

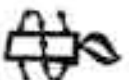
44

3 krigsret 1.1

SIERRA LEONE (44)

15/2/99

Flygtningeævnets sekretariat
St. Kongensgade 1-3
1264 København K



amnesty international

Dansk Afdeling
Danish Section
Dykket 3
DK-1166 København K
Tel: +45 33 11 75 41
Fax: +45 33 83 37 40
Giro: 4 07 84 70

Im. Fin.sekr. 18 Jnr. 1997/71511-62
18 FEB. 1999

Antal bilag Akt nr. 12

København, den 15. februar 1999

Til Flygtningeævnet

Til orientering fremsendes hermed Amnesty Internationals seneste materiale vedrørende Sierra Leone. Amnesty International vurderer nu, at situationen i Sierra Leone er så kritisk, at stort set alle i landet er i fare for alvorlige menneskerettighedskrænkelser.

Med venlig hilsen

Charlotte Olsen
Flygtningekoordinator

(۲۲) ۵۸۳۹ ۸۸۹۵۱۲

۲۲۱۲



amnesty international

L A N D E N O T A T

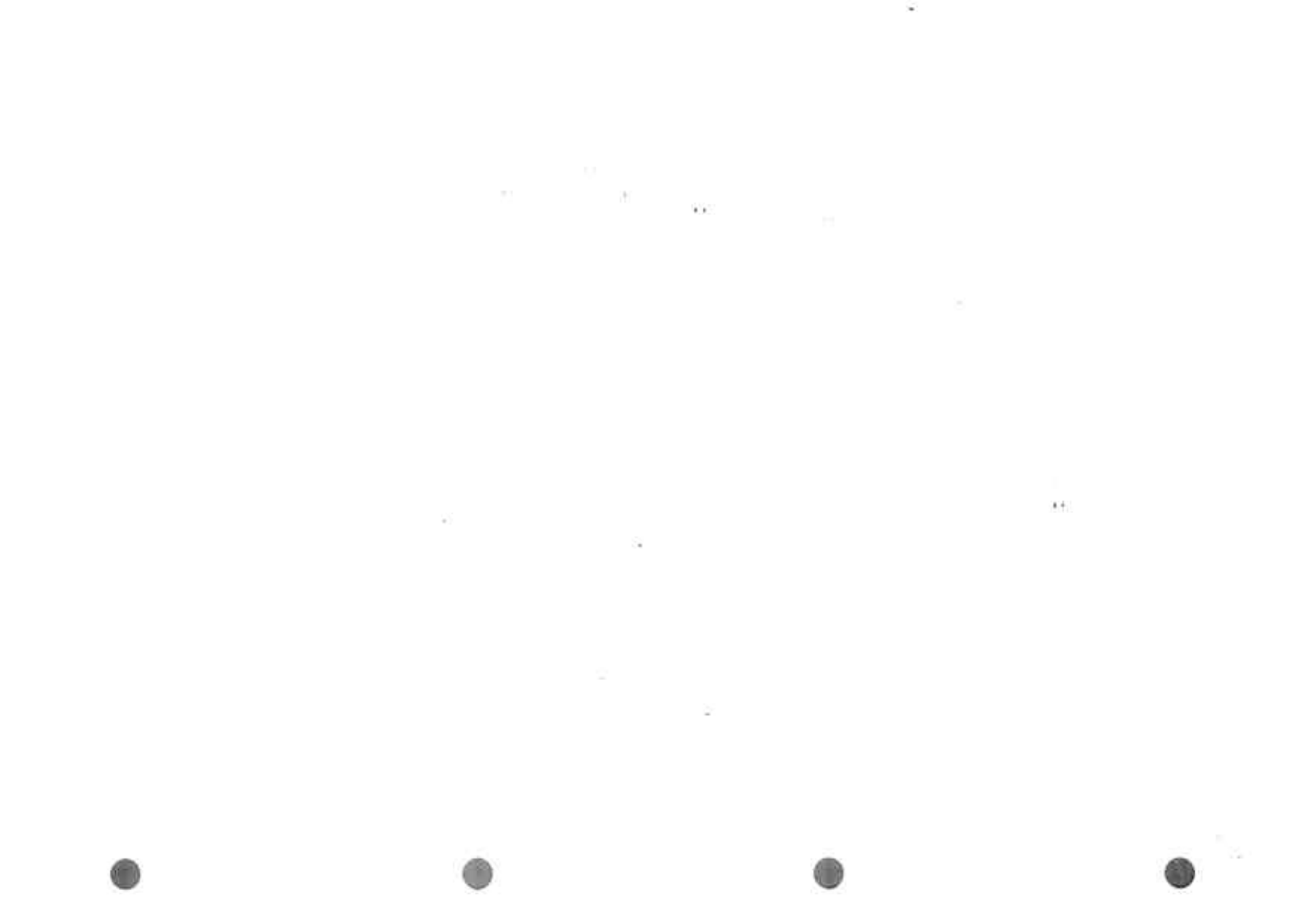
12 February 1999

Sierra Leone: Amnesty International calls on the international community for the protection of asylum seekers from Sierra Leone

Since rebel forces of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) attacked the capital, Freetown, on 6 January 1999 the gross human rights abuses against civilians which have taken place in the north and east of Sierra Leone since rebel forces were removed from power in February 1998 have occurred in Freetown. These abuses include deliberate and arbitrary killing, mutilation, in particular by the amputation of limbs, rape and abduction. Human rights abuses by rebel forces are perpetrated indiscriminately against men, women and children. There have been hundreds of victims of human rights abuses by rebel forces since 6 January 1999. More than 200 civilians in Freetown have suffered amputation of their limbs since 18 January 1999.

The West African force deployed in Sierra Leone, ECOMOG, is also responsible for human rights violations. Dozens of captured rebel combatants or people suspected of supporting rebel forces have been extrajudicially executed by ECOMOG forces in Freetown since 6 January 1999. Rebel suspects have been executed by ECOMOG after the most cursory of interrogations.

Amnesty International believes that the continuing insecurity and conflict, which now affect almost all areas of Sierra Leone, are such that practically any person risks being subjected to gross human rights abuses. Amnesty International therefore calls on the international community to ensure that all those fleeing human rights abuses in Sierra Leone be given effective protection against refoulement.



From April 1998 reports emerged of civilians suffering mutilations such as crude amputations of their feet, hands, arms, lips or ears. Women and girls have been systematically raped. Hundreds of civilians, in particular children and young men and women, have been abducted. This violence has resulted in hundreds of thousands of Sierra Leoneans fleeing to neighbouring Guinea and Liberia or becoming internally displaced within Sierra Leone.

Recent fighting has resulted in large movements of population towards the capital which had previously been a safe haven. However, with the advance of AFRC and RUF forces, many have started to flee for their safety, mostly to neighbouring Guinea.

"The refugees should be admitted to seek asylum without any discrimination on grounds of their political opinion, nationality or country of origin. It is a fundamental right," Amnesty International said.

In a report published in November 1998, *Sierra Leone: 1998 - a year of atrocities against civilians* (AI Index: AFR 51/72/98), Amnesty International described in detail the widespread atrocities – killings, mutilations, rape – which have been committed by rebel forces, after they were forced from power by ECOMOG in February 1998.

ENDS../



AI INDEX: AFR 51/01/99
14 JANUARY 1999

News Service: 009/99

Sierra Leone: escalating human rights crisis requires urgent action

Respect and protection of human rights must be at the centre of all efforts to end the crisis in Sierra Leone, Amnesty International said today, adding that "the imperative to end the fighting must not be at the expense of establishing accountability for human rights abuses."

Intense political activity is now taking place to try to resolve the crisis in Sierra Leone and to bring an end to the fighting in Freetown. The international community – including the United Nations (UN), the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Economic Community of West African States, the Commonwealth and the European Union – has committed itself to contributing to peace and security in Sierra Leone.

"The international community's commitment to resolve the crisis must include initiatives to end the gross human rights abuses perpetrated by rebel forces, prevent further violations and lay solid foundations for the protection of human rights in the future," Amnesty International added.

The organization regrets that the OAU has missed the opportunity to ensure that human rights are at the centre of discussions on Sierra Leone by postponing the OAU Ministerial Conference on Human Rights scheduled to take place in Mauritius later this month. The OAU should nevertheless urgently convene a heads of state level meeting of the Central Organ of its conflict resolution mechanism in order to address the human rights crisis in Sierra Leone.

Amnesty International is particularly concerned about reports that children and young people have been abducted by rebel forces in Freetown and forced to join their ranks.

Civilians in Freetown have been deliberately and arbitrarily killed by rebel forces and have also been caught in hostilities between the West African force deployed in Sierra Leone, known as ECOMOG, and rebel forces of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF).

"Rebel forces must respect international humanitarian law and end the gross human rights abuses which they are perpetrating against unarmed civilians," Amnesty International urged.

"ECOMOG forces must at all times distinguish between the civilian population and combatants and take all necessary measures to protect civilians from the dangers arising from

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

1 Euston Street, London WC1X 8DU, United Kingdom

Tel: Int. Code: (44) (171) 413 5500. UK Code: (0171) 413 5500. Fax: Int. Code: (44) (171) 956 1157. UK Code: (0171) 956 1157.

E-Mail: amnesty@amnesty.org

Web: <http://www.amnesty.org>

Telephone: Amnesty 1 (toll-free) 1600 11 1111. Telex: 285507 AMNESTY G

military operations," the organization added. "Civil Defence Forces fighting alongside ECOMOG must also respect international humanitarian law."

The UN Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) -- the peace-keeping operation established by the UN Security Council in July 1998 -- has been forced to evacuate from Freetown to Conakry in neighbouring Guinea. It is essential, however, that UNOMSIL human rights officers, who have been effectively monitoring and reporting human rights abuses and contributing to the long-term protection of human rights, continue their work. "Sierra Leone continues to face a human rights emergency," Amnesty International added.

The Security Council on Tuesday extended UNOMSIL's mandate for another two months. "The activities of the human rights component of UNOMSIL must be fully supported, both politically and financially, by the international community," Amnesty International said.

Liberia has been widely reported to be providing combatants, arms and ammunition to rebel forces in Sierra Leone. In view of the appalling level of violence against civilians which continues to characterize the conflict in Sierra Leone, Amnesty International believes that all military assistance to rebel forces will result in continuing violations of international human rights and humanitarian law.

"All government should take all possible measures to end immediately military assistance to those committing human rights abuses in Sierra Leone," the organization said.

The international community has strongly condemned continuing support to rebel forces in Sierra Leone. Following a visit to Sierra Leone and Liberia in December, the chairman of the Security Council sanctions committee on Sierra Leone, Hans Dahlgren, said that arms and ammunition were crossing the Sierra Leonean border with neighbouring countries, including Liberia.

It has become increasingly difficult to obtain information from Freetown since telephone communications ceased on 7 January. Although mounting daily, the exact number of civilian casualties since rebel forces entered Freetown on 6 January is unknown.

The people of Freetown have been trapped and unable to escape the violence. They have been unable to leave their homes to obtain food. There is extensive looting and destruction of property. Food supplies and vehicles of humanitarian agencies have been looted.

"Humanitarian agencies must be allowed to assist civilians in Freetown without threats to their safety and security," Amnesty International said.

In a report published in November 1998, *Sierra Leone: 1998 - a year of atrocities against civilians* (AI Index: AFR 51/72/98), Amnesty International described in detail the widespread atrocities -- killings, mutilations, rape -- which have been committed by rebel forces, after they were forced from power by ECOMOG in February 1998.

ENDS../



Amnesty International - News Release - AFR 51/03/99

22 January 1999

SIERRA LEONE

UN human rights presence reduced as abuses worsen

Copyright notice: The copyright for this document rests with Amnesty International. You may download and read it. You may not alter this information, repost or sell it without permission. If you use this document, you are encouraged to make a donation to Amnesty International to support future research. Here you can find the address of your nearest AI office

News Service: 015/99

AI INDEX: AFR 51/03/99

22 JANUARY 1999

Sierra Leone

UN human rights presence reduced as abuses worsen

Plans to reduce the size of the United Nations (UN) peace-keeping mission in Sierra Leone when civilians continue to suffer appalling atrocities are unacceptable, Amnesty International said.

According to information received by the organization, the UN plans to reduce from five to only two or three the number of human rights monitors in the UN Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL).

"At a time when it is more urgent than ever to monitor human rights abuses in Sierra Leone and to report them accurately and impartially, the UNOMSIL human rights section is being weakened dramatically" Amnesty International said. "Despite the difficulties posed by the security situation in Freetown, there is still much that UNOMSIL human rights officers can do."

Retreating through the east of Freetown this week, rebel forces have again resorted to mutilating civilians by cutting off their hands and arms. On 18 January, rebel forces were reported to have taken 12 people from a mosque in the east of Freetown and then either killed them or amputated their limbs.

Dozens of people with amputated limbs are now arriving in the centre of Freetown. Some 30 people with amputations have been admitted this week to the Netland Hospital, which was supported by the International Committee of the Red Cross until the remaining international staff were ordered by the government to leave Freetown last week. Others have gone to Connaught Hospital. Neither hospital is able to cope with the thousands of people who have been injured and killed since 6 January.

After rebel forces entered Freetown on 6 January UNOMSIL evacuated to Conakry in neighbouring Guinea. On 12 January the UN Security Council extended UNOMSIL's mandate for a further two months. While it was expected that the number of UNOMSIL military observers would be reduced, neither the UN Secretary-General nor the Security Council resolution extending UNOMSIL's mandate recommended scaling down the human rights section.

On 14 January Amnesty International stressed that it was essential that UNOMSIL human rights officers continue their work and publicly called on the international community to support, both politically and financially, the human rights section, which has been effective in monitoring and

reporting human rights abuses and which has contributed to the long-term protection of human rights in Sierra Leone.

Meanwhile, Amnesty International is receiving daily reports of atrocities committed by rebel forces. Since they entered Freetown rebel forces have deliberately and arbitrarily killed hundreds of unarmed civilians. Eleven policemen were killed at the ancient Cotton Tree in the heart of Freetown. Rebel forces arrived in Freetown with lists of people to be targeted, including members of the National Commission for Democracy and Human Rights. Lawyers and journalists also appear to have been deliberately sought and killed. When rebel forces went to the home of a lawyer in Freetown and failed to find him, they shot his mother.

Large numbers of civilians, including children and young people, have been abducted in Freetown by rebel forces. Some have been used as porters to carry looted goods from Freetown to other parts of the country. Girls and women have been raped.

The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Freetown and at least 13 foreign nationals, who include seven priests and six nuns, were last week abducted by rebel forces from Kissy in the east of Freetown. Their fate and whereabouts remain unknown.

ECOMOG and Civil Defence Forces (CDF) fighting alongside them have summarily executed captured rebels or people they suspect of supporting rebel forces. ECOMOG forces summarily executed 22 captives on Aberdeen Bridge on 13 January and similar executions are reported to be continuing. Indiscriminate aerial bombardments on areas of the densely populated capital have resulted in large numbers of civilian casualties. Last week the CDF summarily executed six young men alleged to have been rebels at Kingdom in Freetown.

Eight Sierra Leonean humanitarian aid workers are currently being held by ECOMOG, accused of cooperating with rebel forces. Most of them are reported to have been beaten while detained.

Source: *Amnesty International, International Secretariat, 1 Easton Street, WC1X 8DJ, London, United Kingdom*