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PROFILE OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT : SIERRA LEONE

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Norwegian Refugee Council/Global IDP Project
Chemin Moïse Duboule, 59
1209 Geneva - Switzerland
Tel: + 41 22 799 07 00
Fax: + 41 22 799 07 01
E-mail : idpsurvey@nrc.ch



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PROFILE SUMMARY

Executive Summary

Almost one quarter of a million displaced Sierra Leoneans were resettled or had returned in their areas of origin by the end of 2002, according to UN figures, officially ending the situation of internal displacement in the country and further consolidating its recovery after more than a decade of devastating civil war. But many IDPs returned to areas with no basic infrastructure or social services in place, creating acute humanitarian needs and causing some to drift back to urban areas. Assistance for reintegration has mainly been provided for registered IDPs, not for the many thousands who were either unregistered, or who did not wish to be resettled for various reasons. Homelessness in the urban districts of Freetown remains a serious problem, which still needs to be addressed.

Background and causes of displacement

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

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

The conflict spread during the second half of 2000 across the border to Guinea, with the RUF attacking Guinean villages and camps hosting Sierra Leonean refugees – leading to armed activities by Guinean troops inside Sierra Leone. An outcome of this fragile security situation was additional internal displacement, as well as a return flow of Sierra Leonean refugees – many ending up in a situation of internal displacement as their home areas remained exposed to RUF terror.

The armed conflict and the widespread human rights abuses associated with it have been the main causes for internal displacement in Sierra Leone. The civilian population has throughout the conflict been targeted deliberately by the rebel groups, and severe atrocities have been well documented (e.g. AI November 1998 & HRW 26 May 2000 & 5 June 2000). It has also been reported that additional displacement has been caused by counter-insurgency operations by troops loyal to the Government (HRW 12 July 2000, OCHA 24 July 2000, HRW 7 July 2001).

Toward the end of 2000, the rebels gradually signaled willingness to re-enter the peace process. In November 2000, the Government and RUF signed a new ceasefire agreement at Abuja, which was reiterated in May 2001. The completion of disarmament in January 2002, marking the official end of the civil war, the country's parliamentary and presidential elections on May 2002 and the improving security situation, paved the way for large-scale return and resettlement of IDPs and refugees.

Large-scale return and resettlement

Since April 2001 both the Sierra Leone government and the UN have made a concerted effort to resettle large numbers of IDPs, as well as returning refugees, and to gradually close down the IDP camps. At that time, the UN moved its focus from protracted provision of humanitarian relief to support of resettlement and recovery efforts, confident of advances being made in the peace process and increasing stability throughout the country. Indeed, by the end of 2001 the world's largest UN peacekeeping mission was deployed across the country and the disarmament programme was completed. President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah declared the official end of the 11-year civil war, in which an estimated 50,000 people had been killed and up to half of the country's 4.5 million population displaced.

Displaced Sierra Leoneans were assisted to return or resettle in accordance with the national government's Resettlement Strategy, which applies to IDPs as well as refugees and ex-combatants with their dependants, and states that it will "only facilitate resettlement into an area when it is deemed that the area in question is sufficiently safe to allow for the return of displaced people in safety and dignity" (NCRRR, rev. October 2001). All but two of the country's 149 chiefdoms had officially been declared 'safe for resettlement' by the end of 2002. Beneficiaries were offered resettlement packages, which included a two month food ration, household utensils, plastic sheeting, and in some cases transportation. According to UN OCHA, a total of some 223,000 registered IDPs were reintegrated in five phases since April 2001, the last 12,800 of them in November 2002. Many more returned home spontaneously. Officially at least, this left no more IDPs in Sierra Leone.

However, Government and humanitarian agencies acknowledge that the presence of "small pockets of homeless and squatters" in Freetown remain a matter of concern (UN, 30 September 2003). Although to address this need, the government designated the former Waterloo and Grafton IDP camps as settlement areas, in July 2003 there were still 1,500 people sheltering at National Workshop and other 7,500 at Clay Factory (UN OCHA, 30 June 2003).

Return to new hardship

There has been harsh criticism, most notably by MSF, of the government-led resettlement programme. MSF claimed that the government, with the UN, has practically forced people to return – ahead of elections and ahead of the planting season in order to avoid food aid dependence for another agricultural season; that in many cases return could not be described as voluntary because IDPs were not given the information to make an informed decision; that inadequate support during both the transit and rehabilitation phases meant that IDPs were returning in neither safety nor dignity; and that in some cases resettlement was taking place to areas considered by the UN as too dangerous for its own staff (MSF, 12 April & 21 May 2002). Similarly, the US-based Women's Commission reported that, "while [IDP and refugee] returns have been deemed 'voluntary,' in reality they have faced enormous security, political and socio-economic pressures in their attempt to return home" (WCRWC, 31 October 2002).

Though since the beginning of 2003 some progress has been made towards reintegration in areas of return, much is yet to be done to re-establish livelihoods. Access to basic services in many areas of high resettlement need to be improved. Out of 150 chiefdoms, FAO ranked more than half as "high" or "extremely vulnerable". Opportunities to enhance the reintegration of youth remain inadequate to meet the real need (UN, 30 September 2003).

Protection concerns

Widespread human rights abuses committed to differing degrees by all sides to the conflict have been the main cause of internal displacement in Sierra Leone, and lack of adequate protection of internally displaced populations has been a major cause for concern. One reason for this was the collapse of the national law enforcement system. Large parts of the country were for a long time without police presence, and the national army was disbanded after its involvement in the 1997 military coup. Civilians outside rebel-held areas received some protection from civil defense militia and the West African ECOMOG forces. However,

as reported by Human Rights Watch, the merciless atrocities by the rebel forces in January 1999 against civilians in Freetown revealed a situation of inadequate protection of civilians throughout the country. During the 1999-2000 period when the 'peace process' was still intact, there were reports of rebel abuses against IDPs even within areas apparently under government control (HRW, 3 March 2000).

The Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels regularly abducted children, and both Amnesty International and Save the Children (SCF) reported that the use of children as combat soldiers both by RUF and pro-government forces continued during 2000. According to SCF, children constituted about 60 percent of IDPs and as many as 1.8 million children may at some time have been displaced since the outbreak of the war in 1991 – making them extremely vulnerable. More than 5,000 parents reported their children missing in the wake of the rebel attack on Freetown in January 1999 (UN OCHA, 6 December 2000).

Women have also been exposed to grave human rights abuses by fighters on all sides to the conflict. A study by Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), published in January 2002, revealed the extent of war-related sexual abuse against IDPs. One year later, a report by Human Rights Watch highlighted the 'widespread and systematic sexual violence' suffered by thousands of women and girls during the conflict in Sierra Leone (HRW, 15 January 2003).

A lasting peace?

Progress was seen in the commencement of work by both the South-African style Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the Special Court – mandated to arrest, try and convict those guilty of war crimes in Sierra Leone since November 1996 (Mail & Guardian, 11 October 2002). Clearly though, apart from the attention focused on the atrocities violating right to life and physical integrity, the Commission concentrates very little investigative efforts and public attention on the pattern, conditions and impact of a less high profile violation as forced displacement.

While the stability in Sierra Leone has improved, several causes for concern remain. The extremely volatile situation in neighbouring Liberia continues to threaten border areas. The influx of refugees from Liberia has once again heightened tensions and ultimately has had an impact on the humanitarian situation in Sierra Leone. The major downsizing of the UN peacekeeping force, UNAMSIL by 75% by the end of 2004, has heightened anxieties for many (USCR, 1 October 2003). Much will therefore depend on the Sierra Leone government's ability to maintain security and to consolidate its authority in all areas of the country, which will necessarily entail effective, equitable management of diamonds and other natural resources. It is agreed that other root causes of the conflict in Sierra Leone – including unemployment, poor education, crushing poverty, widespread corruption and a culture of impunity – still need to be addressed. Until these issues are tackled effectively, Sierra Leone's peace would remain a fragile one.

CAUSES AND BACKGROUND OF DISPLACEMENT

Background to the conflict

Chronology of significant events since independence (1961 - 2000)

1961: 27 April - Sierra Leone, which was founded as a haven for liberated slaves in the 18th century, receives independence from Britain with Milton Margai as prime minister.

1964: Milton Margai dies. Succeeded as prime minister by his half-brother, Albert Margai.

1967: Siaka Stevens - who in 1957 broke away from the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) to form his All People's party (APC) - is elected prime minister. However, he is prevented in a coup led by Brigadier Andrew Luxon-Smith from assuming his position.

1968: Stevens is returned to power in an army mutiny.

1971: Two assassination attempts on Stevens in one day. A March attempted coup suppressed with aid of Guinean troops.

April - Sierra Leone declared a republic. Stevens named president and head of government.

1973: Opposition SLPP does not contest general elections. Stevens, of the APC, is the sole candidate.

1976: March - Stevens re-elected to the presidency for a second five-year term.

1977: 1 February - Stevens, responding to student demonstrations, declares state of emergency which remains in effect for one year.

May - General elections held a year earlier than schedule following more political unrest.

1978: June - Referendum approves a new constitution that provides for a one-party state. APC becomes the sole legal party.

14 June - Stevens in for a seven-year term as president. SLPP MPs join APC.

1981: Increasing opposition to government following scandal involving government officials and several cabinet ministers in the misappropriation of public funds.

August - State of emergency declared to suppress a general strike against rising prices and food shortages.

December - Stevens assumes temporary control of the Ministry of Finance, following a second financial scandal implicating senior civil servants.

1982: May - General elections take place. Serious outbreak of violence.

1983: May - violence between political factions in Punjehun District results in heavy casualties.

1984: January - Student demonstrations against food shortages and rising prices leads to riots. Four people are killed. Late in the year, teachers and council workers strike through to early in 1985 after the government fails to pay salaries.

1985: April - Stevens announces he would retire at the end of his mandate later in the year. Maj-Gen Joseph Momoh runs for president unopposed and is elected to replace the ageing Siaka Stevens.

November - Relations between Sierra Leone and Liberia are strained after Liberian President Samuel Doe accuses the Freetown government of involvement in an attempted coup in Liberia. Doe closes the border which is reopened in August 1986.

1987: January - Student demonstration against inadequate food allowances results in violence.

March - The government announces it has foiled a coup in which at least 60 people are arrested. In early April, Vice President Francis Minah is arrested and later charged with treason.

1989: Minah and five others are executed for plotting to assassinate Momoh and overthrow his government.

1990: Early in the year, there is widespread popular support for multiparty politics which Momoh rejects in June.

1991: The Constitutional Review Commission submits draft for a multiparty system of government.

March - About 100 fighters based in Liberia cross the border into Sierra Leone in an attempt to overthrow Momoh, who had been supporting a Nigerian-led West African peacekeeping force, known as ECOMOG, which was preventing Liberia's Charles Taylor from capturing Monrovia. The fighters who invade Sierra Leone eventually call themselves the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and include Sierra Leonean dissidents and Liberian fighters loyal to Taylor. They are led by Foday Sankoh, a former photographer and ex-army sergeant, who reportedly had spent time training in Libya with Taylor.

April - Government launches retaliatory raid against RUF rebels in Liberia. Midyear, the army - with Ghanaian and Nigeria help - recaptures several RUF-held towns in the east and south of Sierra Leone. The government troops were also helped by 1,200 Liberian soldiers who fled to Sierra Leone in September 1990.

23-30 August - A national referendum on a new constitution is approved by 60 percent of voters in a 75-percent voter turnout.

September - Legislation is introduced permitting formation of political associations and a number of political parties are granted legal recognition.

Former Doe supporters - the United Liberation Movement of Liberia (ULIMO) attack National Patriotic Front of Liberia forces in northwest Liberia, from Sierra Leone.

1992: 30 April - President Momoh flees the country after believing a coup is in the making when Captain Valentine Strasser and other junior officers of the Sierra Leonean Army (SLA), go to State House to complain about the poor conditions for soldiers at the front, including lack of food and pay. The presidency lands in the lap of Strasser who dubs himself "The Redeemer" and establishes the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC). At the time Strasser, 26, was the world's youngest leader. He affirms his commitment to the introduction of multiparty politics. Meanwhile, the RUF gains strength and some members of the SLA, angry over their poor conditions, join the RUF's campaign, if only to discard their uniforms to loot at night and then step back into them by day. They become known as soldier-rebels, or "sobels".

1 May - Strasser formally convenes the NPRC.

6 May - Strasser is sworn in as head of state.

December - Attempted coup mounted by former army officers calling themselves the Anti-Corruption Revolutionary Movement. Nine suspected coup plotters and 17 other prisoners convicted in November on treason charges are executed.

1993: March - Nigeria, which had peacekeeping troops based in Monrovia, moves two battalions to Freetown to support Strasser and his war against the RUF.

November - Government announces it has pre-empted a coup after four British of Vietnamese origin - alleged to be mercenaries - are arrested in Freetown.

December - Government ends state of emergency that had been in force since April 1992.

1994: January - Strasser launches an army recruitment drive, more than doubling the military's ranks to about 12,000. Some of the new recruits, however, are street children as young as 12 years old.

1995: March - Strasser invites the South African private security company Executive Outcomes (EO) to help the government fight the RUF, which is closing in on the capital and controls much of the country's diamond areas. EO begins by training government troops and then defends the capital alongside West African peacekeepers.

December - EO expands its operations into the countryside and retakes a number of key diamond areas from the RUF. EO also begins to collaborate with a rural pro-government militia, the Kamajors. EO troops provide training and logistical support for the Kamajors, which are commanded by Hinga Norman, a former army captain. The RUF suffers a number of defeats and initiates peace negotiations with Strasser.

1996: January - Brig-Gen Julius Maada-Bio deposes Strasser in a palace coup one month short of general elections. The RUF demands the suspension of the elections until peace talks are held. However, arrangements are too advance for the elections to be called off.

26 February - Elections are held despite intimidation by the RUF.

29 March - Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, who worked for the UN Development Programme for 20 years, wins the country's first relatively free and fair election. He gets 59.4 percent of the votes in a second round. His party wins 51 of the 80-seat legislature. Kabbah appoints Hinga Norman as deputy minister of defence and agrees to keep on foreign security companies. His close relationship with the Kamajors angers the army.

November - A peace agreement is signed in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, between the Kabbah government and the RUF, stipulating that EO leave Sierra Leone by January 1997. Public opinion had turned against EO because of the high fees it charged - US \$1.8 million per month - and its activities in the country's diamond areas. However, EO's affiliate company, Lifeguard, stays on in Sierra Leone through security contracts with several mining companies.

1997: January - Executive Outcomes formally withdraws from Sierra Leone.

March - Sankoh is arrested on an arms charge in Nigeria.

25 May - Major Johnny Paul Koroma topples Kabbah, who flees to Guinea. Koroma, who was over-promoted with the army expansion under Strasser, suspends the constitution, abolishes political parties and establishes the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), including members of the Sierra Leonean Army. Days of looting by soldiers follow the coup. An attempt by Nigerian troops, backed by some South Africans working with Lifeguard, to oust the Koroma junta fails. Nigerian troops and foreigners are briefly trapped in Freetown's Mammy Yoko Hotel in Freetown.

June - Koroma invites the RUF to join the junta.

July - The British company Sandline is hired by allies of Kabbah with the financial support of Indian-born Thai banker Rakesh Saxena. He offers to provide up to US \$10 million for a counter-coup in Sierra Leone in exchange for diamond concessions.

October - UN Security Council adopts a resolution imposing sanctions against the regime in Sierra Leone, including barring the supply of arms and petroleum products.

December - A meeting is arranged between Kabbah and Sandline. Saxena is arrested in Canada on charges of possessing a forged Yugoslavian passport.

1998: 13 February - Nigerian-led West African troops, backed by logistical and intelligence support from Sandline, and the Kamajors storm Freetown, ousting the AFRC/RUF junta. The RUF and AFRC, including members of the SLA, retreat to the countryside.

9 March - Nigerian-led peacekeepers return Kabbah to power.

October - High Court in Sierra Leone sentences Sankoh to death for his role in the 1997 coup. Kabbah makes repeated calls for rebel forces to surrender and offers amnesty.

1999: January - A mixture of RUF rebels and former Sierra Leonean Army troops launch an assault on Freetown, seizing parts of the city from ECOMOG. The peacekeepers retake control of the capital, but not before at least 5,000 people are killed and many neighborhoods lay in ruins. Thousands of other people are abducted by rebel forces. Many are used for forced labour, as sex slaves or terrorized into joining the rebel army.

April - Sankoh is temporarily released from prison and allowed by Kabbah to go to Togo for internal consultations with his field commanders in capital, Lome.

May - Rebels submit their peace proposal to Togolese President Gnassingbe Eyadema, who is leading regional mediation efforts to end the war. The RUF calls for Sankoh's release as a condition for negotiations to end the fighting.

July - Peace accord signed between government and RUF. Controversy surrounds a clause that provides a blanket amnesty following years of atrocities that included rape, mutilation and the killing of civilians. The accord also provides for the establishment of a unity government that includes members of the RUF and former AFRC junta. Sankoh becomes the country's minister for mineral resources, including diamonds.

August - Former SLA soldiers hold several UN officials, ECOMOG troops, journalists and others hostage. Most are released within a week. RUF commanders who were also held were freed a month later.

October - Sankoh and Koroma return to Freetown.

November - UN troops begin arriving to replace West African peacekeepers. Security Council expresses concern about ceasefire violations.

2000: February - UN Security Council expands size of the UN Mission in Sierra Leone, UNAMSIL, from 6,000 to 11,100 and revised its mandate to provide security at key locations, including government buildings and sites used in the country's disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programme. It is also to help law enforcement authorities. (Secretary-General Kofi Annan later asks for the troop strength to be increased to 13,000 and then to 20,500.)

April - Rebels attack UN forces in the east of the country, seize weapons and equipment.

May - More than 500 UN peacekeepers are abducted by the RUF. Sankoh, accused of obstructing the peace process, is captured by pro-government forces and imprisoned nearly two weeks after a demonstration by thousands of people who marched to his home in Freetown. At least four of the demonstrators are shot dead by RUF fighters. The abducted peacekeepers are eventually released. British troops arrive in Freetown to evacuate British nationals if security deteriorates. British advisers also arrive to provide support for the UN forces.

June - The Kabbah government ratifies a treaty to establish an International Criminal Court for Sierra Leone. The issue of trying child soldiers raises controversy because many were forced to join armed factions and to carry out atrocities.

July - The UN Security Council imposes an 18-month ban on the trade of uncertified rough diamonds from Sierra Leone to stem sale of the gems by rebel forces for arms. The last batch of detained UN peacekeepers rescued by UN forces.

August - West Side Boys hold 11 British troops hostage. They release five but keep the six others hostage. The RUF gets a new leader, Issa Sesay, to replace Sankoh.

September - British paratroopers attack the camp of the West Side Boys in the Occra Hills and rescue the detained British troops. One British soldier and 25 West Side Boys are killed. Most of the remaining West Side Boys surrender later. India announces its decision to withdraw its troops from UNAMSIL following a dispute with Nigerian officers in the force. Jordan also decides to withdraw from UNAMSIL.

November - Secretary-General Kofi Annan names Lt-Gen Daniel Opande, of Kenya, to replace Maj-Gen Vijay Jetley, of India, as commander of UNAMSIL. The Lome peace accord is revisited. Ceasefire agreement is signed between the government and RUF which is to be reviewed each 30 days. A taskforce of 500 British Royal Marines arrive in Freetown to reinforce British troops who are already training the Sierra Leonean military.

December - The British Ministry of Defence announces that 300 Gurkha soldiers are to help train the Sierra Leone Army. " (IRIN-WA 29 December 2000)

Historical outline of the first eight years of conflict (1991-1998)

- Conflict characterised by a breakdown in law and order – not a civil war between ethnic groups
- Rebels from the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) crossed the border from Liberia in 1991 and were by 1994 operating throughout Sierra Leone
- Elections and return to civilian rule led by President Kabbah (February 1996)
- Signing of Abidjan peace accord in November 1996
- President Kabbah overthrown in a coup by the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) on 25 May 1997
- Anarchy following the coup causes Freetown residents to flee to interior regions
- Nigerian led ECOMOG troops initially told to enforce economic embargo following May 1997 coup, but later mandated to oust the AFRC/RUF junta
- ECOMOG defeats military junta and President Kabbah returns (March 1998)
- Hundreds of casualties and widespread looting as retreating rebels and soldiers terrorised civilians February/March 1998)
- Continued fighting involving ECOMOG and mobile armed groups in northern and eastern Sierra Leone (second half of 1998)

"It has been suggested that the war in Sierra Leone should be understood as a breakdown in law and order and not as a civil war [...]. A special feature of the Sierra Leonean conflict which distinguishes it from many other recent internal conflicts is that the fighting parties do not identify themselves with a specific ethnic group. Therefore it can be seen as a conflict not based on ethnicity [...]. Although relations between ethnic groups are held to be competitive, there is little ethnic strife in Sierra Leone [...]" (UNHCR November 1998, p.5)

"The conflict in Sierra Leone began in 1991 when rebels from the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) crossed the border from Liberia, allegedly with the support of the leader of the National Patriotic Front in Liberia, Charles Taylor. During the first two years of the ensuing rebellion, the government of Sierra Leone was successful in confining the conflict to the southern and eastern areas of the country, yet the harshness with which it dealt with alleged rebel supporters resulted in support for the rebels. [...] By 1994, it [RUF] was operating throughout Sierra Leone, and by early 1995 it seemed poised to enter Freetown and overcome the government. The rebel force had overextended itself, however, and with the help of foreign mercenaries the government managed to repel it." (Beattie 1998, p. 53)

"Throughout the course of the war, the RUF mutated from a handful of poorly armed dissidents to a much larger, highly mobile and destructive guerrilla force. It also slowly evolved into a recognized interlocutor in negotiations and, with the signing of the Lomé Peace Agreement in July 1999, a component of an otherwise elected government. While the RUF began with a more broadly based leadership, Sankoh has been the most visible leader of the movement from the outset. Eventually it was able to establish a semblance of a civilian administration in some areas under its control, while remaining primarily a coercive military organization. At its core was Sankoh as the 'director of ideology', as well as a War (and later Peace) Council made up of senior members of the movement. Often riven by internal dissent and rivalries, the RUF managed to retain a fairly high degree of cohesiveness through more than nine years of war." (Conciliation Resources September 2000, "The Revolutionary United Front")

"In February 1996 Sierra Leone's first free and fair elections in almost three decades returned the country to civilian rule. Voters defied outbreaks of violence and sabotage by the RUF to elect Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, a former UN technocrat and leader of the country's oldest political party, the SLPP, as president. Although RUF boycotted the elections, Mr Kabbah and RUF's leader, Corporal Foday Sankoh, signed a far-reaching peace agreement in November 1996 that provided, *inter alia*, for the transformation of the RUF into a political party. Peace remained elusive, however, with continuing violence variously attributed to rebels, soldiers or so-called sobels (soldiers by day, rebels by night). Growing discontent within the military and increasingly violent rebel attacks coincided with the emergence and increasing popularity of "Kamajors", a civil militia of traditional hunters." (EIU 1998, p. 40)

"Despite the cease-fire and peace agreement, fighting continued between government forces, foreign mercenaries, traditional militias or Kamajors and RUF fighters in the districts of Kenema, Kailahun and Pujehun. March and April [1997] ushered in further unrest in the Northern province. The conflict culminated on 25 May 1997, when President Kabbah was overthrown in a coup by the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) led by Major Johnny Paul Koroma. A coalition was then formed between the AFRC and the RUF, which collapsed in early 1998 when the AFRC was ousted." (Beattie 1998, p.54)

"ECOWAS [Economic Community of West African States] and ECOMOG [ECOWAS' Cease-fire Monitoring Group] have played key roles in recent political negotiations and military interventions respectively in Sierra Leone. As part of bilateral security accords, Nigerian forces and Guinean forces have been in Sierra Leone since 1995 to help the NPRC and, later, the Kabbah government to fight the RUF. The Nigerian and Guinean forces were in Sierra Leone at the time of the May 25, 1997 coup, and later reinforced ECOMOG's efforts to oust the AFRC/RUF.

Following the 1997 coup, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) called on ECOWAS to restore constitutional order to Sierra Leone. When their negotiations with the AFRC/RUF failed to achieve progress, ECOWAS imposed an economic embargo, which was later reinforced by an October 1997 U.N. Security Council global arms and oil embargo and restrictions on international travel by AFRC/RUF members and their families. ECOMOG enforced these sanctions with the permission of ECOWAS and the Security Council. With the failure of diplomatic efforts and the escalation of tension, ECOMOG's mandate was upgraded from sanction enforcement to actual military intervention to oust the AFRC/RUF." (HRW July 1998, p.36)

"In October 1997 the AFRC agreed to a cease-fire and six-part peace plan that provided the reinstatement of Mr. Kabbah as president within six months. However, crucial deadlines – including the disarmament of all combatants – were missed, and it became evident that the junta did not intend to honour the agreement. Instead, it was ousted from power by a military offensive of the Economic Community of West African States Cease-fire Monitoring Group [ECOMOG] in February 1998, and on March 10th Mr. Kabbah returned to the capital as president. Although Freetown was secured relatively quickly, the military intervention resulted in hundreds of casualties and widespread looting as retreating rebels and soldiers terrorised civilians in towns and villages throughout the interior." (EIU 1998, p.41)

[The ECOMOG operation in Sierra Leone received in July 1998 support by the UN Security Council, which] "Commends the positive role of ECOWAS and ECOMOG in their efforts to restore peace, security and stability throughout the country at the request of the Government of Sierra Leone, and notes the role of ECOMOG in assisting the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration plan adopted by the Government of Sierra Leone, including the provision of security and responsibility for arms collection and destruction." (UN SC 13 July 1998, para 5.)

"Despite the return of the democratically elected Government of Sierra Leone in March 1998, conflict continues to plague the efforts of the majority to recover the psychological, economic and humanitarian results of the junta period. The hostilities between ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) and junta elements have spread over a larger area of northern and eastern Sierra Leone. The persistent insecurity is not due to an expansion of territory by the rebels, as they hold very little ground in the traditional military sense. It is attributable to a strategy of using mobile armed groups which touch on still larger parts of the country. The rebels have systematically committed massive human rights [violations] including mutilations, sexual exploitation, and forced recruitment of child soldiers to wage a desperate and senseless campaign of terror on rural civilians. While pro-government forces control most of the arterial road networks and major population centres, junta remnants roaming the bush have presented a more formidable obstacle to the provision of humanitarian assistance" (UN December 1998, p.1)

"At the end of 1998, the security situation deteriorated rapidly, and on 6 January 1999, rebel forces entered Freetown. Several thousands of people were killed, countless atrocities were committed and many buildings destroyed. ECOMOG forces succeeded in stabilising the situation, and the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF agreed to a ceasefire agreement in May 1999." (FCO December 2000)

For a chronological overview of the civil war, see IRIN chronology of significant events since independence (29 December 2000)

The European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation has also available an analysis of the conflict dynamic, see: "Sierra Leone Real Battles Lie Ahead (September 2000)"

Continued conflict despite the signing of the Lomé peace agreement (July 1999-May 2000)

- Peace agreement signed 7 July 1999 includes permanent cessation of hostilities, the transformation of RUF/SL into a political party and the creation of a broad-based Government of National Unity
- Provision for the release of all conflict-related prisoners and abductees and the resettlement of refugees and displaced persons
- UN not recognising amnesty provisions in accord
- Improved security situation reported between end of May and end of July 1999
- Reports during second half of 1999 that conflict between rebel forces undermines the stability and causes new displacements
- Reports by March 2000 of little progress in disarmament in the northern and eastern parts of Sierra Leone
- Peace process derailed as RUF attacks UN peacekeepers in May 2000

" [P]eace negotiations between the Government of Sierra Leone and RUF began on 25 May 1999 in Lomé, Togo, hosted and mediated by President Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo in his capacity as Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The proceedings were supported by a Facilitation Committee consisting of the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), ECOWAS and the Commonwealth of Nations under the chairmanship of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Togo, Joseph Koffigoh, assisted by my [the UN SG] Special Representative, Francis Okelo.

[...]

[On 7 July 1999 the] Lomé Peace Agreement was signed by President Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah on behalf of the Government of Sierra Leone and by Corporal Foday Sankoh on behalf of the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone, as well as by President Eyadema, President Compaore of Burkina Faso, President Taylor of Liberia, President Obasanjo of Nigeria and high-level representatives of Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, ECOWAS, OAU, the Commonwealth of Nations and the United Nations.

[...]

The agreement provides for the permanent cessation of hostilities, to be monitored at provincial and district levels through Ceasefire Monitoring Committees and, at the national level, through a Joint Monitoring Committee. Governance provisions include, *inter alia*, the transformation of RUF/SL into a political party and its access to public office; the creation of a broad-based Government of National Unity through cabinet appointments for representatives of RUF/SL; the creation of a Commission for the Consolidation of Peace to supervise the implementation of the peace agreement; the establishment of a Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development, to be chaired personally by the leader of RUF/SL, Corporal Foday Sankoh, with the status of Vice-President of Sierra Leone; and the establishment of a Council of Elders and Religious Leaders to mediate any disputes arising from differences in the interpretation of the agreement.

The agreement provides for the pardon of Corporal Foday Sankoh and a complete amnesty for any crimes committed by members of the fighting forces during the conflict from March 1991 up until the date of the signing of the agreement; a review of the present Constitution of Sierra Leone; and the holding of elections in line with the Constitution, to be directed by a National Electoral Commission. I instructed my Special Representative to sign the agreement with the explicit proviso that the United Nations holds the understanding that the amnesty and pardon in article IX of the agreement shall not apply to international crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious violations of international humanitarian law.

Regarding post-conflict military and security issues, the agreement stipulates the revision of the mandate of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG); a request for a new mandate for UNOMSIL; the

encampment, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants; the restructuring and training of a new Sierra Leone armed forces; and the withdrawal of mercenaries.

Concerning humanitarian, human rights and socio-economic issues, the agreement provides for the release of all conflict-related prisoners and abductees; the resettlement of refugees and displaced persons; the guarantee and promotion of human rights, including the establishment of a Human Rights Commission and a Truth and Reconciliation Commission; the safe and unhindered access by humanitarian organizations to all parts of the country; the security of humanitarian goods and personnel; and post-war rehabilitation and assistance to victims of war." (UN SC 30 July 1999, paras. 4-9)

In July 1999 it was reported that:

"The military and security situation in Sierra Leone has improved significantly since the ceasefire agreement took effect on 24 May and has remained generally calm since the signing of the agreement. While some, mostly minor, ceasefire violations have occurred, including reports of rebel raids on villages, the number of incidents of open hostilities has dropped considerably. ECOMOG, CDF and RUF and former Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) forces have generally remained within their areas of control.

RUF/SL and AFRC continue to dominate much of the Northern and Eastern Provinces. In the western parts of the country, their forces are concentrated in the areas west of the main highway from Freetown between Occra Hills, Port Loko and Kambia. The road to Guinea via Kambia is also controlled by RUF/SL and AFRC personnel, but they have assured UNOMSIL that an unhindered flow of traffic will be allowed." (UN SC 30 July 1999, paras. 24-26)

Towards the end of 1999, reports emerged both about fighting between rebel groups and atrocities against civilians:

"Deteriorating security conditions throughout the country have reversed gains in access and prevented further expansion of humanitarian activity despite commitments by all parties of the Lomé Agreement to allow unhindered access countrywide. In particular, during the October RUF/AFRC clashes at Makeni, humanitarian agencies were targeted for looting and harassment. Much of the stolen property has not yet been returned. A further result of the fighting has been the displacement of more than 1,500 civilians to Kabala and the suspension of assistance to vulnerable groups. Disturbingly high rates of malnutrition previously assessed in other areas of the northern and eastern provinces remain unaddressed." (UN SC 6 December 1999, paras. 21, 25)

"Progress in other areas of the peace process has been slow. There has been little progress in disarmament in the northern and eastern parts of the country, while rebel groups continued to interfere with humanitarian activities and UNAMSIL patrols and to harass the civilian population in those areas.

[...]

While there have been some improvements in the security situation, it generally remained tense and volatile. The security environment in the Lungi area improved significantly, mostly as a result of extensive UNAMSIL patrols, but tension remained around the Occra Hills area and in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. Cease fire violations there included ambushes against civilians, the maintenance of illegal roadblocks, movements of RUF troops from the Makeni area to Kono in the early part of February, and obstruction of peacekeeping operations." (SC 7 March 2000, paras. 6 & 10)

The security situation worsened dramatically in May 2000:

"In early May, the peace process rapidly deteriorated, following a series of RUF attacks on UN peacekeepers. The RUF, claiming that UNAMSIL was forcibly disarming its men, destroyed the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) camps in Makeni and Magbruaka and took 500 UN Peacekeepers hostage in Makeni, Magbruaka and Kailahun." (UN July 2000, p.3)

For more information about the peace process, see the report by Conciliation Resources titled "Paying the Price: the Sierra Leone Peace Process" (September 2000), as well as the related seminar report

titled: "Sierra Leone Peace Process: Learning from the Past to Address Current Challenges" (27 September 2000)

Peace process derailed as security situation worsened dramatically in May 2000

- Several RUF attacks on UN peacekeepers, Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) camps in Makeni and Magbruaka destroyed and 500 UN Peacekeepers taken hostage
- RUF leader Chairman Foday Sankoh arrested
- Rebel advances in early July 2000 towards Masiaka, 40 kms from Freetown
- RUF attacks in Port Loko area by end-August 2000
- Military gains by pro-government forces diluted by dissension between the AFRC and the new Sierra Leone Army (August 2000)
- Issa Sesay designated an interim RUF leader RUF on 21 August
- RUF appearing as a less coherent rebel force during second half of 2000, and there are claims that RUF have come more directly under President Taylor's control

"In early May, the peace process rapidly deteriorated, following a series of RUF attacks on UN peacekeepers. The RUF, claiming that UNAMSIL was forcibly disarming its men, destroyed the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) camps in Makeni and Magbruaka and took 500 UN Peacekeepers hostage in Makeni, Magbruaka and Kailahun. Responding to the situation, the Government arrested RUF leader Chairman Foday Sankoh, as well as more than 100 RUF officials in Freetown. The brief deployment on 7 May of British troops and the demobilisation of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC)/ex-SLA and Civil Defense Forces in a new pro-government alliance helped to stabilise the situation in the Freetown area. This allowed the return of most UN and NGO civilian staff who were evacuated in the early days of the crisis. However, since May, insecurity has spread throughout the country leading to a steady influx of Sierra Leoneans into safer locations, including the Freetown and Lungi peninsula, Mile 91 junction and Port Loko town as well as Forecariah, Guinea. Although all the detained UN personnel have now been released, 222 Indian peacekeepers remain surrounded by the RUF in Kailahun." (UN July 2000, p.3)

"The political and security situation continues to dominate humanitarian response in Sierra Leone since hostilities resumed in early May. In June, the rebel Revolutionary United Front (RUF), and an assortment of pro-government forces, battled for control of strategic towns in the northern province. Several skirmishes occurred in Masiaka, Kabala, Port Loko, Lunsar and Rogbere Junction. In some cases rebels have directly engaged the UN Peacekeeping Force, UNAMSIL. In early July, RUF attacked and dislodged the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) at Masiaka, 40 kms from Freetown, compelling UNAMSIL forces to move in and re-take the key junction town linking Freetown to Lungi peninsula and the interior of the country. The fragile security situation deteriorated as the pro-government alliance of SLA, AFRC (forces loyal to the previous junta regime) and Civil Defense Force (CDF) militia weakened. Dissension between the AFRC and the new Sierra Leone Army diluted military gains by pro-government forces, and resulted in the fall of the strategic town of Lunsar. Loss of control over the AFRC faction (also known as the West Side Boys) prompted the Government to call on the AFRC to surrender and give up their arms to UNAMSIL by 11th July. The West Side Boys rebuffed the order and instead withdrew into the Ocra Hills. The security situation along the Freetown peninsula continues to be tense but stable. Routine patrols by UNAMSIL troops, spot checks on vehicles, and cordon and search operations mounted by the peacekeeping force have intensified lately. The Southern Region and Kenema District are also calm. The Makeni, Magburaka, Lunsar, Kambia, Koidu and Kailahun areas are still inaccessible to humanitarian agencies." (UNICEF 28 August 2000)

"Due to the re-installment of UNAMSIL MILOBS and the appointment of a new SLA Battalion Commander for the troops based at Port Loko, the security situation within the town improved in the past

few weeks. However, on 23 August, the RUF counter-attacked, pushed the SLA back to Port Loko and engaged the NIBATT II position (to the East of the town) for two hours. On the following day, the SLA pushed back northwards. NIBATT II suffered two casualties and the pro-government fighters also had two wounded in action. RUF casualties were unknown at the time of writing. The SLAs are deployed to the North, towards Mange Bridge, and with the CDF have been active against the RUF around the Bridge." (OCHA 27 August 2000)

"Although the May crisis rendered some provisions of the Lome Peace Agreement invalid, there is a near complete consensus among international and local stakeholders that the Peace Agreement can still effectively provide a framework for the resumption of peace talks. However, the detained RUF leader Mr. Foday Sankoh has been widely accepted as being an unreliable partner in peace, following his role in sparking the May hostilities.

As a result, the RUF on 21 August designated an interim leader, Mr. Issa Sesay. UNAMSIL has established informal contacts with Mr. Sesay in order to secure the release of stolen UNAMSIL weapons and reach an agreement on the cessation of the hostilities, as pre-conditions to the resumption of peace negotiations. However, these contacts are yet to produce a meaningful political dialogue with the RUF, who continue to insist on the release of their leader, Mr. Sankoh. Meanwhile some Force Commanders, in particular in the north, appear not to respect Mr. Sesay's authority as the interim leader of the RUF. Not surprisingly, some RUF elements seem bent on maintaining hostilities within the country." (UN November 2000, pp.11-12)

"The rebel force [RUF], meanwhile, has splintered into four different factions. First there was a highly public falling out between Sankoh and one of his most fearsome field commanders, Bockarie. He fled to Liberia in December 1999 and has since been involved in training a new rebel force, allegedly out of the Liberian army base in Gbatala and with the aid of a former South African army colonel, Fred Rindle, who previously helped the Unita rebels in Angola. Towards the end of June, troop movements were reported from Liberia into Sierra Leone's diamond areas. The Liberian government hotly denies any involvement and continues to state its commitment to peace in Sierra Leone. Second, the AFRC/RUF alliance disintegrated when the former coup leader Johnny Paul Koroma announced he would be working with the Kabbah government." (EPCPT September 2000)

"There appear to be splits within the RUF. These are not new. In April 1997 one group of senior RUF members denounced Sankoh's leadership because he did not support the Abidjan Accord. They were taken prisoner and tortured. Some never reappeared. It is unclear whether the RUF now operates cohesively as a single unit. Junior members were sent to sign the November 2000 cease-fire, for example. It is uncertain exactly who has authority to represent the movement and ensure that it adheres to a peace agreement.

With Sankoh's imprisonment, the RUF appears to have come more directly under President Taylor's control. Issa Sesay has been announced as 'interim leader', although it is not clear on whose authority. The 'interim' nature of the appointment is presumably meant to indicate that Sankoh remains in theory the overall leader despite his imprisonment. Sesay's appointment appears not to have total support but is most likely backed by President Taylor. Some leaders, such as Dennis 'Superman' Mingo, have opposed Sesay's more moderate line, while there are reports that Sam 'Mosquito' Bockarie may be trying to exert more influence after disagreeing with Sankoh and taking refuge in Liberia. But Bockarie's position is uncertain since it was reported in January 2001 that Taylor had expelled him from Liberia, probably to distance himself from visible connections with the RUF.

Further confusion has fuelled uncertainty about who speaks for the RUF. On 22 November 2000 media reports quoted RUF spokesperson Gibril Massaquoi as alleging that the RUF was divided over the cease-fire signed earlier in the month, and the majority of combatants no longer took orders from Sesay. This was later denied. The RUF appears broadly divided into two commands. The eastern command has two main brigades, one centred around Kono and Tongo diamond areas to secure those resources and the communication routes to Liberia. The northern command, with four brigades, is located in the Magburaka,

Makeni area. The division poses difficulties for obtaining full RUF acquiescence to any peace agreement." (ICG 11 April 2001, p.16)

See also: "UN Peacekeeping mission (UNAMSIL) to facilitate implementation of peace agreement (2000)" [Internal link]

For more information about the peace process, see the report by Conciliation Resources titled "Paying the Price: the Sierra Leone Peace Process" (September 2000), as well as the related seminar report titled: "Sierra Leone Peace Process: Learning from the Past to Address Current Challenges" (27 September 2000)

For further information about the progress of the peace process or the UN mission (UNAMSIL), see the regular reports by the Secretary General to the Security Council.

Relatively stable security situation since signing of cease-fire agreement in Abuja on 10 November 2000

- Concern expressed by the UN in March 2001 that the RUF leadership in the East showed few signs of being ready to demobilise
- Reported in April 2001 that RUF was reluctant to allow Government of Sierra Leone (GOSL) administration establish after UNAMSIL deployment to new areas
- Agreed at meeting in Abuja in May 2001 to continue the cease-fire, and to move the peace process forward
- Rebel commitment to ceasefire and disarming confirmed at meeting in Freetown on 15 May 2001
- Agreement to deploy the UN peacekeeping forces (UNAMSIL) to the diamond-producing areas in the east
- Reported in mid-June 2001 that the fighting factions continued to support the peace process and that a total of 3,855 combatants had disarmed in Port Loko, Kambia, Wilberforce (Freetown) Daru and Lunsar
- Clashes between CDF and RUF in the Kono district halted following intensive discussions between UNAMSIL and the local commanders of the two groups

"After intensive consultations between the Government, ECOWAS and UNAMSIL, a meeting with RUF was convened at Abuja on 10 November [2000], which resulted in the signing of a ceasefire agreement between the Government and RUF. The agreement provided for a monitoring role for UNAMSIL; full liberty for the United Nations to deploy throughout the country; unimpeded movement of humanitarian workers, goods and people throughout the country; the return of UNAMSIL weapons and other equipment seized by RUF; the immediate resumption of the programme of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; and a review of the implementation of the agreement after 30 Days." (UN SC 15 December 2000, para. 2)

"The Government of Sierra Leone has established its own indirect contacts with RUF, primarily through traditional leaders and relatives. However, the slow pace at which RUF is implementing aspects of the Abuja Agreement, which were intended to build confidence and pave the way for a political dialogue, has not helped to remove the deep apprehension about the rebels' intentions.

In its contacts with UNAMSIL and through public statements, the RUF leadership has continued to indicate that the rebel movement will not disarm unless the present Government is replaced by an inclusive

interim government when its term of office expires on 28 March. They have also demanded that both the Sierra Leone Army and the Civil Defence Force be disarmed and that imprisoned RUF leaders be released. [...]

During the reporting period, the ceasefire continued to hold in the country and the military and security situation remained relatively calm. However, UNAMSIL continued to receive reports of fighting at the border areas with Guinea, and of the Guinean military operations against RUF positions in the Kambia district in response to rebel attacks across the border. Attempts by the Sierra Leone Army to move towards RUF positions in the area of Mange Bridge also created some tensions locally." (UN SC 14 March 2001, paras, 7, 8, 17)

"[...], while some divisions of the RUF are still committed to brokering peace and engaged in active negotiations, the leadership in the East shows few signs of being ready to demobilise. Indeed, in recent contacts the RUF have become increasingly bellicose in their statements. As the Government has deferred elections and extended their term in office, the RUF are no longer recognising Kabbah's Government as the legitimate ruling body in Sierra Leone. They claim that the ceasefire is now sham and are calling for the immediate dissolution of the present Government to be replaced by a representative interim Government until democratic elections can be held. President Kabbah has made it quite clear that the RUF have forfeited their right to a part in the political process and cannot and do not have any recognised political standing. Certainly, the ceasefire has arrived at a stalemate. Current stability is tentative and it is anticipated that the only way forward is for some decisive action to be taken on the part of either the GoSL or the RUF." (UN 23 March 2001, "Sierra Leone")

"[Reported by mid-April that] Contacts between the RUF High Command and UNAMSIL continue. According to UNAMSIL, the RUF continue to repeatedly press for the same demands, including the release of their leader, Corporal Foday Sankoh. However, of particular concern is their continued refusal to allow Government of Sierra Leone (GOSL) administration to follow UNAMSIL re-deployment until they [the RUF] are represented within an interim government. UNAMSIL Force Commander General Opande has stressed that the return of the SLP and government administration is non-negotiable. In this connection, the situation in Lunsar remains difficult and according to UNAMSIL, this pattern of behaviour is likely to occur in Makeni and Magburaka. NGOs should therefore be aware that the security situation is likely to remain tense in these locations until UNAMSIL and the GOSL are fully in control." (OCHA 19 April 2001)

"In Sierra Leone, some progress is being made in the implementation of the Abuja Cease-fire Agreement signed between the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) and the RUF on 10 November 2000. According to UNAMSIL, the cease-fire has been largely maintained, despite one isolated incident in April, involving a Civil Defence Forces (CDF) attack on RUF positions in the East. At a review meeting of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Committee of Six, also attended by representatives of the GoSL, the RUF and the UN, on 2 May [2001] in Abuja, both parties agreed to continue maintaining the cease-fire, and to take significant steps towards moving the peace process forward. In particular, the RUF agreed to withdraw from the border areas of Kambia and allow the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) to deploy there." (OCHA 21 May 2001)

"Rival forces in Sierra Leone's long-running war agreed on Tuesday [15 May 2001] to stop fighting and allow the UN mission in the country, UNAMSIL, to guarantee the free movement of people and goods nationwide.

The agreement was signed in the capital, Freetown, at a meeting called to hammer out a timetable for the simultaneous disarmament of Civil Defence Forces (CDF) and Revolutionary United Front (RUF) fighters. In a communique released at the end of the day-long session, chaired by the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, the CDF and RUF agreed that they needed to tell UNAMSIL where their fighters and arms were located." (IRIN 16 May 2001)

"The peace process in Sierra Leone, and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) program, have been gaining positive momentum in the last few weeks. Recent negotiations between the

principal parties to the 10 year civil conflict have led to the rapid disarmament of more than 3,500 combatants from both the RUF and pro-Government militia forces, the release of almost 600 child soldiers, and agreement to deploy the UN peacekeeping forces (UNAMSIL) to the diamond-producing areas in the east of the country to be followed by further disarmament of an estimated 24,000 remaining combatants. The Government and the UN, in consultation with the RUF and the civil defense forces, have agreed on a timetable to respond to these developments in as quick and realistic a fashion as possible given current UN troop strength and logistical challenges. While extremely welcomed, these recent developments and the rapid restart of the DDR program place a significant financial strain on the Government and on the remaining resources in the World Bank administered Trust Fund that supports the Sierra Leone DDR Program." (World Bank 12 June 2001)

"The reporting period [May-June 2001] saw the continued support of the fighting factions towards the peace process, notwithstanding the stall in the disarmament process earlier this month, as government authorities struggled to construct new Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) camps, to receive the sudden flood of ex-combatants waiting to hand over their weapons.

[...]

Since the recommencement of the DDR programme on May 18th a total of 3,855 combatants (until June 13th) have disarmed in Port Loko, Kambia, Wilberforce (Freetown) Daru and Lunsar. NCDDR reports that out of a total of 3,296 that have so far disarmed in Port Loko and Kambia, 3,249 have been demobilised and 2,953 have been discharged from the Port Loko demobilisation centre. (OCHA 16 June 2001)

"Nearly all of the decisions taken at the meeting held on 2 May in Abuja and at the follow-up meeting on 15 May in Freetown have been implemented. The disarmament of RUF and CDF in the Kambia and Port Loko districts and the withdrawal of RUF from Kambia were completed on schedule. The Sierra Leone army started deploying to the Kambia district on 29 May and completed the deployment on 31 May. RUF released a total of 591 child combatants on 25 May and a further 178 on 4 June. The process of releasing more children is ongoing. The clashes between CDF and RUF in the Kono district were halted following intensive discussions between UNAMSIL leadership and the local commanders of the two groups, who agreed to begin immediate disarmament in the district." (UN SC 25 June 2001, para.11)

The text of the Abuja agreement can be accessed through the source section below!

See also the analysis of the prospects for peace by the International Crisis Group issued in April 2001

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

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

"The full deployment of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) has led to a secure environment, with increased freedom of movement, gradual return of refugees and a resurgence of economic activity in the provinces, Secretary-General Kofi Annan says in a just-released report." (UN News Service 18 December 2001)

"Disarmament of former fighters under the Sierra Leone government's disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programme has formally ended, UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) spokesperson Margaret Novicki told IRIN on Monday. Demobilisation was, however, continuing, she said.

According to Novicki, 45,449 former combatants handed over weapons to the authorities between 18 May 2001 and 6 January 2002. The collection of weapons not covered under DDR was still going on under a community arms collection (CAC) programme, she added." (IRIN 7 January 2001)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He noted that 'while this day symbolizes an end, it also symbolizes a beginning-a new beginning for more than 46,000 men and women of this nation,' referring to the ex-combatants. He appealed to the international community for support for the reintegration programme, because the 'financial resources required face a serious shortfall.' (UNAMSIL, 18 January 2002)

Regional efforts to maintain peace in Sierra Leone (2002)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Those tasks include logistic support to the National Electoral Commission as well as the provision of wider security and deterrence throughout the period of preparation for the elections, the polling period itself, and the period immediately after the announcement of the election results. The Mission was in part mandated to assist in the transport of electoral materials and personnel, especially to hard-to-reach areas, and to facilitate the free movement of people, goods and humanitarian assistance throughout the country." (UN News Service, 20 May 2002)

Sierra Leone's special court and truth and reconciliation commission start work (2002-2003)

- Special court - set up by treaty between the Sierra Leone government and UN - has a 3 year mandate to find, arrest, try and convict those guilty of war crimes in Sierra Leone since November 1996
- First arrests are made in March 2003, including two prominent RUF rebel commanders and the former head of the Kamajor militia
- The country's South-African style Truth and Reconciliation Commission began hearings in April 2003

"The special court has moved quickly since President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah officially declared the war over in January.

Set up in March by treaty between the Sierra Leonean government and the United Nations, it aims to avoid the cost and inertia of the Rwanda genocide tribunal.

Operating with a \$58-million budget, only one-sixth of the Rwandan tribunal's, and a much smaller group of staff, the court has a three-year mandate to find, arrest, try and convict those guilty of war crimes in Sierra Leone since November 1996. The Rwandan tribunal has convicted only eight in seven years.

Bulldozers are already clearing recently acquired land in the capital, Freetown, for a new court house and registry.

The court is accountable to a management committee comprising states that have contributed to it, and it is not bound by UN employment rules or UN bureaucracy. If successful, it may become a model for future war crimes tribunals.

Indeed the big number of Americans in senior positions may suggest that it is a United States attempt to thwart the setting up of a permanent international criminal court. Crane denies that interpretation.

Since arriving in Sierra Leone six weeks ago, the energetic 52-year-old former judge advocate in the US army has shown clearly that he is determined to complete his task in the allotted three years.

He says he is here to listen to his clients, 'the people of Sierra Leone'. In his first trip outside the capital to visit the areas most affected by the war, he whizzed around Tomboudou, leaving his police escort and others puffing in his wake. Africa is not used to such hyperactivity.

The willingness of the local people to show him what happened might give Crane the impression that his task will be easy. Identifying the baddies should be straightforward because Sierra Leone is a small country of about five million people. It is hard to hide here.

People such as Gbamanja are quite open about who ordered the massacres, rapes and torture. In Tomboudou, he says, it was 'Staff' Al Haji Bayo. Everyone around us agreed. He should not be hard to find. He is an officer in the newly British-trained Sierra Leonean army.

This is where the real contamination starts. Bayo was not a member of the RUF. He had been an officer in the army. In 1997 junior officers overthrew Kabbah's government and teamed up with the RUF. Together they committed some of the worst atrocities.

To complicate matters, the Nigerian-led West African peacekeeping force, Ecomog, and the local civil defence militias also butchered people. In 1999, under a bizarre US-sponsored peace accord, an amnesty was granted to all and about 2230 fighters from the different factions were integrated unscreened into the new army. As a result, some of the worst killers are now defending the state.

Crane is determined that he will simply go after 'those with the most responsibility'; those who gave the orders, those who killed large numbers and the paymasters in Sierra Leone or elsewhere.

But the search for justice cuts across the new settlement. There is speculation that he might indict Charles Taylor, the President of Liberia who swapped diamonds for guns for the rebels and gave them a base in his country. The court could also indict ministers in the government, such as Hinga Norman, once the leader of a militia group known as the Kamajors, and still a close ally of the president.

Unlike Rwanda, Sierra Leone's war does not have one single source of evil. The whole society became contaminated. Crane will not find a clear line dividing government and rebels, order and chaos, good and evil. In Sierra Leone all is contradictory and grey.

To try to get Sierra Leone's traditionally secretive society to open up and talk about what has happened for the past 11 years, the government has set up a truth and reconciliation commission similar to South Africa's. But it is infected with the same contradictory politics and is short of funds.

There are also doubts about whether statements made in the commission can be used in the special court. Crane says he wants to build his own case and not use the commission's statements, but he will not rule it out.

The main culprit in the war, in the eyes of most Sierra Leoneans, is Foday Sankoh, the RUF leader. But even in his case doubts exist about a successful prosecution. He spent the worst period of RUF atrocities as a 'guest' detained by the Nigerians. Now languishing in Pademba Road jail in Freetown, he has recently fallen ill with hypertension and is refusing medication. He may even die before the court is set up. Even worse, he could plead insanity or he may simply have terrified too many witnesses.

On the other hand the most visible victims of the war, the War-affected Amputees' Association, is sending a confusing message to the court and the commission.

Living with their families at a camp in Freetown, the 250 or so mutilated survivors with no hands or no feet say they do not want revenge. Indeed, there has been astoundingly little personal revenge since the end of the war, despite the victims and perpetrators living together again in the same streets and villages. It looks like superhuman forgiveness.

But at the same time the amputees want to be paid for giving evidence to the court. Though they are well looked after by local and foreign aid agencies, the association is demanding that the government gives them \$100 and a bag of rice every month for life. Until it does, they are refusing to cooperate.

Without the participation of these living symbols of Sierra Leone's suffering, or the trial and conviction of Sankoh, Crane and the war crimes court will be wasting their time." (Mail & Guardian, 11 October 2002)

"The chief prosecutor for the United Nations war crimes tribunal in Sierra Leone has announced the arrest of a senior government politician and two former rebel leaders.

Those detained are the Sierra Leone Minister of Internal Affairs, Sam Hinga Norman, and the former rebel leaders Issa Sesay and Morris Kallon of the Revolutionary United Front.

The rebel Foday Sankoh, who was already in prison facing treason charges, was also transferred into the hands of the court.

"Today the people of Sierra Leone took back control of their lives and their future... The dark days of the rule of the gun are over," the chief prosecutor David Crane said.

Mr Norman, now minister of Internal Affairs, was a leader of the Kamajors militia, which supported the government during the civil war.

Both the Kamajors and the rebels were accused of widespread brutality, including rape arson and plunder of civilian property." (BBC News, 10 March 2003)

"Sierra Leone's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, set up by the government to help heal the scars caused by one of Africa's most brutal civil wars, said it would start hearings on April 7.

The commission, styled on the body with the same name which helped South Africans come to terms with the apartheid era, is meant as a public forum for victims and persecutors alike to tell their stories and voice their grievances.

It will have no power to punish, unlike a special United Nations war tribunal which is due to try about 20 ringleaders accused of the worst atrocities in the West African country's decade-long conflict.

Sierra Leone's war, marked by crimes against civilians such as the amputation of limbs, mass rape and forced recruitment of child soldiers, was declared over in January last year after U.N. peacekeepers disarmed more than 47,000 fighters.

U.N. officials have said testimonies given before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission would not be used by the special court to prosecute people.

The two institutions would operate independently but both would work towards the goal of addressing human rights abuses and accountability for those responsible, the officials said.

The court is expected to begin proceedings in the former British colony later this year but no date has been set yet.

The commission's chairman, Bishop Joseph Humper, told a news conference on Wednesday that 3,500 testimonies had so far been received and more were expected throughout March.

He said the commission needed \$4 million to complete its work and would shortly embark on a fund-raising mission to the United States." (Reuters, 27 February 2003)

Main causes of displacement

Countrywide displacement caused by more than nine years of widespread conflict-related human rights abuses (1991- 2000)

- People have fled rural villages when being exposed by rebel offensives
- Massive displacements in 1998 caused by escalated violence and human rights abuses in northern and eastern Sierra Leone
- Substantial displacements as rebels entered the capital Freetown during January 1999
- Rebel attacks in selected areas continued to displace people by the end of 1999
- Major increase in internal displacement in the wake of escalated fighting since May 2000
- Human rights violations by all fighting groups continued by mid-2000, including extrajudicial executions, mutilation, torture, rape and sexual abuse, forced labour, abduction, use of children as soldiers, destruction and looting of civilian property

"Internal displacement is not ethnically or religiously based in Sierra Leone. It affects all groups and regions and is almost exclusively a result of gross and systematic violations of human rights and humanitarian law committed in the context of the civil war." (NRC March 2001, p.7)

"The conflict in Sierra Leone has caused massive human suffering in the rural provinces and cities. Pillaging of villages, extra-judicial killings, torture and flagrant abuses of human rights have characterised this suffering and prompted large-scale migration." (Beattie 1998, p.54)

"Those displaced have fled their rural villages, leaving behind their possessions. They have sought safety with relatives in the cities, depopulating the countryside and creating serious overcrowding and a strain on food supplies in urban areas. Given the magnitude of the looting in February [1998], continued instability

in much of the country and the approach of the rainy season, it is clear that some communities will no longer be able to cope with the growing tide of displaced people." (UN June 1998, p.57)

"Population movements were fluid throughout the year. Some families were able to return to their home areas during 1998, but new population displacement occurred at other locations. Internally displaced Sierra Leoneans primarily fled rebel-controlled rural areas in the east, north and northwestern regions of the country. By year's end, a new rebel offensive sent thousands of civilians fleeing. (USCR 1999, p.86)

"The AFRC [Armed Forces Revolutionary Council], which seized power in a military coup in May 1997 and which was joined by the RUF, was deposed in February 1998 by West African forces deployed in Sierra Leone. The government of President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, which had been elected in 1996, returned to Freetown in March 1998. Although security has since returned to the capital, Freetown, and much of the south of the country, the scale of human rights abuses committed by AFRC and RUF forces in the north and east of the country has escalated and taken on grotesque forms. From April 1998 reports emerged of civilians suffering mutilations such as crude amputations of their feet, hands, arms, lips or ears. Women and girls have been systematically raped. Hundreds of civilians, in particular children and young men and women, have been abducted by rebel forces. The violence has resulted in hundreds of thousands of Sierra Leoneans fleeing to neighbouring Guinea and Liberia or becoming internally displaced within Sierra Leone." (AI November 1998, "Introduction")

"[R]ebel offensive [in January 1999] brought to the capital the same class of atrocities witnessed in Sierra Leone's rural provinces over the last eight years and is the latest cycle of violence in an armed conflict that has claimed an estimated 50,000 lives and caused the displacement of more than one million Sierra Leoneans. Since launching the rebellion in 1991, the RUF has fought to overthrow successive governments it accuses of widespread corruption, nepotism, and mismanagement of the country's vast diamond and mineral resources. However, since its inception, the RUF has failed publicly and clearly to articulate an alternative political agenda and has consistently committed gross and large scale atrocities against civilians." (HRW 24 June 1999, Chapt.1)

"Since early October 1999, there has been an escalation of attacks on civilians by former rebel elements in the areas west of the Occra Hills, along the Lungi-Port Loko road, as well as around Kabala and in parts of Koinadugu. The attacks frequently involve rape, abduction and harassment, in addition to looting and destruction of property. The frequency of attacks on civilians continues to impede freedom of movement in many locations and to prompt the displacement of people." (UN SC 6 December 1999, para. 20)

"The persistent fighting in many areas of the country continued [during May-July 2000] to have a direct effect on the civilian population and resulted in human rights violations by all fighting groups. These include extrajudicial executions, mutilation, torture, rape and sexual abuse, forced labour, abduction and forced recruitment, use of children as soldiers, the destruction and looting of civilian property and massive internal displacement of persons. The fighting, as well as fear of both the RUF and the Government's helicopter gunship, have caused thousands of civilians to flee. Internally displaced persons, who mostly travel on bush roads, report that many villages are empty and/or burned, especially in the Makeni/Magburaka area.

Based on testimonies from newly arrived internally displaced persons at Mile 91 and in Port Loko, UNAMSIL has documented several cases of summary executions and some new amputations and mutilations of civilians by RUF. It is also alleged that RUF "Small Boys Units" have been ordered to execute deserters or RUF members unwilling to fight. Rape and sexual abuse of women and girls continue. Women — including lactating women with babies — and girls are often abducted, beaten and used for forced labour and as "wives". Medical professionals indicate that most women among the internally displaced persons have contracted sexually transmitted diseases, frequently as a result of rape. As noted in my previous reports, female victims often do not report the incident or seek appropriate treatment for lack of services or fear of stigmatization." (SC 31 July 2000, paras. 37-38)

Major new displacement after break down of the peace process in May 2000

- Human rights abuses being committed by the RUF continue to be a main cause for displacement
- Lack of food cited as one reason for leaving
- Additional displacement in the wake of counter offensive by Government loyal forces not protecting civilians when attacking military targets
- RUF placing civilians at unnecessary risk by deploying their forces in areas with a high concentration of civilians
- Estimated that at least one million Sierra Leoneans lived in unstable areas of the country by July 2000
- RUF attacks on villages in the north still reported in November 2000
- HRW testimonies of abuses taken place within Port Loko, Kambia, Makeni, Lunsar, Kono, Kenema and Kabala districts between May and November 2000
- Reported in May 2001 that continued clashes between RUF and elements of the CDF in the eastern part of the country had caused new IDP flows

"[S]ince May [2000], insecurity has spread throughout the country leading to a steady influx of Sierra Leoneans into safer locations, including the Freetown and Lungi peninsula, Mile 91 junction and Port Loko town as well as Forecariah, Guinea." (UN July 2000, p.3)

"Fighting since May has resulted in the forced displacement of much of the population in Sierra Leone's Northern province [...].

[...]

MSF has learned of various reasons for this displacement. In early May civilians in large numbers fled from Mange, Rokupr and Port Loko because of human rights abuses being committed by the RUF, including killings, rape, forced labour, abductions, armed robbery, arson and looting. Others, well aware of the RUF's dismal human rights record, left for fear of such violations.

Lack of food has been another reason for leaving their homes. The renewed fighting came at the beginning of Sierra Leone's "hungry season" when the rainy season crop is being planted and food supplies are at their lowest. Existing shortages were exacerbated by the cutting off of the roads – and therefore food supplies – between Freetown and towns in the Northern province.

In May in Makeni, a long-time RUF stronghold, lack of food caused some people to leave. However, many more left the town when it appeared that Government forces would attack, although a ground attack never materialised.

[...]

For most displaced persons interviewed by MSF, the main reason for their fleeing their homes was not the RUF nor the food shortages – but, rather, bombings carried out by the two helicopter gunships controlled by the Sierra Leone armed forces. Most of the bombings took place during the first two weeks in June. Places bombed were Makeni and some surrounding villages, Magburaka, villages around Kabala in Koinadugu district, and Rokupr, Kambia and Mange in Kambia district.

[...]

In many cases actions by both sides contributed to the forced displacement of the population. In Kambia district, Kabala and along the route from Magburaka to Mile 91, people left their homes simply to avoid getting caught in the crossfire when fighting broke out between RUF and pro-Government forces. Displaced from Kambia district told MSF that they had fled bombings from the government gunship as well as anticipated and actual atrocities committed by the RUF.

[...]

The departure of people from major towns has had a ripple effect. After Makeni and Magburaka had emptied and were then looted, RUF soldiers went looking for food in the outer villages. The harassment that followed and resulting food shortages caused these villagers to flee." (MSF 14 July 2000)

"Human Rights Watch today [12 July 2000] expressed concern that the Sierra Leone government has caused civilian casualties and massive civilian displacement in helicopter gunship attacks against suspected rebel positions. The attacks took place during the months of May and June in the towns of Makeni, Magburaka and Kambia and have resulted at least 27 civilian deaths and some 50 wounded civilians, as well as the displacement of tens of thousands of civilians. Human Rights Watch called on the Sierra Leone government and its British military advisors to ensure that government forces respect international humanitarian law and take the necessary precautions to protect civilians.

[...]

Displaced civilians from Makeni, located some 120 miles north-east of Freetown, and Magburaka, located fifteen miles southeast of Makeni, have described several air attacks on public places, including crowded markets. The actions of the helicopter caused a massive civilian exodus which emptied entire towns and villages." (HRW 12 July 2000)

"Since the resumption of hostilities in May, the country has been plunged into a chain of military events characterized by RUF attacks on civilians, clashes between allied government forces, military confrontations between UNAMSIL forces and the RUF, and government military activities in RUF areas, resulting in civilian casualties and mass population displacements.

OCHA estimates that at least one million Sierra Leoneans live in currently unstable areas of the country including the RUF occupied territories in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. The people continue to be victims of an unconventional and unpredictable system of conflict that does not differentiate civilian targets from military targets. They are increasingly subjected to human rights abuses by RUF rebels and undisciplined elements of the government forces. Those who are strong enough are leaving in throngs either to other parts of the country or across the border to Guinea.

[...]

Various military operations in the east, including UNAMSIL's operation Khukri, triggered a significant population movement from the Tongo fields area into Kenema town during the week beginning 17 July. The estimated number of new IDPs range between 5,000-10,000. However, by the middle of the week, agencies on the ground reported that the situation was calm and the IDPs were gradually returning to their home areas. No concentrations at public sites or influxes into existing camps were observed, with the exception of Gofor makeshift camp (9 km south of Kenema) where about 784 new IDPs had settled. Majority of the IDPs are said to be staying with relatives and friends in Kenema town." (OCHA 24 July 2000)

"MSF has learned of various reasons for this displacement [from the Northern province]. In early May [2000] civilians in large numbers fled from Mange, Rokupr and Port Loko because of human rights abuses being committed by the RUF, including killings, rape, forced labour, abductions, armed robbery, arson and looting. Others, well aware of the RUF's dismal human rights record, left for fear of such violations.

[...]

RUF forces have been widely implicated in extra-judicial killings, rape, amputations, forced labour, flogging and looting. Through interviews of recently displaced persons, MSF received many reports of rape, killing, and amputations in Mange and Kambia in Kambia district and in Masiaka and Lunsar in Port Loko district. In Makeni and Magburaka violations such as looting, forced labour, flogging, and abductions were most common." (MSF 14 July 2000)

"RUF forces reportedly attacked at least three villages in the north, causing a new wave of displacement into Kabala. According to CRS that operates there, 9,000 new IDPs arrived to the town during the week. UNAMSIL reported that there are indications that RUF forces have started to mobilise their troops towards the Guinea border." (WFP 3 November 2000)

"Since the resumption of hostilities in May 2000, Human Rights Watch has taken scores of testimonies from victims and witnesses of abuses taking place within Port Loko, Kambia, Makeni, Lunsar, Kono, Kenema and Kabala districts. While our research suggests that the RUF continue to commit the overwhelming majority of atrocities – including rape, murder, abduction, forced conscription, and amputation – we note with concern the rising number of serious abuses by the Civil Defense Forces (CDF, primarily the Kamajors and Gbithis) including rape, systematic extortion, looting of villages, commandeering of vehicles, recruitment of children, and torture and summary execution of suspected rebels. We have also documented RUF attacks on Guinean villages and civilians." (HRW 29 November 2000)

"The overall security situation around the country remained calm throughout the period [May 2001]. However, clashes continued between the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and elements of the CDF in the eastern part of the country despite the ceasefire. The fighting, which began in late April, has led to the internal displacement of several thousand civilians in the eastern town of Koidu.

[...]

On May 23rd, a team comprising OCHA, UNHCR and the UN FSO [Field Security Officer], undertook a security assessment mission to the newly accessed town of Koidu in Kono District.

[...]

While they could not confirm the presence of large numbers of returnees and refugees from Guinea and Liberia reported by the RUF, the team found some of the recently displaced populations from the latest fighting between the RUF and the CDF in the area. According to UNAMSIL and the IDPs interviewed, an estimated 3,000 IDPs from surrounding villages have taken refuge in the town, sleeping in two (unroofed) school buildings. The coping strategies of the IDPs are limited and the host population is not in the position to offer significant support. Many of them are said to be scavenging for fruits and nuts in the bushes. It is believed that once the fighting stops, the IDPs will most likely return to their villages." (OCHA 29 May 2001)

See also HRW's reports of RUF atrocities against civilians during the first months after the breakdown of the peace process in May 2000 (HRW 26 May 2000 and 5 June 2000).

New displacement as conflict extended across the Guinea-Sierra Leone border (September 2000 – May 2001)

- Rebels from Sierra Leone attacking villages inside Guinea after September 2000
- Claimed in November 2000 that Guinean troops had entered about three miles inside the Sierra Leone territory near the Kambia district
- Sierra Leonean refugees displaced in south-east Guinea repatriated to Freetown
- Reported that some returning refugees ends up in a situation of internal displacement because home areas are too unsafe for return
- RUF retaliating on civilians after being chased by Guinean forces
- Fighting in the border areas escalated during January-March 2001
- Reported in May 2001 that up to 30,000 civilians had been internally displaced as a direct result of military activities in the area

"Since early September [2000], at least 15 attacks against Guinean border villages have been carried out by armed insurgents, reportedly operating from the territories of Liberia and Sierra Leone. The Government of Guinea reports that 350 people have been killed during the incursions, when several military and administrative establishments were targeted. Responsibility for the attacks has not been established although UNAMSIL has received reports of RUF involvement." (UN SC 31 October 2000, para.5)

"The growing tension along the border areas of Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia is creating new emergencies, further stretching the capacity of the humanitarian system to respond. Thousands of Sierra Leonean refugees in Guinea and IDPs living in the border areas in Kambia District have been displaced since the beginning of September following the instability in these areas and the subsequent harassment of Sierra Leonean refugees in Guinea.

[...]

While some of the returnees are being accommodated by relatives and friends, it is unfortunate that many will go from being refugees to being IDPs, as the main zones of return, including Kambia, Kono and Kailahun remain insecure. Humanitarian agencies are closely monitoring the situation and making necessary arrangements to provide for those who have nowhere to go." (OCHA 18 September 2000)

"An additional 6,000 refugees fled from Kambia immediately after the start of the border clashes in Guinea and are residing as IDPs with host communities in the Lungi area." (SCF November 2000)

"Reports reaching UNAMSIL indicate that about 50% of the RUF from Tongo area in the east have moved to the north and are fully engaged in the military operations in Guinea. However they say the Guinean army has established itself in the area over the past two weeks and appears to be successful in countering the rebels.

Further UNAMSIL report indicate that, during this period, the Guinean troops continued to bomb RUF held territories in the Kambia District and that the GOSL gunship has allegedly bombed several other villages inside Sierra Leone. On October 9th, the Kenyan battalion (KENBAT) of UNAMSIL that is deployed in Barbara and Bailor Wharf reported protracted shelling to the north at Kassiri, Tumbu, Kychom and some other locations. Similarly a Guinean helicopter gunship has supposedly bombed the Kakuna village, 30km northeast of Kambia, in the Tonkolimba chiefdom." (OCHA 27 October 2000)

"UNAMSIL reports the security situation in the country to be generally calm, during the reporting period but says clashes between RUF and Guinean forces along the Guinea boarder near Kambia continues. These incidents of intermittent shelling along the boarders have resulted into fatalities; four civilians, fleeing from shelling at the Koya village, arrived in Babara and have been admitted at the Lungi hospital. One of them died earlier, from his injuries. UNAMSIL confirmed other sources to have heard the shelling on 6th November in Lungi. The Guinean troops are said to have entered about three miles inside the Sierra Leone territory, near the Kambia district whilst the RUF is retreating. They have dug up the road to Kambia, to prevent pursuit by the Guinean troops." (OCHA 13 November 2000)

"An additional 11,500 confirmed refugees moved overland to the Lungi areas where they are receiving community-based assistance." (UN SC 15 December 2000, para. 56)

"During the reporting period [November - December 2000], tensions has been high in the Forecariah and Kindia areas in south-western Guinea, where there have been several cross-border incursions.

[...]

[In the] Kambia district along the border where fighting has continued between rebels and Guinean force. On several occasions, the Guinean forces have had to shell RUF positions in Sierra Leone territory." (UN SC 15 December 2000, paras. 10, 22)

"Sierra Leonean refugees displaced in south-east Guinea continue to be repatriated to Freetown. Some will be able to go back as returnees to their areas of origin, if safety allows. People who are from rebel controlled territory will, however, come back as IDPs and be reinstalled on temporary settlement in areas of relative safety. WFP and the humanitarian community continue to increase contingency measure to deal with the possible large influx of returning refugees." (WFP 5 January 2001)

"During the reporting period [January-March 2001], fighting in the areas along Sierra Leone's border with Guinea escalated, in particular in January 2001. In response to cross-border attacks, Guinean forces intensified shelling and launched helicopter gunship attacks on suspected RUF positions deep inside

Sierra Leone in the Kambia and Rokupr areas, causing civilian casualties and significant flows of internally displaced persons." (UN SC 14 March 2001, para. 22)

"Human Rights Watch has spoken with witnesses and victims from twelve attacks, all within areas under the control of rebels from the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). The attacks, which took place in the Kambia, Bombali and Koinadugu districts of the country, also caused serious destruction of property and resulted in the displacement of thousands of civilians. These attacks, five by helicopter gunship and seven using artillery, took place in and around the towns of Rokupr, Yeliboya, Makasa, Kakuna, Sabuya, Mambolo, Rokel and Kamakwie.

[...]

While many of the victims and witnesses interviewed by Human Rights Watch confirm the presence of RUF rebels in the area around the time of the attacks, none of the attacks documented seem to have accurately targeted RUF bases or areas of concentration. Instead the gunship rockets and artillery shells slammed into neighborhoods, marketplaces, restaurants and boat wharfs." (HRW 28 February 2001)

"Kambia district has been under attack by the Guinean militia and the RUF since the resumption of hostilities in May 2000, making it impossible for humanitarian agencies to operate there. Up to 30,000 civilians have been internally displaced as a direct result of military activities in the area." (OCHA 29 May 2001)

Rebels and pro-government militia attack civilians in the north of country (June 2001)

- RUF rebels and CDF militia kill at least 24 civilians in a series of attacks in the north of the country
- Hundreds of civilians are displaced as a result of the attacks

"According to extensive interviews conducted by Human Rights Watch, both the government-allied civil defense force militias (CDF) and rebels from the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) have been attacking and killing civilians in the northern Kono and Koinadugu districts of Sierra Leone. Human Rights Watch called on the United Nations to deploy peacekeepers to the region as quickly as possible.

'Civilians are being targeted in deadly battles of retaliation,' said Peter Takirambudde, Executive Director for Africa at Human Rights Watch. 'Neither the RUF nor the CDF make much effort to distinguish between military and civilian targets. The U.N. has to act immediately to stop these atrocities.'

Human Rights Watch has interviewed numerous victims and witnesses who described attacks by the CDF militias in June and July against the RUF-controlled towns of Worodu, Yiraira, Sukudu and Mansofinia. In the four attacks documented by Human Rights Watch, at least twenty-four civilians, including nine women and nine children were killed, and some nineteen more civilians, including eleven children, were wounded. In the most serious recent incident, on June 17, CDF militias, commonly known as the Kamajors or Donzos, killed at least twenty-one civilians in the town of Yiraira. In apparent retaliatory attacks in late June and early July, the RUF launched raids against surrounding villagers whom they accuse of supporting the CDF militias. The RUF killed at least three civilians, wounded several, and abducted sixteen people.

[...]

According to witnesses interviewed by Human Rights Watch, many villages have been burned and looted by both sides, and hundreds of civilians have been displaced as a result of the attacks, which took place from mid-June through the second week in July.

Witnesses claim many of the CDF militiamen currently moving into and launching attacks against RUF territory in Kono and Koinadugu Districts were, until April 2001, based in refugee camps in Guinea or around the Guinean border with Sierra Leone. While in late May 2001 the United Nations Mission in Sierra

Leone (UNAMSIL) was able to facilitate the disarmament of 171 of these militiamen, hundreds more are currently operating in what has been an RUF stronghold since 1998.

Human Rights Watch is concerned that hundreds of refugees who have been returning to their villages in Kono and Koinadugu Districts from refugee camps in Guinea are at particular risk for retaliatory attacks by the RUF who may accuse them of supporting the CDF militiamen.

Since a ceasefire between the RUF and Government of Sierra Leone was declared in November 2000, UNAMSIL has been able to deploy and/or patrol in all RUF-controlled areas, and since May 2001, some 7,000 combatants from all sides have disarmed. While thousands of combatants in the RUF strongholds of Kambia and Lunsar have disarmed and some degree of governmental authority has been restored, those combatants in the diamond rich area of Kono have been reluctant to disarm, frustrating United Nations and government officials." (HRW 24 July 2001)

For recent political analysis, see reports by the International Crisis Group (ICG):

Sierra Leone: Managing Uncertainty, 24 Oct 2001, [external link]

Sierra Leone: Ripe for Elections? 19 Dec 2001, [external link]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"After ten years of brutal civil war, the people of Sierra Leone went to the polls on May 14 and re-elected President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah and his Sierra Leone People's Party for a further five-year term. That the elections could be held nationwide and were conducted peacefully indicates that Sierra Leone has entered a new, more optimistic phase after the years of conflict, destruction, and abuse. Yet, the peace remains fragile. Deep-rooted issues that gave rise to the war—a culture of impunity, endemic corruption, weak rule of law, crushing poverty, and the inequitable distribution of the country's vast natural resources—remain largely unaddressed. The new government, with the support of the international community, must take urgent steps to tackle these problems if Sierra Leoneans are not again to be plunged into the misery and destruction that blighted so many lives in the 1990s. In particular, those responsible for the gross abuses of the past must be brought to justice before the new Special Court for Sierra Leone; the Truth and Reconciliation Commission should expose the causes of the war and recommend safeguards against their recurrence; a fair justice system must be rebuilt to underpin the rule of law; and the process of reforming the police and army to inculcate respect for human rights must be completed. And in the wider region, the international community must take steps to prevent the resurgent conflict in Liberia from again engulfing Sierra Leone." (HRW, 11 July 2002)

UN Security Council extends ban on "conflict diamonds" from December 2002

- Security Council extends ban on import of rough diamonds from Sierra Leone for a period of six months, until June 2003
- Sierra Leone's diamonds are one of the main causes of conflict in the country

"The Security Council decided this morning to extend the prohibition on direct or indirect import of rough diamonds from Sierra Leone for a new period of six months, until 5 June 2003.

Unanimously adopting resolution 1446 (2002), as orally amended, the Council further decided that it would review the situation in Sierra Leone at the end of the period, including the extent of the Government's authority over diamond-producing areas. Rough diamonds controlled by the Government under the Certificate of Origin regime would continue to be exempt from the prohibition.

The Council emphasized that the Government of Sierra Leone must strengthen its efforts to extend its authority throughout the country, including the diamond-producing areas, and noted with concern that the situation in Liberia remained a threat to security in Sierra Leone, especially the diamond-mining areas.

The prohibition was initially enacted by the terms of resolution 1306, adopted on 5 July 2000, as the Council was concerned at the role played by the illicit trade in diamonds in fuelling the conflict, and at reports that such diamonds transited neighbouring countries, including Liberia." (UN SC, 4 December 2002)

For recent analysis of the diamond industry in Sierra Leone, see 'War and Peace in Sierra Leone: Diamonds, Corruption and the Lebanese Connection' (Lansana Gberie, Partnership Africa Canada, November 2002)

POPULATION PROFILE AND FIGURES

Global figures

Civilians still residing at Clay Factory and at National Workshop in Freetown (June 2003)

- 7,500 people are occupying the Clay Factory demand IDP benefits before leaving
- At National Workshop IDPs claim to be homeless and therefore cannot move

Clay Factory

The Clay Factory settlement has been a concern for a while now as occupants of this place have been threatened with eviction. Government after resettling these people in 1998 do not recognize this settlement, though most returned.

UNAMSIL, OCHA, NaCSA, Sierra Leone Police and Sierra Leone Roads Authority are discussing how to tackle the problem as this settlement has evolved around displacement of these people during the war. The issue of concern is that approximately 7,500 people occupying the factory are demanding IDP benefits before leaving the factory.

The Factory has been identified for a project of which SLRA is the implementing agency.

IDPs still residing at the National Workshop in Freetown

Even though resettlement of IDPs (except Amputees and War Wounded) has officially closed, the National Workshop still has some former IDPs who claim to be homeless and therefore cannot move from the workshop.

Staffs of OCHA and NaCSA too are addressing this issue. The two agencies intend to bring onboard line ministries such as Social Welfare and Housing. This is because in principle, the government and not Humanitarian agencies should deal with homelessness. (UN OCHA, 30 June 2003)

Resettlement of remaining 12,800 registered IDPs officially ends displacement in Sierra Leone (November 2002)

- Despite the official end of displacement in Sierra Leone, marked by completion of the resettlement process, thousands of 'unofficial' IDPs remain
- Challenge of closing all camps remains, and social problem of homelessness in urban areas needs urgent attention

"There currently remains a total of 12,800 official IDPs remaining to be resettled of whom 3,800 are in the Western Area registered to return to M91 & Kailahun and 9,000 in Tonkolili returning to Makeni, Magburaka and Koidu. In addition there is an anticipated residual caseloads of 105 in Yele and 4,014 in the Western Area who failed to register for resettlement who will also be provided with resettlement support.

[...]

The completion of this exercise will signify the end of formal internal displacement within Sierra Leone. While this is a great step forward the challenge of closing camps will remain and the social problem of homelessness with the urban districts of Freetown will urgently need to be addressed." (UN OCHA, 31 October 2002)

At the end of 2002, there were officially no more IDPs in Sierra Leone. Those previously considered to be IDPs but who chose not to resettle for various reasons are no longer considered to be IDPs and are therefore not entitled to assistance. Some IDP camps however remain open, and their future is uncertain. Clearly, many people who were IDPs remain in Freetown or other urban centres. Some people are still to be traumatised by events in their homes areas to return, while others have made a better life in Freetown. While figures are very difficult to estimate, NGO sources in Sierra Leone privately reported that about 10,000-20,000 'unofficial' IDPs remain.

UN cites figure of 247,590 IDPs in Consolidated Appeal 2002 for Sierra Leone (November 2001)

Profile of Beneficiaries

COUNTRY	IDPs	REFUGEES	RETURNEES	HOSTS/ Other	GRAND TOTAL
Guinea	359 000 ¹	111 000 Sierra Leoneans 51 000 Liberians	14	300 000	851 000
Sierra Leone	247 590	9 500 Liberians	100 000	1 000 000	1 357 090
Liberia	55 000	70 000 Sierra Leoneans	30 000	500 000	655 000
TOTAL	661 590	271 500	130 000	1 800 000	2 863 090

"The table above indicates that more than 3 million war-affected persons will benefit from the combined efforts of United Nations humanitarian Agencies and NGOs through this Appeal, covering relief, rehabilitation, resettlement, repatriation and reintegration, as well as protection interventions. In Sierra Leone and Liberia, IDPs reside primarily in managed camps, while in Guinea, most IDPs are in existing communities. Some refugees are also integrated into communities, particularly those located along the border areas of the four countries. The focus for humanitarian agencies and partners will be to address the varying degrees of vulnerability in these countries." (UN November 2001, p. 7-8)

Only broad estimates available for the total number of IDPs between 1994 and 1997

- Reported numbers of IDPs in 1997 varies from 500,000 to 1,5 million
- Total numbers between 1994 and 1997 varies between 700,000 and one million

"Although violence in Freetown and elsewhere produced new flight in 1997, the large-scale presence of RUF fighters and AFRC soldiers in Freetown meant that significant portions of Sierra Leone's interior were notably more secure than in previous years. The return of hundreds of thousands of displaced persons early in the year, and a projected increase in agricultural production in many rural areas, produced relative stability in some areas.

By year's end [1997], UN agencies reported that some 157,000 internally displaced Sierra Leoneans were "relief dependent." This significantly understated the total number of internally displaced persons, however.

UNHCR, which had no significant presence in Sierra Leone after its international staff evacuated in June, reported that at least 1.5 million Sierra Leoneans were internally displaced as of November. The U.S. Department of State reported that 1.4 million Sierra Leoneans remained internally displaced at year's end. These and other reports were unverifiable.

Based on reports of the number of displaced persons who returned to home areas in early 1997 and the apparent effects of renewed fighting, USCR, in the absence of definitive reports, estimated that 500,000 or more Sierra Leoneans remained internally displaced at year's end. This estimate, like others, was speculative." (USCR 1998, pp.88 & 90)

Total figures for internally displaced population available for the period 1994 – 1996:

Year	Number of IDP	Source
End 1996	"estimated 800,000 or more"	(USCR 1997, p. 89)
End 1995	"at least one million persons"	(USCR 1996, p.65)
End 1994	"700,000 or more"	(USCR 1995, p. 74)

PATTERNS OF DISPLACEMENT

The dynamics between the armed conflict and displacement

Complex movement patterns of different categories of displaced during first half of 2001

- Many returning refugees end up in a situation of internal displacement as home areas is too unsafe for return
- Internally displaced people originating from safe areas are moving back to their homes

"The number of people on the move in Sierra Leone is overwhelming. Refugees are returning from Guinea. Some returnees are going directly to local settlements; others are moving to camps for internally displaced around Kenema and Pujehun in eastern Sierra Leone. Many returnees go to transit sites around the capital, Freetown, but then refuse to leave for fear of what they will find in their home communities. Internally displaced people originating from safe areas are moving back to their homes. Liberians fleeing the fighting in Lofa County are seeking refuge in Daru just across the border. Sierra Leonean refugees alleging recruitment by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in the refugee camps in Liberia are returning to Sierra Leone.

[...]

Refugees and displaced people originating from unsafe areas, mainly Kono and Kailahun in eastern Sierra Leone, have the option of settling in safe areas but most do not want to settle in areas that are not their homes. Many refugee returnees have simply traded their refugee hat for an IDP hat. Around Freetown, thousand of returnees from Guinea are living in transit camps and refusing to leave unless they can go to their places of origin. According to a refugee leader at the congested Lumpa transit center, 'I will never leave here unless I can return to my home in Kono. I do not want to move from one camp to another camp. We will stay here 5 years if we have to even though there are no schools in this camp.'

UNHCR finds itself in a difficult situation in assisting returnees in the three transit camps, now de facto IDP camps. UNHCR is working with the government to identify additional sites to transfer returnees from unsafe areas, but people do not want to leave. The UN Country Team and NGOs have yet to develop a long-range plan detailing how best to assist these refugees, most of whom will stay in these camps until their homes become safe." (R1 26 April 2001)

Many displaced move towards urban areas considered safe (2000-2001)

- People were fleeing from IDP camps around Freetown towards the capital itself as conflict escalated in May 2000
- IDP movement during 2000 towards the Government held town Bumbuna where emergency assistance was available

"Most returnees tend to settle in large cities and remain there as long as their areas of origin are unsafe. Returnees also assume that Freetown, in particular, offers greater safety and economic opportunities. As a result, cities like Freetown and Kenema host large numbers of internally displaced persons, returnees and ex-combatants, adding to a population which is already struggling with high rates of unemployment and scarce resources, placing a heavy strain on basic services, in particular water and sanitation. The capacity of

transit centres in the Freetown area has reached saturation point and many returnees are reluctant to move on, thereby obstructing the admission of new arrivals. (UN SC 23 May 2001, paras. 15)

"Thousands of people displaced by fighting in areas just outside the Freetown peninsula arrived in the Sierra Leonean capital during the past few days, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) quoted aid agencies based in Freetown as saying. On Wednesday, an assessment mission by UN humanitarian agencies to the outskirts of Freetown found that Waterloo and Grafton camps, occupied by people displaced during the rebel invasion of Freetown in January 1999, were emptying rapidly.

Up to 2,000 people were found carrying their belongings on foot along the road from Waterloo to Freetown. But on Thursday, many UN humanitarian agencies, as well as ICRC, reported that many displaced people had started to return to Waterloo, leaving some 20,000 to 30,000 in the environs of central Freetown.

[...]

'Most of the new arrivals are going to friends and families and some to existing camps,' a humanitarian source told IRIN. Approximately 400 to 500 people displaced by recent fighting in Newton and Masiaka (east and northeast of Freetown respectively) are in need of shelter, according to ICRC. Food aid and medical assistance are the most urgent humanitarian requirements in Freetown, according to aid agencies." (IRIN 12 May 2000)

"Rising above the limitations, WFP has [in Bumbuna] completed the first half of an emergency food distribution (10mt) to the families of 645 malnourished children, enrolled in the MSF-B Supplementary Feeding Program (SFP). They hope to target the remaining 1,100 beneficiaries shortly notwithstanding the hindered road access to the township. They describe the food situation in the town as frightening. Not only were the children malnourished but also WFP observed that the majority of the mothers receiving the food were skin-and-bone. MSF-B says that they register between 20-30 new patients into their SFP, weekly. According to them the surging malnutrition is mainly attributed to the fact that Bumbuna is the only accessible town in a largely rebel held territory, which unsurprisingly attracts IDPs from near-by villages in search of food and safety." (OCHA 13 November 2000)

Movement patterns in northern and eastern provinces outlined in comprehensive study (December 1999)

- Three categories of IDPs: IDPs originally from settlements within the same chiefdom; IDPs from other chiefdoms within the same district and IDPs from other districts
- Some IDPs may remain in urban areas despite improved security both due to access to food inputs and an inability to repair their homes

In October 1999, the Government of Sierra Leone, with financial support from the European Union, commissioned a two-month consultancy to assess and analyse conditions in the northern and eastern provinces of the country. This study includes some information about the movement patterns of the IDPs:

"The chiefdom analysis specifically differentiated between different types of internally displaced persons in order to establish clear demographic estimates and cross-reference data for further verification. These groups were:

- 1) IDPs originally from settlements within the same chiefdom (generally moving from rural areas to urban)
- 2) IDPs from other chiefdoms within the same district
- 3) IDPs from other districts

Each of these groups requires external support tailored to their specific needs. Some IDP 'group' and chiefdom targeting considerations, drawn from discussions with working group participants and other agency representatives, are presented below.

Group 1: IDPs from the same chiefdom

In stable, productive chiefdoms, there is a risk that the IDPs from the first category – those from the same chiefdom – have actually migrated to urban areas or formal camps in search of food. In some cases, such 'IDPs' have retained access to their original homes and farms within the chiefdom. A good example of this type of migration is the Blama Camp in Small Bo, where – according to working group participants – a portion of the current IDP population is from nearby settlements in Small Bo.

In other cases, IDPs originally fled their villages during attacks on the chiefdom. While these villages are now secure, some of these IDPs may have remained in urban areas both due to access to food inputs and an inability to repair their homes. An example of this type of migration can be found in Yele town (Gbonkolenken chiefdom), where a high proportion of current IDPs are from Gbonkolenken itself.

Not all IDPs from the same chiefdom would fall into the categories described above – in some chiefdoms, the main town is a safe haven and all other villages in the chiefdom are too insecure for return.

However, in those stable, secure chiefdoms (rating a '1' or a '2'), with high levels of IDPs from within the chiefdom, agencies should consider targeting these IDPs only in their original home settlements. If necessary, these agencies should also consider implementing complementary housing repair projects to support return. This type of targeting could promote resettlement and prevent further population migration.

Group 2: IDPs from the same district

Contingent on security conditions, it is possible that the second group of IDPs from other chiefdoms within the same district may be more likely to return home in 2000 than the third group from other districts. Agencies may wish to further investigate the origins of this group of IDPs. For those who are originally from currently secure chiefdoms, resettlement agricultural packages may be far more appropriate than provision of support within the host chiefdom.

Group 3: IDPs from other districts

The third group of IDPs from other districts is typically from Kono, Kailahun and Koinadugu. Many have been displaced for a number of years and have moved several times. Agencies targeting this group may wish to further investigate two important program considerations:

- Access and rights to land – particularly 'in-kind' rental fees
- Labor compensation rates – it is possible that IDPs working on farms for the resident population may be paid significantly lower wages than local laborers." (GOSL December 1999, sect. 4.2.2)

PHYSICAL SECURITY & FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

General

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Women and children

Thousands of women and girls subjected to 'widespread and systematic sexual violence' during the conflict in Sierra Leone, reports Human Rights Watch (January 2003)

- Crimes of sexual violence against women and girls during Sierra Leone's civil war were usually characterised by 'extraordinary brutality' and were accompanied by other 'egregious human rights abuses'
- Thousands of women and girls were abducted by the rebels and subjected to sexual slavery
- Main perpetrators of sexual violence, including sexual slavery, were rebel forces: the RUF, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) and the West Side Boys
- Prevalence of sexual violence peaked during active military operations, but also continued during times of relative peace

"Throughout the armed conflict in Sierra Leone from 1991 to 2001, thousands of women and girls of all ages, ethnic groups, and socioeconomic classes were subjected to widespread and systematic sexual violence, including individual and gang rape, and rape with objects such as weapons, firewood, umbrellas, and pestles. Rape was perpetrated by both sides, but mostly by the rebel forces. These crimes of sexual

violence were generally characterized by extraordinary brutality and frequently preceded or followed by other egregious human rights abuses against the victim, her family, and her community. Although the rebels raped indiscriminately irrespective of age, they targeted young women and girls whom they thought were virgins. Many of these younger victims did not survive these crimes of sexual violence. Adult women were also raped so violently that they sometimes bled to death or suffered from tearing in the genital area, causing long-term incontinence and severe infections. Many victims who were pregnant at the time of rape miscarried as a result of the sexual violence they were subjected to, and numerous women had their babies torn out of their uterus as rebels placed bets on the sex of the unborn child.

Thousands of women and girls were abducted by the rebels and subjected to sexual slavery, forced to become the sex slaves of their rebel 'husbands.' Abducted women and girls who were assigned "husbands" remained vulnerable to sexual violence by other rebels. Many survivors were kept with the rebel forces for long periods and gave birth to children fathered by rebels. Some abducted women and girls were forcibly conscripted into the fighting forces and given military training, but even within the rebel forces, women still held much lower status and both conscripted and volunteer female combatants were assigned 'husbands.' For civilian abductees, aside from sexual violence their brutal life with the rebels included being made to perform forced labor, such as cooking, washing, carrying ammunition and looted items, as well as farm work. Combatants within the rebel forces had considerable latitude to do what they wanted to abducted civilians, who were often severely punished for offenses as minor as spilling water on a commander's shoes. Escape for these women and girls was often extremely difficult: In many instances, the women and girls, intimidated by their captors and the circumstances, felt powerless to escape their life of sexual slavery, and were advised by other female captives to tolerate the abuses, 'as it was war.' The rebels sometimes made escape more difficult by deliberately carving the name of their faction onto the chests of abducted women and girls. If these marked women and girls were caught by pro-government forces, they would be suspected of being rebels, and often killed. Even though many women did manage to escape, some escaped from one rebel faction or unit only to be captured by another. An unknown number of women and girls still remain with their rebel 'husbands,' although the war was declared over on January 18, 2002.

The main perpetrators of sexual violence, including sexual slavery, were the rebel forces of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) and the West Side Boys, a splinter group of the AFRC. Human Rights Watch has documented over three hundred cases of sexual violence by the rebels; countless more have never been documented. From the launch of their rebellion from Liberia in March 1991, which triggered the war, the RUF perpetrated widespread and systematic sexual violence. Its ideology of salvaging Sierra Leone from the corrupt All People's Congress (APC) regime quickly degenerated into a campaign of violence whose principal aim was to gain access to the country's abundant diamond mines. The AFRC, which consisted of disaffected soldiers from the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) who in May 1997 overthrew the elected government of President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, were also responsible for subjecting thousands of women and girls to sexual violence, including sexual slavery. After the signing of the peace agreement in Lomé, Togo, in July 1999, sexual violence, including sexual slavery, continued unabated in RUF-controlled areas and was also perpetrated by the West Side Boys, who operated outside of the capital, Freetown. The human rights situation worsened after the May 2000 crisis when fighting broke out again, until relative peace was re-established, with U.N. and British assistance, by mid-2001. The prevalence of sexual violence peaked during active military operations and when the rebels were on patrol. Even in times of relative peace, however, sexual violence continued to be committed against the thousands of women and girls who were abducted and subjected to sexual slavery by the rebels. No region of Sierra Leone was spared.

Human Rights Watch has documented only a limited number of cases of sexual violence by pro-government forces, the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) and the militia known as Civil Defense Forces (CDF), the latter consisting of groups of traditional hunters and young men who were called upon by the government to defend their native areas. Human Rights Watch has not documented any cases of sexual violence by the SLA prior to 1997. This may in part be due to the fact that survivors would have often found it difficult to distinguish between rebel and government soldiers, as the latter frequently colluded

with and disguised themselves as RUF forces. Sexual violence was committed relatively infrequently by the CDF, whose internal rules forbid them from having sexual intercourse before going to battle and who believe their power and potency as warriors depends upon sexual abstinence. Some of this internal discipline, however, was lost as CDF moved away from their native areas and traditional chiefs and were given more responsibility in national security. Human Rights Watch has documented several cases of rape by the largest and most powerful CDF group, the Kamajors, who operate predominantly in the south and east.

Human Rights Watch has documented several cases of sexual violence by peacekeepers with the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), including the rape of a twelve-year-old girl in Bo by a soldier of the Guinean contingent and the gang rape of a woman by two Ukrainian soldiers near Kenema. There appears to be reluctance on the part of UNAMSIL to investigate and take disciplinary measures against the perpetrators. Reports of rape by peacekeepers with the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), the majority of whom were Nigerian, deployed at an earlier stage in the war, were rare. Both ECOMOG and UNAMSIL peacekeepers have sexually exploited women, including the solicitation of child prostitutes, whilst deployed in Sierra Leone." (HRW, 15 January 2003)

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

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

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

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

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

The general findings of the assessment team indicate high levels of risk and vulnerability, with respondents reporting incidents of sexual abuse within family settings and the wider context of the camp and surrounding communities. In addition, from the interviews and group sessions conducted with 1,500 adults and children, the team also received allegations of abuse and exploitation against 67 individuals based in a range of agencies responsible for the care and protection of refugee and IDP communities. The agencies that are possibly implicated in some way include UN peacekeeping forces, international and local NGOs, and government agencies responsible for humanitarian response. The assessment mission was not intended as an investigation and was therefore not conducted with the methodology that would have been required if this had been the purpose. Further evaluation of the overall

findings is required in order to clarify the extent of the problem and UNHCR has assumed responsibility for following up on investigatory issues." (UNHCR/ SC-UK, February 2002)

Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) study shows widespread war-related sexual abuse against IDPs (January 2002)

- PHR study indicates that war-related sexual violence, perpetrated mainly by RUF combatants, has been widespread among IDPs in Sierra Leone
- The majority of abuses reported occurred between 1997 and 1999, when the RUF controlled large areas of the country
- Approximately 13% of household members reported one or more incidents of war-related sexual violence

"The findings of this study, the most comprehensive population-based assessment to date of war-related sexual violence and other human rights abuses in Sierra Leone, indicate that combatants have committed widespread human rights abuses and international crimes against IDPs in Sierra Leone including: abductions, beatings, killings, rape and other forms of sexual violence, capturing for less than 24 hours, torture, forced labor, gunshot wounds, serious injuries, and amputations. Such quantitative findings contribute considerable insight into the nature and extent of human rights abuses among IDPs in Sierra Leone, i.e., the frequency of specific human rights abuses, the identity of the alleged perpetrators, the impact of these experiences and the most urgent needs identified by the victims. Furthermore, a rigorous approach to sampling enables the findings to be generalized to the larger IDP population. In order to gain insight into individual experiences of human rights abuses of Sierra Leonean women and their families, the PHR study included qualitative assessments of abuses as well.

A striking 94% of 991 households randomly surveyed reported among its members at least one of these serious abuses during the past ten years of conflict. The majority of abuses reported by participants in the PHR study occurred between 1997 and 1999 and, when known, were attributed primarily to forces from the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). The study's primary focus on abuses of women and girls stems from the historical neglect of these sexual crimes committed against women from previous reports of human rights abuses in Sierra Leone.

The PHR study indicates that war-related sexual violence experiences perpetrated by armed combatants (primarily RUF) are, indeed, widespread among IDPs in Sierra Leone. Approximately one of every eight household members (13%) reported one or more incidents of war-related sexual violence. Nine percent (94/991) of respondents reported war-related sexual violence. A striking 53% of respondents reporting "face to face" contact specifically with RUF forces reported experiencing sexual violence, compared to less than 6% for any other combatant group. One third of the women who reported sexual violence reported being gang raped." (PHR 23 January 2002)

Experts travel to Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia to assess women's experiences during and after war (January 2002)

- Experts examine issues of displacement, sexual violence and the exploitation of women in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia
- Assessment is part of first-ever full-scale study on the impact of armed conflict on women and their role in peace-building

"Independent experts Elisabeth Rehn, former Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, member of the Organization of African Unity Panel of Eminent Persons to investigate the genocide in Rwanda, today begin a mission to Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia to assess the impact of conflict on women and women's role in the peace-building process. This is the last in a series of field visits by experts to countries affected by conflict. Experts will publish their findings in a global report, sponsored by the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), scheduled for release in Spring 2002.

[...]

It is estimated that over 3 million people are currently displaced in the Mano River countries of Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia. Women and their dependent children are approximately 75% of those displaced and have suffered severe consequences to their health, nutrition, education and well-being.

[...]

During their week-long visit to the Mano River countries, experts will look closely at the issues of displacement, sexual violence and the exploitation of women. They will address problems such as unwanted pregnancies, HIV/AIDS, orphans and widowhood. Experts will visit women living in camps for refugees and internally displaced peoples and will speak to representatives of human rights and women's organizations, as well as with female ex-combatants. Meetings are also planned with high-level government officials, including H.E. Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

"Widespread human rights violations in the Mano River countries has fractured communities, displaced families and left people traumatized," said Ms. Johnson Sirleaf, former candidate for the Liberian presidency. "Women and girls have been the most affected by the conflicts and we want the world to know about it." (UNIFEM 21 January 2002)

Children exposed to human rights abuses and abductions (1999-2001)

- Sharp increase in children requiring protection during 1999
- More than 2000 children abducted just in Western Area
- Protection of children at the forefront of peace negotiations in Lomé
- Reports of reluctance by rebels to release abducted children by the end of 1999
- Use of children as combat soldiers both by RUF and pro-Government forces continued during 2000
-

"Horror at the atrocities inflicted on Sierra Leone's children has focused attention on those killed, mutilated or abducted in the war, as well as on child soldiers, some of whom have themselves committed human rights abuses. Less attention has been given to the far greater number of children displaced by the fighting. The shortage of accurate information about numbers of displaced children, and their circumstances, is a major barrier to their effective protection. It is possible, however, to give a general picture of their situation.

Children's rights to survival and development

The impact of Sierra Leone's civil war on children's survival has been disastrous. One in every three Sierra Leonean children dies before their fifth birthday. The country has the highest maternal mortality rate in the world. Around 3,000 women – many themselves still under the age of 18 – die in childbirth each year. Average life expectancy in Sierra Leone stands at 35 years. This is the lowest in the world by a considerable margin.

Displacement causes families and whole communities to suffer long-term or permanent fragmentation. This reduces the ability of families to cope with difficult circumstances and makes children especially vulnerable.

[...]

Just as the direct physical impact of inadequate nutrition is an important threat to children's rights to survival and development, so too is the psychological impact of war and abuse. In Sierra Leone, children have been mutilated, raped or subjected to other violent acts. They have witnessed the death or suffering of family members. Some have committed acts of violence against others. Children who have had such experiences often display severe emotional and learning difficulties that can affect them throughout their life.

This is also true of children affected by displacement itself. In some rural communities, adults hiding from RUF raids in the bush with their children felt compelled to terrify their children into perpetual silence out of fear that the sound of their voices might attract RUF patrols. In 1997, children from bush camps asked to draw pictures of themselves were unable to do so or portrayed themselves without arms or a mouth." (SCF 8 May 2000, pp. 99-100)

"This year [1999] marked a range of extremes for children in Sierra Leone. During the peak of the crisis in January, children suffered more than at any other stage of the war. Thousands were displaced, abducted and abused, while many others suffered amputations and mutilation and witnessed the violent deaths/mutilations of family members—sometimes at the hands of child soldiers their age. The number of missing children rose to more than 4,000 just in the Western Area with well over half of these attributed to abductions (60 percent of them were female). This sharp increase in children requiring protection occurred while agencies were nearly paralysed by looting and insecurity. At the same time, access to these children was difficult. Likewise, when children were found or handed over, insecurity in many areas prevented them from being physically reunited with their families who were trapped behind the front lines.

The extreme suffering of children in Sierra Leone in 1998/1999 finally pushed the international community to take notice of this forgotten crisis. This placed the protection of children at the forefront of peace negotiations in Lomé. High-level visits by the UN Secretary General, his special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the OHCHR, as well as the Executive Directors of WFP, UNICEF and several key Donors all highlighted the problems of children. The Lomé Peace Agreement contained specific chapters and annexes that required all sides to respect the rights of children thus making it the first international peace agreement to formally address these critical needs.

A factor which facilitated implementation was the large degree of awareness of child protection issues created by local advocacy efforts, as well as the various high level visitors to Sierra Leone. Each visitor was seized by the violations of child rights in Sierra Leone and this was expressed numerous times and in strong terms to all sides in the war. This high level advocacy for children bolstered advocacy at the national and local levels. At the time of writing, 1,677 children had returned from the fighting forces, of which 622 were officially handed over by the rebels and 120 by ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). The others were able to escape and return on their own." (UN November 1999, pp. 3-4)

Other UN reports issued by the end of 1999 points out that the rebels were showing great reluctance to release abductees:

"Commitments entered into under the Lomé Agreement and subsequent reaffirmation notwithstanding, both RUF and AFRC have shown great reluctance to release adult and child abductees. Only some 1,000 adults and children have been released so far. Considerable numbers are still in captivity. For instance, more than 2,000 children are registered as missing from the Western Area since the rebel incursion of January 1999. Child fighters, including abductees, were still being sent into combat as recently as October, when a number of 15-year-old boys were injured in combat with other AFRC elements." (UN SC 6 December 1999, para.22)

"There were no noteworthy releases of abductees during the reporting period, in spite of efforts by the Committee for the Release of Prisoners of War and Non-Combatants chaired by UNAMSIL. On 22 December the Committee issued a press release drawing attention to the lack of progress in this area and appealing to the leadership of RUF and AFRC to ensure the release of all abducted persons without further delay." (SC 11 January 2000, para 19)

Abducted children being used as child soldiers:

"More than 5,000 children under the age of 18 have fought in Sierra Leone's internal armed conflict that began in 1991. They have been recruited by both the armed opposition and forces allied to the government. Most of the children fighting with rebel forces were abducted and forced to fight. Many have become perpetrators of human rights abuses themselves, killing and mutilating under the influence of drugs, alcohol or simply out of fear. A similar number of children, both boys and girls, have also been used by rebel forces to carry goods and cook. Girls have been raped and forced into sexual slavery.

"Childhood has been a casualty of this long and brutal conflict", said the human rights organization. "Former child combatants may not be able to regain their youth but they can reclaim their lives if concerted action is taken immediately."

Since 7 July 1999 when the government of Sierra Leone and the armed opposition Revolutionary United Front (RUF) signed a peace agreement in Lomé, Togo, efforts have been made by the United Nations (UN) and non-governmental organizations to disarm and demobilize child combatants. However, the political and security situation in Sierra Leone deteriorated in May 2000 and these programs have been suspended. The recruitment of children as combatants by both rebel forces and government-allied forces has continued." (AI 31 August 2000)

"Both the Revolutionary United Front and pro-Government forces continue to use children as combat soldiers. RUF has engaged in fresh recruitment of children. At Makeni, both children and adults were put under pressure by RUF fighters to join them. RUF troops are reported to have killed two boys and a young man on 31 May at Maforay village near Port Loko, after they refused to join their fighting forces. Government-allied forces are also reported to use child soldiers in combat. On 12 June, in a demobilization of alleged child soldiers in Government-allied forces at Masiaka, only 13 children out of 135 handed over were serving as combatants (nine were with the Civil Defence Force and four with AFRC). I urge all fighting forces to immediately release all child combatants among their forces and to cease the recruitment of children as combatants." (SC 31 July 2000, para.42)

"During the reporting period, close to 1,000 abducted and separated children have been released. A large majority (over 870) of them were released by RUF. The released children are now in the care of child-protection agencies. RUF has established a regional committee on the release of child combatants that liaises directly with UNAMSIL and the child-protection agencies in the area. Family reunification has been relatively successful. UNAMSIL, through its public information facilities and initiatives in civil affairs, is ensuring that information and messages about the reunification and reintegration of children reach all sectors of the community." (UN SC 25 June 2001, para. 56)

SUBSISTENCE NEEDS (HEALTH NUTRITION AND SHELTER)

General

Poverty statistics (2002)

"Sierra Leone has the lowest Human Development Index in the world. Over 82% of the population currently lives below the poverty line. Life expectancy is 38 years. The child mortality (286 per 1000) and maternal mortality rate (1800 per 100,000 live births) are the highest in the world. The fertility rate is 6.1. Over one third of children are stunted, malnutrition affects 27% of the population. The adult illiteracy rate is 80%, 89% for women. In 1999-200, 42% of children aged 6-15 were enrolled in schools, 38% of girls and only one-third of all children in rural areas. Per capita recurrent spending on health care was US\$0.64 in 1999, and only 40% of the population had access to health care in 2000, concentrated in Freetown and a few provincial centers." (World Bank Group, 30 September 2002)

Returning IDPs face numerous problems, says Women's Commission report (October 2002)

"Returning refugees and IDPs suffer from gaps in the coordination of humanitarian aid. Some families are becoming separated: elderly members may be unable to make the journey back, and young people may remain behind in order to attend school. Refugees and IDPs return to communities with little infrastructure, few services in place and minimal reintegration support to help them rebuild their lives. Refugees and IDPs also need support negotiating with former rebel fighters, who are occupying the houses of the formerly displaced as the rebels themselves often have little ability to pay rent or return home." (WCRWC, 31 October 2002)

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

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

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

The entire 15,000 inhabitants of Blama, a camp for the displaced near Kenema, were sent home last weekend. These displaced had registered to leave after the elections on the official lists drawn up by the government and the United Nations. However, the population was suddenly sent home, stopping at transit sites set up in Daru and Segbwema - a two-day walk from Kenema - and then on to their villages. There is

no government protection and no UN representatives are present along the route. In addition, no assistance or medical facilities have been set up along the route by the authorities or the UN.

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

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

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

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

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

Major movements of internally displaced persons, returnees and ex-combatants causes heavy strain on basic services (2001)

- Movements of the displaced cause a strain on already weak health institutions (2001)
- Most returnees tend to settle in large cities and remain there as long as their areas of origin are unsafe
- Capacity of transit centres in the Freetown area has reached saturation point
- Spontaneous movement of refugees and internally displaced persons may regain momentum when the rainy season ends in September 2001

"Health care is sorely in need of extra support in areas of Sierra Leone faced with large numbers of returnees and displaced people, according to a World Health Organization assessment mission last week [February 2001].

[...]

Almost 17,000 returnees have now moved into Lokomassama chiefdom, inland from Lunghi, adding to between 10,000 and 15,000 people internally displaced in recent months from Kambia.

The returnees are being resettled in existing villages under a new model of community absorption which the government and UN agencies hope will avert dependency problems associated with camps and improve conditions for host communities. With the displaced, they have increased the chiefdom's population of more than 50 per cent and, though food distribution and community facilities such as schools and public

latrines are being supported thanks to special rehabilitation and building projects, health facilities and staff are not receiving the same attention.

WHO's mission found health buildings in sore need of repair and with poor staffing levels. One community health officer serves the whole chiefdom, has only been paid his salary for three out of the past 6 months and has no fuel for the aged and unreliable motor-cycle which is his only means of transport. The 12 other health posts are run by nurses or midwives, who have received little in the way of updating or training in recent years." (WHO 20 February 2000)

"Considering the number of Returnees currently residing in these communities, humanitarian agencies are concerned over the host population's capacity to absorb more people. They say one of their greatest challenges in carrying out their duties is distinguishing between the host populations and IDPs." (OCHA 10 March 2001)

"The scenario of the health system is still that of a system affected by the war where recent returnees are putting additional burden. Although some new health facilities have been renovated and reopened since the beginning of the year, the percentage of functional Primary Health Units (PHU) is still low. Data collected on the ground shows that in the six accessible districts (Bo, Western Area, Moyamba, Bonthe, Bo, Kenema) and in accessible chiefdoms of Port Loko districts, only a total of 266 PHUs are functioning. Considering the very few facilities functioning in inaccessible districts, it can be estimated that the level of functionality is still around 40%, compared with the pre-war situation." (OCHA 21 May 2001)

"Most returnees tend to settle in large cities and remain there as long as their areas of origin are unsafe. Returnees also assume that Freetown, in particular, offers greater safety and economic opportunities. As a result, cities like Freetown and Kenema host large numbers of internally displaced persons, returnees and ex-combatants, adding to a population which is already struggling with high rates of unemployment and scarce resources, placing a heavy strain on basic services, in particular water and sanitation. The capacity of transit centres in the Freetown area has reached saturation point and many returnees are reluctant to move on, thereby obstructing the admission of new arrivals.

[...]

Overall, there is a limited capacity in Sierra Leone to deal with the growing influx of returnees and internally displaced persons. It is feared that the local infrastructure and basic services would not be able to cope with a mass influx, brought about by an optimism that the situation could improve significantly in the near future. Although the rainy season is likely to slow movement, once the rains start to subside in September and as the situation continues to stabilize it is possible that the spontaneous movement of refugees and internally displaced persons will regain momentum. This will require careful and comprehensive planning on the part of the Government of Sierra Leone and the international community." (UN SC 23 May 2001, paras. 15, 16)

Health and nutrition

Areas of major return have poorest health care provision (November 2002)

- Populations returning to districts in east and north of the country are particularly vulnerable to disease and malnutrition

"The morbidity pattern in the east and north is the same as that nationally. However with less access to services and coverage of immunisation the population is much more vulnerable. Only Koinadugu has a fully functional hospital and 72% of the functioning PHUs are operating from private houses. All PHUs in

Kono district require renovation. Immunisation coverage in East and North is significantly lower than the national average of 35% e.g. Kambia (18%) and Koinadugu (10%).

Districts in the East and North are a reservoir of **malnutrition cases** as highlighted by the results of the routine screening carried out at PHU level. High rates of **wasting** are registered every month in Kono and Kambia. Even if those rates cannot be extrapolated to the population, they indicate a very fragile situation, which requires careful monitoring." (UN, 19 November 2002)

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

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

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

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

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

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

'Communities are uprooted by conflict and people lose the immediate security as guaranteed by family and friends. At the same time, they lose food security, health services as well as their livelihoods. When you lose those, you lack the most essential means of protection against infection with HIV. Especially destitute women and girls are at risk because many resort to commercial sex work as a survival strategy or become victims of sexual exploitation or trafficking,' Dr. Diallo explains.

According to Dr. Diallo, the country has long witnessed a precipitous increase in promiscuous sexual behaviour, in the number of commercial sex workers (CSWs) and of other risky behaviours among young people especially. Young people who feel they are left with few life options espouse such behaviours because 'they no longer believe in their own survival or a chance of a positive future.' He warns that the

young generations needed to build a new future can easily be lost to the virus if measures are not put in place to protect their health and support positive, income-generating activities.

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

Sierra Leone population most vulnerable to ill health in the world (November 2001)

- High infant and child mortality rate of 170 and 286 per 1,000 respectively
- High maternal mortality rate of 1,800 per 100,000 live births
- 34% of children stunted for their age; 10% wasted, and 27% underweight
- Malaria, ARI and diarrhoeal diseases are consistently the top causes of morbidity
- Levels of immunisation coverage are unacceptably low
- Displacement creating conditions for potential outbreaks of cholera, measles and yellow fever
- HIV/AIDS represents major threat

"Sierra Leone's population is the most vulnerable to ill health of all populations in the world (State of the World's Children Report 2000). The high infant and child mortality rate of 170 and 286 per 1,000 respectively and the extremely high maternal mortality rate of 1,800 per 100,000 live births (Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey - MICS 2000) shows that the women and children are highly vulnerable. The conflict, wide scale social disruption, population displacement, economic collapse, poverty and very poor living conditions along with limited access to quality health services are the major factors contributing to the current high mortality and morbidity.

Malnutrition levels remain very high, with 34% of the children stunted for their age, 10% wasted and 27% underweight (MICS 2000). Pockets of severe wasting have been identified in the areas that became accessible to humanitarian agencies in 2001. The caseload in the Therapeutic Feeding Centres (TFC) is high, with over 500 children per day receiving treatment and over 2,000 per day registering for supplementary feeding programmes. Although no figures are available, it is assumed that the level of micro nutrient-deficiency is high due to the high prevalence of diarrhoea, malaria, measles and acute respiratory infections (ARI).

The high maternal mortality is largely due to lack of services to manage emergency obstetric care, harmful traditional practices, inadequately trained staff, a weak referral system and high hospital/patient costs. These problems are set within the social context of acute poverty and low knowledge levels.

Malaria is a major concern. The MICS 2000 showed a very high prevalence of fever (46% of children had a fever in the two weeks prior to the survey) and that 30% of under-five are taking anti-malarial treatment every two weeks. Although this indicates some access to services, the current emphasis is on curative rather than preventative measures. With only 15% of children sleeping under bed nets, a huge increase in usage is required to make an impact on the incidence of malaria. This situation highlights the fact that community level health promotion is currently the weakest area of the health system.

The morbidity data is not available for the whole country, although malaria, ARI and diarrhoeal diseases are consistently the top causes of morbidity in several district reports.

The decline in immunisation coverage (from 75% to 32% between 1990 and 2001) is being reversed but the levels remain unacceptably low. There are significant regional disparities. Much of the Northern and Eastern Provinces have not had reliable routine immunisation services for over a decade. The National Immunisation Days (NID) in the campaign to eradicate polio have been able to obtain access to the rebel held areas, reaching 87% coverage. A survey is currently underway to verify reported immunisation figures.

Although there have not been any significant outbreaks of disease in 2001, the poor environmental sanitation conditions, poor housing and overcrowded living conditions, resulting from displacement, has created a growing potential for outbreaks of cholera, measles and yellow fever. Yellow fever has the potential to spread from neighbouring countries into areas where continuous surveillance is currently impossible to sustain.

HIV/AIDS represents a major threat that is heightened by the fact that it is not perceived to be a threat by society. Although no national study has yet been undertaken, it is estimated that the prevalence is in the region of 6% (MoHS reports). While the prevalence has increased, the knowledge has remained low. There has been a collapse in the health education and community mobilisation services as well as a reduction in access to schools. Only 42% of children of school going age are enrolled in school and 70% of the population is illiterate. Thus there is very little information on HIV/AIDS and related topics, few structured opportunities to receive information messages and even fewer opportunities to debate and discuss the information amongst peers. The MICS 2000 showed that understanding of HIV and related issues is very low; 46% of females between 15 and 49 had not heard of AIDS (22% in urban and 56% in rural areas). The percentage of females who knew three ways of preventing HIV infection varied from 2% in the North to 43% in the East. " (UN November 2001)

Food

Returning populations will require food aid for at least one harvest season (November 2002)

- Shortage of food is the most urgent post-resettlement need
- Some 80,000 vulnerable farm families lack basic inputs to start farming
- Agricultural services are non-existent in many major areas of return

"Immediate post-resettlement problems are related to a *shortage of food*, which is caused by low production levels, poor marketing services, and low-income levels of consumers. Based on preliminary supporting data returnees are expected to face extreme hardship until the end of at least one and possibly two harvest seasons. Food assistance in this period will not only prevent a hunger gap, but will allow time for the reconstruction of health and community infrastructure. Returning populations have access to farmland and have also benefitted from agricultural training whilst in camps. These skills could support their income and food needs in the communities of origin.

Though cereal production increased by 17% in 2001, the continuous movement of vulnerable populations into communities constitutes a challenge to the consolidation of gains made. Domestic cereal production met only 40% of the national requirements in 2002. About 80,000 vulnerable farm families lack the basic inputs such as seeds and tools to start farming. Those families who are at risk of not receiving any support will be targeted. They will also need food for agriculture support to protect their seeds.

Agricultural services such as crop protection, animal health, and provision of quality seeds are non-existent in the major communities of return in the Kailahun, Kono, Bombali, Koinadugu, and Pujehun districts." (UN, 19 November 2002)

Water and sanitation

Risk of waterborne diseases increased in areas with large-scale resettlement (2002)

- Large-scale resettlement and return to east and north of the country has outstripped water supply system
- Access to potable water and adequate sanitation in newly accessible areas, such as Bombali, is estimated to be as low as 5 percent and 3 percent respectively

"Resettling communities have limited access to potable water and adequate sanitation. The provision of **clean water** and **hygienic sanitation** remains a desperate concern in Sierra Leone where cholera is endemic and diarrhoeal diseases are cited as the third most common cause of morbidity and mortality.

The Multi-Cluster indicator survey (MICS) 2002 revealed marked differences in the water and sanitation coverage between urban and rural areas. According to the survey only 46% of the rural population, (which accounts for 68% of the total) have access to potable water compared to 74% in urban areas. A similar disparity exists for sanitation.

Only 2 of the 42 water treatment plants and less than 70% of the wells and gravity systems constructed are operational. Recent studies in Kono reveal that there are 7,600 persons per protected water sources. The majority of people depend on open traditional wells or stream and swamps. The demand created by the resettlement and return of people to the east and northern regions has outstripped the supply system. Thus these areas remain the most in need. Solid waste is generated at a 0.4kg/capita/day, but current generation has increased threefold." (UN, 19 November 2002)

"There is an acute lack of safe drinking water and sanitation facilities. The 2000 Baseline Service Delivery Survey reported that between 65 and 85% of the population do not have access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities. In many villages and towns, there is a reliance on the use of rivers, streams and the bush for both water and sanitation. This poses a serious health risk. A large number of wells are iron contaminated. With large-scale resettlement into areas in which there are no or limited facilities, the potential for diseases is exacerbated. Recent estimates in the most neglected communities in the 'newly accessible areas' such as Bombali suggest access to potable water and adequate sanitation is as low as 5% and 3% respectively." (World Bank Group, 30 September 2002)

Shelter

Shelter assistance is priority need of returning populations (2002)

- Only about 1 percent of the estimated 340,000 houses to have been destroyed during the civil war have been repaired and are available for returning populations
- Most serious destruction of shelter occurred in the Kailahun and Kono districts in the east of the country

- Returning populations are trying to rebuild houses by themselves, but in most cases lack the necessary materials
- A further problem is housing and land ownership disputes, particularly in urban centres, where some houses are occupied by ex-combatants

"Available records reveal that out of the approximately 340,000 houses destroyed in the provinces over the ten-year conflict only about 3,000 houses (1%) have been repaired and are available for returning populations. Before the war, there were over 655,000 dwelling units. Resettling populations are making efforts to rebuild their houses by themselves but it is evident that many lack the means of accessing shelter materials. In the meantime poor living conditions and overcrowding is leading to increased morbidity rates.

Beyond the provision of shelter for the returning population, the resolution of housing and land ownership disputes especially in the urban centers has to be quickly and fairly addressed to prevent community tensions and friction notably with ex-combatants." (UN, 19 November 2002)

"District recovery assessments reveal that there has been a widespread destruction of shelter. The most serious destruction of shelter has occurred in Kailahun district, followed by Kono district. The state of shelter in many areas is one of the factors constraining the return of government employees, such as health workers and teachers. In many of the newly accessible areas, households are starting the process of rebuilding their houses by themselves, but in most cases lack the means for accessing certain shelter materials such as corrugated iron sheeting. Limited development partners and NGOs have been involved in shelter but have only been able to cover between 5 and 10% of the shelter needs. The large majority of chiefdoms with shelter destruction do not have on-going or planned interventions. Housing committees have been set up in some areas for resolving these types of issues, using as far as possible local conflict resolution mechanisms. These are some of the principal areas in which large-scale resettlement is occurring. Shelter assistance for the most vulnerable in these areas should be treated as a priority. Given the extensive destruction that has occurred, shelter reconstruction will have a positive effect on security by reducing overcrowding and the competition over limited, existing shelter availability. A further problem being encountered in a number of urban centers, such as Koidu, Makeni, and Lunsar, is that people are returning to their houses to find them occupied by others, notably ex-combatants." (World Bank Group, 30 September 2002)

ACCESS TO EDUCATION

General

Education is one of main incentives for return of IDPs (November 2002)

- Education is one of main priorities of the government's recovery efforts
- Nearly 35 percent of the more than 3,000 primary schools in the country need renovation and learning materials, particularly in the eastern and northern districts
- Lack of qualified teachers, teacher training and teacher housing present major challenges

"Education is one of the key priorities for the Government's recovery efforts. It is also one of the principal incentives for the return of the displaced and refugees. A recent study shows that nearly 35% of the 3,032 (3,152) primary schools require renovation, and the provision of learning materials, especially in the eastern and northern districts.

One of the main challenges is the lack of qualified teachers, teacher training and teacher housing. The number of teachers on the payroll is insufficient. In some areas up to 50% of the teachers on the payroll have not yet returned. Initiatives to resolve this situation include paying teachers in the districts to limit their absenteeism but this is undermined by lack of housing.

Mid-level management at the district level is the basis for good planning and coordination, particularly at this phase where accurate data is limited and the data flow is very weak. Offices in some districts have been renovated and provided with logistics and administrative support. Currently, six district education teams need support to be fully operational." (UN, 19 November 2002)

Returning IDPs have limited access to education (2002)

- Returning IDPs place added stress on already overburdened education facilities, with the result that access is not guaranteed
- IDP and former refugee adolescents told WCRWC researchers they value education so highly that they are willing to be separated from their families in order to receive it

"Refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) are beginning to return in large numbers to their home communities. Children and adolescents among them are encouraged to enter school upon return, placing added stress on education institutions that are still far from up and running. Approximately 89 percent of adolescents who participated in the Women's Commission and adolescent researcher study said they had been displaced, and 20 percent were former refugees. While they share educational facilities with local communities, they say access to is not guaranteed, again due to high costs, competing responsibilities and gender discrimination. They also say that classes are overcrowded, and point to a lack of learning materials and basic facilities.

[...]

Many IDP and former refugee adolescents told researchers that they value education so highly, they are willing to separate from their families in order to receive it. For example, former refugees in the Jui temporary settlement near Freetown said they would be staying behind to complete the school year while their relatives went back to their homes. They were not sure where they would live or how they would find

food, but they were determined to complete their academic year. Similarly, reintegrating former child soldiers expressed worry about being reunited with family members prior to completing skills training or formal education classes." (WCRWC, 31 October 2002)

Widespread destruction of schools in 1997 and 1999

- Some 300 schools destroyed or damaged after coup in May 1997
- January 1999 invasion of Freetown and its environs left more than 70 percent of school buildings destroyed or badly damaged
- Returning IDP children and ex-child soldiers further strain the weak educational capacity

"According to the Ministry for Youth Education and Sports (MYES), the 1997 coup and the 1999 rebel invasion of Freetown resulted in the destruction of 70% of the schools." (UN November 2000, p.79)

"Even before the May 1997 coup d'état, primary school enrolment was 45 percent with high drop-out rates due to parents inability to bear the cost of sending children to school. The May 1997 coup resulted in a complete closure of schools, the loss of 1-2 school years for children and some 300 schools destroyed or damaged." (UN December 1998, p. 45)

"The new school term has begun in Sierra Leone [October 1999]. In the capital, Freetown, 60-80 children are crammed inside each classroom. The classrooms are separated by a wooden screen and the noise unbearable, but the children inside are glad to be there. They had to stay away from school for five months in the beginning of the year. When the RUF retreated from their attack of Freetown in January 1999 their school was shot at and all the furniture stolen.

[...]

Before the war started in 1991, 2,500 schools were in operation. This has dropped to around 600. The rebel forces damaged many school buildings, stole and destroyed furniture and even used some of them as barracks. Many buildings were damaged by shrapnel and even direct hits by gunfire and bombs. In exceptional cases, schools were reduced to rubble. Storerooms were looted and school records, registration and academic reports were burnt.

Many other schools are simply run down because there is no money for repairs or equipment. In the past, Sierra Leone was said to have one of the best education systems in Africa. Now, some schools can't even afford chalk, never mind books and pens. The government's lack of resources means that very little is spent on education. Many teachers have fled the country and those left are being paid a pittance. There are not enough trainee teachers coming through the system.

The eight-year conflict has taken its toll. Displaced people are sheltering in many of the schools. And schools are taking on more and more children as many displaced children and ex-child soldiers return to their home villages, many of them severely traumatised. It is hardly surprising that in many schools the standard of education is not very high. Much of the teaching is limited to songs, the alphabet and numbers. However, there is a determination to rebuild the system to what they had before the war." (Christian Aid 21 October 1999)

"With the possibility of access to the whole country, there is an urgent need to rehabilitate schools in areas of high population concentrations in the country. As a priority, schools must be constructed to accommodate out-of-school children in displaced camps and in areas where there are large numbers of displaced persons being supported by the local population. At the same time, more teaching and learning materials will be needed to assist the children's return to school. Some IDP communities have taken the initiative to establish their own schools, but are forced to work without basic materials which lowers effectiveness." (UN OCHA 12 July 1999)

"The January rebel invasion of Freetown and its environs left more than 70 percent of school buildings destroyed or badly damaged and many children unable to attend school due to lack of facilities and materials. At the same time, most of the activities planned for 1999 had to be modified due to several constraints. The devastation caused by the war severely weakened the formal structure. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports relaxed some of the requirements to enable pupils attend school. Temporary schools for the displaced were encouraged. As only 25 percent of the funds required to meet the sector's objectives were received, the capacity to carry out activities for both Formal and Non-Formal Education was limited. However, funding received during the latter part of the year-enabled progress in bringing education to newly accessed areas in the country." (UN November 1999, p.5)

ISSUES OF SELF-RELIANCE AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

General

Returning IDPs, especially youth, lack skills and resources to create a livelihood (2002)

- Poverty and unemployment among young Sierra Leoneans are resulting in a rise in crime, commercial sex work and illicit diamond mining
- Although 85 percent of Sierra Leone's economy is agricultural, few young Sierra Leoneans have the skills or the interest to engage in farming
- Young Sierra Leoneans say they need micro-credit and other support to put their skills to use

Poverty and unemployment are among young people's top concerns. The few skills training programs available are under-resourced and ill equipped. Sierra Leone's economy is so poor, young people have difficulty using the skills they learn. Hoping to find better economic opportunities, they are flocking to already-overcrowded urban areas, and some communities are glutted with young people trained in the same skill. Unable to earn a living, many girls are turning to commercial sex work, and some boys are turning to crime. Others try their luck prospecting in diamond mines, away from family and in easy reach of former rebel commanders. Idle and frustrated young people, overall, may easily become fodder for continued instability.

Eighty-five percent of Sierra Leone's economy is agricultural, and former refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) are going home to farms that have not been worked in years, lacking implements and skilled farmers. Many adolescents never learned to farm, are uninterested in farming and are seeking skills they consider to be more exciting. To be revived, this much-needed industry must be made more attractive for young people.

Young people say that they need micro-credit, income-generating support and start-up capital to put their skills to use. They maintain that decision-makers must begin to make more strategic choices about involving them directly in reconstruction and development efforts. This would include skills assessment and training programs directly linked to their involvement in rebuilding. The community would both get the skills it needs from young people and have a larger stake in recovery efforts, now directed and implemented by outsiders." (WCRWC, 31 October 2002)

Urgent need for employment opportunities (November 2002)

- Lack of employment opportunities was one of root causes of the conflict, and remains a potential source of renewed conflict
- High illiteracy rates and poor access to education means that at least two-thirds of the labour force is in the informal sector
- Within this category, women, the handicapped and the homeless are of special concern

"One of the contributing causes of the conflict was the lack of **employment opportunities** and skills related training for selfemployment among a large percentage of youths in the country. Reliable statistics on unemployment are not available. However, it was reported that in 1999 over 90% of youths and those

aged 18-35 were unemployed. The disruptions of the war years led to large-scale retrenchment of workers both in the private and public sectors. Many private sector establishments were destroyed or closed during the conflict. A large number of workers sought refuge into the informal sector, mostly as petty traders.

Youth are still a very vulnerable group and potential source of renewed instability. This calls for a rapid expansion of employment opportunities needed but also a systematic effort to integrate the concerns of young people into the national agenda for reconciliation and reintegration.

The formal sector can only absorb a small fraction of the rapidly growing labor force. Moreover, a very high proportion of youths are illiterate or partly educated. Hence, at least two-thirds of the labour force has no choice but to enter the informal sector. In the urban areas, especially Freetown, this accounts for over 70% of the urban work force. Of special concern in this category are women, the handicapped, and the homeless." (UN, 19 November 2002)

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

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

"The agricultural sector has been severely affected by the war. In many areas, there have been limited or no agricultural interventions for over a decade and therefore agricultural productivity is minimal. The average proportion of pre-war farms currently being farmed is about 53%. Priority should be given to supporting existing and resettling farming households in newly accessible areas for the approaching agricultural season, so as to avoid continued dependence on food aid. Seeds and tools are priority requirements. Feeder roads are generally impassable to four wheel drive vehicles which means that it will be nearly impossible for agricultural production to be transported to markets." (World Bank Group, 30 September 2002)

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

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

Due to the upcoming May 14th elections and the recent declaration that Sierra Leone is secure, the international community has expedited the return of refugees and IDPs to their places of origin. Because of these developments, there has been a push to return people in time to vote and to plant before the rains begin in June. The resulting repatriation process has been frenzied, with inadequate preparations for

transport and emergency medical care en route. These difficulties underscore the need to ensure coordinated and well-funded support for returnee communities.

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

To help in the transition home, all returnees receive a two-month food ration with the idea that as rations run out returnees will avail themselves of transitional agricultural programs to sustain them before the first harvest in October. However, refugee returnees from Guinea who had returned to Kailahun reported to *RI* that they had to sell some of their rations to supplement their UNHCR travel allowance. Transportation from the drop-off point in one chiefdom of Kailahun (Daru) to their homes in the interior of Kailahun costs double what UNHCR has provided. Situations like this have raised many aid workers' concerns that a two-month food ration is inadequate. One international aid worker stated, 'Normally I don't support food handouts but the situation is dire. These people need more than a two-month supply.' UNHCR may ask donors to support a four- to six-month ration for refugee returnees who are going home after the planting season. If the food rations for refugee returnees increase, agencies must increase the food package for IDPs to ensure parity.

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

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

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

While the afore-mentioned support is vital to ensure short-term food security, additional assistance to revitalize the agricultural sector must begin now. This assistance should include rebuilding of roads to

improve market access, micro-credit support to small-scale producers, and community-based programs that support cash crops such as coffee, cocoa, and palm oil." (RI, 22 April 2002)

Public participation

Internally displaced women in Sierra Leone go to the polls (May 2002)

- Women's Commission (WC) in Sierra Leone actively encouraged internally displaced women to register and vote in the May 2002 presidential and parliamentary elections
- WC representatives visited polling stations in and around Freetown to help ensure internally displaced women were able to vote freely and without intimidation, and to hear their views about the electoral process

"The May 14, 2002 presidential and parliamentary elections in Sierra Leone marked a significant milestone in the consolidation of the country's peace. Cognizant of the role of bad governance in the origins of the 11-year civil war that formally ended in January 2002, the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children's Protection Partnership office in Sierra Leone encouraged internally displaced women to register and vote for the candidate of their choice — a step that the Women's Commission considered critical to improving these women's lives and to ensuring their role in the reconstruction of Sierra Leone. Attention to participation of uprooted women in decision-making has, in the past, been focussed largely on camp governance and humanitarian assistance. Yet, in order to help sustain Sierra Leone's peace, internally displaced and returnee women must make free, informed decisions and participate actively at every point along the public-private spectrum of decision-making — from the home to the parliament, from the executive to the United Nations, African Union and other intergovernmental organizations. Voting is one of the most obvious and pivotal meeting places between the private person and the public actor. When a woman casts a free and informed vote, she acknowledges the crucial public role that she can and should play in the future well-being of her society.

On May 14, the Women's Commission visited several polling stations in and around the capital, Freetown, where internally displaced persons (IDPs) were registered to vote. The field visits were meant, first and foremost, to ensure that displaced women were able to cast their ballot freely and without intimidation. Secondly, the visits were conducted to understand both the views of the displaced women about the electoral process and the motivations underpinning their vote. This report is intended, therefore, as a snapshot of a turning point in Sierra Leone's history, and not a fullblown study of the electoral process in that country. One of the Women's Commission's main objectives in producing it is to serve as a conduit for the voices of internally displaced women who have spent much of the recent, turbulent history of their country without an effective voice.

The women interviewed said they cast their vote for peace, security, survival and self-reliance. To achieve self-reliance, they highlighted their need for shelter, food, education, health care and income-generation, in that order of priority. Their right to the satisfaction of every one of these demands is clearly and repeatedly justified in the international legal obligations to which the Sierra Leonean government has committed itself over the years." (WCRWC, 30 September 2002)

ISSUES OF FAMILY UNITY, IDENTITY AND CULTURE

General

Displacement in Sierra Leone has severely affected family and community links (2001)

- Rupture between displaced families and their original communities
- Displacement has exposed rural communities to new life styles and undermined traditional authorities

"Participants [at an IDP workshop] agreed that forced displacement in Sierra Leone has severely affected family and community links in various ways, most obviously through family separation. Fortunately, several organisations are involved in family re-unification. Displacement has also exposed rural communities to new life styles and undermined traditional authorities. Access to education is limited, often forcing adolescents into premature adulthood away from their families.

Displacement often leads to a rupture between displaced families and their original communities. The creation of new community links in areas of reception is not an uncomplicated process. Participants described how this process has proven the most successful in areas where the host community has been actively involved and has also benefited from IDP support programmes. The example of Lokomasama Chiefdom in Port Loko District has already been mentioned. In other places, the displaced have been able to integrate and create new community ties through every-day activities such as religious worship, local trade, search for social services and inter-marriages. This process could however be more complicated when there are ethnic differences between IDPs and host communities." (NRC March 2001, p.7)

PROPERTY ISSUES

General

Substantial destruction in the Kambia district caused by RUF occupancy and bombing by the Guinean military (2001)

- Basic infrastructures totally destroyed in the Gbinleh Dixon, Magberma and Samu chiefdoms
- Greatest level of damage to buildings was sustained in the northern parts of Gbinleh Dixon, close to the border with Guinea, and in Kambia Town and Rosino

"As a result of RUF occupancy and sustained bombing from the Guinean military much of the Kambia district has suffered considerable displacement and destruction. Whilst the whole district has been affected, principal findings from the assessed settlements reveal clear concentrations of damage where rehabilitation needs are the greatest (see Annex 3 – Damage Overview [available from the map section!!]). When examining overall destruction to housing, agriculture, schools and health clinics and coupling this with greatest levels of displacement, Gbinleh Dixon, Magberma and Samu chiefdoms have been most intensely effected. In these chiefdoms basic infrastructures have been totally destroyed, whole settlements have been deserted and most economic activity has ceased and is only now being re-vitalised. Briama and Mambolo have sustained lesser levels of disruption, whilst Tonko Limba has remained basically intact in terms of destruction. The greatest level of damage to buildings was sustained in the northern parts of Gbinleh Dixon, close to the border with Guinea, and in Kambia Town and Rosino, both former strongholds of the RUF. Agricultural activities were most severely disrupted along the Greater Scarcies River in Samu and Mambolo Chiefdoms. Generally, there are very few government services throughout the District and there is little access to healthcare or educational facilities.." (OCHA/Kambia Humanitarian Task Force June 2001, p.2)

See also "Damage overview of Kambia District" in the map section.

Returnee women who have lost their husbands face problems in reclaiming property (2001)

"Of particular concern are single women returnees. *RI* [Refugees International] heard estimates that as many as 50 percent of refugee and displaced returnees are single women. Sierra Leonean property law discriminates against women in that women are unable to inherit property. This presents a huge obstacle to the development prospects for a large part of the Sierra Leonean population-women who have lost their husbands and male relatives during the fighting. Several single displaced women expressed their concern to the *RI* team: "I am returning to my home after all these years, and I do not know how I can begin to rebuild my life. My home has been destroyed and my husband and brothers were killed in the fighting. The government is giving us a piece of plastic sheeting. How can I build a home for my children? How can I find a job?" (RI 26 April 2001)

Widespread destruction of homes and property by the rebel forces (1999-2001)

- Nearly 6000 homes and residential buildings within the greater Freetown area destroyed after rebel offensive in January 1999

- In areas of hostilities between the Guinean military and RUF forces in the Kambia district it is estimated that over 80% of the villages have been destroyed
- Assessment of villages in Ribbi, Bumpah and Kongbora chiefdoms revealed that out of 3,246 houses (prior to 1999), 2,653 were totally destroyed
- The Wesleyan Church reporting that 86 Primary schools, 5 secondary schools, one hospital and five health center have been vandalized and looted

"Rebel forces were [...] responsible for the deliberate widespread destruction of civilian property and public utilities in Freetown and other locations, such as Makeni and Kambia. In the centre of Freetown, about 20 per cent of the housing stock was destroyed, with as much as 90 per cent destroyed in the eastern outskirts of the city. Some public facilities appear to have been deliberately demolished, including police stations, the Pademba Road prison, the Nigerian High Commission and UNOMSIL headquarters. The residences of human rights activists, lawyers, journalists and Government officials were also targeted, as well as churches, mosques and hospitals." (UN SC 4 March 1999, para. 27)

"As the rebels withdrew from the capital they set entire city blocks and suburban streets on fire. Housing authorities registered the destruction of 5,788 homes and residential buildings within the greater Freetown area. Within the eastern suburb of Calaba Town, the authorities calculated some 80 percent of residential structures had been left in ashes, and within densely populated Kissy the estimate was over 65 percent. According to the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Transport, extensive damage to at least eight of Freetown's factories, set ablaze by retreating rebels, has resulted in the loss of over 5,000 jobs. Embassies, government buildings, churches, mosques, and historical landmarks were also targeted, including Freetown's Big Market, built in 1802, and the Holy Trinity Church, built in 1877." (HRW 24 June 1999, chapt.I)

"In preparation for resettlement in the camps, NCCCC and OCHA spearheaded an interagency needs assessment mission from 6th – 9th February [2001] in the Koya chiefdom. The multi-sectoral assessment involved other agencies and covered 57 villages from 19 sections within the chiefdom. [...] Initial findings reveal massive destruction of almost all the villages in the chiefdom. There were very few houses available on sight with deplorable Watsan facilities." (OCHA 23 February 2001)

"CARE conducted an assessment in 135 villages from seven sections in Ribbi, Bumpah and Kongbora chiefdoms. Initial findings of the assessment, which was aimed at evaluating levels of destruction and needs, showed that out of 3,246 houses (prior to 1999), 2,653 were totally destroyed. Reconstruction of 1,869 destroyed houses is currently ongoing. CARE is planning supporting these villages with Non-Food-Items (NFI) and construction tools. Similarly, in the Kaiyamba chiefdom, CARE gave GTZ (a German organisation) 14 bundles of zinc to roof a primary school in Yawyema." (OCHA 8 May 2001)

"Twenty-five homes have been burned down and property worth millions of leones looted in the coastal towns of Kassiri and Kychom, in Sierra Leone's Kambia District, the state-owned news agency, SLENA, reported on Wednesday [10 January 2001].

It quoted fleeing residents as saying the destruction occurred when Guinean troops attacked fleeing RUF fighters who are believed to be behind the string of recent cross border raids into Guinea. However, the agency reported, "There are conflicting reports as to who actually caused the destruction."

Quoting witnesses, SLENA reported that Thursday's attack forced most of the chiefdom's inhabitants to flee. SLENA quoted an unnamed source as saying that shortly after the Guinean left the RUF resurfaced and then "pounced on the civilians, especially [those] of the Susu tribe". The Susu are mostly found in Guinea and the RUF accused them of acting as spies on the rebels." (IRIN 10 January 2001)

"There have been dozens of civilian deaths and injuries and extensive destruction of homes. Some towns and villages, for example Kassiri and Kychom, have been repeatedly taken and retaken by opposing forces.

In some cases villages have been completely destroyed and are now deserted, adding to an already very large number of internally displaced people in Sierra Leone." (AI 4 May 2001)

"Pre-assessment findings [in the Kambia district] indicate that Gbinleh-Dixon and Samu have sustained the most destruction as a result of hostilities between the Guinean military and RUF forces. In some case villages have been deserted and over 80% of the villages have been destroyed. Water and sanitation facilities are limited and access to fresh water supplies is problematic, the majority of the villages visited depend on streams and swamps as their main source of water. In terms of education there are at most one or two primary schools found in the villages, but hardly any secondary schools." (OCHA 16 June 2001)

"A decade of fighting in Sierra Leone has left 90 percent of the buildings damaged or destroyed in the eastern district of Kono, particularly in its main town, Koidu. World Vision (WV) reported on Saturday. Homes, schools and clinics are among the buildings affected. WV reported that health care and schools were "practically non-existent" in Kono and that people were surviving on bananas and wild yams. " (IRIN 19 June 2001)

"Thousand of houses have been burnt down by rebels and health facilities, schools and other public infrastructure were looted, vandalized and others burnt. In the case of the Wesleyan Church [operating in the northern province and in the western areas of Sierra Leone, all her 86 Primary schools, 5 secondary schools, one hospital and five health center were vandalized and looted. Ten vehicles, five motorcycles, three computers, conference center, office equipment, headquarters office buildings in Makeni were looted/vandalized.

The roads are in a terrible state of disrepair. Community infrastructure has been vandalized. Rice and groundnut and other agricultural produce looted, leaving the farmers with no seeds to plant. People continue to be displaced and the UNHCR is repatriating thousand of Sierra Leonean refugees from Guinea, adding to the already swelling number of displaced persons in Freetown and its environs." (ACT 15 February 2001)

In October 1999, the Government of Sierra Leone, with financial support from the European Union, commissioned a two-month consultancy to assess and analyse conditions in the northern and eastern provinces of the country. This study provides detailed information about destructions of physical assets both in rural and urban areas. See:

*Annex F/3 to Sierra Leone Chiefdom Vulnerability Analysis - Rural
Destruction Assessment November 1999
and*

*Annex F/4 to Sierra Leone Chiefdom Vulnerability Analysis - Urban
Destruction Assessment November 1999*

See also "Damage overview of Kambia District" in the map section.

PATTERNS OF RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT

General

Resettlement process officially ends in November 2002

- Remaining 12,800 registered IDPs (UN figure) were resettled in November 2002, officially ending internal displacement in Sierra Leone
- Challenge of closing camps remained, as well as social problem of homelessness in urban districts of Freetown
- IDPs (and refugees) resettled under the government programme were provided with 2 month resettlement packages, after which support was expected to be provided through community based programmes
- Needs in areas of return remain immense, with insufficient assistance being provided to meet these needs

"Final phase for IDPs"

The final phase of the IDP resettlement process met with delays in October due to lack of funding to support the transportation of resettling IDPs back to their home areas. However, through the generous support of DFID, OCHA has managed to secure the requisite funding for fuel and transport costs to complete the IDP Resettlement Programme.

Residual caseload

There currently remains a total of 12,800 official IDPs remaining to be resettled of whom 3,800 are in the Western Area registered to return to M91 & Kailahun and 9,000 in Tonkolili returning to Makeni, Magburaka and Koidu. In addition there is an anticipated residual caseloads of 105 in Yele and 4,014 in the Western Area who failed to register for resettlement who will also be provided with resettlement support.

Verification of resettlers

A verification of these caseloads was completed in Tonkolili and is planned for the Western Area in the first week of November. As soon as this is completed final logistical plans will be put in place by resettlement partners; distributions for resettlement will commence; and the final resettlement of IDPs to home areas will be undertaken during the month of November. Resettlement partners include NaCSA, OCHA, CARE providing food and NFI assistance, WFP providing food and UNAMSIL and IOM providing transportation support which will be financed by DFID.

The completion of this exercise will signify the end of formal internal displacement within Sierra Leone. While this is a great step forward the challenge of closing camps will remain and the social problem of homelessness with the urban districts of Freetown will urgently need to be addressed." (UN OCHA, 31 October 2002)

"With the successful conclusion of the demobilisation process, the extension of civil authority across the country and the consolidation of peace, conditions have been suitable for the resettlement of displaced populations within Sierra Leone. Adopting a phased approach, which began in April 2001 in the Western Area, the Southern Province and small pockets of the Eastern and Northern Provinces, and concluded in Bombali, Kono and Tonkolili in October 2002, the Government Resettlement Programme has now successfully resettled over 206,000 IDPs (almost the entire registered IDP caseload) and over 97,000

returnees. Further to this an estimated 78,000 Sierra Leonean refugees have returned spontaneously, mostly into border districts. The remaining caseload of approximately 10,000 IDPs are expected to be resettled in the last quarter of 2002, at which point the IDP resettlement programme will be considered effectively complete.

In addition there currently remains an estimated 137,000 Sierra Leoneans who continue to seek asylum in the sub region. It is anticipated that in the final quarter of 2002 and throughout 2003 an additional 50 - 60,000 refugees will be facilitated to return home. If the situation in Liberia and Guinea becomes increasingly tense, this number is expected to increase.

Not one district has remained untouched from the impact of the war and the effects of displacement. However, areas of the East and the North have been most profoundly affected with 55 % of displaced populations originating from Kono and Kailahun districts, which have sustained 80% damage to infrastructure and basic services.

[...]

Under the government resettlement programme resettlers have received a resettlement package of two-months food rations for their family, plastic sheeting for temporary shelter, a household utensils package and where required transportation assistance. Thereafter, support should be delivered through community based programmes aimed to provide more enduring assistance to establish permanent shelter, facilitate the resumption of basic services and stimulate economic recovery. However, the needs in most districts are immense, resettling populations are dispersed and current available assistance is insufficient to meet the needs in most areas.

It is imperative that conditions in areas of resettlement are conducive to reintegration. It is, therefore, essential that recovery efforts are strengthened to ensure that the positive advances achieved so far are not undermined. Most critical needs are permanent shelter assistance, access to effective water and sanitation, especially in key areas of return, a systematic and equitable approach to the rehabilitation of education and health facilities supporting the resumption of basic services and programmes to revitalise the micro-economy and regenerate sustainable livelihoods.

Objective

To facilitate the repatriation and resettlement of refugees to their home areas in safety and dignity, through the provision of transportation assistance and resettlement packages.

Strategy

The strategy will continue to revolve around close cooperation between UNHCR and Government. In accordance with its mandate, UNHCR will continue to provide pre-return sensitisation to refugees, and to facilitate their return from countries of asylum to Sierra Leone by road or by boat. Since the declaration of 'safety for resettlement' in all but two chiefdoms in Kailahun District, an increasing number of refugees will now be able to be moved directly from Guinea to eastern Sierra Leone by road through Kailahun District. This will substantially reduce the journey time for these refugees and vastly increase the efficiency of the repatriation process in that area. In Sierra Leone, returnees will continue to pass through Way- Stations, where medical services will be available and where they will be provided with Non Food Item packages before onward transportation to drop-off points close to their areas of origin. Here they will be given a food aid package and a transport allowance to help with their final journey to their individual villages of origin. The food package has previously been a two month ration, but due to concerns over the level of vulnerability of returning families, food pipeline agencies are making provision for 2003 for this package to be increased to a six month ration.

Once in their area of origin, returnees will be eligible to join or benefit from ongoing community support programmes (agricultural, shelter assistance, income generation, etc.).

Benchmarks for 2003

. Repatriation and resettlement of at least 50,000 returnees

. Completed resettlement of the outstanding caseload of 10,000 IDPs, if not achieved in 2002." (GoSL, 28 October 2002)

Resettlement process beset by problems, says Women's Commission report (October 2002)

- According to Women's Commission report, resettling IDPs have received inadequate support/humanitarian assistance; resettlement assistance was poorly coordinated; and resettling adolescents and youth had pressing concerns about education, livelihood and protection

"The war in Sierra Leone produced over 500,000 refugees, who fled mainly to Guinea and Liberia, and over 1.2 million IDPs. As peace efforts progressed in 1999 and as pressure grew within Guinea in 2000 for Sierra Leonean refugees to repatriate, thousands began to make their way home despite ongoing insecurity in parts of Sierra Leone and serious problems during the journey. In April 2002, IDP and former refugee adolescents and youth living in or out of camps in Sierra Leone described deprivation and violence against them during the war and continued deprivation and lack of protection in recent months and years. While their returns have been deemed 'voluntary,' in reality they have faced enormous security, political and socio-economic pressures in their attempt to return home.

INADEQUATE SUPPORT FOR FORMER REFUGEES AND IDPS

In 2001, approximately 200,000 refugees remained in asylum countries. Those whose returns from Guinea are facilitated by UNHCR follow a route that takes them to Guinea's capital Conakry and then to various sites in Sierra Leone. Many have gone to transit centers, interim care centers for separated children, temporary settlements or host communities, where they have awaited further resettlement to their home areas when they are declared secure, or to other sites. Many refugees also make it to transit points in Guinea or to Sierra Leone spontaneously, with very limited or no assistance.

In 2001, close to 250,000 registered IDPs were living in overcrowded camps or with host communities, and an estimated half million more unregistered IDPs were living in war-ravaged villages. Returns of registered IDPs are coordinated by UNOCHA under a Resettlement Strategy developed by the government of Sierra Leone 'to support the resettlement and reintegration of internally displaced, refugees and ex-combatants with their dependents back into their communities, strengthen their livelihood security and promote reconciliation.' Unregistered IDPs are not entitled to targeted resettlement assistance under the Strategy.

Although the streams of support to each group are distinct, UN agencies have tried to minimize differences between the assistance refugee returnees and IDPs receive. Young returnees and IDPs both told researchers the assistance packages are grossly inadequate. The majority are returning home to eastern and northern areas to *nothing* — no homes, jobs, schools or medical facilities and land that has not been tilled for years. Yet their resettlement packages do not include seeds or tools to get a head start on the planting season, and they receive only a two month food ration. They are also supposed to be fully informed of their options and resettlement conditions and receive transportation to a place 'in close proximity' to their area of resettlement, non-food items and a four meter by five meter piece of plastic sheeting for shelter.

POORLY COORDINATED RESETTLEMENT ASSISTANCE TO IDPS

The stark reality of IDP returns was immediately evident in Makeni in April 2002, as hundreds who had walked 50 kilometers from the IDP camp Mile 91 waited outdoors for days for assistance under hot sunshine in the town's sports stadium and town hall. Given confusing information, they left the camp on foot expecting to be met by local National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA) officials with support packages and instead were completely without food, shelter, water, latrines or transportation. Their paperwork was disorganized, and determinations of who was or was not eligible for assistance were slow. MSF-H representatives working

locally responded to the emergency by trucking in drinking water and providing emergency medical services. They and hospital nurses told researchers that several of the pregnant women who had made the difficult journey had to be hospitalized. Even when food and non-food items were finally provided, the IDPs still faced the need for ongoing transportation, and some were forced to sell their rations to pay for the rest of their journeys home. The most vulnerable elderly and infirm left behind at Mile 91 were promised no additional support.

Former refugee adolescents told researchers they were tired of waiting in transit centers, with limited provisions, that their departures had been frequently rescheduled and that transportation to their final destinations would not be provided, leaving them with additional costs to bear. MSF documented many incidences of incomplete and uncoordinated support around the country, especially regarding the treatment of IDPs, in a report highly critical of the resettlement process. It contends that refugees and IDPs in reality have little choice about their returns given the insecurity and deprivation they felt they could no longer endure in Guinea and the Sierra Leone government's planned closure of IDP camps in June 2002 with no other offers of assistance.

UNHCR and Sierra Leone government officials acknowledge the shortcomings of the process and among other things call on the international community to provide more resources for resettlement and reconstruction, including support for government capacity building.

RESETTLING ADOLESCENTS: EDUCATION, LIVELIHOOD AND PROTECTION

The majority of the adolescents and youth interviewed were currently or had been displaced or refugees, or a combination. Thus, the concerns expressed by young people in this report are mainly theirs. Unregistered IDPs felt they would have more difficulties going home than those receiving assistance leaving camps, despite problems with the resettlement process. However, all worried about their education being disrupted by poorly coordinated returns that would not allow them to complete school terms or training courses. Many said they were even willing to become separated from their families in order to finish their studies.

Some young people interviewed said they had already returned home from Guinea or an IDP camp but were forced to leave again in search of work because of lack of assistance. Some former refugee girls and women said they became involved in commercial sex work for their survival and have traveled to other parts of Sierra Leone to provide services to UNAMSIL troops. Adolescent researchers also met Liberian refugee adolescent girls involved in sex work.

Thousands of young people were abducted and numerous others lost or became separated from families during the conflict. In the process of return, these separated young people are to receive protection and care from UNICEF and CPAs. Given the prevalent conditions, however, it is not clear that child protection systems are functioning effectively along resettlement routes. Many separated children and adolescents did get assistance in ICCs along with former combatants and separated children who were not displaced or former refugees. Female adolescent heads of household will likely have difficulty reclaiming family land, as women cannot own property in Sierra Leone. Separated adolescents still need to be identified and targeted to ensure their human rights, including family tracing and access to assistance packages." (WCRWC, 31 October 2002)

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

- IDPs have been resettled in four phases, starting in April 2001, in accordance with the Sierra Leone government's resettlement strategy
- A total of about 52,000 IDPs were resettled in the first two phases, ending in February 2002
- When virtually the entire country was officially declared 'safe for resettlement' by March 2002, Phase Three of IDP Resettlement took place in March and April 2002, with some 158,000 IDPs registered to resettle

- Resettlement was suspended due to elections in May 2002, and recommenced in June with Phase Four, during which approximately 11,500 IDPs were resettled
- As of July 2002, just over 12,000 registered IDPs were still to be resettled - some to the few remaining 'unsafe' chiefdoms in border areas

"Background

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

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

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

Early Phases of IDP Resettlement in 2001

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

PHASE	DATE	RESETTLEMENT AREAS	TOTAL RESETTLED
Phase 1	April 2001	Freetown & Western Area Two chiefdoms in Port Loko District 12 chiefdoms in Kenema District Southern Province	42,000
Phase 1	June 2001		10,000
Phase 2	Dec 2001	Kambia District Port Loko District	3,000
Phase 2	Feb 2002		4,000

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

Phase 3 of IDP Resettlement – April 2002

The third phase of resettlement, beginning on 28 March, has been the most complex. With the completion of the DDR process and the formal recognition of the end of civil war, President Kabbah declared virtually the whole country "safe for resettlement". (Now only eight chiefdoms in Kailahun District, marking the border with Liberia and Guinea, are not yet considered suitable for resettlement.) Consequently resettlement was possible to all six newly accessible districts in the country, but the eight border chiefdoms in Kailahun. A total of 158,360 people registered to resettle. As many IDPs were expressing a desire to

resettle immediately, but, it was logistically impossible to move all IDPs at the same time, a dual programme was developed running facilitated (transport provided) and voluntary resettlement (no transport assistance) in parallel.

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

Phase 4 of IDP Resettlement

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

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

Completing IDP Resettlement

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

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

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

Ongoing Returnee Resettlement Programme

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

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

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

MSF criticizes resettlement process in Sierra Leone (May 2002)

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

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

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

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

The problems are found at every step of the way, as various agencies, primarily the UN and their implementing partners, have not taken up their responsibilities. The aftereffects of such a slipshod program will continue to be felt for months. As the rainy season begins we can expect the spread of waterborne diseases, such as cholera and shigellosis, due to the lack of water and sanitation in most of the resettlement areas. There is also the risk of malnutrition as people are given insufficient food to cover the ensuing hunger gap, and there is no adequate agricultural plan in place to cover their needs." (MSF, 21 May 2002)

Geographic distribution of IDP resettlement (March 2002)

" Nationwide resettlement

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

Voluntary Resettlement

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

Distribution Centres

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

Registrations

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

UNAMSIL support and the first moves to Kailahun

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

Phase three of resettlement - concurrent operations across the country

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

Kailahun Operation

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

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

Host Communities to Kailahun (IOM) 27-28 April

Kono Operation

Kenema Camps to Kono (IOM) 9 - 29 April

Bo Camps to Kono (IOM) 7-28 April

Bombali and Koinadugu Operation

Western Area to Bombali & Koinadugu (IOM) 6-19 April

Bo & Kenema Camps to Bombali (NaCSA) 20 April

Kenema Operation

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

Host Communities to Kenema (IOM) 27-28 April

Tonkolili Operation

Bo & Kenema Camps to Tonkolili (NaCSA) 25 April

Fourth and final phase of IDP resettlement

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

Western Area Camps to Kono

Host Community Areas to Kono

Bo Camps to Kono

Western Area Camps to Tonkolili

Host Community Areas to Tonkolili

Host Community Areas to Bombali " (UN OCHA, 31 March 2002)

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

General

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

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

Some successes in disarmament process lead to overall improvement in security situation (November 2001)

- Gains in disarmament process allow for basic conditions for resettlement of IDPs in some areas
- Instability in the sub-region risks jeopardizing the improving security situation in Sierra Leone
- Situation in some parts of the country remains volatile
- Poor roads and weak infrastructure also lead to problems with access

"Gains in the disarmament process and the deployment of UNAMSIL have contributed to the creation of new opportunities for humanitarian organisations and the Government of Sierra Leone in previously inaccessible locations. Opportunities exist for the establishment of basic conditions for the resettlement of IDPs, returnees and former combatants, as well as for the recovery of communities affected by the conflict. This translates into the need for the government to provide services ranging from maintaining law and order, to health, education and a conducive environment for the economic development of communities including returning populations.

However, the gradual progress in the peace process in Sierra Leone could be jeopardised by instability in the sub-region, particularly Liberia, as well as by failure of the international community to invest simultaneously in relief and recovery operations. A sudden large-scale influx of Liberian refugees and Sierra Leonean refugees to Sierra Leone could pose a serious source of instability, firstly, because they are most likely to settle in volatile areas with limited humanitarian access, and secondly, because their arrival would severely strain the capacity of relief organisations to address their needs. Security implications related to the possible presence of armed elements among those seeking asylum cannot be ignored, particularly considering the high mobility those elements throughout the sub-region.

The situation in some parts of the country remains volatile, requiring the deployment of civilian members of the Government, as well as law and order elements to ensure a sustainable security environment for relief workers and civilian populations alike. At present, humanitarian agencies are (a) assisting IDPs and returnees from areas that remain unsafe; (b) assisting with the resettlement of IDPs and returnees from safe areas; and (c) initiating relief and recovery assistance in newly accessible areas. Given the prevailing situation, the Strategic Goals outlined in the CAP for 2002 are expected to constitute the basis for sustainable development during the transition from relief to

recovery in Sierra Leone, by contributing to the consolidation of peace and security as well as to the alleviation of poverty, the provision of basic social services, the revival of productive activities and commerce, the promotion of good governance and the fulfillment of basic human rights.

[...]

The main constraint to humanitarian actions over the past four years has been the lack of secure and unhindered access to all parts of the country. The highly volatile, unpredictable and rapidly evolving politico-military situation has necessitated rapid shifts in programmed interventions to address emerging humanitarian needs. However, resources were sometimes not available in-country at the time they were required. Lack of timely and adequate funding, and concomitant capacity limitations have also constrained humanitarian actions.

The poor and dilapidated infrastructure, mainly the road network, has limited the coverage and speed of humanitarian interventions, especially to newly accessible areas. In these situations, the humanitarian helicopter provides a means of delivering essential medication and limited quantities of food until rehabilitation efforts can be undertaken to improve accessibility. Local capacity in terms of human and material resources is also limited. While the efforts of the NRC are trying to address this, Government institutions remain weak and under resourced." (UN November 2001)

Some improvements in access during first half of 2001 as UNAMSIL was deploying to new areas

- UN considered it in May 2001 unlikely that RUF-controlled areas would be declared safe during the second half of the 2001
- RUF agrees to unhindered access to the town of Lunsar after UNAMSIL deployment in March 2001
- Western area and southern province declared safe for resettlement, but almost three-quarters of the north remains inaccessible to humanitarian agencies by March 2001
- RUF withdrawal from the Kambia District and return of Government control by end-May 2001

"UNAMSIL's US-trained 7th Nigerian Battalion comprising 776 peacekeepers completed their deployment on March 20th in the RUF held town of Lunsar. The RUF has agreed that all civilians, humanitarian agencies and UNAMSIL personnel would have complete freedom of movement in areas where UN peacekeepers are deployed, and that a five-kilometer weapons-free zone would be established around all UNAMSIL deployment areas. All RUF checkpoints along the road leading to Makeni would also be dismantled, subject to the approval of the RUF High Command.

[...]

The western area has been declared safe for resettlement. All the 14 chiefdoms in the Bo district have also been declared safe which makes the entire southern province safe. Six chiefdoms in the Kenema district remain unsafe. The Kono area is totally unsafe as well as Kailahun district, with the exception of Daru. Only four chiefdoms in the Port Loko district have been declared safe. Almost ¾ of the north remains inaccessible to humanitarian agencies except for recent improvement in security, which has allowed UNAMSIL and humanitarian agencies to visit the township of Makeni, Magburaka and Lunsar." (OCHA 31 March 2001)

"The RUF continue to man checkpoints on the approach routes to Makeni and Magburaka. Although most of them appear to be unarmed, it is generally believed that the combatants may still be in possession of some weapons in nearby hideouts. Most of these checkpoints have become a major source of income for the combatants who continue to tax civilian vehicles. However, NGOs and UN Agencies are largely exempted from such taxes, probably because the RUF is anxious to see the return of humanitarian agencies to the areas they control. UNAMSIL has advised humanitarian agencies to take adequate precautions when operating in these areas." (OCHA 8 May 2001)

"Despite RUF expressed willingness to guarantee safe access to beneficiaries and Humanitarian Agencies, there is no guarantee that safe access can be sustained in areas under their control without complete disarmament. Much will depend on the evolution of the political situation. It is unlikely that the criteria for declaring areas safe will be met in the RUF-controlled areas during the second half of the year. Agencies will, however, continue to expand operations in newly accessible areas to the extent possible." (OCHA 21 May 2001)

"There were no major security incidents between the Government and rebels during the week [12 January 2001], resulting in a relative calm situation in the country and an improved road access. Revolutionary United Front (RUF) has reportedly agreed to reopen all roads leading to areas under its control (i.e. Bumbuna-Magburaka, Kabala-Mekeni, and the Kambia-Mange-PortLoko axis). The UN Humanitarian Coordinator met with the RUF leadership in Magburaka, to discuss the option of delivering humanitarian aid to rebel held areas. He reported that RUF is ready to allow humanitarian access, but that security concerns will have to be properly addressed prior to any such interventions." (WFP 12 January 2001)

"Meanwhile, persisting instability in some parts of the country and the sub-region continues to significantly impede access to an estimated 1 million Sierra Leoneans currently living in RUF-controlled areas. This notwithstanding, the Government, WHO, UNICEF and their implementing partners have succeeded in negotiating limited access to RUF-held areas, including Makeni, Magburaka and segbwema for the purpose of continuing the polio eradication programmes." (UN SC 15 December 2000, para.58)

"A key feature of the period under review has been improved access across the country. The deployment of UNAMSIL peacekeepers to Lunsar, Makeni and Kambia and patrols in the Kono area, together with the progress in disarmament, have opened up new areas of the country to humanitarian interventions. Humanitarian agencies and organizations are now operational in all of these areas, and an expansion of activities is planned." (UN SC 25 June 2001, para. 61)

"Following the RUF withdrawal from the Kambia District at the end of May the Government of Sierra Leone regained control of the District with the deployment of the SLA and the subsequent deployment of the SLP in early June, opening up the District after several year's under RUF control. The Kambia Task Force established in mid May was mandated to assess the humanitarian situation in the District, identify critical needs and plan appropriate humanitarian interventions to begin the recovery process. An inter-agency multi-sectoral assessment was conducted from the 14th-15th June in all seven of chiefdoms of Kambia." (OCHA/Kambia Humanitarian Task Force June 2001, p.2)

Concern that humanitarian assistance attracts the attention of armed groups in need of supplies (July 2000)

"The displaced populations at Mile 91 and Port Loko are vulnerable not only because they are near areas of continued fighting, but humanitarian goods meant for them are a magnet to the ill-supplied armies in the vicinity. Attacks followed both food distributions to the Port Loko displaced persons camp. At Mile 91, international food agencies have had difficulty bringing in food and supplies in part because of apprehension that it would create similar risks for the displaced population. Because existing clinics are over-stretched and there is the threat of epidemic, MSF is establishing an emergency health program for the displaced persons at Mile 91.

The proliferation of various ostensibly pro-government forces, often consisting of former rebel soldiers, has added to the security concerns of the displaced persons. These groups are largely untrained, badly equipped and short of food, and they have made travel in government-controlled areas extremely hazardous." (MSF 14 July 2000)

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES

National response

Sierra Leone government publishes national recovery strategy, partly aimed at reintegration of resettled IDPs (October 2002)

- Sierra Leone government's national recovery strategy is broken down into four priority areas: restoring state authority; rebuilding communities; peace building and human rights; and restoring the economy
- In terms of rebuilding communities, the government cites the virtual completion of the resettlement programme, improvements in primary health care and education provision, but also acknowledges that much remains to be done
- Peace building and human rights interventions must be supported at the national and community levels in order to achieve reintegration of communities and ultimately long-term stability, says the government

"The Sierra Leonean government on Monday published a National Recovery Strategy that details the state of affairs in various sectors and targets for 2003.

The strategy is broken down into four priority areas: restoring state authority; rebuilding communities; peace building and human rights; and restoring an economy battered by a war that lasted from 1991 to early 2002.

Restoring state authority

With regard to the restoration of state authority, tangible progress had been made over the past year in the deployment of key district officials while district councillors were to be elected in 2003, the report said. Most representatives of line ministries had returned to the districts, but all local government officials suffered from inadequate office facilities, logistical support and staffing conditions, it said.

The Sierra Leone Police (SLP) had deployed to all districts. However, although key infrastructure had been rehabilitated and officers retrained and re-equipped, their capacity was generally constrained by the destruction of most police stations and barracks throughout the country, the report said. A total of 700 new officers were recruited into the force in 2001-2002 and there were plans to recruit a further 1,000 in 2003. The SLP's strength in 2003 would be increased from the current level of 6,500 to 7,500.

Despite considerable improvements this year, the extension of the judiciary throughout the country remained inadequate, held back by a lack of court infrastructure, qualified judges, magistrates and court officers, the document noted. In 2003, Sierra Leone hopes to appoint justices of the peace and magistrates and establish magistrate courts in all districts.

Most prisons had been destroyed or had sustained major damage during the war. The government planned to rehabilitate penitentiaries and increase the number of prison staff from 790 to 1,140.

Rebuilding communities

Virtually the entire registered caseload of 206,000 internally displaced persons; and over 97,000 returnees had been resettled. Of 72,490 ex-combatants disarmed and demobilised, 56,351 had registered for

reintegration opportunities and 58 percent - 32,472 persons - had so far been helped to reintegrate into society, the report said.

Primary health care centres had increased by 221 and now numbered 631, which was 86 percent of the pre-war number. District hospitals were functional in all but two districts, but there was a severe shortage of health professionals outside the capital, Freetown.

Access to safe drinking water ranged from 35 to 54 percent, depending on the district, while access to sanitation facilities varied from 15 to 63 percent. The government said it hoped to increase the number of people with access to safe drinking water and sanitation by 846,000 and 550,000 respectively.

The introduction in 2000 of free basic education had continued to stimulate primary school enrolment, which increased by 20 percent in 2001. Some 200 primary schools are scheduled to be rehabilitated in 2003.

Building peace and the economy

For reconciliation, long-term stability, integration of communities and sustainable development to be achieved, peace building and human rights interventions must be supported at the national and community levels, the report noted.

A Truth and Reconciliation Commission and a Special Court would be integral components of this strategy, it said, adding that the government hoped to include civic/human rights in the general curriculum for all schools in 2003.

Eradicating hunger in Sierra Leone was the government's primary objective over the next five years, the report said. Revitalising agriculture was essential to meeting this challenge and would contribute to the restoration of the country's economy, it said." (IRIN, 31 October 2002)

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

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

"The principles on which the resettlement strategy are based are:

The GOSL will only facilitate resettlement into an area when it is deemed that the area in question is sufficiently safe to allow for the protection of returnees

As far as possible support measures provided during the resettlement process will be standardised and in parity to avoid inter and intra-community tensions

As far as possible support for integrated resettlement, reconstruction and rehabilitation will be community-based incorporating resettling internally displaced persons (IDPs), repatriating refugees, ex-combatants with their dependants and existing resident populations

The geographical unit that will be used for assessing safety of resettlement and for resettlement planning will be the chiefdom.

All beneficiary groups are fully informed of the support they are entitled to and of the procedures for accessing them

Resettlement and reintegration programmes for IDPs refugees and ex-combatants are integrated as far as possible

Every effort will be made to ensure that there is close co-ordination of all aspects of assistance for the resettlement process occurs to ensure appropriate targeting and efficient use of resources

The resettlement process is closely monitored to ensure that appropriate interventions or adjustments are made for those beneficiaries failing to cope adequately during this transitional period

[...]

Registered IDPs

This population consists of those displaced people who have been registered and verified, and are currently receiving IDP support services. This will include spontaneous returning refugees whose areas of origin are not safe for resettling.

[...]

When their home of origin is declared safe for resettlement, these IDPs will enter into the resettlement programme [...]. This will include transportation for the most vulnerable and the receipt of a resettlement package, the potential for entry onto seeds and tools or other employment-based safety-net programmes and benefits from community rehabilitation and reconstruction targeted at basic service provision and income generation.

[...]

Unregistered IDPs

There is no clear information on the number of unregistered IDPs in the country. This population of IDPs has not been registered and so has not benefited from the support services provided to registered IDPs. Given the drive to phase-down IDP camps and support resettlement, the GoSL does not support the registration of new caseloads [...], unless there is a significant new displacement of people.

Despite this, unregistered IDPs are not excluded from support during the resettlement process. They will be eligible to enter onto seeds and tools programmes and/or other employment-based safety net / income generating schemes, as well as gaining benefits from community-based initiatives supporting the rehabilitation and reconstruction of basic services and the resuscitation of the local economy. It is also recommended that agencies consider providing non-food items to the most vulnerable members of the community in the resettlement area. This could be achieved through targeted distributions or through employment-based safety net schemes.

Although, this group will not be eligible for resettlement food rations, provision of food aid for vulnerable groups within this category may be provided through employment-based safety-net schemes, school feeding programmes, VGF rations in cases of food insecurity and, in cases where there is acute malnutrition, therapeutic feeding. The promotion of such interventions will be determined through food security and nutritional monitoring.

Refugees/Returnees

Refugees who repatriate spontaneously (without any UNHCR involvement or assistance) to a situation of internal displacement shall be considered as IDPs and included under relevant mechanisms for IDPs resettlement. For proper tracking purposes, their formal refugee status will be stated on their resettlement benefit cards. These returnees will not be entitled to benefit from UNHCR repatriation assistance, but will be included under community-based reintegration assistance by UNHCR and other agencies.

Sierra Leonean refugees returning under the framework of UNHCR assisted repatriation will be given assistance in parity to that offered to registered IDPs. Organised transportation will however only be provided in the context of a promoted return. This will consist of the provision of transport to the most vulnerable households [...]. In the case of food, a two month food ration will be provided in their areas of return. This will be distributed at the chiefdom-level alongside resettlement food rations provided to resettling, registered IDPs.

In parity with registered IDPs, refugees will receive a resettlement package. In the case of shelter, ways will be found to ensure that those who cannot build on their own will be provided assistance to do so. Like other

beneficiary groups, returnees will have the opportunity of entering onto seeds and tools projects and/or other employment-based safety net / income generating schemes, as well as gaining benefits from community-based initiatives supporting the rehabilitation and reconstruction of basic services and the resuscitation of the local economy.

Like the internally displaced, the decision as to when their homes of origins are suitable safe to allow their facilitated repatriation will be determined through the Resettlement Assessment Committees, for which UNHCR is represented at all levels [...]. Similarly, the planning for repatriation assistance within Sierra Leone will take place through the Resettlement Planning Committees [...]" (NCRRR December 2000, pp. 5-7, 9)

"With respect to the existing IDPs, the strategy is evolving as planned. The declaration of safe areas (about a third of the country) by the GoSL at the beginning of the year has paved the way for some IDPs to return home, necessitating increased support for resettlement and rehabilitation in the areas concerned, and the phasing-out of major relief programmes such as food aid for those who are registered in the programme. At the time of writing, over 40,000 of the 273,000 registered IDPs had registered for resettlement. More are likely to enter the programme as their places of origin are declared safe." (OCHA 21 May 2001)

International political response

Largest UN military mission in the world starts to downsize (2002-2003)

- Full deployment of UNAMSIL takes place in November 2001 - with a total of 17,500 troops deployed around the country
- In March 2002, the UN Security Council extends UNAMSIL's mandate for a further six months, and the mission prepares to downsize
- Fears are expressed in Sierra Leone that UNAMSIL's withdrawal would return the country to war
- UN Secretary-General stresses that the capacity of national police and armed forces must be strengthened in order to avoid a security vacuum
- By the end of 2004, it is envisaged that UNAMSIL will be reduced to about 5,000 troops

"The arrival of the last contingent of UN peacekeepers in Sierra Leone last week has brought the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) to its authorised ceiling of 17,500 troops, a UN official told IRIN on Monday.

The Nepali peacekeepers, which make up an 800-strong battalion, arrived last week in the capital, Freetown, and are due to be deployed to Moyamba District in southern Sierra Leone. 'All 800 will go to key areas in Moyamba including DDR reception centres and UNAMSIL facilities,' the UN official said." (IRIN 20 November 2001)

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

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

The UN Security Council extended the mandate of UNAMSIL by six months on 28 March 2002. The force, the largest UN military mission in the world, literally runs Sierra Leone's security. During elections in May

it deployed 11,000 troops in 200 high-risk areas throughout the country. International civilian police were also provided to help the local police develop operational plans for the elections.

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

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

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

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

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

"10. In my sixteenth report on UNAMSIL (S/2002/1417) of 24 December 2002, I provided details on the progress made in the implementation of the first two phases of the Mission's drawdown plan. The first phase, which started in September 2002, was completed in November 2002 with the withdrawal of some 600 troops from the Bangladeshi and Nigerian contingents, as well as reconnaissance helicopters that were considered no longer essential. The implementation of the second drawdown phase, which envisages the withdrawal of 3,900 troops, is still in progress. In December 2002 and January 2003, the Pakistani artillery unit, the Ghanaian headquarters sector 3 staff and the Kenyan sector 2 staff were repatriated, which allowed the Mission to reduce the force strength from 16,000 to 15,500. Simultaneously, the five military sectors were reduced to three.

11. The next stage of the second phase of the drawdown commenced in March with the repatriation of the Bangladeshi logistic battalion and a reduction in the strength of the Bangladeshi signals battalion. This phase will continue with the repatriation of the Nigerian contingent based at Goderich, near Freetown, the Guinean battalion and the Ghanaian level-2 hospital, to be completed in May 2003. The force strength will thereby be reduced to 13,000 troops.

12. The completion of phase 2 will be followed by a period of review and consolidation of United Nations positions. However, planning for phase 3 of the drawdown is already at an advanced stage. That phase will run from August 2003 to the end of 2004; it is envisaged that the strength of the force will be reduced

further, from 13,000 to about 5,000. That very substantial reduction will obviously be closely linked to the achievement of critical benchmarks established by the Security Council, most significant among which remains the capacity of the Sierra Leone police and RSLAF to maintain security. The risks inherent in the implementation of this phase are recognized to be much greater than those during phase 2, and the UNAMSIL operational plan is being worked out accordingly.

13. In this phase, the force will progressively be concentrated in the Freetown and Lungi peninsulas in the west, and the Tongo and Kono diamond-mining areas and the Liberian border region in the east, with commensurate and staged repatriation of force elements in the central region. At the final stage of this phase, the remaining troops will be concentrated exclusively in Freetown. The military observers, however, will remain at the current level and will remain active across the entire country.

14. UNAMSIL expects to implement phase 3 in several steps, each to be followed by a careful assessment of the prevailing security situation. Step one envisages a reduction of force troops from 13,000 to 12,300; sector centre's Nigerian battalion will repatriate from its base in Makeni by August 2003 on completion of its six-month tour, with sub-units from the Bangladeshi battalion at Magburaka relocating to Makeni if so required. During step two, the number of troops is expected to be reduced to 11,500, after the Bangladeshi battalion has been repatriated on completion of its eight-month tour in November 2003, with another Bangladeshi battalion providing back-up as required. It will be important to retain the attack-and-support helicopter assets in the theatre throughout phase 3, to provide the necessary monitoring and deterrence along Sierra Leone's borders and to enforce peace if required. The support helicopters will be used to deploy the rapid force reserve in support of the Sierra Leone police or army in areas vacated by UNAMSIL as may be necessary." (UN SC, 17 March 2003)

UN Peacekeeping mission (UNAMSIL) to facilitate implementation of peace agreement (1999-2001)

- Security Council decided in October 1999 to establish the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL)
- UNAMSIL mandated to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance
- 12,428 UNAMSIL troops deployed by 22 July 2000, but reduced to 10,356 personnel by March 2001
- Security Council decision in March 2001 to extend the mandate of UNAMSIL for six months and increased its military component to a strength of 17,500
- The first group of more than 4,000 Pakistani peacekeepers started arriving in June 2001
- By June 2001 UNAMSIL was preparing to deploy into the diamond-producing regions and some border areas in the Eastern Province

"On 22 October, the UN Security Council decided to establish a 6000-strong UN peacekeeping force for Sierra Leone in support of the Lomé peace agreement. According to the resolution, the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) will be deployed throughout the country for an initial period of six months. The bulk of the force will be drawn from ECOWAS countries while Kenyan and Indian troops will make up the rest. Under its mandate, UNAMSIL will monitor the ceasefire agreement of May 1999, support the implementation of the Lomé agreement and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance. The UN force will also help the Government disarm, demobilize and reintegrate combatants, including child soldiers; ensure the security and freedom of movement of UN personnel; encourage the parties to create confidence-building mechanisms; and provide support to elections held under the constitution.

Acting under chapter VII of the UN charter, the council authorized the mission to ensure its personnel's security and freedom of movement and, within its capabilities and areas of deployment, "to protect civilians

under imminent threat of physical violence, taking into account the responsibilities of the Government." Members further commended ECOMOG's efforts towards the implementation of the Lomé accord, and stressed the need for close cooperation between the new mission and ECOMOG. Members also stressed the urgent need for substantial resources to finance the DDR process, and called on the international community to contribute generously to the trust fund established by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development." (UN OCHA 23 October 1999)

"An important milestone was reached in November when the UN Security Council established a Peacekeeping Force for Sierra Leone. In a further move to support the country's fragile peace, the Council voted for an expansion from 6,000 military personnel to 11,100 in February. This move has raised hopes that a precarious security situation will finally be stabilized, facilitating DDR and enabling humanitarian and development agencies to meaningfully assist needy populations. The first gain was reaped in February, when the successful deployment of UNAMSIL troops in the northern provincial capital of Makeni paved the way for agencies to undertake a comprehensive multi-sectoral assessment of needs in the area. It also provided an opportunity for the UN to successfully negotiate with the RUF field commanders for the withdrawal of earlier (unacceptable) demands for agencies to channel all aid through the RUF humanitarian wing - the Organization for the Survival of Mankind (OSM). As a way of resolving the issue, the GOSL has invited the OSM Coordinator to join its National Commission for Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (NCRRR), while the UN has advised the RUF to transform the OSM into an independent NGO. Both proposals were accepted by the RUF.

Although the relationship between UNAMSIL troops and the RUF command is presently tense, causing the RUF to re-establish checkpoints in the Makeni area, the RUF has given assurances that aid agencies operational in the area would be granted free access. This has so far been maintained, but the situation remains volatile. This growing tension between the RUF and UNAMSIL troops is a cause for concern for the humanitarian community. The RUF's constant refusal to allow UNAMSIL troops to deploy in key areas, has not only dashed hopes of improved security conditions, but also raised concerns of a possible military confrontation between the two forces, which could potentially increase the risk to aid workers on the ground. An INDBATT convoy moving from Kenema to Daru was stopped on 23 February at Bendu Junction between Mano Junction and Segbwema and prevented from proceeding, despite lengthy negotiations with the direct involvement of Minister Mike Lamin. The RUF forces of 200-300 well-armed men took up defensive positions between Segbwema and Bendu Junction. After 24 hrs the INDBATT convoy was ordered to return to Kenema by the RUF combatants. Although UNAMSIL has so far refrained from forceful action against the RUF, it carries a "robust" chapter VII mandate to "take necessary action to ensure the security and freedom of movement of its personnel and to afford protection to civilians under imminent threat of physical violence." The Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) Oluyemi Adeniji, has warned the RUF leader that contravention of the Lomé Peace Accord, such as the seizure of weapons from UN peacekeepers, mounting illegal road blocks and blocking the free movement of UN troops in the discharge of their mandate, must stop immediately or would "invite forceful response." Of the large number of ammunition, arms and vehicles seized from the Guinean troops by RUF elements, only two armoured personnel carriers had been recovered, both of them stripped of their mounted weapons. Meanwhile, Foday Sankoh continues to express the RUF's disappointment with regard to the current trend of events in Sierra Leone. In a 24 February letter to the Moral Guarantors and other key actors, Sankoh claimed that the RUF was not consulted about UNAMSIL's Mandate, which it considers "highly threatening." (OCHA 7 March 2000, sect.1)

"The strength of the military component of UNAMSIL as at 1 March had reached 7,391 military personnel, including 260 military observers (see annex). In accordance with the earlier plans, main elements of the force are currently deployed to Freetown, Lungi, Port Loko, Lunsar, Masiaka, Makeni, Magburaka, Kenema, Daru, Mile 91, Bo and Moyamba (see map). Successive efforts have been made to deploy also to Koidu and Kailahun, but these have been unsuccessful as a result of the refusal of RUF to allow UNAMSIL freedom of movement, in spite of various assurances from the RUF leadership that UNAMSIL would be able to move to those locations." (SC 7 March 2000, para.16)

"Since my last report, new troops from Bangladesh, India and Jordan have arrived in the Mission area, bringing the troop strength of UNAMSIL to 12,428, as at 22 July 2000. With the expected arrival of a Russian military aviation unit, the military strength of UNAMSIL would approach the ceiling set under Security Council resolution 1299 (2000)." (SC 31 July 2000, para. 29)

"On Friday, 4 August, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted a British-sponsored resolution to extend UNAMSIL's mandate until 8 September 2000 and to strengthen its capacity. The original six-month mandate was due to expire on Monday 7 August. The resolution said UNAMSIL's military component "should be reinforced through accelerated troop rotations, with further aviation and maritime assets, a strengthened force reserve, upgraded communications, and specialist combat and logistic support assets." According to the resolution, U.N. peacekeepers would help the Sierra Leone government to extend its authority over areas of the country under RUF control by deploying at key locations and main population centres. The Council also agreed that the peacekeeping force would "deter, and where necessary, decisively counter, the threat of RUF attack by responding robustly to any hostile actions" or threat of imminent use of force.

The resolution calls on the U.N. force to maintain security around Freetown and at Lungi International Airport as a priority, to patrol main access routes to the capital, and to promote efforts to disarm and demobilise combatants. "Widespread and serious violations" by the RUF of the Lomé Peace Accord "constitute a breakdown of the prior generally permissive environment based on the agreement" and predicated on the cooperation of the warring parties, the resolution said. Until security conditions allow progress toward a peaceful resolution of the conflict, "there will continue to be a threat to UNAMSIL and the security of the state of Sierra Leone," it added." (OCHA 7 August 2000)

"The military strength of UNAMSIL as at 14 March [2001] stood at 10,356 personnel [...]. The relief of the Indian and Jordanian contingents was completed on 14 February 2001. The advance party of a third battalion from Bangladesh arrived in the mission area in mid-February and the main body and support units began to arrive on 9 March. The expected arrival of a Ukrainian Aviation Unit will also add military capability to the force. The Ukrainian Maintenance and Training Battalion is already in Sierra Leone and has begun training various contingents on the operation of armoured personnel carriers and other vehicles. After the arrival of these reinforcements, it is expected that the Mission's strength will reach about 12,700 military personnel by the end of March.

[...]

The Mission's updated concept of operations integrates military and civilian aspects and envisages the deployment, in successive phases, into RUF-controlled areas of UNAMSIL troops, United Nations civil affairs, civilian police and human rights personnel, representatives of humanitarian agencies, and government personnel and assets to establish and consolidate State authority and basic services in these areas. It is clear that the success of this concept will very much depend on the availability of United Nations military resources and, in equal measure, on the extent to which these mutually reinforcing efforts are coordinated between the actors involved." (UN SC 14 March 2001, paras. 34, 59)

"On Friday, The Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) for six months and increased its military component to a strength of 17,500, including the 260 military observers already deployed.

By a unanimous vote, the Council also demanded that the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and other military groups immediately cease their reported abuses of human rights, particularly the harassment and forced recruitment of adults and children for fighting and forced labour. It requested Secretary-General Kofi Annan to ensure that all human rights monitoring positions in UNAMSIL were filled." (UNAMSIL 3 April 2001)

"The first group of more than 4,000 Pakistani peacekeepers has started arriving in Sierra Leone. An advanced party of 265 men joined UNAMSIL on June 8th; the remaining contingent should have all arrived in the country by August 22nd. Meanwhile, UNAMSIL reports that there have been improved consultations between the Security Council and troop-contributing countries in seeking ways to strengthen

peacekeeping efforts in the country. The Security Council working group on Peacekeeping Operations is considering establishing regional peacekeeping training centres to increase international cooperation for peacekeeping. The panel requests the Secretary-General to convene assessment meetings with troop-contributing countries at various stages of an operation. It also says countries providing troops should conduct reconnaissance visits to the mission area, and prepare contingency plans and exit strategies for volatile situations." (OCHA 16 June 2001)

"Since my last report, the troop strength of UNAMSIL has increased to 12,718 (as at 21 June) with the arrival of a third battalion and support units from Bangladesh, the Ukraine Aviation Unit and the advance party of the Pakistani contingent [...]. All 4,300 personnel from Pakistan are expected to be in the mission area by September 2001.

UNAMSIL is preparing to embark on the third phase of its concept of operations, which involves the deployment of United Nations troops into the diamond-producing regions and some border areas in the Eastern Province. With the arrival of the Pakistani contingent, a new sector will be established in the east by September." (UN SC 25 June 2001, paras.18, 21)

See also the section titled "Official Conflict Management" in the September 2000 report by the European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation for more information about the international and regional political response to the conflict.

The UNAMSIL mandate and updated information about their operation can be found at their homepage.

For the full text of the Security Council Resolutions behind UNAMSIL, see:

*(UN SC 22 October 1999);
(UN SC 7 February 2000)
(UN SC 4 August 2000)
(UN SC 22 December 2000)
(UN SC 30 March 2001)*

Donor response

Delays in the commitment of resources hampered efforts to implement planned activities in time (June 2003)

- Limited implementation of activities before heavy rains, undermines rehabilitation efforts
- Influxes of refugees from Liberia results in more financial needs for Relief and Recovery for Sierra Leone

"The stable environment in Sierra Leone is enabling continued opportunities for reintegration and recovery efforts and accelerated repatriation, while the instability in Liberia, is generating additional influxes of refugees. As a result the Inter-agency Appeal for Relief and Recovery for Sierra Leone in 2003 is requesting an additional US\$ 3.7 million for Liberian refugee operations.

Some progress has been achieved in meeting the humanitarian and recovery needs through the collective efforts of communities, the government, UN agencies and national and international NGOs. However, delays in the commitment of resources during the first quarter of the year have hampered efforts to

implement activities in time for the planting season and before the heavy rains undermine rehabilitation efforts.

The main priorities for the humanitarian community in Sierra Leone for the rest of 2003 are to: provide adequate assistance and protection to Liberian refugees; support promoted repatriation of Sierra Leonean refugees from neighbouring countries; support reintegration efforts and enhance the delivery of education, health, agriculture, water and sanitation and shelter services." (UN OCHA, 3 June 2003)

UN requests total of US\$ 82.9 million in 2003 consolidated interagency appeal (November 2002)

- UN appeal is partly aimed at supporting the reintegration and reconciliation process for resettled IDPs (as well as returnees, ex-combatants and separated children) in their home communities
- The appeal identifies main priority needs in the sectors of shelter, health, water and sanitation, food security, education and roads

"The main focus of humanitarian interventions will be to ensure protection and assistance to Liberian refugees; to facilitate and promote the repatriation of Sierra Leonean refugees in safety and dignity, and to support the reintegration and reconciliation process for resettled IDPs, returnees, ex-combatants and separated children in home communities.

To ensure a successful reintegration and reconciliation process, recovery efforts will focus on: the restoration of civil authority; the rehabilitation and extension of basic social services; the revival of the agriculture sector; the creation of economic opportunities; and the promotion of a culture of human rights and peace building. The main priority needs are in the shelter, health, water and sanitation, food security, education and road sectors.

[...]

The programmes and interventions outlined in the appeal have been designed and will be implemented in partnership with the Government of Sierra Leone, international and national non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the Red Cross family and community-based organisations. The Appeal also aims to complement and support the National Recovery Strategy and the UN's Peacebuilding and Recovery Strategy.

The Inter-agency Appeal for Sierra Leone is requesting US\$ 69.2 million for emergency relief assistance and US\$ 13.7 million to meet immediate recovery needs." (UN, 19 November 2002)

Sierra Leone needs \$650 million for reconstruction, say donors (November 2002)

- About half of the US\$ 650 million is expected to come from bilateral donors, particularly the UK and Germany, while multilateral donors such as the African Development Bank will provide the rest
- Sierra Leone government says most of the aid will go to renovate state-owned infrastructure and facilities, rebuild schools and engage in agricultural projects

"Bilateral and multilateral donors have announced that Sierra Leone needs about 650 million dollars for reconstruction after ten years of bloody and devastating civil war.

"We believe that the government has presented in Paris a credible rebuilding programme. That's why some backers have unexpectedly announced financial assistance," said Mats Karlsson, a World Bank official, who announced the aid package on Thursday at a donors' conference in Paris.

About 50 percent of 650 million dollars will be given by bilateral backers, particularly the United Kingdom and Germany, while multilateral backers including the African Development Bank (BAD) will provide the rest, said Karlsson, who co-chaired the conference.

Seemingly overwhelmed, Sierra Leone's vice-president, Solomon Berewa said the announced aid package was beyond expectations of the Freetown delegation.

'In fact, we came here to brief you on the progress of our efforts to rebuild our country. We did not expect the announcement of this important aid that we pledge to use wittingly for our people,' he said.

Berewa said the money would be used mainly to renovate state-owned infrastructure and facilities, build schools and engage in agriculture projects that were heavily destroyed by years of war.

Sierra Leone, he added, will initiate this rebuilding work process without neglecting the urgent humanitarian needs estimated at two million dollars.

The UNDP human development index ranks Sierra Leone last among 174 countries surveyed. Its external debt is being reduced by 40 million dollars yearly." (PANA, 15 November 2002)

UK government pledges £120 million of support for Sierra Leone's reconstruction over next 3 years (November 2002)

- UK aid package is part of a ten-year programme of support to the social and economic development of Sierra Leone
- Britain is the largest bilateral donor to Sierra Leone, supporting a wide range of reconstruction, reconciliation, reintegration and governance projects

"The UK government today, commits to a 10-year programme of support to the social and economic development of Sierra Leone. The agreement commits Britain to £120 million of support for development programmes over the next 3 years.

Clare Short, Secretary of State for International Development, said: 'This agreement with the Government of Sierra Leone is a partnership for reconstruction. It is a demonstration of the Sierra Leone Government's commitment to reform and ours to support it. I hope this will be a successful new approach to cooperation on poverty reduction and that other development agencies will join in supporting this partnership for reconstruction.'

A decade of war was declared over in January 2002 and elections took place in May 2002. The UK Government is 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 and to act in areas such as public administration reform, corruption, financial management and security reforms. 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 the Sierra Leone's government budget to be linked to progress against key reform issues.

This funding is 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.

Notes to editors:

Britain is the largest bilateral donor to Sierra Leone. The UK supports 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. DFID support includes:

Community Reintegration Project (CRP) providing employment for ex-combatants and resettling Internally Displaced People's while rebuilding essential infrastructure.

Training of the Sierra Leone army and police force. Through the IMATT (International Military Advisory Training Team), the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) has been restructured and is undergoing a retraining programme. The Sierra Leone Police also have a key role to play in ensuring long-term security. DFID have provided support on a three year Commonwealth Community Safety and Security Project which focuses on community policing.

An Infrastructure Reconstruction Programme (SLIRP) providing support to the re-establishment of government services in newly accessible parts of the country by building or rehabilitating key infrastructure.

A Media Development Project (MDP) building media efficiency and effectiveness; a Law Development Project (LDP) on restoration and strengthening of the legal institutional framework and update of the legal code;

Campaign for Good Governance (CGG):

- Support to the building of a well-informed and active civil society.
- Budgetary Support for salaries in key social and security services, additional security expenditure and delays in donor disbursement.
-

DFID also supports a range of NGO's working on the humanitarian situation. Priorities are protection (human rights), basic health services, shelter and food.

Clare Short gave a speech in Freetown, Sierra Leone in February 2002 entitled 'Corruption and Governance'. DFID supports the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) which is currently conducting a large number of investigations." (DFID, 13 November 2002)

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

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

Sierra Leone - FY 2002	
USAID\$32,861,817	
USAID/OFDA \$6,635,391	
AAH/USA: Nutrition, Water/Sanitation	Western Area and Northern Province \$1,151,678
Africare: Agriculture, Health	Tonkolili, Kailahun \$799,999
CRS: Agriculture, Health, Shelter	Northern, Eastern, Southern Provinces \$1,184,579
FAO: Agriculture	Country-wide \$200,000

MERLIN: Health, Water/Sanitation	Freetown, Tonkolili, and Kenema Districts	\$412,172
IMC: Health	Port Loko, Kambia District	\$390,912
UN OCHA: Coordination, Information	Country-wide	\$300,000
WVI: Agriculture	Kono District and Southern Province	\$995,173
WVI: Health	Kono District	\$700,878
WFP: Air Support	Country-wide	\$500,000
USAID/FFP		\$26,226,426
CARE: P.L. 480 Title II Food Assistance - 6,530 MT		\$6,650,334
CRS: P.L. 480 Title II Food Assistance - 12,900 MT		\$7,900,700
WVI: P.L. 480 Title II Food Assistance - 9,060 MT		\$6,009,000
WFP: P.L. 480 Title II Food Assistance - 7,200 MT		\$5,756,392
STATE/PRM*		\$4,336,648
ARC: Micro-credit		\$1,036,648
UNHCR: Refugee Support		\$2,840,000
IFRC: Refugee Support		\$460,000
Total USG Humanitarian Assistance to Sierra Leone in FY 2002		\$37,198,465

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

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

African Development Fund supports rehabilitation of education in Sierra Leone (October 2002)

- African Development Fund provides over US\$ 21 million in a loan and grant to finance the rehabilitation of basic, non-formal and vocational educational project in Sierra Leone
- Project is expected to have an important impact on poverty reduction in Sierra Leone

"The African Development Fund (ADF) has approved a loan of 15 million Units of Accounts (UA) and a UA 1 million Technical Assistance Fund (TAF) grant, totalling an amount equivalent to US \$ 21.16 million to finance the rehabilitation of basic, non-formal and vocational education project (Education III Project) in Sierra Leone.

The project is consistent with the government's National Education Master Plan 1997-2006. It aims to implement an emergency response in the provision of basic education, vocational skills training and functional literacy needs. It will also help strengthen national capacity for efficient delivery mechanisms through the rehabilitation, reconstruction or expansion of 460 primary, 100 junior secondary schools, 40 community education centres and vocational training centres as well as the construction of 138 housing units for teachers in needy areas of the country. The project will also contribute to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MEST).

The project will have an important impact on poverty reduction in Sierra Leone. Indeed, several impoverished parts of Sierra Leone will benefit from school construction or rehabilitation in their communities and a number of 600 schools will benefit directly from the school maintenance programme countrywide. It will also promote national reconciliation by restoring normalcy to school life for the children and youth of Sierra Leone whose lives have been severely disrupted and uprooted by warfare." (ADB, 16 October 2002)

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

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

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

Selected UN activities

UN strategy includes the promotion and assistance of sustainable reintegration (October 2002)

- UN's 4-year strategy outlines the transition from humanitarian relief to a longer-term vision of UN assistance to Sierra Leone
- Focus areas for UN assistance will be: strengthening the security framework and regional cooperation, facilitating reintegration, reducing poverty, fostering good governance and promoting human rights and encouraging reconciliation

"Capitalizing on the recent peacebuilding and recovery opportunities in the early transition phase, the UN country team, in close consultation with the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), has prepared a UN Strategy to Support National Recovery and Peacebuilding that has been guided by national policies and priorities established through the National Recovery Programme and the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP). It also draws on the 2002 UN Consolidated Inter-agency Appeal for Sierra Leone (CAP) as well as the global targets established as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The purpose of this strategy paper is to explore how the United Nations, including humanitarian, development agencies and UNAMSIL, can contribute in a cohesive manner to the process of transition and peace building in Sierra Leone.

The strategy outlines the transition from humanitarian relief to a longer-term vision of UN assistance to Sierra Leone in the post conflict era. Taking into consideration political and security aspects, it forms a bridge between relief and recovery and aims at simultaneously directing assistance to those Sierra Leoneans who have been the most affected by the war and paving the way for the transition to sustainable development. The strategy provides a framework within which the UN will focus its dialogue, advocacy and operational activities during the period 2003-2007. It offers the opportunity for interagency collaboration through joint programming. Due to the evolving situation in Sierra Leone, the strategy will be updated on a yearly basis and is intended to lead the way to an appeal for 2003 and a United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for 2004, when programme cycles are planned to be harmonized. The strategy will assist the UN in focusing its contribution to both sector reviews and the preparation of the PRSP in 2003.

The strategy defines focus areas for UN assistance in five closely inter-related fields: strengthening the security framework and regional collaboration, facilitating reintegration, reducing poverty, fostering good governance and promoting human rights and encouraging reconciliation. In supporting the Government in its recovery and peacebuilding efforts, the strategy aims at enhancing the collaboration between the UN actors and their partners in Sierra Leone, ensuring complementary action and the best use of limited resources in the transition phase." (UNDP, 28 October 2002)

[Click here for the full document](#)

UNICEF supports wide-ranging projects that benefit returning IDPs, among others (2002)

- IDPs benefit from UNICEF-supported projects in sectors of education, health, reintegration, water and sanitation, and protection

*Internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees often identify the availability of education services as a criterion for returning to their home areas. Education also plays a key role in the successful reintegration of child excombatants. UNICEF continues to support the expansion of education services with renovations of formal school building, supply of teaching/learning materials and furniture, and refresher training courses for teachers. Priority for new partnerships is being given to schools in Kambia, Kailahun, Kono and Bombali Districts. So far this year, 17 schools have been rehabilitated in four districts: Kenema (4), Port Loko (3), Pujehun (4) and Kambia (6). School rehabilitation is nearing completion for 14 schools in three districts: Bombali (4), Kailahun (5) and Kono (5). Assessments for the rehabilitation of additional 19 schools have been completed, but work is on hold due to the lack of funds. Furniture units to accommodate 9,000 students have also been supplied to schools in 4 districts. As part of the Teacher Development Initiative (TDI), teacher workshops were held in Western Rural Area schools, covering child centred/participatory learning, girls education, HIV/AIDS, peace and human rights education, and, staff development. UNICEF continues to support Non-Formal Primary Education with 267 classes currently in process. Learning and teaching materials were distributed to 162 centres benefiting about 9,000 children, and 108 facilitators were trained in phase 2 & 3 curriculum in Kenema and Bonthe to benefit 3,240 pupils. UNICEF and partners are implementing education activities for a planning figure of 15,000 Liberian school-age children in refugee camps. UNICEF will support by providing teaching/learning and temporary shelter materials.

UNICEF continues to support the Rapid Response Education Programme (RREP) and Complementary Rapid Education for Primary Schools (CREPS) programme for children who did not attend school due to the conflict or other reasons. Over 6,000 children in Kambia, Kailahun and Kono Districts are currently benefiting from RREP which is a 6-month programme designed to enable children to make the adjustment back to the formal system after displacement or long periods out of school. The CREPS programme targets over-age children (10-14 years) and out-of-school children by providing 6 years of primary education in 3 years. With the training of 505 additional CREPS teachers, the programme has expanded to 665 classes operating in Kenema, Kailahun, Kono, Kambia, Port Loko, Bombali and Koinadugu districts.

Expanded Programme of Immunization (EPI) for all districts

UNICEF continues to assist the Ministry of Health & Sanitation (MoHS) to expand immunization services nation-wide. District 'cold rooms' are now operational in 12 out of 13 districts. Some of these are in temporary locations due to destroyed health structures. Solar refrigerators, procured with support from European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO) and UK's Department for International Development (DFID), have been installed in 8 District 'cold rooms'. Performance so far has proved to be satisfactory. EPI Refresher Training sessions for 90 Primary Healthcare Units (PHUs) staff in Tonkolili, Kono and

Kailahun Districts was conducted in July and August on the handling of cold chain equipment, vaccine administration and reporting procedures. Yellow Fever vaccination has been introduced in routine EPI services in Kono, Koinadugu and Kailahun Districts. Yellow fever and measles vaccines are now administered simultaneously, targeting 44,000 under-1 children in these 3 districts. Results of a national immunization coverage survey conducted at the end of 2001 were presented at a workshop in April 2002 for District Medical Officers with an aim to improve immunization coverage. Survey results indicated that only 26 per cent of children nation-wide are fully immunized. The survey will be repeated at year's end to monitor progress.

Increasing access to PHUs and Safe Motherhood services

The number of operational PHUs has increased to 624 nation-wide from 406 since January 2001. UNICEF currently provides drugs and medical supplies to 97 PHUs in 9 districts: Kono, Bombali, Port Loko, Kambia, Kenema, Pujehun, Bonthe, Kailahun and Moyamba. Support was also provided to International Medical Corps (IMC) for 14 clinics on a temporary basis in Kambia and Kailahun Districts. Renovations of 30 PHUs continue in five districts: Kambia (10), Pujehun (4), Bombali (7), Bo (2) and Kono (7). Iron/folic acid tablets for pregnant women have been distributed to all antenatal clinics nationwide with support from the Dutch Micro-nutrient Supplementation Grant. All UNICEF-supported facilities are included in the Anemia Prevention and Control Project which provides pregnant women with malaria prophylaxis, iron/folic acid tablets and de-worming tablets.

Polio National Immunization Days (NIDs)

The Ministry of Health & Sanitation (MoHS), with support from UNICEF, World Health Organization (WHO), US Agency for International Development (USAID), Centre for Disease Control-Atlanta and Rotary International, vaccinated 88,176 and 71,165 under-5 children respectively in two "mopping-up" sub-NIDs. The house-to-house sub-NIDs were held in chiefdoms along the Liberian border and refugee camps in Kailahun, Bo and Pujehun Districts on 21-23 June and on 19-21 July. UNICEF contributed vaccines and technical and financial assistance to vaccinators and supervisors participating in the polio campaigns. The next two NID rounds will be synchronized with other Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) countries and will be conducted house-to-house on 5-7 October and 9-11 November. Planning workshops for the NIDs were held for national and district supervisors on 29-30 July.

Nutrition and vitamin A distribution

To increase the profile and importance of nutrition, UNICEF collaborated with Helen Keller International to sponsor a multi-sector team to participate in a workshop on the situation analysis of nutrition in the country, using nutritional data to assess social and economic impact. The analysis is being used to develop a communication policy and advocacy strategy on priority nutrition problems and interventions. On 16 June, the Day of the African Child, UNICEF provided 1.1 million, Canadian-donated Vitamin A capsules and supported MoHS on training and mass administration of over 1 million children aged 6-59 months. The effort involved 5,000 distribution teams and 500 supervisors nation-wide. Vitamin A supplements help reduce mortality from common childhood illnesses such as measles, diarrhoea and respiratory infection by 25-50 per cent.

Malaria control

UNICEF supported a training of trainers workshop for 26 participants from all districts on the treatment, maintenance, fund management and supply sustainability for Insecticide Treated Bed-Nets.

Reintegration of child ex-combatants and separated children

The priority for UNICEF's Child Protection project is Family Tracing and Reunification (FTR) and family/community reintegration. With all areas accessible, FTR activities are now being conducted nation-wide. As of end August, estimated 6,500 former child combatants have been reunified with their families and only 81 demobilized and 54 separated children remained in Interim Care Centres and alternative care facilities such as group and foster homes. The Community Education Investment Programme (CEIP), supports the reintegration of child ex-combatants and separated children in

formal schools by providing teaching, learning or recreational materials that benefit all children in school. Implementing partners (MYES, COOPI, International Red Cross (IRC), the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Caritas, Save the Children Fund-UK (SCF-UK) follow-up with school on children's performance and attendance. Currently, some 2,600 child ex-combatants and separated children are benefiting from CEIP in 335 primary schools and 113 secondary schools in all 4 provinces. Child protection agencies have also facilitated the enrolment of 1,036 child ex-combatants and reunified children through the NCDDR-supported Training and Employment Programme.

Water and sanitation support to newly accessible areas

Due to low response to the water and sanitation sector of the current appeal, activities have been primarily financed by carry-over funds from contributions received in the second half of 2001 and UNICEF core resources. The chlorination of almost 8,000 wells is taking place in areas densely populated with returning IDPs and refugees to prevent the outbreak of cholera and diarrhoea diseases during the high-risk rainy season. Nine hundred Blue Flag Volunteers (BFVs) in Kono, Port Loko and Kailahun Districts were trained in Oral Rehydration Therapy, management of wells, and treatment of cholera and other water-borne diseases. The three mentioned districts are at risk of outbreaks due to poor water facilities and a high influx of refugees/returnees. New project agreements have been finalized with Water Supply Division of the Ministry of Energy and Power, MOBEKE Agricultural Programme-Sierra Leone, Rural Aid and Community Action for Rural Development. The cooperation will support the construction of 15 wells in primary schools and health centres in Bombali District, construction of 976 pit latrines and training of 106 village hand-pump attendants in Port Loko District, and repair of 3 gravity feed systems and construction of 210 pit latrines in Kailahun District.

Taking action on sexual exploitation

UNICEF chairs the interagency sub-committee of the CCSEA, charged with developing and implementing a Community Reporting System (CRS) on incidents of sexual abuse or exploitation. The CRS is being reviewed and specific recommendations for its implementation are being discussed amongst UN, NGO and government partners. UNICEF presented the CRS for comments at a 5-day workshop organized by IMC on sexual gender-based violence with 45 NGO and government participants.

Child rights training

The National Steering Committee on Military Training on Child Rights and Child Protection, of which UNICEF is a member, conducted a training of trainers workshop for UNAMSIL troops and officers of the Sierra Leone Police Force. Training goals are to create a child protection committee in every UNAMSIL battalion so that child rights information could filter through the ranks as well as to improve monitoring and reporting of child right violations.

HIV/AIDS

The UNICEF-funded "Knowledge, Attitude and Practice Adolescent Survey Report" was launched. Key findings in the survey, which was conducted from 19 November to 2 December 2001, among 3,019 adolescents between the ages of 12 and 21, in four administrative districts of Western Area, Port Loko, Bo and Kenema, included:

- 58 per cent have had sex before reaching 18 years of age;
- only 4 per cent used a condom during their first sexual intercourse;
- only 2 per cent have ever had an HIV/AIDS test;
- 66 per cent are willing to take the test;
- 72.3 per cent had heard of HIV/AIDS but only 7.7 per cent showed an adequate understanding;
- 55.1 per cent do not know that healthy people can carry HIV;
- 55 per cent do not know that everyone is vulnerable to HIV infection;
- 45 per cent heard about HIV/AIDS through the mass media;
- 37.3 per cent had not heard of a condom;
- 75 per cent in rural communities do not know where to obtain a condom;
- less than 50 per cent would abstain from sex to avoid contracting HIV/AIDS;
- 67.6 per cent stated that HIV-infected teachers/workers should not be allowed to work;

- 61 per cent stated that HIV-infected students should not continue at school;
- 81 per cent would not buy food from a trader who is HIV positive.

UNICEF-supported HIV/AIDS activities during the reporting period included support to government ministries for the implementation of an HIV/AIDS message and material design workshop for youth, and development of a national communication strategy for HIV/AIDS with technical assistance from Johns Hopkins University. UNICEF also assisted 30 youth peer counselors, trained by Planned Parenthood Association Sierra Leone (PPASL), to conduct social mobilization activities. A 10-part video drama on HIV/AIDS was completed for broadcast on national television and on video for homes. A model UNICEF/FIFA world cup of football tournament was conducted with 32 teams from 4 regions, during which HIV/AIDS sensitization activities were carried out. Sensitization activities were also conducted on the Day of the African Child to promote the theme, 'Working with Children to Fight HIV/AIDS'." (UNICEF, 20 September 2002)

WFP provides assistance to returnees (2003)

- WFP supported vulnerable groups with tons of food countrywide

"Countrywide, WFP supported a total of 45,480 beneficiaries with some 1,738 tons of food. Vulnerable group feeding programmes including refugees, resettlement, returnees and institutions supported some 16,680 beneficiaries with 211.26 tons of food. Therapeutic Feeding Centres/Supplementary Feeding and Mother and Child Health Programmes provided 31.22 tons of food to 3,533 beneficiaries comprising under-fives, pregnant women, lactating mothers and Caretakers. Institutional Feeding provided 809 beneficiaries with 12.71 tons of food aid." (12 September 2003)

"From 14 to 27 July, WFP supported a total of 41,711 beneficiaries with 917 tons of food countrywide. Monthly pre-positioning and distribution of food items in various camps continued. A total of 45.8 tons of food was dispatched to World Vision International for 3,052 beneficiaries at Gondama camp and 26.6 tons of food was distributed to 1,647 beneficiaries at Tiama Camp. An additional ton of resettlement rations was dispatched through UNHCR for 30 returnees resettled in Bo town. Some 766 returnees from Guinea and Liberia received 25 tons of Vulnerable Group Feeding resettlement rations.

WFP also provided wet feeding and returnee rations to 1,061 returnees repatriated by UNHCR from Guinea. UNHCR relocated 994 Liberian refugees from Kailahun way station to camps in Kenema district. WFP continued to provide food support to returnees at the Port Loko way station and from 14 to 27 July, 896 returnees from Guinea were provided wet feeding. In addition, some 21.4 tons of resettlement rations was pre-positioned for 645 beneficiaries, of which 309 returnees received two-months resettlement rations." (WFP, 31 July 2003)

"Countrywide, WFP supported a total of 146,235 beneficiaries with 2,088 tons of food between 30 June and 13 July. WFP continues to provide food support to returnees at the Port Loko way station. 896 returnees from Guinea were provided wet feeding. Resettlement rations totalling 21.4 tons were pre-positioned for 645 beneficiaries, out of which 309 returnees received two-months resettlement rations." (WFP, 18 July 2003)

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

- UNAMSIL Human Rights Section, with OHCHR, facilitates the visit to Sierra Leone of an Argentinian NGO dedicated to forensic investigation of human rights violations

- One of the NGO's aims was to map the sites of mass graves, with a view to eventually supporting the activities of the Sierra Leone Special Court and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Selected activities of international organisations

ICRC assists resettled women farmers (2002)

- ICRC, together with National Society and Ministry of Agriculture, provides agricultural assistance for resettled women farmers in east of the country
- Project is aimed at improving womens' living standards and improving their income-generating skills

"In 2002 the organization provided agricultural assistance for 415 women's associations in Kono and Kailahun districts, in the eastern part of the country, in cooperation with the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society and the Ministry of Agriculture. The community-based vegetable-farming project was specifically designed to improve the living standards of women and enhance their ability to generate income.

Prior to the delivery of the assistance, participants were taught how to prepare a nursery and where to locate a garden. They also learned about pest control and soil conservation and received information on marketing and other production issues. The package received by each group consisted of imported and local vegetable seed, hoes, shovels, metal buckets, machetes and wheelbarrows. Over 8,000 women are estimated to have benefited from the project.

In 2000 and 2001, 971 women's associations (71,442 beneficiaries) received similar assistance in the Western Area, Bombali, Tonkolili, Koinadugu, Kambia, Port Loko, Bo, Pujehun and Kenema districts." (ICRC, 5 December 2002)

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

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

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

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

Project Description:

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

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

IOM assumed responsibility for the inter-agency IDP registration/manifesting, the safe and orderly transportation of IDPs who voluntarily expressed their desire to return to their places of origin or to the areas declared safe for resettlement. The places of return and the new settlement sites were identified and secured by the Government and UNAMSIL. Receiving communities were also sensitised (by NaCSA) of

the impending arrival of the IDPs in order to avoid inter-community tension. Prior the IDP movements, IDP representatives were taken by NaCSA to visit to places of destination in order to ensure that they were well informed of the conditions in the proposed reception communities.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Selected NGO activities

Norwegian Refugee Council in Sierra Leone focuses largely on rehabilitation, camp management and education (1998-2003)

- NRC in Sierra Leone has operations in the eastern and northern provinces, on the peninsula in the western area, and in Bo district (southern province) through the construction and management of the Jembe camp

"NRC activities in Sierra Leone started in 1998 focusing primarily in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of schools and other community infrastructures, construction and management of camps, providing educational support to underprivileged societies through the Rapid Response Education Programme (RREP), the Community Investment Programme (CEIP), the Complementary Rapid Education for Primary Schools (CREPS), and a programme for assistance to the war wounded and amputees.

Since commencement of operations, NRC has had activities in Port Loko, Kambia, Kono, Kailahun Districts, on the Peninsular in Western Area, and in the Bo District through the construction and management of Jembe Returnee Settlement now transformed to Jembe Refugee Camp.

Various donors and partners are collaborating with the NRC. Among them are the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), NORAD, EC/SLRRP, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNAMSIL, and NaCSA etc.

The Resident Representative, who is supported by internationally recruited Programme Managers, Engineer and Finance/Admin Manager, heads the NRC Sierra Leone Country office in Freetown. There are field offices in Kambia, Kailahun, Kenema and Kono Districts headed by international Field Coordinators / Camp Manager and assisted by local staff.

REHABILITATION AND CAMP MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME IN SIERRA LEONE

Goal of the Programme

The overall goal of the programme is to provide a dignified reintegration and community assistance to victims of the civil conflict.

Overall Objectives

- To provide material and technical support to communities reconstructing their shelters.
- To assist war affected citizens in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of their community structures devastated during the civil conflict.
- To provide information and raise awareness among refugees and IDPs on AIDS/HIV and environmental issues.
- To create an enabling environment for the victims of the conflict, through the establishment of camps as a temporary housing solution.

Methodology, Processes and Procedures

The standard NRC rehabilitation and reconstruction package for primary schools is based on Ministry of Education, Sports and Technology (MEST) approved drawings with a student ratio of 40 pupils per classroom. The package includes rehabilitation of existing structures where they exist, and reconstruction/construction of additional 3, 4, or 6 classroom blocks based on needs, construction of 2 three compartment VIP toilets (one each for boys and girls to increase privacy and deter sexual harassment), construction of one 15 metre deep water well fitted with a hand pump, production of school furniture at a ratio of 22 sets per classroom, provision of teachers tables and chairs and classroom cupboards. A maintenance package of seeds and tools is granted to the School Management Committee for the establishment of a school garden, proceeds of which are to be utilised for the maintenance of the school buildings, the latrines, the water well and the furniture.

The procedure for undertaking a project is as follows:

The local communities, central government authorities (MEST) together with NRC and other stakeholders conduct needs assessments to prioritise projects to be rehabilitated or reconstructed. Local communities sign a Community Agreement detailing the level of cooperation and provision of specific materials to the project.

NRC Programme Engineer and Draughtsman conduct detailed site assessments and prepare bills of quantities, sketches and drawings.

NRC prepares a 'Quick Impact Project' proposal detailing level of intervention and costs. Local authorities, central government, NRC authorities and donors representative sign this document.

NRC calls for a tender from minimum 5 contractors listed on NRC's contractors database or among new ones, depending on references.

Bids are opened, evaluated and contractor selected for the physical rehabilitation or reconstruction of structures. A representative from the MEST is always present during this process with other key NRC staff. Representatives from the donor are invited.

Set up of the School Management Committee (SMC): The chiefs, elder representative and school authorities are asked by NRC and MEST to create a SMC. The SMC role is to represent the community towards the implementing agency and the donors, to report on any significant events, to define the content of the maintenance package and to follow up its utilization. Two sub-committees should also be created, one called the Working Sub-Committee and the second one called the Maintenance Sub-Committee, each of them having specific tasks during and after the implementation of the project.

NRC prepares a separate contract with the selected contractor detailing scope of works, payment schedule and other conditions.

NRC staff undertakes periodic monitoring and evaluation. The Construction Supervisors in the fields complete Field Monitoring Reports (FMR) to record progress and problems, and to justify payments.

When rehabilitation or reconstruction is completed, MEST representative, NRC staff and local communities inspect the structures and a "Certificate of Completion" is issued detailing any defects to be rectified by the contractor within the retention period.

In order to revitalize the rural economic activities and in a bid to further consolidate the peace and reconciliation process separate contracts for the production of furniture are signed with local carpenters within the area. Both these and the contractor are obliged to include ex-combatants who have passed through the DDR programme in their workforce.

Programme achievements to date

The Rehabilitation and Camp Management Programme has achieved remarkable success during these years. The programme has established good working relationships with all local communities in the areas of intervention, cordial-working relations with the MEST and line ministries including the NaCSA, as well as with numerous donors. A summary of the activities of the programme is described in the table below.

Description of activity	Port Loko District	Kambia District	Kono District	Kailahun District	Bo District
Primary school rehabilitation/reconstruction	19	11	7	7	-
Secondary school rehabilitation/reconstruction		1		1	
District Education Office construction/rehabilitation	1	1	1	To be started	-
Health clinics rehabilitation	1	-	-	-	-
Office and accommodation rehabilitation/reconstruction	-	-	1	1	-
Temporary Shelters schools	11	30	13	38	-
Construction and management of camps	1	-	-	-	1

Planned activities

In 2003, NRC will continue its operations in the 3 districts as described above, as well as the management of Jembe Camp. Consequently, the rehabilitation department will seek funding from its traditional donors and new ones to be identified. A major programme will be with the MEST with funding from the World Bank, which is expected to be concentrated mainly in the Kambia District, and MFA and UNHCR are also expected to continue their support towards reintegration activities in Sierra Leone." (NRC, 31 July 2002)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MSF treats neuropathic pain of amputee IDPs (July 2002)

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

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

[...]

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

For full article [click here](#)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

But Lassa Fever is by no means the only threat to people's health within the region. Malaria, diarrhoea, pneumonia and malnutrition are all prevalent health problems. Improving the diagnostic capabilities in rural West Africa and increasing our understanding of the effect of these diseases on the at-risk population will lead to better preventative and curative health services. Therefore the collateral benefits to a focus on Lassa Fever will be felt throughout the entire region, as well as amongst health professionals that wish to increase their understanding of viral haemorrhagic fevers in general." (Merlin, 8 May 2002)

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

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

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

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

Assessment:

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

Emergency Appeal:

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

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

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

References to the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement

Known references to the Guiding Principles (as of October 2003)

- Reference to the Guiding Principles in the national legislation
- Other references to the Guiding Principles
- Availability of the Guiding Principles in local languages

- Training on the Guiding Principles

Reference to the Guiding Principles in the national legislation

None

Other references to the Guiding Principles

Simplification/ dissemination of GPs in host communities and camps: A local NGO, FIND has disseminated and simplified the UN Guiding Principles materials in Jembe host community and refugee population, Grafton war-wounded and Murray town Amputee camps. 18,243 people benefited out of which 6,767, 2,000, 8,146, 130 refugees, Jembe host community and amputees respectively. The dissemination was conducted through listening and cultural groups and selected animators in the three camps and the media (Talking Drum studio, SLBS Kenema and SKY 106.6). Further work on the UN Guiding principles is planned to be implemented in 2003 by FIND.
Source: Foundation for International Dignity (FIND)
Date: 2002-2003
Document: Interim Narrative Report for UN Guiding Principles on Displacement Project, FIND, 31 January 2003 (see list of sources)

Availability of the Guiding Principles

None

Training on the Guiding Principles

NRC training workshop: The Global IDP Project of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) organised a training workshop on the Guiding Principles in Freetown, Sierra Leone. The workshop was co-hosted by the National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (NCRRR) of the Sierra Leone government. The workshop was part of a wider NRC effort to promote and disseminate the Guiding Principles among government authorities, national and international NGOs, UN agencies, international organisations and the displaced themselves. More than one third of the 43 participants had travelled to Freetown from the provinces. One conclusion of the workshop was that the Guiding Principles are not sufficiently known and utilised in Sierra Leone, and that there is a great need for further dissemination and training.
Sources: National authorities, national and international NGOs, UN agencies, different IDP communities.
Date: 12-14 March 2001.
Documents: Report of the Workshop on the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, Freetown, Sierra Leone, March 2001

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
CDF	Civil Defense Forces
CFA	Committee on Food Aid
CHAP	Common Humanitarian Action Plan
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CW	Concern Worldwide
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Office
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EFSL	Evangelical Fellowship of Sierra Leone
EIU	Economist Intelligence Unit
EPI	Expanded Programme of Immunisation
ERSF	Emergency Recovery Support Fund
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
HACU	Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Unit
HIV/AIDS	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
INGOS	International Non-Governmental Organisations
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IO	International Organisation
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
MTs	Metric Tonnes
NCRRR	National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NPRC	National Provisional Ruling Council
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OAU	Organisation for African Unity
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PHUs	Peripheral Health Units
RSLMF	Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SLRCS	Sierra Leone Red Cross Society
TFCs	Therapeutic Feeding Centres
UAC	Unaccompanied Children
UNAMSIL	UN Mission in Sierra Leone
UN-HACU	United Nations Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Unit
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOMSIL	United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

WVI	World Vision International
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