

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADWP	–	Adjustment, Draw-down and Withdrawal Plan
AFL	–	Armed Forces of Liberia
AFRC	–	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
AFTC	–	Armed Forces Training Centre
AGOA	–	Africa Growth and Opportunity Act
AOR	–	Area of Responsibility
APC	–	All People’s Congress
BANARTY	–	Bangladesh Artillery
BANBATT	–	Bangladesh Battalion
BANENGR	–	Bangladesh Engineers
BANLOG	–	Bangladesh Logistics
BANSEC HQ	–	Bangladesh Sector Headquarters
BANSAL	–	Bangladesh-Sierra Leone Agricultural Project
BANSIG	–	Bangladesh Signals
Bde	–	Brigade
CACD	–	Community Arms Collection and Disposal
CACDP	–	Community Arms Collection and Disposal Programme
CCSSP	–	Commonwealth Community Safety and Security Project
CDF	–	Civil Defence Forces
CEIP	–	Community Education Investment Programme
CivPol	–	Civilian Police
CONOPS	–	Concept of Operations
CPTF	–	Commonwealth Police Task Force
DDR	–	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DFID	–	(UK) Department for International Development
DO	–	District Officer
EU	–	European Union
ECOWAS	–	Economic Community of West African States
ECOMOG	–	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
FACOVA	–	Famous Agricultural Organisation for Africa
GAF	–	Guinea Armed Forces
GoSL	–	Government of Sierra Leone

GTZ	– German Agency for Technical Co-operation
HDI	– Human Development Index (UN)
HR	– Human Rights
ICRC	– International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent
ICTR	– International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
ICTY	– International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
ICC	– International Criminal Court
ICG	– International Crisis Group
IDP	– Internally Displaced Person
IHL	– International Humanitarian Law
IMATT	– International Military Advisory and Training Team
IMF	– International Monetary Fund
IRC	– International Rescue Committee
ITAT	– Infantry Training Advance Team
JP	– Justice of the Peace
LDP	– Law Development Project
MACPC	– Military Aid to Civil Power Capability
MDTF	– Multi-Donor Trust Fund
MDP	– Media Development Project
MilObs	– Military Observers
MOCKY	– Movement of Concerned Kono Youths
MoD	– Ministry of Defence
MRP	– Military Reintegration Programme
MRU	– Mano River Union
MSF	– <i>Médecins Sans Frontiers</i> (Doctors without Borders)
NCDDR	– National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
NACSA	– National Committee for Social Affairs
NCRRR	– National Committee for Relief, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation
NEC	– National Electoral Commission
NGO	– Non-Governmental Organisation
NPFL	– National Patriotic Front of Liberia
NRC	– Norwegian Rescue Council
NSC	– National Security Council
OCHA	– Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODA	– Official Development Assistance
OHCHR	– Office of the (UN) High Commissioner for Human Rights
PAC	– Partnership for Africa Canada
PAKCON	– Pakistani Contingent

PLP	–	Peoples' Liberation Party
PI	–	Public Information
PRFA	–	Poverty Reduction Framework Arrangement
QIP	–	Quick Impact Projects
RSLAF	–	Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces
RUF	–	Revolutionary United Front
RUFP	–	Revolutionary United Front Party
SLA	–	Sierra Leone Army
SLP	–	Sierra Leone Police
SLPP	–	Sierra Leone People's Party
SLRA	–	Sierra Leone Roads Authority
SLIRP	–	Infrastructure Reconstruction Programme (Sierra Leone)
SRL	–	Sierra Rutile Limited
SRSG	–	Special Representative of the Secretary General (UN)
TRC	–	Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Sierra Leone)
ULIMO	–	United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia
UNAMSIL	–	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNDP	–	United Nations Development Programme
UN DPKO	–	United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations
UNICEF	–	United Nations Children's Fund
UNHCHR	–	United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNHCR	–	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UN MilObs	–	United Nations Military Observers

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The international community has invested an enormous amount of time, effort, and over US\$2 billion in an expensive, but presumably successful, peacekeeping mission in Sierra Leone. It was this investment that made the presidential and parliamentary elections of May 2002 possible. However, the ability to meet the arduous challenge of rebuilding and changing the political, economic and social landscape will ultimately determine whether or not that money and effort will have been largely wasted. It will determine whether Sierra Leone is destined to become a permanent breeding ground for war, chaos and illegal commercial activity, or whether it is destined for a far more peaceful future that may be compared to post-conflict Namibia and Mozambique. In many ways, Sierra Leone is a litmus test for the United Nations' re-engagement in African peace missions, and for its 'post-Brahimi' determination to do things better.

According to the United Nations Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Organisation and Management, it is too early to make pronouncements on the success of the UN Mission in Sierra Leone. A period of two years is obviously far too short a time to conclude a peace process, or even to address the country's security challenges. Nevertheless, UNAMSIL has achieved two significant benchmarks – the completion of disarmament and demobilisation, and the successful staging of national elections. Few would argue that the intervention has not been a qualified success. UNAMSIL's transition from peacekeeping to peace-building was made easy by the phased, district-based approach to disarmament, which simultaneously encouraged confidence-building measures.

This monograph follows on a similar ISS report published in January 2002, entitled 'Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone: UNAMSIL Hits the Home Straight' (ISS Monograph no.68). The aim of this publication is to provide an update of the remarkable progress that has been made by the peace process since the national elections of May 2002. Specific emphasis will be placed on the practical aspects of what happens with a peace mission after the high-water mark of elections begins to recede. In other words, our interest lay in examining the

transition from peacekeeping to peace-building, against the background of the enormous body of theory and literature that has emerged on the topic over the past decade.

To this end, the authors (Sarah Meek, Mark Malan, Jeremy Ginifer and Thokozani Thusi) visited Sierra Leone over the period 19 to 29 August 2002. They were given the opportunity to interview, and be briefed by, a range of interlocutors who were playing key roles in supporting the post-election recovery of the country. It is however impossible to highlight the remarkably successful transition from peacekeeping to post-conflict peace-building, without reference to the earlier phase of disarmament and demobilisation, and the ongoing process of reintegration of ex-combatants into society.

Chapter 1 therefore provides an overview of what must be considered one of the most successful exercises in disarmament and demobilisation ever conducted under the auspices of a complex UN peace operation. The chapter outlines the mechanics of the disarmament process (including operational plans, implementation schedules, weapons collection, storage, disposal/destruction, monitoring and verification). The chapter also reviews the Sierra Leone police-led Community Arms Collection and Destruction (CACD) programme, which has brought in weapons remaining in the hands of non-combatants while the government develops a new firearms licensing system.

Reintegration in Sierra Leone faces the obstacle that it is still an extremely poor country, despite external aid. Securing employment for ex-combatants, many of whom do not have formal training, represents a major challenge. The danger of disgruntled ex-combatants drifting into criminality or even renewed conflict remains a potential threat. **Chapter 2** examines some of the key reintegration initiatives being undertaken in Sierra Leone and how they are structured, and identifies the key issues and problems to be overcome if the reintegration process is to continue to make headway.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the structure and composition of UNAMSIL as the mission adjusts to post-election tasks and priorities. It includes an overview of the mandate and mission of the force, and a snapshot of the military's role in peace-building – with specific reference to the work being done by sectors 4 and 5, as well as by the military observers. Plans for the adjustment, draw-down and ultimate withdrawal of the force provide the backdrop for a discussion of the increasingly important civilian component of UNAMSIL, including the civilian police, civil affairs, political affairs, public information and human rights sections.

Chapter 4 expands on the role of the media in Sierra Leone in general, and the public information section of UNAMSIL in particular. Broad public support has been and remains central to the attainment of the mission's objectives. A brief but insightful account is provided of how UNAMSIL set about meeting the public information challenge, with specific reference to radio and the print media, community liaison, and the all-important role of the Mission Spokesman's office.

Chapter 5 deals with the related issues of security and military reform in Sierra Leone. Attention is paid to the perceived security challenges that the country is still facing, and the progress that the armed forces of Sierra Leone are making towards meeting these challenges. Key to consolidating national security is the ongoing transformation of the armed forces into a professional and loyal instrument of the state and people of Sierra Leone, and the chapter concludes with a focus on this aspect. Specific reference is made to the assistance provided by the British government and the International Military Advisory and Training Team.

The Sierra Leone Police (SLP) are obviously an integral part of the national and individual security equation in Sierra Leone, but their role is discussed separately in **Chapter 6**. Like the army, the SLP has been seriously compromised over the years by corruption and mismanagement, and its ranks were much depleted during the war by murderous attacks that systematically destroyed the police infrastructure, records and communications. This chapter reports on efforts to rebuild the SLP, with specific reference to training, recruitment and deployment, and the invaluable assistance being provided by both UNAMSIL civilian police and the Commonwealth Community Safety and Security Project (CCSSP).

Chapter 7 focuses on the extension of state authority throughout the territory of Sierra Leone, and on the prospects for the country's economic recovery. It also addresses the inter-related issues of attempts to deal with corruption, and efforts to impose effective government control of the diamond industry, as pre-requisites for any meaningful level of economic recovery.

Chapter 8 provides an examination of progress made in meeting the twin challenges of justice and reconciliation in post-war Sierra Leone. It begins with a brief overview of the existing state of the Sierra Leone judiciary, before providing an update on the status of the Special Court and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The chapter concludes with the opinion that, although vitally important to national reconciliation, the latter two high-profile, internationally sponsored measures for short-term transitional justice, should not overshadow the importance of meeting the long-term needs of the judiciary.

INTRODUCTION

Mark Malan

The international community has invested an enormous amount of time, effort, and over US\$2 billion in an expensive, but presumably successful, peacekeeping mission in Sierra Leone. It was this investment that made the presidential and parliamentary elections of May 2002 possible. However, the ability to meet the arduous challenge of rebuilding and changing the political, economic and social landscape will ultimately determine whether or not that money and effort will have been largely wasted. It will determine whether Sierra Leone is destined to become a permanent breeding ground for war, chaos and illegal commercial activity, or whether it is destined for a far more peaceful future that may be compared to post-conflict Namibia and Mozambique. In many ways, Sierra Leone is a litmus test for the United Nations' re-engagement in African peace missions and for its 'post-Brahimi' determination to do things better.

Assessing performance in peace operations has become an increasingly difficult undertaking with the evolution of multi-functional peace missions during the 1990s. Initially, there was a high degree of consensus that success was achieved with 'expanded peacekeeping' interventions in countries such as Namibia (1989) and Mozambique (1992–1995), where regional and global changes had enabled antagonists to escape from an impasse and where conflicts had run their course to the point of exhaustion. By the end of the decade, however, it had also become apparent that some of the success stories of multifunctional peacekeeping may not be destined for a very happy ending. The challenge of determining the success of a peace operation therefore implies a longitudinal evaluation of where a country such as Cambodia is today. It involves a focus not just on the security dimension, but also on aspects of democracy, governance, economy and development.

On the other hand, the multi-functionality of contemporary peace operations and the need to incorporate peace-building aspects as early as possible in the mission, means that longer term concerns are also pertinent to attempts to determine success *in* a particular peace operation. Both the conditions that give rise to civil wars, and those that result from them, call for a more holistic approach to intervention that goes beyond military and security priorities to

address issues of governance, legitimacy, political and social inclusiveness, and economic equity. International assistance to war-torn societies has to extend way beyond the initial intervention if these issues are to be resolved and the host society made resilient to new rounds of violent conflict.

The strategic and operational challenges are thus both one of how to pull together the various elements of international assistance that coalesced separately at both ends of what was conceptualised as a 'continuum between relief and development', and how to leverage the short-term presence of intervention forces to create the building blocks for a 'sustainable' peace. It was in this context that the concept of post-conflict re-construction, or 'peace-building' emerged as an essential adjunct to peace operations.¹

While highlighting the multiple and complex needs of war-torn societies, this approach largely avoided issues of priorities among the various peace-building activities and of overlapping or contradictory mandates. As Cousens puts it, the 1990s approach to peace-building "amounted to an inventory of those needs that could be filled by international actors, with the larger purpose of peace-building remaining vague".² Past peace-building efforts have thus, all too often, amounted to little more than support for formal election processes that allow for the termination of a peace mission once a legitimate government has been elected, followed by the funding of inchoate attempts by a plethora of NGOs to 'build civil society'. While this minimalist approach to governance provided a handy exit strategy for missions such as the ones in Cambodia, Angola and Haiti, it also led to significant reversals in the peace process that cost thousands more lives, wasted millions of dollars, and ultimately undermined UN credibility.³

The common and hastily pursued electoral end-state indicates that for the most part, interventions have simply aimed at the facade of political participation, without much attention to the actual political power relationships in the host nation. Moreover, in countries such as Angola, Bosnia, Cambodia, and Liberia, disarmament rituals did little to change the distribution of power. On the other hand, where interventions have been at least partially successful, there have been strong linkages between the continuing presence of a credible intervention force, a successful reorganization of the state's security apparatus, and an effective new government.

According to the Deputy SRSG for Organisation and Management, it is too early to make pronouncements on the success of the UN Mission in Sierra Leone. A period of two years is obviously far too short a time to conclude a

peace process, or even to address the country's security challenges.⁴ Nevertheless, UNAMSIL has achieved two such significant benchmarks—the completion of disarmament and demobilisation, and the successful staging of national elections—that few would argue that the intervention has not been a qualified success. UNAMSIL's transition from peacekeeping to peace-building was made easy by the phased, district-based approach to disarmament, which simultaneously encouraged confidence-building measures.⁵

The disarmament programme was declared successfully completed on 17-January2002. A total of 72,490 combatants completed the disarmament programme, including 24,352 RUF and 37,377 CDF forces. (Of those disarmed officially, 6,845 were children.) While there remain suspicions of hidden arms caches, UNAMSIL is satisfied that the majority of the weapons, especially heavy weaponry, have been forfeited during this process.

Though there are still many complaints by former combatants about the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Rehabilitation (NCDDR) (including late payment of benefits), these tend to be related to isolated and localised problems of individuals or small groups of individuals. Often it is not the NCDDR which is to blame, but also NGOs and ex-combatants themselves who try to extract double benefits or other benefits to which they are not entitled. In general, the NCDDR is doing a remarkable job of delivering the promised benefits of the DDR programme to a huge number of demobees countrywide.⁶

By April 2002 most of the 150 chiefdoms in Sierra Leone had been declared (by a joint UN-government committee) safe for resettlement by internally displaced persons (IDPs), with the exception of 11 in the former rebel-held eastern district of Kailahun. The government, in collaboration with UN agencies, donors and NGOs, implemented a Resettlement Strategy which aimed to support the resettlement and reintegration of internally displaced, refugees and ex-combatants with their dependents back into their communities.⁷

Over 65,000 IDPs and returnees were resettled in two phases between May 2001 and February 2002 mainly in the Western Area, Southern Province and the north-western districts. In the third phase, which began in March 2002, some 155,000 IDPs registered for resettlement in the Northern Province and the eastern districts of Kono, Kailahun and Kenema. This brought the total number to 163,517 refugees who had, since 2000, returned to Sierra Leone from Guinea and Liberia ahead of the elections. To encourage participation in the general elections, the National Electoral Commission allowed people who

registered in their area of displacement to transfer their voter registration to their home area.

The first round of national elections for President and parliament was held on 14 May 2002. The preparation and conduct of the elections was relatively free of violence and intimidation, with only occasional incidents of low-level violence reported. The many rallies organised by the various political parties, and the wide extent of public engagement in the elections, were interpreted as encouraging signs of a widespread commitment to peace.

Nine political parties contested the presidency, and eleven parties the 112 parliamentary seats. Final results indicate a clear victory for the incumbent, 70 year-old Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, who, by winning more than 70% of the vote has secured another five-year term. His Sierra Leone Peoples' Party (SLPP) will also retain a majority in parliament by winning 83 seats. To a great extent this comes as little surprise, given the obvious advantages of incumbency and the widely held perception that President Kabbah was instrumental in returning the country to a peace long overdue.

The All Peoples' Congress (APC) came a poor second with about 22% of the presidential votes and 27 seats in parliament, while Foday Sankoh's Revolutionary United Front Party (RUF) took less than 2% of the presidential vote and failed to secure a single parliamentary seat. Besides Johnnie Paul Koromah's Peoples' Liberation Party (PLP), which won about 6% of the presidential votes and secured two parliamentary seats, none of the parties made much impression at all. The voting was carried out in an atmosphere of peace and calm throughout the country, with the only source of worry being the difficulty in managing the heavy turnout – estimated at about 80% of the 2.3 million registered voters.

This was the first truly non-violent vote in the country's history, in large part because of the successful disarmament and the continued substantial presence of UNAMSIL peacekeepers. Of course, no election is ever perfectly 'free and fair', and a number of concerns were expressed by analysts about the familiar issues of electoral fraud and coercion, as well as the substantive outcome of the vote and the re-constitution of a SLPP-dominated executive and legislature. Nevertheless, expectations remain high that the legitimisation of the government, following the elections, could herald the arrival of much needed international financial support.

Freedom of movement has improved significantly and trade and commerce are beginning to revive across the country. The Sierra Leone armed forces and

police are also being deployed throughout the territory, following ongoing assistance with re-training and re-equipping by the UK and other partners. The deployment of district administrators and other senior officials has also marked the beginning of the restoration of state authority, with all areas now accessible to government departments, UN agencies, and NGOs.

Ultimately, government legitimacy, in the eyes of its own citizenry and the international community, will demand a careful balancing act involving the attempted conformation to two different sets of standards – international standards of good governance and rule of law; and local standards that have evolved from the recent history of grievance and conflict, traditional political organisation and practice, the local balance of power, and the influence of outside players.⁸

According to Hamre and Gordon, successful peace-building involves four distinct yet interrelated categories of tasks, or “pillars of reconstruction”⁹, viz:

Security, which addresses all aspects of public safety; particularly the creation of a safe and secure environment and the development of legitimate and effective security institutions. Collective and individual security is the precondition for achieving successful outcomes in the other three pillars. It involves securing the lives of civilians and restoring the territorial integrity of the post-conflict state.

Justice and reconciliation, which addresses the need to deal with past abuses through formal and informal mechanisms for resolving grievances arising from the conflict and to create an impartial and accountable legal system for the future – including an effective law enforcement apparatus, an open judicial system, fair laws and a humane correctional system.

Social and economic well-being, which addresses fundamental social and economic needs, in particular, providing emergency relief, restoring essential services to the population in areas such as health and education, laying the foundation for a viable economy, and initiating an inclusive and sustainable development programme.

Governance and participation, which addresses the need to create legitimate, effective political and administrative institutions and participatory processes. Governance involves setting rules and procedures for political decision-making and for delivering public services in an efficient and transparent manner. Participation refers to a process of giving the broader population a voice in gov-

ernment through developing a civil-society structure that generates an exchange of ideas through advocacy groups, other civic associations, and the media.

This concept of peace-building, and the lessons of the past, is well understood by the UN in Sierra Leone. The UN country team,¹⁰ in collaboration with UNAMSIL, has prepared a UN Strategy to Support National Recovery and Peace-building, that has been guided by national policies and priorities that have been established through the National Recovery Programme and articulated in the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.¹¹ The aim of the UN strategy paper is to provide guidance on how the United Nations (including humanitarian and development agencies and UNAMSIL) can contribute in a cohesive manner in the process of transition from relief to recovery, or from peacekeeping to peace-building.

The strategy defines focus areas for UN assistance in five closely-related fields, viz:

- strengthening the security framework within Sierra Leone and encouraging regional security co-operation;
- facilitating the reintegration of former combatants, refugees and displaced people;
- poverty reduction and employment creation;
- fostering good governance and promoting human rights; and
- encouraging the process of national reconciliation.

The strategy document is intended to lead the way to an appeal for 2003, and a UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for 2004. Although conceived within a five-year framework, the intention is to update the strategy on an annual basis, in accordance with the evolving situation in Sierra Leone.

This monograph follows on a similar ISS report published in January 2002, entitled "Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone: UNAMSIL Hits the Home Straight" ISS Monograph no.68),¹² the purpose of which was to report on progress with the peace process in Sierra Leone, with specific emphasis on the role of UNAMSIL in support of the Abuja II Agreement, and on its progress in reaching the electoral benchmarks set by the UN Secretary-General. The aim of this publication is to provide an update of the remarkable progress with the peace

process that has been made since the national elections of May 2002, with a specific emphasis on the practical aspects of what happens in a peace mission after the high water mark of elections begins to recede. In other words, our interest was in examining the transition from peacekeeping to peace-building, against the background of the enormous body of theory and literature that has emerged on the topic over the past decade.

To this end, the authors (Sarah Meek, Mark Malan, Jeremy Ginnifer and Thokozani Thusi)¹³ visited Sierra Leone over the period 19 – 29 August 2002, where they were provided the opportunity to interview and be briefed by a range of interlocutors who were playing key roles in supporting the post-election recovery of the country. However, it is impossible to highlight the remarkably successful transition from peacekeeping to post conflict peace-building, without reference to the earlier 'benchmark' phase of disarmament and demobilisation, and the ongoing process reintegration into society of ex-combatants.

Chapter 1 therefore provides an overview of what must be considered one of the most successful exercises in disarmament and demobilisation ever conducted under the auspices of a complex UN peace operation. The chapter outlines the mechanics of the disarmament process (including operational plans, implementation schedules, weapons collection, storage and disposal/destruction, monitoring and verification). It provides a brief assessment of the disarmament programme, as supervised by UNAMSIL, including the facts and figures that emerged on completion of the process. The chapter also reviews the Sierra Leone Police-led Community Arms Collection and Destruction (CACD) programme, which has brought in weapons remaining in the hands of non-combatants while the government develops a new firearms licensing system.

Reintegration in Sierra Leone faces the barrier that is still an extremely poor country, despite external aid. Securing employment for ex-combatants, many of whom do not have formal training, represents a major challenge. The danger of disgruntled ex-combatants drifting into criminality or even renewed conflict remains a potential threat. The drifting of youth back into conflict remains a particular fear in the future if their needs are not met. **Chapter 2** examines some of the key reintegration initiatives being undertaken in Sierra Leone, how they are structured, and identifies the key issues and problems to be overcome if the reintegration is to continue to make headway.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the structure and composition of UNAMSIL, as the Mission adjusts to post-election tasks and priorities. It includes an overview of the mandate and mission of the Force, and a snapshot of the

military's role in peace-building – with specific reference to the work being done by Sectors 4 and 5, as well as the Military Observers. Plans for the adjustment, draw-down and ultimate withdrawal of the force provide the backdrop for a discussion of the increasingly important civilian component of UNAMSIL, including the Civilian Police, Civil Affairs, Political Affairs, Public Information and Human Rights sections.

Chapter 4 expands on the role of the media in Sierra Leone in general, and the Public Information Section of UNAMSIL in particular. Broad public support has been and remains central to the attainment of the Mission's objectives. As stated by the author, the aim of this chapter is to highlight the role of the media and public information in the Sierra Leone peace process, with a view to identifying lessons that can be broadly applied in other peacekeeping environments. A brief but insightful account is provided of how UNAMSIL set about meeting the public information challenge, with specific reference to radio and the print media, community liaison, and the all-important role of the Mission Spokesman's office.

Chapter 5 deals with the related issues of security and military reform in Sierra Leone. Attention is paid to the perceived security challenges that the country is still facing, and the progress that the armed forces of Sierra Leone is making towards meeting these challenges. Key to consolidating national security is the ongoing transformation of the armed forces into a professional and loyal instrument of the state and people of Sierra Leone, and the chapter concludes with a focus on this aspect, with specific reference to the assistance provided by the British Government and the International Military Advisory and Training Team.

The Sierra Leone Police (SLP) are obviously an integral part of the national and individual security equation in Sierra Leone, but their role is discussed separately in **Chapter 6**. Like the army, the SLP has been seriously compromised over the years by corruption and mismanagement, and its ranks were much depleted during the war by murderous attacks that systematically destroyed the police infrastructure, records and communications. This chapter reports on efforts to re-build the SLP, with specific reference to training, recruitment and deployment, and the invaluable assistance being provided by both UNAMSIL Civilian Police and the Commonwealth Community Safety and Security Project (CCSSP). It concludes with a summary of the challenges that lie ahead for the policing component of the larger rule of law project for Sierra Leone.

Chapter 7 focuses on the extension of state authority throughout the territory of Sierra Leone, and on the prospects for the country's economic recovery. It is

envisaged that the gradual and phased draw-down of UNAMSIL will provide the government of Sierra Leone the opportunity to build up its capacity to govern effectively – including the ability to address the remaining emergency relief needs of the population and to re-build the economy. This chapter provides an account of prospects for economic recovery, which will require substantial donor support, as well as for the extension of functioning governance structure to the interior of the country. It also addresses the inter-related issues of attempts to deal with corruption and to impose effective government control of the diamond industry, as pre-requisites for any meaningful level of economic recovery.

Chapter 8 provides an examination of progress made in meeting the twin challenges of justice and reconciliation in post-war Sierra Leone. It begins with a brief overview of the extant state of the Sierra Leone judiciary, before providing an update on the status of the Special Court and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The chapter concludes with the opinion that, although vitally important to national reconciliation, the latter two high-profile, internationally sponsored measures for short-term transitional justice should not overshadow the importance of meeting the long-term needs of the judiciary. Ensuring ongoing and effective access to justice is indispensable to any peace-building or recovery process that aims at sustainable peace and development.

Notes

- 1 E Cousens, Introduction, in E Cousens & C Kumar (eds) *Peacebuilding as Politics: Cultivating Peace in Fragile Societies*, Boulder, Colorado, Lynne Rienner, 2001, pp 1–2.
- 2 Ibid, p 7.
- 3 R Orr, *Governing When Chaos Rules: Enhancing Governance and Participation*, *The Washington Quarterly*, Autumn 2002, p 142.
- 4 Interview with Mr Behrooz Sadry, DSRSG (O&M), Freetown, 21 August 2002.
- 5 Interview with Amb Oluyemi Adeniji, UNSRSG for Sierra Leone, Freetown, 20 August 2002.
- 6 Interview with Col Fred Hughton, Deputy Chief Military Observer, Freetown, 20 August 2002.
- 7 IDPs and refugees returning to Sierra Leone were offered resettlement packages including a two-month food ration, household utensils and plastic sheeting. The strategy also offers support to community based rehabilitation programmes which were destroyed during the war. Priority areas include agriculture, health, water, sanitation and education.

- 8 R Orr, op cit, p 143.
- 9 JJ Hamre & G R Sullivan, Towards Postconflict Reconstruction, in *The Washington Quarterly*, Autumn 2002, pp 91–92.
- 10 In Sierra Leone, the country team is comprised of: The UN Resident Co-ordinator (Mr. Alan Doss, who is also the Humanitarian Co-ordinator and the DSRSG for Governance and Stabilisation); FAO; IOM; OCHA; UNAMSIL Political Affairs; UNDP; UNFPA; UNFSO; UNHCR; UNICEF; WFP; WHO and the World Bank.
- 11 United Nations draft document, *Consolidating Peace and Laying the Foundations for Sustainable Development: UN Strategy to Support National Recovery and Peace-building in Sierra Leone*, Freetown, 24 June 2002.
- 12 M Malan & P Rakate & A McIntyre, *Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone: UNAMSIL Hits the Home Straight*, ISS Monograph, no 68, January 2002.
- 13 Mr. Patrick Coker, who contributed the chapter on “The Role of Media in Sierra Leone”, was serving in the Public Information Section at UNAMSIL Headquarters at the time.

CHAPTER 1

DISARMAMENT AND DEMOBILISATION

Thokozani Thusi and Sarah Meek

Introduction

Armed with the mixed experience of both success and failure in disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programmes covering more than ten missions, the United Nations (UN) and other parties to the Sierra Leone peace process soon realised that lasting peace in this country could not be achieved without a successful DDR process. This consensus resulted in negotiations for a political settlement, explicitly incorporating DDR in the negotiations. The formal DDR program was framed in the 1999 Lomé Agreement.¹ Although this chapter focuses on the implementation of the disarmament and demobilisation (DD) aspects of the DDR programme in Sierra Leone, leaving reintegration to a separate chapter, an analysis of disarmament and demobilisation needs to fall within the broader challenges of long-term peace-building.

Technically speaking, the first two components of the process are finite, while reintegration is ongoing, complex and its success dependent on a number of interconnected issues that go beyond the formal end of the war. Addressing poverty, unemployment and good governance, restoring and extending government authority, reviving the education system, rebuilding infrastructure, rebuilding the entire judicial system, and rebuilding the economy of a country emerging from war, are challenges that determine the sustainability of peace.

However, despite numerous problems, setbacks and challenges, the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (NCDDR), and the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), conducted a highly successful mission that resulted in Sierra Leone being declared 'disarmed' and the war declared officially over in January 2002.²

Background to the disarmament and demobilisation process

In 1996 the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) government set up the Ministry of Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation that was later transformed into

the National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (NCRRR). This commission had a department responsible for the disarmament of the various fighting forces. In July 1998 the department was reconstituted as the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (NCDDR). The goal of the NCDDR was to consolidate the existing short-term security situation to form a basis for lasting peace.

The realisation that sustainable peace could only be achieved through a comprehensive process of disarming armed groups in Sierra Leone posed its own set of challenges. During the initial stages of disarmament there was a certain level of distrust between the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and government about commitment to the DD process. There were also concerns about the prospects for reintegration of ex-combatants once they were disarmed. For many, weapons provided not only a sense of personal significance, but also the only means of accessing the country's resources.

Funds also had to be solicited from donors in order to start the DD process. In addition to UNAMSIL, the NCDDR had to work with a number of partners, including UN agencies, donor governments and international and national non-governmental organisations. The work of the NCDDR depended heavily on donor support, and the World Bank assisted by pooling funds into the Multi-donor Trust Fund (MDTF) for Sierra Leone. The delegation of responsibility to other agencies, such as UNICEF that dealt with child soldiers, proved very effective.

Disarmament initially started in 1998. The responsibility for DDR rests with the NCDDR, which is chaired by President Kabbah and operates with an executive secretariat with the following members:³

- Representative from the donor community;
- Minister of Information and Broadcasting;
- Minister of Finance;
- Deputy Minister of Defence (who was the Civil Defence Force coordinator);
- Special Representative of the UN;
- UN Military Force Commander (UNAMSIL); and
- Head of the RUF.

The objectives of DDR in Sierra Leone were:

- To collect, register, disable and destroy all conventional weapons and munitions retrieved from combatants during the disarmament period (which was estimated at three months in the Lomé Agreement).
- To demobilise approximately 45,000 combatants of which 12 per cent were expected to be women.
- To prepare and support ex-combatants for socio-economic reintegration upon discharge from demobilisation centres, for long-term security.⁴

The DDR process was premised on a number of assumptions. Among these were that UNAMSIL would provide security within the framework of its revised mandate; the deployment of UN Military Observers (MilObs); compliance by all parties to the relevant provisions of the Lomé Agreement and the later Abuja Agreement of May 2001; and support from the international community for Sierra Leone.

The disarmament programme run by UNASMIL and coordinated by the NCDDR ran from October 1998 to January 2002, demobilising a total of 72,490 combatants and collecting a total of 42,300 weapons and 1.2m rounds of ammunition.⁵ This was a significantly higher figure than the initial estimated number of 45,000 combatants. The disarmament and demobilisation process ran over a period of three phases, with an interim phase added in 2000, divided as follows:

- Phase I: September – December 1998
- Phase II: October 1999 – April 2000
- Interim phase: May 2000 – 17 May 2001
- Phase III: 18 May 2001 – January 2002

The aim of the DDR process was to disarm all belligerent parties, including about 6,000 Armed Forces of Sierra Leone (AFSL), Revolutionary United Front (RUF), Civil Defence Forces (CDF), Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC/ex-Sierra Leone Army) and various paramilitary groups. The primary purpose of disarmament was to dismantle the military apparatus of the RUF and assist it to transform into a political party. This has happened,

with the RUF transforming into the RUF-P that participated in the May 2002 elections.

However, it was realised in the early stages of the DDR process that there were other categories of weapons and armed individuals not covered by the Lomé Agreement. There were general concerns about the presence in the country of more arms that may not have been surrendered during the official DDR process. This led to the creation of the Community Arms Collection and Destruction (CACD) programme (see below).

The final phase of the DDR programme started in the Kambia and Port Loko districts and proceeded to cover the entire country. Tripartite meetings between the government, the RUF, and UNAMSIL, were conducted on a monthly basis in order to assess the level of disarmament and to deal with any problems that might be hindering the process. These meetings had a consultative and consensual tone, which contributed to the success of the DD process. At a tripartite meeting in Bo in early July 2001, the parties resolved to complete the DD process by the end of November 2001, a target that was nearly met.

The process for implementing the DD programme involved selecting a pair of districts to be disarmed simultaneously within a one-month timeframe. After the month the DD process would be declared officially over for these two districts and started in two new districts.

This approach was due to the fact that during the civil war there were concentrations of combatants in certain areas, some of which generated greater distrust and tension between the RUF and government-aligned groups such as the CDF.

The disarmament programme in Sierra Leone was conducted at reception centres around the country during 2001. These reception centres were used for as short a period as was necessary to conduct the weapons registration and collection. The disarmament exercise was conducted in five phases:

- Assembly: Organising the arrival of combatants, and their orientation to the disarmament process.
- Interview: The collection of personal identification, information, registration, and the verification of weapons or ordnance delivered by the ex-combatants.

- Weapons collection: The tagging of all weapons or ordnance, and temporary disabling and storing of the weapons prior to their transportation to the final storage and disposal centres.
- Eligibility certification: Verification and authorisation of the ex-combatants by the UN Observers for their inclusion as beneficiaries of the DDR programme.
- Transportation: The assembly and organisation of screened and disarmed combatants and finally their transportation to demobilisation centres.

Demobilisation was the process by which the disarmed ex-combatants were received and provided with basic necessities. They were further prepared to enter civilian life through the implementation of orientation activities such as trauma healing and psycho-social counselling, information and sensitisation seminars, and civic education. They were provided with transitional allowances (later referred to as reinsertion packages) to support them during the first three months in their chosen places of resettlement. The ex-combatants were eventually assisted with transportation to their respective local communities where they were provided with reintegration services.

Following the completion of DD in Kambia and Port Loko, the process moved to the Kono and Bonthe districts. Here, there were serious concerns regarding the genuine commitment of the RUF to disarmament. However, disarmament proceeded without too many problems and these districts were officially declared disarmed by the end of September 2001. By 3 September 2001, UNAMSIL had already supervised the disarmament of about 16, 057 ex-combatants.⁶

Other districts, however, proved to be more challenging. In the Koinadugu and Moyamba districts, the RUF boycotted tripartite meetings to protest the decision to hold elections on 14 May 2002. The RUF believed that their political party, the RUF-P, was not ready to participate unless certain conditions and demands they had were met. A September tripartite meeting held in Makeni resolved most of the issues of concern and gave new impetus to moving the disarmament process forward. It was also at this meeting that the NCDDR decided to refuse to accept the inclusion of single or double-barrelled guns and locally made hunting rifles as categories of weapons that could be surrendered by ex-combatants. It was agreed that these would be covered in a separate community arms collection programme.

By the time the disarmament of various ex-combatants was declared over, and demobilisation centres closed, the NCDDR had demobilised and discharged a total number of 47,781 ex-combatants and collected 26,001 weapons in Phase III of the programme. Of this total an estimated 33,331 ex-combatants have registered for reintegration opportunities in the various sectors with the NCDDR district and regional reintegration offices (see Chapter 2). This culminated in the symbolic burning of almost 3,000 weapons on 18 January 2002 at Lungi Town, in a ceremony to mark the end of the war in Sierra Leone.

Despite being relatively successful in meeting its objectives, the DD process faced numerous challenges and experienced various setbacks linked to the political climate in the country. Although different districts presented different challenges there were generalised problems.

Some of the major problems resulted from poor conditions in the demobilisation camps, and ex-combatants not receiving their entitlements in due time.

Table 1: Total disarmed and demobilised, by district

District	RUF	CDF	Others	Total
Bo	17	3,755	0	3,772
Bombali	4,049	110	20	4,179
Bonthe	0	1,246	0	1,246
Western Area	155	1,972	163	2,290
Kailahun	6,115	1,694	40	7,849
Kenema	1,660	3,048	30	4,738
Kolnadugu	317	1,205	30	1,552
Kono	3,730	2,255	38	6,023
Moyamba	1	2,938	0	2,938
Port Loko/Kambia	1,680	5,595	126	7,401
Pujehu	0	2,962	0	2,962
Tonkolli	1,543	1,271	16	2,830
Grand total	19,267	28,051	463	47,781

**Based on actual forms received from UNAMSIL and processed by the ES-NCDDR (as at 18/02/02)

Type	Total
Hand weapons	7,785
Assault weapons	17,180
Group weapons	1,036
Ammunition	935,495
Source: NCDDR, August 2002	

UNAMSIL intervened in some of the problems. For example, in Kovehun, ex-combatants refused to leave the camp without their benefits, in the form of identification cards and travelling allowances, although the camp was at capacity. This stalled the programme as additional accommodation had to be found for new intakes.

At Gandorhun, CDF-instigated disturbances in August 2001 caused the reception centre to be closed, resulting in delays to the process. The dispute was apparently related to the surrender of hand grenades, rocket propelled grenades, and mines, which were classified as ammunition under the NCDDR disarmament guidelines, and not as weapons. The CDF objected, wanting them to count as weapons, but the dispute was resolved after UNAMSIL intervention.

There were other problems associated with a lack of trust between the RUF and the CDF, which also had an impact on the pace of disarmament. It was in part due to the diplomatic skills of UNAMSIL that the continuation of the DD process was on occasion ensured.

Community arms collection and destruction

The Community Arms Collection and Destruction (CACD) programme was aimed at collecting arms that were defined as not being part of the DDR process, such as hunting rifles and pistols, and weapons in the hands of non-combatants. The programme was managed by the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) with the assistance of UNAMSIL. One motivation for the programme was the RUF's concern that the CDF still held shotguns and feared these might be used against them. Shotguns were not included as a category for collection during the formal disar-

mament process. Other motivations included the desire to reduce the availability of weapons in the country as much as possible, and to recall legally held firearms owned by civilians while new laws were implemented.

The CACD programme, covering the entire country, started on 1 December 2001 and was divided into three phases. Phase I targeted the western area, covering the Port Loko and Kambia districts in the northern region and the Moyamba district in the south. Phase II covered the Bombali, Koinadugu and Tonkolili districts in the north and Bonthe in the south, whilst Phase III covered the Pujehun, Kenema, Kailahun and Kono districts in the eastern region.⁷

The programme retrieved approximately 9,660 weapons and 17,000 rounds of ammunition. Weapons collected included shotguns, pistols, bombs and other explosives.⁸ At the end of the amnesty period, which was parallel to the CACD programme, it became illegal to possess arms in the country. The Sierra Leone police conducted limited cordon and search operations in collaboration with communities, in order to recover illegally held firearms after the amnesty period expired.

Disarmament and demobilisation in Kono

Sector 5: Kono and Kailahun

Kono district, in the eastern part of the country, forms part of sector 5 under the operational responsibility of the Pakistani command (see Chapter 3). This sector consists of three battalions spread over three districts. Sector 5 was perceived to be central to the long-term stability of Sierra Leone, as it contains the Kono diamond fields and was at the heart of rebel activity during the war. The successful disarmament of the district held very significant implications for confidence building in the rest of the country. As the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) commented during the September 2002 Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) visit to the sector:

“The choice of Kono (for the visit) is to symbolise the importance which not only you in Sierra Leone, but the entire international community, attach to the disarmament of Kono.”⁹

Thus the symbolic staging of arms destruction and the high-level visit was aimed at maximising the impact of the message that “if Kono can disarm so can the rest of Sierra Leone”. Despite remaining problems associated with illegal mining,

which falls outside the mandate of UNAMSIL, calm has largely returned to the area and no significant incidents of armed violence have been reported.

The Pakistani contingent in sector 5 was involved with the DD process until January 2002, when it was declared officially ended. Disarmament covered areas in Koidu, Yengema, Daru, Kailahun, Buedu and Pendembu.

Disarmament in the sector also included the CACD programme that commenced shortly after official disarmament was declared over, with the Pakistan contingent supporting the SLP in its work.

Table 3: Disarmament statistics for Kono

RUF	3,747
CDF	1,995
Total	5,742

*Covering the period 25 May – 17 August 2001

Source: Sector 5 briefing to the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), August 2002.

Table 4: Disarmament statistics for Kailahun

RUF	5,128
CDF	1,158
Total	6,286

*Covering the period 15 November 2001 – 11 January 2002

Source: Sector 5 briefing to the ISS, August 2002.

Table 5: Total disarmament statistics for sector 5

RUF	8,875
CDF	3,153
Total	12,028

Source: Sector 5 briefing to the ISS, August 2002.

CACD programme

The CACD programme in sector 5 commenced on 3 February 2002, by arrangement with the SLP. The completion deadline was extended from 28 February to 31 March 2002. The CACD programme met with a strong positive response from the community. The support the community provided to the SLP and UNAMSIL showed that people were tired of the fighting and were beginning to develop a certain level of trust in government authority. The number of weapons retrieved was symbolically significant as it signalled that people were not willing to encourage arms proliferation in their communities.

Table 6: Weapons collected – CACD programme

Location	Shotguns	G-3	7mm	Pistols
Koidu	189	1	1	0
Kailahun	215	0	0	2
Daru	632	0	0	3
Total	1,036	1	1	5

Source: Sector 5 briefing to the ISS, August 2002.

Although DD has been completed in sector 5 and the area seems technically disarmed, outstanding issues remain, including the rising sectarianism in Kono and the larger post-election security challenges (see Chapter 6).

Arms destruction

Increasingly, UN missions are unwilling to permit the long-term storage of weapons surrendered during peacekeeping operations. The failure to properly store, document and destroy arms in custody after disarmament raises the prospect that the weapons may end up re-circulating in the country. UNAMSIL had legitimate concerns about the capacity of the Sierra Leone government to safely store collected weapons. This resulted in an agreement with the government that all weapons collected as part of the DDR process would be destroyed. In sector 5, for example, UNAMSIL and NCDDR worked with NGOs to destroy weapons. In general UNAMSIL took responsibility for the

destruction of ammunition and explosives, some of which were highly unstable when they were handed in.

The destruction of weapons was done with the non-governmental organisation, German Agency for Technical Co-operation (GTZ), which has developed a competency in destroying weapons, mainly through cutting the weapons into smaller pieces and rendering them inoperable. These pieces were then made into productive tools.¹⁰ Some 25,089 weapons have been destroyed through this process.¹¹

Disarmament and demobilisation – a success?

After multiple phases and a demanding four years, the DDR programme in Sierra Leone has disarmed and demobilised 72,490 combatants, and collected and destroyed 42,300 weapons and 1.2m pieces of ammunition. By all standards the DD component of the larger DDR process can be said to have been successful. The statistics below clearly show the phenomenal achievement of the NCDDR, in partnership with UNAMSIL, in conducting a successful exercise of DD that created conditions conducive to peace and stability in

Table 7: Total disarmed, by group

Category disarmed	PHASE I (Sep–Dec 1998)	PHASE II (Oct 1999– April 2000)	Interim Phase (May 2000– 17 May 2001)	Phase III (18 May 2001– Jan 2002)	Total
RUF	187	4,130	768	19,267	24,352
AFRC	0	2,129	445	0	2,574
Discharged/ Ex-SLA	2,994	2,366	593	0	5,953
CDF	2	8,800	524	28,051	37,377
OTHERS (including paramilitary)	0	1,473	298	463	2,234
Total	3,183	18,898	2,628	47,781	72,490

Source: NCDDR, August 2002

Sierra Leone. It is largely due to the success of DD that Sierra Leone was able to hold 'free and fair' elections in May 2002, marked by an unprecedented level of calm across the country.

Table 8: Total disarmed children and adults

	PHASE I	PHASE II	INTERIM PHASE	PHASE III	TOTAL
Children*	189	1,982	402	4,272	6,845
Adults	2,994	16,916	2,226	43,509	65,645
Total	3,183	18,898	2,628	47,781	72,490

*Child combatants did not require weapons to join the DDR programme
Source: NCDDR, August 2002

Table 9: Total demobilised children and adults

	Phase I	Phase II*	Interim Phase	Phase III	Total
Children	189	1,982	402	4,272	6,845
Adults	2,994	15,469	2,226	43,509	64,198
Total	3,183	17,451	2,628	47,781	71,043

*1447 AFRC/Ex-SLA disarmed but did not demobilise because of desire to return to the National Army.
Source: NCDDR, August 2002

Table 10: Total discharged children and adults

	Phase I	Phase II	Interim Phase	Phase III	Total
Children	189	1,982	402	4,272	6,845
Adults	1,414	15,469	2,226	43,509	62,618
Total	1,603	17,451	2,628	47,781	69,463

Source: NCDDR, August 2002

District	Children	Adults	Total
Bo	112	3,660	3,772
Bombali	681	3,495	4,176
Bonthe	310	936	1,246
Western Area	127	2,163	2,290
Kailahun	830	7,019	7,849
Kenema	239	4,431	4,670
Koinadugu	345	1,207	1,552
Kono	628	5,395	6,023
Moyamba	313	2,626	2,939
Port Loko/Kambia	416	6,985	7,401
Pujehun	1	2,961	2,962
Tonkolili	268	2,562	2,830
Grand total	4,270	43,440	47,710

Source: NCDDR, August 2002

Achievements in disarmament and demobilisation

To a degree that surprised many observers, the DD process in Sierra Leone after May 2001 went off smoothly and largely according to plan. Some of the key achievements are summarised below.

- Institutionally, the NCDDR was able to design a flexible policy framework that was able to accommodate the complexities of the Sierra Leone political process without compromising the objectives of DDR.
- The NCDDR was able to initiate ‘targeted disarmament’, and delegated responsibility to relevant agencies such as UNICEF who dealt with child soldiers.
- UNAMSIL provided expertise and committed resources in the establishment of cantonment centres in the country.

- UNAMSIL was instrumental in mediating collaborative strategies that included subcontracting arms destruction to the German NGO GTZ.
- Subcontracting GTZ to destroy arms, and ensuring that this was witnessed at community level, increased people's confidence in the merits of disarmament.
- The NCDDR managed to set up a realistic programme by acknowledging the need to broaden DD through the CACD programme, and thereby sustaining their own work through a long-term communal process.
- The reduction of the encampment period from 21 days to 7 days speeded up the process of demobilisation.
- Disarming over 70,000 ex-combatants contributed significantly to improving the security situation in the country and created an environment conducive to peaceful elections.

Conclusion

Although the DD phase was officially over, and all parties involved, especially the NCDDR, the government of Sierra Leone, the RUF and UNAMSIL, played a major role in ensuring its success, there were various obstacles that needed to be addressed. Although some of these were technical issues, such as the issuing of identification cards, most were intrinsically linked to the politics of the peace process, as was evident in May 2000.¹² The primary lesson learned from disarmament and demobilisation in Sierra Leone was that putting a DDR programme on the peace agenda must take into account the financial, logistical and technical issues associated with the objectives and scale of the programme, and be mindful that such objectives depend largely on the political process.

Other challenges faced by the DDR process were direct consequences of the nature of the conflict between the RUF and the government. In some districts there were problems regarding disarmament, where both sides (the RUF and CDF) were reluctant to disarm without simultaneous surrendering of arms by the other. These tensions were more evident in some districts than others, determined by the distribution of the forces and their concentration in a particular district. At times, the NCDDR failed to deliver entitlements, such as identification and travel allowance, to ex-combatants, resulting in setbacks to the DDR process, and increasing tensions in the camps.

The issue of reintegration, which will be critical to the long-term peace and stability of Sierra Leone, cannot be removed from any analysis of Sierra Leone. The next chapter undertakes a thorough review of the ongoing reintegration programme in the country.

Notes

- 1 Controversy surrounded the 1999 Lomé Agreement, which was perceived by some as being too lenient to the RUF by giving their leader Foday Sankoh and the rebels immunity from future prosecution for atrocities committed during the war.
- 2 At the eighth 'Tripartite Meeting' of the Joint Committee on Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) comprising representatives of the Government of Sierra Leone, the RUF and UNAMSIL held in Freetown, both DDR and the war were officially declared over in the whole of Sierra Leone.
- 3 M Malan, P Rakate, A McIntyre, (eds), *Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone: UNAMSIL hits the home straight*, Institute for Security Studies (ISS) Monograph no 68, January 2002, p 45.
- 4 Interview with Colonel Kamal from UNAMSIL DDR Unit, August 2002.
- 5 *UN strategy to support national recovery and peace-building in Sierra Leone 2003–2007*, Draft 24 June 2002, p 7.
- 6 M Malan, op cit, p 46.
- 7 P Coker, Mopping up weapons in local communities, *UNAMSIL Review*, United Nations, April 2002, p 9.
- 8 Ibid. p 9.
- 9 SRSG speaks on ECOWAS leaders' visit to Kono, *UNAMSIL Review*, United Nations, December 2001, p 8.
- 10 See Government of Sierra Leone and World Bank, *Sierra Leone Disarmament and Demobilisation Program Assessment Report*, July 2002, p 6.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 On 2 May RUF forces attacked the UNAMSIL positions in Makeni and Magburaka, killing four Kenyan soldiers and wounding four others. The attackers captured about 50 other UNAMSIL personnel. By the end of 5 May about 500 UN personnel were in RUF captivity. This crisis caused embarrassment for the UN and prompted calls for rapid action to deal with the RUF, who were not seen as spoilers. In addition to the capture of UN personnel, an RUF splinter group calling itself the West Side Boys kidnapped 11 British soldiers and an SLA liaison officer, resulting in Britain's military assault that resulted in the freeing of the

hostages. The consequences of the ensuing political stalemate and renewed fighting in the country affected the entire peace process and DDR in particular, and was finally resolved with the signing of the Abuja II Agreement that kick-started the peace process.

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CHAPTER 2

REINTEGRATION OF EX-COMBATANTS

Jeremy Ginifer

Introduction

Reintegrating ex-combatants into society is one of the major challenges confronting Sierra Leone. During the war, combatants committed widespread atrocities against civilians, including those in their own communities. These acts of violence created suspicion and fear about the prospect of ex-combatants returning to their communities in Sierra Leone.

Reintegration in Sierra Leone is impeded by the fact that, despite external aid, it is still an extremely poor country. Securing employment for ex-combatants represents a major challenge. The danger of disgruntled ex-combatants drifting into criminality or even renewed conflict remains a potential threat.

By August 2002 reintegration in Sierra Leone was well underway, but still incomplete. By October 2002 56,751 out of a total of 69,463 ex-combatants (including children) who had been discharged, had registered for reintegration. Of these, 14,220 had completed skills training and 19,073 were in ongoing skills training programmes, leaving a remaining load of 23,458 out of the total number of ex-combatants registered.¹

A number of problems are confronting reintegration programmes in Sierra Leone, despite the fact that they are generally making steady progress. Most notable are funding shortfalls. However, in December 2002 there seemed little prospect of combatants returning to conflict, and violence has failed to escalate with the entry of ex-combatants into civilian life. Furthermore, there seems to be a degree of acceptance among civilians and the government that combatants will have to be reintegrated if peace is to be consolidated. If this can be backed up with security and development, and events outside Sierra Leone do not destabilise the country, prospects look encouraging.

This chapter examines some of the key reintegration initiatives being undertaken in Sierra Leone, the way in which they are structured, and identifies the key issues and challenges if reintegration is to be completed.

Background to the reintegration process

The peace process in the 1990s and during 2000 was at times shaky and held back attempts at reintegration.² Even by 2001 there were delays in demobilisation at certain cantonment sites: some combatants, for example, refused to leave camps because of the slow release of entitlements. During July and August 2001 there were riots, demonstrations and beatings of National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (NCDDR) staff in the demobilisation camps in Lunsar and Port Loko.³

However, by 5 January 2002 the prospects for forging ahead with reintegration looked more promising, with almost 48,000 combatants having been demobilised.⁴ Combatants were provided with basic necessities and orientation activities, such as trauma healing and psycho-social counselling, information and sensitisation seminars, and civic education. Transitional allowances (later referred to as reinsertion packages) were given to support ex-combatants during their first three months in chosen resettlement locations. Reintegration payments, financed by the Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF), totalled almost US\$ 8.7m by the end of the first quarter of 2002. By the close of March 2002, 15,295 ex-combatants were engaged in medium-term reintegration support and 5,594 had completed reintegration activities.

But by mid-2002 there were increasing concerns over finance. In June it was feared that existing funds would dry up by August. The United Nations Secretary-General warned in May that a lack of funds was delaying the resettlement of thousands of former combatants. In June, there were around 20,000 ex-combatants waiting to go through the NCDDR process. One major problem was that reintegration virtually came to a halt during the elections.

Reintegration in Sierra Leone is clearly dependent on donors making a major contribution, as the Sierra Leone government is not able to absorb these costs. It is however making a financial contribution. One criticism that has been levelled at the process is that most of the donor funds have been invested in the disarmament and demobilisation component of the DDR process, leaving little for the reintegration phase. Currently, NCDDR is targeting ex-combatants with short-term reintegration programmes, but because of limited funds longer-term reintegration is being held back. Local NCDDR partners are having difficulties in delivering medium- and longer-term reintegration, due to a lack of resources.⁵

There are also concerns regarding the prospects of finding employment for ex-combatants. Although Civil Defence Forces (CDF), Revolutionary United Front

(RUF), and Sierra Leone army combatants had undergone short-term training in skills such as car repair and carpentry, the majority of ex-combatants had at the time not enrolled in any training programme. The question was asked whether these were appropriate skills to teach. Many ex-combatants had high expectations of acquiring skills and a job, and were disinclined to take up agriculture, the sector most likely to provide opportunities in Sierra Leone.

NCDDR and GTZ: key reintegration actors in Sierra Leone

By late August 2002 concerted efforts were being made to grapple with these issues. Two of the major actors taking forward reintegration in Sierra Leone have been the NCDDR, a government organisation, and the non-governmental German Agency for Technical Co-operation (GTZ).

Reintegration programmes for ex-combatants led by the NCDDR have mainly focused on economic and social reintegration, reintegration for child soldiers, and special programmes for the disabled and for women. Their aim has been to help ex-combatants become productive members of their communities; to provide them with marketable skills and access to micro enterprise schemes; and to support social acceptance through information dissemination measures, social reconciliation, and sensitisation processes. They have also sought to support sensitisation by public education on the role of ex-combatants in a post-conflict society.

After the end of the disarmament process and the closure of demobilisation centres, the NCDDR demobilised a total of 69,463 combatants. This included 1,414 adults in phase I, 15,469 in phase II, 2,226 in the interim phase, and the majority (43,509) in phase III.⁶ These demobilised soldiers then became eligible to receive reinsertion or resettlement support, which included a transport allowance and basic household needs on return to their communities. By May 2002, 33,331 ex-combatants had registered with the NCDDR District and Regional Reintegration Offices for reintegration opportunities in the various sectors, and the NCDDR had been able to place 23,000 beneficiaries into various projects.⁷

GTZ's reintegration remit does not only include ex-combatants. Its activities extend to all sectors of communities in Sierra Leone, including residents and internally displaced persons (IDPs), women, children, and individuals who have contracted HIV/AIDS. It also has a strong engagement in rural areas and communities. Through its technical staff and programme staff it supports local

NGOs in reintegration activities, such as peace-building, training and education, rehabilitation, and economic empowerment. GTZ supports skills training and education in, for example, business management. Beneficiaries are given three months micro-project training, including managing funds, and are inserted into enterprises. In all, GTZ has 650 staff working on reintegration in Sierra Leone, and over 1,000 ex-combatants going through this process.⁸

Both NCDDR and GTZ have identified a series of problems that will need to be overcome if reintegration is to fully succeed. A major challenge has been to repair relations between ex-combatants and their communities. Ex-combatants have frequently had to overcome the resentment of communities recalling crimes committed during the war, and this has undermined efforts at social reconciliation. Furthermore, according to NCDDR, the provision of targeted assistance to ex-combatants has often been perceived as rewarding the perpetrators of the violence, and not as an investment in peace and security.

In fact, a number of factors, ranging from low investment to lack of local capacity, have hampered reintegration.

Firstly, much of the reintegration assistance is for a six-month period only, which is not sufficient to provide the in-depth training crucial for ex-combatants wishing to be competitive in the labour market.

Secondly, the high mobility of many ex-combatants, moving from region to region, has made it difficult to deliver timely assistance.

Thirdly, both local and international implementing partners have had limited capacity for delivering medium-term reintegration.

Finally, there has also been low investment in social and physical infrastructure in terms of creating employment and supporting job placement. Limited economic growth and the slow pace of private sector initiatives means that even when ex-combatants develop marketable skills, their opportunities are limited.

Economic reintegration

In the critical months following demobilisation, NCDDR has been supporting ex-combatants through reinsertion benefits. These have been calculated to represent in cash the average basic household needs of a family and an ex-combatant for the initial three-month period of their return to their community.

NCDDR's economic reintegration programme has sought to equip former fighters with productive skills and employment options so that they can return to civilian life. This return is dependent on the rehabilitation of basic social, economic and physical infrastructure and the revitalisation of social services. Some of the challenges that have confronted the reintegration process have been an acute shortage of relevant skills to support sustainable livelihoods, and the fact that many ex-combatants are not able to take advantage of opportunities in post-conflict reconstruction. Many ex-combatants have a limited educational background, no marketable skills, and consequently their absorption into the formal sector, including the civil service, is not feasible. Skills development has therefore been a key targeted area for NCDDR in terms of economic integration.

However, skills training development has been undermined by the loss of this capacity within Sierra Leone, and also by a lack of data on the needs of the labour market. Skills development of ex-combatants, NCDDR believes, needs to be linked to the emerging needs of the labour market. Its approach has been to target informal sectors through apprenticeship schemes, along with selected in-centre formal skills training. By May 2002 NCDDR had provided assistance to 10,000 ex-combatants for skills acquisition through apprenticeship and vocational training. In Port Loko and Freetown, for example, there have been 3,000 beneficiaries of apprenticeship schemes and placement into informal outlets. The other 7,000 beneficiaries were in skills training such as carpentry, car mechanics, building, plumbing, and metal work.⁹ Tool kits for trades such as carpentry, plumbing, and bicycle repair are provided after the apprenticeship or training scheme is completed.

However, ex-combatants with recognised formal sector employment skills have been provided with incentive skills to aid their employment, while also receiving support should they wish to continue formal education. NCDDR has provided counselling assistance on job-seeking strategies, training, and employment opportunities, and has also referred ex-combatants to labour intensive public works, or development projects implemented by other parallel programmes.

NCDDR claims that some of its greatest successes have been in formal education. By May 2002, NCDDR had placed 6,452 former fighters in school. It has provided sponsorship of school fees, textbooks, uniforms and a subsistence allowance for one year. Students have been placed in over 93 schools and tertiary institutions in the country, while there has also been sponsorship of students into university. Some ex-combatants have undertaken professional

qualifications in computer studies, accountancy and management.¹⁰ Parallel to this, NCCDR is working with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to give education to child soldiers through the Community Education Investment Programme (CEIP). All these measures have been designed to give ex-combatants skills so that they can be in a position to contribute to national development.

Improving education opportunities has been seen as particularly important, as 36 per cent of ex-combatants surveyed never attended school and only one per cent of the entire 'fighting population' were schooled up to higher education level.¹¹

Another challenge in Sierra Leone has been the reduction of production through the loss of agricultural labour during the conflict. NCDDR has been promoting agricultural projects – in May 2002 these stood at 22 projects involving 3,788 beneficiaries. The problem has been compounded by the fact that most ex-combatants have not had access to land, while the notion of 'group' farming, given the sometimes negative attitudes to ex-combatants, has proved problematic.

Furthermore, perhaps surprisingly, although many ex-combatants are from agricultural backgrounds, they have generally not expressed a preference to return to agriculture. In a survey of ex-combatants, it was found that 33 per cent of respondents were farmers before the war.¹² One reason for the lack of take-up seems to be that support assistance in other sectors is more generous. Accordingly, NCDDR has had to re-adjust its agricultural support to attract more participation, and has been looking at cash support for farm wages and supplementary food. However, certain forms of farming, such as fishing and livestock, have proved more attractive for ex-combatants in Sierra Leone because of their income-generating possibilities.

Sierra Leone remains reliant on labour-based work, which is perhaps the best immediate prospect for ex-combatants, as it is localised and attracts participation within the community. However, ex-combatants have tended to avoid this. One alternative has been public work schemes, which have been supported with, for example, skills training and enterprise formation. Ex-combatants have been trained in building construction, road maintenance, and work supervision by the NCDDR in partnership with the Sierra Leone Roads Authority (SLRA) and local contractors. By May 2002, NCDDR had supported more than 12 small works contractors, providing reconstruction of shelter, roads, police stations and post offices.

A challenge in Sierra Leone is the lack of job opportunities that can be accessed after training. In fact, there are limited job opportunities even for trained and skilled ex-combatants, says NCDDR. It continues to wrestle with the problem of finding alternatives given the absence of jobs for ex-combatants. To this end NCDDR has been looking at credible partners with whom to work, and has also been advising ex-combatants to form co-operatives and engage in income-generating activities. In fact, a very useful connection has been made with UNAMSIL, which has taken up 'stop-gap' projects that engage ex-combatants for short periods in income-generation, and are designed to encourage partners to invest.¹³

However, the lack of employment has, in a few cases, led frustrated ex-combatants to sell their tool kits, which were given to them to boost their livelihood prospects. These were supplied immediately after their skills training. However, as Sullay B. Sesay, Information and Sensitisation Unit manager, NCDDR, notes:

They were meant to assist the ex-combatants kick-start life anew, and continue to use them for survival purposes. When unfortunately livelihood opportunities are not immediately forthcoming, the ex-combatants sell their tool kits to offset their temporary frustration.¹⁴

A continuing problem is the lack of local partners who could deliver medium- and long-term reintegration. This is particularly the case in Kailahun District in the east, where partners who might in fact provide this are prevented from doing so because of security threats due to cross-border raids from Liberia, influxes of refugees, poor funding, and limitations imposed on working with ex-combatants.

Social reintegration/reconciliation

Social reintegration has posed problems for both ex-combatants and civilians in Sierra Leone. Ex-combatants fear they will be targeted and ostracised, while civilians fear a return of violence, or resent the crimes the ex-combatants are frequently alleged to have committed. NCDDR has set up social reconciliation programmes in areas of critical tension in the south, east and northern parts of Sierra Leone. This has been backed up by information dissemination exercises to try and foster trust between communities and ex-combatants. In fact, prior to demobilisation, NCDDR community sensitisation exercises were undertaken to ease the settling in of ex-combatants into communities. This was supported by

campaigns in the media and on radio stations. Traditional reconciliation mechanisms and structures were also used to break down barriers.

Ex-combatants themselves were targeted by NCDDR prior to their return to communities. Pre-discharge counselling emphasised community orientation, with a special re-entry plan. This social adaptation and development plan was developed jointly by NCDDR and other international organisations. Ex-combatants were also brought to *ad hoc* community reconciliation meetings in various parts of the country. In potentially serious cases, where war crimes were alleged, NCDDR acted as a facilitator with traditional leaders to facilitate the return of ex-combatants.

In a further bid to strengthen reconciliation, NCDDR has encouraged ex-combatants to undertake tasks that may be beneficial to communities, such as civil works, street cleaning, and helping to rehabilitate shelter. It has also supported adult education programmes, civic and peace education, music, sports groups, and other projects that help to rebuild social capital.

One of the problems facing reintegration has been the latent hostility to ex-combatants among civilians in Sierra Leone. Reconciliation has at times been a grudging process. A representative from NCDDR involved in sensitisation notes that typical comments heard from communities are: “we are forgiving the ex-combatants for the sake of God”, or “we are forgiving them because the government says so”. For their part, ex-combatants have found the process extremely difficult when they are constantly reminded about atrocities and their days of belligerence. This has led to tensions in some communities.¹⁵

Reintegration efforts have also been undermined by the illiteracy of some ex-combatants who have been unable to understand sensitisation messages disseminated by NCDDR, although this has been partly addressed by live drama performances undertaken by some of NCDDR’s partners.

Furthermore, community resentment over the ‘special’ treatment of ex-combatants, a problem familiar from other DDR processes, has been an issue in Sierra Leone. In community sensitisation sessions and radio ‘phone-ins’, it has been commonplace to hear comments such as “those who have ruined us are being given the chance to become better persons financially, academically and skills-wise”.¹⁶

According to NCDDR this has in some instances been exacerbated by the behaviour of ex-combatants. It is alleged that ex-combatants have held on to

property looted during the conflict, despite the presence of the rightful owners in the community. In the case of RUF fighters, the fact that some have retained their attachment to the jailed RUF leader exacerbates resentment in communities who have suffered at the hands of the RUF.

An equally difficult problem is that some ex-combatants who acquired authority during the RUF occupation of chiefdoms are reluctant to relinquish their authority. The fact that some RUF fighters have joined the new army is a source of distrust of the military, while many CDF fighters consider themselves 'hard done by' and not adequately compensated, given the fact that they see themselves as 'liberators'.

However, NCDDR try to put across the message to communities that they will benefit, directly and indirectly, from the fact that ex-combatants are engaged in rehabilitating damaged societies, and that they will become independent and less likely to commit acts inimical to society.

NCDDR regards it as encouraging that it is now commonplace to see 'die-hard' RUF fighters roaming the streets of Freetown and other big cities without reprisals from those who suffered at their hands during the civil war. However, this process will not be properly consolidated unless more funds are made available to support community-based organisations engaged in peace-building between communities and ex-combatants.¹⁷

GTZ notes that many of the reintegration problems in Sierra Leone have revolved around finance and capacity shortfalls, and as NCDDR has also noted, attitudes held by a number of ex-combatants.

Many ex-combatants have envisaged their allowances being paid instantly. However, it has not been uncommon for them to experience delays in payments of between three to five months, causing widespread discontent. Some officials distributing benefits have been living in fear of violence from ex-combatants angry over late payments. The problem has in part a historical basis. In 1999 one of the main objectives of the peace process was laying the foundations for security, and in terms of DDR the government had to make promises that could not necessarily be met. This has contributed to shortfalls in the funding of reintegration, which NGOs have sometimes had to fill.

Further, the design of reintegration has not always been satisfactory. Three-month training programmes, GTZ believes, are sometimes of little value in terms of learning a trade. And something rather more substantial than the dis-

tribution of tools and certificates is required to make an impact. Furthermore, the often brief periods of training for ex-combatants, and their subsequent low skills levels, will not be helped by the current lack of a favourable economic climate in Sierra Leone. The reality is in fact that many ex-combatants will have little prospect of securing productive work when they return to their communities.

The attitudes of some ex-combatants have made their full reintegration into their communities difficult.¹⁸ A number of them have failed to acknowledge, or comprehend, that many killings during the conflict were morally wrong. In fact, some ex-combatants believe they deserve to be rewarded for their role in the conflict. Some RUF have tended to think of themselves as legitimate revolutionaries, while the CDF have tended to portray themselves as saviours of the people. To resolve this situation there will have to be a balance between encouraging ex-combatants to realise that wrongful acts have been committed, and forgiving them.

However, to put things in perspective, GTZ has noticed that there has been progress since 1998, when capacity for reconciliation was low, with a key sea change in attitude, beginning with developments in October 2000.¹⁹

GTZ concurs with NCDDR that if the reintegration of ex-combatants is to work, it will be important to ensure that their reintegration is not given privilege over that of civilians and communities, particularly when the latter are having to come to terms with economic stagnation and destruction caused by the conflict. Future resentment over these kinds of issues could be creating the basis for the new combatants of the future.

At a social level, some ex-combatants have drifted into ghettos, and have experienced housing problems. Social problems such as illicit marital relationships, the abandonment of child ex-combatants, delays in reintegration support, and the recruitment of former RUF fighters into Liberia, represent major barriers to a successful reintegration process.

NCDDR has, in fact, attempted to address these problems, as well as the negative perceptions of ex-combatants, by stressing that the economic reintegration benefits are not meant to compensate ex-combatants. Furthermore, skills training for ex-combatants will benefit communities, because by placing them in employment they will be less likely to become involved in acts damaging to the community.

Despite these difficulties, NCDDR says it has succeeded over time in minimising the open animosity that characterised early attempts at social reintegration. A key factor in this shift has been the involvement of community-based social reintegration organisations. By July 2002, NCDDR had targeted 64 out of 149 chiefdoms in Sierra Leone so as to engage local organisations in this work.²⁰

Reconciliation and justice

The relationship between communities and ex-combatants is critical to long-term recovery. Traditional reconciliation techniques, such as cleansing rituals, have made a considerable impact in terms of community relations. There have been cases of ex-combatants confessing to wrongdoing and receiving forgiveness from communities in parts of the country. In June 2002 an observer noted a feeling of:

Hope and relief...I found it amazing that they were looking forward so much, rather than wondering about the atrocities of the past.²¹

Furthermore, at places such as the Morideen Amputee Camp in Freetown, which is home to hundreds of men, women, and children whose arms and legs were cut off, there seems evidence of a remarkable degree of forgiveness.²² There also seems to be evidence that the reconciliation process has been significantly aided by radio work undertaken by stations such as Radio UNAMSIL, which started up in May 2000 and which produces programmes addressing issues such as crime, guilt, justice, tolerance, forgiveness, and peace.

To consolidate reconciliation, the role of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to bring suspects to account will be very important. There are difficult hurdles that the commission and also the Special Court for Sierra Leone will have to overcome (see Chapter 8).

Reintegration of child soldiers/disabled ex-combatants/ women soldiers

A feature of the conflict in Sierra Leone was the use of child soldiers. Many were abducted and forcibly recruited, and as well as being victims themselves, became involved in atrocities. Not only has their reintegration posed prob-

lems for communities – some families have been reluctant to accept them back – but they are also potentially vulnerable to abuse. NCCDR has especially promoted the need to protect and reintegrate children, while at the same time taking into account community needs. Child soldiers have been placed within family support structures and specific communities. This work has been undertaken in partnership with UNICEF.

Two initiatives have been adopted: the Training and Employment Programme (TEP), which targets ex-child soldiers between the ages of 15–17, and the Community Education Investment Programme (CEIP), which supports individuals below 15 who have opted for formal education. CEIP, for example, had 2,001 ex-combatants and 260 separated children as beneficiaries, while by May 2002 there were 648 child ex-combatants in apprentice training in carpentry implemented by NCDDR. This training included support for nine months, the provision of training materials, a monthly subsistence support, a tool kit at the conclusion of training, and basic literacy training.

In parallel, there have also been schemes to support the medical rehabilitation of all ex-combatants with physical disabilities so that they can recover their mobility and health, and become productive and active members of society. NCDDR has a framework understanding with Handicap International to provide prostheses to disabled ex-combatants. In addition to micro-finance to accommodate the needs of disabled combatants, project-based counselling and psycho-social work has been undertaken.

It is acknowledged that there is a problem in terms of DDR and women soldiers in Sierra Leone, although the numbers of women involved in the conflict were relatively low at an estimate of twelve per cent.²³ Gender programming has been largely absent in NCDDR's work, and not enough attention has been paid to the challenges faced by women ex-combatants.²⁴

Conclusions

Reintegration is steadily proceeding in Sierra Leone. There are few signs of a wholesale rejection of the process by communities or by ex-combatants themselves.²⁵ However, potential problems lie ahead if sufficient funding and improved programmes are not delivered. Some of the training seems to be too short in duration to provide sufficient in-depth training, which is required if ex-combatants are to get jobs. Local capacities are not strong and both local and international partners seem to have only limited capacity in delivering

medium-term reintegration. Economic stagnation and a lack of infrastructure creation also seem to be factors hurting both Sierra Leone and the reintegration process. If there are failures to deliver in these areas over the medium and long term, there may well be increasing criminality²⁶ and tensions among ex-combatants, with consequences for Sierra Leone's future. Furthermore, reconciliation is not deep-rooted. In an unstable Sierra Leone these could be worrying factors for peace in the country.

Notes

- 1 Figures supplied to the author by the NCDDR by e-mail, November 2002
- 2 For insights into the DDR problems encountered in Sierra Leone prior to January 2002 see: M Malan, P Rakate, A McIntyre, (eds), *Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone: UNAMSIL hits the home straight*, Institute for Security Studies (ISS) Monograph no 68, January 2002.
- 3 International Crisis Group, 'Sierra Leone: Managing Uncertainty', *Africa Report*, no. 35, 24 October 2001, p 14.
- 4 On demobilisation in Sierra Leone see: Government of Sierra Leone/The World Bank, 'Sierra Leone Disarmament and Demobilisation Program Assessment Report: Executive Summary and Lessons Learned', July 2002.
- 5 Figures supplied to the author by the NCDDR by e-mail, November 2002.
- 6 National Committee for Disarmament and Demobilisation (NCDDR), *Reintegration of ex-combatants: transition from war to peace – management of a complex DDR process*, vol. 1, May 2002, p 2.
- 7 *Ibid.* p 1.
- 8 Interview with GTZ staff in Freetown, Sierra Leone, August 2002.
- 9 NCDDR, *op cit*, p 5.
- 10 *Ibid.* p 7.
- 11 Statistics Sierra Leone, Survey on Reinsertion & Reintegration Assistance to Ex-Combatants, report submitted to the NCDDR, October 2002, p 1.
- 12 *Ibid.*
- 13 S Sesay, Socio-Economic Reintegration of Ex-Combatants in Sierra Leone, e-mail document describing reintegration developments supplied to author, 12 November 2002, p 2.
- 14 *Ibid.*
- 15 NCDDR briefing, August 2002, Freetown, Sierra Leone.

- 16 Ibid.
- 17 S Sesay, op cit, p 4.
- 18 F Germano, GTZ, interview in Freetown, Sierra Leone, August 2002.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 S Sesay, Social Reintegration of Ex-Combatants, letter to author, 4 July 2002, p 2.
- 21 IRIN News Org., Sierra Leone: IRIN Interview with John O'Shea, Executive Director of GOAL, 12 June <<http://www.irinnews.org>>.
- 22 E Wongibe, *A Miracle of Peace and Reconciliation: Post-War Recovery in Sierra Leone*, D+C Report, no 5, 2002.
- 23 Statistics Sierra Leone, *Survey on Reinsertion & Reintegration Assistance to Ex-Combatants*, report submitted to the NCDDR, October 2002, p 1.
- 24 Sierra Leone Government document, *Assessment of the Reintegration Programmes of the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration, Executive Summary & Findings report (draft)*, 25 October 2002, p. 4.
- 25 A government survey of ex-combatants found that 77.7% of respondents said they were "satisfied with the reintegration opportunities proposed to them". Statistics Sierra Leone, *Survey on Reinsertion & Reintegration Assistance to Ex-Combatants*, report submitted to the NCDDR, October 2002, p. 2.
- 26 In summer 2002, to the surprise of many observers, there were few signs of violent crime rising in Sierra Leone and, further, the bulk of crime was not gun-related. However, the police do not rule out that the situation may deteriorate. Interview with Al Shek Kamara, Superintendent, Sierra Leone Police, August 2002, Freetown, and email of 9 July 2002 from Al Shek Kamara to the author detailing trends in crime.

CHAPTER 3

UNAMSIL AFTER THE ELECTIONS

Mark Malan

Introduction

On 22 October 1999 the UN Security Council authorised the establishment of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), with a maximum authorised strength of 6,000 military personnel, including 260 military observers, to assist the government and signatory parties in carrying out the provisions of the Lomé Agreement. In early December 1999, the first company of 133 Kenyan soldiers flew into Lungi International Airport as the advance unit of the first new UNAMSIL battalion, to join some 223 UN military observers from 30 countries already on the ground. Four Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) battalions already in Sierra Leone, comprising troops from Ghana, Guinea and Nigeria, were 're-hatted' as UN peacekeepers.

On 7 February 2000 the Security Council voted unanimously to approve the Secretary-General's plans for strengthening UNAMSIL. This not only raised the maximum authorised strength from 6,000 to 11,000, but also granted the mission an expanded mandate under Chapter VII of the charter. After a number of serious setbacks, rooted in non-compliance by the RUF, agreement was finally granted by the Security Council in March 2001 to increase the force level from 13,000 to the 17,500 that were needed to accomplish the mission's mandate.

Though UNAMSIL is touted as the current largest UN peace operation on the grounds of its authorised military and police strength, it is also a multifunctional, civilian-led mission in every sense of the word. The Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG), Ambassador Oluyemi Adeniji of Nigeria, heads the mission, and exercises control through his two deputies: DSRSG (Operations and Management, or O&M), Mr. Behrooz Sadry of Iran, and DSRSG (Governance and Stabilisation) Mr Alan Doss of the UK.

Mr. Sadry was appointed by the Secretary-General to assist the SRSG in the overall political leadership, operations and management of UNAMSIL and to

assume the responsibilities of Acting SRSG in the absence of the SRSG from the mission area. The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), who is responsible for all administrative, financial and logistical functions of the mission as well as the United Nations Volunteers programme, reports directly to the latter. The administrative component of UNAMSIL comprises the following sections: civilian personnel, finance, procurement, security and integrated services, which is responsible, among others, for telecommunications, transport, engineering, supply services, air operations and movement control.

The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (Governance and Stabilisation) was appointed in March 2001 to co-ordinate UNAMSIL's civilian components, focusing on governance, recovery and reintegration matters in support of a cohesive approach to peace-building. This has contributed to the promotion of peace-building as an essential complement to the mission's peacekeeping role. The DSRSG also serves concurrently as the resident co-ordinator and humanitarian co-ordinator, as well as the resident representative of UNDP. This arrangement enables the various elements of the UN system to come together in support of common humanitarian and development goals while ensuring a more effective sharing of resources and information.

At time of writing, UNAMSIL remained the largest UN peacekeeping mission in the world, consisting of 17,500 troops and military observers from more than 37 countries. Another 322 international and 552 national civilian staff members were working within the rather complex civilian-military mission structure that is depicted schematically below.

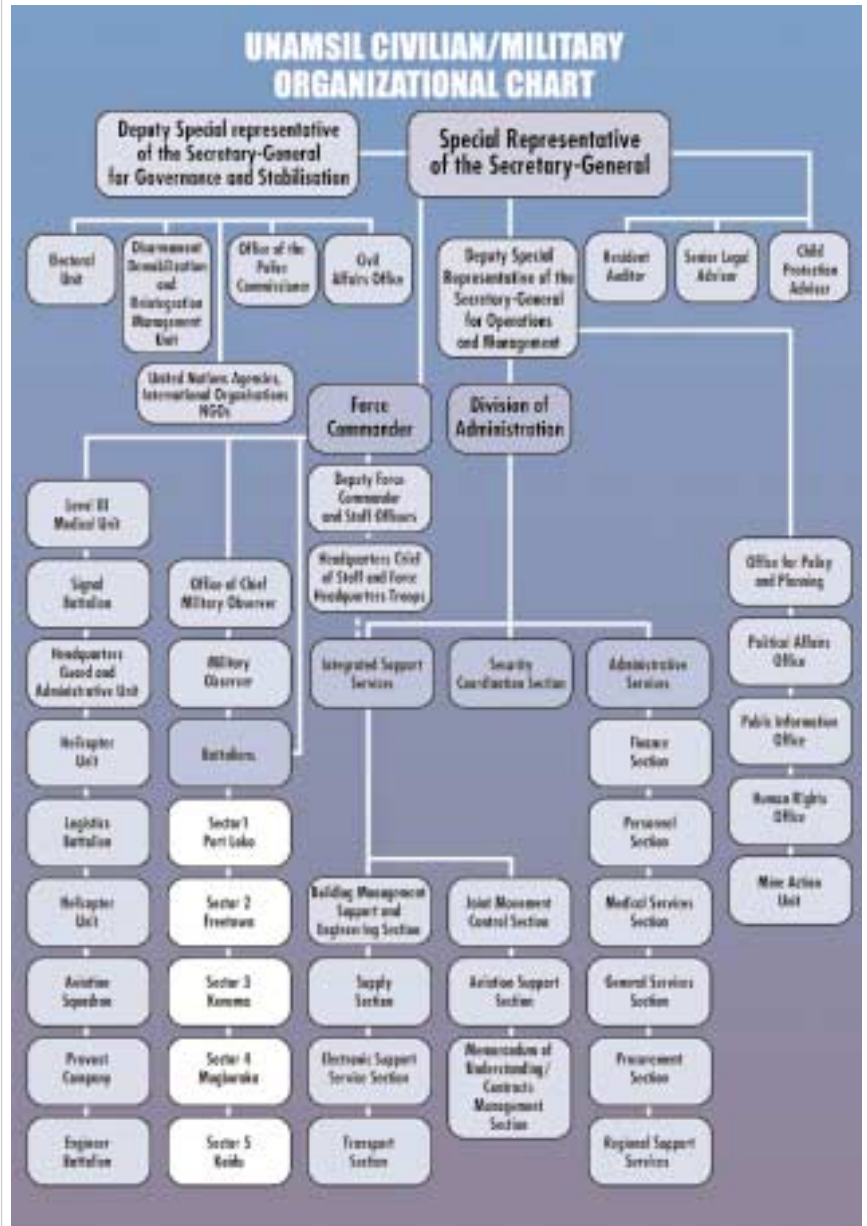
Nevertheless, it is the peacekeeping force that is the most visible part of the mission, and it is this force that has hitherto featured most strongly in the mission's mandates.

Mandate and mission of the force

The United Nations Security Council, through resolution 1270 (1999) of 22 October 1999, mandated UNAMSIL to:

- Co-operate with the government of Sierra Leone and the other parties to the Lomé Peace Agreement in the implementation of the agreement.
- Assist the government of Sierra Leone in the implementation of the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration plan.

Figure 1: UNAMSIL civilian/military organisation



- Establish a presence at key locations throughout the territory of Sierra Leone, including at disarmament/reception centres, and demobilisation centres.
- Ensure the security and freedom of movement of United Nations personnel.
- Monitor adherence to the ceasefire in accordance with the ceasefire agreement of 18 May 1999 ... through the structures provided for therein.
- Encourage the parties to create confidence-building mechanisms and support their functioning.
- Facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance.
- Support the operations of United Nations civilian officials, including the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and his staff, human rights officers and civil affairs officers.
- Provide support, as requested, to the elections which are to be held in accordance with the present constitution of Sierra Leone.

These, mainly military, tasks were expanded by the UN Security Council (resolution 1289 (2000)) on 7 February 2000, to include:

- Providing security at key locations and government buildings, in particular in Freetown and at important intersections and major airports, including Lungi airport.
- Facilitating the free flow of people, goods and humanitarian assistance along specified thoroughfares.
- Providing security in and at all sites of the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programme.
- Co-ordinating with and assisting the Sierra Leone law enforcement authorities in the discharge of their responsibilities.
- Guarding weapons, ammunition and other military equipment collected from ex-combatants and assisting in their subsequent disposal or destruction.

The detail of these resolutions was encapsulated in a more concise overall mission statement, which declared:

The main objectives of UNAMSIL in Sierra Leone remain to assist the efforts of the Government of Sierra Leone to extend its authority, restore law and order and stabilise the situation progressively throughout the entire country, and to assist in the promotion of a political process which should lead to a renewed disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programme and the holding, in due course, of free and fair elections.¹

The mission statement underpinning the resulting military concept of operations (CONOPS) for 2001, may be summarised as follows:

UNAMSIL's mission is to deploy progressively and robustly within a coherent operational structure, dominating strategic locations and lines of communication, whilst affording and facilitating a degree of protection, freedom of movement and the delivery of humanitarian assistance to civilians, in order to assist the legitimate government to restore law, order, peace and stability throughout Sierra Leone.²

By early 2002 the UNAMSIL force had made tremendous strides in accomplishing its core mission of providing security throughout Sierra Leone, whilst gearing itself to provide additional support to the upcoming elections. The UNAMSIL military component by that time had been fully deployed in five sectors across the country. These are shown on the map on the next page.

The force was also looking ahead to operational priorities for the coming year, and had already developed a concept of operations for 2002, based on the following set of assumptions:

- There will be no deliberate resumption of hostilities;
- Disarmament will be completed in all districts by the end of 2001/early 2002;
- Sierra Leone police and/or government of Sierra Leone authorities will continue to deploy throughout the country progressively during 2002;
- Elections will be held in 2002; and



- The withdrawal of the force will commence within a reasonable time frame after elections that are widely accepted as free and fair.

Operational priorities were aimed at supporting this scenario, as reflected in the mission statement underpinning the concept of operations for 2002:

UNAMSIL is to maintain a coherent operational structure until full withdrawal, enabling complete freedom of movement, guarding against security threats, whilst affording a degree of protection to other agencies and civilians, lending selective assistance to other agencies, particularly during the elections, in order to assist the government to restore and maintain law, order, peace and stability throughout Sierra Leone.³

The military planners' assumptions proved to be correct, and with the successful staging of national elections in May 2002, many are asking if there still is a need for a peacekeeping force. The basic answer is that the SLP is not yet ready to maintain law and order on its own, and the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) are not currently mandated to provide support to the police. The UN force fills this gap.⁴ In addition, the force is increasingly involving itself in peace-building activities, for example by engaging in labour-intensive, quick impact projects (QIPs) that employ former combatants, such as road reconstruction.⁵

Although military involvement in post-conflict reconstruction is often regarded as wasteful of the military's 'relative advantage' and as something to be avoided lest 'mission creep' set in, the two sectors visited by the authors displayed an extremely positive and constructive approach to their 'non-military' role, as outlined briefly below. The UNAMSIL military observers have also adapted extremely well to playing a key role in peace-building, after their highly successful engagement with supervising and monitoring the disarmament and demobilisation of combatants.

Military involvement in peace-building

It makes sense to evaluate peace missions from the perspective of the intended beneficiaries of such missions – the host population. If the legitimacy of a peace operation depends in large measure on internal support, then the ultimate success of an operation depends heavily on relations between the intervening forces and the local population – and particularly on local perceptions of force credibility.

Military thinkers have readily conceded that in a joint and multinational intervention of long duration, involving many civilian organisations and agencies, military strategic objectives may be milestones along the way to achieving the political end-state or an actual element of that end-state. The military recognise that peace-building actions are designed to cement a fragile peace and to contribute towards long-term stability by encouraging reconciliation. They assume that military engagement will mainly involve the provision of a stable and secure environment in which civilian agencies can focus on the processes of reconciliation and peace-building. According to peace operations doctrine, military peace-building activities should have a high visibility and impact, demonstrating an immediate benefit from the presence of the peace-keeping force.⁶

Similarly, the Brahimi Report notes that “all peace operations should be given the capacity to make a demonstrable difference in the lives of the people in the mission area, relatively early in the life of the mission”.⁷ UNAMSIL is putting theory into practice, with the force not only continuing to provide a safe and secure environment, but also engaging in some very meaningful recovery projects on behalf of and in partnership with local communities.

Sector 4 – Magburaka

Bangladesh provides the largest contingent (4,257 troops) to UNAMSIL. Sector 4, headquartered in Magburaka, has three battalions under its command, two Bangladeshi and one Nigerian (BANBATT 5, BANBATT 6, and NIBATT 11). The sector headquarters also provides administrative support for all Bangladeshi forces in UNAMSIL, e.g. BANBATT 7 and BANENGR (Engineering) 2 at Lungi, and BANARTY (Artillery) 2 at Lunsar.

Sector 4 focused its operations on disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) until 19 January 2002, with specific responsibility for the formal disarmament camps at Makeni, Magburaka and Kabala. From 30 December 2001 to 14 March 2002, the sector also provided support to the SLP in conducting the Community Arms Collection and Disposal (CACD) programme. As indicated in Chapter 1, this programme netted very few assault weapons, but did result in the collection of a considerable number of hunting weapons. The latter are being held by the SLP, pending the promulgation of a new gun licencing law. Significantly, many individuals who turned over weapons under the CACD attempted to claim the reintegration benefit under the DDR programme, to which they were obviously not entitled.

From mid-March 2002 onwards, the sector concentrated on providing support to the National Electoral Commission (NEC). This involved the secure transportation of election materials to all polling stations in the sector, the establishment of a patrol base to ensure security for the elections, and the retrieval of electoral materials once the ballots had been cast. The sector also provided transport for the 670 SLP members that were deployed for the elections throughout the sector's area of responsibility.

Since the elections, the sector has been focusing on assistance to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returning refugees. For example, BANLOG (logistics) has provided transport for 2,288 IDPs, as well as for 2,499 people needing resettlement. On the humanitarian side, the Bangladeshis have provided much-needed medical care from their field hospitals. The hospital at Lungi treated 6,686 local patients in May 2002 alone. The sector has also used its own rations to feed local populations in need. When some 16,000 people fled Koidu to Magburaka, they were fed by the sector.

The sector command is concerned with the continuing poor state of governance and community services. Some of the issues raised include the fact that the authority of the District Officers (DOs) is still not universally respected by the paramount chiefs, that there are no representatives of the judiciary, that revenue collection remains non-existent, and that schools have not yet reopened. Sector 4 has therefore engaged in a meaningful military-civic action programme, utilising its own resources to launch a number of appreciated projects for the locals. These have been in the area of educational and developmental assistance, sports and cultural development, and the provision of agricultural equipment and advice. The BANSIG (signal) battalion has built a school at Port Loko, and BANBATT 4 erected a similar structure at Lungi. The Bangladesh Sector Headquarters (BANSEC HQ) has built the Sierra-Bangla Friendship Secondary School at Robol, 7km from Magburaka, which opened for classes on 9 September 2002. This co-ed school, which cost about US\$12,000 to complete, can accommodate approximately 150 students.

The Bangladesh-Sierra Leone Agricultural Project (BANSAL) was initiated on 28 August 2001. It encompasses 25 acres of land adjacent to the new school at Robol, which was cleared for cultivation by local participants in the project, some 650 people from 15 villages in the area. The project director is a former RUF commander with the nom de guerre of 'Base Marine', who runs the enterprise according to strict rules of business that were worked out with the help of BANSEC HQ. These rules are applied by management and financial oversight committees, and include a work roster and roll call system to ensure

strict discipline and commitment by all project participants. Cultivation is well planned, with the land planted with local crops such as cassava, ground nuts and corn, as well as 'Bangladeshi vegetables' – banana, chilli, etc.; the cultivation of which, if enjoyed by the locals, will be expanded.

A sorely needed engineering project has been the reconstruction of the Mile 91–Robol road. BANENGR 2 has totally restructured and resurfaced this 54-kilometre route, starting in March 2002 and completing the project by the end of August. Although a gravel road, the new surface has been designed to cope with run-off from the heavy rains. According to the officer in charge of the project it will have a life span of about three years before any major maintenance work will be required – a task which will then be the responsibility of the Sierra Leone authorities.

The significance of this project lies in the fact that the old road was virtually impassable, and many locals chose to travel from Mile 91 to Robol and Magburaka via Makeni, adding much time and cost to the journey. On the upgraded road the distance can be covered in an hour, a fact which should stimulate the movement of people and goods, and thus make a major contribution to the future development of the area.⁸

Sector 5 – Koidu

The Pakistani Contingent (PAKCON) is the second largest in UNAMSIL, with a total strength of 4,225 (273 officers, 176 junior commanders, and 3,806 other ranks). It consists, among others, of a headquarter unit (50), three infantry battalions (each some 795 strong), an artillery battalion (395), an engineers battalion (395), and an aviation unit (145). The contingent's area of responsibility (AOR) corresponds with that of sector 5, and extends from the Kono diamond fields in the north to Daru in the south and Koindu in the extreme east of the country.

On the security side, there are still large numbers of IDPs and refugees at Kono and in Kailahun, and it is difficult to determine whether they are local or from Guinea. Sector 5 forces provided protection for the SLP when they began their deployments, but there was initially no contact between the UNAMSIL Sector Command and the RSLAF. However, a joint decision was later taken to deploy RSLAF closer to the positions of the Pakistani contingent, and all concerned regard the proximity of the forces as a welcome development. The sector enjoys very cordial relations with its RSLAF counterparts.

Aside from the key task of providing security throughout the AOR, a number of major activities have been undertaken by the contingent since its arrival in the mission in October 2001. These include disarmament, payment of reinsertion benefits, assisting a GTZ team with weapons destruction, the incineration of ammunition, security for the CACD programme, and support to the electoral registration process and the May 2002 elections.

The Pakistani contingent played a significant role in the electoral process – something that was unavoidable, as the NEC deployed only one electoral official to the sector, and who had to get by with one vehicle and a ration of eight litres of diesel fuel per day. The SLP were similarly under-resourced, with 205 police officers to see to security at more than 300 polling stations in the sector.

The Pakistani contingent has also been active in rebuilding infrastructure in the sector. It has put in over 481,000 man-hours of work on the roads in the past year. Five thousand cubic metres of stone have been quarried and two tons of plastic explosives used to provide the necessary material for building road surfaces and substructures. In addition to launching a Bailey bridge on the Kailahun–Buedu road, extensive maintenance has been carried out on the following roads: Magburaka–Yengema; Yengema–Koidu; in the towns of Koidu and Yengema; Daru–Pendembu; and Pendembu–Kailahun. Key to the durability of the repairs is the design by Pakistani engineers, which has led to a marked improvement in the road drainage systems. These projects are essential to the revival of economic activity. For example, a vehicle trip from Daru to Kailahun (about 70km by road) that used to take approximately ten hours can now be completed in two hours.

The Pakistani contingent has gone out of its way to provide substantial assistance to the local people, including:

- construction of recreation facilities and the distribution of footballs;
- organisation of inter-school sports competitions;
- provision of administrative assistance to schools and an orphanage;
- renovation of places of worship and distribution of the Quran and Bible;
- distribution of clothing; and
- a variety of other contacts and confidence-building measures.

The PAKCON also provides regular medical assistance to local civilians, as well as evacuation to Freetown in the case of serious injuries or illness. The Pakistani field hospital had treated 37,633 local patients by 28 August 2002.

The deployment of PAKCON has also created sufficient security for the return of humanitarian and development non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to the AOR. While World Vision International was in Kono district before sector 5 was established, the organisation has been joined by a number of other large and smaller actors, including the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), GTZ, Premier Urgence, Peace Wind, and Famous Agricultural Organisation for Africa (FACOVA). Kailahun district is also benefiting from the presence and activities of a host of NGOs, including the International Medical Corps, NRC, ICRC, Medecin Sans Frontiers (MSF), Oxfam, GTZ, Africare, Save the Children, and World Relief.

The assistance offered by the Pakistani contingent to these and other NGOs has primarily been in the form of providing blanket security, but has also involved some transportation, the provision of accommodation and food, and the co-ordination of meetings with a variety of NGOs and the military.⁹

Military observers

Military observers are rightly considered as an integral part of the military component of any UN peace mission. However, the nature of both their tasks and their 'clients' in post-disarmament Sierra Leone has placed them rather uniquely at the civil-military interface. It may also be assumed that, like many parts of the civilian component, the importance and workload of UNAMSIL Military Observers (MilObs) will increase as the peacekeeping force draws down. A brief synopsis of the role of the MilObs is presented below.

From January 2002, the UNAMSIL MilObs shifted their focus from disarmament to electoral support, including sensitisation and education functions as well as the provision of a wide range of administrative support functions. Indeed, it was the MilObs that were responsible for guiding the deployment of teams of international election observers, and briefing them on the situation in each deployment area.

After 14 May 2002, the role and functions of the MilObs shifted again to reintegration issues – from assessing funding priorities to monitoring the 'mood of the people'. As of August 2002, the MilObs have been gathering vital infor-

mation for planning the draw-down process for the force. The MilObs are now also key role-players in the effort to promote recovery and stabilisation, specifically by focusing on three critical aspects of governance, namely the chieftain system, the Sierra Leone police, and the judiciary.

Military observers assess progress with recovery and stabilisation against sets of criteria and according to a well-planned benchmarking process. They engage in village profiling at a basic level (e.g. monitoring and reporting on the number and nature of returnees) in order to provide a comprehensive needs assessment at this level. They are thus of great assistance to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), which is handling a huge case load of returnees as they move from Freetown back to their districts of origin. For example, 8,000 people who returned from exile are now being moved from the capital, Freetown, to Kono district.

The 'clients' for such assessments include not only UNAMSIL and the UN agencies, but also other key agencies such as the National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (NCDDR) and other government departments, as well as a wide variety of NGOs involved in community-level assistance programmes and projects.

Information gathered by the MilObs is collated in a civilian situation report, which is distributed to all mission units, who then add their specialist interpretation and analysis. It was however emphasised that in order to make the information as useful as possible, there is a need for greater civil-military co-ordination and co-operation in this process.

The MilObs cover about 30 villages per day, or an average of about 900 per month, so they are indeed the 'eyes and ears', not only of the force, but of the mission and all its various components.¹⁰

Adjustment, draw-down and withdrawal plan (ADWP)¹¹

The military is not and should not be the sole or even the principal agent in post-conflict reconstruction efforts. Although the UN force can and does play a vital role in some areas of Sierra Leone, there are a host of civilian actors and agencies that have a comparative advantage in addressing the country's wide range of reconstruction needs. These include governance and participation, justice and reconciliation, and economic and social needs. As part of preparations for eventual downsizing, the United Nations Department of

Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) dispatched a military team to Sierra Leone from 9 to 14 June 2002 to help UNAMSIL draw up the withdrawal proposals that were approved by the UN Security Council on 24 September 2002.¹² The new mission formulated for the force is:

To conduct the timely transfer of responsibility for the security of Sierra Leone from UNAMSIL to the Government of Sierra Leone, in order to effect a measured and balanced troop withdrawal commensurate with the achievement of defined security benchmarks.

The intent is to conduct a draw-down of UNAMSIL troops, commensurate with an increasing capacity by the government of Sierra Leone to maintain law and order, and to assume responsibility for its own internal and external security. The key to success lies in maintaining and sustaining sufficient impetus to overcome any inertia on the part of the government to assume those responsibilities. The gradual process of hand-over and the accomplishment of key enabling initiatives and milestones must therefore be driven at all levels in a manner that assists and encourages the government to assume responsibility for national security. The draw-down must be balanced and comply with two principles, namely to:

- ensure that UNAMSIL retains a credible capability to deter, or if deterrence fails, combat any resurgence in violence; and
- ensure that the draw-down of UNAMSIL does not itself precipitate that resurgence.

To that end there will be a period of stabilisation at the end of each significant force draw-down, in order to monitor reactions at local, national, and sub-regional levels before the next step of the draw-down process is initiated. The task of downsizing the mission, whilst also consolidating peace and addressing the remaining security challenges will obviously involve a delicate balancing act. Specific benchmarks have therefore been identified for the entire draw-down process.

The paramount concern throughout will be to avoid creating a security vacuum in the country. The key security benchmark thus revolves around progress made in building up the capacity of the RSLAF and the SLP. The other benchmarks that will be used to determine the pace of the draw-down entail priority tasks aimed at reducing the remaining security challenges, such as:

- Completing the reintegration of former combatants and the resettlement of IDPs and refugees.
- Consolidating state authority throughout the country, including the restoration of law and order by region.
- Dealing with the challenges presented by disenfranchised and disaffected youth.
- Establishing effective government control over diamond mining and other critical resources such as gold and rutil.
- Making progress with the resolution of the conflict in Liberia (and, potentially, the more recent conflict that has erupted in Côte d'Ivoire).

In each of the broad benchmark areas outlined above, UNAMSIL planners have identified more detailed indicators. For example, the 'generic security benchmarks' for monitoring progress in building the capacity of the RSLAF include:

In the moral realm:

- Morale;
- Level of self-confidence;
- Level of competence;
- Level of confidence within general population;
- Effective leadership at all levels; and
- Maintenance of constitutional subordination.

In the physical realm:

- Logistic sustainability in barracks;
- Logistic sustainability whilst deployed on operations;
- Manned to target strengths;

- Sufficient stores of equipment;
- Equipment availability;
- Professional competence; and
- Barrack facilities and housing.

At the conceptual level:

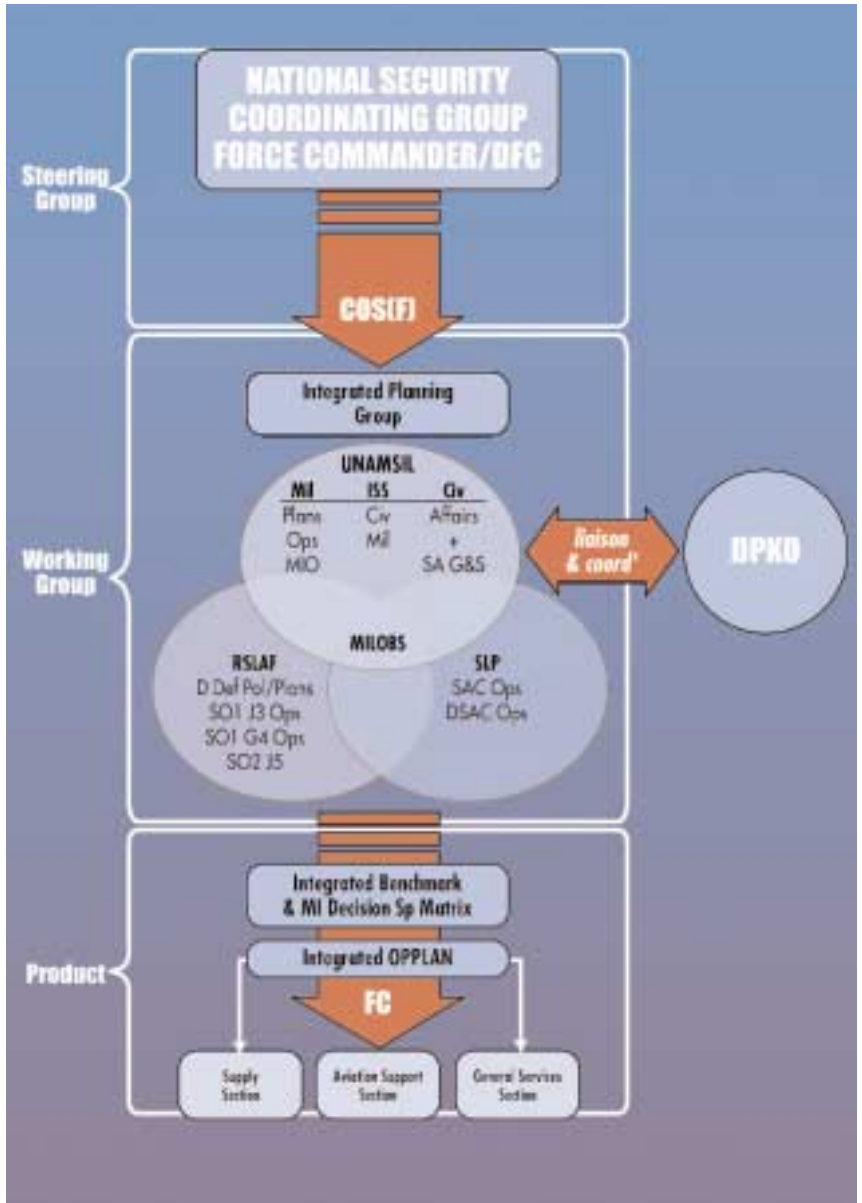
- Effective management; and
- Development of MACP (Military Assistance to the Civil Power) capability

The initial monitoring of benchmarks and the adjustment of plans will not be left to UNAMSIL alone, as the very nature of the ADWP requires an integrated planning and monitoring mechanism that involves a variety of actors from the mission and from government. Indeed, in devising the draw-down plan, such a mechanism was established for consultation and co-ordination with government, including the police and the armed forces. It provides for a National Security Co-ordinating Group that supplies direction to an Integrated Planning Group, that in turn guides the formulation of operational plans to be executed by the RSLAF, SLP and UNAMSIL. The structure and process is illustrated schematically below.

The initial draw-down plan for the force (of which phase 1 and phase 2 were approved by the UN Security Council on 24 September 2002), is based on an evaluation of possible security scenarios. The most likely scenario, according to the planners, is one where there is sufficient international investment to create a capable SLP and RSLAF, faced with only minor domestic and external challenges. In this scenario it is envisaged that troop withdrawal will largely be completed by December 2004. However, the plan is sufficiently flexible to deal even with the worst-case scenario – unsatisfactory progress in building the capacity of the SLP and RSLAF, together with a heightened regional threat to security (see Chapter 5). The major difference would lie in a considerable extension of the time frames for draw-down and withdrawal.

As it stands, the broad draw-down concept provides for four phases. During phase 1 (Adjustment), the force will be ‘pruned’ of troops that are no longer considered operationally essential, whilst still maintaining a presence throughout the country. This will result in a modest reduction of some 600 troops by the end of 2002.¹³

Integrated Planning Mechanism (Diagram 1)



During phase 2 (Initial Draw-down), the force will be concentrated in the central part of the country, around key provincial towns, main communication routes, the principal diamond areas, and areas bordering Liberia.

During this phase, which the UN Security Council expects to be completed by the end of May 2003,¹⁴ UNAMSIL's five sectors are to be reduced to three, with four major units (comprising a total of some 4,000 troops) being withdrawn. The remaining 13,000 members of the force are to dominate key terrain and perceived threat areas. UN Military Observers (MilObs), as well as civilian personnel, are to provide active monitoring of the vacated areas, whilst SLP and RSLAF take over responsibility for security. The UNAMSIL force will maintain sufficient military capacity and mobility to deter or counter any resurgence in violence in these areas.

Phase 3 (Subsequent Draw-down) will follow as soon as conditions allow for significant further troop reductions – from 13,000 down to about 5,000 by late 2004. During the course of this phase, the force will pull back to the Freetown and Lungi peninsulas, while handing over responsibility for the hinterland to the government.

During phase 4 (Withdrawal), a presence of about 2,000 military personnel is envisaged. The precise form and disposition of this military element will be determined by the nature of the security situation at that time, as well as progress made in achieving the various benchmarks.¹⁵ By the time the mission reaches this phase, the role and importance of the civilian component will have clearly superseded that of the military component.

Role of the civilian component

Civilian police

The civilian police (CivPol) component of UNAMSIL was strengthened from 60 authorised posts to 90 for a period of six months, in order to support the May 2002 elections. These additional officers, known as 'election specialists', are now in the process of leaving the mission.¹⁶

Prior to the elections CivPol selected ten of the best police trainers from a pool of 16 at the police training school for participation in a two-week course on providing safety and security during elections. These SLP trainers were then expected to each train teams of about 100 officers every four days in

the run-up to elections, in order to provide sufficient police supervision for the elections.

During the election period, CivPol deployed regional co-ordinators to all the regional headquarters, and strengthened its team sites in the various sectors. The civilian police assisted in the delivery of voting materials, as well as providing oversight of the security measures in place at the various polling stations.

The post-election focus of CivPol has been on the restructuring, training and equipping of the SLP (also see Chapter 6). Four options for future CivPol support were included in the draft report to the United Nations Secretary-General, and formed the basis of his fifteenth report to the UN Security Council on Sierra Leone. Indeed, the size and shape of UNAMSIL will be tailored to the broader parameters of the ADW plan of the force. The basic difference in the new plan is that CivPol will take the lead in training the SLP, with the Commonwealth team providing support in the form of facilities and equipment – which amounts to something of a role reversal. This focus will be on training of SLP trainers to provide thorough and effective training at all levels.¹⁷

Civil Affairs section

The Civil Affairs section has 34 officers in the mission. Three civil affairs officers staff and administer the section's Trust Fund Unit, which is supported by a number of donor countries such as Japan, Canada, Italy and Sweden. The trust fund is earmarked for assistance to special categories of people, such as ex-combatants, and women and child victims of the war. Projects are implemented through local and some international NGOs.

Between late 1999 and May 2001, the civil affairs section was instrumental in getting the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) leadership to talk with the government. Over this period, the section was also instrumental in the extension of government authority to the south and to parts of the north of the country, actively encouraging the government to deploy officials to districts as soon as they had been 'opened up' by the peacekeeping force. By the end of May 2001 the section had deployed civil affairs officers to every district, where they act as 'ombudsmen' for property disputes, issues around project funding, and other local matters.

The civil affairs section has been spearheading a process of conducting community needs assessments in newly opened up areas of the country, and draft-

ing an Interim Recovery Strategy Paper for the mission. The section is still doing needs assessments at basic levels, such as compiling lists of drugs, which it submits to the Ministry of Health. It then transports the medicines received to the district concerned.¹⁸

Human Rights section

The Human Rights section has a total of 20 officers, with 12 operating out of the mission headquarters in Freetown and two officers deployed to each of the four regional human rights offices in Port Loko, Makeni, Kenema and Koidu. A gender specialist recently joined the section to deal with cases such as the reported deaths of two women in August 2002 as a result of traditional genital mutilation. The section also has its own child rights advisor, who deals with issues related to children and youth, and has recently been bolstered by the arrival of a training specialist. There is no dedicated human rights training for the military observers, although some have sought information from the human rights section of their own volition. A planned programme of training for all military observers would no doubt improve the overall human rights monitoring capacity of UNAMSIL.

One of the most important mission training needs articulated by the human rights section was for cross-sectional or inter-component training on the role and functions of each element of UNAMSIL. According to the human rights section there is a very low level of comprehension among mission personnel about the work that people do beyond their immediate section, and thus very limited understanding of how to interact with and contribute to the broader mission objectives.¹⁹

One human rights officer is working full-time on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and attends its weekly briefings, while the human rights section is engaged in mapping the record of human rights violations during the conflict. The investigation of mass graves began in October 2001, when the existence of these sites was first reported. The section is also busy with a study on amputees, which involves a sample of 150 people (two-thirds of whom had limbs forcefully amputated for non-medical reasons). The purpose is to enhance knowledge and understanding of who committed what kinds of atrocities, at what time and to what purpose and effect.

An important project of the section is the establishment of a database on human rights violations in Sierra Leone. The database design and structure has

been completed and handed over to the TRC and the National Forum for Human Rights. The section is advocating for the compilation of national human rights indicators, as well as for the establishment of a human rights subcommittee in parliament.

The section also has been involved in sensitisation and training on issues surrounding the Special Court and the TRC and has provided basic training in human rights to both the SLP and the RSLAF.

Political Affairs section

The mission of Political Affairs is to consolidate the peace through early warning, monitoring and analysis. The political affairs section was increased in number²⁰ ahead of the May elections in order to closely monitor the campaigning and reactions to the campaign by all political players – including the parties, civil society groups, and the unions.

The section is responsible for the collection and analysis of information, and the identification of trends. Reports are provided to the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General (SRSG), who provides the information and analysis to relevant components of the mission and to UN headquarters. The section's work also provides essential background information for the SRSG's ongoing dialogue with the government.

Post-elections, political affairs officers have been closely monitoring the work of parliament and following key developments such as the nomination of parliamentary committee members. The section is concerned by the current exclusiveness of the ruling party in the parliamentary processes.

The political affairs section is also responsible for monitoring regional political and security dynamics. Because the Mano River Union secretariat in Freetown is dysfunctional, political affairs communicates with the ECOWAS Secretariat in Abuja, Nigeria, and also directly with the foreign ministries of neighbouring countries.

The section relies on the MilObs for some information, but also has its own channels for collecting information, such as NGOs and the civil affairs and reintegration officers. Political affairs officers also conduct their own information-gathering missions to the various provinces and districts, where they visit with chiefs and other local political actors.²¹

Public Information section

The Public Information (PI) section employs between 35 and 40 people, the majority of whom are local.²² With the end of the disarmament phase in January 2002, the public information section shifted its focus to preparation for the elections. It provided invaluable support to the NEC, which did not have sufficient public information capacity to keep the electorate informed. Support ranged from providing technical advice to actually taking over responsibility for disseminating voter information.

A special electoral information unit was created within the PI section. They found UNAMSIL Radio a particularly effective medium for dissemination of information, as the station's transmitters reached all but the most remote areas of the country. Due to the high rate of illiteracy, the PI section has always placed special emphasis on radio. A special programme, 'Elections Watch', was created. Candidates from all contending parties were given the opportunity to speak on the programme, though it was mainly the more serious contenders that actually took advantage of the free airtime.

Voter education was also provided by performing artists, who put on shows targeted at the chiefs. Theatre performances were staged for politicians in all five sectors. The PI section hired an additional 20 journalists to cover the elections, while their cartoonist and artist created all the posters used by the NEC. Returning officials were able to announce results over UNAMSIL Radio as soon as they became available.

After the elections, since beginning June 2002, the PI section has focused on providing information about peace-building activities and the planned draw-down process. Attention is being paid to the TRC, the Special Court, and reintegration issues. The idea is to involve the entire population in the peace-building process.²³

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a brief overview of UNAMSIL's role and objectives in Sierra Leone. The highlighting of the activities of certain contingents and mission components, whilst omitting mention of others who have and are playing equally important roles, is an unfortunate limitation of the scope of this particular research project. No offence is intended, and it is sincerely hoped that all who contributed to the peace process will receive appropriate recognition through other publications and projects.

At the risk of compounding an admitted weakness, the next chapter expands on the role of the media and the public information section of UNAMSIL. Any further imbalance thus created has been weighed against the need to publicise, and to learn from those who have made known the role of their colleagues in the mission. Often it is those who are dedicated to fostering better understanding who are least understood.

Notes

- 1 Briefing by Colonel Douglas Mudave, Deputy Chief of Operations, UNAMSIL, South Africa Army College, Pretoria, 6 September 2001.
- 2 Briefing to ISS, Lt Col Richard Hackett, MBE, Chief of Operations (Force), UNAMSIL HQ, 22 October 2001.
- 3 Briefing to ISS by Lt Col T. Beckett, UNAMSIL HQ, Freetown, 22 October 2001.
- 4 Interview with Lt Gen D.I. Opande, UNAMSIL Force Commander, Freetown, 21 August 2002.
- 5 Interview with Amb Oluyemi Adeniji, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sierra Leone, Freetown, 20 August 2002.
- 6 Peace Support Operations, *Joint Warfare Publication* (JWP) 3-50, London, Ministry of Defence, 1999.
- 7 United Nations General Assembly/Security Council, *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*, A/55/305, S/2000/809, 21 August 2000, par. 37.
- 8 Briefing by Lt Col Hasan (on behalf of Brig Gen Iqbal Karim Bhuiyan, Commander Sector 4), Magburaka, 23 August 2002.
- 9 Interview with Brigadier Pasha, Officer Commanding Sector 5, Koidu, 28 August 2002.
- 10 Interview with Col Fred Hughton, Deputy Chief Military Observer, Freetown, 20 August 2002.
- 11 As at 18 August 2002. Briefing by Lt Col Nick Fitzgerald, Freetown, 20 August 2002.
- 12 United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1436, 24 September 2002.
- 13 The first 200 troops (from the Bangladeshi contingent) left Sierra Leone in early November 2000, along with the Deputy Force Commander, Major General Martin Agwai of Nigeria.
- 14 See Resolution 1436, paragraph 4.

- 15 United Nations Security Council, *Fifteenth Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, S/2002/987*, 5 September 2002, paragraphs 28–32.
- 16 UNAMSIL CivPol is somewhat sceptical of the notion of ‘election specialists’, as this is not a general policing speciality for which officers in the majority of police contributing countries are ever specifically trained. Some of the officers currently being repatriated, could, with six months experience in Sierra Leone, make a valuable contribution to the new CivPol concept of operations if allowed to stay on for a full one year tour of duty.
- 17 Interview with Superintendent Francis Muhoro, Deputy Civilian Police Commissioner, Freetown, 22 August 2002.
- 18 Interview with Chief of Civil Affairs, Mr. Ismael Diallo, Freetown, 22 August 2002
- 19 Interview with Ms. Lizbeth Cullity, Human Rights Officer, Freetown, 22 August 2002.
- 20 There are eight authorised posts for political affairs officers. Seven political affairs officers are presently serving in UNAMSIL, including the head of section.
- 21 Interview with Mr. Peter Tingwa, Chief of Political Affairs Section, Freetown, 21 August 2002.
- 22 There are 12 authorised posts for international staff, of which nine are presently filled.
- 23 Interview with Ms. Margaret Novicki, Mission Spokesperson and Head of Public Information Section, Freetown, 22 August 2002.

CHAPTER 4

THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

Patrick Coker

Introduction

Peace operations – a joint military and civilian endeavour – require public support, which is vital to the attainment of the mission. The central role of public information is to gain and maintain broad support and understanding for peace operations. Public information is a ‘non-lethal weapon’ at the disposal of the mission leadership to convince the parties to the conflict and the population to engage in a friendly course of action.

The delivery of this message requires the media, and those media practitioners who mediate information messages first need to be convinced of the veracity of a non-violent course of action. This is much easier said than done in a country that has gone through more than a decade of debilitating civil war characterised by horrific atrocities and violations of international humanitarian law, including massacres, amputations and mutilations, torture, rape, massive destruction of property, and looting of the nation’s mineral wealth. Even after the war, the situation is that seventy per cent of the population is illiterate; life expectancy stands at 38 years, and infant mortality is 170 per 1,000.

Convincing media practitioners therefore requires credibility – that is, saying it the way it is, providing as much available information as possible, and being equipped to answer questions at any time. In other words, in order to succeed, a proactive public information strategy is required, providing free and open access to the media with completely accurate and timely information.

The aim of this chapter is to highlight the role of the media and public information in the Sierra Leone peace process, with a view to identifying lessons that can be broadly applied in other peacekeeping environments – bearing in mind that each conflict situation differs and public information should be fashioned to suit specific circumstances.

The media in Sierra Leone

The Sierra Leonean media – not a very dynamic industry at the best of times and virtually entirely Freetown-based – was virtually destroyed by the war. More than 70 per cent of trained media professionals fled the country, leaving the industry in the hands of mostly untrained media practitioners.

When UNAMSIL arrived on the scene in 1999, there was one television station for a population of 4.5 million, owned by the government and based in Freetown, and only three FM radio stations, concentrated in Freetown. Newspapers, on the other hand, sprouted everywhere. The reason for this was simple: they were easy to set up. A couple of hundred dollars would produce a four-page newspaper.

These newspapers served various partisan interests and their views about the way forward were as diversified as the interests they represented. Strikingly, these views were mostly largely uninformed and sometimes downright negative. Nonetheless, these newspapers had a pervasive influence on people and were major opinion-moulders.

The bulk of the population, including the rank and file of the RUF, resided in the interior and was insulated against the news bombardments that took place in Freetown on a daily basis. The consequence of this was that the country was further polarised: Freetown residents often thought quite differently from people in the interior. This made it difficult to mobilise the citizenry in support of any initiative. However, most Sierra Leoneans, including the opposing forces, avidly listened to the radio and were devotees of the BBC Focus on Africa and Radio France International English Service.

There was little interest from the international media in the Sierra Leonean conflict until 1997 and the coup that overthrew President Kabbah, the subsequent invasion of Freetown on 6 January 1999, and, of course, the abduction of 500 peacekeepers in May 2000. The latter event had an extremely negative impact on the image of UNAMSIL.

UNAMSIL was mandated to assist the government in implementing the Lomé Peace Accord signed in July 1999. The international community believed that a negotiated settlement was the only way to save Sierra Leone. Prior to the signing of the accord, there was mounting internal opposition to plans to talk peace with the rebels. The reasoning was that it was pointless talking peace with a group that could not be trusted and which had over the years destroyed

the very foundation on which the country was built. At a consultative conference before Lomé, even President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah asked: "Should we talk peace with those who have killed our brothers and sisters?" The answer was a resounding 'no'. But the president later bowed to pressure and signed the agreement, which brought Foday Sankoh into government in charge of strategic mineral resources, and enjoying the status of a vice-president.

Initial opposition to peace talks was transferred on to the UN peacekeepers, as it was thought that the UN, together with powerful countries, arm-twisted the president into signing the Lomé Accord. The RUF did not help matters. Almost immediately after Lomé, the RUF began to violate the agreement. In May 2000 they took hundreds of UNAMSIL personnel hostage, capturing their arms and ammunition. The international media responded with vitriolic criticism, as typified by the following commentary in the June 2002 New York Review of Books:

The UN mission in Sierra Leone now looks like a ludicrous attempt to apply the loftiest set of moral principles in a sadistic and predatory world. It is another case of precisely the kind of ruinous naiveté that the UN has been accused of suffering from in Bosnia and Rwanda. But it's worth remembering that it was the Clinton administration, and specifically Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, who forced on President Kabbah the grotesque shotgun marriage with Foday Sankoh in the first place. It was at least as absurd to believe that Sankoh would be satisfied by power-sharing as to believe that the RUF could be conquered by a campaign of friendly persuasion, or that the rebels would be intimidated by the peacekeepers' modest show of force.¹

The local press added insult to injury, referring to the mission as a 'toothless bulldog'. It described as disgraceful the abductions of more than 500 peacekeepers, and even agitated for the mission to be closed. In fact, local newspapers coined the word 'U-NASTY' to mean UNAMSIL, and substituted 'beach-keepers' for peacekeepers in their reporting on the mission. Within UNAMSIL, morale quickly plummeted. The mission itself had been grossly misunderstood. Whereas the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), the armed wing of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), had fought the rebels, the UNAMSIL mandate did not permit recourse to war should a warring faction become belligerent.

The first challenge, therefore, for the public information section was to assist people to understand and accept that the UN Security Council Resolution

1270, passed in October 1999, charged the peacekeepers with specific tasks, none of which was to go to war with any of the parties. A basic understanding of this role would help douse the flames of opposition to the UN, not just from the civilian populace, but also from the RUF and other opposing forces themselves.

Meeting the public information challenges

During the period from January 2000 to early 2001 the RUF and other opposing forces felt threatened by the presence of the peacekeepers, while many people believed that the peacekeepers would complicate efforts towards a military defeat of the rebels. The UNAMSIL public information section therefore needed to reposition the mission in the eyes of the public, to launder its image, and to present it as an impartial force and one whose primary responsibility was to assist the Sierra Leone people to bring about lasting peace. It could also hint that the peacekeepers were trained soldiers, capable of fighting if the need arose. In order to achieve this shift in perception, the local and international media urgently needed to co-operate. It was a delicate act of balancing information, with each sector of the public ready to pull the sword at the slightest provocation.

The UNAMSIL public information section was quickly reorganised into various units: radio, print, community liaison and spokesman's office. Each unit has specific duties and responsibilities, though all sections work in tandem.

Radio

UNAMSIL set up its own radio station, called 'Radio UNAMSIL: The Voice of Peace', with wider coverage than the other FM stations in Freetown. It broadcasts 24 hours daily, seven days a week, on FM and short-wave frequencies.

Radio has been used effectively to send messages of peace to the Sierra Leone people. Thanks to this medium, the mission was not entirely at the mercy of local journalists to put across its messages. Moreover, distorted messages put out by some of the local and international press were quickly corrected by using radio. Soon after it began transmission the station became a main source of information for many Sierra Leoneans. Programming covers the progress of the peace process, such as reconciliation workshops and visits to the mission by ambassadors and military chiefs of staff from Troops Contributing Countries

(TCC). The top management of UNAMSIL, the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) and his deputies, including the force commander and deputy force commander, regularly address the nation and mission personnel on topical issues and recent events and milestones.

Programmes have been carefully crafted to suit the mood of the people. For example, there are programmes for children, for the youth, and even some for people in government. The majority of these programmes are participatory, so Sierra Leoneans themselves have an opportunity to discuss their problems and make recommendations. There is excellent public participation in the phone-in programmes, in which a wide range of issues pertinent to peace and reconciliation are discussed. The radio has played a great role in changing people's perceptions and, as will be seen below, it also rendered a remarkable service during the elections.

The public information section is now busy starting up an exciting new project in collaboration with the office of the UN SRSG, for children in armed conflict. This project involves the establishment of an independent radio station – Voice of Children – that will be operated by and for children affected by war. Strategic direction for Voice of Children will be provided by a special advisory board, which will include the minister of Youth and Sport. Although initially the station will be launched by UNAMSIL Radio, the public information section will eventually hand over the station to local partners. Final approval has been received for the project, and UNAMSIL is currently searching for children to staff the station. The station was due to go on air before the end of 2002.²

Print

The print unit is responsible for drafting and disseminating press releases on the mission's activities, which are circulated not only to the international and local media, but also to the various news divisions at UN Headquarters, which in turn disseminate the information to a broader audience. This channel was used very effectively and was responsible for changing negative perceptions of the mission held by UN member states and troop contributors.

Print also produces a quarterly magazine, *UNAMSIL Review*, which provides a compendium of events that happened over a given period of time and some analysis of the way forward. It is targeted at the opinion-makers in government and civil society, as well as at UN staff. The magazine is distributed free of charge. The print unit also prepares media kits for visiting journalists,

leaflets and handbills, which were distributed during all the phases of the peace process.

Community liaison

The community liaison unit has been very important in reaching the largely illiterate majority of the population with no access to conventional media, through non-conventional means such as theatre, comedy and sports. In addition to its head, the unit includes a company of comedians (the Young Professionals), a theatre/comedy troupe (the Bintumani Players), a theatre director, a women's 'mobiliser', a community-based television star, a cartoonist, a disk jockey, and two professional journalists.

Members of the community liaison unit have been deployed around the country in reaction to events and at different stages of the peace process. Their mandate is to bring communities together and help them heal; to help calm tensions among ex-combatants and between ex-combatants and their host communities; to de-traumatise former child combatants, amputees and other war-affected groups; to sensitise the population on subjects ranging from HIV/AIDS to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission; and even to educate UNAMSIL's own staff. The following examples illustrate the depth and diversity of the unit's engagement with local communities.

Music: To build confidence in the peace process shortly after UNAMSIL peacekeepers were deployed in Maken – the headquarters of the RUF, and still under RUF occupation – the unit organised a music concert in collaboration with Sierra Leone's biggest pop star, Jimmy B. The unit brought ten government ministers to the concert, who, for the first time, were entering rebel territory. They also invited the RUF hierarchy to attend, and convinced both the RUF and government representatives to dance together on stage to *Salone, Mi Land* (Sierra Leone, My Country). Footage of this unprecedented event was aired on national television on a regular programme produced by the unit, entitled 'Kapu Sens'.³

Drama: The unit took a popular theatre group, Spence Productions, on a road show to demobilisation camps around the country to perform a traditional dance drama on reconciliation, entitled *The Throne*. The dance drama was interspersed with comedy performances by the Young Professionals comedians. During the performances, information on UNAMSIL's mandate and deployment of troops, and on disarmament was disseminated.

Media engagement: The unit undertakes timely, proactive and deliberate information targeting. The head of the unit drops in unannounced at local media houses to comment on, or clarify stories. The unit has also designed radio programmes aired on Radio UNAMSIL for outreach purposes. These programmes are the most-listened to on local radio. These include 'Tea Break' (a morning current affairs and news programme, which after the BBC's Network Africa, is a must for all radio listeners); 'Agogo' (a current affairs programme in Krio); and 'UNAMSIL Nightline' (a programme with special appeal to young Sierra Leoneans for its popular music, and peace and civic education messages). To capture the television audience, which although small, is influential, the unit designed 'Kapu Sens' – a weekly, one-hour comic programme that features UNAMSIL video footage on the peace process. The main characters are the local village chief and his wife, discussing topical issues.

Sport: Sports development is one of the unit's outreach activities, given the keen interest of Sierra Leoneans in sport, and particularly in soccer. The unit formed a football club, UNAMSIL Peacemakers United, which competes in the local league series. The team has talented young players aged 16–20 who have been deprived of opportunities by the decade-old war. Its participation in the local league series competitions has further projected UNAMSIL's peace-building image.

Women's mobilisation: The unit, through the women's 'mobiliser', has identified and organised groups of women at grassroots level, such as women in the markets, and women cooks, into a network for information outreach to the population. It organised a nation-wide Women's March for Peace, which, although controversial, got women out and active as players in the peace process. By forming and educating the women's network and channelling information through it, the women's 'mobiliser' has been able to sensitise a broader audience to the peace process. Representatives from the women's network have been interviewed on Radio UNAMSIL and featured on the television programme 'Kapu Sens'.

Comedy: UNAMSIL has found that comedy is a very effective de-traumatising tool. The unit's comedians, performing skits, plays, songs and jingles that they have written about UNAMSIL, are deployed to counter and neutralise negative publicity, and to intervene where a reduction in tension might be called for. For example, after disarmament in Makeni, UNAMSIL was informed that the citizens were planning some revenge attacks against the demobilised combatants. The unit sent in the comedians to sensitise both the public and the ex-combatants on the need to live together and reconcile. The comedians are deployed

at public places such as markets and motor parks, at schools, at amputee and internally displaced camps, and at interim care centres for child ex-combatants. Other UNAMSIL sections have also used the comedians, for instance to demonstrate safety procedures during UN Safety Stand-down Day, to encourage HIV/AIDS awareness during World AIDS Day, and to provide information on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Human Rights Day.

Spokesman's office

This is the hub of the entire public information section, where information about the mission and the peace process is sought by all and sundry. The mission spokesman has an enormous responsibility, in that the release of one wrong piece of information can snowball into unintended consequences. For example, in May 2000 the then UNAMSIL spokesman erroneously announced that the RUF fighters were 35 miles away and advancing towards Freetown. What followed was panic and confusion, and the already traumatised populace was once again on edge. It was later discovered that the information released was not correct. Efforts were made to reduce tensions, but only after the damage had been done.

Soon thereafter Ms Margaret Novicki was appointed as mission spokesperson. She monitored developments both in the mission and in the media with great sensitivity. Press conferences were initially called on a daily basis to update journalists on the latest developments. Now held on a weekly basis, the press conferences have opened up the mission and demystified it. They have brought about greater interaction between the media and the mission, something that has been invaluable to the image and success of UNAMSIL.

The spokesman's office is also involved in news distribution, which is done on a daily basis. News about the mission's activities is compiled and distributed electronically to foreign news services and local media. To ensure the stories get to print and air, especially in the local media, hard copies are sent to the various newspapers, radio and TV stations. These media get up to date information, and they get it on time. The same stories are posted on the UN and UNAMSIL websites.

The UNAMSIL public information section has, over the years, consciously and cautiously wooed the local media. The local media, especially some of the newspapers, can be erratic and uncooperative, but they can also be quite supportive. To get journalists to attend UNAMSIL press conferences, the public

information section ensures that transport is provided to and from mission headquarters. The fact that the journalists themselves need the news is subsumed by the mission's greater interest to have stories put out correctly. The public information section also facilitates journalists' travel to various parts of the country by making UNAMSIL helicopters available. They respond positively to every request and, where the information is simply not available, trouble is taken to explain why this is so. Suffice it to say that there is a continuous flow of information from the mission to the media.

UNAMSIL has also tried to build the capacity of the local media by organising a series of training workshops. These workshops have been quite helpful in taking media practitioners through the basic rudiments of journalism, and there has been a remarkable improvement in the quality of reporting. Journalists now at least make efforts to cross-check their information before they publish or broadcast.

Lessons learned

There is no doubt that the media has a great role to play in any peace operation. This cannot be ignored. Yet this institution can very easily be wrongly used, to devastating effect. Where it is positively employed, it becomes a major catalyst for positive change. The appropriate application of media influence should thus be a major cause for concern in any peace mission.

There are, of course, basic tenets, or ethics, of media practice. These include fair and objective coverage of events, respect for the truth, right to rebuttal, etc. However, ethics are basically moral principles and can hardly be legally enforced. The editor's headline is influenced by his mind-set, which in turn stems from his experiences and environment. Environments differ. The facilities available in various environments also differ. People's reactions to media stories differ from country to country. This can be understood as a function of the literacy rate. Where the bulk of the population is illiterate, media institutions become extra-powerful. The public does not question half-truths or even lies. The nature of the society, the cause of the conflict, the characteristics of the warring parties etc are all factors determining the final media product.

It is therefore important to conduct a careful study of the environment in which the mission is deployed. In the course of studying this environment, an effort must be made to know the various sectors of the public that the media and/or a public information department have to influence. For example, answers

should be sought to such questions as: What is the literacy level? What are the reasons for the conflict? Who are the main actors in the crisis as a whole? How sophisticated is the media industry? Who are the opinion makers?

A public information section must also have the capacity to establish a constructive and positive relationship with the media. In a situation of conflict, the media is usually sharply divided, with each side holding tenaciously on to their positions. However, there ought to be a constant in this interplay of forces. This is the need to have peace, to sheathe the sword, to negotiate rather than to slug it out at the battlefield. In some instances, the need to preserve the state as a corporate entity becomes the driving force. Where the media fans the embers of discord, peace is elusive. But where the media becomes a vehicle for the promotion of harmony, the attainment of peace is accelerated.

The leadership of any public information department is a crucial factor in forging a relationship with the media. Journalists prefer someone they can trust, someone they can relate to, and who shows sympathy and understanding for the constraints under which they operate. Journalists hate a stiff-lipped, cocky, or rigid information officer who churns out press releases and barks when there is a misrepresentation of the facts. The good intentions of a mission may easily be misunderstood and misrepresented simply because of the perceived arrogance of an information officer. Yet it is also possible for a peacekeeping mission that is in difficulty to be helped out by a sympathetic media, purely because of the level of rapport between the information officer and the journalist. Leadership therefore matters a great deal.

It is also important for the information section to help the local media to set an agenda for both government and civil society. For example, when it was time for disarmament in Sierra Leone, the public information section sought the assistance of the local media. They brought them on board and told them precisely what was expected of those who carried arms. The media then joined in the crusade to have all ex-combatants disarmed, including militia groups whom the government armed and who initially felt they should not be disarmed.

The leadership of any mission would normally urge people to reconcile. However, a statement to this effect may easily end up being a once-off, page six news item in a local newspaper. It is therefore the responsibility of the public information section to carefully work out a blueprint for the dissemination of messages of reconciliation, because without this vital element, the whole concept of peacekeeping becomes null and void.

It is important to realise that there will inevitably be crises in the course of any peacekeeping operation. Sometimes accusations fly like kites – from allegations of sexual abuse to charges of reckless driving by mission personnel. The job of the public information section is made much easier if strict in-house disciplinary codes are mapped out and enforced in order to reduce areas of friction between the mission and the civil populace.

However, the very nature of third-party intervention means that it is impossible to eliminate all areas of friction between the peacekeepers and the host population. The important factors are the frequency of incident occurrence and the effectiveness of the method used for damage control. Where an effective public information section is in place, damage can always be controlled. A mission that has suffered severe damage to its image will soon lose its confidence. Such a mission cannot be trusted, and the overall goal for which it was set up becomes unattainable.

It is thus clear that the public information component should be part of the advance team of any peace mission, deployed with all its equipment before the rest of the mission. It can then begin to sensitise and educate the population on what peacekeeping is all about – and, equally important, on what it is not about. In a volatile security environment the military will obviously be key partners to the public information section.

Adequate interaction and collaboration between the public information section and the military component fosters a good understanding of the terminologies and concept of operations adopted by the peacekeeping force. Although the ready availability of military commanders for media interviews and press briefings prevents speculative reporting on the prevailing military situation, it is also advisable to establish a post for a military spokesman to assist the mission spokesman at headquarter level.

In Sierra Leone, the assistance rendered to both the local and international media visiting the peacekeepers in the field encouraged the presentation of balanced account of mission activities. Military press information officers attached to the battalions in the field facilitated the speedy dissemination of information, covering a wide spectrum of community concerns. In fact, the military provided a very useful pool of human resource for the public information section, providing help with the writing of articles, and assisting with radio broadcasting to keep the broadcast service running on a 24-hour basis. Nevertheless, the senior mission leadership could be more forthcoming in sharing information with the spokesman, and adequate media training is recommended at this level.

Conclusion

A peace operation is a joint military and civilian endeavour, demanding public support for the attainment of the mission. The central role of public information is to gain and maintain broad support and understanding for peace operations. All ways and means must be exploited to communicate to the public the mandate of the operation.

Since May 2001, UNAMSIL has made amazing progress towards the achievement of their mandate. The disarmament of about 60,000 combatants, including over 4,000 children, has been completed. The public information strategy has focused heavily on promoting the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration process, as well as on the peace-building activities of UNAMSIL. The mission has also assisted in the successful parliamentary and presidential elections of May 2002.

The focus is now on assisting the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Special Court. More importantly, all peace operations have their exit plans, and UNAMSIL is currently implementing an adjustment, draw-down and withdrawal plan. There is a vigorous media strategy to ensure that UNAMSIL does not incur the wrath of the people they were sent to assist in the first instance. The PI section will go to a great deal of trouble to explain the draw-down process in a way that does not create unnecessary panic. It must also create a sense of responsibility and a realisation among government officials that they will have to systematically take over all those services currently provided by UNAMSIL.

Notes

- 1 James Traube, *New York Review of Books*, June 2000.
- 2 Interview with Margaret Novicki, Mission Spokesperson and Head of Public Information Section, Freetown, 22 August 2002.
- 3 UNAMSIL Pulse, *Kapu Sens: showcasing UNAMSIL, UNAMSIL Review*, Sierra Leone, 2002, p 32.

CHAPTER 5

SECURITY AND MILITARY REFORM

Mark Malan

Introduction

All indications point to the fact that the military structures of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) have crumbled after disarmament. Many rank-and-file soldiers have split from the RUF Party (RUF-P) leadership over issues of broken promises, unpaid allowances, and allegations of corruption among senior commanders. There are, however, concerns that some former soldiers have not disbanded or returned home, but remain concentrated in former RUF strongholds. There have also been reports that the RUF chain of command still exists in salient areas like Makeni and Magburaka.

Other RUF fighters opted out of the peace process and chose to join RUF commander Sam Bockarie in fighting Charles Taylor's war against the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) dissident group (see below). Nevertheless, the lack of weapons and the increasing fragmentation of the RUF, including numerous reports of ex-RUF shifting allegiance to the two main political parties in Sierra Leone – the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) and the All People's Congress (APC) – give cause for some confidence that the RUF poses little threat to stability and peace in the near future.¹

Obviously the prospects of keeping the RUF-P in the mainstream of the democratic process is uncertain, following its poor showing in the May 2002 elections. Alimamy Pallo Bangura, the party's secretary-general and presidential candidate, resigned from the RUF-P on 13 August 2002, and the party has closed some of its main offices in the districts – ostensibly due to financial difficulties. This presents a possible long-term security concern for the country as it ultimately impedes upon processes related to democratic pluralism and political expression. On the other hand, the Civil Defence Force (CDF) command structures have remained intact in some areas where they have usurped the enforcement of law and order in the absence of an effective SLP presence.²

The experience of the past decade indicates that only half of the international attempts to stabilise post-conflict situations have been successful.³ It is now

widely accepted that security, which encompasses the provision of collective and individual security to the citizenry and to those who assist them, is the foundation upon which progress in all other areas of peace-building rests. In its most urgent sense, security involves securing the lives of civilians from immediate and large-scale violence, and restoring the state's ability to maintain territorial integrity. Territory must be secured through a combination of border, movement, and point-of-entry controls. To be effective, these efforts must also be pursued in the context of regional security initiatives aimed at gaining co-operation and preventing unhelpful interference from regional actors.⁴

In the absence of the host nation's inability to provide its own security, an external security provider – whether the UN, other nations, or a mixed partnership – should be deployed to execute immediate security tasks, while reconstructing and strengthening the self-sufficiency of indigenous institutions.⁵ This goal has been pursued with a considerable degree of success by the British military in Sierra Leone in collaboration with UNAMSIL, despite the significant and ongoing regional security challenges, as outlined below.

Security challenges

According to the UN Secretary-General, the conflict in Liberia constitutes the most serious threat to peace and stability in Sierra Leone. When under pressure from opposing forces, both Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) and LURD elements have tended to retreat to the border areas of Guinea and Sierra Leone. Moreover, dozens of these AFL and LURD soldiers have deserted their units and handed themselves over to the Sierra Leone authorities.⁶

The threat of Liberia's conflict spilling over into Sierra Leone in the future is real. The armies of Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone have remained largely confined to their national territories, although a number of former RUF fighters have opted out of the disarmament process and are now fighting with President Charles Taylor's forces in Liberia. The involvement of CDF fighters in the war is another cause for concern. Numerous reports indicate that some CDF forces have moved into Liberia to join one side or the other in the ongoing conflict. The impetus for this move is money, and the related lack of employment and earning opportunities in Sierra Leone.

The flow of ex-combatants back and forth across the Sierra Leone-Liberian border, often with weapons acquired in Liberia, seriously threatens the stability of the border region. There are numerous reports of Liberian government

forces, among others, conducting raids in Sierra Leone to obtain basic foodstuffs and other goods. The flow of refugees from Liberia into Sierra Leone has also been a strain on the country's already meagre resources.⁷ Following the May 2002 national elections there was a wave of cross-border incursions into Sierra Leone by Liberian forces, allegedly to forage for food. According to Liberian defence officials, these troops were not under national command, but were 'lost soldiers who were trapped'. However, the straying soldiers have not been averse to occasionally opening sporadic gunfire before they embark on looting of property and abduction of civilians.⁸

The government of Sierra Leone has also expressed concern about the possible existence of armed Liberians among refugees in the south and east of the country. Contacts have been initiated with Liberian and regional leaders to discuss the possible spill-over and possible methods to deal with these groups. In an attempt to diffuse the situation, the UNAMSIL force commander met the Liberian defence minister at Bo Waterside in western Liberia on 28 May 2002. In addition the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) has met with the leaders of Ghana, Mali, Nigeria and Senegal, as well as with officials of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).⁹ However, according to the International Crisis Group (ICG), President Charles Taylor of Liberia is using the current Mano River Union peace process to buy time in his battle with the rebel forces of LURD, and to demand sanctions against Guinea.¹⁰

In order to mitigate the potential destabilisation of Sierra Leone as a result of the situation in Liberia, the United Nations Panel of Experts was established to probe the supply of weapons that fuels the Liberian conflict, monitor the Liberian government's compliance with the sanctions and arms embargo imposed by the UN Security Council on Liberia in May 2001, and track attempts to deliver arms illegally to the country. However, the tracking of illegitimate arms shipments is extremely difficult as it involves travelling across the globe, interviewing reluctant suspects, and trying to uncover a paper trail that usually includes fraudulent end user certificates. These all-important documents purport to show the final destination of the consignment, thereby allowing arms manufacturers to release their merchandise. The trafficker can thus take delivery of a consignment and divert the weapons to their true destination.

With such deliveries coming into Liberia as recently as August 2002, the panel has recommended that the arms embargo against the Liberian government should be maintained and extended to all armed groups, including the LURD rebels in the Mano River Union sub-region (comprising Guinea, Liberia and

Sierra Leone). The experts also concluded that mercenaries were active in the Mano River area after receiving accounts from mercenaries who had offered their services in the sub-region. These mercenaries came from countries including Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, The Gambia, Ghana and Burkina Faso.

Following the military rebellion that began on 19 September 2002 in Côte d'Ivoire, the danger of regional contagion has increased significantly. If there is a breakdown of talks, there is little doubt that civil war or continued instability in Côte d'Ivoire would seriously damage all attempts at peace-building in the Mano River basin, particularly in Sierra Leone.

Regional analysts have warned of a high risk that the current crisis may degenerate into a north-south ethnic and religious conflict. ECOWAS has indicated that it will play a role in maintaining peace and security by sending approximately 2,000 troops to contain the rebels in their current positions while negotiations proceed in Lomé. If peace talks succeed, ECOWAS forces will proceed to disarm the rebels. If negotiated peace fails, it is difficult to see a growing role for ECOWAS in matters related to peace and security.

The cross-border incursions of Guinean rebels from Liberia into Guinea have perpetuated a cycle of conflict in which countries host each other's rebels. While this phenomenon is not new, if not checked, it could potentially spread throughout the entire region. Demobilised former fighters in Sierra Leone who have not been reintegrated may be encouraged by any gains made by Ivorian rebels and nurture hopes of a return to the bush. If there is a resurgence of violence, the regional humanitarian crisis is likely to worsen, leading to a significant increase in the number of refugees and internally displaced persons. Relief and humanitarian organisations are unlikely to be able to cope with any increase in the number of people who will require assistance.¹¹

RSLAF: Meeting the security challenge?

On 17 January 2002 the final tripartite meeting was held between UNAMSIL, the RUF and the Government of Sierra Leone, resulting, on the following day, in an official declaration of the end of the conflict. On 21 January 2002, the new Ministry of Defence (MoD) was opened in a building just opposite State House, and the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces was established (hitherto the SLA). D-day for the army's deployment throughout the country was 22 January 2002, a feat which was indeed achieved with the deployment of three brigades of the RSLAF in the interior as follows:

- 3 brigade, consisting of a headquarters at Kenema and three battalions deployed to the south eastern border with Liberia;
- 5 brigade, covering Kono, Tonlolili, and Moyamba, and keeping an eye on security around Koidu and the diamond areas; and
- 4 brigade, headquartered at Makeni and covering Koinadugu and the northern districts.

A further three battalions are deployed in the west – one at Freetown, one at Lungi, and one in the Masaka/Port Loko area.¹² The management of Sierra Leone's security is in the hands of the National Security Council (NSC), which has an active working group, four provincial security committees (ProSecs), and district security committees (DiSecs) in each district. The Mano River Union has a parallel type of security arrangement, and envisages a number of Joint Security and Confidence Building Units (JSCBUs). In practice, however, regional security co-ordination occurs through a merger at the DiSec level in the districts bordering Guinea and Liberia.

The role of the RSLAF is clearly prescribed in the constitution of Sierra Leone. In order of importance, it should:

- safeguard the territorial integrity of the country;
- create and maintain a safe environment for the people; and
- assist with development of the country.¹³

Its primary function is being fulfilled through the adoption of a deterrence posture, while deployed battalions carry out active platoon-strength patrols. The secondary role – maintaining a safe environment for the Sierra Leone people – is a bit more contentious, with somewhat of a grey area existing between the roles of the SLP's Operational Support Division and the RSLAF. On the developmental side, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) has funded a number of civil-military co-operation projects aimed at RSLAF assistance in the building or rebuilding of schools, bridges and roads. In short, the RSLAF is currently fulfilling its constitutional role.¹⁴

There are two principal security threats of concern to the armed forces: insecurity on the Liberian border area and the internal security of the diamond mining areas. The potential threat to security regarding the latter issue remains

rather serious. Diamond mining can still best be described as 'anarchic'. Apart from the more traditional turf battles between local miners and RUF insurgents, immigrants from Guinea, Mali and several other countries in the region are now joining the rush. A power struggle has emerged between licensed miners and youth groups in the major mining areas of Tongo Field and Koidu. UNAMSIL MiObs have also observed resurgence in the recruitment of young men around Bo and Kenema, but the purpose of this recruitment is not yet clear. It could be that fighters are being recruited for Liberia, or equally possible, as labour for the diamond fields.¹⁵

The RSLAF is reluctant to get involved in policing the diamond fields, as one incident of smuggling or perceived partiality would be disastrous to the professional image the army is trying hard to create. Hence the continued presence of the UNAMSIL force, providing broader security and a general sense of stability, remains essential for the time being. Government responsibility for the security of the alluvial mining areas remains out of the question until it musters the will and desire to fence off these areas, and controls them in a manner similar to that used in the coastal alluvial diamond fields of Namibia and South Africa.

The National Security Committee is aware that the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) has split along several lines, with many soldiers, now irregulars, regarding Sierra Leone as an easy source of supply and looting the villages along the border. The RSLAF has responded to the situation by deploying troops along the border with Liberia in order to forestall future incursions. As of August 2002, some 70 soldiers from the AFL have been disarmed by the RSLAF after crossing into Sierra Leone, and were waiting for encampment in Port Loko District.¹⁶ However, the entire border region cannot be effectively sealed off because of the very strong social and economic ties of peoples on both sides of the border. Moreover, the border is extremely difficult to police as, in addition to two official crossings, 27 unofficial ones exist.

As a result of the challenges encountered by the government of Sierra Leone regarding the control of cross-border trips and incursions, the United Nations mission continues to maintain a significant troop presence in five sectors on Sierra Leone's eastern border, including Koidu and Kenema, and has conducted regular aerial patrols with Mi24 attack helicopters.¹⁷ While the issue of UNAMSIL support for the government is now far less ambiguous than in the pre-election phases of the mission, this support cannot be uncritical. For example, MiObs are monitoring incidents of possible government corruption at the basic level in the field. Reports from the Mano River Bridge area indicate that

large quantities of food and non-food donor aid, intended by donors for the needy population of Sierra Leone, are being transported in taxis across the border to Liberia, despite the presence of RSLAF, SLP and border officials.¹⁸

The inability of the RSLAF to seal the border and to intern illegal AFL border crossers has led to continued accusations by LURD that Sierra Leone is supporting Taylor's forces. This conviction is so strong that, in August 2002, LURD abducted 28 Sierra Leone citizens from Kailahun in reprisal. However, the relative freedom with which LURD fighters cross the border has led also to accusations by the AFL that the RSLAF is supporting LURD. Guinea, in turn, remains suspicious of Sierra Leone because it is not interning the AFL fighters who enter its territory, and is itself still occupying the northern part of the Kailahun salient.¹⁹

A solution aimed at alleviating the continued border insecurity and dangerous accusations may lie in Sierra Leone actively declaring its neutrality in terms of the 1907 Hague Convention, which deals with respecting 'The Rights and Duties of Neutral Powers and Persons in Case of War on Land'. The articles of Hague Convention V (signed on 18 October 1907, entered into force on 26 January 1910) that would be especially pertinent to the situation in Sierra Leone read as follows:

- **Article 1.** The territory of neutral Powers is inviolable.
- **Article 2.** Belligerents are forbidden to move troops or convoys of either munitions of war or supplies across the territory of a neutral Power.
- **Article 4.** Corps of combatants cannot be formed nor recruiting agencies opened on the territory of a neutral Power to assist the belligerents.
- **Article 5.** A neutral Power must not allow any of the acts referred to in Articles 2 to 4 to occur on its territory. It is not called upon to punish acts in violation of its neutrality unless the said acts have been committed on its own territory.
- **Article 6.** The responsibility of a neutral Power is not engaged by the fact of persons crossing the frontier separately to offer their services to one of the belligerents.
- **Article 10.** The fact of a neutral Power resisting, even by force, attempts to violate its neutrality cannot be regarded as a hostile act.

- **Article 11.** A neutral Power which receives on its territory troops belonging to the belligerent armies shall intern them, as far as possible, at a distance from the theatre of war.
- **Article 12.** In the absence of a special convention to the contrary, the neutral Power shall supply the interned with the food, clothing, and relief required by humanity. At the conclusion of peace the expenses caused by the internment shall be made good.

A clear declaration to the governments of Liberia and Guinea, in accordance with the provisions of Article 22 of Hague Convention V, would be a good starting point, although the government of Sierra Leone would still need to develop the means to comply with its responsibilities as a neutral power.²⁰ At present, there is still a question mark over the competence of the RSLAF to enforce the provisions of the convention, and the limited financial resources of the government remain a perennial problem.

Transformation of the Sierra Leone Armed Forces

The United Kingdom has supported the enhancement of short- and longer-term security in Sierra Leone through a programme aimed at training, equipping and advising government forces. This programme has involved the integration of UK military advisors into Sierra Leone forces; close co-ordination with UNAMSIL and the SLP; and the enhancement of the combat effectiveness of the forces through ongoing advice and training.

Since 1999 the UK has undertaken a series of induction and training programs under what is now called the International Military Advisory and Training Team (IMATT). Short-term training teams initially handled nine Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) intakes, presenting a 12-week training package for each intake. This training was designed as a 'first aid' package to address a very specific and immediate short-term security vacuum.

It was expected that basic training would be provided to about 12,500 soldiers (including air and maritime wings) with more specialised training to a smaller number in logistics, communications, command and control, and other techniques. Some officer training has been provided in Ghana and the UK.²¹

The British training team peaked at a strength of about 600 in September 2001, including the short-term training team members. It was expected that

after completion of the short-term training scheme, and the expansion of the proportion of the country under the control of the government of Sierra Leone, the numbers would drop to an interim level of 300 to 400. A long-term core of 100 to 150 trainers was envisaged after the presidential and parliamentary elections.²² However, the general public still derives a great deal of reassurance from the British military presence, and remains attentive for any signals of a British military withdrawal from Sierra Leone. During July 2002, the IMATT training company, comprising about 120 soldiers, left the country, along with the British force protection company of approximately 100. The effects of this move on public confidence and on force cohesion and effectiveness are being carefully monitored.

Brigadier Patrick Houston and about 80 per cent of the British soldiers remaining in Sierra Leone are occupying executive and advisory posts within the RSLAF, with nine of the posts located within the Ministry of Defence (MoD) itself. Approximately six IMATT advisors, from the rank captain to lieutenant colonel, are deployed with each RSLAF brigade to assist with training, planning, personnel and operations.

The IMATT programme entails much more than military training: it deals directly with virtually every aspect of security sector reform. It involves a complete reconstruction of the MoD and the military apparatus. This means building a culture of loyalty, service and respect for human rights within the armed forces, but it also means a complete departmental overhaul to ensure appropriate civilian oversight and probity. Senior Sierra Leone MoD officials and officers have been removed for participating in corrupt practices. And policies – hitherto non-existent – on procurement, career paths, pay and benefits, the removal of ‘ghost soldiers’ from the payroll, and things as basic as the payment of salaries, have had to be put in place. It is generally agreed that this process of restructuring and reform will be a three to five year undertaking.²³

At the basic level, IMATT has assisted RSLAF instructors at the Armed Forces Training Centre (AFTC) in Benguema with the training of intakes under the Military Reintegration Programme (MRP). This programme was designed to integrate former RUF and CDF combatants who have been through the disarmament and demobilisation process, into the new RSLAF. While the numbers are fairly modest; the MRP is significant in two respects: firstly, it lends credence to the notion of the RSLAF as an army of reconciliation; secondly, it provides a very meaningful form of vocational training for those demobilised personnel who genuinely wish to pursue a military career and continue the life of a soldier.²⁴

The Armed Forces Training Centre (AFTC), created just outside Freetown at Benguema in mid-2001, is at present home to all RSLAF training. There used to be a training facility at Daru, which may be resuscitated in the years to come. The Infantry Training Centre is based a short distance from Benguema, at Hastings, and comprises a tactics wing and a support weapons wing. The latter presents training in mortars, medium machine guns, air defence, and range management. Range management is very important, as safety was badly neglected during the war years. It is especially necessary to sensitise the local people in the vicinity of the firing range at Hastings as to the dangers of blinds and unexploded ordnance, as well as to the need to obey warnings in order to avoid death or injury during live firing exercises. The locals are easily traumatised by the sound of weapons, especially when the range is used for automatic and heavier calibre weapons.²⁵

The AFTC has an Infantry Training Advance Team (ITAT), consisting of eight members who oversee course development. The aim is to transfer ownership of all courses to RSLAF directorate staff and instructors. The commissioning course and the support weapons courses (mortars and machine guns) are already run by the RSLAF, with ITAT oversight. International humanitarian law (IHL) has already been introduced as a core curriculum topic, as well as training in the RSLAF code of conduct, and civil-military relations. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has provided invaluable support in the teaching of IHL, but the AFRC should have its own trainers capable of presenting the subject by the end of 2002.²⁶

As far as future development of training is concerned, the emphasis will be on leadership training and the fine-tuning of leadership courses during the remainder of 2002. 2003 will be a year of consolidation, with no new courses being introduced. From 2004 onwards, however, the intention is to develop collective training within the RSLAF. Hitherto all training has been at the individual level, as collective training at the platoon, company and battalion level requires trained and experienced leaders at all levels of command.²⁷ The RSLAF, with IMATT assistance, is now also busy setting up new training areas and firing ranges throughout the country, all with proper safety templates to avoid civilian casualties.

However, the RSLAF has been left with virtually no infrastructure outside of the greater Freetown/Hastings area. The military barracks at Makeni and other provincial centres have been completely destroyed, and the troops deployed in these areas are living in makeshift shelters constructed of mud and plastic sheeting. Therefore, at a time when there are many competing demands on

government spending, there remains an urgent need to invest in new infrastructure projects.²⁸

The last basic MRP intake graduated from the AFTC on 17 May 2002. A commissioning parade for platoon leaders on 17 August 2002 brought the MRP to a close, with a total of 2,600 soldiers trained under the programme – all of whom have been deployed to units in the field. The soldiers are mixed up in their various units and sub-units; there are no elements of the RSLAF that are exclusively ‘ex-SLA’, ‘ex-RUF’ or ‘ex-CDF’. There have been no complaints or reports of incidents or even friction between former RUF and former CDF fighters, and the MRP can but be considered a remarkable success so far.²⁹

In addition to the Military Reintegration Package, the basic retraining of the former SLA soldiers has been completed. There has been a very promising improvement in the self-confidence of the RSLAF, whose members in the past suffered from a serious lack of confidence in their own professional military capabilities. The gradual transfer of responsibility for training, along with increasing operational responsibilities, has done much to boost the confidence and morale of the force. There has been a discernible increase in the confidence of the soldiers over the past seven months, as evidenced in their performance during field training exercises conducted under IMATT oversight. Feedback on training is given by the IMATT officers who are deployed with the brigades and with the battalions in the field. Exams have also been introduced into the commissioning course, establishing objective standards for graduation and advancement.³⁰

The RSLAF is also keenly aware of the importance of fostering positive public perceptions of the military, and much emphasis is now being placed on correct dress and appearance, proper driving habits, and general military discipline. In terms of civil-military co-operation projects, much effort has been put into the reconstruction and repairing of bridges – albeit with the main aim of enabling the countrywide deployment and mobility of the RSLAF itself.³¹

The RSLAF is presently 14,500 strong, including its maritime and aviation wings. The latter consists of one Mi24 helicopter gun ship that is conducting its first test flights after a ten-month down time for repairs; as well as two Mi8 transport helicopters supplied and operated by a private company under a contract with RSLAF. The maritime wing has one medium-sized, Chinese-built vessel, which is operational and is actively involved in maritime patrolling as a coast guard function.³²

To ensure renewal of the force, the RSLAF has a remit to enlist and train 300 soldiers and 100 officers per year. The first new civilian recruits are expected to enter the AFTC during December 2002. Recruitment policy and selection criteria are currently being developed by the MoD, but it is envisaged that some sort of 'pre-course' will be conducted in order to further screen applicants for a military career. Officer cadets will be identified during this phase, and then separated from the rest of the aspirant soldiers for the remainder of their training. Recruitment efforts will probably be directed towards all the major towns.³³

The focus will remain on the ongoing professional development of the RSLAF under IMATT. The overarching aim is to move beyond basic military skills training and to establish a professional military ethos within the force. This is realistically viewed as a long-term process. According to Colonel John Watson, it will take about ten years to establish the appropriate structures and mechanisms to support a professional force, and a similar length of time thereafter for a new military ethos to become firmly embedded in the organisational culture of the RSLAF.³⁴ However, the operational proficiency, if not the combat effectiveness, of the new force is already being tested rather severely.

Conclusion

The RSLAF has grown from a demoralised outfit that needed UN escorts to deploy, to an army of some 14,500. This is an army that may be considered too large relative to the population and economy of Sierra Leone, but no one is talking of downsizing the armed forces in the current political and security climate.³⁵ The UK has, as outlined above, provided invaluable support to this remarkable example of defence transformation, and IMATT is under no illusion that military reform is anywhere near complete.

The training of the army has, admittedly, been very hurried, with RSLAF essentially comprising 'recycled' soldiers from different military and political backgrounds, and who are yet to be tested in the field. While the planning for new recruit intakes is thus an encouraging move, the rate of 300 soldiers and 100 officers per year means that force renewal is a long-term project. Moreover, present members of RSLAF have no real barracks or permanent accommodation outside Freetown. In some areas, deployed RSLAF have built mud structures that are hardly able to survive the rains. If the RSLAF is to deploy on a permanent basis outside of the Freetown area, attention also needs to be paid to housing for the families and dependants of the soldiers.³⁶

Members of the force presently deployed to the border areas lack effective logistic support, which has opened the door to all sorts of unprofessional practices and activities, such as the erection of 'toll-roads' to extort money from travellers.³⁷ Some recent armed robberies have also been linked to RSLAF personnel using legal arms for heists.³⁸ The current IMATT emphasis – on the ongoing professional development of the RSLAF – is thus essential to the credibility of the armed forces of a nation so deeply traumatised by some of the most unprofessional military conduct in recent history. It is also key to the RSLAF passing the ultimate and perhaps inevitable test of military credibility – success in protecting the people of Sierra Leone from future armed aggression.

The most likely security and development scenario, as outlined by the UN, is one in which there is a large measure of stability across Sierra Leone, but where the SLP and RSLAF remain dependant on UNAMSIL to maintain border security and the diamond areas, and to respond to sporadic domestic disturbances. It sees the further extension of state authority, but with limited services provided, especially in the remote areas. There is likely to be continued dissatisfaction among elements of civil society, especially among the youth, over the modest progress towards delivering on the peace dividend promised by the SLPP during the election campaign. It is foreseen that resettlement will largely be completed but that land, housing and mining disputes in areas of return, together with the reluctance of some former combatants to return home, will impede the ongoing reintegration and reconciliation efforts. The situation in Liberia is likely to remain unstable and the lack of economic opportunities will continue to draw some ex-combatants to join the fighting factions in Liberia, as, no doubt, will the escalating civil conflict in Côte d'Ivoire, whilst refugees will continue to cross into Sierra Leone. International aid flows will continue but may not fully compensate for the decline in humanitarian aid, while the economy will probably grow at a moderate rate thanks to an increase in agricultural production.³⁹

Notes

- 1 J Prendergast, *Testimony On Domestic And Regional Prospects for Peace and Stability in Freetown*, International Crisis Group, Brussels, May 16, 2002.
- 2 See United Nations Security Council, *Fifteenth Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone*, S/2002/987, 5 September 2002, paragraph 8.
- 3 S Feil, Building Better Foundations: Security in Postconflict Reconstruction, *The Washington Quarterly*, Autumn 2002, p 99.

- 4 Ibid. p 99–100.
- 5 Ibid. p 98.
- 6 United Nations Security Council, op cit, paragraph 10.
- 7 J Prendergast, op cit.
- 8 BBC interview on Sierra Leone with General Tom Carew, 2 August 2002.
- 9 Sierra Leone: Troops beefed up on Liberian border, *Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN)*, Freetown, 26 June 2002.
- 10 International Crisis Group, *Liberia: The Key to Ending Regional Instability*, Freetown/Brussels, 24 April 2002. <<http://www.crisisweb.org/projects/showreport.cfm?reportid=627>>
- 11 West African Early Warning Network (WARN) Policy Brief: *Crisis in Côte d'Ivoire*, 31 October 2002. <www.wanep.org>
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Interview with Col Fred Hughton, Deputy Chief Military Observer, Freetown, 20 August 2002.
- 16 IRIN, 26 June 2002, op cit.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Interview with Deputy Chief Military Observer, 20 August 2002, op cit.
- 19 Interview with Colonel John Watson, IMATT, Freetown, 26 August 2002.
- 20 According to Article 22: "Non-Signatory Powers may adhere to the present Convention. The Power which desires to adhere notifies its intention in writing to the Netherlands Government, forwarding to it the act of adhesion, which shall be deposited in the archives of the said Government. This Government shall immediately forward to all the other Powers a duly certified copy of the notification as well as of the act of adhesion, mentioning the date on which it received the notification."
- 21 David Pratt, *Sierra Leone: Danger and Opportunity in a Regional Conflict*, Report to Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, 27 July 2001, p. 13. <http://www.david-pratt.ca/sleone_e.htm>
- 22 *Sierra Leone News*, 29 August 2001.
- 23 David Pratt, op cit. p. 13.

- 24 Interview with Colonel Kes Boyah, Commandant, Armed Forces Training Centre, Benguema, 25 October 2001.
- 25 Briefing by Commanding Officer, Armed Forces Training Centre and IMATT representative, Benguema, 27 August 2002.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Interview with Colonel John Watson, op cit.
- 29 Briefing at Benguema, 27 August 2002, op cit.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Interview with IMATT, 26 August 2002, op cit.
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Briefing at Benguema, 27 August 2002, op cit.
- 34 Interview with IMATT, 26 August 2002, op cit.
- 35 Interview with Mr Behrooz Sadry, Deputy Special Representative to the Secretary-General, Freetown, 21 August 2002.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 Ibid.
- 38 Interview with Mr. Gebremedhin Hagoss, Chief of Policy and Planning Section, Freetown, 21 August 2002.
- 39 United Nations, Interagency Appeal for Relief and Recovery, Sierra Leone 2003, 19 November 2002, p. 4. <<http://www.reliefweb.int/appeals/2003/files/sle03.pdf>>

CHAPTER 6

POLICING SIERRA LEONE

Sarah Meek

Introduction

The story of policing in Sierra Leone is not the most pleasant of tales. Distrusted and chased out of conflict zones during the war, the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) are challenged on multiple levels. They are simultaneously reasserting control for internal security in the country; building up a credible and effective police force, and re-engaging with local communities throughout Sierra Leone to build the trust of the local citizenry in the ability of the police to provide internal security.

The need for developing a policing methodology that would meet these challenges was recognised at an early stage by both the Sierra Leone government and the members of the United Nations and the Commonwealth assistance team. Some of the key challenges facing the SLP included early questions about the size and structure of the revitalised police force, the type of policing it should engage in, and how policing could be exerted in the country in the face of the widespread collapse of the criminal justice system.

Even prior to the outbreak of war in Sierra Leone in the early 1990s the police presence in Sierra Leone was weakening through corruption and systematic neglect by successive Freetown-focused governments. During the war years it became almost non-existent across the country, and its numbers dwindled as officers left, or were killed and not replaced. It has been estimated that 900 officers were killed during the conflict and that the overall reduction in the size of the Sierra Leone police was almost 30 per cent (from a high of 9,317 to a low of 6,600).¹ In January 1999 alone, more than 300 police officers were killed during fighting in Freetown.²

With evidence that the conflict was subsiding – although by no means over – the United Kingdom in 1999 seconded a seasoned police officer to Sierra Leone to become the Acting Inspector General of Police. By 2000, the Commonwealth Community Safety and Security Project (CCSSP) was established to provide training, support and advice to the police. Funded largely by

the United Kingdom, primarily through the Department for International Development (DFID), the CCSSP provided the bulk of training, management support and moral courage to the SLP from 2000–2002. The mission of the CCSSP is to ‘re-establish the Sierra Leone Police as an effective and accountable civilian police service’.³ The CCSSP has allocated £1.5m to provide training for over 9,000 officers, including providing some senior level training at the UK Bramshill Police Staff College. In addition, the UK DFID has provided £1.25m for a police communications network and £3.5m for vehicles for the SLP, including 155 Land Rovers, 158 motor cycles, 47 medium carriers, 24 large carriers, 10 ambulances and 10 cars.⁴

Through its civilian police (CivPol), UNAMSIL also provides support to the SLP and indeed helped it re-establish its presence in critical areas of the country, especially to the east in former RUF stronghold areas where the police were persecuted and killed by RUF members during the war.

All parties realise that however much support has been provided to the SLP to date, it remains insufficient, given the need that exists. The challenges facing the SLP are enormous, and, as one UNAMSIL official observed, just about the only positive aspect of the SLP was that at least it existed after the war, even if in name only – so at least there was a base to build on.⁵

Building a police force for the new Sierra Leone

The history of the SLP from the late 1960s to the 1990s is a litany of oppressive policing, nepotism and corruption that undermined public confidence in the police and made them a ready target for the RUF during the 1991–1999 war. With corruption and the appointment of friends and colleagues came the decline of the service – skills were not sought after and officers were illiterate.⁶ The police were not given uniforms, training or equipment. In November 1999 a constable was paid the equivalent of \$15 per month. The police were also given a heavily armed Internal Security Unit (now the Operational Service Division) under President Siaka Stevens. By 1999 Sierra Leone had the illusion of a police force but one that lacked the confidence of the public and the equipment, skills and training to provide security in the country.

In discussions on reform of the police, the government of Sierra Leone and its international partners all recognised that building a new police force in Sierra Leone would require a dramatic departure from old-style policing in the country. The SLP needed to become a transparent and accountable service

that was trusted by local citizens as much as by the national government. Thus the SLP was launched on a course of development with the “aim of creating a community police service, which is accountable to the people and is not an organ of the government”.⁷ This approach requires decentralising the police force to local level and bringing in the support of communities, including the paramount chiefs, youth organisations and local organisations, as well as members of the public. These aspirations are reflected in the Policing Charter launched by President Kabbah in 1998.

The key challenge in the intervening years has been matching rhetoric to reality. While the SLP officers are generally committed and enthusiastic about their work, they face unbelievable obstacles in transforming the Policing Charter into the face of the police in Sierra Leone.

The SLP is responsible for the internal security of Sierra Leone, while the RSLAF defends Sierra Leone’s borders. The police are unarmed (with the exception of the operational support division) and rely on building relations with local communities for intelligence gathering. By the end of 2001, the SLP were deployed around the country, even into former RUF stronghold areas where they had come under the greatest attack during the war.⁸ However, coverage remains sparse in some regions.⁹ There seems to be evidence that the police are increasingly relied upon by the local population, an important indication of growing support for the SLP in the country.

The three core functions of the police are currently

- public security;
- crime prevention; and
- joint patrols with UNAMSIL.¹⁰

Early on, however, it was recognised that the SLP on their own could not maintain law and order in the country at current capacity. Therefore one of the tasks of UNAMSIL has been to support the SLP in sustaining internal security, essentially buying time for the police to build capacity and resources.¹¹

The SLP has a current force size of 6,500 including 700 new officers that joined the force in 2001–2002. According to the 2002–2003 National Recovery Strategy, the intention is to bring the force up to pre-war strength – to 9,500. The intention is to take on 1,000 recruits in 2003 and to have reached full force size

by 2006. Importantly, the government has budgeted to absorb the cost of the new 1,000 recruits in 2003. Rather than relying on donor funds to pay for these posts, this sends an important signal that government is committed to building up the force itself. Of course additional funds are being sought to increase salaries and to pay for structural improvements, but out of the \$1,870,600 required for the SLP in 2003, \$1,095,00 has already been committed, leaving (in relative terms) a rather small shortfall of \$775,600.¹²

The police training school at Benguema, which was sacked twice by the RUF and suffered the destruction of some of its building by aerial bombing, can presently only accommodate a maximum of 200 trainees per intake. This is after substantial assistance from DFID in restoring destroyed buildings and facilities.

Before the war there were also three regional police training centres at the provincial capitals of Bo, Kenema and Makeni, and it is hoped that these will be revived if donor funding becomes available.

In order to meet its intake targets with reduced facilities, modifications have been made to the training curriculum. The current basic course has been reduced from six months to twelve weeks, followed by three months of field training. As part of the new CivPol concept the focus will be on training (including field training) and mentoring of the SLP, followed by closely observing progress on the ground wherever the SLP is deployed. Training support will ideally be at all levels of the police hierarchy, and include the strategic planning cycle.

Some of the top executive structure and some of the middle-ranking police managers are well trained, but this is largely 'book knowledge', rather than the type of proficiency that comes with experience in professional policing. Nevertheless it is estimated that 80 per cent of the SLP police officers should be able grasp the strategic plan and to work towards its implementation.

The 2002 strategic plan for the SLP was approved by the National Police Council in August 2002. The focus is on 'back-to-basics' training and specifically on the management of manpower and resources. The strategic plan also recognises the need to build up the practical experience of executive and middle managers.¹³

With these plans come challenges. In terms of structure, the SLP is top heavy, with more supervisors than operational members of the force. Many officers have been reassigned from traffic duty to criminal investigations – two func-

tions that arguably need different sets of skills. Importantly, as the police are better able to perform their function and start to arrest more people, there needs to be a place for arrested people to be detained, and a functioning criminal justice system to ensure that cases are processed. Currently the majority of prisons are derelict. The National Recovery Strategy states that “the lack of prison facilities, coupled with the slow pace of the extension of judicial coverage is seen as negatively impacting on the restoration of civil authority and on the maintenance of law and order in particular”.¹⁴ Notably, the financial requirements for the courts and prisons face funding shortfalls of 93 per cent and 66 per cent respectively.

For the moment however Sierra Leone seems to be benefiting from low crime rates, with very low rates of firearm-related crime. There is some violent crime associated with drug use, but the crimes on the increase are primarily assault-related. Domestic violence is a special concern and a special family support unit has been established within the SLP.

The police are also increasingly seeing evidence of rising drug use, which poses special threats to a large youth population and large numbers of unemployed ex-combatants. Prostitution is also a concern. The police are monitoring both situations.

In its current policing approach, the SLP is focused on working with communities and not engaging in aggressive behaviour or policing tactics. Among some observers, however, there is a concern that a more assertive approach is required, given Sierra Leone’s brutal war and its experience of extreme violence. Others say that Sierra Leone is by and large a peaceful society, and one that is so sick of war that any resurgence of violence will be limited. It is too early to gauge which assumption will be the correct one. The reality, as often happens, will probably lie somewhere in the middle.

Most people, including the police, believe that there are still illegal weapons in the country, either in arms caches or held by criminals. As part of the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration process, as well as the Community Arms Control and Destruction (CACD) programme, many weapons in Sierra Leone have been collected and destroyed. In order to respond to the needs of legal firearm owners, who also surrendered their weapons during the CACD programme, the SLP is establishing a new licensing bureau. This is in response to the fact that no licensing procedures have existed since 1996. The current proposal is that between 100 and 200 civilians will be issued firearms, but only for so-called ‘legitimate needs’.¹⁵ The SLP

is undertaking this task with the technical advice of the UN Development Programme (UNDP), and plans are currently being implemented to establish a database of legally held weapons. However, the police recognise that significant arms caches must remain in the country, and are engaging in an ongoing process of community development programmes in exchange for arms, also with the support of the UNDP.

UN civilian policing and the Commonwealth team

The re-emergence of a policing presence in Sierra Leone has benefited greatly from the high-level support of the United Nations, including UNAMSIL and UNDP, and the CCSSP, funded largely by the British government. External assistance, primarily through the Commonwealth, has enabled the police to acquire basic transportation and communication equipment, as well as uniforms and other key equipment. The British government has also sponsored the training of SLP officers at Bramshill Police Training College in England. Funding for the courses comes from the CCSSP programme. UNAMSIL, in the form of its peacekeepers, has been the principal partner at the deployment level, supporting the police on their arrival in areas that were very hostile to the SLP during the war, such as Kono district.

In addition, UN CivPol has been working with the CCSSP and the SLP to support the training of the SLP and the introduction of better management procedures, such as fleet management, duty rosters, investigation and case procedures. Additional functions include supporting the re-equipment of the police force and supporting the restructuring of the service – in particular its devolution to district level.

UN CivPol has 60 observers working in Sierra Leone. In the months leading up to the elections, this increased to 90, and the number has recently been boosted with the most recent UN Security Council resolution (S/RES/1436 (2002)) which will be discussed below. The function of UN CivPol is closely linked to the plans for the draw-down of peacekeeping troops in Sierra Leone. These troops have been working with the SLP to ensure that internal security and stability, especially in flash points such as Koidu, Tongo Fields, and the capital of Freetown, are maintained. Any plans for a draw-down will be commensurate with capacity of government and the SLP to maintain law and order.

The Commonwealth Community Safety and Security Project has also played a significant role in supporting the transition of the SLP. With the Acting

Inspector-General at the head of the organisation, the UK provides the most visible support to the police in Sierra Leone. However, the CCSSP has also assisted in the rebuilding of police stations, supplying of equipment and the installation of a communication network for the police.

Some observers feel that the CCSSP approach is not what is needed at present in Sierra Leone. They believe that it may have served a purpose earlier in the mission, but what is now needed is training that is drawn from countries that have a similar experience of policing and a greater understanding of the challenges faced in Sierra Leone. In their opinion, what Sierra Leone needs is greater participation of African civilian police, possibly drawn from Commonwealth countries such as Ghana, Kenya or South Africa. But there is no denying the experience and expertise of UN CivPol members, most of whom have at least ten years' experience and have often worked with the UN on other missions, in, for example, Haiti, East Timor and the Balkans.

The relationship between the CCSSP and the CivPol component of UNAMSIL has been somewhat unclear. The CivPol 'advise and assist' mandate was vague, and CivPol has only recently come to grips with the dynamics of policing in Sierra Leone. This is reflected in its new beefed-up role as training partner to the SLP, according to the September 2002 UN Security Council resolution.

The fifteenth report of UNAMSIL (S/2002/987) to the UN Security Council reported that the

... civilian police component of the mission, together with the Commonwealth team, could play an enhanced role in assisting in the recruitment of new Sierra Leone police cadets; devising and delivering a basic and field training programme for the new recruits; providing additional training to serving personnel; training Sierra Leonean trainers; providing advice on strategic and operational planning; and devising and supporting a deployment plan aimed at enhancing security in the areas to be vacated by UNAMSIL troops.¹⁶

These expanded responsibilities are designed to assist the SLP to accomplish the 'critical security benchmark for the drawdown of UNAMSIL', that includes an increase in training and recruitment of new officers, equipping the SLP, and building police stations across the country.¹⁷

Practically, the revised CivPol mandate means that with the UN's commitment to ensure a stable draw-down, the responsibility for ensuring the building of

the SLP has shifted from the CCSSP to UN CivPol. Although the partners will continue to co-ordinate activities, it appears that CCSSP will maintain the role of providing logistical assistance to the SLP. It will also provide specialised training, especially to the operations support division and other specialised branches of the SLP, while CivPol takes a greater responsibility for training and management.

United Nations CivPol will be increasing to 185 personnel. This will comprise 57 trainers assigned to the Hastings police training facility and the provinces, 85 trainers assigned to the 17 police divisions across the country, 15 trainers assigned to SLP headquarters, and 16 'mentors' at SLP headquarters to assist with strategic and operational planning. Ten officers, a commissioner and deputy commissioner will be assigned to UNAMSIL headquarters. The concept of operations for the expanded CivPol role is currently being developed.¹⁸

In many ways, the shift in mandate of UN CivPol is the clearest reflection of the shift of UNAMSIL away from peacekeeping to peace-building activities. By assuming greater ownership in developing the SLP, and linking its strengthening to the draw-down of UNAMSIL, the UN has announced its commitment to work on building Sierra Leone's future police force. Co-ordination between the SLP, UN CivPol and CCSSP will be critical, which is why the new structure will include a steering committee chaired by the Inspector General of Police.

Ongoing challenges and the way forward

With the successful elections of May 2002, Sierra Leone seems to have entered a period of relative calm and stability – at least for a country that only declared the war over in January 2002. With the visible presence and active support of UNAMSIL and the CSSP, the SLP have been able to focus on relearning the core principles of policing, and re-engaging with the communities they are to serve.

It would be wrong to suggest that there are not enormous problems facing the SLP. The danger is that by listing the challenges, the positive developments to date may be overlooked. However, it should not be suggested that these challenges be ignored.

First and foremost, and clearly stated by the UN Security Council in resolution 1436, is the need for further strengthening of the SLP to enable them to maintain security and stability independently. Hopefully strong international support

for Sierra Leone will be sustained until this is achieved. Much of Sierra Leone's resource wealth stretches across the middle of the country. The need to protect these areas and to keep them relatively safe and stable is paramount. With the best will in the world, the SLP is not yet at a stage where it can provide this service, and is the first to recognise this. In its draw-down plans, UNAMSIL identifies the central region and Freetown as the last areas from which it will withdraw, with good reason. If Sierra Leone loses its tenuous control over its mineral resources all the achievements of the past three years may be lost.

This is not a new challenge for the government or the police. Indeed, most of the challenges of policing in Sierra Leone are common to almost every country in the world. Briefly, these include:

- A clearer definition of responsibilities at border areas between SLP and RSLAF.
- Creating conditions that thwart corruption.
- Xenophobia towards foreigners, especially in the mining areas of the country.
- Reintegration of ex-combatants, and the possibility that they could become the drivers of economic and political crime and violence.
- Lack of a functioning criminal justice system to underpin the work of the police.
- A dearth of intelligence-gathering capacity so as to be proactive rather than reactive to threats.
- The establishment of the Special Court and the role of the SLP in supporting its work as a police force, for example detaining and arresting suspects.
- Smuggling of diamonds from areas where police presence is very weak.
- The explosion of street traders in Freetown and the need to regulate their activities.
- Traffic in Freetown and balancing the need for police to perform crime prevention and traffic duties – which wins out?

- Building the capacity of the police to enforce the law, and encouraging a culture of respect for the rule of law among the population.
- Vigilantism, especially in the resource-rich areas of the country.
- The growth of organised crime, especially smuggling and money laundering.
- The situation in Liberia also affects the SLP, especially the influx of refugees, some of whom move into the mining areas and either become involved in criminal activities, or victims of crime.

According to the Acting Inspector General, Keith Biddle, the largest challenge facing the SLP is personnel management – after years of neglect and the infiltration of corrupt practices, a culture of management needs to be rebuilt. This includes increasing funding for the police, as well as decentralising the force away from Freetown.¹⁹ In the current situation, given the critical shortage of prisons in the provinces, prisoners are often transported 14 to 16 hours by road to Freetown to be held and their cases heard.

To counteract the list of woes, however, Sierra Leone is also gaining an advantage in some areas. The expected violence has not emerged, and people have been surprised at how low crime levels are. In addition, while tensions may be simmering under the surface, discontent among non-integrated ex-combatants has not boiled over, nor have there been many serious incidents of attacks against ex-combatants. In fact, tolerance for ex-combatants is unexpectedly high among the general population. This has provided the police with a breathing space in which to focus on management and service delivery issues.

There is also no evidence that disaffected ex-combatants are re-arming. While many people believe that small arms have remained in the country, they have not appeared, except in rare cases of armed burglary, usually attributed to renegade RSALF members.

By engaging with communities, traditional rulers, and the district councils, the SLP should also start to meet its service delivery objectives and implement crime prevention measures. Commanders have started to work with communities to identify issues of concern and possible remedies, while local rulers have been consulted to work out systems of co-operation between traditional methods and 21st century policing.

Ideally the SLP should be able to focus on reducing the capacity of citizens to engage in violent crime, and to build the number and quality of its personnel.

There are still key questions about what type of policing Sierra Leone needs. With the shifting of responsibilities between the CCSSP and UN CivPol there will be an evaluation of the SLP's needs, and the training that is best needed to achieve these. The issue of maintaining an unarmed police force, in a country with such a violent past, remains. Although financial implications play some part, there is also a concern about the image that an armed police would have in a country that has seen so much violence. Also, until police officers have demonstrable capacity to retain control over their personal weapons, there seems little sense in increasing the pool of weapons in the country.

Building a police force cannot be achieved in a few months, or arguably even in a few years. In the words of UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, "the international community must stay the course, provide the resources needed to complete the re-integration of ex-combatants, enhance the capacity of the Sierra Leone police ... and support the transition to peace-building, and thereby grasp the success that is within reach."²⁰

Notes

- 1 M Malan, P Rakate, A McIntyre, (eds), *Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone: UNAMSIL hits the home straight*, Institute for Security Studies (ISS) Monograph no 68, January 2002, p 65.
- 2 K Biddle, *Conflict, Security and Development Group Bulletin*, Issue 5, March – April 2000, pp 1–4.
- 3 Clare Short, response to question from John Barrett, UK Parliament, 26 November 2002, <www.parliament.the-stationeryoffice.co.uk/pa/cm200203/cmhansrd/cm021126/text/21126w14.htm>
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Interview with Superintendent F Muhoro, Deputy Civilian Police Commissioner, Freetown, 22 August 2002.
- 6 K Biddle, op cit, p 1.
- 7 Ibid, p 2.
- 8 C Ero, Sierra Leone: addressing regional dynamics, *Conflict, Security and Development Group Bulletin*, Issue 13, October – November 2001, p 4.

- 9 *National Recovery Strategy* (NRS), Sierra Leone 2002–2003, p 21.
- 10 Interview with Brima Kamara, Acting Inspector-General of Police, Freetown, 26 August 2002.
- 11 Interview with Muhoro, Freetown, 22 August 2002.
- 12 *National Recovery Strategy* (NRS), op cit, p 22.
- 13 Interview with Muhoro, op cit.
- 14 *NRS*, op cit, p 23.
- 15 Kamara, op cit.
- 16 United Nations Security Council, *Fifteenth Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, S/2002/987*, 5 September 2002, para. 33.
- 17 Ibid, para. 16–17.
- 18 Ibid., para. 34.
- 19 P Anderson, Interview with Police Inspector-General Keith Biddle, *Sierra Leone Web*, 17 June 2001, <www.sierra-leone.org/feature061701.html>
- 20 S/2002/987, op cit, para. 56.

CHAPTER 7

EXTENSION OF GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY AND NATIONAL RECOVERY

Mark Malan and Sarah Meek

Introduction

Sierra Leone is blessed with a wide variety of natural and human resources, which should have underpinned the sustainable development of the country. Despite the wealth of natural resources, poverty is endemic in Sierra Leone, and the human development and social indicators are among the worst in the world. Some 85 per cent of the population are estimated to be living in extreme poverty, the causes of which are many and varied, though the most salient thereof are the interrelated factors of decades of misgovernment, limited access to economic opportunities because of social exclusion and institutional constraints, and the past eleven years of conflict. The latter resulted not only in loss of life and limb, widespread poverty and destroyed infrastructure, but also in a severe degradation of national capacity for governance and recovery.

According to the United Nations Secretary-General, the gradual and phased draw-down of UNAMSIL will provide the government of Sierra Leone the opportunity to build its capacity and mobilise the resources needed to address not only the consequences of the war, but also its root causes. At the same time, the government will have to face the twin challenges of addressing the remaining emergency relief needs of the population, and of rebuilding the economy.¹

The essential determinant of peace mission success is, arguably, the extent to which a coherent, legitimate government exists or can be created. Such a government is the key to the provision of security, justice, economic and social functions, as well as to channelling the will and resources of the indigenous population and the concerned elements of the international community.² The first challenge for UNAMSIL is obviously to help ensure that the government indeed develops the ability to deliver the security, economic, social, political and justice goods that the public demands, and it is this aspect that preoccupies the present phase of the mission's engagement. However, UNAMSIL, the UN, and interested parties in the broader international community, are dealing with

profound issues of governance, with underlying challenges that are not amenable to quick solutions – such as endemic poverty. Moreover, there is a great disparity in the means available for dealing with the short-term security issues and the long-term recovery challenges.³

Economic recovery

During 2000 the Sierra Leone economy grew at a rate of 3.8 per cent, compared to an 8.1 per cent contraction in 1999. By 2002 economic growth reached an impressive six per cent. Inflation has also improved, with a 2.7 per cent decline in prices in 2000 compared to a nearly 37 per cent increase the year before. According to the World Bank the country experienced zero per cent inflation in 2002. Enhanced government control over the diamond trade undoubtedly contributed to the signs of economic upturn.

On 21 September 2001 the International Monetary Fund (IMF) announced that it had approved a three-year, \$169m loan, to Sierra Leone to assist with economic recovery. The loan is to be used to support a poverty reduction strategy that was designed with the support of the IMF and the World Bank. The programme aims to increase economic growth to rates of six to seven per cent annually. Substantial as this assistance may seem, it falls far short of the present annual budget of \$700m for UNAMSIL – the bulk of which is spent on reimbursements for the troop contributing countries.

While the World Bank is custodian of a multi-donor trust fund for Sierra Leone, and has approved a substantial transitional assistance programme for the country, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been present in Sierra Leone for some 40 years. For the next 18 months the UNDP will focus on the following three key areas of development:

- direct support to the National Recovery Strategy (including support for reintegration);
- resuscitation of governance structures; and
- poverty reduction.⁴

In terms of governance, the immediate challenge is to decentralise administration through the resurrection of local government. This will entail the staging of district council elections and the extension of public service to all districts. The judiciary and the police are obviously a high priority.

The UNDP is providing policy level support for poverty reduction, among others through the development of a paper outlining the UN strategy to support national recovery and peace-building over the years 2003 to 2007. One of the major challenges involves the creation of employment opportunities in a country where only 20 per cent of the economically active population are wage employed (with far more than this trying desperately to make a living in the informal sector). Increases in public sector employment will only be marginal, so any meaningful increase in employment will depend on economic growth that is led by private sector investment (especially labour-intensive enterprises).

The revival and expansion of the private sector is easier said than done, and the UNDP recognises that this requires a secure environment, economic stability, and investor protection. This is somewhat of a catch 22 situation, as the absence of gainful employment and income opportunities is itself a threat to the very stability that is a prerequisite for investment. As it will take some years to foster the conditions for sustained, long-term investment, UNDP has prioritised interim assistance in several areas that will hopefully stimulate sufficient productive economic activity to absorb at least some of the labour force. These include:

- The provision of micro credit and the promotion of vocational and technical skills training for self-employment;
- Labour-intensive public works programmes for upgrading and extending the social and economic infrastructure, especially in the rural areas; and
- Support for small farmers to enable them to achieve food security and to gain a cash income as soon as possible.

It is foreseen that humanitarian aid will taper off towards the end of 2002 (depending of course on the security situation on the Liberian border), and will have to be replaced by development aid. Regarding the conditionality of such aid, perceptions of corruption remain important. However, Sierra Leone has had a good rating on its macro-economic policy over the past three years, and the country's human rights record is now satisfactory.⁵

The largest bilateral donor to Sierra Leone, the United Kingdom, is supporting an extensive programme, including reconstruction of war-damaged areas, reintegration of former combatants, training and strengthening of the police and armed forces, judicial reform, and a wide-ranging programme of governance. An Infrastructure Reconstruction Programme (SLIRP) is providing support to the re-establishment of government services in newly accessible parts

of the country by building or rehabilitating key infrastructure. In addition, a Media Development Project (MDP) is contributing to the enhancement of media efficiency and effectiveness; and a Law Development Project (LDP) is focusing on the restoration and strengthening of the legal institutional framework, including an update of the country's legal code.

On 13 November 2002 the UK announced that it would continue to stand by Sierra Leone and provide bilateral support in a partnership based on a commitment by Sierra Leone to the building of a competent, transparent and open modern state. The government of Sierra Leone would be required to act in areas such as public administration reform, corruption, financial management, and security reforms. The UK committed itself to a ten-year programme of support, with a firm agreement to provide £120m worth of assistance over the next three years.

The agreement, known as a Poverty Reduction Framework Arrangement (PRFA) includes benchmarks to be achieved by both governments, initially for 2003. It also provides for direct support to Sierra Leone's government budget to be linked to progress against key reform issues. The money will come from a combination of bilateral funds from the Department for International Development (DFID) budget, and from the Africa Conflict Reduction Pool, which is collectively funded and managed by DFID, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Ministry of Defence.⁶

The United States of America has also provided significant support to Sierra Leone in addressing humanitarian needs, as well as in providing transitional assistance with the elections, the reintegration of those affected by the war, and economic reconstruction at community level.

In the past two years, the US has devoted approximately \$70m per year to these efforts, which have included:

- Over \$50m in food assistance.
- Over \$20m in disaster response, such as emergency shelter, rehabilitation of medical clinics, and distribution of seeds and tools to vulnerable communities.
- Providing ex-combatants and war-affected youth throughout Sierra Leone with life skills training, including instruction in health practices, conflict management, basic farming techniques, and self-awareness.

- Helping communities heal themselves through an integrated package of assistance that includes psycho-social counselling, trade skills training, community rehabilitation, and micro-credit.
- Logistic and technical support to the May 2002 elections.
- Assistance to the government and to diamond-producing communities with the aim to improve the management of their diamond resources.

In support of Sierra Leone's efforts to encourage the private sector, US ambassador Peter Chaveas announced in Paris that Sierra Leone is now fully eligible to receive benefits under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). The Act provides duty-free access to US markets for African countries that meet its criteria. While Chaveas announced that the United States fully intends to remain engaged in Sierra Leone and assist with the country's economic and social redevelopment, he added that "due to the nature of our budget process, we are unable to project resource levels for 2003 and beyond".⁷

During the November 2002 Sierra Leone Consultative Group Meeting in Paris, France, other countries pledged a total of \$650m over the next four years in support of Sierra Leone's peace-building efforts. The major donors who made pledges at the meeting include, in addition to the UK, the European Commission, Germany, the UN, World Bank, African Development Bank and the Islamic Development Bank.

Unfortunately, Sierra Leone's reputation among some potential investors remains that of an unstable country that is both costly and risky to operate in. Many countries still issue advisories for travel to the country, suggesting that only 'essential business travel' should be undertaken. Investors are cautious about moving into the country due to the severe damage to infrastructure, and due to difficulties faced by investors who have made long-term commitments to Sierra Leone yet experience great trouble in obtaining fair treatment from government, which would allow them to operate profitably.⁸

Prior to 1995, Sierra Leone was among the world's most important producers of rutile. Sierra Rutile Limited (SRL) was the largest private sector employer and one of the government's most important revenue sources. Between 1990 and 1995, prior to its closure because of war, the mine contributed about 90 per cent of the country's export revenue, and employed more than 1,800 Sierra Leoneans.⁹

Working with external donors such as the US, the government of Sierra Leone is engaged in negotiations to re-open the mine by 2003, with production resuming by 2004. The re-launching of SRL under new ownership will have a very positive direct impact on the economy and will convey the message that major investors have confidence in Sierra Leone.

Extension of government to the interior

The challenge of re-establishing government control in the interior is a fundamental one, against the background of a vacuum in state administration that has existed since the abolishment of the district councils in 1972. On top of this, many districts, including Kailahun, Kono and Magburaka, have been hostile towards the central government since the start of the war. Unlike insurgent movements elsewhere in Africa, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) did little to establish alternate government structures. In some places, such as Port Loko (which was a hot spot during the war), the government of Sierra Leone and the Civil Defence Force (CDF) eventually won out and established a form of control over the district. On the other hand, places such as Rogberi Junction changed hands between ten and fifteen times during the course of the war, and the town has been completely destroyed. But few government structures have survived intact, even in places where the government was in control.¹⁰ The government is attempting to deploy officials to all the districts, but this is a difficult undertaking given the extreme paucity of accommodation and facilities for officials in many of the districts.

More positively, military observers in the towns of Port Loko, Moyamba and Mile 91 (western Sierra Leone), have reported calm, stability, and ongoing economic activity within the local communities. In Port Loko, trading activities have returned to normal in the area of the country's northern border with Guinea. Demobilised ex-combatants have become actively engaged in farming and fishing activities, and good progress has been made in extending government authority in the area.¹¹

The Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) and the police have been deployed in these areas. They are maintaining good working relationships with the local population and are also participating in community-based projects in the neighbouring district of Kambia.

The challenges of turning a Freetown-focused government towards its outlying areas is complicated by a poor concept of public administration and the

process of governing a country where road travel reduces short distances to mammoth journeys, and telecommunications and utility infrastructure remains largely non-existent outside Freetown. Additional challenges are financial – it is more expensive to run a decentralised government that reaches across the country – and motivational. Moreover, it has been noted that a great part of the Sierra Leone cabinet is far older than the national demographic average (closer to 60 than 25), and that a lack of dynamism among authorities could pose a greater challenge to governance than corruption.¹²

The plans currently on the table for re-establishing civil authority are being implemented. During 2002 significant progress was made with the assistance of UNAMSIL and UNDP to consolidate state authority throughout the country. Ninety-six paramount chiefs or regent chiefs returned to their chiefdoms; over 50 district officials returned to the districts; and magistrates' courts have started to function in Port Loko, Kenema, Bo, Makeni, and Western Area. However, many officials at the district level lack the most basic logistical support to discharge their functions effectively. The return of district officials to deal with key sectors such as health, water, sanitation, education, land and housing is hampered by very poor living conditions and the absence of office facilities.¹³

Elections have been highlighted as an important step in the process of re-establishing local officials chosen by the local communities. The process has started with elections for 63 paramount chieftain positions that were vacated during the war due to flight or death of the incumbents, positions that are currently occupied by regent chiefs. These elections are the first chieftaincy elections since 1992 and at the time of writing were to take place between December 2002 and January 2003. The first round of elections, held in Dasse Chiefdom in the south of the country on 2 December 2002, is "a sign of the restoration of civil authority ... and is symbolic of the return of normalcy".¹⁴ At the completion of the elections, the full number of 149 chieftaincies will be reached in Sierra Leone.

Paramount chiefs are an important part of governance in Sierra Leone, especially in the collection and management of taxes. The government has reiterated its commitment to upholding the sanctity and dignity of the paramount chieftain tradition as a cornerstone of its local government policy and one of the bases of its decentralisation strategy. A judicious and transparent mechanism as to how paramount chiefs are elected and installed in the first place is therefore considered to be very crucial to the implementation of local government policies and strategies. Paramount chiefs are elected for life by chiefdom councillors, who in turn are elected by the taxpayers of each chiefdom (see below).

The position of the government is not to create new ruling houses but to continue with established ruling houses that were in existence at independence in 1961. The question as to which candidates are eligible, is guided by the following norms:

- Any person born in wedlock to a rightful claimant, in a ruling house.
- A person who may be born outside wedlock but with direct paternal lineage to a rightful claimant in a ruling house.
- There shall be no room for adopted children as claimants to paramount chieftaincy.
- In establishing a legitimate claim to paramount chieftaincy the onus shall rest on the claimant to establish his eligibility to the satisfaction of the chieftaindom councillors.

As far as the councillors' lists are concerned, the known rule is that there shall be twenty taxpayers per councillor. The number of councillors in every chieftaindom shall correspond with the total number of taxpayers. For instance, where there are nine hundred councillors in a given chieftaindom, the corresponding number of taxpayers in such chieftaindom shall be estimated to be eighteen thousand. Fractions shall be rounded to the nearest whole of twenty. In the compilation of councillors' lists, any attempt to inflate the number of taxpayers in order to suit the scheme of things and thereby create an artificial increase in the number of councillors, shall be considered to be a fraud and grounds for disqualification.¹⁵

The extension of authority includes the re-establishment of district administration and district councils. To a large degree, district administration has been re-instated, with senior district officers in place and many representatives of line ministries (e.g. health and education) having returned. However, district councils still have some way to go. District councils were suspended in 1972 and only re-established in 2000. Elections are being planned for the first half of 2003 – the first to be held for 30 years.¹⁶ Once elected, district councils will have the powers and funds for local governance. The infrastructure at district level in Sierra Leone is almost non-existent in many places. While numerous police stations and prisons are under construction, district councils and magistrates courts also need to be built across the country. District recovery committees have been established. They include representatives of the paramount chiefs, the Sierra Leone Police (SLP), ex-combatants, property owners, and other community stakeholders. In contrast to the lack of cohesion of the dis-

tract governance structures, the RUF structures are still intact in many areas, posing a clear and immediate challenge for the new district councillors.¹⁷

In Kono district, for example, there is a district recovery committee that is working with the National Commission for Social Affairs (NACSA) to rebuild the district. Its current activities include:

- Rehabilitating schools and the district office;
- Rebuilding the Ministry of Education offices;
- Constructing or rebuilding courts and prisons;
- Building local market, health centres and water wells;
- Improving the water supply system; and
- Restoring electricity generation and supply to communities.

This list of work could be replicated for each of Sierra Leone's districts, to varying degrees. It represents an enormous undertaking and will rely on sustained donor support for many years, not only to build the infrastructure but, more importantly, to ensure that the procedures for governing at the district and local levels are reactivated.

Another challenge for the district councils is that large numbers of people are still resettling across Sierra Leone, stretching the ability of the councils to provide assistance to their populations. However, UNAMSIL has been using its civic affairs officers to provide support to the government of Sierra Leone at district level. These officers are working on administration, health, education, and with the private sector (e.g. banks). In addition, the civic affairs officers play an important role as ombudsmen, mediating between disputants on issues ranging from resettlement to confrontations between ex-combatants and paramount chiefs.

Dealing with corruption

Corruption is endemic in most post-conflict societies. Weak institutional structures, non-ethical behavioural patterns exacerbated by war, a semi-lawless environment, and a critical shortage of paying jobs, all combine to create a

ripe environment for corruption. The infusion of new money from the peacekeepers and a host of other external agencies serve to heighten the temptation and the stakes involved in corrupt practices. However, widespread post-conflict corruption will threaten economic reconstruction and jeopardise the country's political stability and prospects for longer-term peace. This is because corruption siphons money away from essential government services, scares off investment and inhibits development, and, ultimately, destroys much-needed confidence in the post-conflict political order.¹⁸

The issue of corruption, which is writ so large in recent analyses of barriers to good governance and recovery in Sierra Leone, is one that is spoken about openly by Sierra Leoneans from all walks of life. President Kabbah himself addressed the issue head-on in his inaugural speech after being returned to the presidency in May 2002. This is a positive sign – although petty corruption is rife throughout the officialdom, it was grand corruption that brought the house down.¹⁹

According to Dowden, corruption is still stronger than law in Sierra Leone – a root cause of the conflict that cannot be allowed to persist if there is to be a consolidation of peace:

However perverted and brutal the RUF became, its appeal for justice for the urban and rural poor struck a chord among thousands of half-literate, unemployable young people. Junior army officers and young soldiers who fought against the rebels found themselves to be much like their adversaries. Their common enemy was the Freetown elite – a mix of Sierra Leonean politico-entrepreneurs and bureaucrats, Lebanese businessmen and other foreigners. To the rebels, Freetown was the end of a pipe sucking out the wealth of this well-endowed country and sending it overseas, leaving millions living in Iron Age conditions.²⁰

Reducing the level of corruption in government is therefore a fundamental aspect of consolidating peace. Donors have responded to the challenge by assisting in the development of mechanisms to ensure greater government accountability. For example, the European Union has assisted the ministry of finance with establishing mechanisms to control revenue income and expenditure. New accounting systems for salaries and budgets have reduced the number of 'ghost' civil servants, and have narrowed down opportunities for padding budgets.²¹

The United Kingdom's Department for International Development has addressed the issue of high-level corruption by funding an anti-corruption commission made up of Sierra Leonean officials and British specialists. Established under the Anti-

Corruption Act of 3 February 2000, with extensive powers of search and arrest, the commission has collected clear evidence of deep corruption among civil servants and ministers. Working with British intelligence, it has tracked down bank accounts and secret correspondence, and gathered information that would otherwise have been well hidden.²² However, the commission lacks the power to prosecute, and in late 2001 members of the commission expressed frustration with government interference in its investigations.²³

In February 2002 the UK Secretary of State for International Development, Clare Short, responded by stating that Britain's commitment to Sierra Leone is dependent on ending corruption. During a speech in Freetown she received enthusiastic applause from civil society for stating up-front that: "the tradition of people seeking political office to line their own pockets and that of their family, rather than to improve the life of their country, is still widespread and endangers the future. This tradition of corruption must be brought to an end."²⁴

This warning should have carried some weight, in view of the fact that the UK has spent more than £150m on aid for Sierra Leone in the past ten years, and several million more on military assistance.²⁵ While the British and other donors may be providing half his government's budget, the International Crisis Group believes that President Kabbah, with his 70 per cent electoral majority, may not so easily be pressured into tackling the corruption issue. The International Crisis Group asserts that the anti-corruption commission continues to be used as a political tool by the president's inner circle, and see Kabbah's overtures to Libya as a possible attempt to diversify sources of financial support should the West impose too stringent conditions.²⁶

The commitment to establish transparent and effective governance should not, however, rest with donors alone. It means very little if there is insufficient public participation to ensure that government programmes respond to the will and needs of the people and remain channelled towards public, rather than private, ends. On the other hand, participation can produce little if government remains simply incapable of delivering the basic goods to the population, and it is probably for this reason that the screws have not been tightened on the government.

Control over the diamond industry

Until now, the country's natural wealth has been the preserve of warlords, foreign traders and mercenaries. The diamond areas of eastern Sierra Leone have historically hosted a multi-ethnic population, including Liberians, Fulani

and Mandingo traders, and Lebanese merchants. For example, an estimated 80 per cent of the residents of Kono district are illegal immigrants with false passports.²⁷ The level of social cohesion, localised power structures and trade and smuggling networks will have a deep impact on the government's influence in the diamond areas, and the youthful population remains among the most vulnerable and potentially volatile in future political configurations. The prolonged lack of social services such as health and education are a daunting obstacle to achieving any degree of social stability.

When diamonds were discovered in Kono district in 1930, Lebanese traders set up offices two years before the establishment of a colonial district office. The diamond industry subsequently became the linchpin of Lebanese business interests and a range of underground political activities.²⁸ In Kenema, almost all gem buyers' billboards lining the high street bear Lebanese names. In fact, 102 out of the 143 diamond buying shops are owned by Lebanese traders; and in Bo 65 out of a hundred shops are Lebanese-owned. Oddly enough, only 18 Lebanese nationals in Sierra Leone hold official dealer licenses.²⁹

For years, miners or traders have travelled to Kenema to sell rough diamonds for a fraction of their eventual value in Antwerp or Tel Aviv. The trade has made a few people very wealthy, and has opened a gaping divide between the dirt-poor majority and a super-rich elite able to send children to school in Britain or the United States. Redressing that inequality became a ready rallying cry for Foday Sankoh and his fighters, but they soon became part of the problem. Armed gangs from both government and rebel militia were alternately fighting and mining side by side in a frantic search for gems that could be easily sold and exported.³⁰

Past efforts by government at redressing the situation have always been woefully inadequate. For example, policies included restricting alluvial mining and agents' licenses to Sierra Leone nationals, and the banning of non-nationals from travelling to mining areas. However, many non-indigenous Sierra Leoneans have acquired Sierra Leone passports that allow them to participate directly in mineral extraction and trade.³¹

A different kind of inequality is created by the mining of diamonds from kimberlite pipes, which is beyond the technological means of local entrepreneurs, and is a part of the industry that became dormant during the latter years of the war. Because of the capital-intensive nature of this type of mining, it remains the preserve of foreign companies.

On 9 August 2001 the government announced that the Canadian-registered company, DiamondWorks Ltd. (which was forced by the fighting to abandon its Kono operation in 1997) would resume diamond mining in Kono with at least a \$40m investment. The company has a 60 per cent stake in a 25-year renewable lease, known as Koidu Property, that grants the company exclusive rights to carry out exploration and mining activities in respect of diamonds, gold and associated minerals. The main part of the DiamondWorks concession in Koidu involves two kimberlite pipes. The government expects the annual output from kimberlite mining to be about 300,000 carats, worth well over \$30m.³² DiamondWorks is expected to resume production in 2003, once it has completed repairs to the badly damaged Koidu site and equipment. The company has promised that the local community will benefit from its operations, and that it will employ a substantial number of people, including a 'fair number' of Sierra Leone citizens.

Another Canadian-registered company, Rex Diamond Mining Company, has announced its return to operations in Sierra Leone. Rex acquired titles (which are due to expire in 2019) to properties in Tongo Field and Zimmi from the government in 1994. After some disputes in 1999 and 2002 about the validity of these leases, Rex announced in October 2002 that the issues had been resolved, and that it would soon begin with mining operations in Zimmi.³³

According to a DFID study, diamond output is estimated to increase to between 750,000 and one million carats a year within the next four or five years, with the value of exports also rising from approximately \$50m (for 2002) to around \$180m by 2006. Importantly, these estimates are contingent upon significant gains in the fight against corruption within the industry and the officialdom.³⁴ These figures are actually quite conservative, compared to a 2001 government-estimated production level of \$70m per year before the re-opening of the kimberlite mines was factored into the equation.³⁵ But the benefits for local communities from both types of mining depends largely on the government's ability to tax the product and redistribute the income derived to the people of Sierra Leone – especially those living in the diamond producing areas.

Taxation, licences and community development

While the total value of registered diamond exports was US\$4.2m for June 2002, and US\$4.9m for July 2002, this generated only US\$137,000 in revenue for the government, representing 0.75% of the total value of exports.

The total export duty on diamonds from Sierra Leone is a surprisingly low three per cent of the value of exports, and is calculated as follows:

- 0.75% to the government as a general tax;
- 0.75% for gold and diamond evaluation fees;
- 0.75% for the Mining Community Development Fund;
- 0.4% to the DCI (an independent evaluator from the UK); and
- 0.35% for monitoring fees (for government inspectors).³⁶

The 0.35% for monitoring reflects a dearth of trained mines monitors and wardens employed by the Ministry of Mineral Resources (78 at present, compared to a pre-war high of 108). Moreover, these wardens and monitors are poorly paid, which provides a strong incentive for corruption.³⁷

Revenue from the 0.75% tax for the Mining Community Development Fund is distributed among the chiefdoms of the mining areas in proportion to the number of mining licenses held in each chiefdom. Although some \$195,000 had been distributed in this manner by the end of 2001, little has been used for the benefit of the various communities. Much of the money has been mis-managed or embezzled by chiefs who were displaced during the war and have little attachment to their people.³⁸

The low overall level of taxation, though bemoaned by many Sierra Leoneans, is apparently not unique to the country. Because of the ease with which diamonds can be smuggled, tax increases throughout the diamond-producing world have been accompanied by an increase in smuggling. The three per cent tax level is therefore more or less the norm for rough diamond exporting countries.³⁹

Commenting on the poor revenue accruing to government from diamond exports, versus the control and security challenges presented by the diamond industry, an official from the president's office ventured that if it were up to him, he would close all the diamond fields. On reflection however, he noted that this was not really an option, as "... new alluvial diamond deposits are being found all over the country – everybody's digging...".⁴⁰ The alternative then offered was for the government itself to buy the total monthly diamond production. This would require an outlay of some \$5m, but would generate

about ten per cent return in profit – a great deal more than the present 0.75% income to the government coffers.⁴¹ Some governments of diamond-producing countries, such as Botswana, do indeed participate financially in the mining and marketing of diamonds – some with stakes as high as 50 per cent.⁴²

Although there are more than a hundred licensed diamond dealers in Sierra Leone, there are only 39 licensed exporters – nine of whom are non-Sierra Leoneans. Indigenous exporters accounted for only eight per cent of total exports in 2001. As diamond exporting requires a substantial initial capital outlay, such poor performance is perhaps to be expected in a situation where the banks are loathe to lend money to indigenous Sierra Leoneans.⁴³ However, it is not clear who the exact beneficiaries are of the profits made by the 30 local licensees, as the licensing fee structure provides an incentive for local partnerships or the engagement of front-men. Expatriates have to pay \$20,000 per year for their licences, whilst the fee for locals is only \$5,000 per annum. It is thus fairly commonplace for expatriates to acquire export licences under the name of their drivers or other local contacts – a practice to which “everyone turns a blind eye”.⁴⁴

The simple fact is that few locals can afford mining licenses – one of the most salient grievances articulated by unemployed youth. In Kono, where dislocation was almost total, and where most chiefs have little standing amongst returnees, the Movement of Concerned Kono Youths (MOCKY), formed in 1999, has emerged as a force to be reckoned with. Disgusted by government apathy in the face of the destruction suffered by the district, MOCKY wants all foreigners, particularly Lebanese, out of the district. While maligned (and feared) by many in Freetown, MOCKY is actually generally supportive of government, except on the issues of mining permits, access of immigrants to mineral wealth, and the lack of policies and programmes which would result in money being ploughed back into the Kono community.⁴⁵

According to MOCKY, their movement is feared by local chiefs because they are part and parcel of the bad governance that has led to the ruin of the town of Koidu and the district of Kono – an area that should rightly be the ‘bread basket’ of Sierra Leone. They are now exerting pressure on government to rehabilitate the power supply, the hospital, schools and other essential public services that were destroyed.

The movement points out that mining has been going on for 70 years, based on agreements with big companies such as Branch Energy, but with no consultation with the local people who face the negative environmental impact of

kimberlite mining. They are also sceptical of DiamondWorks's professed sense of social responsibility, claiming that the company has been recruiting workers in Freetown, and not from Kono. Thus MOCKY feels strongly that discussions on mining and mineral concessions must be conducted in Freetown and Koidu.⁴⁶

The disappointingly limited benefits of diamond mining for community development is, of course, greatly exacerbated by the illegal trade in diamonds, and the loss of potential government revenue from this quarter. Illicit diamonds are still being exported via places such as Banjul, Conakry and Monrovia, with smugglers able to bribe officials, and not deterred by penalties that are considered not nearly harsh enough.⁴⁷ The UN team of experts that visited Sierra Leone in September 2000 estimated the volume of the illicit diamond trade between \$25–\$125m a year. Sierra Leone officials estimate that up to 60 per cent of diamond production is still being smuggled out of the country, mainly to Guinea and The Gambia.

As United States Ambassador Chaveas noted at the Paris consultative meeting in November 2002:

The system for tracking stones from the time they are mined to the time they are exported is inadequate. This is due, in part, to the current quality of monitoring and enforcement. There is no reliable means to track leakages from the system (i.e., smuggling) or illegal entries (e.g., stones smuggled into Sierra Leone from Liberia). Smuggling cheats the government and communities of their allocations of export taxes and puts the stones into the hands of actors who may have illicit motives, such as money laundering, tax evasion, or arming of criminal or terrorist groups.⁴⁸

Certification

Given the history and nature of the diamond industry in Sierra Leone, the fragility of the government, and its inability to effectively police the diamond producing areas, there is some hope that regulation, through the type of demand-side controls evolving from the 'Kimberley Process',⁴⁹ will prove more effective than short-term attempts to impose strict 'supply-side' controls.

A Diamond Certification Regime was instituted for Sierra Leone in September 2000, about four months after UN Security Council resolution 1306 placed a

ban on Sierra Leone diamond exports, pending the development of a certification system.⁵⁰ Having been criticised for ignoring the problem of conflict diamonds, the Belgian Diamond High Council assisted the Sierra Leone government in creating a rather detailed and sophisticated regime that provided *inter alia* for the appointment of an independent valuator in addition to the Sierra Leonean diamond evaluator. Under the scheme, all diamonds exported have to be accompanied by a certificate of origin, signed by officials of the mineral resources ministry and the central bank.

Since the implementation of the certification system, there has been a dramatic increase in official diamond exports. In 1999, official exports amounted to a total of \$1.3m. This figure jumped to \$25.9m (for 210,675 carats) for the period from October 2000 to September 2001. The figure of \$26m for the period January to December 2001 is 20 times the amount exported in 1999. The 2001 figure of 220,000 carats is the highest export volume the country had seen since 1996. Present projections are towards 300,000 carats in the near future, a level last seen in 1992 at the beginning of the war.⁵¹

Nevertheless, this figure is still considered to be below the country's export potential. The government therefore hopes that globalisation of the certification system will lead to a corresponding dramatic reduction in smuggling, and a corresponding increase in exports. Some progress was made in this direction on 4 November 2002, when a total of 52 countries agreed in Interlaken, Switzerland, to adopt an international certification scheme designed to stop the flow of conflict diamonds into world markets.⁵²

The implementation of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme will mean that all rough diamonds passing through or into a participating country must be transported in a sealed container and labelled with a certificate of origin. Under the scheme, chaired by South Africa, diamond-producing countries are obliged to issue certificates proving that gems come from legitimate mines. Exporting countries that fail to respect the deal would be prevented from selling diamonds and could face international sanctions. According to the South African minerals and energy department: "The certification process will impact on everyone who has something to do with diamonds. The new system is probably one of the most comprehensive attempts to regulate the trade in diamonds and, hopefully, [will stem] the trade in illegal stones."⁵³

The certification was officially launched on 1 January 2003. The countries that have not implemented the scheme will be excluded from the international diamond trade. However, only thirty-five countries signed the Kimberley

Agreement on 5 November. Six countries said they were not in a position to implement the scheme at this time. Significantly, countries in conflict, such as the Republic of Congo and Central African Republic (considered major diamond-smuggling centres) have not agreed to implement the certification process. Moreover, while analysts agree that the system is a good one, they also point to its major weakness, which lies in the failure to develop strong verification and monitoring measures. According to Sargentini:

This is more like a Christmas tree without lights. The Kimberley Process is merely a framework to regulate the diamond trade. Without an independent audit to monitor how these certificates are issued and to whom exactly, the entire process becomes flawed. As it stands, anyone can apply to be part of the certification process, including rebels.⁵⁴

It is thought that such a monitoring system could be operated either by an independent auditing firm or a third country. Although ministers at the meeting had alluded to the adoption of an independent monitoring system, the meeting ended without a clear commitment of how such a system would work. While some countries, among them Botswana, Namibia and the European Union members, were in favour of a monitoring system, many of the others meeting in Interlaken were opposed to it. There is a possibility, however, that further international meetings in early 2003 will lead to a system being put in place.

Conclusion

Sierra Leone's recovery from decades of economic meltdown and political and social upheaval will depend to a great extent on how it manages the vitally important extractive sector and, in turn, on how successful it is in reducing corruption and criminality in the diamond industry. The mismanagement and misappropriation of funds disbursed to chieftanships through the Mining Community Development Fund demonstrates that there is a clear linkage between the issues of minerals, corruption and the improvement of governance, though paramount chiefs and district councils that are held accountable to the electorate.

Partnership Africa Canada (PAC), in its report confronting the somewhat taboo issue of Lebanese domination of the Sierra Leone retail economy in general, and the diamond trade in particular, recommends that the Lebanese community

should itself make a strong effort to curb corruption and foster a much stronger sense of responsibility for community upliftment and nation-building. However, the benefits of a suggested mechanism for ‘naming and shaming’ corrupt and exploitative Lebanese businessmen need to be balanced with the dangers of awakening dangerous xenophobic sentiments in a wounded and still volatile society. On the other hand, Lebanese domination of the retail sector surely needs to be addressed head-on, as it apparently restricts the empowerment of indigenous entrepreneurs with some chance of upward mobility in the private sector. If this issue continues to be side-stepped, there is likely to be a very exploitative twist to the UNDP’s plan to increase employment through economic growth, led by private sector investment in labour-intensive enterprises.

A very practical and positive recommendation by PAC is for the development of education, public awareness and training programmes for people who live and work in the diamond areas. The focus would be on helping communities to understand their rights and obligations in relation to the diamond trade, as well as on training for legitimate diggers in diamond evaluation. Such programmes could lead to fair prices being paid to producers, and to other voices joining the likes of MOCKY in insisting that the industry adds value to their communities.

Ultimately, however, one has to be realistic about what can be achieved through outside intervention in a soft state and a devastated post-war environment. The short- to medium-term goal should be to create a minimally capable state, not to build a nation or to address all the root causes of the past conflict – including corruption. The latter requires a longer-term process that is clearly beyond the scope of what external actors can achieve or lead; it has to be led and achieved by local actors themselves. A ‘70 per cent solution’ is, after all, better than none.

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CHAPTER 8

THE CHALLENGE OF JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION

Mark Malan

Introduction

Societies emerging from the aftermath of repressive regimes and armed rebellions are often confronted with the problem of how to deal with the legacy of past human rights abuses. Sierra Leone witnessed one of the most brutal rebel wars the world has ever seen. A report released in January 2002 by Physicians for Human Rights, which documented the brutality, said 53 per cent of displaced women and girls who had face-to-face contact with Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels experienced some form of sexual violence. The rate for women who had had contact with other groups of fighters was six per cent. One third of those who reported sexual assault said they were gang-raped.¹

With some 60,000 ex-combatants, including ex-RUF, disarmed and in the process of being reintegrated into ordinary life, there is a major concern that, in the absence of effective and visible justice, communities where the victims (including amputees and rape survivors) live, will try to exact revenge. This may in turn lead to some sort of violent retaliation by the ex-combatants.²

Since the Nuremberg and Tokyo military tribunals at the end of the Second World War, international *ad hoc* or internationally mandated national tribunals have been established to prosecute those responsible for grave breaches of the four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949. The main function of such tribunals is to prosecute those alleged to have committed war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and other violations of international humanitarian law.

Truth commissions, on the other hand, are bodies established in the aftermath of intra-state conflicts to act as a mechanism for healing and national reconciliation, and in so doing to encourage the peace process. The main purpose of a truth commission is to investigate the truth, within a limited space of time, of past human rights violations, and to issue a comprehensive official report of its findings, together with recommendations. The goals of truth commissions are many, and vary from one country to another. In general, these goals include national reconciliation through public acknowledgement of past injustices; the provision

of an opportunity for victims to tell their stories as a cathartic exercise; the prevention of future abuses of human rights by instituting reforms in the police, military, judiciary and other state institutions; and the identification of perpetrators for possible prosecution.

Until the official end of armed conflict in January 2002, emergency regulations were in force in Sierra Leone while normal judicial procedures were suspended. As the focus of the peace process shifts from emergency assistance and security priorities towards restoration of the government authority and the rule of law, the role of the Sierra Leone judiciary has become a central concern. By September 2000 there were only 15 magistrates and 18 judges presiding over a court system that served the western area and the two provincial capitals of Bo and Kenema. A temporary magistrate's court located in Lungi covered the entire northern province. The judiciary remains thoroughly under-resourced, with case backlogs that threaten to overwhelm the capacity of the system to satisfy the post-war demand for justice.³

The Sierra Leone judiciary

As with most state resources in Sierra Leone, the judiciary is most effective in Freetown and all but insignificant in the provinces. The judicial infrastructure was perilous even before the war, suffering from under-investment in court buildings, accommodation for itinerant judges and magistrates, and transport facilities. The RUF subsequently destroyed most of what remained of the courts, which were systematically targeted along with other institutions of state power as part of the rebel strategy.

Magistrates' courts deal with about 80 per cent of the caseload in Sierra Leone. Before the RUF incursions in 1991, there was at least one functioning magistrate's court in each of the twelve provincial judicial districts, staffed by a total of some 26 full-time magistrates. By September 2000, there were only 15 magistrates, most of them in Freetown. High courts had also operated in the eastern, southern and northern provinces (where some 85 per cent of the population live) prior to 1991, but these courts ceased to operate around 1995.⁴ Moreover, by the end of 2001 there were only about 100 lawyers within that jurisdiction. Of this number, eight were in Bo and Kenema, while there were no practicing lawyers in the northern province.

Judicial capacity in Freetown suffered the least damage because the capital absorbed the exodus of judicial personnel from the provinces during the conflict.

However, there was no parallel expansion of courtrooms and infrastructure, and there are severe backlogs in the ten western area magistrates' courts that hear the vast majority of cases in the formal system.⁵ The main impediments to the effective extension of the judiciary are the lack of infrastructure and logistics and the shortage of qualified staff. To address the latter, government is reactivating Justices of the Peace, who will be entrusted with handling lesser offences in the absence of resident magistrates.⁶

The United Nations' Interagency Appeal for Sierra Leone for the year 2003 is \$69.2m for emergency relief, and \$13.7m for recovery projects. Regarding the latter, there is a joint appeal by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNAMSIL for \$670,000 towards the 'Recovery of Basic Capacity of Judicial Institutions'. The targeted beneficiaries are the Ministry of Justice, magistrates' and appellate courts, which are also seen as project implementing partners. While the project objectives are rather ambitious – the rapid capacity-building of judicial institutions, and the enhancement of their capability to deliver effective and fair justice, especially in rural areas – the concrete outputs and activities envisaged are rather modest, and include the following:

- Equip 70 Justices of the Peace (JPs) with basic office equipment and reference materials.
- Equip 14 clerks to assist the JPs and magistrates in recording and tracking cases (procure 14 computers and 14 solar panels with batteries for judicial districts up country and in the western area).
- Procure 14 vehicles and 14 motorcycles for distribution to twelve districts and two western area subdivisions.
- Provide basic training to JPs and clerks for their new functions, in liaison with magistrates' courts.⁷

Longer-term reform of the judicial system in Sierra Leone is a necessary adjunct to any notion of peace with justice. One area that requires consideration in the future is the harmonisation of common law and customary law. There is a need to balance the rights of children and of women under the customary law system with the human rights law enshrined in the constitution, and the other universal human rights instruments to which Sierra Leone is a party. However, this will involve a process that could take at least ten years, which is way beyond the expected temporal mandate of UNAMSIL.⁸ The pri-

mary concern of the mission is therefore to support the interim justice mechanisms for Sierra Leone, namely the Special Court and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Special Court

The international community had 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 four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, as well as the 1977 Additional Protocols. Secondly, the parties had agreed to respect the rules and customs of warfare.⁹ Thirdly, the establishment of the ad hoc International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in 1993, and for Rwanda (ICTR) a year later, created a significant precedent. The UN's determination that the establishment of such tribunals would contribute to the restoration and the maintenance of peace is of great importance. The subsequent adoption of the Rome Statute for the permanent International Criminal Court (ICC) made it even more difficult for the international community to ignore the situation in Sierra Leone.

Given the devastation of the economy of Sierra Leone, it was clear that the government did not have the necessary financial resources to set up a Special Court. However, due to the significant financial commitment involved with the establishment of such courts, the UN Security Council was not receptive to the proposal outlining the creation of yet another UN tribunal along the lines of Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. It was under these circumstances that a hybrid national institution with UN oversight, similar to the war crimes tribunal for Cambodia, became acceptable.

In terms of Resolution 1315 of 14 August 2000, the UN Security Council authorised the creation of a Special Court to prosecute those who 'bear the greatest responsibility' for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in Sierra Leone.¹⁰ Since the beginning of the conflict in Sierra Leone in 1991, the UN Security Council has issued a number of resolutions that appealed to parties to the conflict to respect human rights and humanitarian law. However, the Special Court for Sierra Leone will not, like the ICTY and ICTR, be established as a Chapter VII institution. The difference between the ICTR and ICTY and the Special Court for Sierra Leone, is that the former are UN institutions operating independently from the domestic courts. The Special Court is thus an

innovative model in the sense that it will apply both Sierra Leone's penal law and international law.

The court was set up under an agreement signed on 16 January 2002 by the government of Sierra Leone and the UN, to prosecute persons who bear the greatest responsibility for serious violations of international humanitarian and Sierra Leone law that have taken place since 30 November 1996 (the date of a failed peace agreement between the government and the RUF).¹¹ The Special Court will function in accordance with the Statute of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, which forms an integral part of the agreement between the United Nations and the government of Sierra Leone on the establishment of a Special Court.¹²

According to the Special Court Agreement (article 2), the government of Sierra Leone and the UN Secretary-General will consult on the appointment of judges, who will be appointed for a three-year term and shall be eligible for re-appointment. The court will be composed of a trial chamber and an appeals chamber. The chambers will be composed of no fewer than eight and no more than eleven independent judges. Three judges will serve in the trial chamber, one of whom shall be appointed by the government of Sierra Leone, and the other two by the UN Secretary-General, upon nominations forwarded by member states, particularly those belonging to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Commonwealth.

Five judges will serve in the appeals chamber, two of whom shall be appointed by the government of Sierra Leone, while the other three shall be appointed by the UN Secretary-General upon nominations forwarded by states – also particularly those belonging to ECOWAS and the Commonwealth.

The United Nations Secretary-General will appoint the chief prosecutor, and the government of Sierra Leone (in consultation with the UN), the deputy prosecutor, to assist the prosecutor in the conduct of the investigations and prosecutions.¹³ While the deputy prosecutor will make recommendations regarding indictments, the final decisions rest with the chief prosecutor. Although international oversight will ensure independence and impartiality, the 'internationalised' aspect of the tribunal may have some negative effects, because some of the judges may have little understanding of the political and legal culture of Sierra Leone. However, the emphasis on the appointment of judges from West African and Commonwealth states should prove a mitigating factor.

The Special Court will have the power to prosecute persons who committed or ordered the commission of serious violations of article 3 common to the

Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 for the Protection of War Victims, and of the Additional Protocol II of 8 June 1977.¹⁴ Other serious violations of international humanitarian law, which the Special Court shall have the power to prosecute (under article 4 of the Statute) include conscripting or enlisting children under the age of 15 years into armed forces or groups, or using them to participate actively in hostilities.¹⁵

The court will have the power to prosecute persons who committed crimes against humanity as part of a widespread or systematic attack against any civilian population. Significantly, the list of inhumane acts includes 'rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy and any other form of sexual violence'.¹⁶ According to article 5 of the Statute, the Special Court will also have the power to prosecute persons who have committed certain crimes under Sierra Leone law, including offences relating to the abuse of girls under the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act, 1926.

The Special Court will set a precedent by trying juveniles 'bearing the greatest responsibility' for atrocities. In Sierra Leone, children below the age of 15 years were abducted and used as child soldiers, thus rendering them both victims and perpetrators. However, it is customary international law that children under the age of 15 years may not be recruited, nor participate in hostilities.¹⁷ A compromise has been reached whereby the court may try suspects who were 15 years of age and above at the time of the offence, taking into account such factors as the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders and the truth and reconciliation process.¹⁸

A unique feature of the Special Court is its location in Freetown, where the court will be easily accessible to the victims, and the people of Sierra Leone will be able to follow its proceedings. The fact that trials will take place in Freetown will send a powerful message to the people of Sierra Leone that justice is being done within the framework of the rule of law. In contrast, the ICTY, with its seat in The Hague, and the ICTR, with its seat in Arusha, Tanzania, are far removed from the victims in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda.

The budget for the Special Court is estimated at US \$58m for three years, with approximately \$16m earmarked for the first year. Since it is not a UN body, the Special Court will not be funded through assessed or mandatory contributions, but rather through voluntary contributions from concerned member states. About 15 to 20 countries have expressed support, including the United Kingdom, Canada, Lesotho, the Netherlands and the United States of

America. Some have started to deposit money in the trust fund for the Special Court, but progress towards the target budget remains extremely slow.¹⁹

According to the Special Court Agreement, the UN Secretary-General will commence the process of establishing the court when he has sufficient contributions in hand to finance the establishment of the court and 12 months of its operations, plus pledges equal to the anticipated expenses of the following 24 months of the court's operation. It is further understood that the UN Secretary-General will continue to seek contributions equal to the anticipated expenses of the court beyond its first three years of operation. Should voluntary contributions be insufficient for the court to implement its mandate, the UN Secretary-General and the UN Security Council shall explore alternate means of financing the Special Court.²⁰

In January 2002 a planning team led by UN Assistant Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, Ralph Zacklin, visited Sierra Leone to examine practical arrangements for its operation. The team reached agreement with the government on a site for constructing the court building, and on the use of existing courtrooms, should the need arise before April 2003, when the permanent premises are scheduled for completion. In April 2002 UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, appointed a senior attorney with the US Department of Defense, David Crane, as the chief prosecutor of the court, and Robin Vincent of the United Kingdom as registrar.²¹ On 26 July 2002 the UN Secretary-General and the government of Sierra Leone announced the appointments of the following eight judges who will serve in the trial chamber and the appeals chamber of the Special Court:

- *Trial chamber:* Pierra Boutet (Canada) and Benjamin Mutanga Itoe (Cameroon), appointed by the Secretary-General; and Bankole Thompson (Sierra Leone), appointed by the government of Sierra Leone.
- *Appeals chamber:* Emmanuel O. Ayoola (Nigeria), Alhaji Hassan B. Jallow (The Gambia) and Renate Winter (Austria), appointed by the Secretary-General; and Gelga King (Sierra Leone) and Geoffrey Robertson (United Kingdom), appointed by the government of Sierra Leone.²²

The court is still very much in the establishment stage, and is hoping to start business in late 2003. With a view to achieving efficiency and cost-effectiveness in the operation of the Special Court, a phased approach will be adopted in accordance with the chronological order of the legal process. The appointment of judges, the prosecutor and the registrar, along with investigative and prosecution staff, is the first phase of the operation of the court. The

process of investigations and prosecutions of those already in custody will be the next step. In the initial phase, judges of the trial chamber and the appeals chamber will be convened on an ad hoc basis for dealing with organisational matters, and serving when required to perform their duties. Judges of the trial chamber will take permanent office shortly before the investigation process has been completed. Judges of the appeals chamber will take permanent office when the first trial process has been completed.²³

The United Nations mission has had somewhat of a strange relationship with the Special Court, due to the hybrid nature of the latter body, but the public information section has provided as much information as they can about the rationale and mandate of the court.²⁴ On the other hand, the section has been able to disseminate a great deal more information about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), including the broadcast of the TRC's weekly press briefings on UNAMSIL Radio.²⁵

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission

For a host of practical reasons, the Special Court cannot be expected to try all perpetrators. It is estimated that the number of potential defendants to be tried by the Special Court will not exceed between 20 and 30, and that these will be primarily senior military and political leaders.²⁶ This limitation, and the fact that the Special Court will only try those 'bearing the greatest responsibility', leaves room for many other cases of human rights abuses and crimes against humanity to be considered by a truth commission, and/or to be tried by the national courts of Sierra Leone.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission is widely regarded as one of the pillars of the Lomé Peace Agreement of 1999, which paved the way for the end of the war. According to this agreement, the TRC is intended

to address impunity, break the cycle of violence, provide a forum for both victims and perpetrators of human rights violations to tell their story and get a clear picture of the past in order to facilitate genuine healing and reconciliation...

Modelled on past commissions in countries such as Chile, Guatemala, Haiti, and South Africa, the TRC hopes to investigate and report on the causes, nature and extent of human rights violations that occurred in the country, help restore the human dignity of victims, and promote reconciliation. Although it

has been established through an act of parliament by the government of Sierra Leone, the TRC will be an independent body.²⁷ As in Haiti, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Sierra Leone will be a mixed commission, composed of seven commissioners, including nationals and non-nationals of Sierra Leone.²⁸ In order to ensure transparency and independence of the commission, the selection of the four national commissioners is to be co-ordinated by the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative, and the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) will co-ordinate the appointment of the three international commissioners.²⁹

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission is expected to complete its work within a period of twelve months, and is required to submit a comprehensive report with a set of recommendations to the government. The specific mandate of the commission is:

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 Lomé Peace Agreement; to address impunity, to respond to the needs of victims, to promote healing and reconciliation, and to prevent a repetition of the violations and abuses suffered.³⁰

The main purpose of the TRC is two-fold. Firstly, it is to investigate the 'causes, nature and extent' of gross human rights violations and abuses, and to determine whether such violations 'were the result of deliberate planning, policy or authorisation by any government, group or individual, and the role of both internal and external factors in the conflict'.³¹ Secondly, it is to restore the human dignity of victims by providing both victims and perpetrators with the opportunity to give an account of human rights violations committed during the armed conflict.³² In carrying out these functions, the commission shall pay 'special attention to the subject of sexual abuse and to the experiences of children within the armed conflict'.³³ This broad mandate ensures that all parties to the conflict are subject to investigation, including the government and other internal and external agencies.

In addition to engaging in a pedagogical exercise and attempting to reconstruct the national identity of future generations of Sierra Leoneans, the commission is expected 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 an impartial historical record, preventing the repetition of the violations or abuses suffered, addressing impunity, responding to the need of victims and promoting healing and reconciliation.³⁴

Once the commission has submitted its report to the president, a 'follow-up committee' will be established to monitor the implementation of its recommendations.³⁵

In carrying out its mandate, the commission will hold public hearings in which victims make statements about past human rights violations and may request information from any source, including government officials and private individuals. The commission will search and seize documents without prior notification; interview individuals or organisations at its discretion in private; and undertake research on the causes, nature and patterns of human rights violations.³⁶

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Sierra Leone is vested with investigative powers to request that information be given under oath or affirmation.³⁷ If necessary, the commission may issue summons and subpoenas in order to fulfil its mandate.³⁸ Failure to respond to a subpoena or summons or providing false information constitutes contempt of court and may be referred to the high court for possible prosecution.³⁹ Anyone who obstructs the work of the commission is liable to a fine not exceeding 1m Leones, or a term of imprisonment not exceeding one year, or both.⁴⁰ The commission may not be compelled 'to disclose any information given to it in confidence'.⁴¹ Hearings may be held in public or, where necessary, in private. Importantly, the truth and reconciliation model in Sierra Leone allows for individual and not collective responsibility. It also allows individuals, but not groups, to make statements or appear before the commission.⁴²

The interim secretariat of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was set up in late March 2002 to begin the preparatory processes for the establishment of the commission. It started with only one member of staff, the executive secretary, and subsequently grew to a complement of 14 staff, comprising international advisers and national consultants.⁴³

While the Lomé Peace Accord rather unrealistically envisaged that the commission would be set up within 30 days of the signing of the agreement, this vision was realised on 5 July 2002, when the TRC was inaugurated in Freetown, with the following commissioners:

- Rt. Rev. Joseph Humper (Chair)
- Hon. Justice Laura Marcus-Jones (Deputy chair)
- Professor John Kamara
- Mr Sylvanus Torto
- Mrs Satang Jow
- Professor William Schabas
- Ms Yasmin Sooka

One of the immediate tasks that the commission faced after its inauguration was the need to prepare a budget, which would facilitate its fundraising efforts. As part of the planning process for the commission, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights had prepared a budget for the commission, which required the sum of \$9.9m for the commission's activities over a fifteen-month period. The commission reviewed this budget with the assistance of a mission from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and agreed on the need to have a separate budget for its preparatory phase, which began immediately on the inauguration of the commission.

The commission also reviewed its budget for the 12-month operational period mandated by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Act of 2000, and was assisted by the OHCHR mission to design a budget that segments its activities into respective phases. This enabled the commission to produce a more realistic budget for its activities, and will also make it easier for the OHCHR and the commission to raise the additional funds that may be required.

During the three months preparatory phase, (5 July to 4 October 2002), the commission focused on a number of other essential activities, including:

- hiring of staff;
- procurement of office space;
- designing and undertaking a public education campaign; and
- undertaking a sensitisation programme and preliminary background research.

Because the conflict in Sierra Leone was unique in several respects, the TRC cannot adopt a prescribed model as the answer to dealing with all aspects of the conflict. The commission's approach will be uniquely Sierra Leonean, at all times guided by what is in the best interests of the people of Sierra Leone. In this context, one of the preliminary background research projects of the TRC (funded by OHCHR and conducted by an NGO called Manifesto 99) involved research into the traditional methods of conflict resolution and reconciliation in Sierra Leone.

During the preparatory period, much emphasis was placed on the need for intensive public sensitisation and mass education across the nation. Since its inauguration, hundreds of Sierra Leone people have visited the TRC offices to express their willingness to make statements to the commission on the conflict. The commission regards this as an extremely positive sign, although it had to advise the general public that the statement-taking phase of its activities would only commence in October 2002, after sufficient trained personnel had been recruited to deal with statements.⁴⁴

The sensitisation challenges are very real. For example, while the TRC is to pay 'special attention to the subject of sexual abuse and to the experiences of children within the armed conflict', women survivors do not necessarily have much faith in the process. A report released in January 2002 by Physicians for Human Rights noted that of the respondents to their survey, 42 per cent thought their perpetrators should be punished. The most common reasons cited for not punishing a perpetrator were the spirit of reconciliation, fear of reprisal, a lack of confidence in the system, or wanting to forget about the incident. Only 35 per cent 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.⁴⁵

Another group of persons of primary concern to the TRC's work, the amputee victims of the civil war, threatened not to appear before the commission until certain demands were met. On 30 August 2002, when the commission paid a 'sensitisation' visit to the Amputee Camp at Aberdeen Road, Freetown, the residents said 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 wanted the government to educate their children for free, and to pay them a one-off reintegration allowance equivalent to about \$150. However, the *Sierra News* of 4 September 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.⁴⁶

Politicians also harbour some scepticism about the TRC, and the commission has actively engaged them by hosting a meeting with leaders and representatives of the various political parties in the country, in order to gain their cooperation and especially that of their supporters. Concerns raised by the various parties centre around:

- 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.

However, the political parties all agree that the establishment of the commission is a necessary instrument for lasting peace and prosperity in the country, and they have made pledges of support for the commission's work, as well as sensitising their supporters on the importance of their participation in the TRC. A parliamentary sub-committee on the TRC has also been established, and a number of parliamentarians have already contacted the commission regarding their intention of being actively involved in the commission's visits to the regions.⁴⁷

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 will probably be expanded by the time the commission enters its operational phase, to include other thematic issues that are crucial to the work of the commission.⁴⁸

By the end of August 2002 the TRC had finalised its detailed plan of activities for the operational period, which envisages three phases:

Deployment phase, comprising various initial activities both in the regions and in Freetown, including statement taking and investigations.

Hearings phase, which will comprise the following two sub-phases:

- *Hearings for people affected by and participants in the conflict.* The commission will be holding sessions, some of which may be public, to hear the victims and perpetrators of any abuses or violations, or other interested parties. The objective is to help restore the human dignity of victims, and to promote reconciliation by providing an opportunity for victims to give an account of the violations and abuses suffered, and for perpetrators to relate their experiences. This will also be done by creating a climate that 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.
- *Hearings looking at the different sectors or components of society and the role they have played in relation to the conflict and its antecedents and aftermath.* This will provide an opportunity for relevant stakeholders and interested parties to make submissions aimed at developing a broader understanding of the conflict, and also to offer proposals and recommendations.

Report-writing phase, which is expected to commence at the beginning of the ninth month of the TRC's operational activities, in August 2003. By this time the bulk of the data analysis, investigations and hearings, as well as research activities, should have been completed.

Reconciliation activities will, of course, be ongoing throughout the operational period. The Operational Plan of Action has been shared with OHCHR in Geneva, who is expected to transmit it to donors and other interested parties.⁴⁹

While the TRC is confident that it has sufficient funding to proceed with its work,⁵⁰ it started on a difficult note with barely a tenth of its 12-month budget in place. At the time the commissioners were sworn in, it had received very little in cash and pledges, and was far short of its \$9.9m budget. During the TRC briefing on 11 September 2002, Commissioner Schabas bemoaned what he described as a 'critical funding situation', recalling that pledges amounted to \$1,580,739, of which \$1,107,825 had been received. This excluded the sum of \$97,000 donated by the government of Sierra Leone, and its contribution in kind of premises for the TRC.⁵¹

Funding problems have obviously delayed the appointment of secretariat staff for the TRC. Lack of readily available investigative capacity is a major challenge for both the Special Court and the TRC, with the probability that much of the hard evidence of atrocities will be destroyed before either institution is fully operational.

For example, on 17 June 2002 a group of experts from the Argentinean Forensic Anthropology Team⁵² (EAAF – Spanish acronym) arrived in Sierra Leone to investigate patterns of human rights abuses during the ten-year civil war. The team's task was to map mass gravesites, assess the amount of forensic expertise required to carry out more investigations, and advise on how to preserve forensic evidence. The experts were also to propose guidelines for future investigations that could support the Special Court and the TRC.⁵³

According to TRC Spokesperson, Ozonnia Ojielo, the team "literally found evidence of mass graves and killing sites all over the districts of Kambia, Port Loko, Kailahun and Kono in the north and east".⁵⁴ Many owners of the properties where some of the alleged crimes were committed are eager to return to their properties and develop them. Local communities brought the forensic experts to houses where up to 50 or 60 people were herded together and burnt, and where human skulls and bones were still to be found. The TRC subsequently launched a nationwide appeal to Sierra Leoneans not to tamper with suspected former mass graves and 'slaughterhouses', as vital evidence could be lost.

The forensic experts also advised that the TRC may need to collaborate with other interested bodies like the Special Court, establishing a joint mandate in

investigations to establish the patterns of killings, causes of death and possible identities of victims.⁵⁵

Conclusion

The fact that the Special Court will target only the ‘most responsible’ perpetrators of atrocities committed in Sierra Leone means that it is not necessarily at variance with the TRC process, but rather reinforces the idea that the two institutions are complementary. The underlying message of both institutions is that, while it is necessary to have reconciliation, the people of Sierra Leone also recognise the need for justice.

The TRC will attempt to avoid collective guilt and will set the historical record straight, thus encouraging national reconciliation across the political spectrum. The TRC process is expected to address the plight of the youth of Sierra Leone and of the estimated 50,000 to 60,000 women and young girls who have been victims of sexually related offences resulting from the conflict. The TRC is also expected to make recommendations on reparations and how to reform state institutions such as the military, police, judiciary and the health sector.

The Special Court, unlike the TRC, cannot be expected to give a historical account of the ‘causes and nature and extent’ of the conflict of Sierra Leone. However, the Special Court may contribute to a number of important outcomes, such as:

- bringing an end to the culture of impunity, by conveying a clear message that the international community will not tolerate the kind of atrocities committed in Sierra Leone;
- avoiding retribution by victims, if those bearing the ‘greatest responsibility’ are punished by an independent and impartial institution; and
- restoring the rule of law and setting a precedent for future prosecution of war crimes, and crimes against humanity, by courts in Sierra Leone (and thus helping to improve the legal system of Sierra Leone, since no provision is currently made for the prosecution of war crimes under the penal laws).

Of particular importance is the concern expressed by the RUF regarding the relationship between the TRC and the Special Court.⁵⁶ These relate primarily to

issues of evidence that might be used before both the Special Court and the TRC. For example, if both bodies need to investigate an alleged massacre at a certain place, they surely cannot both independently exhume the same mass grave. This implies that a proper *modus operandi* must be worked out, so that the two institutions can co-operate to include the sharing of information.

On the other hand, since the TRC is not a court of law, defendants appearing before the TRC might be subpoenaed to appear before the Special Court. Because the TRC has only quasi-judicial powers to issue summonses and subpoenas for purposes of carrying out its investigations, Special Court defendants would not be able to invoke the *non bis in idem* rule (i.e. that they cannot be tried twice for the same offence, since the TRC is not a court of law). Obviously, this would affect the willingness of people to testify openly before the TRC.

Such dilemmas, arising from the two institutions functioning, to a degree, in tandem, have left many Sierra Leoneans apathetic and unclear about the roles of the Special Court and the TRC, while others are worried about overlaps in their responsibilities. In response to an NGO request for clarification in March 2002, Attorney General (now vice president) Solomon Berewa stated that the TRC,

... far from being fault-finding and punitive, is to serve as the most legitimate and credible forum for victims to reclaim their human worth, a channel for perpetrators to expiate their guilt. The process has been likened to a national catharsis involving truth telling, respectful listening and compensation for victims.

Berewa also said that the Special Court "... is to operate as an international entity subject to international criminal law. Its objects are entirely punitive and, like any court, will apply predetermined laws and rules of procedure. It is by no means a cheap exercise."⁵⁷

During his 11 September TRC briefing, Professor Schabas attempted to set the record straight by simply stating that:

- The TRC is Sierra Leonean owned but is totally independent from government and any other establishment or body.
- The TRC is not a judicial body and it does not prosecute anybody or mete out punishment to anyone.

- The TRC and the Special Court are two different entities with different mandates and mode of operations.
- The TRC is not a ‘trap’ for those appearing before it to be sent before the Special Court.⁵⁸

The first public hearings of the TRC are likely to elicit a huge measure of publicity (and hopefully better donor support), as will the first trials before the Special Court further down the line. Although vitally important to national reconciliation, these high profile, internationally sponsored measures for short-term transitional justice, should not overshadow the long-term needs of the judiciary. Next to the provision of mass basic education and the harnessing of Sierra Leone’s mineral resources for the benefit of the people, ensuring effective access to justice is arguably the most important element of a process aimed at sustainable peace and development.

Notes

- 1 UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Sierra Leone, Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN) focus on the challenges of reconciliation, Freetown, 15 July 2002.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 N Thompson, *In Pursuit of Justice: A Report on the Judiciary in Sierra Leone*, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative and the Sierra Leone Bar Association, Freetown, September 2002, p 4. <<http://www.humanrightsinitiative.org/publications/Sierra%20Leone%20Report.pdf>>
- 4 Ibid, p 10.
- 5 Ibid, p 11.
- 6 United Nations, *Interagency Appeal for Relief and Recovery, Sierra Leone 2003*, 19 November 2002, p 50. <<http://www.reliefweb.int/appeals/2003/files/sle03.pdf>>
- 7 Ibid, p 76.
- 8 Interview with the Chief of Human Rights, Mr. Rodolfo Mattarollo, 23 October 2001.
- 9 For example, Article 21 of the 1996 Abidjan Accord states that “The parties undertake to respect the principles and rules of international humanitarian law”.
- 10 Articles 2–7 of the Statute of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, as annexed to the Special Court Agreement. Hereafter referred to as “the Statute”.

- 11 *Agreement between the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone on the Establishment of a Special Court for Sierra Leone*, Freetown, 16 January 2002. <<http://www.sierra-leone.org/specialcourt/ta.htm>>. Hereafter referred to simply as the “Special Court Agreement”.
- 13 *Ibid*, Article 3.
- 14 The Statute, *op cit*, Article 3.
- 15 *Ibid*, Article 4.
- 16 *Ibid*, Article 2 g.
- 17 Article 4 of the 1977 Protocol II additional to the four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949.
- 18 The Statute, *op cit*, Article 7.
- 19 N Thompson, *op cit*, p 31.
- 20 Special Court Agreement, Article 6.
- 21 UN OCHA (IRIN), *op cit*.
- 22 UN Press Release, SG/A/813 AFR/444, 26 July 2002.
- 23 Special Court Agreement, Article 19.
- 24 Including the publication in *UNAMSIL Review* of the full text of the Agreement between the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone on the Establishment of a Special Court for Sierra Leone.
- 25 Interview with Margaret Novicki, UNAMSIL Spokesman and Head of Public Information Section, Freetown, 22 August 2002.
- 26 D Pratt & Nepean-Carleton, *Sierra Leone: Danger and Opportunity in A Regional Conflict*, Report to Canada’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, The Honourable John Manley, July, 2001, p 19.
- 27 See Truth and Reconciliation Commission Act, 2000, Sierra Leone Gazette, Vol. CXXXI, No. 9, 10 February 2000. Hereafter referred to as “the Act”.
- 28 *Ibid*, Article 3(1).
- 29 *Ibid*, Section 3(1) (Schedule).
- 30 *Ibid*, Section 6(1).
- 31 *Ibid*, Section 2(a).
- 32 *Ibid*, Section 2(b).
- 33 *Ibid*.

- 34 Ibid, Section 15(2).
- 35 Ibid, Section 18 (1) & (2).
- 36 Ibid, Section 8.
- 37 Ibid, Section 8(e).
- 38 Ibid, Section 8(1) (g).
- 39 Ibid, Section 8(2).
- 40 Ibid, Section 9(2).
- 41 Ibid, Section 7(3).
- 42 See Section 20 of the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act 34 of 1995.
- 43 Statement by Rt Rev. Dr Joseph Humper, Chairman, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, on the occasion of its first weekly briefing, 24 July 2002. <<http://www.sierra-leone.org/trcbriefing072402.html>>
- 44 Ibid.
- 45 UN OCHA (IRIN), op cit.
- 46 Seventh weekly briefing of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, chaired by the Chairman Rt. Rev. Dr. Joseph Humper, 4 September 2002. <<http://www.sierra-leone.org/trcbriefing090402.html>>
- 47 Eighth weekly briefing of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission chaired by Professor William Schabas, 11 September 2002. <<http://www.sierra-leone.org/trcbriefing091102.html>>
- 48 Address by the Chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission at the second weekly briefing of the Commission, 31 July 2002 <<http://www.sierra-leone.org/trcbriefing073102.html>>
- 49 Sixth weekly briefing of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, chaired by the Deputy Chairman Justice Laura Marcus-Jones, 28 August 2002. <<http://www.sierra-leone.org/trcbriefing082802.html>>
- 50 Interview with Lizbeth Cullity, Human Rights Officer, Freetown, 22 August 2002.
- 51 Eighth weekly briefing of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, op cit.
- 52 EAAF is a non-governmental organisation dedicated to applying forensic anthropology to the investigation of human rights violations. It is funded by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights while its work in Sierra Leone is facilitated by UNAMSIL. Forensic anthropology applies techniques from physical anthropology and forensic medicine to solve legal cases involving skeletal or

near-skeletal remains. EAAF exhumes such remains to establish the cause of death and identify of the victims.

- 53 UN OCHA (IRIN), Sierra Leone: Argentinean experts to examine mass graves, 21 June 2002.
- 54 As reported by UN OCHA (IRIN) Abidjan, 22 July 2002.
- 55 UN OCHA (IRIN), 21 June 2002 op cit.
- 56 Interview with RUF leadership, Freetown, 28 October 2001.
- 57 UN OCHA (IRIN), 15 July 2002, op cit.
- 58 Eighth weekly briefing of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, op cit.

CONCLUSION

Sarah Meek

One year after the publication of 'Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone' we have witnessed a new phase in that country, and the peacekeeping function performed by UNAMSIL. Sierra Leone is moving down a remarkable path of peace-building. A feat that seemed distant eighteen months ago has now become reality. Few observers in 2000 would have predicated the Sierra Leone of today. Although the challenges remain many and complex, the government of Sierra Leone, its people, the United Nations, its agencies, UNAMSIL and the donor community seem to be sustaining the will to meet the battles ahead.

This monograph has attempted to illustrate the multiple efforts currently underway to bring that elusive situation, a 'sustainable peace' to Sierra Leone. A few critical milestones have been achieved already – the largely straightforward and on-time disarmament and demobilisation of RUF and CDF combatants, for example, which led to the symbolic 'war is over' declaration of January 2002.

The elections in May 2002 were anticipated by many observers of Sierra Leone as being critical to the country's future. Would Sierra Leone turn the corner towards a more peaceful future, where political differences could be resolved without violent conflict – or would the RUF decide that their strength lay in a military, as opposed to political, future? At the end of the day, elections won out and were conducted in a situation of remarkable calm. The elections became the benchmark against which the future direction of the UN mission in Sierra Leone was judged. When the elections went off without serious disturbances or fraud, UNAMSIL was able to focus its attention to drawing down its presence in a coordinated, rational manner. This allowed the mission to maintain its presence, but shift its focus from a military operation to supporting the government of Sierra Leone in its efforts at building peace.

It would be wrong to downplay the challenges facing Sierra Leone, but it would also be wrong to view the developments in the country in an entirely negative light. The chapters in this monograph have tried to illustrate in a bal-

anced way what has been achieved to date and what still remains to be done. With the presence of the UN in the country changing, a new model for UN operations in Sierra Leone is being developed. It will include a strong UN civilian police (CivPol) presence, working closely with the Commonwealth Community Safety and Security Project (CCSSP) and the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) to try to rectify years of neglect and abuse of the SLP.

UNAMSIL will still need to play an important confidence-building role in the country, including monitoring the public reaction to changes in its structure, composition, mandate and size. It needs to make sure that these are not viewed as the UN 'pulling out' of the country and leaving Sierra Leone to fend for itself. However, at the same time, the UN mission is shifting its focus away from short-term humanitarian assistance to longer-term development support that will need to continue for many years.

Increasingly, however, the burden of effort to rebuild Sierra Leone is moving on to the shoulders of the government, working in partnership with UN agencies, bilateral donors and non-governmental organisations. As the chapters in the monograph have illustrated, the government is facing the challenge of reforming the Sierra Leone Armed Forces and the SLP so that they can take over the protection of the country, along its borders by the SLAF, and internally by the SLP. A new model army or police force cannot be crafted in a few months, or even a few years. It will take time for the training and practice to develop into professional security forces that have the trust and support of the population.

The government is also having to address the need to move beyond the war, most directly through completing the reintegration of remaining ex-combatants and initiating the Special Court and Truth and Reconciliation Commission processes. These each pose significant challenges. Although the mechanics of the reintegration process seem well entrenched, it must be ensured that ex-combatants can become constructive members of Sierra Leonean society who can find non-violent ways to voice frustration and dissatisfaction. In the case of the Special Court and the TRC, these institutions may well test the commitment of the government of Sierra Leone, ex-combatants and citizens to engage in what has been a deeply painful process for some in other countries, such as South Africa.

And, stretching into the future, is the ongoing need for the country to re-engage across its length and breadth – to become a country again. This requires the extension of governmental authority to all the provinces, the

building of infrastructure and systems to govern equitably, and the involvement of Sierra Leone's vibrant civil society to find a voice for itself in the politics and governing of the country.

During the field research in Sierra Leone, many of the people interviewed emphasised the need for a longer-term commitment by the international community to Sierra Leone, primarily through a 'pledging conference' where funds to sustain the progress made to date would be announced. Happily, this took place. In November 2002 the Sierra Leone Consultative Group meeting took place in Paris and resulted in donor countries and organisations committing themselves to assisting the country in its rebuilding efforts. Already Sierra Leone has been granted relief amounting to \$950m on its debt, and has qualified for Highly Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) status. In addition, the United States of America announced that Sierra Leone will benefit from the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which will provide duty-free access to US markets for Sierra Leone.¹

The Sierra Leone government in turn committed itself to working towards greater inclusion, good governance, decentralisation, equity, and sustainable growth. In addition, it expressed its intention to focus on basic education and primary health care. To spur economic growth, the Sierra Leone government said it would focus on five key areas: private sector development, agriculture, reviving the mining industry, improving the country's infrastructure, and building human capital with community-driven programmes in education, health, and HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness.²

Of course there are conditions attached. Sierra Leone must meet certain benchmarks, especially on anti-corruption measures, privatisation and public administration. Some of these may be difficult to achieve in a country that has had so much of its infrastructure, livelihoods and way of life decimated by war.

The United Kingdom, the most visible of Sierra Leone's external supporters, has committed to a ten year programme of support for the social and economic development in Sierra Leone – to the tune of £120m over the next three years.³ Again, the agreement – a Poverty Reduction Framework Arrangement – includes benchmarks for both Sierra Leone and Britain that are to be achieved during 2003. In addition, the funding provided directly to the budget of the government of Sierra Leone is linked to progress in specific reform issues, for example, public administration, security and financial management.

For its part, the United Nations and the United Nations Security Council have recognised that they cannot walk away from Sierra Leone at this precarious stage in its transition from war to peace. The United Nations Security Council resolution in September emphasised “the importance of the continuing support of UNAMSIL to the Government of Sierra Leone in the consolidation of peace and stability”.⁴ Concretely, this resulted in the Council approving plans for a phased drawdown of UNAMSIL’s 17,500 force, and recognition of the need to sustain capacity of the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) during this transition. The latter has resulted in an increase in the mandated number of civilian police, who will work with the Commonwealth Community Safety and Security Project team members to bolster the SLP as it regains its footing in Sierra Leone’s hinterlands.

The United Nations has set conditions for itself in Sierra Leone. Again, benchmarks – the new targets – have been identified. These must be met before each subsequent phase of the draw-down can occur. The prime benchmark is security, both internally, and along Sierra Leone’s border with its most fractious of neighbours – Liberia.

Any discussion of peace in Sierra Leone must always be qualified with a question regarding the situation of Liberia. The international community – in the form of the UN Security Council – is taking an increasingly hard line against Liberia and the regime of Charles Taylor. Most recently, the UN Security Council announced new sanctions in the form of arms embargoes, against both the government (which has been under embargo since 1996) and the rebel-led opposition group, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD). The UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, has committed himself to finding a solution to the conflict in Liberia in the hopes of building peace in the Mano River Union region of West Africa.

The World Bank statement issued at the Consultative Group meeting in Paris sums up the enormous strides Sierra Leone has made. The country has established ‘a unique track record for a post-conflict country’. Less than a year after the war officially ended, the country has achieved a six percent growth rate while inflation has fallen to zero percent. This has been achieved, the Bank said, despite ten years of war, the resettlement of 300,000 displaced persons, and the demobilisation of more than 70,000 combatants.⁵

It is clear that Sierra Leone is firmly on the path to building peace. It will happen in spurts, and it may sometimes appear as if little progress is being made. However, with the continued support of the international community and the

commitment of the government of Sierra Leone and its citizens, it may be possible – cautiously – to say that that peace can indeed be built after so many years of war.

Notes

- 1 Statement by US delegation to Sierra Leone Consultative Group, Paris, France, 13–14 November 2002, Press release, <<http://www.sierra-leone.org/usgovernment112002.html>>, accessed 2 December 2002.
- 2 Sierra Leone news <<http://www.sierra-leone.org/slnews1102.html>>, accessed 2 December 2002.
- 3 Department for International Development, *Britain Commits to Partnership for Reconstruction with Sierra Leone*, Press release, 13 November 2002.
- 4 United Nations Security Council Resolution 1436, 24 September 2002 (S/RES/1436 (2002)), New York.
- 5 World Bank, *Sierra Leone: Partners support the country's plans for peace, recovery and development*, Press release, 14 November 2002, <www.worldbank.org>, accessed 3 December 2002.