices in Africa
ECOMOG	Ecogas Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
APC	All Peoples Congress
UFV	United Front Volunteers
OAU	Organization of African Unity
SLLC	Sierra Leone Labour Congress
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo

SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
AFSL	Armed Forces of Sierra Leone
CDF	Civil Defence Force
GOL	Government of Liberia
MDTF	Multi-Donor Trust Fund
SSS	Special Security Services
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
DFID	Department for International Development
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
SLTC	Sierra Leone Truth Commission
MARWOPET	Mano River Women's Peace Network
AFELL	Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone



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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### **Background to the Study**

The thrust of this study is to analyze the post-conflict peace building in Liberia and Sierra Leone from a comparative perspective. The study is conceived in the context of more than a decade of civil wars which engulfed both countries and adversely affected their socio political and economic activities. Hence the work assesses the peacebuilding strategies adopted to consolidate peace in Sierra Leone and Liberia after the experience of violent conflict that contributed to their failure to exist as composite states.

Reconstructing societies after violent conflicts pose severe challenges. This is because of the complexity of activities required to restore normalcy to all facets of human relations. As, Ho Won Jeong rightly observed, “The end of violent conflict has to be accompanied by rebuilding physical infrastructure and the restoration of essential government functions that provide basic social services”<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Martha Mutisi illustrated the enormity of tasks that need to be accomplished in peacebuilding programmes by stating that the process must” be multi-faceted social and political interventions that acknowledge the reality of eroded security structures, remnants of violence, and scarred relationships among groups”.<sup>2</sup>

Liberia and Sierra Leone have many things in common. They are English speaking neighbours, home to the descendants of freed slaves (Monrovia and Freetown), had two identical war lords, Charles Taylor and Foday Sankoh and went through acrimonious civil wars that lasted more than a decade. In Liberia, it lasted for 14 years (1989-2005) and in Sierra Leone for 11 years (1991-2002).

The causes of the civil wars in both countries were similar. It can be traced to the political and economic exclusion of a large segment of the population in Liberia and Sierra Leone for most of its existence. The modern Republics of Liberia and Sierra Leone trace their origins to the challenges the British and American societies had in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to settle the “freed slaves” outside Europe. In each case, the solution to the problem was the repatriation of the freed slaves to Africa<sup>3</sup>.

The origin of the Liberian conflict can be traced to the first constitution which was designed for the needs of the settler population, which subjugated the indigenous people for over a century. Land and property rights of the majority of Liberians were severely limited. Political power was concentrated essentially in the capital city of Monrovia and primarily at the Presidency, with few checks and balances and little accountability. Most infrastructure and basic services were concentrated in Monrovia and a few other cities, fuelling uneven development, a dualistic economy, and a major dichotomy between urban and rural areas. The political and economic elites controlled the country’s resources for their own use and to consolidate their power. These factors created a wide gap in the distribution of the nation’s wealth and resulted in ethnic and class rivalries that contributed to the outbreak of conflict<sup>4</sup>.

The First Liberian Civil War was an internal conflict which started from 1989 until 1997. The conflict killed over 200,000 people and eventually led to the involvement of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and of the United Nations. The peace did not last long, and in 1999 the Second Liberian Civil War broke out<sup>5</sup>.

Samuel Doe had led a coup d’état that overthrew the elected government in 1980, and in 1985 held elections that were widely considered fraudulent. In December 1989, former government

minister Charles Taylor moved into the country from neighboring Côte d'Ivoire to start an uprising meant to topple the Doe's government.

During the civil war, factions rallied around Taylor and those who supported his former lieutenant with the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), Prince Johnson. Johnson took the capital Monrovia in 1990 and executed Doe, while Taylor's forces, the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), and Johnson's forces later battled for the control of Monrovia.

Peace negotiations and foreign involvement led to a ceasefire in 1995 that was shattered the next year before a final peace agreement and new national elections were held in 1997. Taylor was elected President of Liberia in July 1997.

Samuel Doe had taken power in a popular coup in 1980 against William R. Tolbert, becoming the first Liberian President of non Americo-Liberian descent. Doe established a military regime called the People's Redemption Council and enjoyed early support from a large number of indigenous Liberians who had been excluded from power since country was founded in 1847 by freed American slaves. Any hope that Doe would effect a change from the oppressive rule of the minority rulers dashed as he clamped down on opposition, fueled by his paranoia of a counter-coup against him; Doe held elections in 1985 and won the presidency by a margin just enough to avoid a runoff. However, international monitors condemned the election as fraudulent. Thomas Quiwonkpa, the former Commander General of the Armed Forces of Liberia who Doe had demoted and forced to flee the country, attempted to overthrow Doe's regime from neighboring Sierra Leone. The coup attempt failed and Quiwonkpa was killed.<sup>6</sup> His body was publicly exhibited in the premises of the Executive Mansion in Monrovia soon after his death<sup>7</sup>. Large scale government crackdowns followed in Nimba County in the north of the country against the

Gio and Mano peoples who constituted the majority of the coup plotters. The mistreatment of the Gio and Mano peoples fueled ethnic tensions in Liberia, which was already heightened by Doe's preferential treatment of his own group, the Krahn.

Charles Taylor, who had left Doe's government after being accused of embezzlement, assembled a group of rebels in Côte d'Ivoire (mostly ethnic Gios and Manos persecuted by Doe) metamorphed to be the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). They invaded Nimba County on December 24 1989 and inflicted severe torture on the unarmed civilians.

### **Different Peace meetings on the Liberia Civil Wars**

By the middle of 1990, a civil war was raging in Liberia. Taylor's NPFL soon gained control of much of the country, while Johnson began advancing into the capital, Monrovia. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) attempted to persuade Doe to resign and go into exile, due to his weak position but he declined. ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), an ECOWAS intervention force, arrived at the Freeport of Monrovia on August 24, 1990, landing from Nigerian and Ghanaian vessels<sup>8</sup>. While making a brief trip out of the Executive Mansion to ECOMOG Headquarters, Doe was captured by Johnson on September 9, 1990, and tortured before being killed. The spectacle was videotaped and seen on news reports around the world<sup>9</sup>.

To avoid further festering of the war, series of peace meetings were held in some regional capitals. There were meetings in Bamako in November 1990, Lome in January 1991, and Yamoussoukro in June–October 1991. But the first seven peace conferences, including the Yamoussoukro I-IV initiatives failed.

Peace was still far off as both Taylor and Johnson claimed power. ECOMOG declared an Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU) and named Amos Sawyer as president, with the support

of Johnson. Dissatisfied, Taylor launched an attack on Monrovia on October 15, 1992, named 'Operation Octopus'<sup>10</sup>. The assault may have been led by Burkina Faso soldiers<sup>11</sup>. The resulting siege lasted two months. By late December, ECOMOG had pushed the NPFL back beyond Monrovia's suburbs. Meetings in Cotonou and Benin began in July 1993 to agree to a ceasefire. The Cotonou meeting forged a coalition government between the NPFL, the Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU) and Doe's remaining supporters (known as the United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy or ULIMO). In August 1993, unfortunately, the coalition failed due to lack of co-operation among the warring factions.

In September 1994, the Akosombo Agreement attempted to replace the coalition with moves towards a democratic government, but IGNU rejected this. The Abuja Accord of August 1995 finally achieved this, but in April 1996 the NPFL and ULIMO again began fighting in Monrovia, leading to the evacuation of most international Non-governmental organizations and the destruction of much of the city.

Peace agreements signed included the:

- Banjul III Agreement (1990-10-24)
- Bamako Ceasefire Agreement (1990-11-28)
- Banjul IV Agreement (1990-12-21)
- Lomé Agreement (1991-02-13)
- Yamoussoukro IV Peace Agreement (1991-10-30)
- Geneva Agreement 1992 (1992-04-07)
- Cotonou Peace Agreement (1993-07-25)
- Akosombo Peace Agreement (1994-09-12)
- Accra Agreements/Akosombo clarification agreement (1994-12-21)

- Abuja Peace Agreement (1995-08-19)<sup>9</sup>

The Liberian civil war pitched brothers against brothers and ethnic groups against ethnic groups, claiming an estimated 250,000 lives equivalent to 10 percent of the country's population at the time<sup>10</sup>. The destructive dimension of the war caused many professionals to flee the country and sought refuge in the diaspora. From an estimated 2,000 medical practitioners before the conflict, Liberia was left with less than 100 doctors at the end of the war<sup>12</sup>. This became a major challenge after the conflict as Liberians were overwhelmed and incapable of providing solutions to the myriad of problems confronting their country. It, therefore, became imperative to seek a post-conflict resolution mechanism to address the challenges.

Similarly in Sierra Leone, the brutal civil war that was ongoing in neighbouring Liberia played a significant role in the outbreak of civil unrest in Sierra Leone. Charles Taylor – then leader of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia – reportedly helped to form the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) under the command of former Sierra Leonean army corporal Foday Saybana Sankoh, an ethnic Temne from Tonkolili District in Northern Sierra Leone. Sankoh was a British trained former army corporal who had also undergone guerrilla training in Libya. Taylor's aim was for the RUF to attack the military base of Nigerian dominated peacekeeping troops in Sierra Leone who were opposed to his rebel movement in Liberia.

On April 29 1992, a 25-year-old Captain Valentine Strasser, an ethnic Creole, led his fellow six junior officers in the Sierra Leone army, all in their mid to late twenties: Lieutenant Sahr Sandy, Sargent Solomon Musa, Captain Komba Mondeh, Lieutenant Tom Nyuma, Captain Julius Maada Bio and Captain Komba Kambo<sup>13</sup>, to launch a military coup, which sent President Joseph



Saidu Momoh into exile in Guinea and the young soldiers established the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) with Strasser as its chairman and Head of State of the country<sup>14</sup>.

Sergeant Solomon Musa, a childhood friend of Strasser, became the deputy chairman and deputy leader of the NPRC junta government. Strasser became the world's youngest Head of State when he seized power just three days after his 25th birthday. The NPRC junta established the National Supreme Council of State (NSCS) as the military highest command. Final authority in all matters were exclusively for the highest ranking NPRC soldiers, including Strasser himself and the original soldiers who toppled President Momoh<sup>15</sup>.

Senior NPRC commander Lieutenant Sahr Sandy, a trusted ally of Strasser, was assassinated, allegedly by Major S.I.M. Turay, a key loyalist of ousted president Momoh. A heavily armed military manhunt took place across the country to find Lieutenant Sandy's killer. The major suspect Major S.I.M Turay went into hiding and fled the country to Guinea, to avoid death. Dozens of soldiers loyal to the ousted president Momoh were arrested.

The NPRC Junta immediately suspended the constitution, banned all political parties, stifled freedom of speech and freedom of the press and enacted a rule-by-decree policy, which granted soldiers unlimited powers of administrative detention without charge or trial, and challenges against such detentions in court were precluded.

The NPRC Junta maintained relations with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and strengthened support for Sierra Leone-based ECOMOG troops fighting in Liberia. In December 1992, an alleged coup attempt against the NPRC administration of Strasser, aimed at freeing the detained Colonel Yahya Kanu, Colonel Kahota M.S. Dumbuya and

former Inspector General of Police Bambay Kamara was foiled. Junior army officers were identified as being behind the coup plot. The coup plot led to the execution of seventeen soldiers. Several prominent members of the Momoh government who had been in detention at the Pa Demba Road prison, including former inspector general of police Bambay Kamara were also executed<sup>16</sup>.

On July 5 1994, the deputy NPRC leader Sergeant Solomon Musa, who was very popular with the general population, particularly in Freetown, was arrested and sent into exile after he was accused of planning a coup against Strasser which he denied. Strasser replaced Musa as deputy NPRC chairman with Captain Julius Maada Bio, who was instantly promoted by Strasser to Brigadier.

The NPRC proved to be nearly as ineffectual as the Momoh-led APC government in repelling the RUF. More and more of the country fell to RUF fighters, and by 1994 they held much of the diamond-rich Eastern Province and were at the edge of Freetown. In response, the NPRC hired several hundred mercenaries from the private firm Executive Outcomes. Within a month they had driven RUF fighters back to enclaves along Sierra Leone's borders, and cleared the RUF from the Kono diamond producing areas of Sierra Leone.

With Strasser's two most senior NPRC allies and commanders Lieutenant Sahr Sandy and Lieutenant Solomon Musa no longer around to defend him, Strasser's leadership within the NPRC Supreme Council of State became feeble. On 16 January 1996, after about four years in power, Strasser was arrested in a palace coup at the Defence Headquarter in Freetown by his fellow NPRC soldiers<sup>16</sup> Strasser was immediately flown into exile in a military helicopter to Conakry, Guinea.

In his first public broadcast to the nation following the 1996 coup, Brigadier Bio stated that his support for returning Sierra Leone to a democratically elected civilian government and his commitment to ending the civil war were his motivations for the coup<sup>17</sup>. Promises of a return to civilian rule were fulfilled by Bio, who handed power over to Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), after the conclusion of elections in early 1996. President Kabbah took power with a great promise of ending the civil war. President Kabbah opened dialogue with the RUF and invited RUF leader Foday Sankoh for peace negotiations.

On May 25 1997, seventeen soldiers in the Sierra Leone army led by Corporal Tamba Gborie, loyal to the detained Major General Johnny Paul Koroma, launched a military coup which sent President Kabbah into exile in Guinea and they established the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC). Corporal Gborie quickly went to the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Station (SLBS) FM 99.9 headquarters in Freetown to announce the coup to a shocked nation and to alert all soldiers across the country to report for guard duty. The soldiers immediately released Koroma from prison and installed him as their chairman and Head of State.

Koroma suspended the constitution, banned demonstrations, shut down all private radio stations in the country and invited the RUF to join the new junta government, with its leader Foday Sankoh as the Vice-Chairman of the new AFRC-RUF coalition junta government. Within days, Freetown was overwhelmed by the presence of the RUF combatants who came to the city in their thousands. The Kamajors, a group of traditional fighters mostly from the Mende ethnic group under the command of Deputy Defence Minister Samuel Hinga Norman, remained loyal to President Kabbah and defended the southern part of Sierra Leone from the soldiers.

After ten months in office, the junta was overthrown by the Nigeria-led ECOMOG forces, and the democratically elected government of President Kabbah was reinstated in March 1998. On October 12, 1998, twenty five soldiers in the Sierra Leone army were executed after they were convicted at a court martial in Freetown for planning the 1997 coup that overthrew President Kabbah<sup>18</sup>.

In October 1999, the United Nations agreed to send peacekeepers to help restore order and disarm the rebels. The first of the 6,000-member force arrived in December, and the UN Security Council voted in February 2000 to increase the force to 11,000, and later to 13,000. But in May, when nearly all Nigerian forces had left and UN forces were trying to disarm the RUF in eastern Sierra Leone, Sankoh's forces clashed with the UN troops, and some 500 peacekeepers were taken hostage as the peace accord effectively collapsed. The hostage crisis resulted in severe fighting between the RUF and the government as UN troops launched Operation Khukri to end the siege. The Operation was successful with Indian and British Special Forces being the main contingents.

The situation in the country deteriorated badly to an extent that British troops were deployed in Operation Palliser, originally meant to evacuate foreign nationals. However, the British exceeded their original mandate, and took full military action to finally defeat the rebels and restore order. The British were the catalyst for the ceasefire that ended the civil war. Elements of the British Army, together with administrators and politicians, remain in Sierra Leone to this day, helping to train the armed forces, improve the infrastructure of the country and administer financial and material aid. Tony Blair, the Prime Minister of Britain at the time of the British intervention, is

regarded as a hero by the people of Sierra Leone, many of whom are keen for more British involvement. Sierra Leoneans have been described as "The World's Most Resilient People"<sup>19</sup>.

### **Various Peace Efforts on Sierra Leone Civil War**

As in Liberia, there were various peace meetings meant to bring peace to Sierra Leone which were truncated because of personal and selfish interests.

First was on April 29, 1992, when Captain Valentine Strasser, Chairman of the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) openly declared that his regime was ready to establish contacts with any Liberian factional leader to negotiate settlement of the Sierra Leone crisis which was rebuffed, by the RUF force.

Next was the solicited assistance from the UN Secretary-General to bring the Revolutionary United Front to the negotiation table which also failed because of the inability of the UN Special Envoy, Felix Moush, to establish contact with the rebels.

Despite the botched meeting, there was another attempt in May 1996, when the Sierra Leone government met with RUF in Yamoussoukoro, to find peaceful solution to the crises which also failed. After, a National Commission for Consolidation of Peace (NCCP) was established. The commission did not see light of the day because of RUF opposition to the inclusion of ECOMOG in the peace process.

Despite the failure, the peace process was once again revived in Togo under the auspices of President Gwassinghe Eyadema and ECOWAS in 1991 which lasted 44 days. Again the talks broke down on several occasions as a result of the irreconcilable differences between both camps.

Peace was eventually attained with Lome Peace Accord, of 1991 which addressed the controversial issues like Pardon and Amnesty but left out other areas such as Economic, social and justice reform crucial to the enduring post conflict peacebuilding in Sierra Leone. The Lome Peace Agreement was eventually sealed with the Abuja Ceasefire Agreement on November 10, 2000 with a renewed legal basis for the application of the Lome Agreement.

It was the Abuja II Agreement of year 2000 that provided the breakthrough in the process by reviewing progress made on implementation and agreeing on mechanisms for moving the entire process forward, including Disarmament, Demobilization and Rehabilitation (DDR).

Between 1991 and 2001, about 50,000 people were killed in the Sierra Leone civil war. Hundreds of thousands of people were forced from their homes and many became refugees in Guinea and Liberia<sup>20</sup>. In 2001, UN forces moved into rebel-held areas and began to disarm rebel soldiers. By January 2002, the war was declared over. In May 2002, Kabbah was re-elected president by a landslide. By 2004, the disarmament process was complete. Also in 2004, a UN-backed war crimes court began holding trials of senior leaders from both sides of the war. In December 2005, UN peacekeeping forces pulled out of Sierra Leone.

In August 2007, Sierra Leone held presidential and parliamentary elections. However, no presidential candidate won the 50% plus one vote majority stipulated in the constitution in the first round of voting. A runoff election was held in September 2007, and Ernest Bai Koroma, the candidate of the main opposition party The All Peoples Congress (APC), was elected president. Koroma was re-elected president for a second (and final) term in November 2012.

Same as in Liberia, the violent conflict in Sierra Leone was caused by unchecked corruption, bad governance, deprivation and the exclusion of a vast majority of the population especially those in

rural areas from the mainstream of governance. Also, there were the systemic dismantling of democratic institutions, social injustice and a culture of impunity in plundering state resources. The voice of opposition was silenced and the repression made the outbreak of the war inevitable<sup>21</sup>. The war was traumatic for the people of Sierra Leone. Many people lost their lives; properties were destroyed, thousands displaced while others were forced to seek refugee status in the sub-region.

The civil war also affected the socio-economic and political systems. The economy remained precarious; agriculture was seriously undermined while prices of goods escalated and the level of unemployment became unprecedented. Poverty became widespread as living standards fell especially among the poorer segments of the society. Against this backdrop, smuggling, especially of diamonds, remained pervasive. Similarly, the country's physical and social infrastructures were affected. Road networks were destroyed and lack of maintenance resulted in deteriorated power supply. Human resources development was neglected while the literacy rate fell sharply below 32 percent<sup>22</sup>, since there was no schooling in most parts of the country. In the civil service, the quality of service declined as majority of the middle and lower level staff began to pick up second jobs due to poor salaries.

The public health sector was left in an appalling state: hospitals, health centres and clinics were looted and left unguided, understaffed and riddled with corruption. Health services were limited in many parts of the country and access depended entirely on how much one could afford to pay. So devastating was the effect of the war that by 2003 the country was ranked 175<sup>th</sup> in the UNDP Human Development Index, with a life expectancy of 34.5 years while the adult literacy percentage stood at 36 percent for those aged 15 and above<sup>23</sup>.

In both countries, several peace agreements were concluded before the wars were brought to an end. In Liberia, thirteen peace accords, including the 1995 Abuja Accord were signed. Sierra Leone had eight peace accords, including the 1999 Lome Peace Agreement which broke down soon after it was reached<sup>24</sup>. It is against this background that this research undertakes a comparative analysis of the post conflict peacebuilding in Liberia and Sierra Leone with the objective of highlighting their similarities and differences.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Peacebuilding, as an aspect of post-conflict management, has generated a lot of debates among analysts of the subject. The debates have revolved around how peacebuilding works. The difficulty has been reinforced by the persistent deficit in empirical and micro-level analyses which explains why most discussions on peacebuilding are general and speculative, thereby generating more confusion about the strategy.

An aspect of the debate on peacebuilding has to do with the desired outcome of the exercise. Some scholars have framed the goal of peacebuilding in terms of “negative peace” (absence of armed conflict) or “positive peace” (a structural transformation towards socio-political and economic system capable of fostering justice and ensuring a self sustained peace). Others suggested that if there is a trade-off between these goals, the immediate absence of conflict should take priority over participatory politics if peacebuilding is the frame of reference.

Relatedly, these explains why scholars have not been able to adopt peacebuilding as the only panacea to problems confronting nations emerging from violent conflicts such as Sierra Leone and Liberia. Many of the existing works on post conflict peacebuilding generally address one out



of the five major pillars of peacebuilding i.e. economic recovery, entrenching democratic structure, demilitarization, demobilization, reintegration and rehabilitation (DDRR), truth and reconciliation, and the role of external bodies. This study is problematized within the context of the debate on the best way to achieve effective peacebuilding. It argues that the holistic approach which integrates all the pillars is one of the best.

Incidentally, little has been done to address the entire pillars to capture the situations in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Both countries were confronted with problems such as hunger, poverty, lack of basic infrastructure, incessant violence, youth neglect, challenge of reintegration of ex-combatants and presence of small arms and light weapons that transformed both countries into the category of fragile societies. Government's approaches to these problems faced immense difficulties. It was external intervention that eventually and effectively solved the problems. The comparative analysis of post-conflict peacebuilding in Liberia and Sierra Leone between 2000 and 2013, which this work undertakes, has highlighted the dynamics and challenges of peacebuilding.

### **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The study has the general aim of assessing post-conflict peacebuilding initiatives in Liberia and Sierra Leone from 2000 to 2013. The specific objectives are to:

Highlight the demilitarization, demobilization, reintegration and rehabilitation (DDRR) process in Liberia and Sierra Leone during the period of study.

Examine the political reforms in Liberia and Sierra Leone as they relate to peacebuilding process in the two countries.

Investigate the structure of economic reforms in both countries as it relates to peacebuilding process.

Access the role of external bodies in peacebuilding in Liberia and Sierra Leone during the period, and

Discuss the reconciliation process in Liberia and Sierra Leone during the period.

### **Significance of the Study**

The present study is significant for a number of reasons:

First, the study highlights corporation between local and external factors in the peace building processes in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Second, the study demonstrates the significance of comparative methodology by highlighting the similarities and differences in history, culture and geography to peace building in both countries.

Third, it provides a new insight into the efforts of Liberian and Sierra Leonean governments in peacebuilding after the civil war in their respective countries.

Finally, the study reveals that post conflict peace building process was easier to execute in Sierra Leone because of the experience garnered in Liberia.

### **Scope and Delimitation of the Study**

The study focuses on post-conflict peacebuilding in Liberia and Sierra Leone from 2000 to 2013.

The commencement date, 2000, marked the beginning of peacebuilding in Sierra Leone, while that of Liberia started in 2006. The terminal date of 2013 marked what can be regarded as the end of the first phase of the United Nation's mandate in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The study discusses the five major pillars of peacebuilding which are the Demilitarization, Demobilization, Reintegration and Rehabilitation of ex-combatants, and Reconciliation and Justice.

## **Research Questions**

This study is guided by the following research questions:

How successful was the DDRR process in Liberia and Sierra Leone between 2000 and 2013?

To what extent did the democratic structure enhance peacebuilding in Liberia and Sierra Leone between 2000 and 2013?

What was the role of external bodies in peacebuilding process in Liberia and Sierra Leone?

How successful were the reconciliation and justice process in Liberia and Sierra Leone?

How successful were the economic strategies adopted to promote peacebuilding process in Liberia and Sierra Leone?

## **Operational Definition of Terms**

It is imperative to clarify the meaning of some of the terms used in this work that are central to the subject matter of this thesis. These include demilitarization, demobilization, reintegration, rehabilitation, international peace, peacebuilding, economic restoration and political restoration.

**Demilitarization:** Demilitarization is the reduction of a nation's army, weapons or military vehicles to an agreed minimum. It is usually the result of a peace treaty ending a war or a major conflict.

**Demobilization:** Demobilization is the process of standing down a nation's armed forces from combat-ready status. It entails the disbanding of armed groups. This may be as a result of victory in war, or because a crisis has been peacefully resolved. Disarmament, an aspect of demobilization, entails the physical removal of the means of combat from ex-belligerents (weapons, ammunition, etc.)

**Reintegration:** Reintegration is a strategy for executing successful peacekeeping operations, and is generally the strategy employed by all UN Peacekeeping Operations. It is the process of reintegrating former combatants back into the society.

**Rehabilitation:** Rehabilitation is the process of reinstating or restoring former privileges or good conditions after conflict.

**Peacebuilding:** This refers to all actions that attack the root causes of conflict and ensure sustainable peace. Peacebuilding involves actions such as the creation or strengthening of national institutions, monitoring of elections, promotion of human rights, providing for reintegration and rehabilitation programmes, and creating conditions for continued development. Peacebuilding efforts could commence before the start of conflict, such as efforts to reduce poverty or to ensure free and fair elections, or they could come during or after a conflict, such as sanctions and actions aimed at reconciliation and reconstruction.

**Economic Restoration:** This is the strategy of bringing back to normal, the ruptured economy after a violent conflict. This involves the repair and provision of basic social infrastructures such as schools, roads, hospitals, industries and provision of employment.

**Political Restoration:** This is the act of addressing political issues or problems that led to violent conflict. This involves the re-establishment of the rule of law based on constitutionalism, democracy, and the elimination of marginalization based on political, religious, ethnic or gender differences.

**International Organization:** This refers to organizations that cut across international borders such as, the United Nations Organization (UNO), and African Union (AU), among others.

**Post-Conflict Reconstruction:** This is the long-term process of rebuilding war-affected communities. This includes the process of rebuilding the political, security, social and economic

structures of a society emerging from a conflict. Reconstruction involves addressing the root causes of the conflict and promoting social and economic justice as well as putting in place political structures of governance and the rule of law to consolidate peacebuilding.

**Peace Enforcement:** This is the use of armed intervention to compel hostile belligerents to comply with international standards or resolution. This also involves containment of all forms of inhibition with coercion so that negotiation to resolve the crisis could take place.

**Peacemaking:** This is the strategic effort initiated by stakeholders or non stakeholders to bring combatants to the table to discuss peaceful resolution of a crisis.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This research adopts the Peacebuilding theory as a strategy for conflict resolution. The theory has numerous definitions which have generated fascinating debates amongst scholars, because there is no single theory that explains the phenomenon fully.

Societies from early stage of history have created several mechanisms and institutions to build peace. However, peacebuilding became institutionalized in international law in the late nineteenth century with the Hague Peace Conference of 1898. In the twentieth century, peacebuilding was influenced by the non-violence and peace movements and the religious inspired moral reform movements in Britain and United States. The debate on peacebuilding gained additional momentum with the establishment of peace research in the early 1960s as a normative interdisciplinary policy-oriented academic field. Pioneers in this field were Kenneth and Elise in the United States, Johan Galtung in Norway, Adam Curle in the United Kingdom and Dieter Senghams in Germany<sup>25</sup>. The overview is to provide us with background information on the concept of peacebuilding.

Peacebuilding is essentially about the process of achieving peace. Depending on one's understanding, peacebuilding differs considerably in terms of approaches, scope of activities and timeframe which explains why it is used commonly in research and practice with varying understanding and definitions.

Against this background, this study adopts “the progression towards positive peace” theory on peacebuilding by Johan Galtung. The term peacebuilding was first used by Johan Galtung in 1975. He defined peacebuilding as “preventing the recurrence of violence immediately after armed conflicts and helping a country to set the parameters for starting the journey towards positive peace using the following activities, disarming, destroying weapons, repatriating refugees, training security forces, monitoring elections and advancing the protection of human rights.” The theory emphasizes three approaches to achieving peace. These are peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Galtung's theory is based on his conceptual distinction between negative peace (end of violence) and positive peace (peaceful society).

Galtung developed these concepts from the analysis of violence. Negative peace achieves the absence of structural violence through peacekeeping, Positive peace achieves the absence of physical violence through peacemaking and peacebuilding. In this regard, the “progression towards positive peace” as a theory, seeks to explain that to achieve an enduring peace in post-conflict societies, there must be in place structures and institutions based on justice, equity and cooperation, that would address the underlying causes of conflict and preventing a return of violence.

Also the theory emphasizes the necessity for a structured agreements to end civil strife, destruction of weapons, repatriation of refugees, training support for security personnel, monitoring elections, advancing efforts to protect human rights, reforming, strengthen governmental institutions and promotion of both formal and informal method of political participation.

A critical appraisal of “progression towards positive peace” theory explains its relevance as a useful analytical tool for a comparative analysis of post-conflict peacebuilding in Liberia and Sierra Leone civil wars. Liberia and Sierra Leone were engulfed with civil wars that lasted more than a decade. The causes of the wars were similar ranging from corruption, bad governance, looting of the economy, neglect of the majority, and neglects of the youth among others. Government institutions in both countries, responsible for the management of internal crisis, were unable to manage the crisis. Consequently, violent conflict became inevitable.

It is against this background that aggrieved groups who felt marginalized and schemed out of positions became more determined to change the situation. This struggle for the “soul” of both countries between those in power and the aggrieved led to the outbreak of the civil wars. This theory provides a good insight into how to bring about durable peace in post-conflict Liberia and Sierra Leone.

### **Literature Review**

This is a study in post-conflict peacebuilding. Peacebuilding is an emerging field of study, and there are several literature on various aspects of peacebuilding. However, there is no existing literature to the knowledge of this author on the Comparative Analysis of Post-conflict

Peacebuilding in Liberia and Sierra Leone. As indicated above, there are works that examined broad issues relevant to this thesis.

There are two categories of works relevant to this study. The first category addresses the origin, growth, causes and development of the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The second category is the literature on nature and structure of peacebuilding operations in both countries.

On the causes of the civil war in Sierra Leone, Allie Joe's book, *Bound to co-operate: conflict, peace and people of Sierra Leone*<sup>27</sup>, identified rural isolation, over centralization of state machinery in the hands of a few, chiefdom level politics, ethnic politics and corruption, as some of the problems that led to the civil war. Corroborating Allie's is Recardo and Kande in *Ethnicity and National Identity in Sierra Leone and Borders, Nationalism and the African State*<sup>28</sup>. They identified among other issues, the deep rooted marginalization and victimization of the majority indigenes by the freed returnee slaves as the tragic event which led to the outbreak of the civil war. Like Allie, Kande and Recardo were silent on the social stratification of the society which was one of the causes of the civil war.

On the other hand, Abdullah<sup>29</sup> and Hirsh in their works, *Between Democracy and Terror*, and *Sierra Leone: factions at war* respectively posit that apart from ethnicity, marginalization and victimization of indigenous people in Sierra Leone, it was the crisis of modernity caused by the warped leadership style of administration of the ruling All Peoples Party (APC) that contributed to the outbreak of the civil war.

Hirsh, on his part, argues that the major cause of the civil war was the lust for power and greed<sup>30</sup>. He is of the view that the war was caused by the struggle between the various factions of the



armed groups that contended to control the lucrative mineral resources of the state. Hirsh notes that the Sierra Leone civil war was not a popular reaction of the people but a selfish exercise of those who wanted to control the economic resources of the state.

On the causes of the civil war in Liberia, Adekeye's *Building Peace in West Africa, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau*<sup>31</sup>, traced the cause of the Liberian civil war to the Liberian political autocracy under the tiny Americo-Liberian oligarchy between 1847 and 1980, coupled with the brutal style of administration of Master-Sergeant Doe's regime. Adekeye also identified three other factors that led to the outbreak of the war. They were the challenging security environment, splintering and proliferation of rebel forces and the National Patriotic Front (NPF) opposition to the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG).

Sessay, in his work, *Heterogeneity and Political Instability in Liberia Plural Societies*<sup>32</sup>, examined the origin of the civil war in Liberia and identified the domination of the majority indigenous people by the minority freed slaves as the principal factor for the outbreak of the war. By and large, the literature examined in this category is useful to this study because they provide relevant background information on the causes of the civil wars in both countries.

The second category of works related to this study discusses peacebuilding as a basic requirement for enduring peace in post-conflict societies. D.W. Bowett's *United Nations Forces: A Legal Study of United Nations Practice*<sup>33</sup> provides an account of the United Nations forces' in peacekeeping operations since 1950. Bowett discusses the principles governing the creation and function of such forces, the relationship to disarmament, and the outline of a scheme for the gradual creation of a permanent peacekeeping force. Drawing inspiration from history, Bowett acknowledges some *ad hoc* international forces which preceded the establishment of the United

Nations, for instance, for the purpose of the Saar plebiscite in 1935, and the scheme embodied in Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations and the failure to implement it<sup>34</sup>. He also examines the action of the United Nations with regards to Korea from 1950 onwards.

Perhaps, Bowett's most important contribution lies in his classification of a number of *ad hoc* field missions appointed by the United Nations for the purposes of conciliation, good offices and mediation between factions involved in a dispute. Since a major function of these missions was to obtain impartial information, he classifies them as "United Nations Observer Groups". In Africa, Bowett examines the organization and dispatch of the United Nations Force in the Congo (UNFC) in 1960. In constitutional terms, this operation was based on Resolutions of the Security Council and of the General Assembly<sup>35</sup>.

Relevant to this study also is the article of Finn Seyersted, *United Nations Forces in the Law of Peace and War*<sup>36</sup>, which probes into the operations of combat and peacekeeping forces generally. He examined each force separately from the point of view of facts, in order to establish notably its mandate, its system of command and its relationship with the Charter<sup>37</sup>. Furthermore, external legal problems relating to the forces i.e., their position under international law, are examined in respect of United Nations Force generally, with a view to concentrating on problems which are not directly linked to the mandate of any given United Nations Force<sup>38</sup>.

Other works examined under this category include those of *Amos Sawyer, Amadu Sesay, Drew Christian, Sessay et al, Cousens Elizabeth, and Dayo Kusa Oluyemi*. Sawyer's *Violent Conflicts and Governance Challenges in West Africa*<sup>39</sup> provides deeper understanding of the Mano River basin conflict which he attributes to state and governance failure.

In view of this, a comprehensive approach to peace-building and a new constitutional paradigm and appropriate institution of democratic self-governance are seen as foundations for lasting peace in the basin area. In this regard, the cycle of violence will have to be broken and governing orders will have to be reconstituted in ways that depart from autocracy. The argument is that sustained marginalization and state-supported injustice create conditions for crisis and collapse of states, which have become commonplace in post-colonial Africa. Government failure in post-colonial Africa stems from the nature of the governing orders. The conflict in the Mano River basin area is complex in the sense that issues of identity, greed and the consequences of a changed global order are all interlinked in context and specific manifestation with injustice, predation and repression being denominators. In other words, in the Mano River basin area, the major source of conflict are the conditions of injustice and repression perpetrated by predatory and repressive rule fuelled by resource greed triggered by the pervasive insatiable desires of leaders including Charles Taylor.

The basic challenge to conflict resolution is how to reflect a deep understanding of conflict contexts, sources, and process, going beyond simply working out agreements between belligerent parties. In other words, it is not the provision of incentives to ensure cooperation among antagonistic armed groups in the two war torn countries or holding of elections, but understanding the conflict, and creating and implementing appropriate peace settlements that have the potential to support process of democratic peace. The author suggests that injustice and repressive government can be redressed through a new governance arrangements in which governing institutions are rooted in and accountable to citizens and communities at local, provincial, national and, even at the supranational levels. Although the two countries have different colonial histories and governmental structures, but they share the same character in

terms of personality and predatory rule that were repressive and marginalized a large segments of their people. The configuration of relationships involving cross-border flows of arms, trade in diamonds and timber, and the movement of fighters made the Mano River basin area an epicenter of conflict in sub-Saharan Africa.

Sesay, Abdulah, and Adekeye, *Civil Wars, Child Soldiers and Post-conflict Peacebuilding in West Africa*<sup>40</sup> seek to interrogate the contemporary post-war reconstruction agenda and practices in Africa with reference to Liberia and Sierra Leone. They seek to understand the imperative of cross-national research in post-war reconstruction and daunting challenges to different regions in Africa. This is in view of the fact of the socio-economic, political, historical and geographical ties that link the diverse conflicts in the different regions. The central argument is that post-war transformation and rebuilding of failed state institutions and society must avoid the mistake of the past. This is in view of the fact that the state-of-the-art post-war reconstruction agenda in Africa is plagued by serious theoretical, organizational and practical inadequacies.

Besides, regardless of whatever hope anyone would have placed on post-war reconstruction rebuilding institutions, management and the transformation of the socio-political agency of power elites and regime character is central to the understanding and resolution of the socio-economic, political and developmental problems being experienced by many countries across sub-Saharan Africa. The nature of elite competition for power that precipitates and accentuates a majority of the civil conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa needs to be understood for successful post-war reconstruction in countries devastated by war. According to the authors, failure to do all of these would further expose the post-conflict societies to another round of conflict or a

continuation of pre-war and wartime practices, which may include non-formal activities such as illegal and indiscriminate exploitation of natural resources.

The book's theoretical argument is well founded as it offers a new perspective in explaining civil war and the post-war reconstruction efforts. It is the understanding of the causes of the civil war that would enable us to know why it is difficult to reconstruct the war-torn society. In a comparative perspective, the book examines the reconstruction efforts across sub-Saharan Africa. The book observes that contemporary post-war reconstruction is confronted with many problems. First, organizational and lack of co-ordination among the major actors, who often pursue contradictory national, institutional, geo-political ideological agenda. Second, post-war reconstruction is viewed as an event involving the implementation of an operational checklist, and re-fixing various institutions and process within a specified period, say, two or five-year plan. The third observation is that peace agreement most often makes the leaders of warring factions to become instant heroes or peace celebrities as they are often rewarded with juicy appointments either as ministers or members of the legislature. The fourth observation is the lopsided funding of post-war reconstruction programmes in Africa, with particular reference to Liberia and Sierra Leone. Finally, post-war reconstruction is skewed towards rebuilding those institutions and practices that precipitated civil wars, instead of transforming them in a radical manner or even replacing them entirely with new and improved governance models or structure. The present study, however, draws insight from this work in view of the fact that it addresses the most fundamental aspect of post-conflict peace-building.

Drew's study, *Post-Conflict Peacebuilding*, is another contribution<sup>41</sup>. The author examines the conceptual perspective of peacebuilding. He explains the differences between post-conflict

peacebuilding and the concepts of peacebuilding, peacemaking and peace enforcement. He argues that the concept of post conflict peacebuilding has been developed not by the theory but the practice of the United Nations Peace Mission. Drew's study is useful to the current work, because it helps in shaping its conceptual framework.

Another important study is the edited work by Elizabeth M. Cousens, *Peacebuilding as Politics: Cultivating peace in fragile societies*<sup>42</sup>. The study, as opposed to Drew's theorization of the concept of post-conflict peacebuilding, x-rayed the successes and failures of efforts to build peace in El Salvador, Cambodia, Haiti, Somalia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina and revealed the constraints of peacebuilding in these areas and international responses to them. An argument was sustained in the work that the priority of peacebuilding initiatives should be the development of authoritative, legitimate political mechanisms to resolve internal conflicts without violence. Though, outside the scope of this study, this study benefited immensely from the work because the background information from other regions of the world, in areas of peacebuilding, was useful for comparative purpose.

Wolpe and McDonald's *Democracy and Peacebuilding: Re-thinking the Conventional Wisdom*<sup>43</sup> attempt a systematic analysis of the practical experiences of resolving African conflicts. The authors drew examples from the Iraqi experience where the international community could not successfully advance peace and democracy, by virtue of their ignorance of the dynamics and intricacies of the internal sectarian and ethnic division in the country. The writers are of the view that the underlying assumptions of traditional approaches to peacebuilding and promotion of democracy should be re-examined. This is against the background of the failure of the international community to build sustainable peace in Iraq. The traditional approaches are based

on the signing of a peace agreement by the belligerent parties to a conflict. This peace agreement is usually imposed from above, that is, by the international community. The work argues that the major challenge in peacebuilding and democracy lies not in abstract, sector-specific institutional 'fixes', but, rather, in bringing key leaders together in a long-term process designed to resolve the tensions and mistrust that are the inevitable by-product of conflict and war, and to build (or rebuild) their capacity to work effectively together across the country's ethnic and political divides.

Writing from the gender perspective on peacebuilding, Dayo Kusa in *Gender, Peace and Conflict in Africa*<sup>44</sup> contends that women should form an integral part of post-conflict peacebuilding process, because in times of armed conflicts, women suffer at both ends with the death of their husbands and children and their personal painful experience of trauma which they suffered. The study concludes that for a successful peacebuilding, women must be and even share own past experience be involved. The work is however silent on the specific role(s) women should play in the process of peacebuilding. This study finds this useful because it provides an insight into a neglected area of peacebuilding studies.

The book of Ho-Won Jeong titled, *Peacebuilding in Post-Conflict Societies; Strategy and Process* is another work of relevance. The study focuses on issues of security and demilitarization, political transition, reconciliation and social rehabilitation in peacebuilding process. The author demonstrates that good governance, poverty alleviation, education, health, civilian security, social rehabilitation and reconciliation amongst others can help to avert conflicts or a re-occurrence of one. The work is a general overview of peacebuilding in post-conflict societies. It provides useful information for this study.

A critical analysis of the literature reviewed shows that the works examined various aspects of the journey to peacebuilding in Liberia and Sierra Leone without any of them focusing on the peacebuilding in Liberia and Sierra Leone which is the thrust of this study.

## **Methodology**

The research is a comparative study. Consequently, it adopts the comparative historical method of data collection and analysis that is “issue” based. Specifically, it addresses the similarities and differences in post-conflict demilitarization, demobilization, reconciliation and resettlement (DDRR), justice, economic, restructuring, building a democratic structure, and the role of external organization in the peacebuilding process in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Comparative historical methodology is a nineteenth century phenomenon which provides insight into diverse social phenomena and in doing so allow historians and social scientists to analyze and offer important insight into perplexing pertinent issues. The study adopts the “Univerlizing the comparative method” which identify similarities between cases. The theory is usually symmetrical because it gives equal weights to all cases compared. Relatedly, in view of the subject matter of this study, which cuts across conflict resolution, peacekeeping, peacemaking, economics justice, politics and diplomacy, the study adopts the historical methodology of data collection which relies on primary and secondary sources of data collected by the researcher from Nigeria, Liberia and Sierra Leone from 2006 to 2013. The primary sources include oral interviews, archival materials, unpublished dissertations, government publications, private records as well as newspaper articles.

To ensure the credibility of the primary sources, the researchers used structured and unstructured style of interview collected from key informants and respondents in Nigeria, Liberia and Sierra



Leone such as victims and survivors of the civil wars, former rebels, and government officials who witnessed and participated in the crisis. Specifically, the oral interviews were conducted and data were collected from Liberia and Sierra Leone embassies in Nigeria, refugee camp in Oru Ogun State.

Information was also gathered from United Nations Human Rights Commission (UNHRC) Awolowo Road, Ikoyi, Lagos. The researcher visited the United Nations Mission offices in Monrovia and Freetown respectively for oral interview. Oral information was also obtained in Liberia and Sierra Leone Ministry of Information, University of Liberia and Sierra Leone libraries.

Secondary sources consulted include books, journal articles and monographs obtained from the Nigeria Institute of International Affairs (NIIA) Victoria Island Lagos, Nigeria. Internet sources were also consulted. The information collected was critically analyzed. The study is descriptive, and presented in thematic and chronological styles. The approach is essentially comparative.

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## CHAPTER TWO

### AN OVERVIEW OF THE CAUSES OF THE CIVIL WARS IN LIBERIA AND SIERRA LEONE

This chapter addresses the historical contexts of the crisis in Liberia and Sierra Leone, its complexities and how it has attracted international responses. It begins with the history of the origin of both countries, the geography, and how the arrival of the freed slaves from Europe and United States affected the composition of the societies, which later became a factor in the outbreak of the civil wars.

The Liberia and Sierra Leone civil wars ended in 2002 and 2005 respectively, following the concerted efforts of continental and international institutions. However, the memory of brutality and viciousness still lingers in the minds of Liberians and Sierra Leoneans. The recent trial of former Liberian president, Charles Taylor, believed to be the mastermind of the crisis in Liberia and Sierra Leone, is a testimony of the indelible scars on the citizenry of both countries.<sup>1</sup>

Liberia and Sierra Leone have many things in common. They are English speaking neighbours, home to the descendants of freed slaves, had two identical warlords, Charles Taylor and Foday Sankoh and went through acrimonious civil wars.

The causes of the civil wars in both countries were similar. It is view of scholars like Paul Collier, Anke Hoeffler and Mary Kaldor that both wars were motivated by opportunities of economic profit (greed) than by political and social dissatisfaction (grievances).<sup>2</sup> The assumption about the primary role of economic opportunities appears plausible for the escalation of the civil wars. However, the experience in Sierra Leone and Liberia does not suggest that there is a strong correlation between the motivation of greed and both wars.

The atrocities committed during the wars were also portrayed as evidence of a mindless rebel movement without legitimate grievance. These abstract approaches provide a limited picture of what really happened. In order to fully comprehend the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone, this chapter examines the formation of both societies before delving into the detail causes of the wars.

## **LIBERIA**

The territory on which the Liberian state was established is said to have been inhabited for at least four centuries. In 1821, a group of African-Americans established a colonial settlement in Liberia with the assistance of the American Colonization Society (ACS). In 1847, the legislature of the settler colony declared the territory an independent, free republic, the first on the African continent. The legislature named the new country “Liberia” and elected as its first president Joseph Jenkins Roberts. Little is known about the original inhabitants of Liberia, but it is believed that they were black and powerfully built and that they had discovered the secrets of agriculture.<sup>3</sup>

Liberia is a small country of about 43,000 square meters, with a population of 3.22 million going by the 2003 estimate. It lies in the equatorial zone, along the coast of West Africa, between 4.30 and 8.30 north of the equator. It is bounded in the west by Sierra- Leone, in the north by Guinea, in the south by the Atlantic Ocean in the east by Cote d’Ivoire. The country is richly blessed with natural resources including iron ore, gold, diamonds and other minerals. It has vast water resources and fertile soil. The country is potentially rich in forest and agricultural resources, such as rubber, coffee, citrus, cocoa, pineapple, avocado, cassava and rice, the staple food of the people.<sup>4</sup>

Liberia also has a rich diversity of ethnic groups. The indigenous people account for 95% of the population, comprised of 16 ethnic groups who speak 27 languages or distinct dialects. They are Kpeller (198,500), Bassa (214,150), Gio (130,300), Mano (125,540), Kru (121,400), Grebo (108,099), Gola (106,450), Loma (60,840), Bandi (30,870), Kissi (25,500), Vai (24,000), Krahn (18,464), Mandigho (10,836), Del (7,900), Belle (5,386) and Mende (4,216), Americo-Liberians 2.5% (descendants of US freed slaves and freemen) and congo people 2.5% (descendants of Caribbean ex-slaves).<sup>5</sup>

From 1822 to 1847, when the country became a republic, the settlers (Americo-Liberian) exercised strong control over the country's socio-political space, often at the expense of the indigenous group, who primarily engaged in subsistence agriculture and petty trade and experienced a lower standard of living. Aside, they also imposed a system of centralized administrative rule, taxation and codified law on the indigenous people and employ military force to ensure compliance to laid down rules.

The country was named Liberia to express the feeling of freedom from slavery, which was expressed in the motto of the country "The love of liberty brought us here". The capital Monrovia was originally called Christ polis meaning the "city of Christ". It was an expression of the religious aspiration of the settlers. However, it was renamed Monrovia in honour of the American President James Monroe who gave the American colonization society so much help<sup>6</sup>.

The structure of the Liberian nation and the dichotomy which existed between the settlers and the indigenous peoples laid the basis for future conflict.

## **CAUSES OF THE LIBERIAN CRISIS**

The Liberian Civil war, which raged for 14 years, was caused by several factors which can be categorized into remote and immediate causes.

### **REMOTE CAUSES**

#### **Americo-Liberian Domination**

One of the problems that confronted Liberia before the outbreak of the war was the nature of the ethnic composition of the country. Liberia was stratified into three groups. These were the Americo-Liberians, the Congo's (descendants of Caribbean ex-slaves) and the indigenous Liberians themselves. The Liberian society was dichotomized from the beginning and this sowed the seed of ethnicity which played a major role in the Liberian politics. The Americo-Liberians constituted about 2.5% percent of Liberian's population<sup>7</sup> in the pre-war era. Although they were few in number, they constituted the ruling oligarchy with complete monopoly of political, social and economic power<sup>8</sup>. To maintain this privilege, they exploited the country's ethnic configuration through an uneven distribution of economic and social rewards. They also employed the tactics of political coercion based on strategic recruitment of troops from one ethnic group, to the chagrin of others. These policies were in place for over a century, and kept the mass of the inhabitants in abject poverty. The policy also intensified the structural differences among the various ethnic groups. Consequently, ethnicity became the singular index of group identification and social mobility, and set the stage for political conflict.

#### **Subjugation of the Indigenous Liberians**

Another factor that led to the Liberian civil war was the subjugation and colonization of the indigenous Liberians. The indigenous Liberians were virtually colonized by the non-ethnic



settlers who considered the indigenous people primitive. The settlers, who themselves were ex-slaves, treated the indigenous population in a manner reminiscent of their slavery experience. They superimposed economic, political and social systems over the existing indigenous structures. The settlers ensured that the indigenous Liberians were given limited education, which constrained them to nominal positions. The policy was spearheaded by President Joseph-Jenkins Roberts. The aim was to deter competition with the ruling class.

Further, President Roberts, clashed with the Protestant Church Men of Cape Palmas, who provided money, books and materials to the indigenous Africans<sup>9</sup> to improve the standard of the people. Indigenous Liberians that occupied prominent positions in government before 1980 were those affiliated to Americo-Liberians either through marriage or birth. Of the country's 19 Presidents before April 12, 1980 coup, none was an indigenous Liberian, 11 of the 19 Presidents were actually born in the United States of America<sup>10</sup>. Before 1946, there were separate laws which permitted only the Americo-Liberians right to reside in Monrovia and other coastal areas of the country, without the indigenes who owned the land.

Besides, the Americo-Liberians practiced politics of patronage and dominated the country's politics for over a century (1870-1980). They also controlled the government and economy owning over 60 percent of the country's wealth. Until recently, senior legislative, judiciary and executive positions were retained by the elite Americo-Liberians families<sup>11</sup>. In order to maintain a firm control of the system, relatives and family members of President Williams Tubman (1947-71) and President William Tolbert (1971-80) were appointed to important and sensitive positions. President Tolbert's brother, Stephen Tolbert was Secretary of Agriculture and Commerce in Tubman's administration and Minister of Finance under Tolbert. During Tubman's

administration, his son Shad Tubman Jr. was President of the Confederation of Trade Unions (CTU). Equally, in Tolbert's government, his son-in-law was Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, another was, Director of Budget, his cousin Minister of Education, and daughter, Assistant Minister of Education<sup>12</sup>.

The privileged Americo-Liberian classes were also members of the ruling political party, True Whig Party, which dominated the political scene for more than a century. All attempts to establish an opposition party, as stipulated in the constitution, failed. The Whig party represented a "club" of individuals who were prepared to uphold and advance the privileges enjoyed by the minority Americo-Liberians.

All those who were not prepared to "play the game", in accordance with the rules and dictates of the party, were fenced out of the political, economic and social privileges that the elaborate patronage system offered<sup>13</sup>. Gus Liebenow observes:

The Americo-Liberian elite displayed an ambivalent political concern toward the involvement of tribal people in traditional forms of Economic associations. The involvement of tribal people in more modern forms of economic associations, on the other hand was viewed with open hostility by the Whig leadership. In the absence of government support of cooperatives, the cash-crop economy was destined to remain under the control of foreign entrepreneurs and leaders of the Americo-Liberians class with little competition from peasant cultivators<sup>14</sup>.

The oppressive rule of the elite minority was instrumental in setting the stage for the outbreak of the war.

### **The Role of the True Whig Party (T.W.P)**

The role of the ruling True Whig Party (T.W.P) in Liberia was another factor that led to the outbreak of the civil war. The Liberian constitution makes provision for citizens numbering 300

and above to establish a political party and compete for political power. However, in practice, that right was never conceded by the ruling TWP until the advent of the Progressive Alliance of Liberia (PAL), led by Baccus Mathews in 1975<sup>15</sup>. Previous attempts to establish an opposition to compete with the True Whig Party failed. The TWP remained in power for 102 years, (1878 to 1980), thus making it the oldest de facto political party in Africa<sup>16</sup>. Beside, the administrative style of the political party was warped. They were “bosses not leaders”, combative and autocratic in nature. For example, during the Tubman administration, he single handedly ruled the country because he had other arms of government, namely the Senate, House of Representatives and the Judiciary, under his control.

According to Gus Liebenow, Tubman personalized government to the extent that cheques worth \$25 and above had to be personally signed by him<sup>17</sup>. In addition, he enjoyed elaborate patronage networks in the country which produced praise singers, political jobbers and sycophants around him. He presided over an authoritarian, coercive and potently corrupt administration that was unchallenged for twenty-seven years. He achieved this, through an elaborate network of security agencies he created, such as National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), the Special Security Service (SSS), and the most dreaded National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS). These organizations were ruthless and brutal and Tubman did not hesitate to unleash them on real or perceived enemies. The consequence was that oppositions were stifled out of existence and the country became a police state<sup>18</sup>.

Many senior officers were dismissed from public service for not toeing the line. A prominent example was the dismissal of Dr. Togba-Na Tipoteh, then Budget Advisor to President Tolbert as well as Professor of Economics at the University of Liberia. He lost both jobs because he

refused to be “co-opted”, and rather identified with the plight of the masses and indigenous people<sup>19</sup>.

In the early 1970s, it became apparent that a few but highly dedicated indigenous Liberians were determined to challenge the TWP, albeit gradually. Thus in 1973, a small group of indigenous Liberians, led by three highly qualified and dedicated men Dr. Togba-Na Tipoteh, Dr Amos Sawyer and Dew Mason, founded the Liberian chapter of Pan-African organization called Movement for Justice in Africa (MOJA). The objective of MOJA was, to work towards “raising the consciousness of the masses and their mobilization in concrete political action against oppression through show-downs, stoppages and militant action”<sup>20</sup>. MOJA also registered a sister organization, Sukusu, whose major objective was to work among the rural populace to raise their political consciousness and improve their living standards through communal agricultural co-operatives.

In short, it became obvious that during the latter years of Tubman’s administration, the TWP was unable to respond fully to the political yearnings of the indigenous Liberians who were now resolute not to sell their birth rights to the Americo-Liberian political oligarchy. The reluctance of the TWP to reform and accommodate those believed to be “non-comformists” contributed in no small measure to the collapse of the First Republic in April 9, 1980.

## **IMMEDIATE CAUSES**

### **The Takeover of Power by Samuel Doe**

One of the immediate causes of the Liberian civil war was the takeover of Sergeant Samuel Sanyon Doe through a bloody coup. Sanyon Kanyon Doe, a sergeant in the Liberian Army, trained by United States Armed Forces was an ethnic Krahn, a rural tribe in inland Liberia. The

Krahn are a part of the large majority of the Liberian population which had been repressed by the Americo-Liberian elite and are about a quarter of the Liberian population.

Doe's coup was encouraged by the deplorable economic and social conditions of the country. Although, small in size, Liberia is nonetheless a potentially wealthy country. It is endowed with huge valuable minerals such as iron-ore, the biggest in Africa and the third largest in the world<sup>21</sup>. Further, Liberia is blessed with huge diamonds reserves, rich forests of rubber plantation, and fertile soil for agriculture.

Unfortunately, these economic benefits were only enjoyed by the Americo-Liberian elite, who constitute only about two-percent of the population. The situation bred frustration, anger, bitterness and strong determination to upturn the political system. The lopsidedness provided a fertile ground for the seventeen non-commissioned officers, led by Samuel Kayon Doe, to seize power on April 2, 1980.

### **Samuel Doe and the Liberian Crisis**

Doe's coup brought to an abrupt end the 133 years of Americo-Liberian domination of Liberia and also marked the first time Liberia was governed by a person of native African descent. The coup brought mixed reactions from the people. Many, especially the indigenous Liberians, welcomed the coup as a shift in favour of the majority that had been excluded from power. According to James Kerkulah, a teacher, "Master Doe's coup brought a relief to us, our suffering has ended"<sup>22</sup>

Kerkulah was corroborated by Elizabeth J. Boyenneh, a public servant, "My brother, the suffering was too much. No food, no money, corruption everywhere, Doe is God sent to end our

problems”<sup>23</sup>. However, it was a different tone from Anthony Tolbert, a grandchild of William Tolbert, a businessman in the capital city Monrovia. “Master Sgt Doe was evil, he was blood thirsty, he killed my people to satisfy his personal ambition, he is an opportunist and corrupt soldier”<sup>24</sup>, he said.

Hardly had the euphoria of the coup died, when Doe began to exhibit a style of administration which was not different from that of Tubman. Doe’s administration was characterized by gross violations of human rights, over concentration of power, and massive corruption. Consequently, public opinion turned against him. His financial mismanagement left Liberia’s treasury with about two billion dollars in debt<sup>25</sup>. He appointed some members of his ethnic group to senior and sensitive government positions. Doe also recruited and promoted fellow Krahn within the armed forces, which further increased the ethnic tension in the army<sup>26</sup>, a situation which Joyce said.

Doe’s greatest mistake, and the one that has had the most lasting impact, was his ethnicizing” of the armed forces. Krahn people were given most of the authority in the military and the most significant posts in the government. The armed forces became almost completely Krahn and behaved more like a faction than a national army. Doe divided ethnic groups as ever before<sup>27</sup>.

The Krahn dominated army was largely responsible for the atrocities and gross human rights violations committed during Doe’s regime<sup>28</sup>. A coup attempt in 1985, led by Thomas Quiwonkpa from Gio ethnic group to overthrow the government of Doe, was resisted with bloody reprisals as about 2,000 Gio and Mano civilians were killed in the capital Monrovia<sup>29</sup>. Similar brutal attacks were also unleashed on soldiers from other ethnic groups.

Even the media was not spared during Doe’s autocratic rule. After tolerating a relatively free press immediately after the coup, Doe descended heavily on the media by banning some editions of newspapers and jailing reporters. In the early 1984, the government shut down the leading

Daily Newspaper, "*The observer*". He also banned all political activities in the state and cracked down on critics. The students were also banned from engaging in political activities.

The civil conflict in Liberia, the first in the country's nearly 170 year history began on Christmas Eve in 1989, when Charles Taylor, a former corrupt civil servant under Doe, with his National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) Taylor launched an invasion from their base in Cote d'Ivoire. Taylor's objective was to overthrow the 10 year –old corrupt and dictatorial rule of Doe<sup>30</sup>. Doe was born by a Krahn father and Golah mother. In the first stage of the attack, Taylor and his NPFL limited their attacks to soldiers and government officials. Doe responded by torturing Taylor's supporters. Taylor's forces retaliated by attacking civilians of the Krahn and Mandigo ethnic groups. People from Krahn were attacked because of their affiliation to Doe and the military, and the Mandigo were attacked because of their perceived alliance with the government. By the beginning of 1990, the war intensified in Nimba and surrounding areas, some 120,000 refugees had fled to Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea<sup>31</sup>. Soon, the war degenerated into factions.

What started as an attempt to oust Doe degenerated into ethnic massacres. The violence fanned ethnic hatred as each faction fought with the desire to take revenge. The situation gave rise to increase in the number of displaced persons and refugees. It is ironic that Taylor's NPFL whose claim was to save the Liberia people inflicted needless suffering on the civilians. This situation is comparable to what happened in Sudan, Somalia, Mozambique, Angola and Sierra-Leone, where armed conflicts has subjected the civilians to untold hardships.

Within six months of the first attack, Taylor was in control of about seventy five percent of the country including the strategic ports of Buchanan and Gbanga which later became the headquarters of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL).

Doe suffered heavy defeat at the hands of the NPFL. He retreated to his “Executive Mansion”, where he was holed up in heavy fortifications for several months. He was eventually captured and executed by a breakaway faction of the NPFL, led by Prince Yeduo Johnson. Doe had earlier relied on the support from the United States during the crisis, because during his first years in office, he openly supported US Cold War foreign policy in Africa in the 1980s. He even severed diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and even challenged diplomats when they criticized the US in his presence.<sup>32</sup>

As the war intensified, there were frequent reports of genocide and gruesome atrocities against civilians and foreign nationals from both sides in the conflict. The first attempt at settling the conflicts failed as Doe refused the offer of the United States of America to facilitate his safe passage to any country that was prepared to grant him political asylum in order to bring the war to a speedy end.

After the failure of the US attempt, there were thirteen other major peace agreements efforts to end the conflict. These also failed due to complex interactions at domestic and external levels. Domestically, peace was rendered difficult by the proliferation of armed factions and the manipulation of ethnic rivalries by power-seeking warlords. Also, the conflict was exacerbated by the refusal of the strongest faction, the NPFL to share power with other groups. At the subregional level, the sixteen members of the Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS) disagreed on how to resolve the conflict. Burkina Faso and Cote d’Ivoire supported



the NPFL militarily for much of the war, while Guinea and Sierra-Leone backed United Liberation Movement (ULIMO), and another factional group. Others complain about Nigeria's domineering role.

Nigeria provided military assistance to other factional groups and Ghana and Nigeria disagreed on fundamental diplomatic and military issues. While ECOWAS lacked the political unity to stop the crisis, it gave opportunity to the warlords to exploit subregional divisions. ECOWAS was not ready to engage the warlords in a protracted guerrilla war.

At the extra- subregional level, international actors largely ignored subregional efforts to resolve the conflict. The United States channeled its support largely toward humanitarian relief. Washington criticized Ecowas Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) for lack of seriousness. Nigeria Washington diplomatic relations deteriorated after the Nigerian military annulled the 1993 general election widely believed to have been won by Chief Kashimawo Abiola of the Social Democratic Party in Nigeria and continued repressive military rule resulted in inconsistent support for ECOMOG. The UN had less than 100 unarmed military observers in Liberia for most part of the war, while the African Union's 1,500 peacekeepers withdrew after a year, following the failure of the international bodies to deliver promised logistical support.

### **Different Peace Meetings on the Liberia Civil Wars**

There were efforts by various bodies to find a lasting solution to the civil war in Liberia. By the middle of 1990, a civil war was raging. Taylor's NPFL soon controlled much of the country, while Johnson began advancing on the capital, Monrovia. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) attempted to persuade Doe to resign and go into exile, due to his weak position, he refused. ECOMOG, an ECOWAS intervention force, arrived at the Freeport of

Monrovia on August 24, 1990, landing from Nigerian and Ghanaian vessels <sup>6</sup>. While making a brief trip out of the Executive Mansion to ECOMOG Headquarters, Doe was captured by Johnson on September 9, 1990, and tortured before being killed. The spectacle was videotaped and seen on news reports around the world<sup>7</sup>.

A series of peacemaking conferences in regional capitals followed. There were meetings in Bamako in November 1990, Lome in January 1991, and Yamoussoukro in June–October 1991. But the first seven peace conferences, including the Yamoussoukro I-IV processed failed.

Peace was still far off as both Taylor and Johnson claimed power. ECOMOG declared an Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU) with Amos Sawyer as president, with the broad support of Johnson. Taylor launched an assault on Monrovia on October 15, 1992, named 'Operation Octopus.'<sup>8</sup> The assault may have been led by Burkina Faso soldiers.<sup>9</sup> The resulting siege lasted two months. By late December, ECOMOG had pushed the NPFL back beyond Monrovia's suburbs. Meetings in Cotonou, Benin, began in July 1993 to agree a ceasefire. The Cotonou Agreement resulted in a treaty between the NPFL, IGNU and Doe's remaining supporters (known as the United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy or ULIMO). A coalition government was formed in August 1993. Yet, this and the previous agreements failed due to lack of agreement among the warring factions.

In September 1994, the Akosombo Agreement attempted to replace the coalition with moves towards a democratic government, but IGNU rejected this. The Abuja Accord of August 1995 finally achieved this, but in April 1996 the NPFL and ULIMO again began fighting in Monrovia, leading to the evacuation of most international Non-governmental organizations and the destruction of much of the city.

The peace agreements signed included the:

- Banjul III Agreement (1990-10-24)
- Bamako Ceasefire Agreement (1990-11-28)
- Banjul IV Agreement (1990-12-21)
- Lomé Agreement (1991-02-13)
- Yamoussoukro IV Peace Agreement (1991-10-30)
- Geneva Agreement 1992 (1992-04-07)
- Cotonou Peace Agreement (1993-07-25)
- Akosombo Peace Agreement (1994-09-12)
- Accra Agreements/Akosombo clarification agreement (1994-12-21)
- Abuja Peace Agreement (1995-08-19)<sup>10</sup>

The Liberian civil war pitched brothers against brothers and ethnic groups against ethnic groups, claiming an estimated 250,000 lives equivalent to 10 percent of the country's population at the time.<sup>11</sup> The destructive dimension of the war caused many professionals to flee the country and sought refuge in the diaspora. From an estimated 2,000 medical practitioners before the conflict, Liberia was left with less than 100 doctors at the end of the war.<sup>12</sup> This became a major challenge after the conflict as Liberians were overwhelmed and incapable of providing solutions to the myriad of problems confronting their country. It, therefore, became imperative to seek a post-conflict resolution mechanism to address the challenges.

By 1997, most of these difficulties had been finally resolved. At the domestic level, the warlords largely cooperated with ECOMOG in disarming the combatants. At the subregional level, Nigeria made peace with Taylor and withdrew support to his enemies. At the extra-subregional level, the United States and European Union provided crucial logistic support to the West

African peacekeepers, enabling ECOMOG to disarm the factions. In the end, contingencies and personal relations between ECOWAS leaders and Liberian warlords, rather than any structured plan, led to the end of the war in Liberia.

### **Historical Overview of the Sierra Leone Civil War**

Just like Liberia, an understanding of the civil war in Sierra Leone requires an in depth analysis of the geography and early history of the country up to the outbreak of the war. It is in the light of this that, David Keen argued that to understand the Sierra Leone's civil war is to understand its history and the grievances it generated<sup>32</sup>.

The present Republic of Sierra Leone is one of the fifty four independent countries of Africa. With an estimated population of four and half million people<sup>33</sup> before the war, it is no, doubt, one of the smallest countries on the West Coast of Africa. The area was marked out during the Scramble for Africa as Britain's Colony and Protectorate in 1896<sup>34</sup>.

The country had two distinct areas; the colony consisting of a small area on the Coast, around Freetown where a settlement for freed slaves had been established a century earlier and the protectorate inhabited by the indigenous peoples. There are seventeen ethnic groups in Sierra Leone. They are Mende, Limba, Loko, Susu, Kono, Koranko, So, Yalumka, Mandingo, Vai, Tenne, Kissi, Gola, Fula, Kru and Krio.

Sierra Leone has a relatively fertile soil and is rich in mineral deposits, which include diamond, gold, platinum, bauxite, iron-ore and chromites. It is bounded in the east and southeast by Liberia, on the northwest and northeast by the Republic of Guinea, and on the west and southwest by the Atlantic Ocean.

The foundation of the state was laid in 1896 when Freetown was founded as the “haven of freedom” for the black loyalists who had fought on the side of the British in the American War of Independence. Many of them had traveled to London to swell the rank of the ‘Black Pools’ in Britain. Others came from Nova Scotia. Some were slaves who were caught on the high seas by British naval ships and freed in the Colony.

In 1702, the Sierra Leone Company was formed to take over the running of the affairs of the settlement. In 1808, the British Government annexed the territory as a crown colony and it became Britain’s gateway to modernization in West Africa<sup>35</sup>.

Similarly, like Liberia, there were remote and immediate causes of the Sierra Leone civil war

### **Foday Sankoh Coup**

In March 1991, an obscure rebel movement known as the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), led by an ex-Corporal of the Sierra Leone Army, Foday Sankoh launched a series of guerrilla attacks on some border towns in eastern Sierra Leone. Their first operation was an attack on the Police Station in Bomaru in Kailahun district on the Sierra Leone Liberia border. During the encounter, the RUF succeeded in overrunning the station and capturing most of the weapons there.

The RUF aimed to overthrow the All People’s Congress (APC) government headed by Major-General Joseph Saidu Momoh, whose administration the RUF described as corrupt, inefficient, tribalistic and lacking popular mandate. The Government did not take the attack on Bomaru Police Station seriously; it was interpreted as a small skirmish over trading transactions between some irresponsible elements from Liberia and Sierra Leonean border guards. A mistake, which Joe A.D. Alie said was a tragedy<sup>36</sup>.

According to Allie, some APC politicians even argued, if less convincingly, that the skirmish was orchestrated by some unpatriotic opposition elements in the southern and eastern regions of Sierra Leone who were bent on derailing the democratic process that was unfolding after a long period of one-party rule. In short, rather than grapple with the issue headlong, the political leadership sought simplistic interpretations and advanced conspiracy theories to address what later turned out to be a very complex and thorny problem<sup>37</sup>.

Hitherto, Charles Taylor (leader of the rebel National Patriotic Front of Liberia – NPFL) told the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) that “Sierra Leoneans would taste the bitterness of war<sup>38</sup>, for allowing their territory to be used as a base for the ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) peacekeeping operations against his movement. According to him, “ECOMOG’s presence in both Sierra Leone and Liberia prevented him from shooting his way to power in Liberia. Tom Woewiyu, spokesperson for the NPFL said, “Sierra Leone’s participation in ECOMOG was the chief factor in the NPFL’s problems. You cannot be peacemakers and still fight us at the sametime”<sup>39</sup>. It is important to note that Foday Sankoh’s RUF forces initially contained a lot of mercenaries provided by Charles Taylor. But Taylor had other reasons for supporting the RUF. He wanted unlimited access to the rich agricultural and diamond rich land in south-eastern Sierra Leone, in order to pay for his elaborate war in Liberia.

In the absence of a coordinated strategy by the Sierra Leone forces to contain the situation, the RUF rebels, with considerable logistics and other forms of support from some West African leaders, began slowly to advance northward and westward. In the process, their ranks swelled with recruits, many through abductions. By 1992, the RUF had become a force to reckon with.

Since the RUF invasion in 1991, Sierra Leoneans have been grappling with difficult crisis. The war brought into sharp focus the serious political problems that had confronted the nation since the attainment of political independence in 1961. According to Desmond O. George-Williams, “it set in motion brutal and cruel forces that have engulfed the entire country in an unprecedented civil conflict.”<sup>40</sup> Williams view was corroborated by Karim Koroma, who said “the conflict brought into graphic focus that human nature if, given appropriate circumstances, can be transformed from good to evil, graciousness to brutishness, sharing and caring to a display of primeval instincts”<sup>41</sup>. The war left in its wake, mass destruction of lives, property, settlements and violation of human rights. It also rendered the Sierra Leone government incapable of meeting its social, economic and other responsibilities to the citizens.

### **Over centralization of State machinery**

Another major cause of the Sierra Leone civil war was the over concentration of state administrative machinery at the centre. Sierra Leone inherited her administration style from the British in 1961. There was a functioning parliamentary system exercising legislative power in an elected House of Representatives, while executive power resided in a cabinet headed by the Prime Minister. Judicial power was in the domain of an independent court system that had the Supreme Court at the apex. Other arms of the Government, such as the civil service, army and the police had highly qualified and motivated personnel who were respected for their industry, loyalty and commitment to duty. The nation’s educational institutions were the envy of sub-Saharan Africa.

Local government bodies popularly elected by the people, performed useful functions and were mainly responsible for development at community and chiefdom levels. Politicians were in close

touch with their constituencies and regularly explained government policies and plans to the people. They, in turn, took back messages and grievances from their constituencies to government. Thus, there was regular and fruitful communication between the rulers and the ruled. If the people perceived that their elected representatives were not working in their best interests, they had an opportunity to replace them in regular and transparent elections. This was demonstrated during the general elections of March 1967, when the opposition All People's Congress (APC) defeated the ruling Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), thus, becoming the first opposition party in post colonial Africa to oust a ruling party through the ballot box.

Unfortunately, the APC abandoned their previous (1961-1967) commitment to participatory democracy after the victory. The country became a single-party state. They instituted a highly centralized, inefficient, and corrupt bureaucratic system of government, marginalizing the people and robbing them of their rights and freedoms. Thereafter, state policy acquired a national character only when it originated from State House.

As the Prime Minister, Siaka Stevens began to display autocratic tendencies, his close associates, Dr. M.S. Forna and M.O Bash-Taqi, Ministers of Finance, and Economic Development resigned their membership of the APC. Later they joined forces with Dr. John Karefa-Smart and others to form United Democratic Party (UDP).

In his letter of resignation to the Prime Minister, M.O. Bash-Taqi wrote "It gives me a greater pain to see that you have embarked on a road of rapid destruction of those high ideals and fundamental principles for which we fought so vehemently over the last years"<sup>42</sup>. Dr. Forna, in like manner, described Stevens as the "evil spirit behind the use of force and violence"<sup>43</sup>.



The bulk of the UDP support came mainly from Freetown and the Northern province, particularly from the Temme. The split within the APC was more destructive. It was a major threat to Siaka Stevens, whose greatest appeal throughout his political career had been to the Freetown community and to the Temme and allied groups, such as the Limba (whereas the SLPP's main political base was further South among the Mende).

Siaka Stevens, armed with emergency powers, quickly proscribed the UDP, arguing that "it was an ethnic based party bent on destabilizing the country"<sup>44</sup>. The party was also accused of being financed by foreign interests. The UDP's followers reacted with violence, staging attacks on APC offices and other government targets in the Northern Province and in Freetown.

The violence was brutally suppressed, the UDP and its supporters were banned, from all political activities and its leader jailed. Some were jailed, and others fled the country. Meanwhile the APC- dominated Parliament had been making moves to transform the country into a Republic. This controversial action was completed on March 19, 1971. Two days later, Siaka Stevens made himself Executive President with wide powers. On March 23, the force commander, John Bangura and other officers were arrested for a coup plot. They were subsequently executed. A relative of John Bangura, Foday Sankoh who was a corporal and photographer in the army, was also implicated in the coup plot and was jailed.

The concentration of power in the hands of few people, in the capital city made access to resources impossible for non-APC members. Consequently, membership of the APC became a visa to access national resources. The excessive centralization of public administration at the centre robbed developmental progress at the grass-roots level.

Local government bodies such as Rural Area Councils, Districts Council and Chiefdom Councils became dysfunctional. Where they existed, they merely served the interests of the “party-Government”, because members of the councils were not popularly elected, but appointed by the ruling cabal in Freetown. This made the specific needs, realities and circumstances of the rural communities to be marginally treated, or neglected. Even simple extractive functions like local tax collection were also controlled from the centre.

Overcentralization accelerated the crumbling of the State and its eventual collapse. The collapse made it possible for neighbouring rogue states to interfere on Sierra Leone’s politics directly. The country’s economic space also contracted significantly, reducing the ability of the Government to generate enough revenue and to provide adequate services for its citizens. A feeling of disenchantment finally set in.

### **Rural Isolation**

Visible evidence of over centralization and the lack of equity in resource allocation, led to the feeling of deprivation and alienation by the rural dwellers. These areas were almost completely cut off from the centre and government influence in the rural areas was, at best, minimal. Socio economic development was confined to Freetown and a few other towns. But the money used for such development was obtained mainly from the rural masses through agriculture and other activities. The neglect made rural Sierra Leoneans near the Liberian border to identify themselves with Monrovia (capital of Liberia) rather than with Freetown. Growing poverty and isolation in the countryside contributed significantly to the rural-urban migration, with its accompanying problems. Many rural migrants were unable to find jobs in the city and so drifted into idleness and destitution. They became potential material for mob action.

Those who remained in the rural areas did not seem to know or care much about what was happening in the capital city; nor did the city residents know what was happening in other parts of the country. For a long time, the rebel war was viewed largely as a provincial affair which had little to do with the capital city. Government workers in remote parts of the country, such as teachers, frequently went for months without salary, and these articulate groups became very bitter against “the system”. This encouraged them to assume confrontational positions in crisis periods. Youths and young adults in particular, perceived officials in the capital as working against their collective interest.

### **Factionalism and Ethnic Politics**

Sierra Leone, like many other African States, is a multi-ethnic society. Some seventeen ethnic nationalities collectively occupy a geographical area of 27,925 square miles about 41,887.5 kilometres<sup>45</sup>. The two largest groups are the Temme, who occupy large sections of the Northern region, and the Mende who dominate the south and eastern parts of the country. Together, the Mende and Temme account for roughly 60 percent of the country’s population. Both groups, over the years, had influenced culturally other ethnic groups within their domain.

The Mende and Temme have been dominant players in the political space of Sierra Leone before and after independence. Political leaders from both groups have often appealed to their kith and kin for support, while vying for political offices. Sometimes, intense competition for political power led to major conflicts. This was evident during the first decade of independence, 1961-1970. Other important players in the national politics had been the Krio (who inhabit the Western Area), the Limba (sometimes dominant in the APC) and the Kono, whose homeland in the far east of Sierra Leone is rich in diamonds.

Since the independence of Sierra Leone, two big political parties had always controlled the country. They are, the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) and the All People's Congress (APC). The SLPP, which ruled the country from 1961-1967, drew its followers mainly from the Mende ethnic group and those with close affinity to the Mende. To the Northerners and particularly the Temne, the SLPP leadership did not seem to pay much attention to regional balance in the power-sharing arrangements. Some northern politicians complained, for example, when Prime Minister Sir Milton Margai (a Mende) effected a cabinet reshuffle shortly before independence. The Temne, group alleged that they had been denied important positions in the government. John Cartright observed:

Unease among Northerners, particularly Temnes, had been growing slowly as Sierra Leoneans assumed a greater share of power in the government. Sir Milton (the Prime Minister and leader of the SLPP) had taken steps to allay Temne fears in 1957 by appointing Kandeh Bureh and I.B. Taylor-Kamara as well as his close supporter Dr. Karefa-Smart to important portfolios, and later added Y.D. Sesay and Paramount Chief Bai Koblo to the Cabinet, but in 1960 this concern for balance seemed to lessen. The Temne leader in the SLPP hoped in 1960 for the appointment of one of their number to the newly created post of Deputy prime Minister "to bring peace between the two tribes", but instead the position went to (M.S) Mustapha, an Aku Creole. A further blow to Temne pride came with the announcement of new... United Front Ministers; the Mendes received one additional post, the Creoles three, but the Temne none. Two of the newly-created appointments were carved out of Temnes' ministries, which appeared too many Temnes to be further indication that they were being downgraded<sup>46</sup>.

In the midst of the political crisis, a new political party APC emerged in 1960. Its leader was Siaka Stevens, a Limba born in the southern town of Moyamba. The APC attracted large followers from the North; many Northern politicians gravitated towards the APC and encouraged their countrymen and women to join the party, believing it was the only party that would genuinely address their needs. They blamed the SLPP for the apparent backwardness of the

north. Some northern politicians even suggested that the new party be called “Northern People’s Party”, but Siaka Stevens opposed this. The APC leadership at the time of the party’s inception was made of two major ethnic groups in the North- the Temne and Limba. The principal leaders were Siaka Stevens (Leader, Limba, trade unionist and politician); C.A Kamara-Taylor (Secretary-General, Limba and transport-owner); S.A Fofana (Temne tailor); S.I Koroma (Temne, transport – owner); M.O. Bash-Taqi (Temne, politician); Prince Koh (Limba, politician); C.A Kamara- Taylor (Secretary-General, Limba and transport-owner); S.A Fofana (Temne, tailor); S.I Koroma (Temne, transport- owner); M.O. Bash-Taqi (Temne, politician); Prince Koh (Limba, Politician).

The APC party appeared desperate to lead the country. Its motto, was “Now or never”. It received considerable support from krio and the Kono probably because these groups felt that they would not be able to make much headway in SLPP. Although the leadership of the APC may have been prepared to use constitutional means to achieve its objectives, the rank and file felt otherwise. Those who opposed the party’s position attempted to wreak havoc during the 1961 independence celebrations in Freetown, by violence and sabotage. The government was forced to declare a state of emergency<sup>47</sup>. Certain SLPP supporters in Freetown (who were predominantly Mende) decided to counter APC violence by forming a militia group called United Front Volunteers (UFV); although they did not engage in any act of violence. Following the declaration of a state emergency, APC leaders were arrested and detained during the independence celebrations. While the celebrations were largely peaceful, explosions occurred at Freetown’s main power stations. Telephone lines between Freetown and the province were also cut, and unsuccessful attempts were made to sabotage a major bridge in Freetown. The APC leaders were released shortly afterwards.

In the first general elections after independence in 1962, the APC and their allies secured 20 seats; the SLPP 28; Independent candidates 14 and paramount Chiefs 12. Most of the APC seats were won in the North and Western Area (Freetown and its environs)<sup>48</sup>. The APC thus emerged as the official opposition in parliament.

It is important to note that the disparity in socio-economic development between the North and South was a not deliberate policy of the SLPP. It was a colonial legacy. During the colonial period, most of the Government's economic activities had been concentrated in the South and East, where the main cash crops (coffee, cocoa) were grown to satisfy the demands in Europe. The South and East also had rich deposits of strategic minerals including diamonds. The Southerners also appear to have embraced Western education much more vigorously than the Northerners, who were Muslims. The early and sustained exposure of the Southerners to western influences gave them an edge over other provincial groups in post-colonial politics and administration of the country.

It can be argued, however, that certain politicians blinded themselves to economic realities. While Northerners lacked natural resources, they were adequately compensated in commerce. They controlled most of the retail trade in the country. Islam came to West Africa through trade and has retained this commercial tradition.

Politically, it would seem that the country was polarized along ethnic lines. The situation became worse after 1964 when Sir Milton Margai died. He was succeeded by his brother Albert Margai although some in the SLPP felt that a non-Mende in the person of either "the darling of the North" Dr. John Karefa-Smart, or M.S Mustapha should have succeeded Sir Milton. Albert Margai took immediate steps to punish four non-Mende Ministers who had criticized his

appointment by the Governor-General. They were M.S Mustapha (a Krio), John Karefa-Smart and Y.D Sesay (North) and S.L Maturi (east). Their dismissal from the Government was a mistake causing further political tension, because they were influential people who represented important areas in the country.

Albert Margai's actions may have aggravated the already tensed ethnic situation in the country. For example, he advised provincial chiefs to discourage APC activities in their chiefdoms, and the National Broadcasting Service (NBS) was instructed not to publicize the APC activities. An absenteeism bill was rushed through parliament in May 1965, which stipulated that any Member of Parliament (MP) who absented himself from parliament for 30 consecutive days "without reasonable excuse" would lose his seat<sup>49</sup>. As a result four APC parliamentarians, who were in jail on convictions of riot and assault lost their seats. Not surprisingly, the APC would later use similar legislation in 1977 to deprive four SLPP parliamentarians, of their seats: and one of them was Sir Albert Margai's son, Charles and others who had been detained on various charges including murder, after the 1997 general elections. They were released after losing their parliamentary seats.

Albert Margai (who later became Sir. Albert) was also accused of "Mendenizing" the civil service and the army. Some Mende (or people with close affinity with the Mende) were appointed to senior positions. John Kallon (Mende) was Establishment Secretary, Peter Tucker (Sherbro) was Secretary to the prime Minister, S.B Daramy (Mandingo) was Financial Secretary, while David Lansana (Gola) was promoted to the rank of Brigadier and made to head the army.

The polarization of the country, along ethnic and regional lines, also crept into the army. While it was widely believed that brigadier-General David Lansana supported the Prime Minister, his

Deputy Colonel, John Bangura (a Northerner), was sympathetic to the APC. Shortly before the general elections of March 1967, Bangura and some other officers were implicated in a coup plot. The officers arrested included three Southerners. The arrest of the Krio and Northern officers, were seen as the last desperate attempt by Sir Albert Margai to complete his mastery over the army in preparation for the forthcoming elections. This gave the APC a propaganda tool to appeal for both Krio and Northern solidarity.

The elections went ahead as planned. The election exposed once again, the dangerous ethnic tension in the country. The APC won all the seats in the North but one, all contested seats in the Western Area and some in Kono District, while the SLPP won almost all seats in the South and most seats in Kenema and Kailahun and Kono districts. The final results were APC 32 seats, SLPP 28, and independents six <sup>50</sup>. Then came the Lansana led coup. Lansana advanced many reasons for taking over the government. He said, that “the elections had been fought on an ethnic basis, a situation that could lead to a civil war”. But other officers felt otherwise. They believed that the Brigadier intended to reappoint Sir Albert Margai as Prime Minister. A group of colonels arrested both their Brigadier and Sir Albert Margai, and took over the governments from them.

Following the restoration of constitutional rule through a counter-coup by junior officers loyal to the APC in April 1968, Siaka Stevens returned from exile in Guinea and was appointed Prime Minister. He lost no time in replacing Mende officers in the army with Northerners. In May 1969, John Bangura was promoted Brigadier-General and Force commander. When Siaka Stevens later fell out with Bangura, he appointed another Northerner-Joseph Momoh (a Limba) - to the position of Force Commander.



The years 1968-1970 were particularly difficult for the SLPP and the Mende community generally, including those in Freetown. The Mende were punished for the sins of the SLPP as if the party was made of only the Mendes. In the east end of Freetown at Ginger Hall where there was a large concentration of the Mende, APC thugs beat up people suspected of being SLPP and burnt houses belonging to SLPP supporters. In reaction, most Mende living in the South and East of the country firmly resolved not to have any dealings with the APC.

The regionalization of national politics had led to a series of bloody clashes between supporters of the APC and those of the SLPP, especially in SLPP strongholds like Bo, Pujehun, Kenema and Kailahun. During election periods, and especially in 1973 and 1977, the APC, assured of victory in the North through the infamous “unopposed system” mobilized truckloads of thugs from the Northern areas and transported them to the South and east to harass and intimidate SLPP supporters. One of the worst clashes occurred on May 3, 1977 in the Southern provincial town of Bo, a traditional SLPP strong hold. The APC leaders in the town brought in several hundred youths from the North to terrorize SLPP supporters. The clash that ensued left many people dead and the homes of some Northerners in Bo completely destroyed. This intense rivalry between the Mende and Temne for political power had serious implications for national unity and cohesion. Against this background, it was safe to say that tribalism destroyed the social fabric of the Sierra Leone society. This was a common knowledge, which many felt was too sensitive to talk about. While ethnicity or regionalism may not have been a significant factor in the early stages of the civil war in Sierra Leone, subsequent events tend to support the view that this factor was a powerful under current in the crisis and needs to be properly addressed. For instance, when RUF rebels attacked a Northern town in early May 1997, a prominent Northern politician was quoted as saying that the rebels killed everybody in the town except one woman,

who spoke Mende. It is instructive to note that Foday Sankoh, the leader of the RUF, is a Temne, but many of his fighters are Mende. This composition is important and is perhaps a blessing in disguise for the country; it prevented the rebel war from degenerating into a tribal conflict. The RUF leadership probably convinced itself that Kailahun and Pujehun, which were traditionally SLPP safe areas, would support any movement to get rid of the APC. This, in addition to the border factor, partly explains why the RUF started their operations in Sierra Leone from Kailahun and Pujehun.

### **The Politics of Exclusion**

From 1968 on, there was little or no provisions for alternative views in Sierra Leone politics: Sierra Leoneans were either with the ruling party or against it. Loyalty to the APC replaced loyalty to the country. This was vividly expressed in the armed forces where enlistment was through the recommendation of a government minister or a party heavyweight.

In 1978, all semblance of multi-party competition was eliminated with the introduction of a one-party State. Sierra Leoneans felt disenfranchised. Political leaders established “clients” relations with potentially powerful groups like the intellectual community, the armed forces and labour unions, to maintain themselves in power. The judiciary was corrupted and miscarriage of justice became a norm. Honest and hard-working Sierra Leoneans who did not support the APC were sidelined and this affected the morale of people especially in the civil service.

Those groups or regions which were perceived to be anti-ruling party were subjected to harassments and intimidations. The action forced some opposition elements to go underground and wait for the “right opportunity” to vent their anger on their oppressors. The opposition members and their supporters were also denied the country’s resources. This denial included

access to job opportunities. Civil servants were not spared; there were many instances of illegal dismissals and sidelining of those senior civil servants who were not in support of the government. Nepotism rather than meritocracy became the criteria for advancement in the civil service and government parastatals.

Siaka Steven's supporters argued that a one-party system of government was the only practical way to eliminate political violence, which some people believed was inherent in the multi-party system. The first election under a one-party state in 1982 was accompanied by violence and intimidation on an unprecedented scale. The aftermath of the mayhem in some area was so severe that its consequences were still felt several years later. In Pujehun District, some citizens formed a guerrilla movement, the "Ndogbowusi", in the wake of the 1982 general elections, to protect themselves against what they called "state sponsored terrorism".

### **Chieftom Level Politics**

Politics at the chieftom level, especially among the ruling houses, has been characterized by intense competition since the colonial era, when the idea was first initiated for paramount Chiefs to sit in Parliament. According to Allie, "there were instances when the colonial administration openly supported a candidate who did not seem to command the respect of the majority of the chieftom people. Such chiefs held their position at the pleasure of their masters and not on any traditional principle of acceptance by their people". This eroded traditional African rule of reciprocity: many chiefs were able to ill-treat their subjects because they know they had the backing of the colonial government. Interference by the central administration in the politics of the chieftoms continued after independence and sometimes created volatile situations, which occasionally resulted in violent conflicts in the chieftoms. The RUF leadership may have

capitalized on some of these deep-seated grudges to sell their movement to certain disaffected people.

Maladministration by other chiefdom authorities, such as excessive fines by Court Chairmen, created bad blood between these authorities and the young men. There were occasions when some youths had to flee their villages because of their inability to pay huge court fines. Such young men always had the desire to take revenge on their oppressors.

The erosion of local governance had a severe impact on weapons of violence. Under the Chiefdom Council Act, firearms permits were issued during the 1960s and 1970s by Police authorities on the recommendation of village headmen and the local chief. In practice, this meant that local notables were vouching for the good character of hunters; they were guarantors for the proper use of firearms in the community. This partnership between communal elders and the police broke down under the one-party system. Firearms legislation was no longer applied after the dissolution of Chiefdom Councils. Firearms began to circulate more freely, especially in areas close to the Liberian border. The growing availability of firearms in the society was to have a negative effect on the country in no distant future.

### **Wealth, Corruption and Abuse of Power**

Other factor that led to the outbreak of the civil war in Sierra Leone were the influence of the country's wealth, corruption and abuse of power. In terms of natural resources, Sierra Leone is among the richest countries in the world. As the then British High Commissioner to Sierra Leone, Peter Penfold, observed at the Consultative Conference on the Peace Agreement in Sierra Leone in April 1999:

The tragedy of Sierra Leone is that her people are among the poorest in the world, while the country is among the richest. The reasons for this are entirely man made. Other countries in the world are poor because of natural disasters, few resources, unfertile territory, or bulging populations. Not so in Sierra Leone. God blessed this land with an abundance of Resources. Just a relatively few people are responsible for the misery and hardship suffered by so many<sup>52</sup>.

Over the past three decades, a small minority of Sierra Leoneans became fabulously rich, and insensitive to the plight of the masses. They move around in expensive cars and sent their children to school overseas, while their wives and mistresses went shopping overseas. Corruption and mismanagement were rife. These vices became institutionalized in Sierra Leone from the 1970s when the APC began to make increasing use of the patronage system to reward the party faithfuls. Siaka Stevens openly supported corruption as he himself acquired a great deal of wealth. He is quoted as having said that “usal yu tai kaw, na dae I dae it” (meaning “a cow grazes where it is tethered”)

This expression more or less gave a free hand to all those who had access to public money to loot without looking back. Funds allocated for general development invariably found their way into the pockets of private individuals. “From 1981 certain ministers and public officials were implicated in a series of financial scandals variously tagged “voucher-gate”, “million-gate” and “squander-gate”. But little attempt was made to punish these offenders. Successor regimes also tolerated a high degree of corruption. Transparency and accountability vanished from the public administration system”<sup>53</sup>

Government financial management was appalling. Expenditure always ended up more than planned. A case in point was the hosting of the Organization of African unity (OAU) Summit in Freetown in 1980, the Government ended up spending some 200million Leones (about US

\$200million), although 100million Leones had been earmarked for the conference<sup>54</sup>. No one was forced to explain what happened to the extra money.

Corruption and mismanagement affected the country in diverse ways. Previous governments failed to translate the country's rich mineral, marine and agricultural resources to improve welfare people. According to Abdullah, the economic downturn in the early 1980s, partly fuelled by the lavish hosting of the 1980 OAU conference, and the dwindling mining revenues exacerbated by rampant smuggling, affected expenditure on health and other social services. Scholarships to students also reduced.

For the 1974/75 fiscal year, the expenditure on education totaled 15.6 percent of government expenditure; this was reduced to 8.5 per cent in the 1988/89 fiscal year. Similarly, expenditure on health and housing dropped from 6.6per cent and 4.8 per cent in the same period to about 2.9 per cent and 0.3 per cent, respectively. Since the State was the largest employer of labour, the downward economic trend affected the general employment situation. Thus, whereas the number of pupils in secondary schools registered a phenomenal increase from 16,414 in 1969 to 96,709 in 1990, there were only about 60,000 in paid employment by 1985. By 1990, it had become impossible even for university graduates to secure jobs in the public sector, and this at a time when the private sector was downsizing<sup>55</sup>.

The increasing incidence of poverty seriously affected the health and educational sectors of the country. As far back as 1983, ever since Sierra Leone was classified by the United Nations as the least developed country in the world,<sup>56</sup> the country has held on to this sad position at the bottom of Africa's league table.

From April 1968 till March 1992 when the APC was overthrown by young military officers, the party leadership was preoccupied with amassing of wealth while maintaining itself in power to the detriment of the country. A situation which Dominic Lamin described as “Now or Never” to “Live for Ever”<sup>57</sup>. This meant that the party continued to bulldoze its way to power regardless of the wishes of the people. Young people, in particular, point to past political failures, nepotism, and mismanagement of the country’s vast resources as some of the principal causes of the rebel war.

### **Neglect of the Youths**

As the abuse of power and corruption were not enough, another factor that led to the Sierra Leone civil war was the neglect and misuse of youths in the country. No group suffered more from political and economic exclusion than the under twenties. The progressive deterioration of the economy over the years had its most adverse effect on the youth. Majority of young men and women emerged without jobs or reliable means of livelihood. This marginalized youths felt dejected, cut off from the mainstream of society and losing faith in the system. Some became radical and rebellious, including school leavers, university graduates, and unemployed ghetto dwellers that were in no short supply in Freetown and other urban centers. “For these youths, life was an uphill task”. Youth radicalism and anger against “the system” was particularly marked in the late 1970s and 1980s when there was an urgent desire for change. Youths in Sierra Leone and elsewhere found comfort and inspiration in songs such as “System Dread”, “Send Another Moses”, and other lyrics by singers such as Bob Marley and Peter Tosh<sup>58</sup>.

Colonel Gaddafi’s Green Book<sup>59</sup> from Libya was another source of inspiration. This was widely read by students in Sierra Leone and its revolutionary ideas greatly appealed to them. The Green

Book (which a former American President described as a watermelon; green on the outside, but red inside) gave many aggrieved young people (including those living in the ghettos) revolutionary impetus for the crusade against what they considered an “unjust system”. Some of the educated young men who pioneered the RUFs manifesto footpaths to democracy<sup>60</sup> towards a New Sierra Leone, as perhaps a stepchild of the Green Book. When the RUF was formed, a lot of jobless young people joined the movement because it promised to give them hope, power and new life.

Often, these youths did not hesitate to vent their anger on the establishment. At the annual Convocation for the Conferment of Degrees at Fourah bay College (the country’s university) on January 27, 1977 the students staged a peaceful anti-government demonstration in full view of President Siaka Stevens, Chancellor of the University. The students request, among other things, for an improved social and economic conditions and free and fair elections, APC thugs countered by staging a pro-Government demonstration two days later.

They attacked Fourah Bay College, and attacked both the students and lecturers and damaged a lot of property. The authorities closed the college. However, primary and secondary school pupils and other youths in Freetown joined in solidarity with the college students, declaring “No College, No School”. They went on the rampage and soon provincial pupils joined in nationwide anti-Government demonstrations. There were serious disturbances across the country. The vandalism was directed mainly against APC ministers and their stalwarts. The government reacted by shutting down all educational institutions in the country.

Students staged another demonstration on January 12, 1984 which coincided with the official opening of the Eight APC National Delegates Conference held at the City Hall in Freetown. The



students were calling for major economic reforms. Unemployed youths took advantage of the situation to embark on wide spread looting and destruction of property. Fourah Bay College was again closed for eight weeks following the disturbances.

Students were not alone in manifesting their discontent. Already, on September 1 1981, the Sierra Leone Labour Congress (SLLC) initiated a nationwide strike to press for economic reforms. The strike had a huge impact and the Government used high-handed tactics to put down the strike. Many congress officials were rounded up and taken to Pademba Road Prison. “The Tablet” newspaper, which for some years had embarrassed the Siaka Stevens Government with its incisive comments and exposures, was forced to go underground. And its editor fled the country.

### **Lapses in State Security**

Between 1961 and 1991 the national security collapsed, courtesy of the politicization of the military and the police, the creation of security organizations with personal or political allegiance, rampant corruption, and military coups. This seriously undermined the national security apparatus, to the extent that the RUF crossed the border from Liberia in March 1991 with about 100 men, and by 1995 had pushed the offensive almost as far as Freetown.

The army inherited from the British in 1961 was relatively small, well trained, professional and disciplined. Gradually, however, political interference began to creep into process of recruiting and promoting officers. This led to a lowering of standards and low morale. In 1974, the head of the army was appointed into Parliament and into the Cabinet. As a result, the army lost its national character and its commitment to the “national interest and national security”. By 1978, recruitment into the army became commercialized as each leading politician was allocated a

share of vacancies for enlisted men. The army was consequently filled with thugs and other misfits who could disobey their commanders with impunity, thus shifting loyalty from the state to godfather politicians.

Meanwhile, the army top brass enriched themselves at the expense of the State. Officers carted away huge sums of money, leaving the soldiers poorly equipped. The rank and file of the army was disgruntled and demoralized. When the RUF rebels attacked the country, there were no trucks to carry troops to the battlefield. Many of the disaffected soldiers went on to collaborate with the RUF rebels, to the disappointment of the civilians.

As early as 1970, Siaka Stevens had begun to lose confidence in the army. This was due to partly to the army's propensity for staging coups. To neutralize the army, Stevens created a new paramilitary force, the Internal Security Unit (ISU) (later State Security Division). This force was well trained and well armed, fiercely loyal to Stevens's and the APC, and was used as an anti-riot outfit to control civil unrest and students disturbances. Members of the force became so trigger happy that they were nicknamed 'ISU' (meaning "I shoot yo"). They were notorious striking terror in the civil populace.

The police force became corrupted like the army. The Inspector General of Police also became a nominated Member of Parliament. He became a politician rather than the "Chief Sherriff". This undermined the neutrality of the force. With the introduction of a one-party system of government 1978, recruitment and promotion were influenced mainly by loyalty to the APC. Many recruits did not meet the basic requirements for entry into the force. Corruption was rife, due in part to poor pay of the police, poor accommodation, illiteracy and ignorance of the mission of the police force. Many people simply got rich.

The effect was that the force was unable to perform, there was complete breakdown of security, particularly in the provincial areas. For instance, Libya was sponsoring candidates and organizations in the mid-1980s to engage in illegal activities in the country. With police protection, Foday Sankoh and the students activists' transverse the length and breadth of the country recruiting young men for military training in Benghazi, Libya.

### **Peace Efforts to End the Sierra Leone Civil War**

The road to eventual peace in Sierra Leone was not easy and to some extent replicated the peace efforts in Liberia. Before the cessation of hostility, there were several peace agreements which were truncated because of personal and selfish interest. First was on April 29, 1992, when Captain Valentine Strasser, Chairman of the National Provision Ruling Council (NPRC) openly declared that his regime was ready to establish contacts with any Liberian factional leader to negotiate settlement of the Sierra Leone crisis which was rebuffed.

Next was the solicited assistance from the Un Secretary-General to bring the Revolutionary United Front to the negotiation which also failed because of the inability of the UN Special Envoy Felix Moshia to establish contact with the rebels.

Despite the botched meeting, there was another attempt in May 1996. The Sierra Leonean government met with RUF in Yamoussoukoro to find peace. This also failed. After, a National Commission for Consolidation of Peace was established. The commission did not achieve anything because of the RUF opposition of the ECOMOG member inclusion in the peace process.

Despite the failures, the peace process was once again revived in Togo under the auspices of President Gwassinghe Eyadema and ECOWAS in 1991 this lasted 44 days. Again, the talks

broke down on several occasions as a result of the irreconcilable differences between both camps.

Peace was eventually attained with Lome Peace Accord, which addressed the controversial issues like Pardon and Amnesty but glossed over other areas crucial to the long term socio-economic and political development of Sierra Leone as well as the humanitarian question.

The Lome Peace Agreement was followed the Abuja Ceasefire Agreement on November 10, 2000 which produced the legal basis for the application of the Lome Agreement.

It was the Abuja II Agreement that provided the breakthrough by reviewing progress made on implementation and agreeing on mechanisms for moving the entire process forward, including DDR.

In conclusion, this background to Sierra Leone's descent into anarchy shows that the root causes of the civil wars were already present in the society long before the outbreak of the war. In summary they include:

- Political injustice, manipulation of elections, ethnic politics, disruption of the rule of law, and misuse of the principal institutions of the State, notably the courts, the police, and the military;
- Mismanagement of resources, misappropriation and embezzlement of State funds;
- Social injustice stemming partly from political injustice and partly from economic injustice; this led to the marginalization of the youth and the rural poor, who were to become recruits for armed rebellion;

- Over centralization of State powers and State resources to the total neglect of the vast majority of the population; the total collapse of local governance and the erosion of chieftain authority which were deliberately engineered by Siaka Stevens; and
- Mass poverty and mass illiteracy that encouraged the culture of violence.

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## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILISATION, REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION**

#### **(DDRR) IN SIERRA LEONE AND LIBERIA**

##### **Introduction**

The process of peace building requires sequential actions and one which precedes other processes and is necessary to create an atmosphere of stability is the DDRR. However the reluctance of the various factions in the Liberia and Sierra Leone civil wars to abide by several peace agreements initially prevented the DDRR process from taking off. As an example the Abuja Accord failed to bring about meaningful peace in Liberia; and in 1999, the Lome Peace Agreement broke down soon after it was reached. Numerous peace accords had indeed failed to gain grip. However concerted efforts of various bodies including the United Nations and ECOMOG as well as individual state and non state actors helped to create enough stability to allow for effective peacebuilding efforts such that both countries qualified as ‘post-conflict’ states.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, this chapter provides an overview of DDRR in Sierra Leone and Liberia after the civil wars. First, it examines the events that preceded the signing of peace agreements in both countries which laid the foundation for the return of peace and security. Second, it examines the foundation for the DDRR programme itself, taking into context, the legal backing, aims and objectives, membership composition, implementation strategies, role(s) of external bodies, problems encountered and level of success recorded.

The DDRR of former combatants in Sierra Leone and Liberia constitute the most crucial activities in post-conflict peace-building. The efficient implementation of DDRR programmes

can reassure belligerent parties of the possibilities of a permanent cessation of hostilities, as they are often the most visible element of the peace agreement. A well structured and flexible reintegration process can also promote the viability of long term peace locally, nationally and internationally.

DDRR as an aspect of peace-building mechanism has been practiced in over twenty five war-to-peace transition countries since the end of the Cold War in 1991. Some of these DDR initiatives have been undertaken in war-to-peace transition contexts such as in Afghanistan, Ace, Angola, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), El Salvador, Eritrea, East Timor, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Haiti, Ivory Coast, Liberian, Mindanao, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Uganda.<sup>2</sup>

In Sub-Sahara Africa fourteen countries were faced with the challenges of post war disintegration as at 1995.<sup>3</sup> By mid-1998, twenty of the world's post-conflict reconstruction took place in 35 poorest countries that had just emerged from civil wars. In Africa, armed conflicts are problems facing the continent. It is estimated that more than 250 million people, armed conflicts have led to the displacement of more than 250 million people.<sup>4</sup> In these countries which are among the poorest in the world, the existing problems of natural disasters such as droughts, poverty, insecurity, underdevelopment and instability are compounded by those flowing from the violence of war creating what is now fashionably captioned 'complex political emergencies' (CPE).

In 2007, over 1,129,000 combatants took part in DDR programmes in 20 countries. With an estimated cost of US \$2 billion; one estimate suggested \$1,686 per ex-combatant. Some two-third of former combatants were from African countries, 42% were members of the armed forces

and 58% belonged to armed militias, guerrilla groups and paramilitary groups. Of this statistics, nearly 10% were child soldiers.<sup>5</sup>

Of the estimated 600 million Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in circulation around the world, 100 million of it are found in Africa. It is also estimated that about 8 million of the 600 million small arms are in circulation in West Africa sub-region.<sup>6</sup> It is believed that the accumulation and uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons in the West African sub-region is responsible for the intensity of conflicts and the several broken peace agreements. This is because several actors or conflict entrepreneurs profit from illegal trading in arms and therefore undermine actions that aim to restore peace since this will hurt their means of livelihood and survival.

It is against this background that this chapter examines the post-conflict security mechanism in Sierra Leone and Liberia after the civil wars. The civil wars resulted in nearly 250,000 deaths and the spilling across borders of over 1 million refugees.<sup>7</sup> As Sierra Leone and Liberia ended their more than a decade of civil conflicts, the countries realized that it takes more than mere resilience to embark on a new life in the face of numerous challenges, occasioned by the massive destruction of the socio economic fabrics of the society and lack of steady income earning opportunities. The task of rebuilding in both countries was immense. The scars of the civil wars were everywhere. In the former battle zones, especially in the capital cities of Monrovia and Freetown, most houses and buildings were roofless or riddled with bullets holes or destroyed by bomb blasts. Also, rain forests had swallowed villages deserted for years. In many areas, only stubbles of concretes could be observed through thick foliage where churches and government buildings once stood. Schools, hospitals and other basic facilities were ruined.

Added to the physical destruction was the fundamental challenge of how to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate thousands of ex-combatant including child soldiers and women into the civil society.

### **Mandate of the DDDR**

The foundation of the DDDR programme in **Sierra Leone** was grounded in several peace agreements signed between the government and the rebel forces. First, was the February 1996 Peace Agreement signed between the government of Sierra Leone and the RUF. The second was the July 1999 Lome Peace Agreement, and the third was the November 2000 Abuja Ceasefire Agreement. The last was the May 2001 Abuja Ceasefire Review Agreement (Abuja II).<sup>8</sup>

The various agreements emphasized the need for a sustained DDR of ex-combatants from both sides of the conflict, as a condition for the sustenance of peace in the country. Also, the agreement made provision for the inclusion of women and child soldiers in the disarmament and demobilization exercise.

### **Aim and Objectives of the DDDR**

The central aim of the DDDR programme in **Sierra Leone** was to assist the government in stabilizing the region and to ensure peace in the nation, with specific objectives to:

- Collect, register disable and destroy all conventional weapons and munitions retrieved from combatants during the disarmament period.
- Demobilize approximately 45,000 combatants of which 12 percent were expected to be women;
- Prepare and support ex-combatants for socio-economic reintegration upon discharge from demobilization centers, for long-term security.<sup>9</sup>

## **Composition of the DDDR**

The DDDR programme was a multilateral effort of all the stakeholders. In **Sierra Leone**, the actors included the World Bank who played a crucial role in the design and support of the process. Other stakeholders, included ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) United Nations Operations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) subsequently (UNAMSIL), and UN agencies, the Civil Defense Force (CDF), and the Armed Forces of Sierra Leone (AFSL), NGOs, community groups and international donors. The funds were a concerted effort of the stakeholders and were pooled into the Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) for Sierra Leone.

## **Liberia**

In the same vein Liberia's journey to peace was tortuous. Before the cessation of gunfire between 1990 and 1997, there were several peace agreement meetings sponsored by ECOWAS none of which could guarantee peace in the country.<sup>10</sup> This explains why fresh hostilities resumed after agreement had been brokered. Not until the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed on August 28, 2003 in Accra, Ghana that established the framework for the country's post-conflict programmes that durable peace was ushered into Liberia. The CPA agreement was signed by the Government of Liberia (GOL) under Charles Taylor, the two main rebel movements-the Liberian United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), and eighteen political parties.<sup>11</sup>

The CPA provided the framework, for the management of the political transition process in Liberia, and the elections in 2005. The agreement, was facilitated by ECOWAS, and it was guided by the ECOWAS principles of democratic practice, respect for the rule of law and good governance as enshrined in the ECOWAS Declaration of Political Principles of 1991, the

Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-Keeping and Security of 1999, as well as the Liberian constitution which was suspended.<sup>12</sup> Like the Lome Peace document, the CPA agreement was comprehensive.

The agreements entails among other things:

- To ensure the Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR) programme is in place with the objective to demilitarize the country, restore order and stability.
- To ensure security sector reform; which involved the restructuring of Armed Forces of Liberia through the integration of the different forces, their retraining, and ensuring balanced geographical representation. Other paramilitary forces like the police, immigration services, Special Security Services (SSS) were to be reoriented to imbibe respect for democratic values and respect for human rights.
- To ensure the establishment of a Governance Reform Commission. This commission was the vehicle for the promotion of good governance in Liberia through reviewing the objectives, scope and strategies of existing programmes on good governance, undertaking public sector management reforms, and ensuring transparency and accountability in all government institutions.
- Aside these, the CPA was also mandated to reform the electoral system in Liberia by ensuring that
  - (i) The National Elections Commission was reconstituted to operate in conformity with UN's standards;
  - (ii) Delimitation of constituencies to take account of the newly created counties;

- (iii) Seeking support and cooperation of the UN, AU and ECOWAS and other members of the international community in the conduct, monitor and supervision of the elections;
- (iv) Ensure that elections are conducted not later than October 2005.<sup>13</sup>

The National Transition Government of Liberia led by Gyude Bryant was inaugurated on October 14, 2003. The Transition Government was expected to terminate its assignment on January 3, 2006 when a new elected government would have been installed.

In line with her mandate, the CPA provided the structure for a transitional government, the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL) and other institutions and agencies necessary to facilitate effective political transition process. Functions of the NTGL included:

- (a) Implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement;
- (b) Overseeing and coordinating implementation of the political and rehabilitation programmes contained in the Peace Agreement;
- (c) Promotion of reconciliation to ensure restoration of peace and stability to the country and its people;
- (d) Contributing to the preparation and conduct of internationally supervised elections in October 2005, for the inauguration of an elected Government for Liberia in January 2005.<sup>14</sup>

The above guideline provided the springboard for political reforms in Liberia. However, while the CPA was applauded for a work well done in international circle, critics at home alleged that the CPA encouraged a culture of impunity with her flawed assumption that political power could be exchanged for military peace by allocating seats to rebels in the NTGL and granting them blanket amnesty.

However, unlike Sierra Leone where there were series of violent unrest in Freetown when peace agreements were been negotiated, Liberia witnessed relative peace at home, as the combatants relied on diplomatic process for the resolution of the conflict.

### **Mandate of the DDRR**

Like Sierra Leone, in which the DDRR programme foundation were anchored on several peace agreements and resolutions, the Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration Programme of **Liberia** was anchored on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution 1509 signed in 2003 and several peace agreement. As in Sierra Leone, the objectives were to disarm and demobilize ex-combatants of the Armed Forces of Liberia (APL), Government of Liberia (GOL), Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), and Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) and other paramilitary forces and militias. The resolution also called for the preparation of sustainable social and economic reintegration of former combatants in support of long-term peace and security in the country.<sup>15</sup>

### **Aim and Objectives of the DDRR**

Similarly, the general aim of the DDRR in **Liberia** was to assist the government in stabilizing the country and to ensure sustainable peace. The specific objectives were slightly different from those of Liberia. In Liberia, the DDR was to:

- demobilize 75,000 ex-combatants as against Sierra Leone's 45,000;
- to allow non-fighting groups such as women and children that accompanied combatants to be eligible for disarmament, thus obtaining the same DDRR benefits as the combatants;



- to help and support ex-combatants to prepare for socio-economic life as was in Sierra Leone.<sup>16</sup>

### **Composition of the DDRR Committee**

In **Liberia**, the actors were composed of numerous political parties and stakeholders, which included the United Nations, National Transition Government of Liberia, key donors such as the European Commission (EC); the United States Agency for International Development (USAID); Department for International Development (DFID); and the International and Local implementing partners. In the same way, like Sierra Leone funding of the DDRR activities was a multilateral effort of all the stakeholders such as the DFID, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) amongst others.

### **Criteria for the DDRR Process**

In order to participate in the DDRR programmes in both countries, combatants were required to fulfill certain conditions.

### **Sierra Leone**

The Lome Peace Agreement provided conditions to be met in order to be disarmed. Combatants were required to demonstrate participation as an adult or child combatant in any of the following categories.

- Revolutionary United Front/Paramilitary Groups
- Armed Forces of Sierra Leone
- Civil Defense Force

AND

- Present acceptable proof of participation in the armed conflict as a combatant member of at least one of the above mentioned groups, including:
  - Presentation of a group of a serviceable weapon by each combatant
  - Presentation of a group of weapons and munitions, an acceptable ratio of 2/3 persons to weapons with appropriate rounds of munitions, TBD (i.e. valid SLA Number)

OR

Be an underage combatant, accompanying minor, unaccompanied minor or any other participant under the age of 18, representing themselves at the Reception Centre with any of the above mentioned groups.<sup>17</sup>

### **Implementation of the DDRR Programme**

In order to ensure the success of the DDRR programme, the governments of **Sierra Leone** and **Liberia** established separate bodies to co-ordinate the implementation of the programmes. In Sierra Leone, the government established the National Committee for Disarmament and Reintegration (NCDDR) chaired by the President to work in coordination with other international and regional organizations.

### **Operational Framework of the DDRR**

The DDRR programme in **Sierra Leone** adopted a phased approach. It was carried out in three phases.

### **Phase 1 (September 1998 – December 1998)**

The initial DDR programme, commenced in September 1998 by the government with the assistance of ECOMOG and UNDP. The programme was targeted persons who belonged to any of the armed groups that participated in the civil war following the coup of 25,1997 i.e. Total of about 75,000 combatants (10,000 ex-SLA/AFRC; 55,000 CDF; 7,000 RUF 3,000 child combatants as well as 300 disabled).

This programme was reviewed in July 1998 with the assistance of the World Bank after the establishment of the NCDDR. The target was for 45,000 combatants (6,000 SLA; 15,000 RUF, 15,000 CDF, 7,000 AFRC and 2,000 paramilitary elements). During this phase, about 3,200 combatants were disarmed, mostly ex-SLA/AFRC who surrendered to ECOMOG. This phase was interrupted following the deterioration of the security situation and rebels attack on Freetown on 6 January 1999.<sup>18</sup>

### **Phase 2 (October 1999 To May 2000)**

The second phase was implemented based on the framework of the Lome Peace Agreement signed on 7 July 1999, contained in XVI. The Article called for the disarmament of all the combatants and paramilitary groups. This Agreement came as a result of the talks that took place between the government and the RUF following the signing of the Ceasefire agreement in May 1999. The agreement also requested the United Nations to deploy Military Observers to monitor the ceasefire. During this phase, UN presence in Sierra Leone was strengthened with the establishment of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) by Security Council's resolution 1270 in October 1999 which succeeded ECOMOG, with a mandate to carry out the disarmament of combatants.<sup>19</sup>

Accordingly, the DDRR programme was further reviewed and redesigned to represent a multi-age effort, through an agreed Joint Operation Plan involving the Government of Sierra Leone, ECOMOG UNAMSIL, UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), the World Food Programme (WFP) and other agencies and donors. During this phase, a total of 18,898 were disarmed. This phase was interrupted by the resumption of hostilities in May 2000, which also resulted in the hostage-taking of over 500 peacekeepers by the RUF.<sup>20</sup>

This interruption had serious implications on political space and the DDRR programme. Politically, it led to the (exclusion of RUF members from government, arrest and detention of Foday Sankoh and other senior RUF members, as well as Sankoh's replacement by Issa Sesay) and on the DDR programme, it led to the re-arming of non ex-combatant and the suspension of the Transitional Safety Allowance (TSA). A low-key disarmament continued sporadically, which brought about the disarmament of 2,600 combatants. This was referred to as an Interim phase (May 2000 to May 2001).<sup>21</sup>

### **Phase 3 (18 May 2001 to 6 January 2002)**

The third and most significant phase came as a result of intensive and concerted efforts by ECOWAS and the United Nations to bring the peace process back on track. Subsequently, a ceasefire was signed in Abuja on November 10, 2000, and an agreement was reached on May 2, 2001 between the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF to resume the disarmament. Accordingly, the disarmament was simultaneously re-launched in Port Loko (CDF) and Kambia (RUF) on May 18, 2001.<sup>22</sup>

The final phase of the DDRR process, which got underway in May 2001, was successful, because the parties to the conflict had realized that, for a variety of military was not within grasp. The government of Sierra Leone came to realise that it could not eliminate the insurgency and rely on the allegiance of its own army. These considerations reinforced further commitment to the peaceful resolution of the conflict. The commitment of all parties to the peace process deepened, and DDRR became a means of achieving peace rather than a tactical maneuver aimed at buying time.

On January 18 2002, President Alhaji Tejan-Kabbah declared the decade-old civil war ended with the completion of disarmament and demobilization of former RUF and CDF combatants of all 12 districts of the country. Based on the conclusions from numerous studies commissioned between NCDDR and World Bank, as well as studies by independent consultants, institutions and other international organizations, it can be stated that most ex-combatants returned to their families and communities and, like all other Sierra Leoneans, made some contributions to the recovery.<sup>23</sup>

## **Liberia**

In contrast to Sierra Leone, participation in the DDRR programme in Liberia differed in some ways. Ex-combatants were requested to fill the “Ex-combatant Disarmament Form” which was not the case in Sierra Leone. Also, such an individual must show evidence of;

- Having demonstrated to the observer’s satisfaction that they had participated as an active combatant of the above fighting forces in Liberia at the time of the signing of the Accra Peace Agreement of August 18, 2003; and

- Having delivered at least a personal weapon or belonging to a group of at most five combatants delivering at least one group weapon; or
- Being an underage combatant, accompanying minor, unaccompanied minor, or any other participant under the age of 18 or female, presenting with any of the fighting forces.<sup>24</sup>

### **Implementation of the DDRR Programme**

Likewise in **Liberia**, a body made up of the government and the Joint Implementation Unit (JIU) headed by a programme and policy adviser was responsible for the daily operations and execution of the DDRR programme. However, the JIU was supervised by the National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (NCDDRR) which was composed by representatives from GOL, LURD, MODEL, ECOWAS, the UN, the African Union (AU) and the International Contact Group in Liberia (ICGL).

### **Operational Framework of the DDRR**

As in **Liberia**, DDRR implementation programme was executed in phases, but was structured into four functional units namely:

#### **Disarmament and Demobilization (DD) Unit**

This unit was staffed primarily with expertise in disarmament and demobilization from United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). This included desk officers, field officers and national support staff.

#### **Rehabilitation and Reintegration (RR) Unit**

This was composed by experts in reintegration, vocational training, small enterprise development, employment creation, apprenticeship promotion, agricultural and food production. Such individuals were drawn from the UNDP and other relevant national agencies.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Unit**

This unit was staffed by technical assistants from UNDP and consisted of an M&E expert analysts, data entry clerks and field monitors staff.

### **Information and Sensitization (I&S) Unit**

This unit was staffed with expertise from UNMIL and the UN office for the coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). They consist of specialists in public information development and dissemination, social adaptation programme in the area of civic education, psychosocial counseling, community-based reconciliation and peace building measures.

The seeming structured implementation strategy of the DDDR in Liberia as distanced from Sierra Leone could be explained as Liberia has learnt from the mistakes of Sierra Leone

### **Achievements of the DDDR Programmes**

The relative success of the peacebuilding exercises in **Sierra Leone** and Liberia could be attributed greatly to DDDR programmes. For purpose of clarity below are the performances of various segments of the exercise.

#### **Disarmament**

Disarmament which entailed the collection, registration, disabling and destruction of all conventional weapons and munitions retrieved from combatant during the period at various designated centers in Sierra Leone stood at 72,490 people and over 30,000 weapons collected.<sup>25</sup>

In addition, it was discovered that after the completion of the disarmament of the factions some weapons (small light weapons – SALW) still be hidden in the bush among the community, the Sierra Leone government with active support of the UNDP and UNAMSIL, embarked on

Community Arms Collection and Destruction Programme (CACD) which led to the collection of 9,000 weapons, predominantly shot guns in some districts.<sup>26</sup>

The programme was further expanded to different districts of the country and was called Arms For Development (AFD). Its aim was to certify chiefdoms as “Arms free” and develop a mindset towards a weapon free society. Specifically, it provided development incentives varying from \$20,000 to each chiefdom that achieved the Arms free rating. Between 2003 and January 2005, over 1,487 weapons were collected.<sup>27</sup>

**Table 1: DDDR weapons collection in Sierra Leone**

DDRR Phase	Number of Combatant Disarmed	Implementing Agency
02/98-12/98	3,200	ECOMOG
10.99-05/00	18,898	UNAMSIL/NCDDR
18/05/01-01/02	72,490	UNAMSIL/Tripartite Commission

Figures culled from CAII (1997), NCDDR (2004)<sup>28</sup>

### **Demobilization**

After the disarmament exercises in Sierra Leone, the next stage in the DDDR programme was the demobilization exercise. Demobilization entailed the reception and re-orientation of ex-combatants for the re-entry into the society.

In **Sierra Leone** the demobilization exercise took place at designated centers. During the exercise all former military command structures were dismantled to prevent regrouping. The children were also separated from the adults and sent to care centers for reunification with their families. About 71,043 people went through the exercise and were duly registered.<sup>29</sup>



## Disarmament

### Liberia

In contrast, there was no CACD exercise in **Liberia**. Instead it went through the phases that yielded the disarmament of, 101,495 excombatants demobilization of 22,370 women, 8,523 boys and 2,440 girls. In all 28,314 weapons, 33,604 heavy munitions and 6,486,136 rounds of ammunition were turned over for disposal.<sup>30</sup>

**Table 2: DDRR weapons collection in Liberia**

DDRR Phase	Number of Combatant Disarmed	Implementing Agency
22/11/96-9/02/97	20,332	ECOMOG/UNOMIL
7/12/03-31/10/04 (DDRR was suspended from 27 Dec 2003-15 Apr 2004)	103,019	UNMIL/JIU/other UN agencies

Figures culled from CAII (1997), NCDDRR (2004)<sup>31</sup>

### Demobilization

Like Sierra Leone, **Liberia's**, the demobilization exercise took place at designated centers after the ex-combatants were disarmed at disarmament sites. The, ex-combatants were registered and verified, and were give personal identification card. Aside, they were medically screened and handed a non food Item (NFI) kit which was not the case in Sierra Leone before being assigned to a dormitory. As was practiced in Sierra Leone, vulnerable groups such as Children Associated with Fighting Forces (CAFF) and women were selected for tailored programmes in separate area. A total of 101,495 persons were demobilized during the exercise.<sup>32</sup>

## **Rehabilitation and Reintegration**

Another key factor of post-conflict peacebuilding in the DDR process is the rehabilitation and reintegration programme. Rehabilitation and reintegration exercises focuses on a strategy of assistance to ex-combatants. The underlining principle is to provide eligible ex-combatants immediate package of assistance to support their effective reintegration into their respective communities.

The reintegration programme in **Sierra Leone** started in 2000/2001 and was completed in January 2004. About 56,700 former combatants registered for reintegration support. By January 2004, a total of 51,122 ex-combatants were supported in the following categories:

- Vocational/apprenticeship (28,901)
- Formal Education (12,182)
- Agriculture (9,231)
- Job placement (444)
- Others (364)<sup>33</sup>

About 2,800 out of the 3,500 remaining caseload that could not take advantage of the Reintegration Opportunity Programme (ROP) for various reasons were given a one-time package equivalent to USD 150. Also, they were given training skills in carpentry, masonry and tailoring to assist them in returning to society.

In addition, the former combatants were also provided food benefits, condiments and utensils. On her part, UNICEF supported the reintegration programme with HIV prevention and promoting reproductive health as a tool of social cohesion and reconstruction in the country. The UNFPA provided psychosocial support and counseling, occupational training and skills

development which provided succor for hundreds of abused and traumatized boys and girls. Hitherto, the girls were coerced into sex trade for survival. However, the situation changed after the training and talks as they have acquired alternative skills to generate income. The total amount committed to the DDRR programme was US \$80 million.<sup>34</sup>

Similarly in **Liberia**, the completion of the DDRR programme started immediately after the civil war in November 2006. Like in Sierra Leone, the key components of the reintegration and rehabilitation in Liberia were agriculture, vocational skills training, apprenticeship and job placement, small enterprise development, labour based activities; and formal education.

At the commencement of the exercise in early November 2006, a total of 32,876 ex-combatants made up of 25,597 male and 7,279 female completed the reintegration exercise. Another 26,956 were either enrolled in formal education, vocational skills training or apprenticeship schemes (21,238 male and 5,717 female). by the end of November, a total of 60, 000 participated in the programme, unlike in Sierra Leone where no figure could be assessed for the programme.<sup>35</sup>

Despite widespread disarmament and demobilization (DD) in both countries, the exercises were far from comprehensive. The success of DDRR depended on an adequate capacity in Liberian and Sierra Leonean institutions to transparently manage activities and resources. Such capacity can be supplemented but not replaced by the initiatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or other groups and partners.

In the case of Liberia, the revenue initially available was insufficient to pay adequate salaries of key civil servants. There was also a lack of capacity to ensure the provision of basic services like water, electricity and the financing and retraining of ex-combatants. A key observation of

the DDR in Liberia as in Sierra Leone was that the external aids and grants were not sufficient to sustain the DDR.

The DDRR implementation capacity throughout Liberia was undermined by inordinately high levels of insecurity, uncertainty about the future, lack of programme management expertise, scarcity of functioning facilities and essential equipment, and insufficient numbers of in-country officials with the appropriate skills to oversee the programme. From the commencement of the programme, some fundamental prerequisites should have been fulfilled namely:

- A stronger management capacity in local and national government institutions, so that they could absorb and utilize resources effectively as well as deliver essential services where and when they are needed;
- Better organizational skills at the local level to re-establish community-level institutions that support social development and economic growth;
- Ensuring that ex-combatants, returnees and IDPs are able to find work and shelter, meet their basic needs, and eventually become re-integrated into Liberian society;
- Ensuring that the rule of law was guaranteed through minimal judicial, police and corrections services and the protection of human rights.

The conflict in Sierra Leone and its aftermath exacerbated economic mismanagement and resulted in a decline of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the flight of human and financial capital and the accumulation of debt arrears, forced the government to depend heavily on foreign income. When hostilities resumed in 2000, the post-war recovery stalled and GDP growth declined further. The productive capacity outside the agricultural sector practically grounded to a halt and the government barely functioned. As a consequence, insecurity and

instability increased. In addition, physical infrastructure disintegrated and public services broke down. Concomitantly, unemployment escalated.<sup>36</sup>

Prior to the conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone and during the DDRR enhanced poverty in both countries and still remains relatively high due to limited job opportunities. The levels of poverty in both societies also meant that there is a limited access to basic services like education, health, water, and sanitation. This undermines the general capacity to promote the development of social capital which is vital for economic regeneration.

The major impediments to DD in both countries can be described as follows:

- **Shortcoming in the screening process:** As a result of the inadequate nature of the screening processes, significantly large numbers of people were unable to go through DDRR. There were no standardized screening procedure or set questions and it was virtually impossible to separate legitimate combatants from those regular citizens trying to gain admittance into the programme.

In Liberia for example, UNMIL received funds to rehabilitate former combatants as part of the regular assessed peacekeeping budget. But this was not undertaken in a systematic manner. The initial funds set aside for the DDRR programme were based on an estimate of 38,000 ex-combatants. In the end, however, 107,000 individuals entered the programme and were eligible to receive benefits.

Donors were reportedly unwilling to make up the shortfall and the programmes were faced with major problems. Whether the fundamental problem lied with loose eligibility criteria or a gross underestimation of absolute numbers, it was evident that operational and logistical demands exceeded the donor community's ability to support the process

politically and financially. This suggests that relying too heavily on external sources to undertake DDRR could prove to be counterproductive.

Similarly, a flawed screening process in Sierra Leone particularly affected ex-child soldiers. Children who did not have knowledge of weapons, and could not dismantle them, identify certain parts or explain what ammunition they used, were labeled as 'separated children' and reunited with their families, instead of being demobilized. If indeed they had been involved in violent conflict this could potentially have ramifications for their psychological well-being.

- **Lack of accurate records:** This renders an assessment of the level of success of the disarmament programme rather problematic in the absence of a baseline figure of actual number of weapons in circulation prior to the DDRR process. With no accurate figure of weapons stockpiles available, it is difficult to assess to what extent the disarmament process were successful.
- **Short demobilization period:** The programme also suffered from inadequate time to implement of the demobilization of ex-combatants. Generally, the encampment period was widely too short to effect any substantial and sustained change in behaviour and attitudes, and break up existing command and control structures amongst the armed factions. The three-week period initially planned for demobilization in Liberia was subsequently reduced to five days. This has been palpably inadequate in addressing the psychological, social, and health needs of many of the ex-combatants who had witnessed years of combat. It has become little more than a pro forma waiting period between turn in of weapons or ammunition and turnover of money. Likewise in Sierra Leone, the

encampment period was limited in duration, inconsistent and ignored the specific needs of women and children.

- **Women and Children:** have not been particularly well-served by DDRR in Sierra Leone. Having learned from that experience, UNMIL lessened entry criteria in order to include more women and children. While the percentage of children (9.8 per cent) in the Liberian process was about the same as in Sierra Leone, that of women, whose roles were varied, (“bush wives”, cooks, spies, frontline fighters and porters), was 17.4 per cent compared to 6.5 per cent in Sierra Leone.<sup>37</sup>
- **Encampment of women and children:** Unlike Sierra Leone, following disarmament in Liberia, women and men were housed in separate quarters of the cantonment site. Children were transported by child protection agencies to Interim Care Centers (ICCs) where they were housed until they could be reunited with their families. This addressed the protection issues raised in Sierra Leone and ensured that women were not at risk of abuse and continued violence either from their ‘husbands’ or other fighters from a different faction.
- **Communication and co-ordination:** A key issue which militated the DDRR is that at the policy level, joint implementation failed to function in a cohesive manner. Relations between some UN agencies and officials, and other agencies were strained, with several policy-makers openly criticize of one another. The concept of joint effort, joint co-ordination and complementarily efforts disintegrated into unilateral action and finger pointing became the norm.
- **Local ownership:** The national commissions and local communities have been critical of the donor community, claiming they have been sidelined throughout much of the process.

- **Regional concerns:** In addition to technical shortcomings, both programmes have also been criticized for being designed and implemented with insufficient thoughts given to regional considerations. In a region as volatile as West Africa, this has grave implications. Long porous borders between Liberia, Sierra Leone and their neighbours mean that what happens in one country invariably impacts the others. This is especially the case with regards to transient fighters and their weapons. The moment Sierra Leone launched its DDRR programme and started paying for weapons and ammunition, an instant market was created, with reports of arms and ammunition being brought into the country from Liberia and Guinea. Similarly, in Liberia, arms were smuggled in from Guinea with the intention of selling them to individuals seeking to gain entry into the DDRR. In March 2004, Cote d'Ivoire announced the detail of their forthcoming DDRR programme. Compounding Liberia's DDRR process is the fact that in neighbouring Cote d'Ivoire the ex-combatants will perceive receiving more money ( US \$900) for their weapons than the Liberians (US\$300) when (and if ) the disarmament process finally take place. This promoted the speculation that many Liberian fighters may be holding back their weapons so that they may cash them when the sum is high.<sup>38</sup>

### **Reintegration Challenges**

There is a disconnect between DD and R in Sierra Leone and Liberia, which if not addressed urgently, may undermine the human security of local communities. Several factors are responsible for this. One is the waiting period between the end of DD and the commencement of reintegration, while the other dimension relates to the adequacy (or otherwise) of the available reintegration programmes. The other challenge is that primarily reintegrating ex-combatants in the war torn societies were not the same as it would have been in the case of a well-functioning



society. Other important factors that was a set back for the reintegration process was the failure of families to accept family members who are ex-combatants. Most ex-combatants have been ostracized from their families. Yet the war experience that many went through were such that their restoration and return to civil existence required the support of their family members.

The reintegration component of the DDRR programme generally has a three-prong target-based approach, namely, formal education vocational training and apprenticeship skills training. CAFFs are reintegrated through the United Nations Children's Fund's (UNICEF) Community Education Investment Program (CEIP). Notwithstanding, the existence of dedicated DDRR commissions, there were programmatic and institutional gaps with regards to reintegration.

These included the lack of a broad and consistent socio-economic profiling of combatants, the failure to implement financial management skills training for the many ex-combatants inexperienced in managing demobilization and other money, reintegration financing shortfalls, ex-combatants' low levels of education and skills, limited capacities of local and international organizations delivering long-term reintegration, short periods of inconsistent and ineffective training, incompetent and corrupt commission staff, and the lack of a proactive monitoring mechanism.

Majority of the ex-combatants enterprises collapsed due to these factors, while agro-based enterprises were also hard-hit by the lack of elaborate and workable cooperatives support mechanisms. The ex-combatants had been thrown into the deep-end of the sea without adequate preparation. Compounded by unfavourable economic and labour environments, the reintegration process has not been successful. All this has had important human security consequences for ex-combatants, their dependents and the communities in which they are located.

In war-torn societies like Sierra Leone and Liberia, opportunities are limited. Ex-combatants' expectations on peace were often very high and the expectations of a future society far outweigh the post-war realities. Immediately after the conflict, optimism prevailed but gradually pessimism and disillusionment took over as they failed to secure livelihoods, as well as a better future for themselves and their dependents. Moreover, traditional support structures were partly exhausted as a result of the deprivation caused by the conflict. After many years of absence, some combatants lost their position of trust and respect in the family and in the community. They were no longer part of a network that depended on their labour for daily survival. In fact their presence became an embarrassment and social reintegration became challenging.

Reintegration challenges in Liberia deserve elaboration, as they were more prevalent than in Sierra Leone. The challenges were compounded by poorly developed, cases, and corrupted governance systems. In addition, the division between the dominant minority Americo-Liberians and indigenous communities which festered in the political, economic and social balances of power as well as other inter-ethnic hostilities continued to present problems.

Inter ethnic hostilities assumed symbolic and primordial significance especially among the Poro practicing groups and Muslims. It became the custom for rival groups to desecrate shrines and other symbols of significance of the opposing ethnic groups. This is particularly true for the Poro practicing ethnic group who accused the Muslim from Mandingo ethnic group of desecrating their shrines. As a consequence, eleven of Liberia's sixteen ethnic groups that have the Poro and Sande traditions have mobilized a 'pan-Poro' revolt against the Mandingoes, thereby creating high levels of human insecurities.<sup>40</sup>

Land disputes, which are prominent in the North-west of the country even before the civil war took a turn for the worse and this constituted another challenge that undermined the reintegration process in Liberia. Old patterns of conflict over land ownership are increasingly drawn into the new conflict dynamics. In addition to an ambiguous land tenure system and traditional claims to land, the return of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees has sparked off land and property disputes around Liberia. Until recently, the land and homes of the ‘losers’ of the war were widely regarded as part of the ‘spoils of war’ by the ‘victors’. Inter-ethnic hostility has become an alibi for looting and vandalism of property. Land and houses are often occupied by others who may, in turn, have been driven from their own homes during the war. Official records may also have been destroyed, or were never entirely accurate to begin with. Ownership and transfer documents are also often forged, or some who have lived on particular land or property for years may not have an official title, because it was only recognized through customary law. The situation in Nimba County is the most prominent of this phenomenon. However, inter-ethnic rivalry is also prevalent in Lofa, Sinoe and Gbarpolu, whilst the Sarpo-Kru rivalry dominates Sinoe. Failure to reconcile different ethnic groups has impacted considerably on communities and their economic and social well-being, particularly women and girls, and jeopardized the safety and security of communities and the longer-term prospects for recovery.<sup>41</sup>

Poor governance systems and lack of shared vision created a context within which other conflict factors flourished, for example, unemployed youths, former combatants and poorly regulated natural resources. The inability of Sierra Leone and Liberia to manage their natural resources presents challenges for the governments in realizing good governance, ensuring sound economic development which promotes the human security of the local communities and the nation at large, and in sustaining social reintegration.

The dire economic environment in West Africa exacerbates grievances nursed by youths and ex-combatants and put pressure on reintegration process. People were less inclined to return to their communities, if there are no job prospects, not to mention the lack of basic social services.

Another problem which constituted a challenge to the reintegration process was the failure to focus on agriculture. As a result of the policy deficit in the agricultural sector, only 3.7 per cent of demobilized Liberian fighters expressed a preference for agriculture as the focus of their reintegration package while there was a better response towards agriculture in Sierra Leone with 16 per cent of ex-combatants opting for agriculture. Several factors can be attributed to the poor agricultural policy as part of the reintegration process. One was that agriculture like in the pre-war period was not the popular option for ex-combatants. However, this lack of attraction for agriculture was because of the lack of access to land, the local legal and political systems which made it land acquisition difficult, and the lack of viable infrastructure that could promote agriculture. The question of land acquisition became more pressing in the post war period in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Access to land has been problematic for ex-combatants who are not treated as target group under official land laws. The existing system of land allocation and ownership did not change significantly as land is traditionally organized around strict lineage hierarchies. The descendants of the man considered to have been the original settler of a village usually owns all the land around it. Rather than selling or giving land to others, they grant rights to use parts of it. Over time, use rights hardened into de factor ownership, and later generations often have considerable security in laying claim to large swathes for cultivation. Use rights for relative newcomers, young men, and women, however, are insecure. While all local land is theoretically revocable by the descendants of the original settler, legitimate long-term rights to use a plot in the traditional system derive from the amount of work put into improving it. Felling

trees, clearing bush, and in the case of swamp rice, preparing a plot for cultivation all give a farmer priority for using the same land again.<sup>42</sup>

### **Impact of DDRR on Peace building**

Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) is a programme that enables former combatants reintegrated into the civil society. Aside, it is needed in order to improve the tactics used to rehabilitate societies and further protect the people from economic and psychological damages of the civil war. The purpose of DDR programme is to provide incentives for the ex-combatants to turn away from violence and focus to a life in civil society which meets their material and psychological needs. Since its first adoption in 1989, DDR has gained the confidence of policy makers, despite this, there is still doubt about the effectiveness. It is against the background that this study examines the effectiveness of the DDR in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

### **Sierra Leone**

Unlike Liberia, it was through the DDR that a ceasefire was achieved in Sierra Leone and this paved way to the signing of peace agreement between the government forces and the various factions of the rebel forces. On the economic front, the DDR had marginally helped to improve the economic welfare of the ex-combatants as was conceived. The improvement of the economic welfare enhanced the willingness of the ex-combatants to respect the rule of law and adopt an orientation that favoured societal stability.

In addition, the DDR programme also exposed the ex-combatants to different types of job training. Through the assistance of the DDR, three thousand ex-combatants registered for disarmament and mobilization which paved way for peace in the society and a boost to other

aspects of peacebuilding initiatives. Aside, the DDR in Sierra Leone provided the guidelines for other DDR operations in Liberia, Haiti and later Burundi. In terms of acceptance by the society 81% of the ex-combatants said they were accepted by their neighbours without any trouble. Overall, 70% believed the community viewed them with acceptance. Ex-combatants who have completed the DDR programme perceived higher acceptance from the communities in comparison with those who did not participate

In the area of security, many believed that the security in the country had improved greatly under UNMSIL and concluded that UNMSIL has done a good job by implementing the DDR programme. In conclusion the Sierra Leone DDR was a partial success because the DDR aspect of social and political reintegration of ex-combatants through individually targeted economic assistance have not really produced downstream effects on political integration; there were no evidence that economic wellbeing provided positive impact on political order, laws and norms of the society.

## **Liberia**

In Liberia a ceasefire was first achieved before the signing of peace agreement between the government and the various factions of the rebel forces. As in the Sierra Leone, in the economic front, UNMIL survey found that there was only a marginal difference in the socioeconomic situation of the two groups. In terms of acceptance by society, 93% of the ex-combatants said they were accepted by their neighbours without trouble. Overall, 73% believed the community viewed them with acceptance. Ex-combatants who had completed the RR programme perceived higher acceptance from the communities in comparison with those who had not (6 percent versus

55 percent). Of the ex-combatants who had participated in the RR programs, only 4 percent believed that their communities viewed them with fear.<sup>43</sup>

In January 2006, the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) financed an external public opinion survey to gauge perceptions of UNMIL's work. The survey reported that 94 percent of the 800 respondents situated throughout the country said the security situation in the country has improved under UNMIL, and 90 percent stated that UNMIL had done a very good or good job implementing the CPA. In regard to the disarmament process, 26 percent rated it very good, 42 percent rated it good and 32 percent rated it only fairly or poor.<sup>44</sup>

In the area of security sector reform, 92 percent said that the retraining of the police by the UNMIL was good, but confidence in the police remained mixed. 58 percent of the survey sample stated that they were only somewhat confident in the police, and 32 percent stated that they had no confidence in the Liberian police. In terms of human rights in general, 88 percent stated that UNMIL had improved the human rights conditions in the country, particularly through "increased security, disarmament, and enabling people to have freedom of movement."<sup>45</sup>

Most recently, in 2007, UNMIL, and other UN agencies, conducted an assessment mission on the DDRR process in Liberia. According to their findings, many Liberians informed the mission that "the reintegration programme has failed to provide sustainable alternative livelihoods for ex-combatants, as majority of the ex-combatants are still unemployed and thousands have regrouped for the purpose of illegally exploiting natural resources in diamond and gold mining areas, as well as on rubber plantation."<sup>46</sup>

At any rate, it is worthy of note to emphasize that there have been corresponding national peace-building initiatives such as truth and reconciliation commissions (TRCs), as well as international

engagements. There have been also been major peacekeeping deployments in both countries which are now also on the agenda of the UN peace-building Commission. Thus, the question is have these interventions contributed to consolidating peace?

Overall, the DDR programme in Liberia and Sierra Leone was a partial success. The Liberian example shows that DDRR process minimizes the risk of relapse to violence, but it does not remove threats to the security of the people and the state. The socio-economic and political situation in post-conflict Liberia also had an impact on the reintegration and rehabilitation of the ex-combatants. The relatives or parents with whom many of the ex-fighters were united with are surviving on less than US\$1 per day. The unemployment rate is 85 percent. Although 40 percent of the ex-fighters are choosing to acquire formal education, even upon successful graduation there are few jobs for them. While a successful DDRR program can have an impact on peace building, its success also depends on the socioeconomic and political climate, within which they operate.<sup>47</sup>

The situation in both Liberia and Sierra Leone sheds some light on reasons for the limited success of peace-building efforts in other war-torn African countries. Some examples justify this assertion. Despite the peacebuilding efforts in Haiti, the country relapsed into chaos and despair in February 2004 throwing into the mud ten years of international and Haitian state peace-building efforts.<sup>48</sup> Peacebuilding efforts seemed to have been characterised by relapses even outside Africa as the cases of Afghanistan and Kosovo indicate. Kosovo still remains under UN administration with an uncertain future and ongoing undercurrents of conflict. All of these examples illustrate why many theories have been proffered to explain the failure of peacebuilding and each of the cases mentioned tend to justify the views of many scholars. These



are operational limitations, the unintended negative consequences of international aid, institutional lapses and the lack of knowledge of how to rebuild states that have experienced violent conflicts.<sup>49</sup>

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45. Jean Krasno, Public Opinion Survey of UNMIL’s Works in Liberia (Monrovia: UNDPKO,2006)
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## CHAPTER FOUR

### REBUILDING DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES

This chapter examines the various efforts made by the governments of Sierra Leone and Liberia to rebuild democratic structures in their countries after the civil wars. It takes into account, the politics of rebuilding a virile democratic restructure, such as formation of political parties, power sharing and elections, post-election politics and formation of government. Finally, it assesses the comparative nature of political transition in both countries with a view to understanding the impact it had on the consolidation of peace following the devastating effects of the civil war and the long history of political exclusion that dates back to the colonial period.

#### **Introduction**

In West Africa, as in some other parts of the world, the end of most civil wars or conflicts exposed the true nature of state failure with its attendant human tragedies.<sup>1</sup> These developments had demonstrated the urgent need for a clear understanding of how governance institutions are structured and how they interact with their environment. The magnitude of human tragedy, as manifested in the massive killings, internal displacements, refugee flows, plunder and pillage in Sierra Leone and Liberian civil wars serve as a vivid reminder that the rudimentary requirements of human security had yet to be fully met in most West African societies.

These problems underscored the need for a clear understanding of the link between governance and societal expectations. This chapter argues that bad governance was the root cause(s) of conflict in Sierra Leone and Liberia where the apparatus of state authority scarcely functioned in an effective manner. Before the outbreak of the civil wars in both countries, revenue collection and accountability was low and led to the collapse of some social programmes such as education

and health. Aside, salaries of civil servants fell into arrears for more than a year. In this milieu, public services became inefficient and poorly motivated; most civil servants abandoned their service and took employment in foreign countries and non-governmental organizations.

The situation in both countries was further compounded by the concentration of governmental powers and executive functions at national level. Excessive centralization of administrative functions undermined the institutions of local government and excluded grassroots participation in development management, at rural levels. These among other factors such as youth neglect and insolvency aggravated social tensions which contributed to the civil wars<sup>2</sup>

Consequently, there was an urgent need to rebuild the mechanisms of the failed states. The restoration of state authority in post-conflict societies, as in Sierra Leone and Liberia was a crucial element in the peacebuilding process. To assist in the restoration of democratic structure, the UNO and other stakeholders established the frameworks for electoral processes in both countries.

### **Structure of Political Reformation**

In **Sierra Leone**, the process of political reformation after the ceasefire and disarmament commenced with the establishment of the Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC). This commission was saddled with the responsibility to conduct the affairs of the first post-disarmament election in the country. Elections in post-war contexts are part of the peacebuilding architecture in which activities of transitional justice, particularly national reconciliation, play important roles.<sup>3</sup> Post conflict elections ushers in democracy which enhances the emancipation of the majority from the tyranny of the few.

INEC in Sierra Leone was headed by James O.C. Jonah an indigene who had retired as a UN's Under Secretary for political affairs. On acceptance of the job, Jonah said: "I accepted the challenge of plotting the democratic transition to give some services to my country."<sup>4</sup> Before taking the job, Jonah insisted on assurance from the NPRC that the commission, as it turned out, was critical to ensuring that the elections took place.

Ground rules for the elections were specified in three related NPRC Decrees (14, 15, and 16). Decree 14, required political parties to file their financial statements with the electoral commission not later than twenty-one days before the elections. Decree 15 repealed the 1961 Franchise and Voter Registration Act and empowered INEC to prepare new electoral lists. Decree 16 replaced the simple plurality system with proportional representation and required each party to pay Le3 million (roughly 6,000 US dollars) to register for the elections. Decree 16 also replaced constituencies with electoral regions and established an Election Offences Court to try cases of electoral malpractices.

INEC's adoption of proportional representation, instead of simple plurality, helped to depersonalize the parliamentary contest, reduce the level of inter-party violence and eliminate unopposed candidatures all of which were major features of past elections. Depopulation of the countryside rendered the simple plurality system impractical and reduced inter-party violence.

INEC encountered several problems and a major one was the compilation of a new voters' lists. Another problem was the lack of funds. This delayed the commencement of voter registration and many citizens remained unregistered at the end of the first round of voter's registration. This forced the commission to compile another expanded voters list which was used in the first but not the second round of presidential balloting in the western area. Thousands of Sierra Leone

refugees in Guinea were never registered. INEC's attempt to register these refugees after the first round of elections was overruled by the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC), which insisted that the same voter's roll should be maintained for both electoral rounds.

There were also reports of discrimination against members of the Fulah ethnic group, many of whom were not registered for the 1996 polling. These reports forced INEC to warn against disenfranchisement in any form. Less than 50 percent voted in the first round and approximately 60 percent voted in the presidential run-off election.<sup>3</sup>

In order to organize to perform creditably, INEC needed autonomy. The autonomy of INEC was both political and fiscal. INEC's activities were mostly funded by external donors instead of the government. This eliminated the NPRC's capacity to manipulate the process by withholding funds from the commission. Although the NPRC government contributed the sum of Le27 million (270,000 US dollars) to get INEC started, the \$17 million budget of INEC was funded exclusively by donor countries.

Support from the international community emboldened the commission in resisting NPRC efforts to delay the elections. Even after, his residence and office were bombed by army regulars. Jonah stood his ground and refused to be intimidated. Without a relatively autonomous electoral commission, perhaps the 1996 elections would not have been held. The final decision to go ahead with the elections was, however, made not by INEC but by the delegates at the Bintumani consultative conferences.

### **Consultative Conference and the General Elections**

As part of the strategies to resolve some of the issues raised above, **Sierra Leone** held two consultative conferences. The conferences were held at Bintumani Conference Centre in



Aberdeen. The objective of the conference was to provide a forum for political parties and societal organizations to make their views known concerning the elections. The issue that dominated both conferences was whether to proceed with the elections as planned or postpone the exercise until all the aggrieved persons were pacified. Given the rebel insurrection and the displacement of over a quarter of the country's population, there were many who genuinely felt it was preposterous to hold elections under conditions of insecurity and war. But as it became increasingly obvious that the NPRC, like its predecessor, was using the war as a pretext to remain in power, many citizens who had earlier favored postponement of the elections became vocal advocates of "elections now". Supporters of immediate elections were opposed by advocates of peace before elections.

The first national consultative conference was held on August 17, 1995. Among the 154 delegates, were leaders of seventeen political parties and the representatives of trade unions, students and women's organizations, non-governmental organizations, petty-traders association, religious groups, the university, the armed forces, displaced citizens, refugees in Guinea and Liberia and representatives of Sierra Leonean groups based in Britain and the United States. One influential organization not represented at the conference was the Bar Association, which declined INEC's invitation to participate because of its objections to NPRC decrees 7 and 8. The Bar Association claimed that the decrees disenfranchised some people. The purpose of the conference was to decide whether to proceed with presidential and parliamentary elections or postpone them until the country was at peace. The delegates unanimously opted to proceed with the elections without delay but had to settle for a compromise with the electoral commission on the specific date of the polling. According to the NPRC timetable, elections were supposed to take place in December 1995 but Jonah informed delegates that it would be impossible to meet

the deadline, and suggested March 1996 as the earliest possible date for the elections to be held. Both sides eventually agreed to shift the election date to February 1996.

In addition to settling the issue, the Bintumani I conference also ratified INEC's adoption of proportional representation and agreed to hold presidential and parliamentary elections on the same day. The conference adopted a code of conduct for political parties who were called upon to ensure that their functionaries, members and supporters act in accordance with electoral rules and regulations, if violated the conduct stipulated punishable fine of Le500, 000 (equivalent of \$950 at the time). At the end of the conference, none of the delegates had any premonition that another conference to address same issues would be convened again. Nevertheless, another conference became necessary due to the palace coup which replaced Captain Valentine Strasser with Julius Bio as chairman of the NPRC and head of state respectively.

After succeeding Strasser as head of state in late January 1996, Bio announced that elections would be held on schedule, and commenced negotiations with Foday Sankoh, the RUF leader, with hope of ending the civil conflict. While dismissing NPRC-RUF talks as a ploy to postpone the elections, Jonah, nonetheless went along with Bio's request for a second conference to revisit the issue of whether or not to hold the election irrespective of the insecurity in the country.

The prevailing sentiment among delegates attending the Bintumani II conference was that the NPRC was desperately reluctant to give up power and was using negotiations with the RUF as an excuse to prolong its incumbency. Bio himself actively campaigned among traditional rulers to support postponement of the elections. On the day of the conference, banners calling for "Elections Now" were torn by some military personnel while those calling for "Peace Before Elections" festooned the entrance to the conference hall. Politicians on their way to the

conference were manhandled by men in uniform. However, it did not deter delegates and their supporters from going to the conference venue at Aberdeen. Of the seventy delegates who attended the February 12, 1996 consultative conference, fifty-six voted for elections to be held on schedule.<sup>1</sup>

Fourteen delegates, including representatives of the NPRC and the RUF (which sent a letter to be read at the conference) voted to postpone the elections until peace was restored. Those favouring elections included representatives of the Petty Traders' Association, the Bar Association (in attendance for the first time), student unions, political parties and women's organizations. Brigadier Joy Turay, representing the armed forces, warned that the army could not guarantee security for the elections, but, this was dismissed as mere threat by most of the delegates.

The issue of whether to proceed with the elections despite NPRC and RUF opposition helped to galvanize pro-democracy forces. The consultative conferences provided an effective forum for public consultation on crucial issues regarding the timing and conduct of multiparty elections. By opting for a consultative conference – the composition of which it had no control over NPRC inadvertently ceded control of the transition process to INEC. INEC's position and autonomy were in turn bolstered in the electoral process.

## **Liberia**

The process of political reform in Liberia was much like what obtained in Liberia. A body known as CPA provided the framework for the electoral process to begin in Liberia. As earlier observed, the agreement stipulated a reform of the electoral institution, the electoral law, the conduct of elections according to UN standards, and the elections to be conducted on or before October 2005.

A major step in the electoral process was the reconstitution of the electoral commission. The commission was renamed from the Elections Commissions (ECOM) to the National Elections Commission of Liberia (NEC). According to Article XVIII, section 2B of the CPA: “the appointment of the NEC shall be made by the Chairman with the advice and consent of the NTLA within three months from the entry into force of this Agreement. It shall be composed of men and women of integrity.” In line with this, the chairman of the transitional Government nominated seven electoral commissioners led by Ms. Frances Johnson-Morris as chairperson, approved by the NTLA. The commission was inaugurated on April 29, 2004, with the mandate to perform the following functions among others;

- a. Administer and enforce all laws relating to the conduct of elections throughout Liberia
- b. Propose to the National Legislature for enactment, amendment to and repeal of, any provision of the Electoral Law.
- c. Give accreditation to and register all political parties that meet registration requirements as laid down by the commission.
- d. Conduct all elections for elective public offices including the chieftaincy election and all referenda and declare results thereof.
- e. Formulate and enforce guidelines for controlling the conduct of all elections for elective public offices.
- f. Maintain a register of all qualified voters.
- g. Screen all candidates for elective public office and accredit their candidacy and reject candidates not qualified under the guidelines laid down by the commission.
- h. Examine financial transactions and audited accounts of political parties.

- i. Handle election disputes, which may later be referred to the Supreme Court, as final arbiter.
- j. Submit annual report to the National legislature and the President on the general operation of the commission.<sup>5</sup>

There were five distinct phases in the electoral process in Liberia. These were:

1. The establishment of the National Elections Commission (NEC)
2. The setting up of the legal framework and defining the electoral system
3. Conducting Operational activities towards the elections such as:
  - i. Voter registration and display of voters register
  - ii. Registration of political parties
  - iii. Allocation of seats and demarcation of electoral districts
  - iv. Training of electoral officers
  - v. Candidate nomination by political parties
4. Actual Election Activities such as :
  - i. Political campaigns
  - ii. Polling
  - iii. Counting of ballots, tallying and announcement of election result.
5. Post Election Activities, such as petition over election results and adjudication of election disputes.

The Electoral Reform Law had power to suspend certain provisions of the Constitution of Liberia and amended some sections of the New Elections Law of 1986, while also having new provisions especially the one that related to budget appropriations by the NEC, which was a major factor in guaranteeing its autonomy. As such, there were four sources of the legal

instruments and legal framework of elections in Liberia. These were the 2004 Electoral Reform Law, the Liberian Constitution, the New Elections Law of 1986, and Regulations and Guidelines issued by NEC.

The Electoral Reform Law covered all areas of the electoral procedure such as eligibility for contesting for public office, allocation of seats in the Senate and House of Representatives, registration of political parties, campaign, finance, registration of voters, voting and voter counting, electoral offences, declaration of election results, and budget appropriation.

The electoral law stipulated a majoritarian two round electoral system for elections for the office of the President and Vice President. The first round was to be determined by an absolute majority (50% plus one) of the valid votes cast. If no candidate obtained an absolute majority in the first ballot, a second ballot would be conducted on the Tuesday following the announcement of the first ballot. The two candidates who obtained the highest number of votes at the first ballot would participate in the run-off elections. The candidate who obtained the majority of the valid votes in the second ballot was to be deemed elected.

For the Senate and House of Representatives, a simple majority electoral system was adopted. For the senate, the two candidates who obtained the highest and second highest number of valid votes cast in a county were to be deemed elected. The senator with the highest number of votes cast was to be senator of the first category, while the second shall be regarded as the senator of the second category. For the House of Representatives, it is a simple majority system with a single member electoral district. Each electoral district was made up of some voting precincts as designated by NEC, but must be within a county boundary.<sup>7</sup>

To make for the separation of political power at the centre, the Electoral Law stipulated that both the President and Vice President shall not be from the same county. It also suspended the ten-year residency clause for contesting elections as contained in the Liberian Constitution. The law granted Liberians who were of specified adult age, and were taxpayers resident in the country, the right to contest elections in the 2005 elections.

The Electoral Law together with the Campaign Finance Regulation of July 2005 issued by NEC provided stringent regulations on campaign finances for political parties. The law sets limit for campaign expenditure and prescribed guidelines of how campaign finances were to be managed and accounted for. For instance, for the president and vice president, election expenses were not to be more than \$2 million and \$1 million respectively. For the Senate and House of Representatives, the limits were \$600,000 and \$400,000 respectively, while for any other elective office the expenditure level was pegged at \$75,000.<sup>1</sup> Political parties and candidates running for public offices were to constitute “campaign committees” with a treasurer and maintain a depository bank account.

The committee would receive all donations and funds for campaign purposes. The Treasurer would keep records of the details of funds raised and expenditure made. However, parties and individuals were prohibited from raising funds for campaign from specified sources, such as anonymous sources, corporations, labour unions and banks, funds from the abuse of state resources, non citizens, and foreign governments. In practice however, it was difficult for NEC to track and regulate party campaign finances.

An interesting part of the electoral law was the relative autonomy granted to NEC on financial matters. NEC’s funding was directly charged to the national revenue, and duly appropriated by

the NTLA. However, for probity and accountability, NEC was required to have its accounts externally audited and published as an annual report, with detailed financial reporting.

Having set the legal framework for the electoral process, preparations for the registration of voters by NEC began in earnest. Voter registration task forces consisting of NEC and United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) were constituted. The taskforce distributed its work into twelve working groups. Recruitment of voter registration personnel, logistics, and civic education on the registration exercise were all conducted at this phase. NEC created 1511 registration centers with 1,000 registration teams (with about 4,000 personnel) to service the centers.

Civil society organizations (CSOs) were mobilized and actively participated in the exercise. Some of the CSOs included the Christian Church, Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET), and the Media. Registration of voters was conducted between April and May 2005. In all, the number of registered voters was 1,352,730 with women having a higher number than men. The average age of registered voters was 35 years and 35% of those registered lived in Montserrado County, where the capital city is located.<sup>10</sup> In commending the success of the registration exercise the chairperson of NEC, Frances Johnson-Morris observed:

The National Elections Commission (NEC) was extremely gratified by the strong will demonstrated by the Liberia people to bring this transition and all that it represents to an end. This was manifested by the impressive turnout by eligible Liberians to register from 25 April to 21 May 2005 despite all odds ... of course without the moral, financial and material support of the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL), the UNMIL, ECOWAS, USAID/IFES, EC and AU, this effort would not have succeeded. Indeed, Liberians owe those partners a debt of gratitude.<sup>11</sup>



## **Consultative Conference and the General Elections**

Unlike Sierra Leone, **Liberia** political stakeholders held no conferences for the conduct of their elections. There were no official record why this was so. However, it was perceived that the government and the people had already resolved issues that might militate against the conduct of smooth and fair elections as provided in the G.P.A conference held earlier.

## **History of Political Parties**

A brief history of political parties here would enable us to appreciate the politics and intrigues in post-conflict electoral process in both countries.

The Sierra Leone People Party (SLPP) describes itself as the “grand old party” of **Sierra Leone**. The party’s motto – ‘One Country, One People’ – symbolizes the ideals of its founding fathers in 1951. The founding fathers were members of the Sierra Leone Organization Society (SOS) led by John Karefa-Smart, of the Progressive Educational People’s Union (PEPU) Chief Julius Gulama, Ahmad Wurie and others and the People’s Party (PP) of Rev. Jones (aka Lamina Sankoh).

Conflicts within the SLPP caused by ministerial appointments and whether to hold elections before independence resulted in the defections from the party by other aspiring politicians who later formed the APC. The APC was handily defeated in the 1962 election by the incumbent SLPP but the death of Milton Margai, the prime minister and party leader, in 1964 left the SLPP in disarray, thus improving the APC’s electoral prospects. Disagreements over leadership succession triggered more defections (mostly by northern politicians) from the SLPP to the APC. The ethnic chauvinism of Albert Margai (Sir Milton’s successor) led to the SLPP’s stigmatization as a “Mende Party,” and the failed attempt to introduce a one-party constitution

contributed to his party's defeat in the 1967 elections. More significantly, Albert Margai's reluctance to concede electoral defeat plunged the country into crisis, with three coup d'états in a single year (1967 – 68).<sup>12</sup>

The SLPP in opposition was hamstrung by the leadership rivalry between Salia Jusu-Sheriff and Mohammed Sanusi Mustapha. The party was split between the supporters of the contestants and this sapped its ability to mount a united front against the APC government. In the one-party state, prominent SLPP leaders (including Jusu-Sheriff and Sama Banya) served in various capacities as ministers. SLPP collaboration in the one-party dictatorship did not, however, erode public support for the party in the southern and eastern provinces. The party had the best name recognition going by the 1996 elections and did not tow the line of the APC. In an effort to shed its image as a Mende party, the SLPP actively recruited northerners (including Karafa-Smart and Abass Bundu) for the party's leadership. The choice of Tejan Kabbah, a non-Mende, as its presidential candidate captured the party's determination to counter the perception that it was Mende-dominated. While rivalry for the party's presidential nomination evoked images of earlier tussles, the defection of Charles Margai to the NUP after losing the SLPP's leadership contest, actually helped rather than hurt the SLPP cause. By choosing Kabbah, a Mandingo and former United Nations bureaucrat, instead of Charles Margai, the SLPP enhanced its appeal among voters in the Western area and Northern provinces.<sup>13</sup>

Unlike the SLPP, the United Progressive People's Party (UNPP) of Karefa-Smart was a new comer on the political scene. The party's octogenarian leader had better name recognition than the party he founded. Though a new party, the UNPP could be linked through its leader to the United Democratic Party (UDP) of 1970 and the National Democratic Party (NDP) of 1991-

1992. In both instances, defectors from the APC dominated the UDP leadership. According to APC propaganda, the UDP of 1970 was poisoned by the Temne tribalism of some of the leaders and the grasping personal ambition of others.

Sensing a threat to its northern base, the APC government banned the UDP and arrested most of its leaders. Two of these leaders, Mohammed Forna and Ibrahim Bash-Taqi, were later executed on fathom treason charges. The UDP was revived during the brief democratic opening of 1991-92, but it was later banned along with all other political parties, by the NPRC junta. The party resurfaced under its current name, UNPP, after the NPRC lifted the ban on political parties in preparation for the 1996 elections.

Like most other parties, the UNPP was a personalist instrument that was unlikely to outlast its founding leader. While there were speculation as to who would be the SLPP standard-bearer, there was no such uncertainty in the UNPP camp. The party attracted many APC members, especially those banned from contesting the elections, and was seen by a plurality of northern politicians and voters as an alternative to the SLPP and the APC.

The People's Democratic Party (PDP) was also a personalist vehicle formed by former APC politician and minister, Thaimu Bangura. As a former Minister of Information in the government of Siaka Stevens, Bangura earned notoriety for spearheading efforts to muzzle the print media and for torching two villages during the violent 1982 elections – the first under the one-party system. Bangura left the APC in 1990 for personal reasons and began reinventing himself as an advocate of multiparty democracy.

The PDP was a serious contender for the northern vote and the votes of petty traders in urban areas, especially Freetown. The PDP, rather than the UNPP, was identified as a Temne party largely on account of Bangura's credentials as a cultural politician and because most of the party's leaders were Temne. The party's motto, *Sobeh*, is a Temne word that connotes dedication, hard work and commitment. With the exception of Karefa-Smart whose defection from the APC predated the one-party state, Thaimu Bangura was the only former APC member to do well in the 1996 elections.

The All People's Congress (APC) emerged out of the People's National Party (PNP) and the Elections Before Independence Movement (EBIM). The name APC came from a local brand of aspirin (APC) used to cure headache. The party leader, Mughtarr Kallay, captured the essence of the party's mission, which was to 'cure' the country of its SLPP headache. The party was founded and led by Siaka Stevens, a trade unionist who resigned from the SLPP in 1957 to form the People's National Party (PNP) with Albert Margai and others. As the main opposition party in parliament from 1962 to 1967, the APC led the fight against Albert Margai's unsuccessful attempts to introduce one-party constitution.

While in government, the APC was a disappointment. It drastically contrasted the political arena by adopting the same constitutional provisions, republicanism and one-party system it had opposed as an opposition party. In addition, the APC that benefited from the 1968 democratic restoration did not guarantee free and fair election during its tenure. The imposition of a one-party system of government at a time when the public was clamoring for democratic change retarded institutional development and widened the gulf between state and society. Some prominent leaders began defecting from the party in the early 1990s to form their own political

parties. Others were banned by the NPRC from contesting the 1996 elections. What remained of the APC in 1996 was led by Edward Turay, a 53-year-old lawyer and former Member of Parliament from 1986 to 1992. Turay's efforts to reinvent the APC were undermined by the party's disastrous track record.<sup>14</sup>

The National Unity Party (NUP) was founded and supported by the NPRC junta and its civilian supporters. Division in the party arose between those who wanted the NPRC leadership to contest the elections and those opposed to such an idea. This precipitated a palace coup less than a month before the scheduled elections. Although the main reason given for the coup was Valentine Strasser's desire to contest the elections as presidential candidate of the NUP, it was clear that the balance of forces within the NPRC junta had a direct bearing on what transpired inside the NUP. The '*Segbwema Mafia*', led by John Benjamin, orchestrated both the ouster of Strasser as head of state and the choice of John Karimu (NPRC Minister of Finance) as the NUP presidential candidate. By and large, the NUP became indistinguishable from the NPRC in the eyes of the public as most of its civilian leaders were drawn mainly from the ranks of NPRC clients.

In addition to these five parties, there were other political parties in Sierra Leone. These were the Democratic Center Party (DECP) which was founded and led by Abu Koroma, a former Attorney General, the People's Progressive Party (PPP), founded and led by Abass Bundu, a former minister in both APC and NPRC governments; the People's National Convention (PNC), whose founding leader Edward Kargbo was another prominent former APC politician and minister; the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) of Ahmadou Jalloh, the first Fula to contest the presidency in Sierra Leone; the Social Democratic Party (SDP) of Andrew Lungay, a United

Kingdom resident who returned home briefly to contest the election; the National Unity Movement (NUM) of Desmond Luke, the only former minister to have resigned from the APC government; the National Alliance Party (NAP) of Mohammed Sillah and Geredine Williams-Sarho, and the National People's Party (NPP) of Andrew Turay.

None of these parties were mass-based. They were essentially elitist parties that offered to do the same things if elected. The thrust of their supports were regional, ethno-clienteles and personalist; none could claim a national base. The correlation between ethno-regionalism, on the one hand, and party formation and support, on the other, presented some element of party competition in Sierra Leone that has remained unchanged since the 1960s. The participation of thirteen political parties in the 1996 elections, compared to four parties in the 1967 elections, can be attributed to intense factionalism and opportunism among northern politicians. Eight of the thirteen parties in the 1996 elections were led by northern politicians, a fact that made voting more competitive in the north than in the south and east where the SLPP faced a fragile opposition from the NUP and DCP. Proliferation of political parties and fragmentation of the party system mirrored the increased personalization of politics and a general weakening of party loyalty and ethno-regional solidarity among elites.

## **Liberia**

As in Sierra Leone, political parties in Liberia were in transition. The Republican Party of Liberia (RPL) was the first. It was founded in 1848, soon after the founding of Liberia.<sup>1</sup> It was primarily made up of the Americo-Liberians who had mixed African and European ancestry. Its main opposition was the True Whig Party (TWP). The party weakened soon after the death of the first president of Liberia, Joseph Jenkins Roberts.

As the Republican Party weakened another political party True Whig Party (TWP) emerged on the political space in Liberia. The True Whig Party was also known as the Liberian Whig Party (LWP). The True Whig Party was founded in 1869.<sup>15</sup> It was the main opposition party to the Republican Party. The TWP dominated Liberian Politics from 1878 until 1980. Between 1878 and 1980, when the TWP were in power, Liberia was virtually a one party state, although opposition parties were allowed to participate in the politics of the state. Initially, its ideology was heavily influenced by that of the United States Whig Party.

The political party was founded in the township of clay Ashland in 1869.<sup>1</sup> It dominated over a society where only Black American settlers and their descendants were citizens able to vote, and so represented them. The party endorsed systems of forced labour. In 1930 they sold human labour to Spanish colonists on Fernando Po (now Bioko in Equatorial Guinea), leading to a five year U.S and British boycott of Liberia. Despite this dispute, the West saw them as a stabilizing, unthreatening force and so invested heavily in the nation under William Tubman's leadership (1944 - 1971)<sup>16</sup>

The party lost power after Tubman's successor, William Tolbert, was killed in April 1980 coup, by forces opposed to his clampdown on the political opposition and tolerance of corruption. It was then the opposition's turn to clamp down on the True Whig Party. Majority of its members and supporters left the party, but it struggled on as a minor party.

The party participated in the 2005 general elections as part of the coalition for the transformation of Liberia, which fizzled out the next year. It registered to compete as an individual party in the 2011 general election, while endorsing president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's bid for a second term.<sup>1</sup> However, it failed to nominate any candidate for legislative positions.

Political activities in Liberia were truncated in the 1980s when young Samuel Kanyon Doe, from *Krahn* ethnic stock took control of government after a coup d'état which ousted the government of Siaka Stevens. Between 1980 and 2006, Liberia was governed by a series of military and transitional governments which banned all political parties and their activities. In 1985, elections were held and Doe National Democratic Party of Liberia (NDPL) won

Doe's victory was characterized by widespread fraud and rigging. Doe's era witnessed increased human rights abuses, corruption and ethnic tension which resulted into ethnic violence and civil war that claimed more than 200,000 lives and displaced a million others into refugee camps in neighboring countries.<sup>17</sup>

From 1989 when Charles Taylor emerged to 2005, the country went into another series of political upheaval and civil war which ended with the intervention of concerted efforts of both regional and continental bodies. The end of the civil war and the exit of President Charles Taylor from the political scene heralded another opportunity for active political practice in the country. At the 2005 first post civil war election, many political parties emerged and participated in the election, as part of the peacebuilding process. Some of the political parties and their leaders are listed below:

<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Party</b>
Ellen Johnson Sirleaf	Unity Party
George Weah	Congress for Democratic Change
Charles Brumskine	Liberty Party
Winston Tubman	National Democratic Party of Liberia
Varney Sherman	Coalition for the Transformation of <b>Liberia</b>



Roland Massaquoi	National Patriotic Party
Joseph Korto	Liberia Equal Right Party
Alhaji G.V Kromah	All Liberia Coalition Party
Togba-Nah Tipoteh	Alliance for Peace and Democracy
William V.S. Tubman Jr.	Reformed United Liberia party
John Morlu	United Democratic Alliance
Nathaniel Barnes	Liberian Destiny Party
Margaret Tor – Thompson	Freedom Alliance Party of Liberia
Joseph Woah-Tee	Labour Party of Liberia
Sekou Conneh	Progressive Democratic party
David Farhat	Free democratic party
George Klay Kieh	New Deal Movement
Armah Jallah	National Party of Liberia
Robert Kpoto	Union of Liberia Democrats
George Kiadii	National Vision Party of Liberia
Samuel Raymond Divine	Independent
Alfred Reeves	National Reformation Party <sup>18</sup>

## **Electioneering Campaigns**

### **Sierra Leone**

The campaign period leading to the elections lasted for less than three months. Campaigns hardly took place in the rural areas due to inadequate security. Campaigns were focused mainly on urban communities, with political parties utilizing a wide array of resources and strategies to

get their messages across to the voting public. Ideology and party manifestos did not differentiate the parties as they all promised to essentially pursue the same policies if elected.

The thrust of the campaigns were peace, law and order, corruption, rehabilitation and reconstruction. All the parties promised to pursue a negotiated settlement with the rebels war and none seemed to question whether a negotiated settlement was in fact possible or address the issue of what to do if negotiations with the RUF failed. The SLPP, for example, promised to negotiate an end to the war, resettle and rehabilitate the displaced, reconstitute the army, rehabilitate health facilities, reform the educational system, provide decent and affordable housing, invest in infrastructure and usher a 'new dispensation ... free from corruption, extra-constitutional governments, incompetence, nepotism, favouritism, tribalism, regionalism and gender discrimination.'<sup>19</sup>

The UNPP on her part promised promotion of national unity; the restoration of honesty, integrity and transparency to government; finding remedies for economic mismanagement; use of local resources to improve standards of living of the average Sierra Leonean; proper management of natural resources; assistance to victims of the war, and reduction in unemployment and stabilization of the economy. On the issue of peace, the UNPP pledged to engage all avenue with the help of external mediators, to replace the military option with a conciliatory approach to reach a peaceful settlement between all combatant groups.' The party's reconciliatory approach was to be based on the offer of 'amnesty to all as the only way to achieve lasting peace'. The UNPP also promised to the decentralization of local government, free primary education, the provision of safe drinking water and primary health care for all, food sufficiency and investment in agriculture.

The campaign styles of the SLPP's and UNPP's reflected a dose of negative campaigning based on personality attacks rather than issues. For example, SLPP supporters maintained that the state will be forced to pay huge medical bills if Karefa-Smart was elected president. Apparently, the slip was referring to Karefa-Smart's fragile look. Others went as far to suggest that Karefa-Smart's pursuit of the presidency was fueled by his desire to have a state funeral. After, the campaign degenerated to Mrs. Karefa-Smart (an African-American) whom they regarded, and as an outsider, unsympathetic to the concerns of the average Sierra Leonean.<sup>20</sup>

Reacting, the UNPP supporters highlighted the past misdeeds or alleged improprieties of the SLPP presidential candidate Kabbah. The focus of UNPP attacks on Kabbah was the report of the Beoku-Betts Commission of Inquiry which indicted Kabbah of lack of integrity which disqualifies him from holding any high office for which good character and integrity are prerequisites'. On account of this, the APC government under Siaka Stevens confiscated some of Kabbah's assets but was later returned after the legality of the government's action was questioned in the law court. By directing public attention to this aspect of Kabbah's past record in the civil service, the UNPP portray the SLPP presidential candidate as a corrupt former civil servant who lacked the 'character' and 'integrity' of his opponent, Karefa-Smart.

The politicization of religion by supporters of the SLPP's Kabbah and the PDP's religious dimension was introduced in the campaign and electoral process. Supporters of Kabbah and Bangura openly called on voters to cast their ballots for their candidate because of their Islamic faith. This appeal to religion was highly conspicuous during the run-off campaign for the presidency between Kabbah, a Muslim, and Karefa-Smart, a Christian. Although he was not known to use the Alhaji title before the elections, supporters of Kabbah suddenly began referring

to their candidate as Alhaji Tejan Kabbah. He was also described by local and international media as a 'Muslim lawyer'. In a country where religion has never constituted a significant basis of social cleavage, SLPP efforts to politicize the faith of their presidential candidate obscured and distorted the choices of voters.

Some intimidating incidents occurred prior to the election day renewed doubts of it whether the election would hold. On February 10, 1996, there were three grenade attacks targeted at the offices and residences of the INEC chairman and Tejan Kabbah's residence.<sup>16</sup> Although there were no casualties and physical damage was light, the attacks were aimed at derailing the elections by intimidating some of the key players in the process. However, if the intention of the perpetrators were to intimidate and scare voters, it backfired, as people came out of their homes in droves to cast their votes, to show their disdain for military government.

### **Results of the Election**

The first round of voting for presidential and parliamentary positions took place on February 26 and 27 1996? Originally scheduled for February 26, 1996 balloting had to be extended for another day due to logistical problems, such as transportation of ballot boxes to the provinces, late delivery of voter registers to polling stations and the inability of the army to provide security in some areas. The security problems prevented several chiefdoms from voting in the north, especially in Tonkolili and Kenema districts.

The SLPP's victory in both parliamentary and presidential elections did not come as a surprise to many observers. In the parliamentary contest, the SLPP captured 36.1 percent of the popular vote, compared to 21.6 percent for the UNPP and 15.3 percent for the PDP. By placing a strong third in both parliamentary and presidential elections, the PDP found itself in a position where it

could influence the outcome of the presidential election by supporting one of the two candidates in the run-off. That the PDP chose to form an electoral alliance with the SLPP during the run-off campaign was one of the few surprises of these elections.<sup>21</sup>

The results of the parliamentary elections showed a clear ethnoregional voting pattern. The SLPP gathered the bulk of its popular vote from the south with an overall popular vote of 3.7 percent.

**Table 3: Results of Parliamentary Election in Sierra Leone**

Party	Total Votes	% of Popular Vote	No of Seats
SLPP	269,489	36.1	29
UNPP	161,618	21.6	18
PDP	114,409	15.3	12
APC	42,443	5.7	5
NUP	39,280	5.3	4
DCP	35,624	4.8	0
PPP	21,354	2.9	0
NDA	20,105	2.7	0
PNC	19,019	2.5	0
NUM	8,884	1.2	0
SDP	5,900	0.8	0
NADP	4,653	0.6	0
NPP	3,989	0.5	0
Total	750,764	100.0	68

Figures culled from NEC, Sierra Leone.<sup>22</sup>

Like the SLPP, electoral support for the UNPP was regionally skewed. The UNPP received over half of its support from the north but fared poorly in the south and east. The party won 44.6 percent of the northern, 21.4 percent of the western, 9.4 percent of the eastern and 2.4 percent of the southern vote. The regional distribution of the UNPP's popular vote was as follows: north (58.4 percent), west (29.4 percent), east (10 percent) and south (2.1 percent). This correlation between region and party support were also evident in the returns for the PDP. The PDP won 23 percent of the northern votes, 21.6 percent of the western votes, 6.1 percent of the eastern and 4.9 percent of the southern vote. 42.5 percent of the PDP's overall popular vote came from the north, 42 percent from the west, 9.2 percent from the east and 6.1 percent from the south. Although the PDP and UNPP trailed the SLPP in terms of their respective share of the western vote, the western vote as a percentage of party vote totals was greater for the PDP (42.5 percent) and UNPP (29.4 percent) than for the SLPP (20.5 percent).<sup>23</sup>

The APC, PPP and PNC also performed relatively well in the north, compared to other regions. Although the APC lost two-thirds of the northern vote to the UNPP and PDP, it still managed to place third in the north, ahead of two of its breakaway reincarnations, the PPP and PNC.

**Table 4: Results of the Parliamentary Election by Region in Sierra Leone**

Party	Western Area	Eastern Province	Northern Province	Southern Province
SLPP	55,327	84,712	9,929	119,518
UNPP	47,516	16,223	94,453	3,426
PDP	48,076	10,575	48,677	7,081
APC	19,272	2,996	18,414	1,761
NUP	14,554	17,450	3,984	3,292

DCP	2,465	30,426	2,229	504
PPP	7,519	1,092	11,601	1,142
NDA	7,125	3,613	7,961	1,406
PNC	7,605	742	10,246	425
NUM	7,366	345	713	460
SDP	1,377	1,833	1,489	1,201
NADP	2,086	750	989	828
NPP	1,358	1,109	895	827
Total	221,646	171,866	211,580	141,871

Figures culled from NEC, Sierra Leone.<sup>24</sup>

The APC received 8.6 percent of the western, 8.7 percent of the northern, 1.7 percent of the eastern and 1.2 percent of the southern, vote. The regional breakdown of the APC's overall vote showed 45.4 percent came from the western area, 43.3 percent from the Northern Province, 7 percent from the east and 4.1 percent from the south. In a rather interesting development, more people voted for the APC in the western area than in the Northern Province and the party's overall total vote of 42,443 was less than the PDP's northern vote total of 48,677. Votes for the PPP and PNC also came mainly from the north. The PPP's share of the northern regional vote was only 54.3 percent, while the PNC, had 61 percent.

Desmond Luke's NUM party received only 1.2 percent of the popular vote, which came mainly from the western area. The NUP party attracted more votes in the east than in the north and south combined; where it gathered overall total vote of 44.4 percent. Of the DCP's 4.8 percent share

of the popular vote, 85.4 percent came from the east, where the party placed second to the SLPP in parliamentary balloting with 17.7 percent of the regional vote.<sup>24</sup>

On observation, the parties that performed well in the south and east fared poorly in the north and vice-versa. Three parties (SLPP, UNPP, and PDP) were competitive in two regions but only one party (SLPP) was competitive in three regions (western area, southern and eastern provinces). The SLPP received 75.7 percent of its share of the national vote total from the south and east, while the UNPP and PDP attracted 87.8 and 84.5 percent of theirs from the north and west respectively. Comparatively, voting was more competitive in the western area than in the other three provinces; the south was the least competitive region, with 84.2 percent of its vote going to the SLPP. By contrast, no single party collected more than 25 percent of the western area vote. Of the three major parties, the PDP was the most dependent on the western vote, with 42 percent of its popular vote coming from there.<sup>24</sup>

The three major contenders in the presidential contest were Kabbah of the SLPP, Karefa-Smart of the UNPP and Bangura of the PDP. Kabbah emerged top vote-getter in the first round, followed by Karefa-Smart and Bangura as indicated in the table 3 below. Bundu of the PPP, Karimu of the NUP and Luke of the NUM cried foul and questioned the validity of the results. Bangura lost in the North, and Karefa-Smart won convincingly. However, international observers of the elections uniformly concluded that the exercise was relatively free and fair.<sup>25</sup>



**Table 5: Results of the presidential election in Sierra Leone**

Candidate	Party	Total Votes	Total Vote (%)
Kabbah	SLPP	267,279	35.8
Karefa-Smart	UNPP	171,603	22.19
Bangura	PDP	119,782	16.1
Karimu	APC	39,617	5.3
Turay	NUP	38,316	5.1
Koroma	DCP	36,779	4.9
Bundu	PPP	21,557	2.9
Jalloh	NDA	17,335	2.3
Kargbo	PNC	15,798	2.1
Luke	NUM	7,918	1.1
Lungay	SDP	5,202	0.7
Turay	NADP	3,925	0.5
Sillah	NPP	3,723	0.5
Totals		745,409	100.0

Figures culled from NEC, Sierra Leone.<sup>26</sup>

The result of the face-off between Kabbah and Karefa-Smart had the SLPP candidate once again trouncing his rival in three of the four regions of the country as indicated in table 5. Kabbah's share of the popular vote exceeded the 55 percent required by the constitution to declare a winner in presidential elections. Kabbah won the presidency with 92 percent of the southern, 90 percent of the eastern, 54 percent of the western and 22 percent of the northern vote. By contrast, Karefa-Smart polled 78 percent of the northern, 46 percent of the western, 10 percent of the

eastern and 8 percent of the southern vote. Kabbah was popular in the north, he had more votes (83,344) than his opponent's eastern and southern votes combined, (45,815) Karefa-Smart's presidential bid failed to gain ground in the south and east.<sup>27</sup>

**Table 6: Results of the run-off regional presidential election in Sierra Leone**

Candidate	Western Area	Eastern Province	Northern Province	Southern Province
Kabbah	84,635	232,084	83,344	209,462
Karefa-Smart	72,397	26,984	301,114	18,831

Figures culled from NEC, Sierra Leone<sup>28</sup>

### **Regional breakdown of Result**

The regional breakdown of votes in the first round of the presidential election was almost identical to the parliamentary contest. Kabbah received 83.7 percent of the southern, 51.1 percent of the eastern, 24.9 percent of the western and 4.1 percent of the northern, vote. With only 35.8 percent of popular vote, the SLPP candidate placed first in three of the four regions of the country. Karefa-Smart was the top vote-getter in the Northern Province where he won 46.7 percent of the regional vote. He was second in the west with 22.1 percent, third in the east with 9.9 percent and fourth in the south with 2.3 percent of the respective regional votes. If performance in the first round provided any clue as to the outcome of the run-off election, then Karefa-Smart's only hope of triumph was to outsmart Kabbah in the north and win convincingly in the western area. Victory in the north and west could not, however, guarantee a Karefa-Smart presidency. For Karefa-Smart to win, he needed a superlative performance in the south and east. Kabbah, by contrast, could win the presidency without significant northern support.

## **Post Election Disputes**

After the presidential and parliamentary elections were held, voting data from the provinces suggested grave irregularities in the presidential run-off election. Official results showed a 38 percent increase in overall voters' turnout, from 745,409 in the first round to 1,028,851 in the second round of the presidential election. In the Northern Province, voters turnout increased by 85.4 percent, from 207,507 in the first round to 384,458 in the second round. The east recorded a 59.7 percent increase in turnout (from 162,138 to 259,068) followed by the south with a 59.6 percent increase (from 142,988 to 228,293). Only the western area reported a drop (29.5 percent) in voters' turnout, from 222,767 to 157,032. Voter turn-out, based on initial computer printouts of results was 345 percent in the Pujehun district, 155 percent in Bonthe district, 139 percent in Kailahun district, 117 percent in Kenema district and 90 percent in Bo district. President Tejan Kabbah of the SLPP was returned to power with about 70 per cent of the vote cast, followed by Ernest Koroma as head of the APC, with 22 per cent; the SLPP also won the majority of the seat in the parliament.<sup>1</sup> Karefa-Smart's UNPP reacted to these irregularities by issuing a press statement in which it accused the SLPP and INEC for the massive electoral fraud. It stated further "... in spite of these glaring irregularities and flagrant violations of the electoral law by both INEC and the SLPP, the UNPP would 'overlook these violations and allow the transition process to move forward'"<sup>29</sup>

## **Electioneering campaigns**

### **Liberia**

Just like Sierra Leone, the road to political transformation was similar. It involved campaigns by political party aspirants. Political Parties in Liberia commenced campaigns from August 15, 2005 to the midnight of 9 October, 2005. Commendably, the parties adopted the code of conduct as

directed by NEC which instructed political parties “to play by the rules of the game.” On their part, the political parties expressed their determination to build lasting democratic self governance for present and future generations of Liberians. They also promised strong commitment to the growth and development of virile multi-party democracy and no to the authoritarian political power centre that usually contributed to the dysfunctional state system and governance.

The NEC code stipulated that all political parties must abide by the existing laws and regulations on political campaigns, must not obstruct, disrupt or break up meetings, rallies or other activities of another parties, desist from destroying, removing, defacing or in any way tamper with the posters, logos, symbols, handbills or publicity materials of another party, eschew violence their members or supporters should in good faith coordinate their campaign activities in a way that no two parties shall hold public meetings or rallies at the same venue or locality on the same day in order to avoid clash of conflict.

In addition, an inter-party coordination committee was constituted in order to create a platform for dialogue among the political parties and NEC. Undoubtedly, there was a clear commitment to the electoral policies by the political parties, so as not to repeat the pitfalls of the past. Generally, the political campaigns were full of funfair, glamour and understanding. Unlike in Sierra Leone where campaigns were rough and delegates were manhandled. The methods of campaigns by the parties included door to door campaigning, use of bill boards, posters, banner, T-shirts, rallies, and messages and jingles on radio and television. The radio provided the most extensive outreach for political campaigns by the parties given the challenges of poor infrastructure of roads in the country. In order to ensure equal access to media coverage, the Press Union of

Liberia Ethics Committee (PULEC) was established to entertain cases of unfair media coverage by parties, and independent candidates contesting elections must make their manifestos public or face the penalty of media blackout.<sup>30</sup>

The essence was to ensure that political parties carry out issue based campaigns. Most of the radio and television stations such as the State radio, Eternal Love Broadcasting Corporate (ELBC) displayed a high degree of fairness and professionalism in their coverage of the campaigns. Some of the print media were partisan, reflecting the ownership interests of some of the contestants in those organizations.

The Civil Society Organizations' groups were also actively involved in ensuring free and fair political campaigns. A coalition of CSOs, the Campaign Monitoring Coalition (CMC) was formed to track the campaign process. This group intervened at critical moments to draw attention to the unfair and illegal activities of some candidates and parties in the campaign process. For instance, there were allegations of some candidates deploying state resources like vehicles and funds to support their campaigns and votes buying by candidates.<sup>33</sup> These allegations were promptly investigated by NEC, with the NTGL taking appropriate steps to correct the misuse of state facilities.

On September 15, 2005 a presidential debate was organized by Press Union of Liberia (PUL) in conjunction with the National Democratic Institution (NDI) and the international Republican Institute (IRI). Eleven out of the twenty two presidential candidates participated. The debates were lively, friendly but sometimes confrontational with candidates seeking to gain political advantage over others. A presidential candidate who participated in the debate, Joseph Korto, of the Liberia Equal Right Party remarked, "the greatest thing about this debate is to see Liberian

presidential candidate sitting here and talking to others and trying to convince voters rather than being in the bush and shooting at each other.<sup>1</sup> Beyond political marketing of candidates and their programmes, the debate reinforced the spirit of consociation politics among the key political actors in the electoral process.”<sup>31</sup>

Of the twenty presidential aspirants, George Opong Weah, the candidate of the CDC had the greatest street popularity. He commanded massive youths support, because of his pedigree in footballing and was seen as a beacon of hope and symbol of social denial of youths by unjust elites, who managed the country in the past. His fragile academic background rather than be a minus endeared sympathy to him. Many of the uneducated young ones and former child soldiers during the war saw in him the image of their own societal denial. They easily identified with him and supported him. His youthfulness and newness in the political turf was also an asset. Two major slogans of campaign were coined in his favour:

Whether he go school or he no go school, we go vote for am.<sup>32</sup>

*Opong kill your mama, No!*

*Opong kill your papa, No!*

*Opong give you gun, No.*

A political rally held in Monrovia by the CDC candidate, few days to the October 11 2005 elections saw over 500,000 youths in attendance, demonstrating total commitment and huge passion to their Idol. George Weah, represented the new face of Liberian Politics.

The political campaign was conducted in an orderly manner. As the European Union Election Monitoring team observed.

The election campaign was conducted in a positive atmosphere, with no reports of restrictions of freedoms of expression, assembly, and association or serious intimidation of candidates or voters. In a hopeful sign of the future of the country, the Liberian people

participated enthusiastically in the process, demonstrating widespread interest in the election process. Most political party and candidate platforms were only belatedly made available to the electorate. The widespread use of posters, banners and T-shirts was evidence of a highly competitive campaign.<sup>33</sup>

### **Result of the Election**

Similarly, elections to both the presidential and parliamentary seats in **Liberia** were held on October 11 2005. A culmination of the intensive preparation by NEC supported by UNMIL made the elections possible. NEC provided the logistical back-up while UNMIL provided 15,000 soldiers of men and women which provided security. The election commenced fairly late in many polling centers, with huge crowd of voters eager to cast their votes, the voting process was handled with professionalism and competence by the electoral officials.<sup>38</sup> Some of the features of the elections as observed by the ECOWAS Observer Mission were:

- Great enthusiasm by the electorates on the eve of the elections
- Large turnout of voters for the elections including the aged, psychically challenged, youths and the internally displaced
- High level of discipline and patience demonstrated by electorates while queuing and waiting to cast their vote.
- Adequate and unobtrusive security provided at most polling stations.
- Prompt and early arrival of election materials in most polling stations.
- The voting was by secret ballot, which protected the confidentiality and integrity of the voting process.
- Representatives of political parties, candidates and observers missions, local and international were present at most polling stations and witnessed the voting and counting of votes.<sup>34</sup>

Fifty domestics and twenty eight (28) international observer groups monitored the elections. The overall verdict on the election was that they were generally free, fair, transparent, credible and democratic, with results reflecting the general wishes of the Liberian people. Concluding on the elections, ECOWAS said

The ECOWAS Observers Mission's preliminary report on the October 11, 2005 elections is that the Presidential, Senate and House of Representatives elections were generally peaceful, free, fair, and transparent. The determination and positive spirit of the Liberian people and the National Transitional Government of Liberia to set their country back on the road to democratic rule, peace, stability and progress was highly commended<sup>35</sup>

The legislative elections (Senate and House of Representatives) saw parties like CTOL, CDC, and NPP, UP, LP, APD, and NDPL with a fairly good standing, however, none of the parties had an overwhelming majority in both parliamentary bodies. While the legislative elections were settled at the October polls, the presidential elections were not. None of the twenty presidential candidates secured the required fifty percent plus one vote as stipulated by the electoral law. The two topmost presidential candidates, George Weah and Ellen Sirleaf Johnson had 28.3% and 19.6% respectively of the valid votes cast. The implication was that a run-off election would be conducted to decide the eventual winner.

### **Run-Off Elections**

Campaigns for the run-off presidential elections commenced shortly after the first round results were announced. Unlike the first round, the political atmosphere for the second round was fairly charged as the stakes became higher. UNMIL forces had to scale up security in order to ensure maximum security.



While George Opong Weah was candidate to beat in the first round, the balance of political forces shifted considerably in the second round. Ellen Sirleaf Johnson went on the offensive, and mounted a well coordinated, organized and strategic campaign. She undertook extensive political consultations with key opinion leaders and secured the House of Representatives, paying personal visits to defeated presidential, senatorial and house candidates who had goodwill in different communities to support her.

In addition, she took her campaign to the remotest part of the country using a helicopter. Her media political management was phenomenal. Her credentials as an international public servant, development expert and competent administrator played up in the public space.<sup>41</sup> The issue of education or lack of it which was an advantage to George Weah in the first round, however played against him in the second round.

The partisan media drew a parallel line on the impact of good education and leadership between Opong Weah and Ellen Sirleaf Johnson. Poor education in leadership was dangerous to the political health of the country, hence Weah was unqualified for the position. Swayed by this media trick, the professional class and the student groups casted their support in favour of Ellen Sirleaf Johnson. The Liberian National Student Union (LNSU) supported her. Indeed, many professionals both at home and abroad started contributing opinion articles in the print media on why Liberians should vote for Ellen Sirleaf Johnson. As John Morlue a columnist with *The Inquirer* Observes:

“Weah’s political machinery was weak, uncoordinated and seemingly disoriented. Perhaps, George Weah took Things for granted given results of the first round that he would cruise to victory easily. His alliances became Political liabilities rather than assets with many of the Warlords declaring support for him, and virtually became His spokesperson during the runoff campaigns”.<sup>36</sup>

This development swayed many Liberians from their previous perspective on Weah as an untainted new breed politician. The voice(s) of the warlords re-echoed the horrors of the civil war in the country. Weah’s media relations during the runoff campaigns were poorly managed. Weah and his team continuously had problems with journalists with allegations from the PUL that journalists were unduly attacked by CDC members and supporters. Indeed, the PUL had to petition the CDC on this.<sup>37</sup>

The ethnic card also played against Weah. Being a Khran, and Samuel Deo also a Khran, made it easier to conjure a possibility of a replay of the Doe era in the event of Weah’s victory. Weah’s campaign team were more pre-occupied with rumours and conspiracy theory that the international community supported Ellen Sirleaf Johnson, and wanted to rig the elections in her favour. This created political inertial and disincentives for the team. A few days before the runoff elections, Weah raised allegations that the October 11 elections were rigged in favour of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and that he won 62% of the total vote cast. This political furore further alienated the party from the electorates. When the elections were held on November 8, 2005, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf won and emerged as the first female president.<sup>38</sup>

**Table 7: Results of Run Off Presidential Elections of November 8, 2005 in Liberia**

Political Party	Presidential Candidate	Vice Presidential Candidate	Votes
Unity Party	Ellen Sirleaf Johnson	Boakai Joseph Nyuma	478, 562(59.4%)
Congress for Democratic Change CDC	George Weah	Joseph Rudolph	327, 046 (40.6%)
		Valid Votes	805, 572
		Invalid Votes	20, 144
		Total Votes	825, 716
		Invalid votes accounts for 2.4% of total votes	

Figures culled from NEC, Liberia.<sup>39</sup>

## **Post Election Disputes**

After the re-run elections, there were three critical issues which prompted the intervention of the ECOWAS special mediator, General Abdulsalam Abubakar, Nigeria's former military ruler, in order to keep the transition programme on course. First, was that, a few days to the October 11, 2005 elections, the Supreme Court, in a suit instituted by three disqualified presidential candidates ruled against NEC, that the candidates were qualified and should be allowed to run for elections. This decision created political statement that would have made NEC to postpone the elections.<sup>40</sup> NEC had already printed the ballot papers excluding these candidates, and reprinting would have not only imposed heavy financial burden on NEC, but would have led to the postponement of the elections and the derailment of the transition time table. ECOWAS had to intervene by dialoguing with the three candidates who graciously agreed to step down and allow the elections to proceed. Second, two days to the run off presidential elections of November 8 2005. George Weah proclaimed that he won the October 11 elections with 62%, without filling any election complaints or petitions<sup>41</sup> This heated the polity and created tension possible of igniting conflict between his supporters and that of Ellen Sirleaf Johnson. Again, ECOWAS, through its special mediator, Gen. Abubakar Abdusallam intervened by dialoguing with the two candidates.

Thirdly, after the run-off presidential elections, George Weah alleged that the elections were not free and fair, contrary to the verdict of the domestic and international observers who adjudged the elections to be free, fair and transparent.<sup>42</sup> He was reluctant on the legal and procedural option. As expected, ECOWAS had to intervene insisting that candidates have the right to protest and disagree with election results, but such complaints should be channeled through the legal procedure. After much dialogue, Weah decided to accept the election results and support the

newly elected government. With this, the electoral process were brought to an end, and the transition process under the CPA concluded. The newly elected government was sworn in on January 16 2006, with Liberia, making history with the first elected female president on the African continent.

## **Democracy and Peacebuilding**

### **Sierra Leone**

The effort at democratization in Sierra Leone had a positive impact on the peacebuilding process because increasingly it gave the people a feeling of inclusion in the political process which had been very exclusive in the pre-war period. The participatory nature of Sierra Leone political reform were base on policies that aimed to open up the political process to various sections of the citizenry. In March 2004, a Local Government Act was passed with the strong support of the international community.<sup>43</sup> The Act effectively paired a peacebuilding strategy in Sierra Leone, like in Macedonia, as a way to open new channels of representative government in the war-torn provinces and to decentralize governance and political power in Sierra Leone as an approach to conflict management.

The law led to landmark elections in the political, economic and social structure of Sierra Leone. The May 2004 election for district council seats were held throughout Sierra Leone, with oversight and management provided by UNDP. Seats were contested by two principle political parties, the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), presently in power and the All People's Congress (APC), in opposition, and several smaller parties. .

The experience in Sierra Leone shows that peacebuilding based on democratic structure is instrumental to rebuilding a weak or a failed state. This is particularly so when this is anchored

on decentralization. This has helped confer legitimacy on the state through a closer connection to the citizens and through better service delivery. Some regional or district differences can be positively encouraged to better improve overall service delivery and transparency in political power through democracy. However political reforms of Sierra Leone must take into account traditional rules regarding access to land and property rights as well as consider gender so as to ensure equal treatment for women and to increase opportunities for youth, a majority in a population of 6 million.<sup>44</sup> The need for reforms that reflect concerns for women is important especially since the military, armed forces and the entire political leadership was dominated by men and this dominance prevailed during the past ten years of civil war..

The peacebuilding process also enhanced the participation of youth in the political process and other aspects of civic engagement. But bringing the youth population into national and local political institutions as well as civic organizations is a step in the right direction for a country in pursuit of restoration since half the population of Sierra Leone is under the age of 25. Thus a fundamental political issue for the newly elected District Councilors is to promote local community economic development, and to support employment goals for community youth, especially in preventing youth from re-entering potentially violent or conflict-prone groups and organizations.

In addition, peacebuilding has promoted institution rebuilding. This is was evident in the judiciary with the deconcentration of the national judiciary system and developing community-level judicial alternatives and dispute resolution mechanisms. Such reforms will greatly assist the work of the new District Council. However, most programs funded by the international

community to enhance local judicial structures failed in Sierra Leone due to the enormous gap in education and training and the incredible problem of corruption and insecurity.

Aside from the judiciary, the peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone also involved the Paramount Chiefs through the Local Government Act. Their involvement is important in view of the centrality of traditional leaders in the grass root administration where they are either appointed, or selected along hereditary and male lineage. Their inclusion was achieved through a reform process at the local level of governance in addition to the District Council election.

In addition to democratizing the process of selecting Paramount Chiefs, a more effective peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone must consider the issue of access to land which is organized based on male lineage and traditional hierarchies. This will provide direct property rights to persons using plots of land, or who in some instances have occupied land for years, or through making good use through cultivation.

Finally, peacebuilding in Sierra Leone has guaranteed the prospects for long-term security and assistance by the international community in cooperation with local actors particularly at community level to move the country toward stability and progress.

## **Liberia**

Also in Liberia, reforms in the democratic structure led to the establishment of the National Elections Commission of Liberia (NEC) which operates independently of the three branches of the Liberian Government. NEC was backed up in Articles 89 of the Liberian constitution.

External partners in the Liberian peace process were reassured of the emergence of a strong political will existed to build a new Liberia with the restoration of the democratic process

followed by the election of the first post conflict President, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, The strong legacy of democracy, since the end of the civil war, also led to the guarantee and preservation of peace, made possible with the assistance of international military and police presence embodied by the United Nation Mission in Liberia. In addition, it had also led to the creation of a new army and police and the establishment of a national security sector capable of coping with some degree of threats. However, the failure of the police particularly its extremely limited deployment outside the capital Monrovia made an international security presence imperative.

It was not only the political process that benefitted from the peacebuilding process but it extended to the economic and social spheres. This is because investment and economic development in Liberia was hampered by lack of human resources and expertise. As such the area of manpower training was an important aspect of the peacebuilding process and it served to strengthen the institutions and contribute to economic development. Attention was directed to training of staff of ministries and public institutions and the establishment of training graduate schools as well as technical and vocational institutions tailored to provide manpower so as to sustain efforts at rebuilding the economy. In conclusion, if Liberia's peace is to be secured all sectors of the Liberian population as well as well institutions must targeted in the peacebuilding process. In turn effective peace building in Liberia can only be effective with international support considering the enormity of the damage brought by protracted civil war and the weakening of the police and judiciary as well as social services in education and health which were not functional ineffective even before the war .

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**CHAPTER FIVE**  
**THE POST CIVIL WAR ECONOMIES**  
**IN SIERRA LEONE AND LIBERIA 2003-2010**

This chapter examines the efforts of the Liberian and Sierra Leonean governments in revamping their economies after the civil wars. It takes into context the economic positions of the two countries, before, during and the economic peacebuilding strategies that were employed after the war. It examines how the Liberian and Sierra Leonean governments addressed the problems of unemployment, repairs of basic social and economic infrastructures such as roads, electricity, communications and transportations, amongst others. The chapter concludes with a comparative assessment of the achievements and challenges of both countries in the area of economic reconstruction.

**Introduction**

An essential component of peacebuilding is the rebuilding of economic institutions, government institutions, and communities.<sup>1</sup> States emerging from armed conflict usually face the challenge of transitioning from “war-weakened economies and highly polarized political and social relations to rejuvenated economies capable of providing the basic needs of all citizens and political groups that offer all social groups meaning participation”<sup>2</sup> in decision-making. States like Sierra Leone and Liberia that had experienced protracted conflicts will often suffer from economic underdevelopment, damaged assets, and reduced capacity to function effectively. Armed conflict retards a country’s development process, and also erodes its developmental foundation.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to the lives lost and several injured persons, the wars in both countries led to material losses, such as destruction of crops and roads, and extensive damage to economic and social

infrastructures. Other areas that were grossly affected by the civil wars were transportation and communication systems, banking, health care, education, as well as agriculture.<sup>4</sup>

Generally the economic stress caused by war lessens production capacity and limits the investment capabilities of war-torn regions.<sup>5</sup> During wartime, resources are “diverted from routine maintenance of existing social and economic infrastructure” into defence.<sup>6</sup> Non-military government spending is often tightened, and there is typically a decline in investments in industrial, agricultural, and construction sectors. These industries, as well as overall trade, tend to decline. Debt often reaches very high level.<sup>7</sup> War usually leads to emigration and displacement. It can reduce the overall size of the labour force.<sup>8</sup> People are killed, or they abandon their homes. This often creates significant cost for a country in terms of capital and labour power.

Human resource shortages are also often severe in war-torn societies. Educational opportunities decrease, and access to land, limited. Indeed, war-induced destruction and poverty lead to illiteracy, malnutrition, inadequate access to clean water and sanitation facilities, and low school enrollment.<sup>9</sup> Protracted conflict disrupts the routine life of many society members. These burdens contribute to harsh economic or social conditions, pitting subgroups against each other.<sup>10</sup> In severe case; it produces social disorder resulting in widespread violence, famine, and flight.<sup>11</sup>

The environmental degradation brought about by war is also extensive. War-related population movements wreak havoc on fragile ecosystems and natural resources are over-exploited to finance the war effort.<sup>12</sup> Land mines may make territory unusable for agriculture. Multiple claims to land and assets arise, and are difficult to resolve in the contentious political environment that typically follows conflict.<sup>13</sup>

It is against this background that this chapter examines the economic reconstruction in Sierra Leone and Liberia after more than a decade of civil wars. It contends that states emerging from violent conflicts must focus both on immediate needs and long-term development projects.<sup>14</sup> People must have reasonable access to basic needs such as healthcare, nutrition, education, and housing. Meeting these immediate needs is important for young children, pregnant or nursing women, the elderly, and the extremely poor.<sup>15</sup> In addition to extreme poverty, disease and illiteracy are dangerous impediments to sustained economic and political progress.<sup>16</sup>

On the whole the effects of war on the economy implies that peacebuilding programmes must focus on the rehabilitation of basic physical infrastructure, including health and education services, water and sanitation systems, roads, telecommunications facilities and irrigation system.<sup>17</sup> Rebuilding bridges, marketplaces, and power generation facilities are also crucial to economic revival.<sup>18</sup>

### **The Economy Before and During the War**

**Sierra Leone** was engulfed in one of the most debasing civil wars that lasted over a decade in the 1990's. One of the root causes of the conflict could be traced to the massive corruption by the ruling government. Before the civil war began, more than 70 percent of the 4.5million citizens were involved in some aspect of agriculture mainly subsistence farming, and the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was 1.9billion UDS.<sup>19</sup> Although the country has substantial mineral resources which include diamonds, gold, and bauxite, official receipts of these products to government has been very small as a result of smuggling of the products abroad.

The civil war left in its trail a collapsed socio-economic order. The economy remained precarious. Agriculture was seriously undermined while prices of goods escalated and

unemployment dominated the labour force. Poverty became widespread as living standards fell especially among the poorer segments of the society. Against this backdrop, smuggling, especially of diamonds, remained pervasive and debilitating.

Similarly, the country's physical and social infrastructures were affected. Road networks were destroyed and lack of maintenance resulted in a deteriorated power supply system. Human resources development was neglected while the literacy rate fell sharply below 32 percent as there were no schooling in most parts of the country. In the civil service, the quality of service declined because majority of the middle and lower level staff lacked adequate education and were occupied with second jobs due to poor salaries.<sup>20</sup> The restructure of the collapsed economy became one of the challenges of post-conflict government in Sierra Leone.

### **Rebuilding the Financial Sector and Debt Repayments**

**Sierra Leone** is a potential rich country with diverse resources which include diamonds, gold, rutile, bauxite and varieties of agricultural products. Sierra Leone is an impoverished country and it is been rated in the category of the world's poorest nations. The economy had been severely depressed by the eleven years civil war, which affected and disrupted economic activity; the war severely damaged the export base, destroyed much of the physical infrastructure of the country.

The effect, was the collapse in the revenue base and chronic balance-of-payments deficit. "In 1997, there was an 18% contraction in GDP, virtual stagnation during 1998 and a further fall of 8% in 1999. By year 2000, real GDP, at US\$636m, was only around 84% of GDP in 1990, and GNP was a mere 57% of its value in 1990."<sup>21</sup>

Sierra Leone's economic development had always been constrained by an overdependence on mineral exploitation. Successive governments and the population had always believed that "diamonds and gold" are sufficient generators of foreign currency earnings and lure for investment. As a result, large scale agriculture of commodity products, industrial development and sustainable investments were neglected by governments. The economy was basically exploitative.

With the civil war over, post-conflict administration of President Tejan Kabbah in 2002, declared before a jubilating crowd in Freetown that "war don, meaning, the war is over."<sup>22</sup> He further declared that a new commitment aimed at rebuilding the economy had begun.

To back his statement, President Kabbah established the National Recovery Strategy (NRS) in collaboration with international partners to revamp the economy. Memberships of the NRS were Sierra Leonian's from different spheres of life. The broad membership of the NRS was to integrate people into the democratic and recovery process of the government.

On the recommendation and advice of the NRS, President Kabbah adopted a Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) that outlined for a reduction in the number of civil service employees, increased privatization of the economy, increased taxation and fiscal discipline. The initiative produced some improvements in the stability of the exchange rate and reduced inflation. Consequently, Sierra Leone qualified for the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative in 2002, at which point many rich countries stopped asking her to service its debt.

The World Bank and IMF reduced the sums owed them and demanded debt service charges. Four years after in December 2006, Sierra Leone had paid millions of dollars in debt service. At

this point, she got “debt cancellation worth \$1million through the HIPC initiative, and more than \$600 million from the Multilateral Debt Relief (MDR) initiative. The amount represented about 90% of Sierra Leone’s \$1.7 billion debt, leaving \$100 million of the external debt to be paid”.<sup>23</sup>

## **Agriculture**

Following years of pre-war economic mismanagements and a decade of civil war which disrupted the Sierra Leone’s economy, the agricultural sector was not isolated. The was affected the agricultural sector, which traditionally employed more than half of the country’s labour force.<sup>24</sup> The war led to displacement of populations and insecurity and this affected the agricultural production and exports of crops. Also, most livestock’s were killed, post harvest facilities vandalized, and fishing infrastructure were destroyed. The latter in particular led to the reduction of fish production to 50% of pre-war levels. Aside, coffee and cocoa which traditionally have been the major sources of foreign exchange for the Sierra Leone government also slumped in international market raising questions over the economic viability of the country.

Further, increased demand for firewood for cooking led to increase in the consumption of firewood, which caused widespread environmental damage, huge demand for food aid dependency, widespread unemployment, poverty and malnutrition and expanded foreign indebtedness. To eradicate these problems, President Kabbah embarked on full scale revitalization of the agricultural sector, by establishing the “Agricultural and Food Security Dependency Programme (AFSDP) to help the country to achieve food sufficiency, generate trade surplus and create employment and raise income.

Since inception in 2000, the initiative had recorded tremendous progress in stabilizing the economy. Food crop production, such as paddy rice, millet and sweet potato which was low in



pre war economy in 1991 was increased by 50 percent from 2003 figure<sup>25</sup> Similar success was recorded in the livestock levels of cattle, sheep and poultry which increased by 10% from its 2% war economy level. Goats increased by 20% from 5% war economy and pig stocks increased by 100% over 2002 stock. Estimated lowland rice cultivation increased from 13,000 hectares of land to 85,000 hectares, while fisheries achieved 25% from 10% war economy level through the provision of 100 additional artisanal fishing boats with engines and net.<sup>26</sup>

Through the aggressive agriculture policy, dependency on foreign food aid was reduced by at least 50% to less than 31,000 MT. To consolidate the gains in this sector, the government partnered with several foreign donors including the United States to operate integrated rural development and agricultural projects in November 2009.

### **Mining Sector**

Rich in minerals, Sierra Leone has relied on the mining sector in general, and diamonds in particular, for its economic base. Before the war, the Mining was the major source of income of the Sierra Leone's government. According to statistics from the Ministry of Mineral Resources (MMR) before the war, the sector accounted for about 20% of the Gross Domestic Product of Sierra Leone, and 90% of the registered exports and about 20% of fiscal revenues in the early 1970s and 1980s.<sup>27</sup> Mining also provided employment for over 270,000 workers. Mining in Sierra Leone involved principally the extraction of diamonds, gold, rutile and bauxite. After the war in 2000, the official mining exports plummeted to a paltry US \$10 million and accounted for 0.1% of the country's gross domestic product.<sup>28</sup>

The stagnation of the sector resulted from domestic factors, ranging from political instability, macro-economic policies, and governance, low share in fiscal revenues and major illegal trade

and exports of diamonds. To bring back the sector to pre-war condition, Sierra Leone Ministry of Mines adopted a three point strategy geared to increase production and generate more income for the government: This includes:

Maintaining civil order in mining areas through the deployment of staff, encourage use of licenses, allowing communities to engage in the licensing process, provision of mobility communications and training of staff.

Establishment of sound mining policy in close collaboration and with the assistance from World Bank, Department for International Development (DFID) and USAID, that will promote and create an enabling environment to attract private investment for medium and large-scale mining.

Finally, immediate reactivation of current mining leases, including reactivation of rutile and bauxite mines, encourage investors to engage in small-scale artisanal diamond mining projects in partnership with local communities and facilitate investors operations through simplifying of licensing procedures and waiver of custom duties on importation of mining equipment.

The strategy yielded results. Diamond output in 2003 was reported at 506,819 carats, up sharply from 351,860 carats in 2002. However, these figures do not reflect smuggled artisanal output. National diamond output was placed at 600,000 carats annually from 1999 through 2001, and at 250,000 carats in 1998.<sup>29</sup> It was believed that a substantial portion of the diamonds close to the earth's surface was smuggled out of the country.

Cement production in 2003 totaled 169,500 metric tons, up from 144,100 metric tons in 2002. Gypsum output was estimated at 4,000 metric tons annually from 1999 through 2003. Salt production in 2003 was estimated at 1,800 metric tons, unchanged from 2002.<sup>30</sup> There was no

recorded output of rutile in Sierra Leone in 2003, although it had been announced that rutile mining would resume by that year.

Sierra Leone is known to have reserves of bauxite and other minerals including antimony, cassiterite, columbite, corundum, fluorspar, ilmenite, lead, lignite, magnetite, molybdenum, monazite, platinum, silver, tantalite, tin titanium, tungsten, and zinc.

Sierra Leone has one of the world's highest deposits of rutile, a titanium ore used as paint pigment and welding rod coatings. Mining operations in this sector was banned when rebels invaded the mining sites in 1995. However, the government lifted the ban in 2005.

### **The Economy before and during the War**

Like Sierra Leone, the **Liberian** economy was already plummeting downwards and it worsened during the civil war. The country's were already being looted even in peacetime by the political elite and their cronies. However during the war, the Liberian economy was not only destroyed but its resources were looted by the major protagonists of the war. The war also left in its ruins most of the country's economic and social infrastructure. Transportation, communication and public utility systems which are important for any modern economic development were destroyed, and most public, business and residential dwellings were destroyed by the war. The war also left schools and hospitals inoperable.

The war drove the Liberian economy into deep crises. With low private and public investments during the war, the Liberian economy declined drastically. Urban unemployment rose to over 50 percent<sup>31</sup> while rising consumer prices cut deeply into the incomes of those employed. During Sgt. Doe's government in the early 1980s, Liberia's economy maintained huge non-productive

budget deficits with her foreign financial loans and low commercial bank's reserves causing an increase in the external debt from \$537million in 1980 to over 1.4 billion in 1982.<sup>32</sup>

By the late 1980s, the government of Liberia was in deep financial mess, as it could no longer meet her foreign obligations. Liberia's access to the World Bank was suspended and several World Bank Assisted Projects, such as the Monrovia Urban Development Programme (MUDP) was kept on hold. Even her best ally, the United States of America demanded repayment of \$7million<sup>33</sup> debt owed her before providing further financial assistance. In 1989, just as the war commenced, United State Agency for International Development (USAID) began to close its programmes in Liberia.

Aside from financial crises, the war denied Liberia a national economy. What existed throughout the period was an economy divided into various zones of exploitable resource from where different warriors and factions fought to expand their commercial ties to the outside world. And since most of these economic and commercial activities were done secretly and illegally, it became extremely difficult for the Liberian government to aggregate her national income.

Liberia, richly endowed with water, mineral resources, forests and a climate favourable for agriculture, was producer and exporter of basic products such as raw timber and rubber. The local manufacturing sector was mainly foreign owned. Liberia relied heavily on mining of iron ore before the war. The combination of low production, mass unemployment, rising inflation and excessive public debts produced serious negative socio-economic impacts on the citizenry. With the civil war over, and with the election and inauguration of a new government headed by Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in 2006, the responsibility for the economic reconstruction and development

became the duty of the Harvard-trained banker and administrator to implement sound macro and micro economic policies to move the country forward.

### **Rebuilding the Financial Sector and Debt Repayment**

One thing that was common to Sierra Leone and **Liberia** was that both are blessed with rich mineral resources and thus have the potential to belong to rich countries in the MANO River region. Fourteen years of civil conflict destroyed government institutions, decimated infrastructure, and forced the flight of thousands. Liberia's forests were exploited in "arms for timber sales" for which the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) imposed sanctions banning the export of timber and diamonds which were the major sources of revenue to the government. Amidst this decay, the public service was demoralized and riddled with corruption. As the war rages, government expenditure increased towards military ends at the cost of civil servants salaries.

Consequently, the civil servants increased their corrupt practices in order to extract a living wage. Key officials in revenue generating entities became wealthy through graft and theft of revenue. As a result, the national budget contracted from \$300 million in 1980 to US\$48 million in 2003. Relations with International Financial Institutions were poor and deteriorated. Under these daunting challenges coupled with the humanitarian problems, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf emerged in office.

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf assumed office with an inherited financial debt to the tune of \$3 billion. Saddled with the debt and how to re-enact investors' confidence on the economy, President Sirleaf embarked on an aggressive diplomatic shuttles overseas to reassure foreign investors and build confidence to re-invest in the Liberian economy. The diplomatic shuttles

yielded results. The government was able to attract over \$100 million in new investments in the first half of 2009 and also announced reforms in thirty-nine business sectors in 2008 and 2009.<sup>34</sup> Aside, the government fulfilled her financial obligation to the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and African Development Bank to the tune of \$1.6billion. She also announced in 2001 that \$1.4billion debt in arrears to Paris Club creditors had been cleared.<sup>35</sup>

Liberia's economy continued to grow modestly under President Sirleaf Johnson's administration, despite the global economic downturn. The IMF projects Gross Domestic growth for Liberia through 2012. The inflation rate in 2009 averaged 7.4% and the government budget for the 2010-2011 fiscal year ending June 30, 2011 was \$369million. This was about 0.5% lower than the final budget of the previous year.<sup>36</sup>

## **Agriculture**

In **Liberia**, agriculture is the predominant source of livelihood for over 70% of the population. The economy of Liberia was entirely dependent on agricultural activities, with special focus on the production of rubber. Agriculture contributed 76 percent of Liberia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 1999 and about 70%<sup>55</sup> of the population worked in the agricultural sector, which produced rubber, coffee, cocoa, rice, cassava, palm oil, sugarcane and banana. Sheep and goats were raised, and there was also lumbering. The staple food was rice but it was mainly imported. However, the government made huge effort to develop intensive rice production in the country because of the strategic importance of the crop.

On assumption of office, and cushion the effects of the civil war on the citizenry, President Ellen Sirleaf Johnson embarked on the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS). The programme had two objectives, viz;

1. To increase sales and shipments of agriculture production to urban and export markets
2. To increase agricultural production of food supply to rural families and improved subsistence farming.

As witnessed in Sierra Leone, many of the people embraced farming after the civil war. The fragile success recorded in the agricultural sector during the period of the PRS centered around provision of technical and material inputs to farmers to stimulate increased production. Although, Liberia's agricultural sector made significant gains during the period, many challenges remain. The farming sector is currently under performing with low productive capacity, contributing to food insecurity. Dependence on imported food is increasing, two-third of the food on the Liberian market is imported. Food insecurity remains a major challenge for Liberians, with 41% of the population undernourished. Enhanced production of Liberian staple foods rice and cassava- will alleviate the challenges of food insecurity.

### **Mining Sector**

Before the war, **Liberia** was one of the main diamond producing and exporting centers in West Africa. Production of diamond and gold minerals were organized on small-scale by individuals with rights to form partnerships in order to raise capital and initiate contract terms with diggers of the minerals. The contracts usually involved profit sharing for diggers, except where the investor provided machinery.

Estimates of diamond exports during the war through Cote d'Ivoire varied from US\$300m to US\$500m and its destination was Antwerp, Belgium. Estimates of Belgian imports from Liberia based on IMF trade returns in 1994 shows \$309m in 1994 and \$371m in 1995 (IMF 1996). Impressive as the figures seems the money realized did not get to the government's coffer,

instead it went to the various factions of the rebel fighters who were in control of the mines especially former rebel leader and President Charles Taylor.

To reverse the trend, as part of her government's efforts at rebuilding the economy after the civil war, President Sirleaf Johnson again suspended the diamond renewal mining licenses, which were to expire at the end of December 2006. The suspension order made all mining exercises after December 2006 illegal. To enforce this policy the government established a diamond mining monitoring offices in Monrovia and several other regions. The government's effort was boosted by the United States government which apart from assisting in technical training of staff in the offices also provided diamond and gem tools equipment and furniture for the programme.

Besides, the United States also assisted in the following areas:

- Training of Liberian diamond evaluators in South Africa and Dubai,
- Training of staff to manage the regional offices and related material and salary assistance, including vehicles, to support the establishment and future functioning of these posts throughout Liberia;
- Salary support for five diamond evaluators
- Provision of specialized technical training to multiple ministry staff in the areas of Stream Sediment Studies, database applications, and GIS and remote imagery;
- Production of a comprehensive geological assessment of Liberia's diamond production capacity, and digitization and reproduction of geological maps of Liberia;
- Provision of software and hardware components of a database for tracking diamond production and Kimberley Process admission and program compliance; and
- Production of 1,000 Kimberly Process rough diamond export certificates.



The funding of the US assistance was provided under a \$1.44 million FY2005 ESF funding tranche under a U.S. Geological Survey implemented contract with the Constella Futures International, a social development technical assistance firm. As at the time of this field work, the U.S. Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control was reportedly preparing updated regulations to allow the import of Liberian rough diamonds into the United States.

President Sirleaf Johnsons' suspension order paid off on May 4, 2007 when Liberia was re admitted into the Kimberley Process following the United Nations (U.N) Security Council's passage on April 27, 2007, of Resolution 1753, which lifted the ban on Liberian diamonds imposed in December 2003 (Resolution 1321). In passing Resolution 1753, the Council also announced its intention to review Liberia's admission to and general compliance with the Kimberley Process.

Liberia's diamond deposits are mostly alluvial, usually deposited by water flows, and far from their point of origin.

## **Rebuilding Infrastructure**

### **Roads:**

In **Sierra Leone**, national recovery is inextricably linked to access, which is critical for the maintenance of security, and speedy recovery of the economy. Hence, the urgent need to repair roads and infrastructures that were destroyed during the civil war. The opening of road networks would enable farmers to reach markets, traders to transport their goods around the country at affordable costs, and also help provide much needed employment opportunities through intensive labour works. Likewise, without a functioning good road network, the restoration of civil

authority, health, education, water, sanitation and other social infrastructure will be severely hampered.

After the war, Sierra-Leone's public road network was in bad shape. It suffered many years of inadequate maintenance and neglect. Of the 8000km functionally classified roads, main roads and feeder roads 44% were in poor condition, 31% in a fair condition and only 25% were in good condition. For feeder roads only, over 50% were classified good.<sup>37</sup>

While on field work for this research, it was difficult for this researcher to access the hinterland because of the bad roads. Most of the roads previously asphalted were in a state of dilapidation dotted with uncountable potholes, collapsed culverts and general erosion. Overall, the sparse coverage and poor state of the roads constituted a huge barrier to economic recovery and sustainable growth.

Further, Sierra Leone government established the Sierra Leone Roads Authority (SLRA) largely funded by international donors in conjunction with United Nation Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) engineers to embark on rehabilitation of road networks up to minimum standards. To this end, a total of approximately 1,840km of trunk road and 1,690km of feeder roads were rehabilitated, as at December 2009. The exercise generated 600,000 m/days labour for the unemployed citizens.<sup>38</sup>

### **Air Transportation**

The national air carrier, founded in 1961 as **Sierra Leone Airways**, was reconstituted in 1982 as Sierra Leone Airlines under the management of Alia-Royal Jordanian Airline, which holds a

20% share. In 2003, about 14, 000 passengers were carried on scheduled domestic and international flights.<sup>39</sup>

In 2004 there were 10 airports. However, in 2005, only one had a paved runway with two heliports. An international airport at Lungi is connected by ferry to Freetown, across the bay. It is served by about a dozen international airlines with regular flights to Europe, North and South America, and the rest of West Africa. Domestic service operates from Hastings Airport, 22 km (14mi) from Freetown, linking the capital to nearly all the large provincial towns.

The rehabilitation of the Lungi International Airport is highlighted in the Agenda for Change as a key priority result to be achieved by 2012. The Government has committed to reconstruct, expand and upgrade the existing Lungi Airport infrastructure. This involves designing and promoting aviation safety, facilitating international and domestic movement of people and goods through the effective management of the airport, and providing efficient passenger and cargo handling facilities. The government has also pledged to address the problem of linking the Lungi International Airport with Freetown through public-private partnership arrangements that will provide additional ferries and other safe means of sea transportation.

The rehabilitation of the airport planned by Sierra Leone Airport Authority (SLAA) includes the construction of a new terminal building and a modern car park, the rehabilitation and refurbishment of the existing runway. Furthermore, the SLAA is planning to rehabilitate all the domestic airstrips in the country and to build a new airport on the mainland.

In 2009, the Ministry of Transport and Aviation secured a grant of 8.9 million US Dollars<sup>40</sup> from the World Bank to upgrade the Freetown International Airport infrastructure. Activities initiated included

- Overlay of the runway and widening of the taxiway (ongoing)
- Relocation of airfield ground lighting system (ongoing)
- Provision of water and electricity for the airport (ongoing)
- Provision of navigation and communications equipment (equipment ordered)
- Institutional strengthening and training (ongoing)

With regard to effort undertaken towards more efficient management and passenger and cargo handling at Lungi International Airport, a private service provider (Group Europe Company) was awarded the contract for ground handling. A new fire vehicle was also procured to improve the emergency response services in compliance with the ICAO/IATA regulations.

## **Maritime**

Like any other sector, **Sierra Leone** maritime industries were heavily devastated during the civil war. As part of the agenda for change, the Sierra Leone Port Authority (SLPA) privatized the port from service port to a landlord port in which the core activities of stevedoring and shore handling would be relinquished to private sector operators. Furthermore, in parallel to the privatization process, the SLPA rolled out activities for the effective takeoff of the scheme.

Some of the activities included:

- Construction of a new oil jetty or port,
- Rehabilitation of Kissy Oil Jetty (KOJ)

- Procurement of a Close Circuit Television (CCTV) to improve security at the port and monitoring operations,
- Procurement of a Pilot Boat, Tug and Mooring Work Boat with a capacity of 2,500HP,
- Provision of Handling equipment,
- Dredging of the Queen Elizabeth 2 Quay,
- Dredging of the area immediately in front of the Litherage Quay,
- Demolition and reconstruction of the Jetty and Government Wharf.<sup>41</sup>

In addition, The Sierra Leone Maritime Administration (SLMA) focused on the construction and rehabilitation of jetties with storage and sanitation facilities, the procurement and installation of navigational aids and communication equipment, the clearing of wrecks in the coastal and inland waterways, dredging of inland waterway and construction of Boat Yards.

In 2009, the SLMA commenced construction of jetties in the following areas which were completed in 2011:

- Gbondapi in the Pujehun District
- Gbangbatoke in the Moyamba District
- Yargio in the Bonthe District
- Port Loko in the Port District
- Rokupr in the Kambia District
- Kasserri in the Kambia District
- Kychon in the Kambia District
- Mabolo in the Kambia District

The SLMA also procured a search and rescue boat as well as a large quantity of navigational aids that are ready for installation in Sierra Leone territorial waters and inland water ways. Finally, communications equipments have also been also procured and installed in ten jetties in the country.

The Ministry of Transport and Aviation in collaboration with the SLMA submitted the statutory instrument providing the regulation of Shipping Agents for ratification by Parliament.

The targets for the next twelve months (2010) were.

- Rehabilitation of Kissy Oil Jetty
- Procurement of Pilot Boat, 50ton Tug Boat and a Mooring/Work boat,
- Demolition and construction of the Ligttorage Quay and reinforcement of the shoreline in this immediate vicinity at the Queen Elizabeth 2 Quay. The quay would be used by lighter vessels of smaller draft,
- Dredging of the area immediately in front of the Ligttorage Quay
- Demolition and reconstruction of the jetty at government wharf.

### **Health {Global Health Initiative (GHI)}**

**Sierra Leone's** devastating 11-year civil war ended over a decade ago. The country's healthcare system largely destroyed during the conflict along side other vital infrastructures, remains extremely weak. The nation continues to struggle with a low life expectancy of 47 years, an infant mortality rate of 89 per 1,000 live births, an under-five mortality rate of 140 per 1,000 live births, and a maternal mortality rate of 857 per 100,000 births (SLDHS, 2008).<sup>42</sup>

As expected after the war the government of Sierra Leone (GoSL), was confronted with numerous competing demands to establish a stable power system, clean water supply, and other

basic infrastructure, and rebuilding the health sector. Immediately after the civil war, the GoSL released National Health Sector Strategic Plan (NHSSP), which provided the framework needed to guide the efforts of the Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MoHS) and its partners over the next six years in attaining health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Their target was to reduce child mortality, improving maternal health, and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases. The overarching goal of the NHSSP is “to reduce inequalities and improve the health of the people, especially mothers and children, through strengthening national health system to enhance health related outcomes and impact indicators.”<sup>43</sup>

Despite the limited resources and infrastructural challenges in Sierra Leone, the MoHS has been very proactive and committed to pushing through recent innovative health policies and reforms, such as:

- Decentralization of health services, such that since 2008 for instance, 19 local councils are responsible for managing the delivery of both primary and secondary health care services.
- Establishment of the NHSSP (2010-2015). This focuses on six health system strengthening areas including leadership and governance, service delivery, human resources for health, medical products and health technologies, and health information systems. The NHSSP forms the basis for developing and implementing strategic and operational plans of the central MoHS directorates, formalizes coordination mechanisms, and guidance for developing short and long term expenditure frameworks.
- Establishment of health compact between the GoSL and signatory health partners. This set a framework for increased and more effective aid to permit Sierra Leone to make faster progress towards achieving MDGs. This is a voluntary agreement between the

GoSL and health development partners to ensure that aid is lined up behind the priorities outlined in the NHSSP.

- Formation of a basic package of essential services. This addresses the unacceptably high child and maternal mortality and morbidity in the country.
- The President announced a Free Health Care Initiative for pregnant women, locating mothers, and children under five in April 2010. Attendance at health facilities increased three-fold and demonstrated that cost was a significant barrier to accessing health care.
- Establishment of a national laboratory policy.<sup>44</sup>

## **Forestry**

Before the war, **Sierra Leone** had over 2.7 million hectares of forest, representing 38.5% of the land area. Since 1990, 9.5% of the country's forest has been lost and there is very little rainforest remaining.<sup>45</sup> Deforestation is the result of the rapidly growing population pressure on resources through over-harvest of timber, the expansion of cattle grazing and slash-and-burn agriculture. Despite the richness of the countries mineral, agricultural and fishery resources, decades of neglect by the government, followed by the brutal civil war, which ended in 2002, have exacerbated the situation and the majority of the people of Sierra Leone live in extreme poverty.

After the civil war, elected President, Kabbah in 2007 embarked on a mission to crack down illegal logging. A timber export ban was imposed in January 2008 in response to claim that foreign companies and logger (mostly from China, and neighboring Guinea and Ivory Cost) were plundering Sierra Leone's forest and causing severe degradation. The lack of clarity over responsibility for forest management and corruption led to the enforcement of the ban.



The ban was lifted in June 2008 and strict rules were announced to tackle illegal logging. These include monitoring of felling by forest rangers, new transportation permits and identification codes on timber. A reward scheme was also set up for informers with information on illegal logging practices.

Sierra Leone has 2,090 known species of higher plants, 147 mammals, 626 birds, 67 reptiles, 35 amphibians, and 99 fish species.<sup>46</sup>

Sierra Leone is a signatory to the Accra Declaration which emerged from the FAO/ITTO workshop held in Accra, Ghana in July 2008. The workshop explored the problems and solutions to the illegal extraction of forest resources in tropical West Africa.

### **Energy Sector**

As in all other sectors, the civil war in **Sierra Leone** destroyed the energy sector. During the war, total national electricity production was below 255 million kWh in 2002<sup>47</sup> with 100% from fossil fuel.

At the end of the war, the government placed the energy sector at the top of its development agenda, which was informed by the recognition of the tremendous multiple affect that a reliable and sustained supply of electricity had on the economy. Access to reliable and affordable energy supply on a sustainable basis, particularly by industries, agriculture and the commercial sector, would serve as an important catalyst for achieving high economic growth and hence, poverty reduction.

To achieving her dream in the energy sector, in the medium to long term, therefore, the Government's evolved five policies thrust for energy development which covered the following:

- Improving thermal power generation
- Exploiting hydro potentials
- Upgrading and expanding the national transmission and distribution network
- Improving energy sector governance
- Ensuring an integrated policy approach

As a result of the policy, electricity rose sharply by 4.7%<sup>48</sup> for the first time in December 2009. In the same year, 11KV transmission line project was completed in Freetown. The project was supported by World Bank.<sup>49</sup>

With the effort of the government, huge improvement was record in the transmission distribution generation in 2010 and 2011. Also, the government had installed another 77.0kVA generation capacities in the southern towns of Pujehun and Moyamba. Total national electricity production totaled 255 million kWh in 2002, with 100% from fossil fuel. Consumption of electricity in 2002 was 237 million kWh. Installed capacity in 2002 was 124,000kW.<sup>50</sup>

As at January 1, 2003, Sierra Leone had no proven reserves of crude oil or natural gas. However, with strong determination, the refining capacity rose to 10,000 barrels per day. In 2002, imports of all petroleum products averaged 6,710 barrels per day, which included crude oil imports of 5,040 barrel per day. Refined oil production that year averaged 4,810 barrels per day, while demand averaged 6,410 barrels per day.

### **Communications Industry**

As observed in the previous paragraph, the **Sierra Leone** civil war ruptured the social infrastructures in the country. Pre-war communication infrastructure in Sierra Leone were

relatively okay, but were controlled by the state. International cablegram, telex, and telephone services are provided by Sierra Leone External Telecommunications (SLET). Before the war, the only telephone service provider in the country, “Sierratel” only functioned in the capital, Freetown. In Bo and Kanema, services were limited and linkages to all urban centers were erratic at best. The poor communication network stifled economic activities in the country the people were compelled to move from one spot to another on bad roads.

Realizing the vital role of communication in the polity, the government granted licenses to communication service providers such as Celtel which now provides service to all parts of the country. Regarding internet services, there is currently only one provider in the country known as *Securicom*. Which services currently oversubscribed, overstretched and over-priced. Lack of reliable internet service provider is militating against the growth of business, and the government had also addressed this sector by granting more licenses to other private investors. As at 2003, there were an estimated five mainline telephone for every 1,000 people, as well as approximately 13 mobile phones in use for every 1,000 peopl.<sup>51</sup>

In 2004, there were over 50 newspapers throughout the country. The only major daily newspaper is the government-owned *Daily Mail* (with a 2002 circulation of 10,000) and *Weekend Spark* (20,000).<sup>52</sup> Under legislation enacted in 1980, all newspapers must register with the ministry of information and pay a sizable registration fee. The 1991 constitution provided for free speech and a free press, however in practice this is not so as journalist are often harassed for publishing articles unflattering to the government.

## **Education Sector**

The more than a civil war in **Sierra Leone** also impacted the educational development the country. It destroyed infrastructure, and alienated youths and children from family values and national culture. The population was decimated and large number of people displaced. Random killing, rapes, and mutilation became commonplace in a horrific nightmare of lawlessness, fear, and rampant terror. About 70%<sup>53</sup> of schools in Sierra Leone were destroyed or occupied by rebel forces during the war. Those, which were not occupied, were left in various states of destruction and despair. Rebels used school furniture as firewood during such occupations. School reconstruction and rehabilitation were the priorities after the war. Although over 500 schools were constructed and rehabilitated from 2001 to 2007,<sup>54</sup> the efforts have not solved the problem of scarce classroom for all the children of school going age expected by 2015 under the Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme.<sup>55</sup>

Primary education is neither wholly free nor compulsory, but the ultimate of the government is to provide free primary school facilities for every child. Primary school last for three years, followed by three years of junior secondary school and three years senior secondary school.<sup>56</sup> In 2001, about 4% of the children between the ages of three and five were enrolled in some type of preschool program. In the same year, there were 554,000 students enrolled in primary school and 156,000 students enrolled in secondary school. It is estimated that about 56% of the students complete their primary education. The student-to-teacher ratio for primary school was at about 37:1 while that of secondary school was at about 27:1.<sup>57</sup>

Fourah Bay College, the oldest institution of higher learning in West Africa, was founded in 1827 by the Church Missionary Society (CMS), primarily to provide theological training. It was

affiliated to the University of Durham in England in 1876 and received a Royal Charter in 1959 as the University College of Sierra Leone. In 1967, the University of Sierra Leone was chartered with two constituent colleges, Fourah Bay (in Freetown) and Njala University College (in Moyambe District). In 2001, there were about 9,000 students enrolled in higher education programme.

As of 2003, public expenditure on education was estimated at 3.7% of GDP.

### **Water Sanitation**

Before the civil war, **Sierra Leone's** has huge water resources potential, however harnessing it was a challenge. Access to safe and sustainable water source has remained poor. After the civil war, Sierra Leone suffers from acute lack of sources for safe drinking water and sanitation facilities. Estimates of access to sanitation facilities ranged from 15% to 63%. Even in the nation's capital Freetown, the taps were dry. Most citizens source their water from the well which is not safe. To alleviate the suffering the government created the Guma Valley Water Company (GVWC), charged with the responsibility of providing quality drinking water to the citizens. So far, the company has provided 846,000 liters of safe drinking water for the people. While additional sanitation facilities have been provided for about 550,000 people.<sup>58</sup>

### **Rebuilding Infrastructure**

#### **Roads**

Similarly, the need for good roads in **Liberia** was understandable. Improved road conditions will help fast-track humanitarian assistance, revive the country's economy through the expansion of commerce and trade, thus leading to poverty reduction among rural and urban populations. Good roads reduce travel time; reduce transport costs and cost of goods. Addressing the issue,

President Ellen Johnson in collaboration with other organizations including UNMIL, UN agencies, non-governmental organizations and the private sector embarked on aggressive road rehabilitation programme. The programme was supported by the World Bank which provided an emergency grant of US\$68 million.<sup>59</sup>

On roads, the World Bank placed emphasis on rehabilitation of road surfaces, roadside brushing and repairing of drainages amongst others. On her part, the Liberian government financed the rehabilitation of over 2,000km<sup>60</sup> of roads in the country.

To consolidate the efforts in the road sector, as part of the joint project implementation agreement the World Bank, Ministry of Public Works, UNMIL, and WNDP, all agreed to meet regularly to fine-tune operational strategies for road rehabilitation. Details of the agreement were that the UNMIL would supply all the heavy construction equipment needed as well as provide military and civilian technical expertise and supervision. Public works would provide added road engineering expertise and knowledge of the terrain. While the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) take care of the overall management of financial resources, including procurement of auxiliary construction equipments, tools gear and materials as well as payment of labourers. The World Bank contributed financial resources. At the same time, principal parties involved in the rehabilitation exercise meet fortnightly to focus on operational issues and to facilitate cooperation in support of community driven recovery efforts.

### **Reforms in Air Transportation**

In a similar vein, the years of insecurity in Liberia reduced the demand for air service to and from Monrovia. SN Brussels remains the only international airline that flies directly to Monrovia from Europe as at the time of this research in 2006.

The Roberts International Airport (RIA), about 45km outside Monrovia, is the only international airport in the country. Most RIA's infrastructure were destroyed during the years of unrest. The other airport with a paved runway is James Spriggs Payne in Monrovia. There were other gravel-surfaced airstrips throughout Liberia. Air transport within Liberia is limited to small aircraft and helicopters. Liberia does not have a national carrier.

The services provided at RIA airport leaves much to be desired. Passengers are often hassled by ill-trained airport personnel and officials. Considering the mismanagement, insufficient funding, and lack of proper equipment at airports throughout the country, air transport management is an issue that warrants comprehensive study.

To this end, the government in collaboration with the World Bank committed US \$200,000 and US \$600, 000<sup>61</sup> respectively for the renovation and modification of the existing passengers' terminals and purchase of aeronautical equipments which were installed in 2010.

## **Maritime**

Similarly in Liberia, the 1989-2003 civil wars had debasing effect on the maritime sector. During the fourteen year civil war, the country lost huge financial resources in this sector due to non-patronage of the seaports. Conscious of the immense contribution of this sector to the Liberian economy, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, in 2010, enacted several legislations to modernize commercial transactions and expand commercial activities at the seaports.

The result earned the Liberian government \$100million from timber export and another \$70million from rubber exports in 2009.<sup>62</sup> Also being the second-largest maritime licensor in the world before the outbreak of the civil war, the Liberian maritime industry registered over 3000

vessels totaling nearly 100 million gross tons, under its flag, including 35% of the world's tanker fleet in 2005.<sup>63</sup> Also, there is an increasing interest in the possibility of commercially exploitable off shore crude oil deposits along Liberia's Atlantic Coast with Chevron, a United States based oil corporation giant. It present Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, signed a three year deal to explore the oil.

## **Health**

As expected, **Liberia** faces substantial public health challenges after the war. Malaria was endemic, water-borne illnesses were common, tuberculosis cases often go uncured, and outbreaks of other diseases such as yellow fever, measles and cholera are common. Unfortunately the country lacks the means to combat this problems.<sup>64</sup> Above all, medical supplies and trained staff were in chronic short supply. Finding solution to the problems of the health sector, President Ellen Johnson sought the support of international donor agencies to help combat the challenges. The results, was the establishment of the Quick Impact Project (QIPs) of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) which funds community-oriented projects aimed to address issues of water and sanitation, road rehabilitation and health, amongst others.

In combating waterborne diseases problem, the Liberia Ministry of Health (MOH) in collaboration with UNMIL Quick Impact Project provided 6.500 new hand-pumps in all parts of the country to enable the people have access to clean drinking water.<sup>65</sup> Hitherto, Liberians especially those in the rural areas relied on water from creeks and un-chlorinated wells dotted round the country, for their water needs.

Lassa fever disease also broke out in Liberia during this period. To combat the disease the Liberian Ministry of Health in collaboration with WHO implemented an Emergency Lassa Fever Prevention and Control Programme (LFPCP), to handle issues of Lassa fever patients through



clinical diagnosis, case management, referrals, infection control, injection safety and hospital-based surveillance through improved laboratory services. Other responsibilities of the LFPCP include, provision of sanitation tools, surveillance and response to outbreaks, community sensitization through information education and communication.

So far the scheme had training of 162 health workers on Lassa fever prevention and control, twelve others as trainers to facilitate information sharing and skills development. In addition, 60 nurses and nursing students were also trained on aspects of case definitions, clinical presentation and standard precautions.<sup>66</sup>

Assistance has also been received from other concerned international governments such as the Chinese government, which built and equipped a hospital in the South-eastern city of Zwedru. The hospital has 12 medical doctors and 16 medical personnel, all drawn from the Beijing Army General Hospital.<sup>67</sup> The hospital provides high quality medical support to UNMIL staff and also extends free medical service to critical patients in the local community who cannot be treated at the local hospital.

## **Forestry**

Before the war, the forestry sector in **Liberia** generates substantial revenue for the government. Approximately 60 different timber species are routinely harvested in Liberia.<sup>68</sup> The brutal civil war brought equilateral damage on the forestry sector. During the war, there were incessant wide lives poaching which took a heavy toll on Liberia forest.

During the war the Liberia government granted concessions to timber firms which made the government lose control over logging in much of the country. The situation made the United

Nation Security Council to impose strict sanction on Liberia in 2003 because the government had not legitimately earned any revenue from the timber sector. However, with the end of the war, the new government in Liberia immediately established forestry as a national priority and instituted a five-year tax holiday on timber industries. This policy, combined with the return of commercial interests to the country, repopulation, and reconstruction efforts, has put pressure on Liberia's remaining forest resources. Since the close of the 1990, deforestation rates have increased by 17%, and primary forest cover in the country has fallen to over 13% of the land area (or 4.1% of forest the cover).<sup>69</sup>

### **Energy Sector**

Another major issue which confronted President Johnson Sirleaf's government after the war was energy. Before the war, **Liberia** produced 432 million kilowatt per hour (kwh) of electricity, but much of the electricity-generating infrastructure had been destroyed or damaged. Two-thirds of electricity generated in the country were from diesel generators. Inadequate electricity was a major headache to the government. All petroleum products were imported, 38 percent consumed was used to generate electricity and most domestic energy needs were provided by charcoal and wood.

The government's response was to grant more licenses to importers of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS), Petrol and Agro Oil (AGO) to discourage monopoly and promote rivalry with the aim of bringing down the cost of the products. Also, the government signed a three year contract with a United States based oil company, Chevron, to prospect crude oil discovered in offshore Atlantic Coast of the country.

## **Communications Industry**

In the same vein among the social economic infrastructures which were destroyed during the civil war in Liberia, communication was one of the worst hit. During the war, the illiteracy rate was estimated at 76% due to the insecurity in the country which made many people not have access to information. In addition, cost of newspapers and transportation increased due to the poor state of roads in the country which limited newspapers distributions to only Monrovia, the nation's capital.

Consequently, radio became the primary source of mass communication. Before the civil war, Liberia had only three radio broadcasting stations, viz: the state-run national station, Liberia Broadcasting Corporation (LBC), operated and directed under ex-President Charles Taylor and two commercial stations (DC-101) and Radio Veritas which were operated under the Catholic Archdiocese. Due to the economic situation in the country during the war period, and the dependency on generators which required expensive fueling, most broadcast stations limited their broadcast hours, and in some cases ceased operations for some hours. Television was limited to those who could afford them. Internet facility was limited by relatively high price and was under government's constant monitoring, as the government claimed that the opposition group used the internet to wage propaganda against her.

On assumption of office, President Johnson Sirleaf, granted several licenses to many operators in communication business in Liberia. As at the time of this research in 2007, there were only 6 FM radio stations, 4 Short Wave and 10 independent newspapers. There were 30, 000 telephones and three mobile phones service providers.

## **Education Sector**

Similarly, before the civil war, **Liberia** was once a safe haven for Africa's brightest minds. Students from across the continent went to Liberia to study because of Liberia's strong educational system. One of the oldest colleges in Africa, Cultingon was Liberia's first private college. The University of Liberia is the largest public institution in the country. Before the outbreak of the war, Liberia was competing with institutions across the continent.

The civil war had two negative effects to the Liberian education system. First, it created a lost generation. Thousands of children were unable to receive education as major government services ceased to exist, creating an inadequate labour force necessary for rapid economic development. Second, during the war, most educated persons were either killed or fled the country for survival reasons and also to find greener pastures in other nations. When the educated left, the education systems collapsed. Those who fled were the foundations within the education sector.

Today, Liberia's school system is still in shambles with few teachers that are qualified to be called teachers or lecturers in the real sense. Though the government is trying, her effort is not enough. Enrollment of girls and boys skyrocketed. Mud houses are built and used as classrooms to accommodate the ever increasing students. "Colleges" and "universities" are been opened at homes. Most of them have been accredited without regard for the lack of facilities and quality instructors. Most of these schools are in business to make fast money out of the students because of government's inability to provide a better alternative. The recent WAEC examination was a disaster, because it recorded mass failure with government schools being the worst hit.

## **Water Sanitation**

Similarly, **Liberia** had the challenge of harnessing its huge water resources. With 14% of Liberia's surface area covered by water and a particularly heavy annual rainfall, the country's water resource potential is vast. During the rainy season, annual rainfall averages 4,320 mm. Liberia's groundwater is exploited primarily through wells and boreholes. Liberia's abundant water resources are also favorable to agriculture and rural energy development. Water and Sewer Corporation (LWSC) is mandated to provide safe drinking water is mandated to provide safe drinking water for Liberians. However, low capacity and a lack of modern technologies hinder the ability of LWSC to provide this critical service. The provision of this service requires financial and technical support in order to achieve effective management water resources.

Population growth, particularly in urban centers like Monrovia has placed tremendous stress on water resources. Other stressors such as uncontrolled waste disposal, industrial processes, agricultural activities, and mining. These contribute to decreased water quality, thus, increasing the potential for water-borne diseases. Additionally, reliable water quality data was unavailable as nation-wide baseline studies have not been completed. Liberia's current water quality standards are no longer applicable as long-term degradation and industrial processes have changed water quality in the country.

In 2007, under the direction of the Ministry of Lands, Mines, and Energy (MLME), an Integrated Water Resource Policy was developed. This Policy called for strategies for the development of domestic water supplies, water for agriculture use, industry use, recreation, and maintenance of productive ecosystems. It is vision of Policy that by 2015, water resources will be significantly improved.

## **Economic Recovery and Peacebuilding**

As could be gleaned from the above, Sierra Leone and Liberia went through more than a decade of civil wars. In Sierra Leone, the war ended in 2002 and in Liberia 2005. As the war ended, both countries embarked on peacebuilding with the objective of addressing the fundamental issues that led to the conflict.

Since 2002, Sierra Leone's growth and development has put international partners on notice that the country is serious about its post-war development. There is reason for optimism regarding economic growth. In tough economic times, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecasts the inflation rate to drop from 18% in 2008 to 11% in 2010. The IMF also forecast Sierra Leone real GDP to grow at about 5.1% in 2010. The astonishing increase in 2010 GDP growth was due to the long awaited revenues from large scale iron ore export projects.

According to the 2010 US Embassy Sierra Leone Investment Climate report, "Sierra Leone is showing encouraging signs but most importantly, the country is said to be showing sincere and determined priority among national leadership to boost market economy"<sup>70</sup> Further, the report noted "The Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) continues to work to improve the integration of the private sector to advance modern technologies into the mining and agricultural development strategies as well as to continue to build the industrial base to create more jobs"<sup>71</sup> The mining sector seemed to be moving forward with iron ore production beginning in earnest in the end of 2010. Although very promising, the agriculture sector remained characterized by subsistence farming and agribusiness ventures were often mired in land tenure and socio-political debates.

The development in Sierra Leone had prompted foreign investors to see the poor electricity grid a business opportunity and most US businesses are actively entering the energy sector. An

example is Joule Africa, which settled an agreement in 2009 to lead a hydroelectric project to expand the nation's major energy source. Chinese Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and projects remain the dominant force in infrastructure development in Sierra Leone. The largest road construction project in Sierra Leone's history was under the management of the China Railway Seventh Group Corporation. Other Chinese companies and parastatals are also partners in opaque agreements relating to airport improvement, a tender for a new airport, and a hydropower project, building roads and railway lines related to the iron ore industry and building of hospitals. Beyond mining, agriculture energy, and infrastructure, increased overseas investors interest can also be seen in fishing, petroleum, and tourism.

Sierra Leone's health care programme has improved tremendously in a country hard hit by cholera. Life expectancy is far above the comparators and rates of maternal and child mortality is low. Access to potable water and facilities has improved. In areas of economic stabilization, the government has followed prudent fiscal policy and monetary to ensure macroeconomic stability. Total government expenditure is about 22 percent of GDP. Salaries predominate; debt service has decreased significantly since she attained the completion point of the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative.

However its infrastructure is still in poor condition and the lack of infrastructure is a huge obstacle to the rebuilding process; ICT infrastructure and the energy sector are also critically underdeveloped. Efforts are being made to support private sector activity. Also, post-conflict recovery of agriculture and livestock is significant is low. Low capital investment, weak credit, poor infrastructure and weak support services must be addressed.

In addition to the above, youth literacy is low because of the poor quality of primary and secondary education. Conversely, the labour force participation is high but pressure for job creation remains. The rigidity in labour market poses a huge hurdle in peacebuilding.

Similarly, **Liberia** had made some advancement since the end of the civil war. The GDP is estimated to have grown at 7.8% in 2006 to 9.7% in 2007.<sup>72</sup> The growth was driven largely by construction and services. GDP was still far below pre-war levels. Improving governance and the rule of law, maintaining security, and sustaining growth in investment will be needed to preserve peace, increase economic growth and reduce poverty so as not to mitigate the rebuilding process.

Like Sierra Leone, Liberia's infrastructure is poor and the lack of infrastructure is a huge obstacle to the rebuilding process. The railway network has been torn up for scrap and the roads are in very poor condition. ICT infrastructure is also underdeveloped and power grid is practically nonexistent.

Unlike in Sierra Leone, where the labour force is high, Liberia labour force is low and there are significant gaps in gender education. To improve the situation, gender mainstreaming should be incorporated into all facets of the country's economic recovery.

Exports from Liberia are steadily increasing, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is on the rise, and the government is attracting large amount of foreign aid to help with the rebuilding process. There is a pressing need to solve Liberia's external debt problems and to build up foreign reserves, the lack of which is rendering the country vulnerable to external shocks. Although Liberia has entered the HIPC process, debt service will increase over levels when all debts were in arrears.



Though the Liberian government under Sirleaf had made huge strides in projecting a good image for the country abroad after ten years of isolation, and billions of dollars in debt, at home it is still finding hard to get the people to feel the trickledown effect of such international success as many continue to wallow in poverty. Many still lack access to basic health and free primary education as the government promised during its elections campaign. Most of the roads constructed during the first term of the administration have fallen apart due to poor construction. The Liberia electricity corporation has not been able to move beyond Monrovia and its environs in its bid to light up the post war nation.

On scale, Sierra Leone had a better prospect of advancement than Liberia and have recorded three successful post-war elections. In addition, she uses her lean reasons to rebuild the country. Sierra Leone is credited with making healthcare accessible to all her citizens. Also she had an improving infrastructure with a number of impressive road constructions paved roads.

An achievement which President Sirleaf acknowledged while addressing a an audience on her return from Tokyo, “I tell you that Sierra Leone is ahead of us; Sierra Leone is already in pre-transition and we are still behind because we keep fussing among ourselves which means we need to get ourselves back on track though we have made some progress, Liberia will grow at 8.8 percent while Sierra Leone will grow at 25 percent because they have finished their negotiations on time and they have all their operation going and so for me it is time for a big push, a big push for reconciliation.”<sup>73</sup>

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**CHAPTER SIX**  
**RECONCILIATION AND JUSTICE IN SIERRA LEONE AND**  
**LIBERIA AFTER THE CIVIL WARS**

**Overview**

This chapter examines the local and international context of transitional justice and reconciliation in Sierra Leone and Liberia after the civil wars. When civil war ends, societies are often confronted with a lot of problems one of these is how to deal with the legacy of past human rights abuses.<sup>1</sup>

Oftentimes “the question of pardon rather than punishment” or pardon for many alongside punishment of the few has become the trend for most transitional societies coming out of eras marked by intrastate conflict”.<sup>2</sup>

Coupled with the above, is the issues of whether or not the past should be forgotten or erased from the victims consciousness, or be reserved and acknowledged till another day or simply be apologized for? Followed by how can a government emerging from the ashes of violent conflict prevent a re-occurrence of such acts in the future?

Another contending issue facing societies emerging from conflict is that there is a question of who deserved to be punished or pardoned. While some argue that only the perpetrators of the war crimes should be punished, and those who came in the defense of the state such as the Civil Defense Force (CDF) of Sierra Leone be pardoned, others had a contrary view, arguing that both the perpetrators of crime and those who claimed to be in the defence of the state be punished together.

Interestingly, international humanitarian law does not make a distinction of the reasons behind acts of violence. It looks at participants in an armed conflict without regard to whether their cause is just or legitimate. International humanitarian law looks at the legality of the means and methods of warfare, and at the protection of vulnerable, groups, especially civilians. It is immaterial whether the combat formation is composed of rebels or government forces. No actor in an armed conflict situation can use as a defence the justice of its cause to perpetrate human right abuses.

The Universal Declaration of Human Right (UDHR) acknowledges in its preambles the necessity for human rights protection under the rule of law in order to avoid rebellion against tyranny and oppression. One interpretation of this provision may be that the declaration accepts the right of rebellion in some cases. What is clear is that human rights law does not encourage rebellion. It assumes that rights will be pursued using legal means and under the rule of law.

International humanitarian rights law also acknowledges the right of state to restrict or suspend certain fundamental rights when certain conditions such as public emergencies, which threaten the life of the nation, exist. However, international human rights law insists that certain fundamental rights and freedoms cannot be suspended even in times of war. These rights which are deemed sacrosanct include the right to life, the prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and the right to protection against discrimination. No protection is available to a government or its allies when they violate any of these rights.

Reconciliation and Justice has been identified as a key to sustainable peacebuilding. According to Ramsbothan et al, restoring broken relationships and learning to live non-violently with radical differences is the ultimate goal of conflict resolution.<sup>3</sup>

The objective of reconciliation justice approaches are prosecutions, non-judicial truth seeking reconciliation, reparation and vetting/institutional reforms.<sup>4</sup> There are two types of transitional justice: retributive and restorative justice.

In choosing ‘retributive’ justice, transitional societies seek to punish perpetrators of human rights abuses through criminal prosecution in a national or international setting. On the contrary, ‘restorative’ justice adheres to a non-punitive approach that emphasizes ‘truth-telling’ usually under the auspices of a truth commission or other such designated bodies.

Restorative justice, which favors reconciliation among former foes over punishment of perpetrators of crimes, has been increasingly applied since 1974, with truth commission implemented in approximately two dozen countries around the world.<sup>5</sup> Most prominent among these in Africa are South Africa’s, Truth and Reconciliation Commission. However, countries like Rwanda, Sierra Leone, the Central Africa Republic, Ghana, Morocco and Nigeria have also embarked on “truth telling” processes that emphasized reconciliation.

The origin of transitional justice was rooted in the Nuremberg and Tokyo Military Tribunals at the end of the World War II and truth commissions instituted in the 1970s.<sup>6</sup> International ad hoc or internationally mandated national tribunals have been established to prosecute those responsible for grave breaches of the four Geneva Conventions of August 12 1949.<sup>7</sup> The function of the tribunals is to prosecute those alleged to have committed war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and other violation of international laws.<sup>8</sup> Most importantly in this regard are those political, economic, social, cultural, religious and historical factors determining a society’s selection of the approach.



These developments sustain the argument that the idea of restorative justice is not just a fad but represents an innovative approach for citizens of many countries confronted with the question of how to live with former enemies. These are the context which this chapter examines the transitional justice mechanisms in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

In an attempt to deal with the crimes committed during the long and brutal civil war in **Sierra Leone** which lasted for more than a decade with many people displaced and mutilated, Sierra Leone embarked on a two-pronged process. The persons who bear the greatest responsibility for crimes against humanity, war, crimes, and other serious violation of humanitarian law would be tried in UN-funded special court and others, which comprised of both the perpetrators of crimes and their victims, would be heard in a manner reminiscent of the South African styled Truth and Reconciliation Commission (SATRC).<sup>9</sup>

Reason(s) for the adoption of a two prong process were, first, the nature and extent of atrocities committed in Sierra Leone since 1991 constituted grave breaches of international humanitarian law under the Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949, as well as the 1997 Additional Protocols. Second, given the huge devastation of the economy of Sierra Leone during the civil war, it was clear that the government did not have enough funds to set up a special court.

The two justice institutions had two different objectives: The special court emphasizes justice through punishment while the TRC promotes reconciliation through a process of truth telling, apology and pardon. As the Registrar of the Special Court Robin Vincent put it, there will be punishment for the few masterminds and forgiveness for the many foot soldiers.<sup>10</sup>

## **Special Court**

The international community had some compelling reasons to create a Special Court for **Sierra Leone**. First, the nature and extent of atrocities committed in Sierra Leone since 1991 constituted grave breaches of international humanitarian law under the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, as well as the 1977 Additional Protocols.

The Special Court of Sierra Leone, otherwise called the “Special Court”<sup>11</sup> or the SCSL, is a judicial body set by the government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations<sup>12</sup> to “prosecute persons who bear the greatest responsibility for serious violations of international humanitarian law and Sierra Leonean law” committed in Sierra Leone after 30 November 1996 and during the Sierra Leone Civil War. The court’s working language is English.<sup>13</sup>

On 26 April, 2012, former Liberian President Charles Taylor became the first African head of state to be convicted for his part in war crimes.<sup>14</sup>

On June 12, 2000, Sierra Leone’s President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah wrote a letter to United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Anna asking the international community to try those responsible for crimes during the conflict.

On 10 August, 2000, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1315 requesting the Secretary-General to start negotiations with the Sierra Leonean government to create a Special Court.

On 16 January 2002, the UN and the government of Sierra Leone signed an agreement establishing the court. A contract was awarded to Sierra Construction Systems, the largest

construction company in Sierra Leone, to construct the building that would house the court. The first staff members arrived in Freetown in July 2002.

As of April 2012, over 40 states had contributed funds for the court's work, with the most notable African contributor being Nigeria. In 2004, 2011 and 2012, the SCSL received funding from subvention from the United Nations.

The SCSL had jurisdiction to try any persons who committed crimes against humanity against civilians that included: murder; extermination; enslavement; deportation; imprisonment; torture; rape; sexual slavery; forced prostitution or any other form of sexual violence; persecution on the basis of politics, race, ethnicity or religion; and other "inhumane acts." In addition, the court would have jurisdiction to prosecute those who violated the Geneva Convention of 1949, as well as Sierra Leone's Prevention of Cruelty to children Act, 1926 for the abuse of girls and Malicious Damage Act, 1861. However, the court does not have jurisdiction over those under the age of 15. Further, it was superior to any court of Sierra Leone and could take precedence in cases of possible conflicting jurisdiction. Previous amnesties contrary to the remit of the court would be invalid.<sup>15</sup>

All sentences should be carried out within **Sierra Leone**, unless there was no capacity to deal with the accused, at which point any states pursuant to the International Criminal tribunal for Rwanda or the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia who have a willingness to host the accused for the tenure of their sentence can hold the prisoner. Enforcement would be carried out by the court.

Commuting sentences would be up to the state in consultation with the court.<sup>16</sup>

The Special Court consists of three institutions: the Registry, the Prosecutor, and the Chambers (for trials and appeals). The Registry is responsible for the overall management of the court.<sup>17</sup> Robin Vincent was the first registrar. On 22 February 2012, the SCSL announced the appointment of a new registrar, Binta Mansaray. Mansaray had previously served as the deputy registrar and as head of the court's Outreach Programme. She is the first Sierra Leonean to hold the post of Registrar.

The current prosecutor, Brenda Hollis, previously the principal trial attorney in the Charles Taylor case, was appointed by the UNSG and assumed office on February 2010. The prosecutor and her team investigate crimes, gather evidence and submit indictments to the judges.<sup>18</sup> The Deputy Prosecutor was Joseph Kamara, a Sierra Leonean, nominated by that government and appointed by the Secretary General. Kamara took up his post on 15 August 2008.

The statute of the court indicated eight to eleven judges. Three would serve in the trial chamber (of which one would be appointed by the Sierra Leonean government and two by the UN Secretary-General) and five would serve in the appeals chamber (of which two would be appointed by the Sierra Leonean government and three by the UN Secretary-General).

There were twelve judges, of which seven are Trial Judges (five UN appointed-including one alternate-and two nominated by the Sierra Leone government). The remaining five are Appeals Judges, three of whom were appointed by the UN and two nominated by the Sierra Leone government. Judges are appointed for a term of three years. They can be re-appointed.

## **Inductees**

The Statute of the Special Court for **Sierra Leone** outlines four different types of crimes with which the Court can charge individuals. They are crimes against humanity, violation of Article 3 common to the Geneva Conventions and of Additional Protocol II (war crimes), other serious violations of international humanitarian law, and crimes under Sierra Leone Law.<sup>19</sup> If found guilty, sentencing could include prison terms or property confiscation. The SCSL, as with all other tribunals established by the United Nations, did not have the power to impose the death penalty. Thus far, 34 individuals had been indicted on charges of committing crimes against humanity, war crimes, and other violations of international humanitarian law. Of the 34, 20 had been captured or had their proceedings terminated due to death. Five other individuals are currently on trial (two of whom are serving sentences from prior convictions), one has been acquitted, eight have been convicted and are serving sentences (including two who are currently on trial on additional counts), one has been convicted but has yet to be sentenced and four individuals have completed their sentences. Proceedings against three individuals were terminated following their death, and one individual, Johnny Paul Koroma, is a fugitive, though he is believed to have been executed by order of Charles Taylor.<sup>20</sup>

The Special Court could be credited for the high profile cases it handled during its tenure. It is on record that the court indicted three leaders of the Civil Defense Forces (CDF). They are, Allieu Kondewa, Moinina Fofana, and former Interior Minister Samuel Hinga Norman. Their trial started June 3, 2004 and concluded with closing arguments in September, 2006. Others include five members of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) whose names were Foday Sankoh, Sam Bockarie, Issa Hassan Sesay, Morris Kallon and Augustine Gbao. The charges against Sankoh and Bockarie were dropped after their deaths were officially ascertained. The trial of Kallon,

Gbao and Sesay began July 5, 2004. It concluded on June 24, 2008. Final oral arguments were conducted August 4 and 5, 2008.

Three of the detained inductees belonged to the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC): Alex Tamba Brima (also known as Gullit), Brima Bazzy Kamara and Santigie Borbor Kanu (also known as Five-Five). Their trial began March 7, 2005.

The only indicted person who is not detained, and whose whereabouts remain uncertain, is the former dictator and AFRC chairman Johnny Paul Koroma, who seized power in a military coup May 25, 1997. He was widely reported to have been killed in June 2003, but as definitive evidence of his death has never been provided his indictment has not been dropped.

Charles Taylor, the former President of Liberia, accused of involvement in the civil war was indicted in 2003,<sup>21</sup> but he got asylum in Nigeria.<sup>22</sup> On March 2006, Taylor fled from his house in Nigeria and was arrested at the Cameroon border. Taylor was extradited to the SCSL following request by the Liberian government. He was then immediately turned over to the SCSL.

Because Taylor still enjoyed considerable support in Liberia, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf requested the trial to be moved to The Hague. The Dutch government called for United Nations Security Council Resolution 1688 to take him but also requested a third country to hold him if convicted, to which the United Kingdom agreed.<sup>23</sup> His trial in Freetown was deemed undesirable for security reasons with UNAMSIL having considerably reduced its presence. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1688 of June 17, 2006<sup>24</sup> allowed the Special Court to transfer Taylor's case to The Hague, Netherlands, where the physical infrastructure of the International

Criminal Court would be used with the trial still being conducted under the SCSL's auspices. Taylor's trial started June 4, 2007,<sup>25</sup> with the first witness appearing January 7, 2008.<sup>26</sup>

The prosecution rested its case on February 27, 2009,<sup>27</sup> and the defence began their case on July 13 and rested November 12, 2010.<sup>28</sup> The Trial Chamber II schedule the announcement of its verdict April 26, 2012.<sup>29</sup> The verdict was read starting at 11:00<sup>30</sup> by the presiding judge Richard Lussick, who said that "the trial chamber unanimously finds you guilty of aiding and abetting (all of these)crimes:" acts of terrorism; murder; violence to life, health or physical well being of persons; rape; sexual slavery; outrages upon personal dignity; other inhumane acts, a crime against humanity; conscripting or enlisting children under the age of 15 years into the armed forces; enslavement; and pillage in accordance with article 6.1 of the SCSL's statute. His sentence would be announces May 30 after a hearing in which Taylor would be given the opportunity to speak May 16. An appeal could also be filed within 14 days of the decision.<sup>31</sup>

Though Taylor had rejected complicity on any of the charges, the court said that he ordered and supported the RUF, while the prosecution said that RUF's undermining of a 1999 ceasefire prolonged the war and was financed by Taylor through the proceeds of illegally mined "blood diamonds." In reaction to the verdict, Richard Dekker, the head of the international justice programme at Human Rights Watch said "The Taylor verdict is a watershed moment, however it turns out. As president, Taylor is believed to have been responsible for so much murder and mayhem which unfolded in Sierra Leone. His was a shadow that bloomed across the region"<sup>32</sup> Christine Cheng of Exeter College, Oxford pointed to the politicization of the trial and the degree to which the trial has been funded by Western states, though she added that the conclusion of

Taylor's trial represented a "milestone for the pursuit of international justice."<sup>33</sup> The prosecutor Brenda J. Hollis reacted to the verdict in saying:<sup>34</sup>

Today is for the people of Sierra Leone who suffered horribly because of Charles Taylor. This judgment brings some measure of justice to the thousands of victims who paid a terrible price for Mr. Taylor's crimes. Today's historic judgment reinforces the new reality, that Heads of State will be held to account for war crimes and other international crimes. This judgment affirms that with leadership come not just power and authority, but also responsibility and accountability. No person, no matter how powerful, is above the law. The judges found that Mr. Taylor aided and abetted the crimes charged in counts 1 through 11, and that he planned with Sam Bockarie the attacks on Kono, Makeni and Freetown in late 1998 and January 1999 during which the charged crimes were committed. The Trial Chamber's findings made clear the central role Charles Taylor played in the horrific crimes against the people of Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor's conviction for murder acknowledges the thousands who were brutally killed. These men, women and children were violently taken from their family and friends, and many were killed in remote locations known only to their killers. Victims' families were left destitute, with emotional wounds that will never heal. Richard Falk criticized the trial, arguing that Western powers selectively prosecuted only war criminals who were opposed to Western interests. He also noted that the U.S. has refused the International Criminal Court jurisdiction over its citizens.<sup>35</sup>

In contrast, **Liberia** did not establish any Special Court. Rather, she opted for another version of transitional justice strategy which is Security Sector Reform (SSR). However, she also imitated the Sierra Leone adoption of the truth and reconciliation commission tandem with the South Africa's style Truth and Reconciliation Commission (SATRC).

### **Security Sector Reform (SSR)**

In similar vein, in attempt to address the crimes committed during in the fourteen years civil war, **Liberia** like Sierra Leone adopted two pronged process after cessation of gunfire and



demobilization and demilitarization of ex-combatants. One of the processes was Security Sector Reform (SSR).

The end of the civil war in Liberia in 2003, and the subsequent free and fair democratic elections of 2005, signaled the emergence of peace, stability and sustainable development to the country. Reaping benefits from the cessation of hostilities and the ensuing democratic environment, Liberians needed to make necessary adjustments to accommodate decisions stemming from the 2003 Peace Accord. The National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL) and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) worked together to ensure that the Peace Accord was decisively pursued and scrupulously implemented. Subsequently, the first post-war democratic regime assumed power in 2006, and continued the collaboration with the UN Mission to ensure that the country's reform peace agenda was implemented.

Paramount among the reform recommendations was security sector reform (SSR). This issue sparked major debate among the country's actors. Warring factions wanted to feature their generals in the reformed (new) army, while civil society activists and political parties argued against the recruitment of "rebels" into the military. The outcome was an agreement that the new army would accommodate members of all warring factions in its ranks, including the moribund Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) and forces loyal to the government of Charles Taylor<sup>36</sup> at the time of the signing of the peace agreement. The reform programme was ongoing until 31 December 2009, when the United States turned over the Armed Forces of Liberia's SSR programme to the democratic government of Liberia.

The context of Post-war Security Sector Reform (SSR) is a concept that was introduced in international development discourses in 1998, in a speech delivered by the ministerial head of the British Department for International Development (DID), Clare Short. Issues concerning the building of democratic security institutions and the need for a viable and comprehensive security sector had featured earlier in development discourses, but it was Short's speech and the policies promulgated by the DID that made the concept of SSR a relevant concept in international peace, security and development.<sup>37</sup> Since then, it has been applied to countries emerging from wars, and nations that are either failing or weak and fragile. Specifically, development donors have argued that assistance must flow into secured environments and, as such, the necessary security architecture must be in place to ensure successful and peaceful implementation of such development aid. Security reform has mainly been applied to help countries that are transitioning to peace and rebuilding state institutions.

The concept of SSR is now widely accepted and popularly used, even though there were proposals of different phrases to represent the concept when it was introduced to the development debate. These proposals included that of the Bureau Of Crisis Prevention And Recovery (BCPR) of the United Nations Development Program which, in 2003, began to promote similar ideas but with different terms, like "justice and security sector reform" (JSSR).<sup>38</sup> SSR is now understood to refer to a programme of reform of a country's security system, which involves the transformation and restructuring of the military and police forces, and any paramilitary organizations controlled by the state. This process has to do with the restructuring and empowering of security-related institutions for effectiveness, discipline and capacity-building for community development initiatives. In some instances, judicial or judiciary reform initiatives are considered under SSR programmes.

When a country goes to war or becomes embroiled in internal civil strife, and its legitimate security institutions (the military and police) divide into factions with belligerent motives, peacekeeping activities become difficult, civilians are abused, more warring parties emerge, and the entire nation degenerates into disorder. In such a scenario, when the violence subsides and peacebuilding programmes are being implemented, reform of the security sector is essential to restore the state's credibility and to reassure the citizenry of their security. Liberia's security sector has been no exception to the above. During the country's 14-year-long civil war, all of the security forces and institutions joined warring factions, and the institutions became factionalized. As a result, the citizenry lost faith in these security institutions. Reforming the sector in the post-war era was thus critical to ensure the security of the people of Liberia, and not merely the protection of short-term regimes.

### **Political and Legal Background of Security Sector Reform**

Even before the plunder and devastation of the civil war (1989–2003), Liberia's security institutions were heavily politicized by officials of government, and survived on patronage. Its personnel were poorly trained and had no special civic education programmes. Security personnel saw themselves and their political patrons as masters of the people rather than protectors and servants of the people. They became unpopular for their lack of professionalism, corruption, frequent human rights violations and their exploitation by their political patrons to intimidate – and, at times, terrorise – the people. In 1980, the military seized power in Liberia and, in 1985, transformed itself into a civilian government. From 1980 onwards, Liberia's security forces were part of the political process and thereby lost their neutrality and relevance as enforcers of the law and protectors of the people.

The ruthlessness of these forces was seen during the civil war, when most of them joined factions and led campaigns of terror against the civilians. After the civil war – and with virtually no reliable security institutions left in the country – it became politically necessary to reorganise, train and rebuild an effective and well-trained pro-people security regime for the country, as part of the post-war governance reform process.

Liberia’s SSR programme was conceived to address the above historical faults, and “to create a secure and peaceful environment, both domestically and in the sub-region, that is conducive to sustainable, inclusive, and equitable growth and development”.<sup>39</sup> In the Poverty Reduction Strategy of Liberia (PRS) of 2008-2011, the government articulated issues of peace and security as a first priority, without which there could be no real development in the country. The first pillar of the PRS was therefore “consolidating peace and security”.

Liberia’s SSR programme is legally empowered by three enabling, but complicated, instruments. These are the Comprehensive Peace Accord of 2003, the Constitution of Liberia, and the United Nations Security Council resolution 1509 of 2003.

### **Specific Mandate**

In Article VII, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) called for the disbandment of all irregular forces, and the reforming and restructuring of the Armed Forces of Liberia. It also requested substantial support in material, capacity-building and other technical support from the United Nations (UN), the Economic Community of West African states (ECOWAS), the African Union (AU), and the International Contact Group on Liberia (ICGL), with a call to the United States (US) to play a lead role in reforming the Armed Forces of Liberia. To that end, the US

contracted the services of private companies – including DynCorp and Pacific Architects & engineers, or PAE – to take charge of the training process.

Article VII also set out the criteria by which personnel should be recruited into the new armed forces, and it laid emphasis on education, medical fitness, professionalism and one’s human rights record. Article VII (c) clearly outlined the mission of the new Armed Forces of Liberia as “to defend the national sovereignty and in extreme case, respond to natural disasters”.<sup>40</sup>

In Article VIII, the CPA called for the restructuring of the Liberia National Police and all other security forces in the country, including the special security services, as well as the “ruthless” Anti-Terrorist unit and the special Operation

Division of the Liberia National Police – both of which were created by the regime of Charles Taylor and had developed fearsome reputations for human rights violations. The two were disbanded in 2003 and their members demobilized. In restructuring the police and other security services, the CPA laid special emphasis on democratic controls and values, and the respect of human rights by these forces, stating:

There shall be an immediate restructuring of the National Police Force, the Immigration Force, special security service (SSS), custom security guards and such other statutory security units. These restructured security forces shall adopt a professional orientation that emphasizes democratic values and respect for human rights, a non-partisan approach to duty and the avoidance of corrupt practices.<sup>41</sup>

## **Achievement of SSR**

Since 2004, stakeholders in the Liberian peace process have been engaged in a public campaign to recruit young Liberians into the police had military forces, as well as such paramilitary groups like Immigration and correctional services. Restructuring of the Liberian National Police (LNP) began in 2004, with the help of the UNMIL. This reform has gone beyond a mere recruitment of officers to a process of institutional capacity-building, with reforms in the rank and file of the police service. Monthly salaries for the lowest rankings in the police have been increased over 100% during the last four years. In the areas of infrastructure and institutional reform, the LNP has undergone considerable restructuring. The position of police director has now been changed to inspector general, and the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) is now called the Crime service Department. These changes in names are intended to reflect the modified missions and purposes of the positions and departments within the police. For example, a Women and Children Protection section has been created within the LNP as a first line of response regarding women's and children's issues.

Other institutional rebuilding initiatives that have taken place include the development of a LNP duty manual and the establishment of a Police Promotion Board, and new police stations (depots) are being built around the country. The police had trained and deployed over 3, 500 personnels. In the area of emergency response to armed robberies and riots, the LNP has established an Emergency Response Unit (ERU). This unit is intended to be a specialised, armed anti-crime unit in the police, and it now has 287 personnel toward a target of 500. There is also a Police support unit, which has trained 148 officers toward a target of 600.<sup>42</sup>

With regard to the military, the AFL is currently the main spotlight of the country's SSR programme. Liberians fear the military, due to its brutal roles in the civil war and its general violence, indiscipline and human rights abuses. Reforming the AFL is popular with the people of Liberia, and the process has involved individual citizens and civil society organisations – citizens have the right to challenge and vet new applicants to the army. During the recruitment process, photographs of applicants are displayed in community centres for citizens to review and to object, should candidates have a record of indiscipline, crime and human rights abuses. Besides this process, background investigations are conducted on individual applicants in their communities and schools. The target for the reformed AFL in the PRS is 2, 000 soldiers. Successfully, through the support of the US government and other development partners of Liberia, the AFL has trained over 2 000 personnel, who have been deployed to various barracks.

The AFL is also undergoing institutional and human capacity-building. The reform process is serious about having a literate army. This new AFL is now comprised of personnel with at least a junior high school education, and it also has in it many high school and college graduates.

The “new AFL”, as it is called, has over time been involved in community services, including the construction of roads and bridges, medical assistance to hospitals, and community clean-up efforts. The US and other partners have aided the government of Liberia in rebuilding barracks and providing logistical support to the new army, and four barracks had been refurbished and made fully operational.<sup>43</sup> The Liberian Coast Guard unit of the AFL has also trained about 40 officers, and this unit has a mandate of improving coastline management, controlling smuggling and illegal fishing. There is also a new bureau for the welfare of retired AFL servicemen, called the Bureau of Veteran Affairs.

Other security institutions have also been reformed and reactivated, including the Bureau of Immigration, Bureau of Correction and the National Fire service. A general review process of all of the security institutions has taken place, and the government has adopted a National security strategy as the working tool for peace and security in the country.

Liberia's security reform programme, like most post-conflict governance reform initiatives, was faced with perennial challenges of inadequate resources and limited human resource capacity to improve and sustain the integrity of the programme and the effectiveness of the security institutions. The problems were further exacerbated by the level of underdevelopment in the country.

The ineffectiveness of the LNP to respond to emergencies in the country has been attributed to a lack of equipment – including radios, vehicles, handcuffs and raincoats (for the rainy season). These shortages are also common to the Bureaux of Immigration and Correction, and the National Fire service. The integrity of the police system is highly criticised in the country, resulting in some citizens describing the police force as “a new wine in an old bottle”. The police have been seen engaging in violations, include brutality against civilians and bribery. These attitudes of indiscipline, while publicly condemned, discourage a populace already weary of insecurity and corruption.

The country is also still struggling to deal with the ex-servicemen of the AFL, who have staged numerous strikes for benefits and re-enlistment into the new military. Some of the demobilised soldiers still allege that they are in the army, claiming that the CPA called for the restructuring of the AFL, and not its disbandment. The new army has retained some staff from the old army and re-enlisted them into the force. The government has tried to respond to the concerns of the



disbanded soldiers by paying arrears of us\$4.1 million – including us\$228000 to AFL widows – and has promised that any further assistance to the disbanded soldiers will be directed at jobs and training opportunities as a means of ensuring sustainability in benefits.<sup>44</sup>

### **Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)**

Like other transitional societies, Sierra Leone and Liberia have experimented with the truth telling. The idea of a TRC was designed in the hope that it would provide an opportunity for both victims and perpetrators to “tell their stories” about the past. The assumption is that this kind of exercise would enhance the healing and reconciliation processes in the post-conflict period.

Sierra Leone and Liberia are by no means the first society that has experimented with the idea of establishing a truth commission in the aftermath of a bloody conflict. The dilemma faced by most societies transitioning from war to peace, or from authoritarian rule to democratic governance is the lack of consensus on the kind of institutional mechanism required to deal with past injustices that typically had to do with grave human rights abuses. At issue is whether to “punish” perpetrators of these violations, or to find ways of “reconciling” past enemies. The conceptual debate in this area – transitional justice – borders on two approaches, namely “retributive” or “restorative” justice.

Retributive justice by definition is dispensed through a criminal justice process instituted at national, regional or international level. Such a process can be in the form of an international criminal court or tribunal set up in the aftermath of conflict to prosecute perpetrators of human rights abuses. Recent examples of a retributive model of justice include the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), and Rwanda (ICTR), and the Special Court for Sierra Leone (a “hybrid” international tribunal). An important development in the

evolution of international criminal law generally, and more specially in reinforcing retributive justice, is the adoption in 1998 of the Rome Treaty to establish the International Criminal Court (ICC). The ICC, which came into force in July 2002 following the ratification of the Rome Treaty by 60 state parties, is a significant development that not only reaffirms the rapid evolution of individual human rights, but also underscores the erosion of state sovereignty, and the whole concept of “sovereign impunity”<sup>45</sup>

By contrast, restorative justice is typically dispensed through a legally constituted process that lacks prosecutorial powers, such as a “truth commission” or a “national inquiry.” Well-known examples of the restorative model of justice include commissions established in the Latin American countries of Chile, Argentina and Peru, after decades of military autocracy.<sup>46</sup> In Africa, South Africa presents the most celebrated example of a transitional society that has made significant progress toward healing past wounds, thanks to the work of TRC, which was established after the historic multi-racial and democratic elections of 1994. Little wonder that other transitional societies in the continent have sought to replicate the South African experience, although their historical contexts are radically different from that of South Africa.<sup>47</sup>

The issue of blanket or general amnesty is always contentious in designing a transitional justice mechanism such as a truth commission. Should blanket amnesty be granted to (ex-) combatants in exchange for their cooperation with the peace process, as in Sierra Leone, or should amnesty be predicted on the willingness of perpetrators to accept wrongdoing, as the South African experience shows? These and other key questions are crucial to our understanding of the controversial “peace versus justice”, debate in transitional societies. If “retributive” justice is the preferred approach for dealing with past abuses, is it likely to contribute to lasting peace?

Controversially, what is the likelihood that future abuses will be deterred if perpetrators of past abuses are not punished? In other words, does “restorative” justice not have the potential to undermine long-term peace? In effect, is there a trade-off between “peace” and “justice” and if so, what impact does that have on the post-conflict environment?

### **Legal Backing**

As indicated earlier, Sierra Leone established two post-conflict institutions to address the crimes committed during her more than a decade civil war which officially ended in 2002. First, it was the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) which was established to promote justice by trying “persons who bear the greatest responsibility” (Statute of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, 2002, Article 1) for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law, while the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission (SLTRC) was mandated to offer a forum for victims and perpetrators alike to tell their wartime stories in an effort to promote reconciliation.

The Lome Peace Agreement of 7 July 1999 provided for the establishment of a truth and reconciliation commission in Sierra Leone. The commission was to “address impunity, break the cycle of violence, provide a forum for both victims and perpetrators of human rights violations to tell their story, get a clear picture of the past in order to facilitate genuine healing and reconciliation.” The peace agreement further provided for the grant of “absolute and free pardon” for Corporal Foday Sankoh, leader of the RUF and for the grant of “absolute and free pardon and reprieve for all combatants and collaborators in respect of anything done by them in pursuit of their objectives, up to the signing of the present Agreement”

Sierra Leone Truth Commission (SLTC), established in July 2002 by an act of Parliament by the government of Sierra Leone was an independent body, began gathering statements in December 2002 from citizens of all war times affiliations and commenced public hearings in April 2003.<sup>48</sup> Its mandate was to create an impartial record of human rights violations committed during the war (1991 to 1999), and to address the conflict's root causes. Its ultimate goal, according to President Tejan Kabbah, was nothing less than "the reconciliation of our population."<sup>49</sup>

### **Features of the TRC**

After eleven years of brutal conflict in Sierra Leone, a need existed to confront the past, thus giving birth to the Sierra Leone Truth Commission (SLTC). The nation wanted to know what precipitated the wave of vengeance and mayhem that swept across the country. How was it that the people of Sierra Leone came to turn on each other with such ferocity? Why did so many abandon traditions of the community and peaceful co-existence? Why were long held and cherished customs and taboos so wantonly discarded? It is only through generating such understanding that the horrors of the past can effectively be prevented from occurring again. These captured the major features of Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Sierra Leone because knowledge and understanding are the most powerful deterrents against conflict and war.<sup>50</sup>

Membership of the Sierra Leone Truth Commission (SLTC) were seven, headed by a religious leader, Joseph Humper, Bishop of the United Methodist Church and President of the Inter-Religious Council.<sup>51</sup> Of the seven members, four were Sierra Leonean and the other three were international members. It was believed that the inclusion of the international commissioners was to give the commission the independent and integrity it needed to endear the participation of all

Sierra Leoneans.<sup>52</sup> The commissioners were appointed by the President of Sierra Leone following a selection procedure to be coordinated by the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in Sierra Leone (SRSG).

However, unlike the South African TRC, it had no power to grant amnesty to those who came forward to acknowledge their crimes. Also, as it operated concurrently with the Special Court, there was concern that the Special Court's prosecutor could develop a case from the public truth commission testimony.

The mandate of the commission according to Section 6 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Act 2000 were as follows:

- 6(1) The object for which the Commission was established to create an impartial historical record of violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law related to the armed conflict in Sierra Leone, from the beginning of the conflict in 1991 to the signing of the Lome Peace Agreement, to address impunity, to respond to the needs of the victims, to promote healing and reconciliation and to prevent a repetition of the violations and abuses suffered.
- (2) Without prejudice to the generality of subsection (1), it shall be the function of the Commission
  - (a). To investigate and report on the causes, nature and extent of the violations and abuses referred to in sub section (1) to the fullest degree possible, including their antecedents, the context in which the violations and abuses occurred, the question of, whether those violations and abuses were the result of deliberate planning, policy or authorization by

any government, group or individual, and the role of both internal and external factors in the conflict.

- (b). To work to help restore the human dignity of victims and promote reconciliation by providing an opportunity for victims to give an account of the violations and abuses suffered and for perpetrators to relate their experience, and by creating a climate which fosters constructive interchange between victims and perpetrators, giving special attention to the subject of sexual abuses and to the experiences of children within the armed conflict.
- (c) To do all such things as may contribute to the fulfillment of the object of the Commission. Among the functions of the Commission, it was to undertake investigations and research into key events, causes, patterns of abuse or violations and the parties responsible; to conduct hearing which may be open or closed to the public, and to take individual statements and gather additional information with regard to the causes and patterns of the conflict, and to promoting reconciliation.<sup>53</sup>

The Act further charged the commission to seek assistance from traditional and religious leaders to facilitate its public sessions and in resolving local conflicts that arise from past violations or in support of healing and reconciliation.<sup>54</sup>

Part V of the Act dealing with the Commission's report and recommendations, charged the Commission to "make recommendations concerning the reforms and other measures, whether legal, political, administrative or otherwise, needed to achieve the object of the Commission, namely, the object of providing impartial historical record, preventing the repetition of the

violations and abuses suffered, addressing impunity, responding to the needs of victims and promoting healing and reconciliation”.

### **Reports of the Commission**

The final report of the commission was submitted to the President of **Sierra Leone** on October 5, 2004 and presented to the United Nations Security Council October 27, 2004. Howard Varney, Chief Investigator for the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission presented an overview, findings and recommendations on November 12, 2005. The report was extensive and included names of responsible persons. Versions for secondary schools and children were also published.

### **Finding of the TRCS**

The Truth and Reconciliation in Sierra Leone and Liberia came out with some horrendous reports of their investigation in both countries. Surprisingly, both commissions submitted five point findings of their investigation in each country. Central to their findings were causes of the war, nature and structure of the war, participation and government’s role in the war.

### **In Sierra Leone,**

- The Commission found that the central cause of the war in Sierra Leone was corruption and an overwhelming control of the executive. Colonialism and the subversion of traditional systems also had an effect.
- While the majority of victims were adult males, perpetrators also singled out women and children.
- Forced displacements, abductions, arbitrary detentions and killings, plundering, and looting were the most common violations.

- The leadership of the RUF, the AFRC, the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) and the Civil Defense Force (CDF) were responsible for human rights violations against civilians. The leaders of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) and the RUF, Charles Taylor and Foday Sankoh, played pivotal roles in the conflict. The RUF was responsible for the highest count of human rights violations in the conflict, followed by the AFRC, the SLA, and the CDF.
- Successive governments abused the death penalty and misused emergency powers against dissidents.

### **Recommendations**

Unlike in the reports where Sierra Leone and Liberia Truth Commission submitted five findings each in the two countries, the situation was however different in their recommendations to both governments. In Sierra Leone, the TRC submitted only three recommendations while in Liberia it submitted seven. The difference in the number may not be unconnected with the historical background of both countries and the establishment of the Special Court in Sierra Leone which was not in Liberia.

- In **Sierra Leone**, the commission's recommendations were legally binding.
- The commission's main recommendations concerned the fight against corruption, the creation of a new Bill of Rights developed in a participatory constitutional process, the independence of the judiciary, strengthening the role of Parliament, stricter control over the security forces, decentralization and enhanced economic autonomy for the provinces as well as the government's commitment to deliver basic public services and the inclusion of youth and women in political decision-making.



- The commission recommended the establishment of a reparations program and an implementing agency, as it was already suggested in the Lome Agreement.

### **Issues from the TRC Report**

There were mixed reactions to the TRC exercise in **Sierra Leone**. On participation in the exercise, majority of Sierra Leonean and international stake holders felt that the TRC process had fallen seriously short of what had been hoped for in terms of participation, while others thought otherwise. For example, the sensitization exercise during the preparatory phase was widely viewed as deficient because there was a tendency that the radio messages would be enough to alert Sierra Leonean to the existence of the TRC when what was needed was to work with civil society organization to ensure that each chiefdom and village were visited and revisited. Claude Kondor, Director, Network of Collaborative Peacebuilding observed that “there was no enough sensitization. Most people in the province are still ignorant or confused about the TRC... we were ready to assist. But they never came to ask to work with us”<sup>55</sup> Kondor was corroborated by Gibril Massie Bah who said “the TRC did not make enough use of civil society. It was centralized in Freetown. The Makeni office was always empty and unused.”<sup>56</sup>

Apart from the lack of adequate sensitization, many Sierra Leonean did not participate in the exercise because they had no confidence in the exercise. Some cited possible reprisal attacks from perpetrators of crime if they came out to testify against them. The fears explain why only 35% of the women believed punishment would prevent further sexual violence, and only 23 per cent were willing to give their names to either the Special Court or the TRC.<sup>57</sup>

Another group, the amputee and victims of the civil war, threatened not to appear before the commission until certain demands were met. On August 30 2002, when the commission visited

the Amputee Camp at Aberdeen Road, Freetown, the residents complained that they felt abandoned, while the perpetrators of the crimes were being compensated through the reintegration scheme for ex-combatants. They demanded that all amputees be given a monthly allowance of a bag of rice and Le 200,000 (about \$100). They also demanded that the government should educate their children for free, and to pay them a one-off reintegration allowance equivalent to about \$150.

However, the *Sierra News* of September 4, 2002 reported that the TRC boycott threat by members of the War Amputees Association had been dropped after a meeting with President Kabbah at his Hill Station Lodge. According to the newspaper, “President Kabbah admonished the amputees not to be misled by a few ill-motivated persons, and pledged his government’s commitment to alleviating the suffering of amputees and other war wounded persons”.<sup>58</sup>

Politicians also harbored skepticism about the TRC. The commission engaged them by hosting a meeting with leaders and representatives of the various political parties in the country, in order to earn their cooperation and support. Concerns raised by the parties centered on:

- Possible reparation for victims;
- Activation of the Special Fund for War Victims;
- Witness protection challenges and risks of false testimony;
- The financial status of the commission; and
- The level of national and international support for the commission.

Irrespective of their grievances the political parties agreed that the establishment of the commission was a necessary instrument for lasting peace and prosperity in the country, and they pledged support for the commission’s work, as well as sensitizing their supporters on the

importance of their participation in the TRC. A parliamentary sub-committee on the TRC established, and a number of parliamentarians had contacted the commission regarding their intention of being actively involved in the commission's visits to the regions.<sup>59</sup>

Without a fully staffed secretariat, the TRC appointed portfolio heads among the commissioners to deal with specific issues during the preparatory phase, as follows:

- Finance and fundraising – Professor John Kamara
- Reconciliation and protection – Rt. Rev. Joseph Humper (Chair)
- Administration and logistics – Mr. Sylvanus Torto
- Public information and education – Mrs. Satang Jow
- Legal and report writing – Professor William Schabas and hon. Justice Laura Marcus-Jones (Deputy chair)
- Deployment/Investigation/Research – Hon. Justice Marcus-Jones and Ms. Yasmin Sooka.

These portfolios were expanded when the commission began the operational phase, which included other issues that were crucial to the work of the commission.<sup>60</sup>

### **Legal Backing**

Similarly, the TRC in **Liberia** was established on May 2005 in Accra Ghana by an Act of legislature to address the issue of impunity after fourteen years of war and mayhem.

After fourteen years of war and several peace agreements, on August 18 2003, the stakeholders to the conflict signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in Accra, Ghana. The signing of the peace agreement altered the political landscape of the country and set in motion a number of measures aimed at making the recurrence of armed violence difficult, if not impossible. One of the measures was the establishment of the TRC.

After a transitional government was established, the UN Security Council authorized the UN Mission in Liberia to replace the ECOWAS mission and to monitor the implementation of the peace agreement. The Accra Agreement called for the establishment of an independent national commission on human rights, a truth and reconciliation commission, the reform of the Liberian police force, and the reorganization of the National Elections Commission. In May 2005 the Truth and Reconciliation Act was passed to implement the terms of the Accra agreement, and then President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, a former World Bank official, was elected president in November 2005.

### **Features of the TRC**

Similarly, the **Liberia** Truth and Reconciliation Commission (LTRC) had four major characteristics: they focused on the past; they investigated the pattern of abuses over a period of time, rather than specific events. However unlike Sierra Leone TRC, which had six months to conduct its findings and submit report, the Liberia TRC was given two years mandate to conduct its investigation and another three months to produce a comprehensive final report, detailing its findings, conclusions, and recommendation. Like their Sierra Leone counterpart, the official status of the commission gave it access to government documents and other information, more security to undertake sensitive investigations, and more likelihood that its report and recommendations will receive serious attention from the government and other national institutions.

### **Structure**

Like in Sierra Leone, the membership of **Liberia's** TRC was international. It was chaired by Jerome Verdier, Liberian human right activist and environmental lawyer, the commission made

up of nine commissioners: four women and five men. After a public vetting and recruitment process in late 2005, the commissioners were selected by then transitional head of States Gyude Bryant and afterward approved by President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. A three-member International Technical Adversary Committee was also provided for by the TRC Act.

As expected, the **Liberia** Truth and Reconciliation Commission shares similar mandate with Sierra Leone. The Act tasks the TRC “to promote national peace, security, unity and reconciliation” by investigating gross human rights violations and violations of humanitarian law, sexual violations, and economic crimes that occurred between January 1979 and October 2003. The commission may explore the period before 1979 as need, and it is mandated to determine whether abuses were isolates incidents or part of a systematic pattern, establish the antecedents, circumstances, factors and context of such violations, their motive as well as the impact of the abuses on victims. In addition, the commission was mandated to provide a forum against impunity, establish the record of the past and compile a public report with findings and recommendations.

The first volume of the TRC’s **Final Report** in **Liberia** and a summary were released on December 19, 2008. On June 30, 2009 the TRC issued what it called the final and consolidated, but “unedited” report which was submitted to the National Assembly and made public. On December 3, 2009 the final edited version was re-released together with numerous appendices and specialized reports on issues such as women children and economic crimes.

In addition, The Advocates for Human Rights published “A House with Two Rooms”, a report on the experience of the Liberian Diaspora.

## **Finding of the TRCS**

- In **Liberia**, the major root causes of the conflict are, according to the TRC, attributable to poverty, greed, corruption, limited access to education, economic, social, civil and political inequalities; identity conflict; land tenure and distribution; the lack of reliable and appropriate mechanisms for the settlement of disputes; as well as the “duality of the Liberian political, social and legal systems which polarizes and widens the disparities between the Liberian peoples- a chasm between settler Liberia and indigenous Liberia (Consolidated Final Report, Vol II, p 16).”
- All factions to the Liberian conflict are responsible for abuses, including war crimes and crimes against humanity.
- The massive wave of gross violations and atrocities assumed a systematic pattern of abuse.
- “External state actors in Africa, North America and Europe participated, supported, aided, abetted, conspired and instigated violate, war and regime change for political, economic and foreign policy advantages.

## **Recommendations**

- The TRC advised the establishment of an Extraordinary Criminal Tribunal for Liberia and named individuals, corporations and institutions recommended for prosecution or, in some cases, for further investigation.
- The commission also included a list of individuals recommended to be barred from holding public office for thirty years (including President Ellen Sirleaf).
- The commission urged the Government of Liberia to guarantee the full enjoyment of social, economic and cultural rights, in addition to civil and political rights.

- The TRC's report called for the establishment of a National Palaver Hut Forum as a complementary tool for justice and national reconciliation. The commission recommended that the Palaver Hut process be based on traditional dispute resolution mechanisms. Persons recommended for prosecution in the TRC Report for the commission of international crimes would not be entitled to be pardoned through the Palaver Hut process.
- The TRC recommended that Government of Liberia assumes its full responsibility under international law to provide reparations for all those individuals and communities victimized by the years of instability and war, especially women and children. The commission recommended general amnesty for children and amnesty for lesser crimes in an effort to foster national healing and reconciliation if individuals admit their wrongs and express remorse.
- The commission recommended that the institutional reform must be implemented to promote good governance and human rights, and to prevent the recurrence of abuses.
- The TRC recommended to the international community to continue its engagement with Liberia and the sub region.

### **Issues from the TRC Report**

Similarly in **Liberia**, there was mixed reactions to the TRC report. The key issues that emerged out of the process were that first, the tension, fear and confusion which the report generated illustrated that societies emerging out of war situation are usually confronted with challenges, which if not fully addressed could derail the process of post-war reconstruction and create the basis for a relapse into another armed violence. However, unlike in Sierra Leone where lost confidence in the TRC; the situation was different in Liberia as majority of the people

participated in the exercise. The difference in the participation is obvious. Liberians may have learnt from the experiences of the Sierra Leone TRC and had enough sensitization exercise which was lacking in Sierra Leone.

It is interesting to note that the Liberians unlike the Sierra Leoneans were more interested on fundamental issues hinged on legal and constitution rather than moral and sentiments observed in Sierra Leone.

For example, while Sierra Leoneans were raising issues of fear of possible reprisal attacks from perpetrator of crime if they testify at the TRC, Liberians on the other hand were querying the reality of Section 48 of the TRC Act which states “all its recommendations shall be implemented”. If this is obeyed then President Sirleaf and others would be barred from participating in the forthcoming 2011 elections. However the Act had both legal and political implications. Legally, the statement in the Act was problematic because only the Courts of Liberia could provide for the mandatory punishment of anyone in the territorial confines of Liberia. If interpreted narrowly, this aspect of the Act does not provide room for due process of the law, a sacred constitutional principle of the country.

As the supreme legal regime of Liberia, the constitution takes precedence over all other subsidiary legal documents. Nonetheless, there were some arguments to be made that the Act could be interpreted from a broader perspective. The Act was enacted by the legislature, the highest law making body in the country.

Further TRC was established under the terms and conditions of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of 18 August 2003 that brought the 14 years civil war to an end. Accordingly,



the CPA suspended parts of the Constitution in the name of peace and security. At the time of establishing the TRC in 2005 the suspended parts of the Constitution were never brought to force; they remained suspended. However, the suspended parts were restored after the inauguration of President Sirleaf in January 2006 but whether it had retrospective effect on the TRC Act is debatable.

Some were also of the opinion that the TRC Act did not undermine due process because implementing the recommendations of the Commission required going before a competent court of jurisdiction. On the suspension of some parts of the Constitution, some argued that it was under the conditions of the CPA that many people ran for the presidency even though they did not meet the residency clause, which called for ten years of continuous residency before anyone could be eligible to vie for presidency. Whether this part of the Constitution still remains suspended, provides the test for constitutionalism in Liberia.

Thirdly, implementation of recommendations in relation to prosecution raises some practical issues: political will and human and financial resources. Implementing this requires political will on the part of the existing government. Further, it requires financial and human resources. In this direction, the role of international will and consent is crucial because there were doubts as to whether Liberia could shoulder the responsibility of financing such a lengthy process. Other issue was the appointment of a Prosecutor which required some time. According to the law, the prosecutor must be publicly scrutinized and command public trust and confidence. Conducting such investigations could take between five to ten years before the process is completed.

Even if the implementation of Section 48 is legally implemented, there were political implications for the TRC recommendations. In 2011, Liberia would have held its second election after the war. The sitting President and other Liberians who may run for the presidency and other elected positions had been recommended to be barred from partaking in the elections. Will the President and others defy the recommendations of the report and contest these elections or will they comply with them? The overwhelming view in Monrovia is that she would have tested the legitimacy of these recommendations by running. If this is the case, then her opponents will use this as a campaign issue. In a country where majority of the people are politically conscious, her contesting would pose implications on how she will be perceived. Already, some opposition and civil society groups were calling on the President to step down as a consequence report. During the elections, the situation could be even worse. On October 1 2009, the New Deal Movement wrote to the Chair of the National Elections Commission requesting that “that the President should not be allowed to contest in any presidential election in the future because of the TRC report”.<sup>61</sup>

Fourthly, the report raised the issue of reconciliation and national healing. Do the TRC recommendations provide the basis for healing and reconciliation or do they divide the country? The answer to this cannot be a straight-forward order. To provide an answer, one must understand the contexts, nature and consequences of the war. The point was that reconciliation does not lead to justice nor does truth lead to healing. Hence, if truth seeking and reconciliation were viewed as healing measures, then the issue of those who perpetrated crime during the war and are still walking freely on the street should be brought into the picture. Therefore, there was a huge tension between truth, justice and reconciliation in Liberia.

To the victims of war and their sympathizers in the larger society including human rights and other civil society groups, the failure to pursue justice by refusing to implement the recommendations of the TRC illustrated two basic things. First, that the perpetrators of crime and those who aided and abetted the war had crafted their own version of truth and imposed their own version or style of unity, healing and reconciliation upon the society. Finally, the failure to implement the recommendations illustrated the logic that ‘might make right’. While we speak of unity, healing and reconciliation, we should also be aware that forgetting cannot be imposed.

For the perpetrators of crime and those who supported the war, the recommendations were a recipe for disunity, disorder and chaos. In their views, if the ex-warlords and ‘big men’ and ‘big women’ named in the report were punished, it could derail the peace process and undermine the emerging democratic process. For them, the only way forward was to ‘let bygones be by gone’ and the country would thrive.

The major challenge that faced Liberia and its leaders were to choose between order and justice. On this issue, one observer in Liberia argues that “if those who perpetrated crime during the war and are still walking freely on the street are allowed under the present circumstances, it would enable anti-democratic elements within the society to drag the process of forging a future for Liberia. If democracy and rule of law are the future of Liberia, then such move would certainly undermine emerging democratic process as well as the confidence of the people in such future”.<sup>62</sup>

Finally, there was an argument that impunity would undermine the peace process and militate against the peace-building process. The measures recommended could serve as deterrence for others who may want to foment new war, kill innocent people and get away, under the alibi of

peace and security. The implementation of the recommendation would help in consummating the Accra peace process out of which the TRC was set up. Publication of the draft report was not the end of the process it only started the process.

There were mixed reactions to the TRC report and the recommendations. On one hand, some Liberians welcomed the report and supported the call for sanctions, while others thought that the TRC would have granted amnesty to all who were associated with the war.<sup>63</sup> Consequently country divided into two camps. For example, after the draft report went on circulation some civil society groups called for the resignation of the President. The Forum For The Establishment of War Court in Liberia called for the resignation of President Sirleaf and other government officials listed in the report because of what they termed as loss of public confidence on them.<sup>64</sup> In addition, it was reported in the *New Democrat Newspaper* that some of civil society groups which included Amnesty International, the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC), Centre for Democratic Empowerment (CEDE), National Human Rights Council of Liberia (NHRCL) argued that the issue should be of ‘let bygone be bygone’ or else it could undermine the national healing and reconciliation process in the country. In their words,

Turning a blind eye to the scores of rapes, tortures, inhumane deaths and wanton destruction of properties that characterized our politics, under the guise of ‘let bygone-be-bygone’ represents the real threats of relapse to conflict as this could dash the hopes of the many brutalized and broken victims, trigger private revenges and undermine the national healing and reconciliation process.<sup>65</sup>

In her editorial, The *Public Agenda* published that justice should prevail over impunity. The editorial reads as follow: “right now, the Liberian civil society, the masses, the children and families of the victims of war and the international community are poised to see justice visited

upon those for whom justice is due and necessary. And each, according to the weight of his or her guilt and innocence, will get proportionate justice”.<sup>66</sup>

Some Liberian political parties also joined the debate over the recommendations by the TRC. In a statement released to the press on July 17, 2009, the Liberty Party was more cautious. The party welcomed the report and commended the TRC for its courage and diligence in completing its work. According to the party, the report had serious implications for reconciliation, peace and development in Liberia.<sup>67</sup> It enjoined the President to provide adequate security for every member of the TRC in order to ensure their protection. It also called on:

All Liberians to develop an attitude of tolerance and deep reflection, to consider the report in its entirety, and to use the report in furtherance of our efforts to build a peaceful, democratic, and prosperous Liberia. True patriotism and love-for-country call for an unbiased and non-partisan assessment of the TRC Report. If we as a nation ever needed an expression of objectivity and a demonstration of love for country, this is the time.<sup>68</sup>

Similarly, the New Deal Movement also welcomed the report and commended the commissioners for their work. The group also cautioned against impunity and called on the President to resign her position.

The national legislatures were caught in a web of confusion as to the role of the President in the entire process and members expressed their concerns. For example, in a statement released to the press and published in the *Public Agenda*, the Representative of District No. 2 from Grand Bassa County, Hon. Vimcius S. Hodges questioned why those who yesterday stood against impunity were now in support of it. In his words:

.....is it because of the mention of President Sirleaf as one of those that have been sanctioned by the final report of the body? “What are we saying, then? Trash the entire report because we so desperately desire to protect the President and the big guns? No,

fellow Liberians! Liberia cannot move along the path of progress, if we continue to cleave to narrow views of what justice and reconciliation are, and who are those that must fall under the radar of the two concepts. All must fall to the fair arms of the law.<sup>69</sup>

Similarly, a petty trader in Monrovia, Ma-Lorpu Kollie told *The Evidence* newspaper that she lost her husband and two children during the war and so commended the TRC for recommending that the perpetrators be punished. In her words, “those people came and killed all our people, destroyed all that we had worked for and shortened our lives, then we should say let’s forgive them, for what?”<sup>70</sup>

Nevertheless, not all Liberians shared Kollie’s views. There were those who saw the recommendations as a divisive tool and an effort aimed at undermining the legitimacy of the administration of President Sirleaf. Some civil society groups, the ex-warlords, and supporters of the President also argued against implementation of the recommendations of the report, because of what they perceived as the negative impact that it could have on the politics of the country. For example, the Coalition for Peace and Tranquility issued a statement in *The Inquirer* and accused the TRC of fomenting chaos and trying to derail the already fragile peace process and democracy, threaten the stability of the Liberian state and politically dislodge potential political leaders in Liberia.<sup>71</sup> The group also questioned the authority of the TRC to make recommendations contained in its report, arguing that the TRC was established to promote ‘genuine reconciliation, psychological relief and peace; but on the contrary, it has arrogated unto itself the powers to render verdicts on individuals without conducting a hearing and by so doing criminalizing people”. According to the group, there were others whose names should have appeared in the report but did not. Specific reference was made to members of the Association for Constitutional Democracy in Liberia (ACDL), a group organized in the US in the early 1980s

to oppose the dictatorial regime of Samuel Doe. President Sirleaf was part of this group and so were other prominent Liberian scholars Dr. Amos Sawyer, former Interim President, and Dr. Patrick Seyon, former Vice President for Administration of the University of Liberia. In their argument, the Coalition questioned why Sirleaf had been sanctioned and not other members of the ACDL like those named above.<sup>72</sup> In defense, it was argued that members of the ACDL were divided on the issue of support to Taylor. While President Sirleaf and others voted in favor of raising money to support the war, Dr. Sawyer, Dr. Seyon and others refused to support the move.<sup>73</sup>

Ex-warlords were not left out in the frail. They also opposed the recommendations. The Ex-warlords were recommended for war crimes and which caused outrage among them. In a move to scurry the support of the President, they argued that the TRC recommendations were targeted to overthrow President Sirleaf and cause serious chaos in the country.<sup>74</sup> Those that converged at the Monrovia City Hall to condemn the report included representatives of the following defunct armed factions: National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), Liberia Peace Council (LPC), Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), and the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD).<sup>75</sup> In response to the statement of the warlords, in its editorial, the *Public Agenda* commented as follow, “in their unremorseful state, they are still barking with the venoms of death, promising chaos and betting atrocities. They are calling the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), by extension Liberians, toothless bulldog”.<sup>76</sup>

Some members of the Liberian Legislature also condemned the report. For example, according to *The Evidence*, Senator Richard Divine of Bomi County asserted that the report had the propensity to create disunity as opposed to finding a solution. He pointed to the fact that the report could bring down the government and create chaos.<sup>77</sup> In similar vein, a leading opposition

figure whose party, the Liberia Action Party, merged with President Sirleaf's Unity Party (UP), Coll. Varney Sherman also issued a statement and condemned the intents of the report. According to him, while he would not condone human rights violations, he had "serious doubt as to whether genuine healing and reconciliation can be fostered among the people of Liberia by recommending that President Sirleaf be barred from holding appointed and elected positions in the country". In this light, he sees the report as being more divisive than reconciliatory.<sup>78</sup>

Six years after, President Sirleaf had been cautious in addressing the issue of the report. Although, she had refrained from condemning the report, she had also not issued any statement indicating how the recommendations will be implemented because the TRC mandates the Executive to implement the recommendations of the TRC. In her speech on the occasion of the 162<sup>nd</sup> Independence Anniversary of Liberia, the President Sirleaf acknowledged that thousands of Liberians took part in the process and commended them for participation. However, she said that "where the report lives up to its mission and mandate, the Liberian people have my commitment to work with all branches of government, the Independent Human Rights Commission, the religious community, civil society and the media to actualize its recommendation".<sup>79</sup> Ever since, the President had not made any comments on the report because according to her, this would be legally imprudent and misinterpreted as an effort to influence whatever action the national legislature would take on the matter.<sup>80</sup> But she had established the Independent National Human Rights Commission of Liberia, in keeping with the TRC Act as the moral guarantor of the CPA: it has the responsibility to monitor, and campaign for the implementation of all recommendations emanating from the TRC's report.<sup>81</sup>



In her case, the Legislature had no decision to make in relation to the implementation of the recommendations by the TRC other than to monitor it. In keeping with Section 48 of the Act, the Head of State was expected to report to the National legislature within three months of the receipt of the report and on a quarterly basis thereafter.<sup>82</sup>

From the above, the report had created tension and division among Liberians. One of the issues that emerged was the confusion over who was responsible for the implementation of the TRC recommendations and how it would be carried which had serious implications for post-war peace-building and reconstruction.

### **Reconciliation, Justice and Peacebuilding**

The 1999 Lome and the 2003 Accra Agreement marked the official end to conflicts in Sierra Leone and Liberia respectively and the beginning of their long paths towards lasting peace. Both are making headway, but the underlying causes of conflict persist in both familiar and new forms.

In both countries feeling widespread grievance, mistrust and trauma resulting from the killing and brutalization of hundreds of thousands of people are still acute. This legacy divides society and undermines development. Unless individual and community relationships are restored and a shared sense of nationhood built, sustainable peace will remain elusive. Local civil society actors, in particular, feel that without reconciliation, democratic processes will perpetuate wartime power struggles and statebuilding initiatives will be co-opted.

Sierra Leone and Liberia's Truth Reconciliation Commission (TRC) both set a framework for healing, but people widely view the processes as bureaucratic and distant and lacking legitimacy.

While Sierra Leone's final TRC report has been relatively well regarded, the process has been seen as insufficiently participative and compromised by its overlap with the Special Court.

Liberia's TRC process has not been straight-forward. The partial implementation of its recommendations has festered resentment and questions have been raised around the TRC process and the solidity of evidence for public accusations. Implementing the outstanding recommendations would be a step forward, but it would not now be enough to achieve reconciliation; other ways forward also need to be found.

Ordinary Sierra Leoneans are now either cynical about the TRC or have forgotten about it. Victim and perpetrators at community level still often find themselves living uneasily next door to each other, without having had any opportunity for meaningful acknowledgement or reconciliation.

Weak political will and poor progress on reconciliation has bred despondency and allowed division to fester. Civil society initiatives seek to fill the gap by responding to the need for community reconciliation in ways that harness local traditions, to foster healing over the long term. However, the task of reconciling deep divisions remains great. Legitimate, participative processes to deal with the past are needed at community and national levels in both countries to enable sustainable peace and development.

Unresolved issues of inequality and exclusion of certain groups, frustrated post-war expectations, corruption and disputes over land and resources are latent threats to the consolidation of peace. Truth Reconciliation Commissions (TRC) in both countries and the Special Court of Sierra Leone have not satisfied the need for healing and justice and political will to deal with the past

has been lacking. Popular resentment towards the lack of justice for past crimes runs deep and surfaces in violence at moments of tension, particularly around elections.

The average Sierra Leonean and Liberian understands that peace only comes when we acknowledge what went wrong, when we restore the dignity of victims, when offenders have the opportunity to explain why they committed such atrocities and to apologize. Then one could say that we are at the beginning of the long road to peace.

Before the conflict, Sierra Leoneans used to describe ourselves as one big family. “The family tree will bend but never break”. There is little interest in Western notions of punishment at the community level. They have their way of addressing justices. Bonfires ceremonies in which offenders explain to the community what they did and ask for forgiveness was key, but they are preceded by community consultations for a minimum of three months. They train a community reconciliation committee that includes youth, women and religious leaders in basic trauma healing, listening and meditation skills. They are always there to talk with offenders. It takes a lot of time to help people to tell their stories and not be afraid. But through this process, people can begin to forgive and to rebuild their lives.

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## CHAPTER SEVEN

### ROLE OF EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS

This chapter examines the roles played by external bodies in the postconflict peacebuilding processes in Sierra Leone and Liberia. It also considers the contributions of the Civil Society Groups, Interfaith Missions, United Nations, and European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU) among others in ensuring durable peace in both countries on comparative basis.

#### **Introduction**

The international community has come to recognize that parties emerging from armed conflict require assistance not only in negotiating peace agreements, but also in building peace. Indeed, a state's ability to rebuild itself is often limited by weak institutions, and scarce human and financial resources, and economic fragility.<sup>1</sup> There is often a 'conspicuous lack of efficient permanent institutions and skills necessary for the complex and urgent project of reconstruction.'<sup>2</sup> In some cases, the dearth may be alleviated by the more active post-war role played by women's groups, local NGOs, labour unions and indigenous groups.<sup>3</sup>

However, in many cases, this is not enough. Consequently, nations emerging from violent conflict have increasingly turned to outside aid for technical and monetary assistance to further post-conflict transitions.<sup>4</sup> There are various development cooperation agencies that attempted to aid post-war reconstruction efforts. For example, the United Nations Development Program, (UNDP) the U.S. Agency for international Development, (USAID) the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund all provide international financial assistance to rebuild economic institutions and physical infrastructure.

In addition, development practitioners from various non-governmental bodies and international organizations had also assisted in strengthening household economies, carrying out infrastructure projects, and initiating community development programmes.<sup>5</sup> Outside

sources can help to assess damage to economic and social infrastructure and provide technical assistance to implement rehabilitation efforts. Practitioners can aid governments to develop a policy framework within which peacebuilding activities will occur.<sup>6</sup> The international community can also help to revitalize communities' capacities to resolve conflict through nonviolent means, and assist in settling disputes overland and other assets.

To maximize effectiveness of external resources, a division of labour needs to be established between the international community, and development organizations, other members of the international community, and development cooperation agencies. The different parties must work together and collaborate in their reconstruction efforts.<sup>7</sup> Many observed that there needs for a coordinated international commitment to peace building.<sup>8</sup> In addition, donors should take steps to lengthen the time frame for post-conflict peacebuilding activities. And they need to give top priority to building institutional capacity in both the public and civil sectors as early as possible. Together with the governments in question, donors can help create an environment to enable reconstruction and reconciliation exercises to take root. It is against these background that this chapter examines the roles of the Regional and Continental bodies, Interfaith Based Mission Groups, Civil Society Networks among others in peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

### **Regional Actors**

The end of the cold war precipitated the increased involvement of regional organizations in the maintenance of peace and security. What constitutes regional organization is ambiguous and elusive. Regional may very well be a function of whether a particular organization is geared towards economic, political or military goals. As Andrew Hurrell has noted "There are no "natural" regions and definitions of "region" and indicators of "regionness" vary according to the particular problem or question under investigation"<sup>8</sup>

For the purpose of this study, Regional Organizations could be defined as an organization or body within a defined territorial space but united by a common question with multidimensional character”. Classical examples are Organization of America States (OAS) and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) now African Union.

## **ECOWAS**

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was established in 1975 as a regional economic organization designed to foster economic integration amongst the member states. Barely had the organization settled to face the challenges of reorganizing the economic problems of member states in the region engulfed in a plethora of intra and inter ethnic conflicts making the region unsafe for meaningful economic development.

To tackle the insecurity, ECOWAS initiated a joint military group ECOWAS monitoring group (ECOMOG) to intervene in violent crisis anywhere within the region irrespective of the combatants’ sovereignty. The formation of ECOMOG, as expected, heralded some condemnations from critics, it however did not kill the dreams of the founding fathers.

The legality or not of ECOMOG intervention in Sierra Leone and Liberia is not the focus of this study.

ECOWAS became formally involved with the **Sierra Leone** three months after the coup. Hitherto, Nigeria had already been active in Sierra Leone by virtue of President Strasser’s invitation since 1992. In March 1997, Nigeria had entered into a bilateral defense agreement with the Kabbah government and it was by virtue of the Agreement that Nigeria quickly intervened in support of Kabbah.

At the time of the coup, Nigeria had some sizeable troops in Sierra Leone. The stated aim of Nigeria’s intervention was to try to restore order and reinstate Kabbah. But despite the aerial

and naval bombardments, Nigeria's intervention failed to oust the AFRC and RUF from Freetown and the control of government.<sup>9</sup> Nigeria then called upon Ghana and Guinea among others, for assistance which sent small contingents in an attempt to make the force look more multinational.

But when the situation lingered, an official ECOWAS approval was needed. ECOWAS involvement came in June 1997. ECOWAS foreign ministers met in Conakry, Guinea to review the Sierra Leonean situation. The ministers neither condemned the Nigerian's action nor approve an ECOMOG force intervention. Instead, they created a committee of four, comprising Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea and Nigeria fashion a way out for a peaceful resolution in Sierra Leone.

In August 1997, ECOWAS Chief of Defense staff and foreign ministers held successive meeting on the situation in Sierra Leone. The foreign ministers recommended the establishment of another ECOMOG for Sierra Leone to be known as ECOMOG II. On the August 29 1993, the authority extended the scope of ECOMOG activity to Sierra Leone with the mandate to ensure the early reinstatement of the legitimate government of the country.<sup>10</sup> However, ECOWAS, in its approval of the ECOMOG action in Sierra Leone, did not authorize a full-scale military intervention. Nigeria had sought an all – out action, but several other countries opposed the move. The ECOWAS approvals were therefore a compromise between the two factions. ECOWAS imposed embargo on all supplies of petroleum products, arms and military equipment to Sierra Leone and authorized ECOMOG to enforce the embargo by means necessary.<sup>11</sup>

Further negotiation led to the signing in October 1997 of a six-month Peace Plan for Sierra Leone by the AFRC. It was soon obvious that the AFRC had not negotiated in good faith. By late 1997, Nigeria as the head of the ECOMOG II had lost faith in the Peace Plan. In

February 1998, a Nigeria led military ECOMOG military launched an offensive to recapture Freetown and restore Kabbah to the presidency. The ECOMOG action, with substantial external assistance, quickly ousted the AFRC from Freetown. Kabbah was reinstated, and the RUF and AFRC retreated into the bush

From the bush, the rebel stepped up campaign to return to government. But this time, 'it was a campaign of terror'. Villages were destroyed and civilians were mutilated and murdered in their thousands. In fact, a favourite strategy of the RUF in this phase of the war was the amputation of hands of ECOMOG or government soldier and others suspected to be supporting them or collaborating with the government. The terrain favored the rebel, and largely as a result, ECOMOG could not totally defeat them and secure the surrounding countryside, less so the hinterland

ECOMOG had superior firepower, but this could not achieve much in the forested terrain. Then ECOMOG had other problems of its own. The force had operational shortcomings, stemming largely from the lack of coordination among countries supporting the campaign. The countries of ECOWAS also continued to differ in their attitude to the war itself. Then the force had logistic problems. Equipments were always inadequate, so was funding. As a result, fighting did not abate as initially hoped, and the rebels continued to control several diamond mines, using the proceeds to fund war activities.<sup>12</sup>

In September 1998, the rebels decided on a new offensive. This time, their elements started infiltrating into Freetown in trickles and in December, they had apparently considered themselves well positioned. In January 1999, they launched the offensive. This time, the rebels had captured Freetown. Shortly afterwards, the situation was reversed, in February.<sup>13</sup>

The rebels' wreaked havoc on their way to Freetown; bodies decayed on the streets in thousands. Many people were reportedly killed in the offensive. The rebels succeeded in seizing the State House briefly. They also burnt the police headquarters. The prison was also overrun and RUF and AFRC members detained there were released. The Nigerian Embassy was burnt, in addition to the significant casualties suffered by Nigerian troops.<sup>14</sup>

In frustration, ECOMOG retaliated with equal brutality. The counter offensives mounted were alleged to have involved revenge killings as well as other gross human rights abuses. Meanwhile, as the war progresses, Nigeria was undergoing a political transition process, from military to civilian regime. The sentiment in the country was that the whole ECOMOG exercise by the Nigeria's troop was a military misadventure, and the hope was that a new civilian regime would withdraw from the mission.

Nigeria actually made an announcement to that effect which further prompted other countries to carry on with the ECOMOG mandate in Sierra Leone. Other countries pledged and contributed more troops, and donors came up with more funding.<sup>15</sup>

However, Nigeria rescinded her decision to withdraw from Sierra Leone. By July 1999, the Lome Peace Agreement was signed between the Kabbah government and the rebels in order to end the civil war. But even after the Accord, the RUF continued to fight, under several pretexts.

Following these continued difficulties with the RUF, ECOWAS sent 3000- strong rapid reaction force to bolster UNAMSIL. The force consisted largely of Nigerians, and was trained and equipped by the US in the last months of 2000.<sup>16</sup> Fighting decreased significantly after the deployment of more troops by ECOWAS countries, and the Abuja Ceasefire Agreement was signed in November 2000 between the government and the RUF which

brought immediate ceasefire to the conflict. However, tensions between rebel groups and within rebel factions led to several post accord clashes.

## **Women**

Centralizations of power, violence and patriarchal attitudes excluded women from politics and public decision making in post-independence African countries. In response, women in Sierra Leone and Liberia formed non-political voluntary groups that focused on the advancement of the status and welfare of women and worked at the community level to provide them with material benefits and democratic opportunities not otherwise available.

The first major step in this regard came in mid-1994, when the Sierra Leone Association of University Women (SLAUW) proposed that women's groups meet regularly for networking, information sharing and collective action on issues of common concern. The Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), the Women's Association for National Development (WAND), SLAUW, and the National Organization for Women (NOW), and long-time community activists such as Haja Isha Sasso formed the backbone of the new structure. Soon the women of ZONTA and Soroptimist International were networking with Omo Benjamin of the Women's Wing of the Sierra Leone Labour Congress, with Alice Conteh of the newly formed National Displaced Women's Organization, and with members of different women traders groups.

Muslim women's associations and mass membership Christian women's groups were also active participants in the Women's Forum, as the discussion group came to be known. The women justified their strategy of direct intervention in politics on the grounds that the national crisis was too serious to be left to the military government. They argued that women were natural peacemakers who could offer unique skills to resolve the conflict. SLWMP obtained the Forum's active support for a campaign of appeals to government and rebels,



marches, prayer rallies and meetings with government and members of the international community to apply pressure for a negotiated settlement.

The military government, like its predecessor, was uneasy about public discussion and particularly sensitive about criticism of their handling of the war. The women's peace campaign placed the issue in the public domain in a non-partisan and non-confrontational manner that made public debate of contentious issues possible without the fear of automatically offending the government.

The first peace march organized by the SLWMP in January 1995 was a joyous carnival affair led by a little-known pediatrician, Fatmatta Boie-Kamara. It was a public demonstration of a kind not seen since the Mothers' Union marched on Parliament in the 1960s to protest against changes in family law. Female professionals, previously known for being aloof from the concerns of ordinary people, danced through central Freetown, linking arms with female soldiers, petty traders and student nurses, singing choruses. The message of the demonstrators was simple and compelling: 'Try Peace to end this senseless war'. As the crowd marched along they called onlookers to join them. Many found the appeals irresistible.

Peace groups hitherto viewed with suspicion as 'fifth columnists' and rebel sympathizers acquired legitimacy through association with the women who had mobilized a mass movement and enjoyed the support of the international community. As a result of the women's intervention a negotiated peace settlement became a respectable option that offered both government and the rebels the opportunity to climb down from entrenched positions without loss of face.

However, by mid-1995, no significant response to the women's activities from the parties left their peace campaign in the doldrums. WOMEN (a small member of the Forum), whose main

objectives were promotion of a democratic culture and active participation of women in politics and governance, at this point provided fresh impetus. They proposed the Forum take up the government's half-hearted offer of civilian rule, given under pressure from the international community. As ever, many groups were wary of politics. In a passionate debate some members of the SLWMP, themselves recently displaced as a result of the war, pointed out that economic collusion between government soldiers and RUF forces meant a speedy battlefield victory by the government was unlikely. It was concluded that peace would best be pursued through a return to democratic civilian rule.

Women took the lead in the democratization process encouraged by other civil society groups, who felt the military would put up with more from the women than from men. The women's position paper prepared for the National Consultative Conference in August 1995 (called Bintumani I, named after the hotel where the conference was held) was circulated to all delegates to convince them of the conference's importance. Many of the women's recommendations were adopted without debate, the most significant of which was the provision that only a recall of the conference could authorize postponement of elections. As the voting date was approaching civilians were increasingly targeted in brutal attacks aimed at maiming potential voters and intimidating others.

The Women's Forum held a widely reported press conference. At the conference they emphasised the need for candidates to address women's issues such as illiteracy, health care, women entrepreneurship to reduce poverty, and reform of laws detrimental to women on divorce, property, marriage and inheritance. They also reaffirmed their commitment to peace and demanded that elections must go ahead as planned since its 'an essential and fundamental part of the peace process' and that women make up fifty per cent of any peace negotiation delegation.

Amidst the pre-election violence and an orchestrated campaign calling for peace before elections, the national Consultative Conference was recalled by the NPRC government two weeks before the election in February 1996. Looking back, the democratization process had an air of doubt about it. Many delegates were undecided, particularly after the force commander clearly signaled the army's opposition to elections. When someone noticed that the young teacher slated to speak on behalf of the Women of the Eastern Province was being prevailed upon by Kailahun District elders to break ranks, an immediate decision was taken by other women in the conference to substitute another speaker. Marie Turay's loud and unequivocal declaration in favour of elections took courage and was considered by many to be the turning point of the decision to proceed with the elections.

The women's movement's claim to speak for women nationally was often challenged but it was justified. The women's demands in 1995–96 were reflections of the long-standing demands of women for improved welfare and status. Internally displaced women from the other towns invaded Freetown to join the Forum and other connected groups. Well-established Forum members, like the YWCA, already had nation-wide membership and communication structures. Other Freetown groups, such as WAND, had established contacts with up-country women leaders through their provincial projects.

They undertook a successful sensitization campaign and opened branches in all accessible parts of the country. The Forum considered these provincial links important and used them to share information, and co-ordinate marches. At the Bintumani I, conference decision-making was made through long and lively discussions on issues attended by up to eighty women at a time, all of whom had a right to speak and experts were invited to provide information. The hallmark of the Forum was to cultivate democratic culture. The women only brought idealistic appeals to the peace process that carried no weight with the belligerents. The RUF

never responded to their appeals for direct talks and the NPRC and civilian governments ignored their demands to be included in the formal peace process. In any case, neither the NPRC nor the RUF was, at that time, interested in the kind of peace being suggested by the women.

Women believed that their hard work in the democratization process would be rewarded by places at the negotiating table, but politicians recognized that the ideas and attitudes thrown up by the women's movement had the potential of destabilizing traditional politics, so they discouraged further participation by women in leadership.

Thirty years of systematic marginalization of women in politics had left them lacking confidence.<sup>43</sup> The majority of women steadfastly refused to convert into a political force that would have had leverage in the peace process. A civilian government that promised to take over responsibility for the peace process was a sufficient achievement for many of the women's groups who were not comfortable in the spotlight.

The 1996 elections produced a civilian government but neither a participatory peace process nor sustainable peace. After Abidjan, internal conflict disintegrated the SLWMP, the Forum struggled to fill the limited role offered by a flawed agreement it had played no part in drawing up. The May 1997 coup ended women's attempts at independent intervention in the peace process. In future, they would be firmly submerged within civil society.

Although the participation in the search for peace and democratization process were revealing experiences for the women, the movement was perhaps not as influential as sometimes suggested, at least not in the short-term. Certainly they opened up opportunities for public debate on peace issues and peace advocates were no longer automatically perceived as fifth columnists. They also emphasized the importance of issues over personalities in politics.

However, the lack of an ideological framework to guide their peacebuilding activities blunted the movement's effectiveness. Forum discussions were long and inclusive, but the analysis was shallow and the consensual style prevented a clear and consistent long-term vision being elaborated.

Nonetheless, the women of Sierra Leone did succeed in creating an independent voice that articulated a non-partisan, female perspective on a wide range of issues. The most useful contribution a women's movement could make to sustaining peace would be to regain that voice.

### **Inter-Faith Missions**

During the crisis in **Sierra Leone**, the churches and mosque were not left out in the advocacy for peace. United Methodist Bishop, Joseph Humper and the Reverend D.H Caulker, Pastor of King Memorial UMC in Freetown, played important roles in the efforts of the multi faith religious communities in Sierra Leone to aid peace process. Both United Methodists and King Memorial UMS were members of the Interreligious Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSL), a broad-based organization representing the Christian and Muslim organizations in the country. The IRCSL played critical role as an advocate for government dialogue with the rebels towards the goal of bringing hostility to an end.

Prior to the rebels' entry into Freetown the public's mood were hostile toward any kind of government dialogue with the rebels. Despite the public's negative mood, members of the IRCSL met with President Kabbah, and advised him to enter into a purposeful dialogue with the rebels. Their hopes was for negotiation "that could lead to a final and lasting resolution of the eight years of war in Sierra Leone" they offered to take the news to their constituencies. Their effort prompted the president to announce his willingness to negotiate with the rebel and receive the IRCSL's offer of full support to assist in the process.

The Inter-religious Council of Sierra Leone had developed a public statement calling for dialogue, enhance press conference and met with the president, members of the parliament, paramount chiefs and traditional leaders, and UN officials and their constituencies. The IRC SL also formed a sensitization committee to develop daily radio and television messages on the need for resolution of the conflict. A working group was formed of members of the IRC SL, parliament and paramount chiefs to evolve a strategy for the government, the UN, and other parties to resolve the conflict and help the nation recover. The IRC SL also worked through the World Conference on Religion and Peace to establish connection with unarmed northern European governments that might possibly act as a third-party negotiator between rebels and the government of Sierra Leone.

Sierra Leone is a nation of many faiths. About 60% of its people are Muslim, 10% are Christian and at least 30% practices indigenous forms of worship. Yet they are united, a factor which the United Nations Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, Olara Otunnu, recently observed that “it was rare that a society emerging from protracted conflict remained as united and cohesive at the national level as Sierra Leone was today, especially given its diversity in regional and religious terms.

Religious communities in Sierra Leone had proved themselves to be among the strongest civil actors in the country. Broad recognition of the importance of religious communities in Sierra Leone is evidenced by the fact they had been repeatedly called upon by political leaders to coordinate critical social services, undertake advocacy, mediate claim of legitimacy, and assist in the formulation of conditions for peace between conflicting parties.

Engaging the religious communities toward the development of a culture of human right must be a major element in any strategy for the achievement of a durable and sustainable peace in the country. In his speech at the National Conference on the Role of Religion in Peace and

Reconciliation in Sierra Leone on April 1, 1997, President Kabbah paid tribute to the roles of these communities, saying, “through the persistent prayers, moral and spiritual support, and fearless vocal pronouncement of these leaders, our country is able to surmount the difficulties of the transitional period from military rule to a democratically elected government.” He called for mobilization of the religious communities so that they could act as a “constructive force” in the “peacebuilding process.” Again, in his speech on February 7, 1999, President Kaddah called on civil groups to begin consultation immediately, and try to build national consensus on how government should conduct the peace process.<sup>46</sup>

## **Media**

The media was a strong tool for peacebuilding in **Sierra Leone**, during its eleven years civil war. The media was instrumental to the Women Group in their quest for peace and stability. According to Ramatu, the Chairwoman of Women’s Action for Dignity (WAD), women gained increased power as a result of the devastating war, and one way they did this was through the use of media. “Media is our force” says Ramatu, “we had one hour per week of free radio airing to speak on issues regarding women and children”<sup>50</sup>

According to James Ambrose of Search for Common Ground (SFCG), 80-90% of Sierra Leonean owns a radio.<sup>51</sup> those who did not have a radio during the war quickly acquired one in order to know where the rebels were moving. During the war, media played an integral role in reaching out to otherwise unreachable groups. Civilians and NGOs began to use radio and music to create dialogue between political enemies and put an end to violence by communicating with combatants in the bush.

Search for Common Ground (SFCG), used radio to create national and community discourse and crossed the frontlines of the rebel armies and engaged in direct communication with the combatants. SFCG convinced rebel commander to disarm and release child soldiers. Media

practitioners went into the bush, talked with commanders, established credibility and then gradually took truckloads of children back to civilian life. Additionally, SFCG strategically used music, an ingrained aspect of Sierra Leonean culture, as a common connector to rebuild relationship between fighting forces and in broken communities. SFCG organized peace festivals in which musicians crossed the fighting line to play concert for rebels and local villages.

The SFCG also used media to reintegrate and empower the youths. They established Talking Drums Studios, a multi-media production studio, to create radio and audio programmes that encouraged the youths to play an active role in building peace and transforming conflict. Adolescents write and sang songs, recite poems, and tell stories about the challenges they faced in the aftermath of the war. Talking Drums promotes the progression of sustainable peace by encouraging citizen to apologize, forgive and heal in a safe space.

### **United Nations**

It was only in 1997 that the United Nations took the first formal action on the **Sierra Leonean** situation, although war broke out in 1991. In October 1997, the Security Council imposed an embargo on the sale or supply of petroleum or petroleum products and arms and military equipment to Sierra Leone. The resolution mandated ECOWAS to implement the sanction. This embargo followed the overthrow of the Kabbah government by the AFRC.

Following the persistent paucity of fund for Sierra Leonean peace process, the Security Council requested the Secretary General to establish a Trust Fund for Sierra Leone. In March 1998, the Trust Fund was established. Contributions remained very negligible, long after the Fund came into being. The Secretary General also created a United Nations Liaison office in Sierra Leone. But the office was a small one as the Security Council in April 1998 authorized the deployment of only 10 military liaison and security personnel to staff it.<sup>31</sup>



In June 1998, the Security Council established the UN Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL). Its operational size was however limited to only 70 military observers. This was even reduced further when hostilities flared in late 1998 and early 1999. Following the January 1999 rebel advanced into Freetown, UNOMSIL was reduced to a mere nine military observers. Even after ECOMOG had largely contained the offensive, UNOMSIL was not restored to full strength. By June 1999, the strength of UNOMSIL was only 24.<sup>32</sup>

The UN and ECOWAS however, spearheaded the Lome Peace Agreement, which was signed on July 7, 1999. The Accord called for the RUF to be transformed into a political party, and for the party was to be provided with positions in the Government of National Unity. The Accord also gave the RUF leader, Foday Sankoh, the Vice Presidency of the country as well as the chairmanship of a Commission for the Management of the Strategic Resources. A controversial amnesty was extended to all war crimes committed during the conflict. The UN agreed to contribute personnel to help oversee disarmament and elections, and a Joint Implementation Committee was to meet every three month to oversee the implementation of the agreement.<sup>34</sup>

This Agreement however, came at the time a new civilian regime came in Nigeria and the new government expressed its desire to embark on a phased withdrawal of troops from Sierra Leone. But the international community rose to this challenge. In order to fill the vacuum that was created by Nigeria's withdrawal, UNAMSIL's strength was increased to 12,440, and its budget increased to \$476 million a year.<sup>35</sup> The new UNAMSIL consisted of troops from Nigeria, India, Jordan, Kenya, Bangladesh, Guinea, Ghana and Zambia. An Indian was made the commander of the force.

However, the RUF accused UNAMSIL of taking sides with the Kabbah government. Consequently it continued its fight the government and prevented UNAMSIL, prevented

from deploying, its force to the mineral-rich areas. In addition, they took UN peacekeepers hostage and seized their weapons,<sup>36</sup> at one point detaining 500 UN personnel at different locations across the country. Nine of the UN troops were killed.

UNAMSIL had its own internal problems. There were accusations of collusion with the rebels against some peacekeepers, in addition to other managerial problems. Some UNAMSIL units lacked proper training and equipments and there was also lack of understanding of the mandate of the Mission as well as the rules of engagement by peacekeepers

These setbacks notwithstanding, UNAMSIL was able to respond more forcefully in the mid-2000 against the RUF. On May 17, RUF leader Sankoh was arrested, and months after, the peacekeepers freed were by the RUF, recaptured the strategic town of Masiaka from the RUF, and cleared the illegal check points mounted by the rebel group in Occra Hills.<sup>37</sup> The UN also recognized the role of the illicit trade in diamonds in the Sierra Leonean conflict. In July 2000, the Security Council prohibited the global importation of rough diamonds from Sierra Leone.

In May 2001, the government and the RUF agreed to a ceasefire in order to effect implementation of the Lome Peace Agreement. By mid May, disarmament had begun and by August, it has festered throughout the country. Disarmament continued through the year although there were minor clashes between government and the rebel forces in some districts. Then in January 2002, the war was officially declared over.

## **ECOWAS**

Conversely, it took **ECOWAS** about six months to step into the Liberian crisis. Before ECOWAS arrival, Doe and his government had been confined in Monrovia by the rebel

forces. For humanitarian and regional security, it was pertinent that some form of external intervention was needed. It is against these backgrounds, ECOWAS intervened militarily in the crisis. Unlike in Sierra Leone where Nigeria intervened on invitation, Nigeria intervened based on the personal relationship of her president and that of Liberia. Doe was known to be a friend to Nigeria's then military ruler, General Ibrahim Babangida and had particularly turned to him at that moment of great need. At Babaginda's request, ECOWAS, at its May 1990 Summit in Banjul, Gambia, agreed to establish the Standing Mediation Committee (SMC). Hitherto, ECOWAS had no defense mechanism for internal conflicts within member states. The SMC was thus aimed at correcting this anomaly and even though not specifically mentioned, it was also obvious that the SMC was created to address the Liberian conflict.<sup>17</sup>

The SMC was empowered to initiate and carry out mediation process in conflicts within the region. Its initial membership comprised the Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria and Togo. After the May 1990 summit, the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS, in consultation with other members of the SMC and the parties to the Liberian conflict, convened a ministerial- level meeting of the SMC in July 1990. At the meeting, a sub-committee on Defense Matters was established to address issues relating to an intervention force in Liberia.

Based on their recommendations, the SMC Heads of State decided in August 1990 to establish an ECOWAS Cease-Fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). ECOMOG was to be composed of military contingents from the member-states of the SMC as well as from Guinea and Sierra Leone.<sup>18</sup>

With the deteriorating situation in Liberia, ECOMOG was in haste to deploy troops to Liberia, despite several oppositions, especially from ECOWAS member- states who saw the mission as having a secret Nigerian agenda and also from Taylor's NPFL, which saw the operations as calculated to deny him of certain victory.<sup>19</sup>

Notwithstanding, ECOMOG Forces were deployed on August 24, 1990. Only Guinea declined to send troops. Unlike in Sierra Leone where there were no opposition to intervene. The operation were marred with problems such as language barrier, of interoperability, training, equipment and orientation.<sup>20</sup> In addition, they were received into Monrovia with a barrage of fire from NPFL troops. At the end, the ECOMOG forces managed to set up camps in Monrovia according to plan.

ECOMOG was intended to be an interposition force, meant to keep the warring factions in the Liberian conflict apart while striving for peace. But no sooner had the force been deployed that the realities forced a change of purpose. The combat with NPFL continued. Then on September 9, 1990, Doe was captured by NPFL soldiers at the ECOMOG Headquarters in Monrovia. NPFL was supposed to be in alliance with ECOMOG against the NPFL, but its subsequent brutal murder of Doe not only incensed the regional force, but largely led to the force's transformation into an intervention force.<sup>21</sup>

From this moment, Nigeria assumed a greater role in the ECOMOG command. The command structure of the force was restructured, with Nigeria assuming not only the overall command but also the staff command. ECOMOG also became increasingly offensive against the NPFL. This strategy brought the ECOMOG obviously nearer the possibility of military victory. But the strategy also helped to further antagonize Taylor and his NPFL to the ECOMOG. It also failed to secure a political environment conducive to finding a peaceful and diplomatic settlement.<sup>22</sup>

Nevertheless, ECOWAS Heads of State at an Extra-Ordinary summit in November 1990 in Bamako, Mali endorsed an ECOWAS Peace Plan. The Summit also secured a cease-fire agreement between the warring parties. Subsequently, peace efforts were pursued with frenzy. In December 1990, Cote d'Ivoire facilitated the attendance of a ministerial meeting of the

standing mediation by the warring factions. In mid- 1991, the francophone countries sought to mediate in the conflict. A Francophone dominated committee of five was established in June 1991.

Also in an effort to strengthen ECOMOG and allay fears of Nigeria domination, the US agreed to provide funds to enable Senegal, the leading French-speaking country in the region join ECOMOG. With the assistance, Senegal contributed troops in September 1991. The first contingent arrived Monrovia in October 1991, and the full battalion deployed to the interior by April 1992. The battalion were transferred back to Monrovia in May 1992 when the NPFL killed six Senegalese soldiers. In January 1993, the entire battalion were withdrawn due to the escalating violence of the conflict.<sup>23</sup>

Other efforts at peace failed to yield the desired results. The major was that ECOWAS member states continued to pursue UN coordinated and competing strategies. While many ECOWAS states continued to support and even create different factions in the conflict,<sup>24</sup> the Nigerian led ECOMOG preferred military solution to the conflict.

Taylor became increasingly incensed by Nigerian activities, and his NPFL'S relations with the Nigerian dominated ECOMOG was tense. In October 1992, the NPFL launched a major offensive to seize Monrovia. This objective was almost realized as ECOMOG was only able to thwart the move at a heavy cost to its men and equipments. The ECOMOG onslaught led to the disintegration out of some factions such as the INPEL, whose leader managed to escape to Nigeria.<sup>25</sup>

Following the heavy losses sustained in containing the NPFL offensive, ECOMOG reinforced its troops and undertook a full- scale war against the NPFL. It also actively cooperated with other factions opposed to the NPFL, such as remnants of the AFL as well as

elements of the United Liberation Movement of Liberians for Democracy (ULIMO). With the new move ECOMOG became increasingly ruthless against the NPFL and its collaborators. Consequently mounting concerns about, concerns ECOMOG's alleged handedness and Nigeria's domination of the force became more strident.

In response to these concerns, more efforts were made to negotiate peace. In July 1993, the Cotonou Peace Agreement was signed. The Agreement provided for the United Nations to supervise and monitor the implementation of the peace treaty. It also called for the introduction of contingents from African countries outside the sub-region to democratize and professionalize ECOMOG.<sup>26</sup> Subsequent to the Cotonou Agreement therefore, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe agreed to contribute a battalion of troops each.

These developments did little to improve the situation. The UN entered but not in the strength anticipated or required. Though the countries mentioned above, with the exception of Zimbabwe fulfilled her promise to contributed troops, problems still persisted. The troops from Tanzania and Uganda reduced Nigeria's domination of ECOMOG, but there were complaints of bellow expectation performance on the field.

ECOMOG thus continued to suffer from the several shortcomings that beset it throughout. As Tanzania and Uganda pulled out, funding continued to be a problem, which made several peace moves to be tentative at best. In fact, by 1997, there had been 10 ceasefires and seventeen negotiated agreements with most of them coming to naught.<sup>27</sup> Worse still, the Liberian crisis produced new warlords daily throughout the crisis period which made the peace process difficult.

By 1997 war weariness had crept in on the actors at a time the fortunes of ECOMOG were brightening. There were an influx of Western military assistance as well as troops from many West African countries, many of which had hitherto refused to send troops.

All these combined to increase the effectiveness of the ECOMOG.

Owing to the weariness of the belligerents, and increasing opposition to the operation in many troop contributing countries,<sup>28</sup> the need became more urgent for peace.

By first half of 1997, plans were atop gear for elections to end the conflict. In July of same year, legislative and presidential elections held throughout Liberia and NPFL, presidential candidate, Charles Taylor, emerged victorious. ECOWAS extended the stay of ECOMOG in the country. But a new mandate was drafted for the continued operation, with the objective of consolidating the peace as well as building capacity. The contingent were however, considerably reduced and only a few number of troops remained in Liberia by 1999.<sup>29</sup>

Two years after the installation of Charles Taylor as Liberia's President renewed conflicts emerged. This time, between the forces of the Government of Liberia (GOL), the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL). As the conflict escalated the situation in Liberia became intolerable. The refugee situation was unmanageable, and the death toll of both civilians and combatants was unusually high.

Against these background the West African leaders under the auspices of ECOWAS decided to intervene. The leaders set up the ECOWAS Mission in Liberia. In August 2003, this interposition force landed in Monrovia with the mandate of separating the combatants and securing the lives of residents in the city. The force was also to enforce an arms embargo as well as ensure the provision of basic amenities to residents and refugees.<sup>30</sup>

A ceasefire agreement led to the exit of Charles Taylor on exile to Nigeria and the cessation of hostilities. Further negotiations at Accra between ECOWAS Liberia leaders of conflict finally produced a Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The Agreement came into effect on October 2003 and mandated the United Nations to supervise the implementation of the provisions.

## **Women**

Similarly in **Liberia**, women as mothers and custodian of homes took active part in the Liberia peace process. First the women joined the Women in Peace Network (WINIPET) to provide platform for their operation. The women in Peace Building Network WIPNET held public rallies in 1991 to advocate for peace and security, and by 1993, they attended their first peace agreement meeting.

Another defining moment for WIPNET's was their inclusion in the Liberia's peace process during the second civil war, when President Charles Taylor challenged them to find the rebel leaders. Proving them resourceful, the women funded a small delegation's trip to Sierra Leone, to dialogue with some of the rebel leaders. The women arranged a meeting between Charles Taylor and the rebel leaders, earning a reputation as objective intermediaries. In 2003, because of the brutality of the war, WIPNET spearheaded the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace Campaign (WOLMACPC) to confront and engage the rebels directly, traveling over the country and region. WIPNET's movement with the rebel leaders was instrumental in moving the disarmament process forward.

After the Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed, WIPNET shifted its focus from mediation to implementation. WIPNET de-mystified the peace agreement and engaged women directly in its implementation. Noticing that the CPA had no clear outline when specific tasks would be completed, WIPNET organized a five-day workshop to identify



benchmarks in the implementation of the CPA. The goal of the workshop participants were to disseminate clear information to the Liberian public and women in particular on empowering civil society to be a ‘watchdog’ over the implementation of the peace agreement. Even with this knowledge, women were not welcomed into the implementation process wholeheartedly. In particular, women found themselves shut out of the disarmament process. However, when the disarmament proved slowly than expected, the WIPNET and other women leaders traveled to the disarmament camp themselves to meet the fighters and convince them to lay down their arms, thereby speeding up the disarmament process.

WIPNET were also instrumental in ensuring women’s representation during the 2005 election. Initially, many women expressed indifference to voting given that the government structures had never before benefited them as a group. With five days to the registration period, many realized that market women were not registering. In response, a coalition of 200 women, led by WIPNET, provided transportation, childcare and supervision of market stalls to allow women the means and the peace of mind to leave their work and register their vote. At the end of five days, more than 7,400 women had registered their vote.<sup>44</sup>

Another women group, Mano River Women’s Peace Network (MARWOPET) also played vital role in Liberia peace process. As Liberia embarked on consolidating peace, MARWOPNET worked to empower women to take part in Liberia’s reconstruction. MARWOPNET, and other associations representing the Muslim and Christian women group, provided training in different trade. For example, women who received training as seamstresses have had the opportunity to obtain government contract to sew uniforms for school children in the Bomi Country area.

Skill-based training did not only provides tool for sustainable employment, it also helped to integrate women into Liberian economy, thus contributing to improve gender equality in

post-conflict Liberia. MARWOPNET also develop legal expertise to ensure the protection of women and children and representation of female rape victim in court through the Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia (AFELL).

Recognizing that an inclusive peacebuilding and reconstruction process cannot occur without partnership among government, the international community, and the Liberian civil society organizations.<sup>45</sup> MARWOPNET encouraged women to work with government and non-governmental organizations in order to have a voice in the management of their country. Recently, the United Nations' all-female Indian police unit met with AFELL to discuss issues on prosecuting of rapists and other crimes against women in court.

### **Inter-Faith Missions**

Motivated by a desire to help those less fortunate, many religious-based NGOs were involved in humanitarian assistance. The goal is to relieve suffering, whether due to natural disaster or man-made calamity. Many were also engaged in long range development projects. At times, however, these projects had the unintended consequences of creating or exacerbating conflict. They also support the development of Civil Society Organizations that provided venue for peaceful participation and conflict management.<sup>47</sup> Few examples are:

### **American Jewish World Services**

The AJWS was founded in 1985 with a mission to alleviate hunger, disease, and poverty around the world. In doing so, it draws upon notion of social justice in Jewish tradition. At present, it gives grant to hundreds of grassroot organizations around the world and hundreds of volunteers participated in their project yearly.

## **World Vision**

World Vision is an ecumenical Christian Relief And Development Organization that has recently recognize the importance of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. It does so primarily at the community level. “World Vision’s believes that participatory process to identify community needs and to promote community development can help prevent violent conflict.

These planning processes contribute to peace through bringing community leaders together across ethnic/religious division and through intermixing groups that oppose each other.”<sup>48</sup>

Motivated by religious goal of seeking peace, religious leaders and faith-based NGOs have frequently played prominent roles as mediators or other form of intervention in conflict scenarios. Some religious figures have been able to use their positions of authority to work towards peace and towards the cause of justice.

Pope John Paul II, for example, played a prominent role in Poland, Lebanon, and Haiti. As respected members of the society, individual national religious leaders have often been at the forefront of efforts to deny impunity and bring an end to fighting. For instance, local bishops have served as mediators in civil wars in Mozambique, Burundi and Liberia. The all African Conference of Churches brought a temporary end to the Sudanese civil war in 1972 in part through prayers at critical points in the negotiation and by invoking both Christian and Muslim texts. Under Latin American dictatorship in the 1970-1980s, the Catholic Church was able to criticize the abuse of human rights. In Brazil, members of the church worked with other world council of churches to conduct a private truth commission of abuses under the military government. Some have also pointed to the role Buddhism play in building peace in Cambodia as it is the only institution respected and trusted by all segment of society. These

efforts, however, often do go unrecognized, particularly the effort of individuals and groups working in the grassroots level.

Mediators who are motivated by their faith may face challenges unique to their perspective. It is very difficult to work with those who the faith-based mediator believed to be morally wrong, if not evil. Furthermore, the mediator may be tempted to abandon their neutral position for ‘an eye for an eye’ attitude, should they or their loved ones be threatened. The main challenge, is to find God in others. The advantage they have is their persistence and commitment. Studies had proved that faith-based NGOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina helped to overcome condition that fueled the conflict by bringing people together to undertaken projects as soup kitchens, building homes and organizing choirs. The long-term commitments of these NGOs, these studies find, have contributed to reconciliation.

Some examples of faith-based organization that engaged in meditation or related intervention includes:

### **Quakers (The Religious Society of Friends)**

Quakers theology is committed to non-violence. They began relief services in the 1960-1970s and have also gone so far as to sponsor conference for disputants. Their 1984 involvement in the Sri Lanka was to learn more about the conflict and determine if there are projects they could support, and share their experience on similar conflicts elsewhere. As the conflict became clearer, the Quakers concluded that mediation might have been beneficial, but no one was filling the role. From that experience, a number of lessons emerged. One was the importance of operating transparently and observing strictly neutrality. The Quakers were wary of being the cynosure of eyes. They demanded that their role as intermediary be kept secret. According to them their view their effectiveness depended on not being seen as part of the conflict. In fact, they emphasized their powerlessness so as to impart on the parties that

they have no interest in the conflict. For similar reasons, they refused to set deadline for the disputants. In Sri Lanka, they also repeatedly reaffirmed with the sides that their presence was still seen as useful.<sup>49</sup>

## **Media**

Similarly in **Liberia**, the media was an important ally in the crusade for a democratic and open society. The media's relevance to the democratization of society stems from its ability to influence and shape public opinion by creating forum for public discourse, thereby contributing to transparency and accountability of the government. Though the media in Liberia struggled to continue in its bold reportage of the news as it did during the period of the civil war, it slipped into a mode of self-censorship as a result of repressive action taken by the government against the press. For fears of arrest and threats to their lives, journalists tend to refrain from publishing news stories that are considered sensitive to the government. In an environment dominated by fear and by government censorship, the Liberian press has been unable to perform its duties of educating and informing the public effectively.

The media in post-1997 Liberia has also remained as fractious as it was during the civil war, divided between the independence free press and the partisan media. The latter has been dominated by Charles Taylor's privately-owned media network, the Liberia Communication Network (LCN), comprising Kiss FM Radio and TV, Radio Liberia, the Patriot Newspaper, and the state owned media institutes such as the Liberia Broadcasting System (LBS) and the Ministry of Information's New Liberia Newspaper. Privately owned newspapers such as the Poll Watch and the Monrovia Guardian with known links to the ruling National Patriot Party (NPP) were also included in this group. Among the independent press included the Inquirer Newspaper, Ducor Broadcasting Corporation (DBC), the Catholic-owned radio Veritas, and the newspapers.<sup>52</sup>

The division in the media had often undermined authority of the umbrella body the Press Union of Liberia (PUL). During the crisis, rival blocs such as the Liberian Association of Journalists, have emerged in opposition to the PUL. In March 2000, when the PUL called for a press blackout in the protest over the government's action on the ordering of the closure of Radio Veritas and Stars Radio, only the independence press responded to the call.

### **United Nations**

Like in Sierra Leone, it took the UN twelve years to intervene in the **Liberian** crisis. The UN adopted a hands-off approach to the Liberian conflict. The Security Council did not take a firm position concerning the formation and deployment of ECOMOG. For a long time, the world body did not recognise ECOMOG. This situation continued between 1989 and 1990, well after President Doe was murdered. The first reference to the Liberian situation was in January 1991 when the President of the Security Council commended the effort of ECOWAS and called for peace in Liberia. In May 1992, the Security Council Presidential Statement on Liberia again commended the ECOWAS.<sup>37</sup>

By the end of 1992, the Security Council began to show more interest in the Liberian situation. As in Sierra Leone, on November 1992, the Security Council passed a resolution imposing an embargo on all deliveries of weapons and equipment to the parties in the Liberian conflict, except ECOMOG. The Council's became more committed after the signing of the Cotonou Peace Agreement in July 1993. The Agreement recognized the need for an impartial broker in the Liberian peace efforts and called for the UN to supervise the implementation of its provisions.

Like in Sierra Leone, the Security Council formally established the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) in September 1993 UNOMIL was entrusted with assisting in the implementation of the Cotonou Peace Agreement as well as to monitor and verify the

peace process. The Cotonou Agreement itself was concluded by the then Liberian parties- The Interim Government of National Unity of Liberia (IGNU), NPFL and ULIMO. The Agreement provided for the disarmament and demobilization of combatants and the establishment of a transitional Government to administer the country until elections scheduled for 1994.<sup>38</sup>

In furtherance of the UN Mission, the Secretary General appointed a Special Representative for Liberia whom he had contact touch on the Liberian situation. Similarly, like in Sierra Leone, the UN established a Trust Fund for Liberia in September 1993. The Security Council also agreed with the Secretary General's request for a force of 303 observers and support personnel. By March 1994, the disarmament process had started and the Transitional Government was partially installed. By May, the Government was fully in place. The UN was equally involved with the refuge situation as well as foods was supply to areas of shortages.<sup>39</sup>

Like in Sierra Leone, the UN in Liberia had some problems. The disarmament process fell behind schedule before collapsing finally by August 1994. Tensions were also increased between parties to the conflict. Within the mission itself, plans did not go as envisaged. The Liberian operation continued in a precarious state, even after the UN had convened a Conference on Assistance to Liberia in October 1995. The observers were not able to be deployed as planned.

By the end of 1995, fighting had resumed throughout Liberia. As a result of the continued fighting, the Security Council amended the mandate of UNOMIL. Following this amended mandate, UNOMIL's authorized strength was increased to 160 observers. Even at that, the actual number of observers deployed was much less than the authorized size throughout the conflict.

For most of 1996, the strength of UNOMIL ranged from five to ten observers a situation reminiscent of the Sierra Leone situation. In October, the official strength was further reduced to two following the Secretary General's appraisal. The strength of the UNOMIL increased to 86 in 1997.<sup>40</sup>

Later, the mission was shut down. Following the outbreak of new hostilities in 1999, the UN was again expected to intervene. The world body did not do much however, except to retain embargo on arms and diamond sales and travel sanctions on officials of the Liberian government.<sup>41</sup> But as the war intensified and the carnage worsened, calls for a full scale intervention by the UN intensified.<sup>42</sup> In 2003, following the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the parties to the Liberian conflict under the auspices of ECOWAS, the UN was asked to set up an International Stabilization Force to supervise the Agreement.

In response, the UN established the Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). The mission commenced work on October 1, 2003, with the absorption of erstwhile ECOWAS Mission in Liberia (ECOMIL) troops as UNMIL peacekeepers. The peacekeeping force has steadily risen ever since, such that by the end of 2004, UNMIL was the second largest peacekeeping force in the world. The force has worked steadily to ensure that the conflict in Liberia come to an end but that the likelihood does not arise again in near future.

### **External Organization and Peacebuilding**

Peacebuilding was adopted in Sierra Leone and Liberia after more than a decade of civil wars which brought untold hardships to the people and drew the countries backward. Peacebuilding is a conflict resolution strategy that involves both the local and international governments to address all the issues that led to the outbreak of conflict. In Sierra Leone and Liberia, many civil rights and non-governmental organizations including the regional and international governments were involved in resolving the crisis from the peace-making, and



peacekeeping, peacebuilding process in other to ensure an endurable peace in the war-torn countries.

As could be observed from this chapter, the roles played by various organizations were similar because they all had a common objective to ensure an endurable peace back to both countries. As expected in any violent situation, the women were more vulnerable to the crimes of war as they bore the highest of burden of emotions and physical loss of their children, brothers and husbands.

During the crisis, women in both countries joined other women in the region under the aegis of WAPRONET to canvass for peace and put an end to the crisis. Aside, they ensure that the rebels and government came to a roundtable to negotiate peace, even at the risk of their lives. Women also campaigned for early disarmament and spoke powerfully in favour of election and democracy in both countries, which boosted the peacebuilding process.

The interfaith mission also contributed immensely to usher peace in both countries. In Sierra Leone, members of the IRC SL met with president, Tejan Kabbah, in Freetown and encouraged him to engage the rebels in dialogue. They also pledged their support to achieve this through constant prayers and fasting. The IRC SL, using their international network, also established connections with some foreign based government, possibly to act as intermediaries during negotiation between Sierra Leone government and the various rebel factions.

Similar pattern was replicated in Liberia by the religious based organizations, who also prayed and sought international humanitarian assistance for war victims in the country.

The efforts of the interfaith mission in both countries like that of the women helped to usher in peace and contributed to the achievements of the peacebuilding processes.

During and after the crisis in Sierra Leone and Liberia, the media, which the voice(s) of the people, were not left out. Apart from updating the people about issues concerning the war and the steps taken to bring about peace, the media (both print Electronic) was a veritable instrument for women, civilians and NGOs to disseminate information to the people. In Sierra Leone, some media practitioners went to the push to dialogue with the rebels at the risk of their lives. Civilians and NGOs also used music and radio stations to create dialogue between the rebels and the government. Like in Sierra Leone, the Liberia media were bold and resolute in their reportage, many journalists were jailed for flimsy excuses and had their media organizations shut by the government of Charles Taylor. For example, the two journalists from Nigeria, Tayo Awotunsin of Champion Newspaper and Chris Imodibie of the Guardian respectively, were killed during the crisis. The Liberian media also helped during and after the war to influence and sharpened the public opinion through it creation of public discussion. No doubt that without the media in both countries, the world would had been in the darkness of the crisis in both countries.

Also not left out in the quest for peace in Sierra Leone and Liberia were the regional bodies African Union and ECOWAS. After series of peace negotiations between the rebels and the governments in both countries, the African Union established the ECOMOG force which ensured peacekeeping operations by sending military troops to boost the UNAMSIL and UNMIL forces in both countries. They also played vital roles during disarmament and election in both countries which helped to usher peacebuilding.

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## CHAPTER EIGHT

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, CONTRIBUTIONS TO KNOWLEDGE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

What this research did, was to examine the comparative analysis of the post-conflict peacebuilding in Sierra Leone and Liberia after more than a decade of their civil wars. Also the study evaluate the effectiveness of peacebuilding as a mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution in the context of West Africa. The second aspect of this research objective is to examine the similarity and differences in the context of peacebuilding experiment. The objectives are to examine the Demilitarization, Demobilization, Reintegration of ex-combants, rebuilding of the democratic structure, economic recovery, reconciliation and justices the role of external organization in peacebuilding in both countries.

In chapter one of this research, we identified that Sierra Leone and Liberia civil wars began in 1991 and 1989 respectively, together the civil wars claimed 750,000 lives and displayed 3.1 million people.<sup>1</sup> We also identified that the major causes of the civil wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia were years of bad governance, endemic corruption, youth neglect, the states, denial of basic human rights that created deplorable condition that made conflict inevitable”<sup>2</sup>

There are many perceptions of the causes of the conflict, some blamed the campaign of terror in response to the abuse of the government, while others claimed the collapse of the institutions as the root cause of the war and not the greed of diamond as widely speculated in some quarters. However, there is a general consensus on several core causes of the conflict, which were corruption and economic mismanagement and the underdevelopment of rural areas and youth neglect amongst others.

The study identified that countries emerging from violent conflicts such as Sierra Leone and Liberia are usually confronted with a deluge of problems such as how to rebuild the infrastructure destroyed during the war, rebuild the economy, ensure accountability for past abuses and violation of human rights, structure a future based on the rule of law, equity and justice amongst others.

Finally, the issue of peacebuilding was explored. Most literature on the subject recommended the primacy of joint efforts of the state and external organization as a foundation for lasting peace. However, what is the impact of peacebuilding when the circumstances that led to the outbreak of the war still persist? How has Sierra Leone and Liberia responded to the challenges, creating spaces for dialogue between victims and perpetrators and at the same time constructing new institutions for mediating the relationship between the government and citizens?

The outbreak of violence in Liberia in 1989 and Sierra Leone in 1991 marked the beginning of a change in the political, economic and security configuration of the Mano River Union (MRU) sub-region. This crisis as indicated earlier betrayed the once lofty goals of economic integration and peaceful co-existence among the MRU countries.

There is no unanimity among scholars and researchers on the causes of the conflict in Sierra Leone and Liberia which were accentuated by colonialism and were carried into the post-colonial era. Many believed that the major cause of the war was the warped administrative styles of leaders in both countries. Sierra Leone and Liberia had the misfortune of selfish and self-centered elites who milked the countries dry and disrupted development. The mismanagement of natural resources, massive corruption and neglect of the youths coupled with entrenched ethnic differences made war inevitable in both countries.

There was a variant in the method of military engagement in both countries. In Sierra Leone, the rebels resorted to the barbaric act of amputation of arms and limbs of innocent civilians to force the government to the negotiation table, while in Liberia, this was not so. However, there were similarities in their attack on the innocent civilians in both countries. During the conflicts, it was difficult for the ordinary civilians to distinguish between rebel, forces and the government forces as they all inflicted attacks on the innocent and unarmed civilians they claimed they were liberating.

Motivations to unleash terrible atrocities against innocent citizens were immaterial. Those who committed violence must be held accountable for their act under the law of Armed Conflict. The wars were brought to an end by concerted efforts of both the government and external organization in the peace agreements signed in Lome and Accra. Despite the massive United Nation Peacekeeping Missions deployed as well as the extensive external aid and reconstruction efforts by the United States, United Kingdom and the United Nations, the root causes of the conflict had not been resolved in both countries.

The international reconstruction efforts in Sierra Leone and Liberia had failed to a large extent to address the fundamental causes of the conflicts, especially in the areas of institutional weakness and endemic corruption and the marginalization of youths. Sierra Leone and Liberia provides invaluable lessons for the international actors involved in state-building and peacebuilding.

Recognizing that a lack of democratic governance result in the marginalization of citizens who then pose a threat to peace and security USAID has defined its main objective in Sierra Leone and Liberia as the promotion of good governance and transparency.<sup>4</sup> Ispite the best intentions of USAID and other organizations governance in both countries still remained plagued by corruption at all levels. In addition to corruption, rushed elections and the



reconstructions of the Paramount Chief system have contributed to a lack of transparency and accountability in the government.

Donors have tried to stem the tide of corruption in both countries with very little success. The creation of an Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) was the most recognized effort to hold government officials accountable. Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys, corruption survey and better accountancy system within the Ministry of Finance have constituted additional anti-corruption measures.

Thus far, though the ACC has been particularly ineffective and by 2004, only 2 of 40 cases that were sent to the Attorney General's office for prosecution has been concluded. In Sierra Leone, the ACC's greatest challenge is lack of cooperation from government and judicial officials. The Anti-Corruption Act of 2000 provides no penalties for refusing to comply with the Commission and its recommendations, and request from the ACC are frequently ignored by government ministers and officials. For Sierra Leoneans and Liberians, the luxurious lifestyles of government officials were evidence enough that corruption still remains embedded in the government and in the criminal justice system.<sup>5</sup>

The lifestyle of government officials are not the only evidence of corruption. The poor continue to suffer directly from corruption as well. The toll of poverty is exacerbated by extra payments demanded by local officials for health and education services. Bribes are required in order to gain access to the judicial system.<sup>6</sup> majority of the citizenry in both countries are still deprived of basic services due to the redirection and siphoning of funding and revenues by the government officials. If and when these services are provided, the people suffer yet again at the local level from corruption. The link between lasting peace and corruption is obvious, yet the political will of the international community to address this issue has been weak at best. If corruption continues, disillusionment and distrust will follow, particularly in

the light of the fact that Sierra Leone and Liberia were promised democracy by the international community. In societies with history of patrimonial and clientele rulers, reconstruction must endeavour to prevent history from repeating itself.

Another aspect of governance threatening the peace in Sierra Leone and Liberia is the Paramount Chief system. This local governance system were largely destroyed during the war, with many chiefs losing their lives. The Paramount Chief system was reconstructed by a Direct Foreign Investment and Development (DFID) -funded programme, the Paramount Chiefs Restoration Programme (PCRP).<sup>7</sup> Chiefs were commonly viewed as a cause of the conflict, and there were uprisings against their abuses of power as early as 1955. Abuses of power such as exploitative punishments given through local courts and seizure of property were common in the past, and there is no hope that this will change under the customary law system.

The customary laws tended to promote human rights abuses, especially with the regard to women and youth. A Forced Labour Ordinance (from 1932) is still listed on statute books and allows chiefs and their families to force youth to work for them.<sup>8</sup> The reinstatement of the Paramount Chiefs has sustained a form of injustice and unaccountability of governance that will continue to alienate youth and other segments of the population if it remains unchanged.

Corruption, crime and human rights abuses will continue as long as the judiciary is unable to function as an efficient and nonpartisan institution. Both countries' judicial system are plagued extortion and bribery among court officials, insufficient staff of the detention of hundreds of accused person with trials for protracted periods.<sup>9</sup> Donors had led efforts to rebuild courts and provide personnel, yet there remain insufficient numbers of judges, magistrates, public defenders and prosecutors. The judiciary also remains subject to corruption and bribery. The backlog of cases in the judicial system leaves an estimated 70%

of the population with the access to the Paramount Chiefs courts, giving the chiefs more power.<sup>11</sup>

Public perceptions of corruption, mismanagement and injustices represented dangerous form of disillusionment and despair that is not new in Sierra Leone or Liberia and must be addressed immediately by the international donor community.

Young people everywhere have considerable anxiety about their future, and if they do not find educational and employment opportunities, they naturally despair. This leads to feelings of exclusive and resentment that in the extreme can produce lawlessness, violence, and even anarchy as Sierra Leone and Liberia witnessed during years civil conflict. The conditions that exist today are some of the same condition the led to that conflict, and they be addressed.<sup>11</sup>

The economic exclusion of the youth is a widely accepted cause of the civil conflict that brutalized Sierra Leone and Liberia. The RUF was able to attract youths not because they were inclined to violence, but because they lacked social incentives and were economically and politically marginalized by poverty and the failure of state institutions.<sup>12</sup> One of the greatest failures of state-building in Sierra Leone and :iberia has been on economic front.

The UNDP Human Development Index ranks Sierra Leone and Liberia 175<sup>th</sup> and 176<sup>th</sup> respectively out of 177 countries. Development indicators for both countries are frighteningly stark, with an estimated 65%<sup>13</sup> of the population remaining illiterate and 70% living in poverty. While poverty affects every part of a society, unemployed youth are especially impacted by the ability to achieve a meaningful livelihood. Three-fourth of both countries' populations between the ages of 18 and 35 are unemployed,<sup>14</sup> and the few who have jobs often are not paid enough to escape the clutches of poverty.<sup>15</sup>

Reconstruction in Sierra Leone and Liberia focused most directly on the immediate needs for disarmament and demobilization of former combatants. The large-scale Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) efforts in both countries has been cited as a United Nation success story. Appearance can be deceitful however, time had revealed the ineffectiveness of reintegration. The agricultural sector provides three-fourth of the jobs in Sierra Leone and Liberia, yet DDR programs trained former combatants as plumbers, carpenters, or mechanics. Donors did hope that ex-combatants would be settled as farmers but the reintegration programmes provided did not meet the requirements that would have made this possible.<sup>16</sup>

In reintegration programmes, combatant could choose a field of training and receive a “toolkit” for that area. Much to the dismay of the donors the ex-combatant chose the kits which could be resold at highest value-hoes and seeds don’t fetch much. A six month stipend was provided for the ex-combatants who entered vocational training while farmers were not supported at all, since it was assumed they were already knowledgeable about farming. There were many hidden disincentives for ex-combatants to enter the agricultural field. In the midst of floods of foreign services, training and aid, many youth overlooked agricultural training in the hope of something more.<sup>18</sup>

The failure of the donor community to provide sufficient infrastructure reconstruction and employment generation has made livelihoods in agriculture for ex-combatants and youth untenable. A small number of public work schemes were undertaken. For example UNAMSIL and UNMIL soldiers employed ex-combatants on road construction projects, yet roads remain in extremely poor shape. International financial institutions, including the International Monetary Fund (IMF), have also been active in reconstruction and have compounded the economic challenges faced by youths in Sierra Leone and Liberia. IMF’s

insistence on privatization of public enterprise has made rebuilding the countries' infrastructure an impossible task for a governments whose budget are comprised of 65% foreign aid<sup>19</sup>. Opportunities in the agricultural sector have been stifled further by international insistence on removing trade barriers, which allowed cheaper Asians rice to invade the local market, reducing the ability of small farmers to compete.<sup>20</sup> A combination of the misguided reintegration programmes and the demands of international financial institutions resulted in a lack of infrastructure and access to productive lands, a lack of appropriate training and increased disappointment among youths.

The economic sector where the youths have been integrated is diamond mining, which accounts for 20% of the countries' total GDP and 65% of its foreign exchange. The exploitation of natural resources in Sierra Leone and Liberia, the smuggling of diamond in particular was a driving force of the conflict. An extremely valuable natural resource, diamond it will harnessed had the tendency contribute to economic development and poverty alleviation in one of the poorest countries on earth. Unfortunately, lack of government regulation, corruption and illegal smuggling continue. The Kimberly Process, initiated by the United Nations in response to the crisis of conflict diamonds, has not been effectively implemented in Sierra Leone and Liberia; government officials have attributed a decline in the official diamond exports from \$140 million in 2005 to \$120 million in 2006 to smuggling.

A major challenge for the reconstruction process has been using diamond revenue to promote development, a task that is feasible without government regulation. A positive step in this direction was the creation of the Diamond Area Community Development Fund (DACDF), with aim to invest diamond revenues in the respective diamond-producing areas. The effort has been undermined by lack of regulation by mining companies and Paramount Chiefs.

Youths interviewed by this researcher in 2007 said that “they believe land is being taken away from communities for resource management, but that their communities are not benefiting”.<sup>21</sup> Disaffection with the government and mining companies has only be enhanced by the number of youths who had been attracted to the mines in search of employment. In Kono district, one of the prominent mining districts in Sierra Leone, thousands of youth aged seven to sixteen were involved in mining often in exceptionally exploitative conditions. The lack of government oversight on mining makes it unlikely that the conditions for the conditions for youths will change in the near future.<sup>22</sup>

Education is the foundation of economic growth, development, health and other conditions to enhance peace. Although donor-driven initiatives rebuilt schools, many youths still do not have access to education. Education plays an extreme important role in postconflict societies, and particularly in the context of Sierra Leone and Liberia where 36% of ex-combatants surveyed had never attended school.<sup>23</sup>

Public education in both countries is free, but the widespread poverty has prevented many parents to afford textbooks, uniforms and additional fees charged by school authorities.<sup>24</sup> Despite the construction and repair of many school facilities, the educational system remains in crisis.

The pupil-to-teacher ratio in some part of the countries is still astonishingly high 118:1. In 2005, a reported 375,000 children could not attend school.<sup>25</sup> Extremely low literacy highlights the failure of the post-conflict educational system. About 47% of males and 24% of female can ready. Barely half of all primary schools are functioning, and only 41% of children attended primary school from 2000-2005 (although this figure is an average and the percentage may have increased in the past few years).<sup>26</sup>

Teacher salaries and school reconstruction have been impeded from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and donors to meet macro-economic objectives. IMF spending caps prevented increased government spending on education and result in low civil services salaries.<sup>27</sup> Maintaining low civil services salaries increased likelihood of corruption to supplement incomes and have resulted in additional school fees charged by education officials. As long as education remains out of reach for many citizens of both countries, a large segment of society namely, school-aged youth and young adults will continue to feel marginalized and alienated by a system that does not meet their most fundamental needs. Education is the hope of the future. Without it, disillusionment, frustration and despair flourish.

The plight of youths in Sierra Leone and Liberia has been illustrated by the creation of loosely knit youth groups and criminal gangs. While these groups are not necessarily violent and may even be formed for the advancement of youth, they illustrate the search many youth are undertaking for an identity not defined by poverty, unemployment, exploitation, and disillusionment. Groups serve multiple functions, such as providing protection for their members from police harassment or providing early warning on police patrols.<sup>28</sup> These groups have an enormous potential as forums for youth concerns and political engagement, but their potential for criminality and violence must be recognized by the international community and the government of Sierra Leone and Liberia. Local chiefs and strongmen may be able to co-opt these groups. UNASMIL and UNMIL reported that it needed the cooperation of youth groups as much as that of paramount chiefs in some mining districts; in Kono, for instance, youth groups appear to exert some control over which companies are permitted to operate.

Most threatening of these groups are criminal gangs. Bruce Baker explains the attraction of these gangs as organizations that offer a cohesive alternative sub-culture to the dominant culture which has marginalized boasts its own language and, through criminal activity, offers alternative forms of wealth.<sup>29</sup> The international community and the state government have not recognized or addressed these youth-led groups, leaving them disengaged from the political sphere.<sup>30</sup> In the context of poverty, unemployment, lack of education and feelings of injustice, youth organizations embody a palpable threat to security in Sierra Leone and Liberia and could easily be mobilized as criminal gangs, militias, or rebels.

The RUF was composed mainly of urban youths with unemployment, criminals, alienated rural youth, and young migrants working in diamond-mining districts.<sup>31</sup> What is the different for youths in Sierra Leone and Liberia today? The answer is not tangible. Reconstruction efforts disarmed former combatants, institutionalized a relatively stable governing structure, and expanded and reformed the police and military sectors. The average youth, however, still does not have access to education or employment. They are subjected to injustice by local chiefs, and embittered by local and high-level corruption. In the aftermath of great expectations, youths have found themselves outside the projects that were undertaken to rebuild their country and their futures. The greatest threat to peace in Sierra Leone and Liberia remains the state of the youths.

### **Peacebuilding in Sierra Leone and Liberia.**

“...In the gap between reality and the theory lies war.”<sup>32</sup>

There is perhaps no better way to describe the challenges of post-conflict state-building and peace-building than the above quotation. Sierra Leone and Liberia had experienced the gap between reality and theory first-hand. Donor agencies are now recognizing the threats to peace that have not been resolved in both countries. Reconstruction has succeeded in many



ways. Why, then, do corruption, injustice, unemployment and poverty remain endemic? State-building cannot be separated from peace-building. Failures of state-building endanger peace. The case of Sierra Leone and Liberia provides a multitude of lessons for the international community on priorities of reconstruction and the need to make theory become reality.

### **Curbing Corruption and Promoting Justice**

Post-conflict societies rarely experience a clean break from the past, particularly in the elite realm of governance. It is imperative that the international community and donors involved in reconstruction make ending corruption a high priority. Donors took several important steps in this direction in Sierra Leone and Liberia, with the creation of the Anti-Corruption Commission being the most significant. As was noted previously the Commission had remained powerless in the face of government interference and lack of cooperation. The international community must pressure that the government confer prosecutorial powers on the Commission. Additional recommendations by International Crisis Group call for a comprehensive reform of the judiciary.

In order to decrease the windows of corruption at all levels of government, budgets should be published from the ministry-level down and candidates should declare their financial assets before running for public office.<sup>33</sup> An informed public provides an important means of accountability for officials. Sufficient (not extravagant) salaries for civil servants will diminish the motivation for corruption at lower levels of government. A functioning legal system and Anti-Corruption Commission are necessary to curb corruption at the highest levels. UK Major General Jonathan Riley describes the inability of reconstruction to tackle corruption, saying: “We did security. We made a contribution to governance but did not

address the whole system, and we did nothing about essential services. In particular, we allowed corruption to continue.”<sup>34</sup>

The need for state-building to focus on functioning institutions in the immediate aftermath of war is unquestionable. The need to recognize what elements will impede the functioning of those institutions in the near and far future, however, is rarely questioned. The international community and donors have the capacity to enhance conditions for good governance and to limit corruption. Strategic analyses of the problems facing state institutions must be conducted in the immediate aftermath of war or even before peace is declared.

Unexpected consequences or failures of reconstruction initiatives must be anticipated as well. One of the most important lessons from the case of Sierra Leone and Liberia is that international interventions in state-building must last much longer than is currently acceptable to the international and donor communities.<sup>35</sup> Long-term engagement is necessary to monitor the consequences of decisions first made in the post-conflict setting and to ensure that they do not destabilize the country.<sup>36</sup> Corruption was rampant in both countries for generations before the war and was a core cause of the conflict. The United Nations, US, and UK should have, and must today, recognize the threat corruption poses to peace and use their leverage to stop the cycle.

### **Giving Youths Hope for the Future**

The word reconstruction conjures images of the construction of buildings, roads, hospitals and schools. The reality is that those images are often only a small part of reconstruction plans. The international community overlooked the concerns of youth and an impoverished population with a short-sighted drive for immediate peace, disarmament, and the creation of a barely functional government. Economic development, education, and the restoration of basic services were certainly on the list of things to do; the problem is how far down on the list

they fell and how they would be accomplished. Donors concentrated on disarmament and reintegration as a strategy for preventing future violence among youth. At the same time, their strategies for macroeconomic growth and spending caps undermined economic and educational opportunities for those same youth. A higher priority should have been given to the education and health sectors, as well as rebuilding infrastructure that connects rural areas. According to International Crisis Group, a World Bank study recommends less emphasis be placed on macro-economic balances. Instead, rapid spending on reconstruction in rural areas and the provision of jobs for impoverished and alienated youth should occur.<sup>37</sup>

A handful of public works projects to build roads and local police stations were conducted by donors, yet no large-scale government spending on public works emerged. Donors must consider the consequences of IMP and World Bank policies on at-risk populations, such as the youth in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Reductions in government spending on education, infrastructure, and health have led to conditions that marginalize large numbers of youths. Corruption must be constrained before donor support for government spending can be effective, however. International actors must approach state-building with a long-term time frame and a willingness to invest time and effort into understanding the many intricate relationships between reconstruction activities and the needs of the average of both countries.

### **Data Analysis and Findings**

This research is a comparative analysis of post-conflict peacebuilding in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Liberia and Sierra Leone two tiny neighbouring West African countries in the Mano River region, were engulfed in brutal civil wars that lasted over a decade. The causes of the civil wars could be traced to the early period of the history of the two countries. Sierra Leone with a small population of about 6 million people was colonized by the minority freed slaves from Britain that were settled in Freetown by the British Colonization Society (BCS). A

similar pattern was repeated in Liberia, where the American Colonization Society (ACS) repatriated some freed slaves in United States to resettle in Monrovia in 1847. However, there is a point of divergence here as Liberia was never colonized.

After the resettlement, the minority freed slaves in both countries seized the reign of power, and subjected the indigenes who were in majority to inhuman treatment. The minority freed slave dominated the reins of power for more than five decades. In Sierra Leone, power of governance was symbolized by the family of Siaka Stevens. Similarly in Liberia, it was the Tubman family and its descendants that dominated the reigns of power. In Liberia and Sierra Leone both families and their supporters also appropriated the state resources.

All efforts made by the majority indigenes in both countries to reverse the situation proved abortive, thus paving the way for the inevitable violent clashes. Other issues that led to the violence in Liberia and Sierra Leone include bankruptcy, coupled with huge inflation and massive corruption in the judiciary, the military and paramilitary forces. In addition, there were unemployment in both countries and the youths were neglected. The inability of both governments to address the grievances above led to the outbreak of conflict and civil wars in 1989 in Liberia and 1991 in Sierra Leone.

The civil wars attracted both local and international attention, because of the nature of atrocities committed against innocent civilians and women. In Sierra Leone, the war lasted for eleven years and fourteen in Liberia. As expected, there were huge loses of human and material resources on both sides. All attempts to resolve the crises proved abortive. After several peace agreements, peace was eventually restored beginning with Sierra Leone in 2000 after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in Lome, Togo. Similarly in Liberia, peace came in 2005 after the Accra Peace meeting. (2005)

With the signing of the peace agreements, under the auspices of the UNO and African Union through the sub-regional body the ECOWAS, the stages were set for the reconstruction of the war-torn societies. The first agenda was security. During the wars, both countries witnessed huge influx of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) coupled with the presence of foreign troops which posed serious security threat to the fragile societies.

The demilitarization, demobilization, reintegration and rehabilitation (DDRR) exercises in both countries commenced and this gave birth to the first post-conflict elections in both countries. The DDRR exercises in both countries were fraught with irregularities based on logistic and human greed. For example, the number of ex-combatants that were present in the resettlement camps in Freetown and Monrovia exceeded the number initially planned for. This created uneasy situations in the camps. In Liberia, the situation led to a riot which almost marred the exercise.

The shortcomings notwithstanding, Liberia and Sierra Leone survived the tensions. Consequently, there is relative peace and security. Both countries also have been able to create and sustain their indigenous security forces for almost a decade plus. After the DDRR exercise, Liberia and Sierra Leone commenced the task of rebuilding the state machinery through democratic electioneering process. In both countries, the citizens were very happy and enthusiastic about the elections, the first in more than a decade. The people were enfranchised and elections were conducted peacefully though not without claims of rigging which led to another round of elections in both countries. President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah emerged winner after a seriously contested electoral battle. Similarly in Liberia, President Ellen Sirleaf Johnson emerged as first female elected president in any African country, after defeating football maestro, John Opong Weah, in the election. With this, democracies were

restored in the two countries. However, the presence of former rebel leaders in the new political dispensation did not go down well with majority of the people.

In the economic sphere, Liberia and Sierra Leone's fragile economies were ruptured. After the civil wars, both countries' economies were grounded to a halt as diamond and rubber, which were their main sources of revenue, were destroyed during the wars. Consequently, both countries depended largely on foreign aid to survive.

With the support of the international community, Liberia and Sierra Leone were able to revive their diamond and rubber plantations which were the main stay of their economies. On unemployment and infrastructural developments, both countries have tremendously improved from their war time positions. Though unemployment still exists, there are prospects that the situation will improve as time goes on.

The research examined how Liberia and Sierra Leone addressed the issues of war victims and their families through reconciliation and the rebuilding of the judiciary system. After the provision of the constitutions, the governments of Liberia and Sierra Leone established the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRC), a body mandated to look into the grievances of war victims and their relations and apologize on behalf of the states for the assaults and insults done to them. Though many were skeptical of the activities of the TRC because of its non-legal backing and its inability to impose capital punishment on those who committed severe crimes, such as sexual assaults and amputation of limbs and hands on innocent civilians as was evident in Sierra Leone, the TRC contributed immensely to the stability of Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Finally, the research examined the roles played by both the regional and international bodies in ending the civil wars and contributing to the peacebuilding process in both countries. Of

particular note is the activities of the United Nations Organization (UNO) and the African Union (AU) and the ECOWAS, which were involved in the peacemaking, peacekeeping and enforcement and contributed immensely through material and financial support to the peacebuilding process in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

This study sets out to examine the nature and structure of post-conflict peacebuilding in Liberia and Sierra Leone. It also sets for itself, the task of investigating how the governments and people of both countries responded to the peacebuilding measures put in place. The following are the major findings of this study:

1. The study found that the adoption of the DDRR was largely successful as peacebuilding strategy, especially because it was necessary for other peacebuilding measures to commence
2. That the return to participatory democracy in spite of its shortcomings, encouraged the process of peacebuilding in both countries as more people now have a sense of belonging and participation in governance.
3. The governments of both countries took decisive steps to control their natural resources, hitherto in the hands of the combatants, and fell back on international aid for support in order to promote their economic developments.
4. Also, the study found that international organizations provided funds and logistics in both countries without which the peacebuilding process would not have been possible.
5. The study found that both countries adopted the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Strategy which partly addressed the issues of human rights violations but has not provided satisfactory justice to all and sundry. Many are of the view that the money used for funding the commission could have been better used to re-organize the judicial system.

6. Finally, the study found that DDDR process was easier in Liberia than in Sierra Leone because the international organization learnt from the mistakes encountered in Sierra Leone DDDR.

### **Contributions to Knowledge**

1. This is the first in-depth historical study of peacebuilding processes in Liberia and Sierra Leone on comparative basis. Many of the existing studies have examined the subject on individual country basis.
2. The thesis has demonstrated that successful peacebuilding in both countries required external funding but that local actors including the youth, traditional chiefs and women were important in achieving a comprehensive reconstruction of both societies.
3. The thesis has revealed that the weakness of both states in terms of their poor economy, mis-governance as well politics of exclusion in the pre-war period made reconstruction and rebuilding efforts more challenging.
4. The thesis established that the process of peacebuilding in Sierra-Leone was easier to achieve than in Liberia because the peacemakers continued to profit from the chaotic situation that prevailed in Liberia.

### **Conclusion**

The destruction caused by war cannot be fully comprehended by those who were not its victims in some way. The international donor community has failed to deal with the context in which conflict originally emerged in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Officials remain corrupt, chiefs retain power, injustice prevails, unemployment is pervasive, and disillusionment at the reconstruction process is widespread. International reconstruction efforts must endeavor to understand and anticipate their consequences, both intended and unintended. In bridging the gap between theory or planning and reality, what is left undone is often more important than



what is done. Reconstruction and aid must demand transparency from recipient governments while simultaneously providing support and expertise to implement systems of accountability. Reintegration projects cannot provide a short-term fix, but must work within the existing economic framework to provide employment that will make lasting contributions to individuals' livelihoods. Schools can be rebuilt, but will remain empty unless funds are allowed to be used for teacher salaries and materials. Many lessons can be discerned from the failures of peacebuilding in both countries. Sweeping political, judicial, and economic reconstruction will falter if it does not consider and adequately address the underlying causes of the conflict and hear the voice of those to whom the society belongs.

### **Recommendation**

1. The social contract between the state and the people needs to be rebuilt through more inclusive and accountable politics
2. To repair relationships and deal with the past, locally owned reconciliation processes and dialogues are needed in each country
3. Build on existing local knowledge and capacity in conflict management in order to strengthen community resilience to conflict.
4. More peacebuilding and development support to marginalize rural and borderland communities is needed to counterbalance the concentration of power and resources in capitals and among elites.
5. Reduce the alienation of young people particularly 'hard-to-reach' youth participating in political and criminal violence, through psychosocial and economic support.

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