UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

RESOLVING INTRASTATE CONFLICTS:

A CASE STUDY OF SIERRA LEONE

BY

CRAIG DOUGLAS COLEMAN

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF DIPLOMATIC STUDIES

Department of Political Sciences,

Faculty of Humanities, University of Pretoria

Supervisor:

Prof. K.N. Miti

APRIL 2010

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

B. **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS.**

AFRC	-	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
APC	-	All People's Congress
AU	-	African Union
CDF	-	Civil Defence Force
CMRRD	-	Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development
DDR	-	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration programme
DRC	-	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECOMOG	-	Economic Community of West African States Military Observer Group
ECOWAS	-	Economic Community of West African States
EO	-	Executive Outcomes
GSG	-	Gurkha Security Guards
ICG	-	International Crisis Group
IGAD	-	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
IMF	-	International Monetary Fund
NEO	-	Non-combatant evacuation operation
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organisation
NMG	-	Neutral Monitoring Group
NPFL	-	National Patriotic Front of Liberia

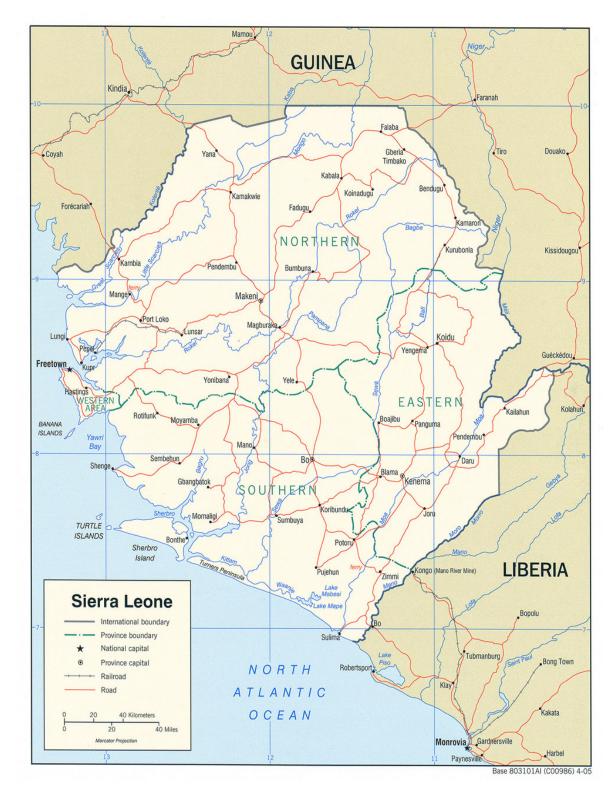|		
NPRC	-	National Provisional Ruling Council
OAU	-	Organisation of African Unity
PMC	-	Private Military Company
RSLMF	-	Royal Sierra Leone Military Forces
RUF	-	Revolutionary United Front
RUF/SL	-	Revolutionary United Front / Sierra Leone
SADC	-	Southern African Development Community
SLA	-	Sierra Leone Army
SLPP	-	Sierra Leone People's Party
UN	-	United Nations
UNAMSIL	-	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNITA	-	National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
UNOMSIL	-	United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

C.   MAP OF SIERRA LEONE.

Source: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/africa/sierra_leone_pol_2005.jpg

D.   ABSTRACT.

This study set out to examine the interplay of negotiations and military intervention in the resolution of the conflict in Sierra Leone between 1991 and 2002, and to draw lessons from this process for the resolution of intrastate conflicts in Africa. To achieve this, a more detailed analysis was undertaken on: the evolution and progress of the conflict in Sierra Leone (Chapter two); the various military interventions (Chapter three); and the various peace agreements (Chapter four).

What has come to light is that it is important to distinguish between the triggers to the conflict and the drivers of the conflict. In the case of Sierra Leone, the trigger was ECOMOG's entry into Liberia – an event that was mistakenly seen as the main cause of the conflict and leading to wrong decisions on how to end the conflict. It is also clear that greed was at the centre of the conflict in Sierra Leone since control of natural resources appear to be the main push factors behind most of the fighting. Control of these resources gave the holders an advantage. Progress in negotiations was determined by demands and concessions by those in control of the resources. An additional dimension that was common to many conflicts in Africa was control of the country's capital city. Possession of this bestowed visible power to the holders. It is because of this that Freetown became the centre of many bouts of conflict.

The study highlighted a number of issues that impact on the duration and outcome of intrastate conflicts. The first concerns the risks of sidelining the army that had played a significant role in governing the country. To do so, in favour of a civilian militia, was inviting trouble. This mistake extended the conflict by at least another two years.

Also important was the issue of the over-militarisation of society. As the state structures failed, patronage and resources acted as drivers for the formation of other armed factions. The proliferation of armed factions made

finding a solution more problematic. Increasing militarisation was further driven by the role of by neighbouring countries. This complicated the search for a political solution, as members of the regional group, ECOWAS, actively supported various sides in the conflict. While it was encouraging to see ECOWAS attempting to resolve the conflict, it could not sustain the role of being both a player and referee at the same time. As a result of this, ECOWAS itself contributed to the prolonging of the conflict.

The intervention by the United Kingdom demonstrated that actors with superior force are in a position to make decisive interventions to help end conflicts. At the international level, the question on leaving conflict management to regional bodies is not a panacea for solving intrastate conflicts. The United Nations Security Council initially relied on ECOWAS to manage the conflict, but was later forced to take over the active peacekeeping role. It was also only when the United Nations began reflecting on earlier peacekeeping failures, such as Rwanda and Somalia, that new peacekeeping approaches began to emerge. This reflection also generated the continuing debate on the "Responsibility to Protect" vulnerable populations in intrastate conflict.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION.

Intrastate conflicts have been a common feature in Sub-Saharan Africa since the early 1990s. Countries that have experienced intrastate conflicts include Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sudan, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Chad etc. These conflicts have been referred to as 'new wars' (Kaldor 2007: 6 – 10) and as intractable in the sense that their resolution is beset with difficulties. Finding a solution to such conflicts has become a major preoccupation not only of the regional bodies like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) but also for the continental body, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) / African Union (AU). The AU has been forced by circumstances to engage in peacekeeping in Burundi, Somalia and Sudan. The United Nations (UN) has been beset by Africa's intractable conflicts and forced to maintain a huge contingent of peacekeepers on the continent. Not only has the frequency, size and cost of UN missions grown, but their complexity, risk and difficulty have increased exponentially (Neethling 2009: 3 - 4).

1.1 **Aims and Organization of the Study.**

The causes of intrastate conflicts are numerous, ranging from greed and the need to control resources like diamonds, gold and oil to political manipulation of ethnic differences. Apart from the case of the Sierra Leone conflict, this study does not delve into the general causes of intrastate conflict on the continent. The focus is on the resolution of the conflict in Sierra Leone and what can be learnt from the process. Two main tactics have been used to resolve intrastate conflicts in Africa. The first is military intervention on behalf of one or the other belligerent or direct military enforcement of peace agreements. The second is negotiations between the existing government and a set of warlords

under the mediation of third parties. The two tactics have been used interchangeably with one or the other taking centre stage at any particular moment.

This study examines the interplay between negotiations and military intervention in the resolution of the conflict in Sierra Leone. The conflict raged from 1991 to 2002 and its resolution involved a blend of diplomacy and coercion at various stages. The conflict and its resolution brought together a multiplicity of actors. Internally this involved the constantly changing set of new governments, rebels and leaders. The damning part of this conflict was its extreme violence against the civilian population and the use of child soldiers. Externally, different armed groups have been involved in the conflict. This has included private armies (Executive Outcomes (EO) in particular) called in to support the government against the rebels; The ECOWAS military force (the Economic Community of West African States Military Observer Group, ECOMOG) that first used Sierra Leone to stage attacks in neighboring Liberia and that acted as a trigger to the Sierra Leonean conflict in 1991 when Liberian rebels supported the Revolutionary United Front's (RUF) incursion; The United Nations peacekeeping force that initially incorporated some of the ECOMOG forces; and British military forces that came in to rescue the UN peacekeepers taken hostage by the RUF. The involvement of so many actors and the use of military force and negotiations complicated the process of conflict resolution in Sierra Leone.

The aim of this study is to draw lessons from the long conflict resolution process in Sierra Leone. It is hoped that these lessons may help to shorten the process in the many conflict situations on the continent. The study first looks at the literature on the civil war in Sierra Leone. This literature is then linked to the general literature on intrastate conflicts on the continent. This constitutes the remaining part of this Chapter. The aim here is to pick the main trends that would be useful in the analysis of the conflict.

Chapter two takes a more detailed review of the Sierra Leone conflict from 1991 to 2002. The aim here is to identify the multiple players in the conflict and the changing context within which the military intervention and negotiations played themselves out. Chapter three focuses on the external military intervention by the three military forces. The role of Executive Outcomes is excluded because it was acting on behalf of internal forces and became part of the bargaining process among the internal players. The aim here is in part to outline the role played by external military forces in the resolution or complication of the conflict in Sierra Leone. Chapter four looks at the various negotiations and peace agreements entered into by the internal players. Attention here is paid to the process and the subsequent failure to implement the agreements. The aim here is, in part, to identify the changing issues in the negotiations and the role of external forces in both the negotiating phase and implementing process of the peace accords. Chapter five brings together the lessons from the Sierra Leone conflict and its implementation.

1.2   Literature review.

A number of studies already exist on the nature and character of the conflict in Sierra Leone. There is equally extensive literature on intrastate conflict in Africa and the conflict resolution processes that have been undertaken. These provide a background to this study and will guide the attempt to understand both the conflict and its resolution in Sierra Leone. The literature is therefore divided into two parts: the Sierra Leone civil war; and intrastate conflicts and conflict resolution in Africa.

1.2.1 The Sierra Leone civil war.

Studies on Sierra Leone have focused on a number of key areas. These are generally; the role of private military companies (PMC) in the conflict; the role of resources, especially diamonds, in fuelling the war; the role of ECOMOG and the United Nations to enforce peace in Sierra Leone; the issue of the brutality and violence, including the use of child soldiers and mutilation of civilians; and the politics of warlords.

The focus on PMCs centred on the role of Executive Outcomes and, to a lesser extent, Gurkha Security Guards (GSG) and Sandline International, all of which operated more as sophisticated businesses than the classic mercenaries of the 1960s (Musah and Fayemi 2000 :22 - 23). Despite the contentious role of these companies, EO in particular, helped neutralise the RUF threat to the Sierra Leone government. Shearer (1998a :76) notes that EO's successes against the RUF created sufficient stability to hold the first elections in 27 years. Musah (2000 :89) notes that the success of EO and the Kamajors convinced the rebels to talk peace (if only to buy time) and led to the Abidjan Agreement. Ironically, the British-based Sandline International became embroiled in an arms scandal that had as its aim the restoration of the democratically-elected President of Sierra Leone, Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, who was ousted in a *coup d'état* in May 1997 (Vines 2000 :179-180).

The role of PMCs raises the question of whether the privatisation of security, especially in Africa, has impacted on African sovereignty. As O'Brien (2000 :44-45) points out, the use of PMCs in the developing world, particularly Africa, has focused attention on this question for a number of reasons. These include; (a) the concern that PMCs generate for their impact on regional security issues in theatres where they operate; (b) that when PMCs do operate in the face of international inaction, often in African conflicts, their use is criticized by many as a 'band-aid' solution; (c) that many PMCs operate with the acquiescence of Western governments; and (d) that PMCs are perceived to operate on behalf of Western mining and oil companies, with very little regard to the wellbeing of the country in which they operate.

 A factor which is cited by many authors as a driver of the Sierra Leonean conflict is that of resources. Collier (2000 :97) advances the notion that the presence of primary commodity exports massively increases the risks of civil conflict. This risk factor is increased further in societies where there is a high proportion of young men. Reno (2000a :45-47) posits the notion of the 'shadow state' (which explains the relationship between

corruption and politics). This is often seen in situations of state collapse, in which the patrimonial system will see the ruler minimise provision of public goods to the population, in order to encourage individuals to seek the ruler's personal favour.

The role of EO, which inter alia, secured mining concessions from the Sierra Leonean government as payment, raised a question posed by Cornwell (1998 :80) as to whether peace can only be kept at the cost of African states placing their natural resources in pawn. Cilliers (1999 :6) maintains that mining still represents one of Africa's few areas of progress, but that in weak states the environment is such that foreign companies need to establish their own infrastructure and security, while having to pay off warlords, the army and local politicians to continue their business. Francis (1999 :322-325) states that the primary motivation for these new mercenaries are 'diamonds, oil and other rich mineral resources', and these have collaborated with mineral concession interests to form a type of 'cooperative commerce'. There was significant corruption, especially related to the diamond industry. These factors helped contribute to the formation of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), supported by its external crime networks and Charles Taylor from neighbouring Liberia, who had an eye on the diamond fields of the Kono region of Sierra Leone (Reno 1999 :97-99). By 1995 the RUF controlled three major mining areas for diamonds and bauxite - the principal revenue generators for the Sierra Leone government.

The role of Nigeria and ECOMOG remains controversial as it is generally perceived that Nigeria sought to protect the vested interests of the military ruler, Sani Abacha, and also pre-empted a mandate eventually given by ECOWAS (Ogunmola and Badmus 2006 :90). According to Sesay (1999 : 28) the circumstances of ECOMOG's creation had two impacts: firstly it allowed for extreme flexibility and even unilateral action by Nigeria, its major sponsor, and secondly, ECOMOG became a divisive issue (the dissent led by Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso) within ECOWAS and this threatened ECOMOG's legitimacy and operational effectiveness. Berman

and Sams (2000 :113-118) maintain that Nigeria's mandate for intervention in Sierra Leone was questionable, as no agreement existed for Nigerian troops in Freetown prior to the *coup d'état* in May 1997 to respond militarily in support of the deposed government. They also state that unlike Liberia, in Sierra Leone Nigeria first responded militarily and sought ECOWAS approval only after it had intervened. Despite this, the UN Security Council granted legitimacy to the ECOMOG through UN Security Council Resolution 1132 (United Nations 1997a :2), empowering it to implement punitive measures against the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) Junta. The campaign waged by ECOMOG had mixed results, as it successfully recaptured Freetown (with the assistance of Sandline International) in February 1998, but was later caught unawares by an AFRC/RUF counter-attack on Freetown in January 1999, losing hundreds of soldiers in the process (Berman and Sams 2000 :124). ECOMOG launched a brutal counter-offensive called "Death before Dishonour" which bore the hallmarks of a campaign of retribution.

Significant attention has been paid to the social dimension of the Sierra Leonean youth in the origin of the RUF (especially in unemployment and youth marginalisation), and how this, coupled with greed for resources, manifested in the brutality witnessed during the war. Abdullah (1997 :73-74) draws the origins of the conflict to the lumpen youth (the *rarray boy* culture[1]), which he sees as a large pool of unemployed and unemployable youths, mostly male, and who lived by their wits or who had one foot in the underground economy, and whose situation was compounded by ill discipline and drug abuse.

In seeking to understand the brutality of the war, Abdullah (1997 :68-69) points out that the RUF did not share any of the characteristics of an African revolutionary movement in that it lacked ideology and

---

[1] Abdullah (1997 :50) states that *'rarray boy'* is a pejorative term for 'underclass youth'.

organisation, except in the use of violence to attain power. A point raised by Bangura (1997 :121), and missed by many African analysts, is that the civil war was not caused or driven by ethnic rivalry, and citing Muana[2], described the RUF commanders as 'semi-literate village school drop outs' who despised traditional values and authority and welcomed the violence as 'an opportunity to settle local scores'. He added that it was also clear that the RUF's practices were overwhelmingly rejected by all Sierra Leoneans, and questioned how rational would be the RUF's 'revolutionary struggle' if its methods merely alienated the bulk of society. On the other hand, the lumpen youth also served as a source of recruitment into the army. Cornwell (1998 :74) describes the RUF as a 'mysterious force with no coherent ideology and constantly changing composition' and that persistently refused to enter into negotiations.

1.2.2 Intrastate conflicts and conflict resolution in Africa.

With regard to the literature on conflict resolution a number of facts have been highlight by authors on intrastate conflicts and their resolution. First and foremost is the fact that intrastate conflicts or civil wars tend to be total wars in which the ultimate aim is the elimination of the opponent (Stedman 1996 : 343). This normally brings forward the issue of survival stakes, where a loss could be perceived to mean death. The situation becomes worse because normally these civil wars are fought by leaders that will accept nothing less than total victory. This has tended to make civil wars more vicious and violent resulting in extreme human rights abuses that include massacres and torture of the civilian population.

Secondly, one should acknowledge the fact that most civil wars end up by one side winning. This is the conclusion by Stedman after analyzing civil wars between 1900 and 1980. Only 15 percent of civil wars during this period ended by negotiation (Stedman 1996 :341-343). Despite this fact

---

[2] Patrick Muana, Department of Linguistics and Languages, University of Sheffield, United Kingdom. Contributor to a special edition of Africa Development, titled 'Lumpen Culture and Political Violence: The Sierra Leone Civil War', (Vol XXII, Nos 3/4, 1997)

there has been an emphasis on resolving intrastate conflicts through negotiations. The basic assumptions underlying this are that: (a) solutions can be found to address the needs of all conflicting parties; (b) leaders of civil wars are all rational decision makers able to be swayed by reason; (c) the leaders are genuinely looking for peace; (d) it is possible to separate or marginalize the extremists; and (e) negotiated settlements are preferable to military victory by one side. The above assumptions are not always correct. Negotiations can also be seen as attempts to outmaneuver the enemy and as means for buying time.

Thirdly, negotiated settlements or political settlements to civil wars require parties to disarm and form a single government and a single army. Yesterdays sworn enemies are expected overnight to turn into allies in government and joint commanders of the military force. Belligerents are often forced into such settlements by external pressure and intervention. It should not be surprising that it takes several attempts before any settlement can be reached (Stedman 1996 :343).

Brown (1996 :622) maintains that the key to conflict resolution requires a two-track approach: the first approach is by co-optation – that is by marginalising militants by bringing more fringe elements into the political and economic mainstream and subverting militant movements by offering political and economic inducements to group leaders; the second approach being an aggressive campaign of neutralisation, by taking forceful action against militants and extremists.

Fourthly one needs to acknowledge the fact that the process of the civil wars, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa is influenced by a number of factors. It is these factors that finally determine whether a conflict will be settled by negotiations or by military victory. The main factors are first and foremost - military power. According to Shearer (1997 :854) there is a causal relationship between the military fortunes of warring parties and their willingness to seek a settlement. In fact he notes that settlements follow military outcomes. Thus shifts in the military balance or fortunes

force one or the other group to seek negotiations. This does not generally mean that they are seeking peace but rather for a respite or lull in the fighting so that they can regroup and remobilize. The second factor is economic power - in the sense of the available resources to the belligerents. In the African context this has often meant the control of primary export commodities, in particular minerals. Collier and Hoeffler (2000 :26) note the fact that 'the existence of primary commodities for export is the single largest influence on the risk of conflict'. However, it is the control of these commodities - diamond, gold and oil - that finally determine the process of the civil war. Changes in economic fortunes of the belligerents are likely to lead to a call for negotiations.

The third factor in influencing the process of intrastate conflicts in Africa is external intervention or involvement. Governments and rebels have all tended to receive external support. As noted by Solomon (2001 :45) however, external intervention or support is not based on altruism, but includes a large measure of self interest. Also to be noted in conclusions by Hironaka (2005 :51) and Regan and Aydin (2006 :738) is that intrastate conflicts (civil wars) with external interventions are dramatically longer than civil wars in which no intervention had taken place. Unfortunately in the current globalized world, external intervention, whether implicit or explicit cannot be avoided, particularly with the focus on humanitarian protection. Thus Kaldor (2007 :92-93) calls for the application of cosmopolitan law enforcement for humanitarian and human rights law during civil wars. It should not be surprising that many intrastate conflicts in Africa are ending in criminal prosecution in the name of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The fourth factor is state capacity. Weak states, that is, states with collapsed state institutions have tended to attract insurgencies (Reno 2001 :219). This does not mean that strong states do not face civil wars but that they are in a good position to contain the insurgencies.

Malan (1999 :86) posits that most deliberations on conflict resolution in Africa focus on pacific forms of peace maintenance – such as 'peacekeeping', 'preventive diplomacy' and 'peace building' – instead of 'peace enforcement'. The problematic issues of United Nations peacekeeping centre on the issues of state sovereignty and the requirement of consent of the parties, are effective only where the consent of the parties has been obtained. These become increasingly problematic where consent is refused or withdrawn by some parties (Oudraat 1996 :499). This was reinforced by the UN Secretary-General when he sought the Security Council's approval to seek ways in which the UN could 'assist' in the implementation of the Abidjan Agreement (United Nations 1997b :1-9).

The decade of the 1990's saw the crisis for United Nations peacekeeping with the events in Rwanda, Somalia and Yugoslavia. Adebayo and Landsberg (2000 :164-165) identify three distinct phases of UN peacekeeping in Africa: The first being the 1960's Cold War-fuelled Congo crisis which effectively ended large-scale UN peacekeeping in Africa; the second being the post- Cold War period, with successes in Mozambique and Namibia, but reversals in Rwanda and Somalia; and thirdly, regional efforts to fill the vacuum left by the disappearance of the UN. Rotberg (2000 :8) maintains that the UN has wasted lives and funds when it has attempted to play the impartial peacekeeper, when a more robust peace enforcement mission in a hostile environment is called for and which is envisaged by the UN Charter, but now more often accomplished most often by unilateral interventions.

This view is countered by Guėhenno (2002 :71) who outlined the factors that have assisted the resurgence of UN peacekeeping. The following are cited as examples;

- that regional and sub-regional initiatives were confronted by the same challenges that had stymied earlier UN peacekeeping missions;

- that in certain circumstances, regional or sub-regional organisations are not appropriate to take on the task, because one or more of their members may actually be parties to the conflict;

- that some parties to a conflict will only accept the universal legitimacy of the UN;

- that very few regional or sub-regional arrangements have the capacity to do the job.

The above general aspects of intrastate conflicts will be used to understand the Sierra Leone conflict and its different phases that moved between direct confrontation and negotiations. It will also help to understand the role played by external militaries, ECOMOG, UNAMSIL and the United Kingdom.

1.3 **Issues arising from the Literature.**

From a review of the literature, a number of issues are brought to the fore in analyzing why the Sierra Leonean conflict took so long to bring to a conclusion. The interplay between a range of characteristics of the conflict magnified the complexity of the overall situation, and this complexity took time and a mix of measures, to resolve. Amongst the issues arising from the literature are the following:

(a) *The role of resources.*

At the centre of the conflict is the pervasive presence of resources and the role that these play in fuelling both greed and grievance between those establishing and benefitting from the system of patronage and those driven by grievance. The continued interplay between these two drivers compounded the efforts (both through negotiation and military applications) by external forces to bring the conflict to a speedy end. In the case of Sierra Leone, the established patronage system of the ruling elite was challenged by others that pursued the natural resource wealth. This included members of the Sierra Leonean army, the RUF as well as

members of the ECOMOG force. The range of forces that benefitted from the exploitation of the resource base, especially diamonds, meant that while profit was being made by the respective players, it was unlikely that these would quickly move to a political settlement.

(b)   Interference/involvement by neighbouring states.

A further complicating dimension was added by the involvement of neighbouring states. In this regard, it is the principal involvement of two neighbouring states, Liberia and Nigeria that helped fuel and then prolong the conflict. This occurred despite both of these being members of the same sub-regional political community in West Africa. On the one hand, Liberia (especially Charles Taylor) sought to exact a measure of retaliation against Sierra Leone for allowing ECOMOG to operate against the NPFL by helping establish and arm the RUF, while also assisting them to launch from Liberian territory under his control. In addition, Taylor was also able to benefit from the profitable diamond wealth of Sierra Leone. Nigeria, the regional hegemon, entered Sierra Leone with mixed motives, initially on a bilateral basis but later as an ECOWAS mission. While ostensibly a peacekeeping mission, Nigeria's political motives in supporting a democratic government in Sierra Leone, was also meant to enhance Nigeria's diplomatic standing (given its military government) both in Africa and internationally. Two significant members of the same region opposing each other in Sierra Leone, was likely to lead to a protracted process in brokering a solution.

(*c*)   *The degree of brutality and role of ideology marking this conflict.*

The Sierra Leone conflict was marked by a severe degree of brutality against civilians. While people do die in conflicts – and many did in Sierra Leone – the degree of violence exacted through amputations, added a dimension of savagery to the RUF methods. The RUF itself, while ostensibly initially launching its military campaign to overthrow the ruling All People's Congress (APC), it clearly lacked any kind of ideological direction to guide its military strategy. It was only through the assistance

of a foreign non-governmental organization (the British-based NGO, International Alert) in 1995, that the RUF purportedly adopted a semblance of an ideological position. The literature though, also highlights that the RUF was not ideologically-driven, but rather subjected to the twin forces of the strong personality-cult leadership of Foday Sankoh on the one hand, and the profitability offered by Sierra Leone's diamond resources on the other. While the RUF's military tactics bore some semblance to an unconventional guerilla campaign, its indiscriminate use of terror against civilians meant that its strategy was more akin to total warfare where little or no distinction was made between civilians and the Sierra Leonean army, the official opponent of the RUF. At the same time though, this also held for those members of the Sierra Leonean army that operated as rebels. The indiscriminate use of terror tactics against the civilian population meant that the RUF lacked a clear military approach to achieve its aims.

(d)   The role of Private Military Companies.

Sierra Leone brought to the fore the question of the role of private military companies (PMC), and especially the role played by Executive Outcomes. In this regard, EO's role came within the context of a failure by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the international community to act. The EO role in Sierra Leone presaged the debate on the privatization of security and the role of states in maintaining the apparatus of state security. This also took place in a period before the advent of the 'War on Terror', which resulted in a much wider use of PMCs in such theatres as Iraq. The role of PMCs also raises the question on whether PMCs can be utilized as a viable option (e.g. protecting humanitarian interventions) in the absence of any activity by either the state or the collective of the international community. While this study does not focus on the issues of the PMC or privatization of security, the military dimension of this study relates to the more formalised state-driven interventions. Despite this, EO did have an effect during its limited operation in Sierra Leone, in that it gave a new direction to events on the

political front in Sierra Leone, and indirectly sowed the seeds for further military events later in the conflict.

(e)   Factors that advance or hinder negotiating processes.

The Sierra Leone conflict progressed through a number of bouts of negotiation in order to bring it to a conclusion. None of the negotiation efforts by themselves produced an outcome that delivered a result that made all the protagonists happy. Internal efforts by Sierra Leoneans produced very little tangible progress, largely due to the fact that they too were party to the conflict, and did not have sufficient power or resources to defeat their opponents.

It was, therefore, left to the external interventions to get a momentum going for negotiations, but at the same time there were a range of other factors available at their disposal to backstop the political negotiations. In this regard a variety of other tools, most notably economic and military power, are required in situations where political momentum begins to stall or where parties to agreements renege on undertakings. Very often parties to negotiations will adopt spoiling tactics, and in these circumstances other power instruments must be brought to bear. As negotiations progress (or falter), these power instruments will be utilized interchangeably.

(f)   The role of inclusivity in successful negotiating outcomes.

Clearly a negotiated peaceful outcome remains the most preferred outcome to ending any conflict. The alternative suggests a more military-orientated approach to seek a solution.

The principal objective of negotiating an end to conflict is to end the conflict in such a way that it addresses the original root causes of the conflict. A failure to do so may result in a resurgence of the conflict at a later stage. This however, becomes much more problematic when the original root cause of the conflict is contested and subject to wide and varied interpretations – as is the case with the RUF. In the various

negotiations, much was done to accommodate the RUF, and yet ultimately this was not enough to get the RUF to fully implement its undertakings. In the case of the RUF, their inclusion in proposed governance structures was unpalatable to many, given the brutality displayed by its members during the conflict. The questions raised over the matter of inclusivity (including roles as providers of security for those who suffered as victims) are moral questions and focus on the issues of impunity for perpetrators of war crimes and gross human rights violations. The moral dilemma is whether the demands of peace override the calls for justice.

(g)   The role of the United Nations and regional organisations and the challenges of peacekeeping.

The literature exposes the widely diverging positions on the role of the United Nations in intervening (both diplomatically and through peacekeeping) in conflict situations. Africa, in particular, appears to proffer a major challenge in this regard. With many of the United Nations peacekeeping missions in Africa, and the dramatic events surrounding peacekeeping interventions in Somalia and Rwanda, a trend has become established that reflects a growing reliance by the United Nations on the support of sub-regional organizations. In Sierra Leone, this largely rested on the West African peacekeeping force, and would possibly have remained so until domestic events in Nigeria forced the United Nations Security Council to adopt a more direct peacekeeping approach involving a wider participation by the international community[3]. For Sierra Leone though, the issues of mandate and structure of the peacekeeping mission was contested, given the difficult and obstructionist position adopted by the RUF and the initial weak mandate provided to the peacekeeping

---

[3] Hawkins (2003 :64-65) points out that during the 1990's UN Security Council determinations on what constituted 'threats to peace' were defined by narrow national interests that resulted in major inconsistencies. This included finding 'threats to peace' in almost entirely internal conflicts, including minor ones where the level of human suffering was relatively minor.

mission. The RUF stance again raised the issues of the readiness of peacekeepers to engage in missions of peace enforcement as opposed to those associated with the more traditional notion of peacekeeping.

One of the more complex aspects to successful peacekeeping has been the issue of disarming of combatants, and the problems posed especially where one of the parties represents the military force of the state. In these cases, the disarmament process is accompanied by a demobilization and reintegration phase. While the disarmament phase can be implemented, the problems arise especially where combatants are not suitably re-skilled and prepared for reintegration into society. This is compounded in poor communities, where the success of such programmes is dependent on funding from donor sources in the international community.

(h)   The complexity of the Sierra Leone conflict.

The complex inter-relationship between these issues made Sierra Leone's conflict more difficult to resolve. Sierra Leone represents both the best and the worst aspects of trying to resolve a conflict. This ranges from the initial international indifference to the conflict, followed by a move to an over-reliance by the international community on the efforts of the ECOWAS, until compelled to undertake formal peacekeeping. For the international community, Sierra Leone presented a challenge that meant it could no longer choose in which conflicts it would or would not become involved. Forcing their hand in this regard was the growing effect of media (particularly television) in bringing images of the effects of the conflict to a wider global community. Sierra Leone showed that once a position had been reached where negotiation could commence, this was neither a quick nor an easy process, and often required frequent bouts with interventions by a range of negotiators.

CHAPTER 2

OVERVIEW OF THE SIERRA LEONE CONFLICT.

This Chapter examines first the various internal factors that led up to the civil war. It then traces the progress of the civil war, starting with the RUF incursion in March 1991, the army takeover in 1992, the 1996 elections, the 1997 *coup d'état*, the restoration of Kabbah in 1998, the Lomé Agreement and the entry of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in 1999.

According to Keen (2005 :37), the initial RUF group that attacked into the Kailahun district of eastern Sierra Leone was composed of Sierra Leonean dissidents, members of Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), as well as a number of mercenaries from Burkina Faso. This group appeared to be under the leadership of Foday Sankoh, a poorly-educated former non-commissioned officer in the Sierra Leonean army and who had served 7 years (1971 – 1978) in prison for his role in an attempted *coup d'état* against the government of Siaka Stevens (Gberie 2005 :42 – 43). This was set to start Sankoh on the path to starting a civil war that lasted for close to ten years.

2.1   **The lead up to the civil war.**

While the RUF's March 1991 invasion of Sierra Leone marks the beginning of the civil war, the actual origin of the civil war can be traced as far back as the 1970's and 1980's. One of the key drivers for the eventual civil war in Sierra Leone was the rebellious youth culture that developed during the 1970's and 1980's, and which was further exacerbated by severe economic decline, and the allure of the strong revolutionary writings of Libyan leader, Muammar al-Gadaffi, in his 'Green Book'. According to Gberie (2005 :52) a number of Sierra Leoneans, including Foday Sankoh, underwent training at the 'World Revolutionary Headquarters' in Benghazi, Libya in the late 1980's – citing historian

Stephen Ellis's description of this centre as 'the Harvard and Yale of a whole generation of African revolutionaries'.

In examining the origins of youth radicalism in Sierra Leone, Rashid (2004 :67-83) contends that radical politics was not a feature of the university culture until the late 1970's and 1980's. In tandem with this are what analysts refer to as the lumpen proletariat, a conglomerate with diverse social and ethnic backgrounds, and many of whom were unemployed and unemployable. By 1985, the youth population aged between 14 and 35 years of age, accounted for nearly 30 percent of the total population, and for 35 percent of Freetown's population. The lumpen cultural lure attracted youths to informal urban gatherings (*potes*), where they could engage in social practices usually frowned on by traditional society, and at the same time engaged in radical youth political discussion.

The early 1980's saw a major structural economic crisis for Sierra Leone, which saw declining prices and volumes of their commodity exports, coupled with a poorly performing resource sector, and increasing costs of rice (a staple food) and oil imports (Keen 2005 :25-27). Compounding this was the effect of reforms imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, which resulted in a significant devaluation of the Sierra Leonean currency unit, the *leone*, which itself acted as an inflationary driver. Keen (2005 :27) points out that in the financial year 1986 – 1987, Sierra Leone was spending more on servicing its foreign debt than the combined budgets for health, education and other social services, and that by the time of the RUF incursion, the Sierra Leonean government's social spending was a mere 15 percent of what it had been a decade before.

Apart from the social exclusion of a significant section of Sierra Leone's youth, the period since the country's independence in 1961 was chequered, witnessing the country's first (in a series of many) *coup d'état* in 1967. The years of rule under Siaka Stevens (1968 to 1985) saw Sierra

Leone slide into a one-party state (1978) with the All People's Congress (APC) as the sole legitimate party (BBC News 2009a). It was particularly during the rule of Stevens, and following his 1971 elevation to the position of an executive President, that Sierra Leone witnessed a process of 'factionalisation', that saw the political system devolve to 'an extreme executive centralization and the erosion of formal institutions... (this) facilitated the rise of paternalistic bargaining political patterns' (Gberie 2005 :28-29). The effect of Stevens's rule was described as the 'seventeen-year plague of locusts' – a process that destroyed or corrupted every institution of the state (Hirsch 2001 :29). As mentioned in Chapter one, Reno (2000a :45-47) describes the notion of the 'shadow state' as the relationship between corruption and politics, and that this 'shadow state' reflects the product of personal rule, usually constructed behind the façade of *de jure* state sovereignty. Citing Max Weber, Reno (2000a :46-47) makes a key observation on patrimonial regimes in that patrimonial offices lack above all the bureaucratic separation of the 'private' and 'official spheres, and that to make patronage work as a system of political control, the ruler must prevent all individuals from gaining unregulated access to markets. This, Reno holds, means that the shadow state ruler seeks to make life less secure and more materially impoverished for subjects.

Stevens retired in 1985, and was succeeded by Joseph Momoh, handpicked from the ranks of the army by Stevens. The Momoh regime was immediately faced with a severe economic challenge, partly inherited from the Stevens patronage network and partly from its dealings with the IMF and its failure to reach an economic restructuring agreement with it (Richards 1998 :41). Compounding Momoh's economic woes was that after 1985, Stevens and his allies continued to dominate clandestine commerce in Sierra Leone, at the expense of efforts by Momoh to establish his own patronage network (Reno 1999 :116). The virtual loss of control over state functions further exacerbated the crisis for Momoh in his dealings with foreign creditors who were demanding fiscal discipline.

A clear sign of Momoh's lack of control over the resource sector is reflected by the fact that by 1987, the official yield from diamond sales that passed through formal, taxable channels was only USD 100,000, while Momoh's rivals appropriated much of the rest.

The parlous state of the Sierra Leonean economy, and Momoh's failure to establish his own patronage network in the face of the challenge posed by his predecessor's patronage network, left his administration open to challenge from the unpaid elements of the police, army and government administration. The economic crisis forced Momoh to declare a State of Economic Emergency in November 1987, which imposed new regulations banning all private business deals in foreign currency as well as the hoarding of any currency or commodity (Keen 2005 :32). The effect of this move by Momoh, according to Keen, resulted in the Sierra Leonean army being required to enforce the emergency regulations – but instead of curbing smuggling, this served to encourage the development of an economic agenda within the army, with the trade in diamonds becoming a source of revenue for it. Momoh oversaw two military campaigns that were to provide greater security in the diamond mining areas. 'Operation Clear All' and 'Operation Clean Sweep', aimed at centralising state control over resources, but instead widened the gap between the state's authority in the capital and its capacity to control the diamond fields (Reno 1999 :121).

This action dislocated miners that had been seeking a living in an economy unable to absorb them in the formal economy, and effectively added a significant mass of unemployed ready to be recruited into a rebellion. At the same time, the action by the army, while disrupting the commercial networks of some of Momoh's rivals, also saw the blurring of the military's distinction between defence of state interests and those of personal profit in 'warlord-type operations' (Reno 1999 :121 ; Pratt 1999 :6-7).

The civil war in Liberia, and the commencement of the RUF insurgency in March 1991, forced Momoh to undertake a strategy that would sow the seeds of his own demise. Momoh expanded the enlistment of troops from 3,000 to about 14,000 in a short space of time – many of whom were drawn from the dislocated section of society, and were required to operate in the field without any professional military leadership (Reno 1999 :125). In addition, military units from Guinea and Nigeria were brought in by Momoh to help in shoring up control of the border area adjacent to Liberia. This then created fertile ground for an army rebellion and the overthrow of Momoh.

It is in this context then that Sierra Leone prepared to enter a ten year period of debilitating conflict, that would leave thousands dead and many more displaced. At the same time, the entire sub-region was susceptible to the effects of the ongoing civil war in Liberia. It is this fusion of events, both domestic and external, that would add to the complexity of resolving the conflict.

2.2   **The NPRC take control.**

In April 1992, members of the Sierra Leonean army[4] who had been sent to fight the RUF staged a protest in Freetown about poor pay and conditions. What had started out as a protest against conditions in the army, ended in the military overthrow of Joseph Momoh and the installation of the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) headed by a 25 year-old army officer, Captain Valentine Strasser. The overthrow of the APC by the NPRC was popular with ordinary Sierra Leoneans, not because people welcomed the inexperienced officers in the NPRC, but

---

[4] 'Sierra Leone army' will be used to designate the government's armed forces. This was known initially as the 'Royal Sierra Leone' Military Force (RSLMF), until 1997, and during the interlude of the AFRC/RUF rule as the 'People's Army'. From 1999 onwards, it was known as the Sierra Leone Army (Richards 2003 :9).

because of their fatigue at two decades of APC single-party rule (Abraham 2004a :105).

In an attempt to rid themselves of army officers sympathetic to the APC, the NPRC detained or retired a number of senior officers, and in December 1992, executed 26 people for plotting to overthrow the government (Hirsch 2001 : 35). At the same time that the NPRC were profiteering off their gains, a new threat emerged in the 'sobel'[5] (soldier-rebel) phenomenon. Reno (1999 :125) is of the view that the chaos caused by the RUF activities, allowed unpaid soldiers an opportunity to extort and loot from the local population. This had the effect of having any military advances that were made during 1992 and 1993 dissolving into acts of banditry, which, while coming from within the army, resembled rebel attacks.

By early 1995, the Sierra Leonean army had devolved into a bloated, poorly trained organization, which itself had become a problem in Sierra Leone. It had resorted to the practice of conscripting youths off the street, providing them with a few days military training and sending them off to operational areas. Pratt (1999 :7) states that with the increase in the numbers of recruits joining the army, by 1993, this included at least 1,000 soldiers below the age of 15. This then, according to Douglas (1999 :178), allowed the RUF to reconsolidate its position, and to operate throughout the country, including holding the alluvial diamond fields, while even threatening Freetown itself. The NPRC in fact, according to Abraham (2004a :107) collaborated with the RUF in the plunder of the country's resources. This identity of interests resulted in both parties targeting unarmed and defenceless civilians.

---

[5] The term 'sobel' (literally "soldier-rebel') refers to government army personnel that soldiered by day and profited as rebels by night (Olonisakin 2008 :15).

In November 1994, the RUF resorted to kidnapping and capturing international hostages. It kidnapped two British volunteer aid workers, and in January 1995 kidnapped a group of expatriate nuns (Richards 1998 :14 – 15). More hostages were captured in attacks on rutile and bauxite mines in the following months. This led to the closure of these mines, causing a significant loss in revenue for the NPRC government and thus weakening its economic position.

The declining economic situation and the military crisis in curbing advances by the RUF - that even threatened to capture Freetown - forced Strasser to turn to foreign private military companies for assistance. In January 1995, the NPRC contracted the Channel Islands-based Gurkha Security Guards (GSG) to train its military forces, but the GSG was quickly forced to withdraw after sustaining significant casualties, including the loss of the GSG team leader, in a skirmish with the RUF in February 1995 (Vines 1999 :130). The NPRC then turned to the South African company Executive Outcomes (EO) that had established its reputation in Angola in helping the Angolan government against the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) in 1993 and 1994. The principal operational strategy of EO was to concentrate 'on reorganising the Royal Sierra Leone Military Force (RSLMF) into a proper military structure and retraining its forces to a level where it could uphold the government without external assistance' (Francis 1999 :327). According to Shearer (1998b :49) EO focused its attention on;

- securing Freetown;

- regaining control of critical resources, in particular the Sierra Rutile mine and the diamond fields;

- destroying the RUF's headquarters; and

- clearing remaining areas of RUF occupation.

EO managed to make a quick impact in achieving it stated objectives. Apart from pushing back the RUF's gains, it also managed to promote

cooperation between itself and local militias and self-defence units (most notably the Mende hunter-militia, the Kamajors, led by Captain Sam Hinga Norman), and effectively began to counter the excesses of both the RUF and the army (Douglas 1999 :183).

The NPRC had been coming under increasing international pressure to restore Sierra Leone to multiparty rule, something that EO's operational successes allowed the country to do in February/March of 1996 (Ducasse-Rogier 2004 : 26). Strasser and the NPRC had been under intense pressure to move the country to elections, even before 'a controversial peace process' facilitated by the London-based NGO, International Alert, had got off the ground (Richards 2003 :16).

According to Reno (2001 :220) EO's effectiveness created serious long-term political complications in that the air of greater security afforded societal groups the chance to pressure the NPRC to hold multiparty elections (promised by Momoh before his overthrow). The prospect for elections and the fear by the military that they would be replaced by a strong Civil Defence Force (CDF) - trained by EO - drew the army and the RUF closer, resulting in the overthrow of Strasser by Brigadier Julius Maada Bio (Reno 1997 :228). Bio immediately commenced negotiations with Sankoh, and both called for 'peace before elections' in a bid to forestall the elections.

2.3   The 1996 elections.

The peace process was given further impetus when the Bintumani II constitutional conference in February 1996 voted for the elections to continue as scheduled. This resulted in the election of Ahmad Tejan Kabbah as President of Sierra Leone under the banner of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP).

In March 1996 Kabbah took over as President. His government was strongly supported by the traditional elites and the Kamajor militia[6] of the Civil Defence Force. In fact, the leader of the CDF, Captain Sam Hinga Norman, was made Deputy Defence Minister (with Kabbah also acting as Defence Minister). This further antagonised the Sierra Leonean army that had failed in its bid to postpone the elections (Douglas 1999 :185). The antagonism between the CDF and the Sierra Leonean army continued simmering and resulted in an open clash on 1 May 1997 that left 100 dead on both sides (Gberie 2005 :100). A few weeks later, the army sent Kabbah fleeing to neighbouring Guinea.

Kabbah's government attracted strong support from both bilateral and multilateral donors. This translated into financial allocations of USD 500 million for infrastructure development and rehabilitation (Gberie 2005 :100). The government, however, was faced with huge challenges, the prime challenges being;

Firstly, the lack of control over large areas of the country because of the continuing civil war. This forced the government to negotiate with the RUF. While the RUF had been unable to confront the EO and CDF forces, it was not ready to negotiate with the Kabbah government unless the withdrawal of EO became part of the negotiation process. The Kabbah government responded to the RUF challenge by seeking to fragment its leadership. In February 1997, Kabbah instigated the detention of Sankoh in Lagos by the Nigerian authorities, while encouraging the Freetown-based RUF members serving on the Peace Commission to create an alternative RUF leadership under Philip Palmer. These actions however, antagonised the RUF field commanders and led

---

[6] By 1997, the Mende-based Kamajor represented a standing army of some 20,000, while other tribal militias such as the Tamaboro and Kapra were disbanded. While modernizing the CDF, Kabbah aimed to reduce the Sierra Leonean army from 18,000 to about 3,000 (Musah 2000 : 95).

to the stalling of the implementation of the Abidjan Agreement (Keen 2005 :195-196 ; Musah 2000 :95).

Secondly, a shattered economy put into question the continued affordability of the Executive Outcomes operation and resulted in donor and IMF pressure on Sierra Leone to terminate the services of EO. The government had to renegotiate their payments to EO. Payments were set at USD 1, 2 million per month from May 1996 until the conclusion of their contract in December 1996. This was reduced to USD 900, 000 and then again unilaterally reduced by the Ministry of Finance to USD 700, 000 (Douglas 1999 :186). The EO finally withdrew from Sierra Leone in January 1997 after the conclusion of the Abidjan Agreement that had specifically provided for its departure.

Thirdly, was the existence of an ineffective, bloated, corrupt, disloyal and suspicious military force. The government sought to counter this by increasing the size of the CDF, in particular the Mende Kamajor and reducing the size of the army (Musah 2000 :94-95). It was this prospect that forced the army to take over in May 1997[7]. This was clearly spelt out in the actions of Koroma, the Head of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) on 28 May 1997, some two days after the *coup d'état* (Sierra Leone Web 1997a). The first decree of the Koroma government was in fact to abolish the Kamajor militia (Keen 2005 :211). It was furthermore the fear of demobilisation that drew the army closer to the RUF. Immediately after the army takeover, Sankoh and the RUF were invited to join the AFRC. This invited the sudden appearance of some 5,000 RUF fighters in Freetown.

Fourthly, a central government structure that was both corrupt and ineffective but which the Kabbah government did little to change.

---

[7] In a letter from AFRC head, Johnny Paul Koroma to ECOWAS in August 1997, he wrote that 'the SLPP tribal hunter militia, the Kamajors, received logistics and supplies beyond their immediate needs. This was enough indication of the preference for the private army over our Armed Forces, foreshadowing the ultimate replacement of the Constitutional Defence Force by Mr Kabbah's hunters.' (ICG 2001 :7)

According to Kandeh (1998 :107-108) the SLPP under Kabbah remained 'an unregenerate patronage party united by the spoils logic whose beneficiaries were mainly the elite' and that 'the same pillage frenzy that devoured the state under the APC and NPRC characterised the SLPP'. The fact that local government had disappeared many years before, did not help the situation. Even in the capital Freetown, services were haphazard.

It is within this broad context that the Abidjan Agreement was signed in November 1996. It called for the withdrawal of Executive Outcomes. EO left the country in January 1997. This left the Kabbah government unguarded and open to challenge. Unfortunately this was the only part of the Agreement that was implemented. The RUF was not interested in the disarmament of its combatants. The option left to the government was to use force against RUF but the conflict between the army and the Civil Defence Force (which was being promoted by Kabbah) made this impossible as the two moved to open clashes.

2.4   **The May 1997 *coup d'état*.**

On 25 May 1997, Sierra Leonean soldiers, dressed in civilian clothing, attacked the Pademba Road prison in Freetown, freeing some 600 prisoners, including Major Johnny Paul Koroma, who had been jailed by the Kabbah government for helping to plot a *coup d'état* in December 1996 (Gberie 2004 :147). The freed prisoners were armed and proceeded to attack State House and the national radio station, forcing President Kabbah to flee to neighbouring Guinea. The new *coup* leaders then joined hands with the RUF to form the AFRC/RUF Junta.

The *coup d'état* was immediately condemned by the members of the UN Security Council and the Organisation of African Unity. Both called for the immediate restoration of the constitutional order (United Nations 1997c :1). It was however, the Economic Community of West African States that led the external response to the *coup d'état*.

ECOWAS Foreign Ministers met in Conakry, Guinea, on 26 June 1997, to map out the sub-regional response to the AFRC/RUF Junta. An ECOWAS Committee of Four (Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire) – later broadened to five with the inclusion of Liberia - was established to detail the actions to be taken against the Junta. According to Tom Ikimi, Nigeria's Foreign Minister, the committee had agreed on the restoration of President Kabbah to power through a mixture of dialogue, sanctions and embargoes and the use of force (United Nations 1997d :2).

Koroma responded to the ECOWAS demands in his national broadcast on 30 July 1997. He repeated the reasons for the ousting of President Kabbah and announced a transitional timetable for elections at various levels of government culminating in presidential elections in November 2001. He stated the Junta's continued readiness to implement the Abidjan Agreement but coupled this with the preparedness of the 'People's Army' (the joint AFRC/RUF military force) to defend its territorial integrity from any aggression, real or imagined, internal or external. In light of this, the envisaged international peacekeeping force as foreseen in the Abidjan Agreement, was no longer seen as necessary. Koroma thus called for the withdrawal of the entire ECOMOG force, including Nigerian Army elements deployed under the bilateral Status of Forces Agreement. Furthermore he called for the Nigerian authorities to release Sankoh (who had been appointed Vice-Chairman of the AFRC/RUF Junta) (Sierra Leone Web 1997b).

The ECOWAS member states responded to Koroma and the Junta by authorising the ECOMOG force to enforce sanctions. The imposed sanctions included a total embargo on all supplies of petroleum products, arms and military equipment as well as a travel ban on members of the AFRC/RUF Junta. In October 1997, the UN Security Council endorsed the ECOWAS sanctions and further provided ECOWAS with the explicit authority 'to ensure strict implementation of the Security Council resolution' (United Nations 1997a :3 ; United Nations 1997e :2). This

gave ECOWAS the mandate of halting all maritime shipping in order to inspect and search their cargoes and destinations.

The combined blockade and bombardment of Freetown forced the AFRC/RUF to commence negotiations with ECOWAS in Conakry on 22 and 23 October 1997. The outcome of the negotiations was the adoption of the Conakry Peace Plan, a six month phased plan that had as some of its key components the following;

- The return of President Kabbah to power within a period of six months;

- The immediate cessation of all hostilities and the demobilisation of all combatants;

- The granting of immunity and guarantees to leaders of the *coup d'état* of 25 May 1997 (United Nations 1997e :5-7).

It was, however, not possible for the AFRC/RUF Junta to implement the Conakry plan. The ECOMOG forces (composed largely of Nigerian infantry forces) embarked on 'Operation Sandstorm' on 26/27 January 1998. This operation was launched in tandem with the Kamajor CDF militia and was designed to dislodge the AFRC/RUF Junta from Freetown. The ECOMOG force concentrated its attack on Freetown, while the Kamajor attacked the 'People's Army' in the diamond regions of Kono and Tongo Field. This served to keep the bulk of the 'People's Army' from moving to the Freetown area (Gberie 2005 :116). The strategy worked and ECOMOG retook Freetown and declared it secure on 12 February 1998. President Kabbah was thus able to return to Freetown and resume his presidential duties on 10 March 1998 (Douglas 1999 :192-193).

2.5 **The Return of Kabbah and the Lomé Agreement.**

A week after Kabbah's return to power his government declared a State of Emergency on 16 March 1998 and instituted charges against

AFRC/RUF collaborators. Foday Sankoh was returned from Nigeria, tried and found guilty of treason and sentenced to death. A number of soldiers and civilians were also tried and 24 of these were publicly executed on Freetown beaches on 19 October 1998. These actions however, did not help in bringing an end to the civil war that continued to rage outside Freetown (Gberie 2005 :116-117).

The UN Security Council responded to the changed situation in Sierra Leone by adopting Resolution 1162 of 17 April 1998. This authorised the deployment of military liaison officers, the first of which began deploying on 4 May 1998 under the authority of the UN Special Envoy for Sierra Leone (United Nations 1998a :4). On 13 July 1998, UN Security Council Resolution 1181 authorised the creation of the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL), with 70 military observers (United Nations 1998b :2). The situation in Sierra Leone, however, started worsening and by mid-December 1998, ECOMOG forces were forced to withdraw to positions closer to Freetown. As the situation deteriorated further, UNOMSIL observers were at first withdrawn to Lungi (across the bay from Freetown) and eventually to Conakry, Guinea, on 28 December (United Nations 1999a :1-2).

On 6 January 1999, AFRC and RUF fighters commenced an assault on Freetown. They were able to free many AFRC/RUF members held at the Pademba Road prison. For two weeks, the AFRC and RUF fighters subjected the civilians in the capital to rape, mutilation, torture and murder. They destroyed many government buildings, including many police stations. Officials put the death toll from this incursion at between 4,000 and 5,000, with numerous of these being members of the Nigerian army (Sierra Leone Web 2009b ; Keen 2005 :237).

The ECOMOG force which had sustained significant casualties during this period of heavy fighting in Sierra Leone was reinforced with new contingents from Nigeria, Guinea and Mali. This allowed it to regain control of Freetown while large parts of the country still remained under

rebel control (United Nations 1999b :1-2). The ransacking of Freetown by the AFRC and RUF forces, completely changed the balance of power and forced the Kabbah government to the negotiating table – this time tilted in favour of the rebels. This process resulted in the Lomé Agreement. It is here that Zartman's (1989 :10) concept of 'ripe moments' is evident. This included a mutual, painful stalemate marked by a recent (e.g. the 1999 Freetown invasion) or impending catastrophe; and when both parties efforts at unilateral solutions or 'tracks' was blocked.

The Kabbah government that had been restored in March 1998 was forced to go to the negotiating table with the people that ECOMOG had driven out of Freetown. Since the withdrawal of EO, the Kabbah government had been over-reliant on Nigerian troops to create and maintain stability in the country (Olonisakin 2004 :237 ; Bangura 2002 :146-147). The poorly equipped Nigerian/ECOMOG forces however, were unable to counter the insurgency tactics adopted by the rump AFRC/RUF forces. The reinforced ECOMOG forces were able to liberate Freetown from the rebels, but not able to take full control of the entire country. This forced the Kabbah government to adopt a dual track strategy that included a vigorous pursuit of dialogue with the AFRC/RUF and the intensification of military action against the group (Bangura 2002 :146-147).

Finally a Peace Agreement was signed by both Kabbah and Sankoh on 7 July 1999. The signing of the Lomé Peace Agreement was witnessed by the Heads of State of Togo, Nigeria, Liberia and Burkina Faso, with Foreign Ministers of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, while four international organisations (the OAU, ECOWAS, the UN and the Commonwealth) along with Togo undertook to be 'moral guarantors' that would ensure that the Agreement was implemented with integrity and good faith by both parties (Abraham 2004b : 212). As things turned out, it was not possible to implement the Agreement despite the fact that it was in favour of the RUF, as we shall see later. Instead the RUF sought to unilaterally take over power. It seized UN peacekeeping personnel as hostages and with

their arms, started to advance towards Freetown. It was only thanks to the timely British intervention that the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) regained control of the situation and Kabbah's government was saved from imminent collapse.

2.6   The United Kingdom intervention.

The huge hostage taking of UN peacekeepers by the RUF completely changed the military situation in Sierra Leone. Both the Kabbah government and the UN mission were in danger. The arrival of the military forces of the United Kingdom on 7 May 2000 in Freetown saved the situation for both. The show of force by the British allowed for the rescue of the UNAMSIL hostages. It also forced the RUF to the negotiating table and finally to the Abuja Ceasefire Agreement on 10 November 2000 (The Independent 2000). This allowed the recommencement of the DDR process and allowed UNAMSIL the opportunity to start deploying fully (United Nations 2000b :4-6). While the RUF remained reluctant to disarm fully in the Kambia district, due to Guinean military interdiction, ECOWAS pressure led to a compromise solution involving a joint disarmament by the CDF and RUF in the Kambia district and brought the DDR process back on track by mid-2001 (Olonisakin 2008 :102-103).

The British military intervention also created space for the Kabbah government not only to reorganize but to restructure the Sierra Leone army. The United Nations too, had time to reconfigure the command structure of the mission, appointing Lieutenant-General Daniel Opande of Kenya as the new force commander and giving UNAMSIL an increased staffing level of 11,000 – but then increased to 13,000 and later ending up at 17,455 by the end of March 2002 (Keen 2005 :272 ; Gberie 2005 :169).

By January 2002 president Kabbah was able to declare an end to the disarmament process and with that the formal conclusion of the civil war. The end of the civil war, however, marked the beginning of the UN Special Court for Sierra Leone on 16 January 2002.

2.7 **Concluding remarks.**

The domestic environment in Sierra Leone proved a fertile breeding ground for the conflict that commenced with the RUF invasion in March 1991. A number of factors indicated that Sierra Leone had a predisposition to civil conflict. It had a large pool of disaffected youth, who were largely unemployed and unemployable. Despite the natural resource wealth of the country, very few of the youth could access this wealth to advance the country's national level of development. At the same time Sierra Leone fell victim to a declining economy compounded by donor demands on reform. Further exacerbating matters was the nature of governance in Sierra Leone that had vacillated between one-party and military rule – neither conducive conditions for dealing with the challenges facing the country. On the contrary, the existence of these styles of governance merely caused complications as patronage systems crippled the effective operation of central government institutions, and these became of less relevance to the Sierra Leonean people.

This toxic mix of factors co-existed for a period of time until the trigger came along that would lead to the ignition of conflict. This was provided by the ECOWAS decision in 1990 to intervene militarily in the Liberian civil war as well as the Sierra Leone government's decision to allow Lungi airport to be used as a forward supply and staging base for ECOMOG ground and air operations inside Liberia. The ECOMOG Liberian operation effectively turned into a contest between ECOMOG and Charles Taylor and his NPFL faction. This effectively prepared the ground for the creation of the RUF insurgency, and in effect represented a retaliatory act by a surrogate force backed by Charles Taylor.

Despite the commencement of the RUF insurgency, Sierra Leone's principal preoccupation remained largely with its own military forces rather than the RUF. It was the disgruntlement of junior officers with their own career conditions and prospects that prompted the overthrow of the Momoh APC government.

The successive Sierra Leonean government's adopted various approaches to dealing with the RUF. An early strategy (and one that came to be very problematic) was the rapid expansion of the ranks of the Sierra Leonean army by recruiting from the masses of disaffected youth and providing them only with rudimentary training before sending them to operational deployments against the RUF. Effectively, any professional standards that had been available to the Sierra Leone army became downgraded through the poor recruiting and meant that its ability to wage a successful military campaign also receded. Part of this problem became reflected in the emergence of the 'sobel' problem.

In an effort then to counter these military problems, Sierra Leone called on the 'good offices' of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to try and advance negotiations, but with very little success. At the same time, the NGO, International Alert, entered the scene, but was effectively seen as partisan towards the RUF. This failure again prompted the Sierra Leonean Head of State, Valentine Strasser to consider another military option – the use of Private Military Companies. In this regard, Executive Outcomes proved a highly successful acquisition in the fight against the RUF – so much so that enough political space was opened to hold successful elections in 1996.

The democratically-elected government then followed a dual track approach – negotiation and military confrontation. The military reverses suffered by the RUF forced them to enter into negotiations, and in so doing, the EO itself was brought into the resolution process, being forced to withdraw from Sierra Leone. With EO removed from the picture, and questionable loyalty from the Sierra Leone army, the Kabbah government was forced to depend on traditional hunter-militias, and following a period in exile following the May 1997 *coup d'état*, the military support of ECOMOG. The May 1997 *coup d'état* confirmed the belief that the Sierra Leone army could not be fully trusted, and its alliance with the RUF as the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, gave credence to allegations of

close collaborative ties between the army and the RUF, even during periods when these had been direct military opponents.

In negotiating with the RUF, the Sierra Leone government and the RUF both adopted their stances as their military fortunes fluctuated. Throughout the conflict, the RUF retained significant control over the diamond fields, thus depriving the government of significant revenues. These two factors effectively determined how both the major parties stood in the negotiating process. Throughout the process, neither side negotiated in good faith (as the number of peace agreements would attest to), and their willingness to make concessions depended on their current fortunes or misfortunes in the battlefield.

CHAPTER 3

MILITARY INTERVENTION IN SIERRA LEONE.

The conflict in Sierra Leone between 1991 and 2002 was marked by the military intervention of three main external players. These were the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) with its Economic Community of West African States Military Observer Group (ECOMOG); the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL); and the United Kingdom's military intervention under 'Operation Palliser'. In this Chapter a more detailed discussion is made of the three interventions and the impact they had on the conflict in Sierra Leone.

3.1   The ECOWAS/ECOMOG Military Intervention.

The ECOWAS/ECOMOG military intervention was basically in two phases. The first phase ran from the start of the civil war in March 1991 to the election of President Kabbah in 1996. The second phase ran from the 1997 *coup d'état* against Kabbah up to the arrival of UNAMSIL in 1999. In the first phase ECOMOG support was provided essentially as an adjunct to the conflict in Liberia[8]. It was ECOMOG's use of Lungi Airport to stage operations against Taylor's NPFL that led to the March 1991 RUF incursions in Sierra Leone. The ECOMOG forces had been requested by Samuel Doe, the President of Liberia, to support him against the various Liberian rebel factions seeking to oust him. The ECOMOG forces landed in Monrovia on 24 August 1990 from their base in Sierra Leone. This force was initially composed of contingents from Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Gambia. The RUF incursion into Sierra Leone in March 1991 was Taylor's response to the presence of ECOMOG in

---

[8] In August 1990, West African states took the unprecedented step of deploying a military force, ECOMOG, on a peacekeeping mission to Liberia in an effort to end the civil war. While ECOMOG backed the Liberian Interim Government, Charles Taylor's NPFL controlled 90 percent of Liberia (Human Rights Watch 1993 :1-2))

Liberia and its use of Sierra Leone as a platform to attack his NPFL forces.

ECOMOG responded by stationing some army units from Guinea and Nigeria and a Ghana Air force squadron along the Liberia – Sierra Leone border. In fact, the Yamoussoukro IV Accord (on ending the conflict in Liberia) signed in October 1991 resolved that all hostile forces should be withdrawn from Sierra Leone and that a buffer zone be created between Liberia and Sierra Leone and monitored by ECOMOG. The RUF was seen at the time as an upshot of Taylor's NPFL - thus support for the Sierra Leone government was seen as containment for the conflict contagion from Liberia (Ero 1995 :4).

The overthrow of Momoh's government in 1992 and the increasing divisions within ECOMOG and ECOWAS over Liberia limited the help that ECOMOG could provide to Strasser's government against the RUF incursions. With the RUF advancing on Freetown, this forced the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) to turn to private military companies, in particular Executive Outcomes (EO) and Civil Defence Forces (CDF), the best known being the Kamajor. It was largely through the employment of these forces and not the ECOMOG forces, that sufficient space was created for the 1996 electoral processes to be completed.

There were, however, two major problems that underlay the Sierra Leone army. One was the 'sobel' phenomenon described (see footnote page 22) by which government army personnel freelanced as rebels by night. This created a negative image for the Sierra Leone army, and civilians were forced to establish defence militias to protect themselves. This, however, created two armies within the country. This was the second problem. The effective alliance between the Executive Outcomes and the CDF Kamajor had forced the RUF to the negotiating table. The implication was that the CDF/Kamajor would be seen to replace the army after the elections. This in part prompted the army to adopt a common position with the RUF to try

and stop elections from taking place by insisting that a peace agreement be signed and in place before the elections.

Strasser's opposition to the election was ended when he was overthrown by his deputy, Brigadier Julius Maada Bio, in January 1996. Bio who had forged close relations with EO, also headed the EO-trained Special Forces Units within the Sierra Leonean army, and used these to his advantage in ousting Strasser (Musah 2000 :89). Despite Bio's opposition to Strasser's wanting to contest a presidential election (and prompting the overthrow), Bio and members of his administration also maintained the position of no election before a peace agreement (Keen 2005 :154-156). It should not be surprising therefore, that the main demand of the RUF and by proxy, the army, during negotiations was the withdrawal of Executive Outcomes. It should also not be surprising also that President Kabbah made the commander of the CDF/ Kamajor, Sam Hinga Norman, the Deputy Minister of Defence and made himself Minister of Defence. These two acts - the withdrawal of Executive Outcomes and the elevation of the Kamajor to a position akin to an alternative army - had serious consequences for the Kabbah government and contributed to his ouster by the army a year later (see footnote p 25).

The second phase of ECOMOG military intervention started with the overthrow of Kabbah on 25 May 1997. The new government, known as the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) and led by Major Johnny Paul Koroma (who had been imprisoned by Kabbah) invited the RUF to join the government. The RUF acceptance of this led to the formation of ARFC/RUF Junta. This provoked outrage in ECOWAS, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations. They all called for the restoration of the elected government. It is this that started the ECOMOG military intervention.

It is important to note here the existence of a bilateral defence pact between Nigeria and Sierra Leone signed in March 1997 just two months before Kabbah's overthrow. The agreement provided for among other

things: the defence of the Kabbah government by the Nigerian army; the training of the new Sierra Leone Army (with the Kamajor as the core of that army) and the overseeing of the implementation of the Abidjan Agreement (which included the disarmament of RUF and the reduction of the size of the army) (Gberie 2005 :111-112; Ogunmola and Badmus 2006 :79). It is this that explains the prominence of the Nigerian forces in the subsequent ECOMOG military intervention. Equally important is the fact that at the time of the *coup d'état* the ECOMOG contingent in Sierra Leone was largely composed of Nigerians (3,000 men out of 4,500).

The new ECOMOG mission was endorsed by the OAU Summit in Harare, Zimbabwe in early June 1997 and included:

- The early reinstatement of the legitimate government of President Kabbah;

- The return of peace and security; and

- The resolution of the issue of refugees and displaced persons (United Nations 1997g :2).

The ECOMOG military intervention essentially boiled down to the recapture of Freetown. It is important to note however, the fact that ECOMOG did not have enough resources immediately after the *coup d'état* to oust the AFRC/RUF Junta from Freetown. In fact the 'Peoples' Army' (the adopted name for the Junta forces) attacked the Nigerian contingent around Lungi airport and the best the Nigerian forces could do was to repel the assault and then shell the AFRC headquarters in Freetown (Keen 2005 :212). Given this delicate situation the ECOWAS Committee of Four (later expanded to five with the inclusion of Liberia) decided to enter into negotiations with the AFRC/RUF Junta while it strengthened its ECOMOG force by redeployment from Liberia and fresh troops from Nigeria. The negotiations produced the Conakry Peace Plan signed by the Junta in October 1997. The plan called for the restoration of President Kabbah within six months and the granting of immunity to the

coup leaders. The Junta, however, did not show any indication of implementing the plan which left ECOMOG with only one option – using force to dislodge the Junta from Freetown.

In late January 1998, ECOMOG forces commenced 'Operation Sandstorm', an offensive in the Freetown area to drive out the AFRC/RUF Junta. Within a short space of time, ECOMOG forces were able to clear the Freetown area, securing the capital by 12 February 1998, allowing for the return of President Kabbah on 10 March. Ironically, ECOMOG was assisted in this operation by another Private Military Company, the British-based Sandline International, contracted by the deposed and exiled Kabbah government (Berman and Sams 2000 :118) Key to the success of 'Operation Sandstorm' was the role of the CDF in keeping AFRC/RUF combatants busy in the diamond mining areas and reducing the risk of these forces interfering in ECOMOG's Freetown operation (Gberie 2005 :116). The initial surge by ECOMOG and the CDF resulted in the establishment of an ECOMOG/CDF control line extending between Bo, Kenema and Zimmi, but this did not include control of some of the diamond-rich areas such as Koidu, Kono and Kailahun (Douglas 1999 :193). Following this initial advance, the military offensive quickly settled into a stalemate.

While ECOMOG had succeeded in driving the AFRC/RUF from Freetown, large parts of the country remained under rebel control. While rebels stepped up their campaign of terror on the civilian population, the ECOMOG force appeared to accept the military stalemate[9]. Apart from the fact that the bulk of the ECOMOG force was made up of Nigerian units, their approach to warfare in Sierra Leone reflected their ability to wage a conventional campaign, but was not geared to fighting an unconventional counter-insurgency type operation. Gershoni (1997 :59)

---

[9] Tuck (2000 :9) points out that ECOMOG role in corruption in Liberia had led the acronym ECOMOG being jokingly referred to as 'Every Car or Moving Object Gone'. A similar sentiment marked ECOMOG's role in Sierra Leone.

points out, the RUF waged war against conventional government armies, relying on guerilla tactics. This meant that the RUF could control swathes of the countryside, but that conversely, was not able to overcome government forces guarding the capital city. Counter-insurgency tactics had been one of the key successes employed by EO against the RUF earlier during the conflict (Howe 2001 :166).

A number of contributing factors to the stalemate included; (a) a significant lack of requisite support and logistical backup (especially in weapons, ammunition, vehicles and helicopters) for the ECOMOG force and; (b) a significant lack of funding. ECOMOG therefore did not have sufficient capacity to sustain an all out offensive to defeat the AFRC/RUF forces. At the same time the domestic political events in Nigeria led it to increasingly question the cost of ECOMOG operations, which it largely funded. Besides the ECOMOG force was not universally popular in Sierra Leone and there were divisions among ECOWAS leaders with some openly supporting the AFRC/RUF Junta[10]. The accusation of corruption and ill discipline within ECOMOG further harmed the reputation of the force (Berman and Sams 2000 : 118-120).

This meant that the only option would be negotiations between the Kabbah government and the AFRC/RUF. The earlier attempts at negotiations were not helped by Kabbah's punitive approach, which bordered on retribution, towards those who had overthrown him. This included the public execution on Freetown beaches on 18 October 1998 of 24 soldiers and civilians who had been convicted in this regard (Berman and Sams 2000 :122 ; Gberie 2005 :116-117 ; Reno 2000b :326). It is in response to this retribution that the AFRC/RUF launched its counter-attack, infiltrating Freetown in 'Operation No Living Thing' in January 1999. The rebels were able to ransack Freetown and it took the

---

[10] Divisions had persisted within ECOWAS (largely between Nigeria and Francophone countries) since the launch of ECOMOG in Liberia, where the operation was seen as move by 'corrupt, repressive, undemocratic and self-perpetuating regimes to save the military dictatorship of Doe from collapse.' (Sesay 1995 :213)

ECOMOG forces six weeks to liberate the city, leaving thousands dead in the process. The largely Nigerian ECOMOG force suffered heavy losses (estimated at around 700) and in retaliation launched 'Operation Death Before Dishonour' which was extremely ruthless and led to accusations of human right abuses (Noyes 2003 :57 ; Evoe 2008 :54-55). This was followed by the announcement of Nigeria's intention to withdraw its forces gradually from Sierra Leone during 1999. In this regard, Nigeria was concerned that in the planning of the UNAMSIL mission, the UN did not adequately recognise the central role that Nigeria had played in ECOMOG. This, coupled to the increasing cost to Nigeria of their deployment – reportedly more than USD 4 billion in both Liberia and Sierra Leone - in Sierra Leone, costing an estimated USD 1 million per day, led Nigeria to announce a withdrawal from ECOMOG (Olonisakin 2008 :44)

The ECOMOG force was once more able to save Kabbah's government. It was clear however, that the force could not deliver a decisive military victory against the AFRC/RUF opponents especially in view of its poor logistical capacity and questionable military leadership (Olonisakin 2008 :34). This meant that it was time to go back to the negotiating table for Kabbah and the AFRC/RUF. This culminated in the Lomé Agreement in July 1999. While Nigeria withdrew a significant number of its troops, it did eventually agree to allow some of its ECOMOG force to be absorbed into the newly established UNAMSIL.

3.2   **The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL).**

The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone is not strictly a military intervention though its military personnel were forced to confront and engage the RUF/AFRC rebels at various points. UNAMSIL was intended to be a peace-keeping mission. It is important to treat it for three reasons:

- the connection between ECOMOG and UNAMSIL: At one point in time these two missions co-existed in tandem in Sierra Leone, and

when ECOMOG eventually withdrew, some members of ECOMOG were absorbed into UNAMSIL.

- due to the tragic disaster that befell UNAMSIL: This involved the loss of a number of its peacekeepers and the capture of significant numbers of other peacekeepers by the RUF. This brought into sharp focus the whole issue of peacekeeping and mandates.

- the imminent collapse of UNAMSIL mission: in the face of the RUF threat, this led to the United Kingdom's military intervention that helped bring the conflict to a final conclusion.

It is important to start with a brief background of UNAMSIL. The United Nations involvement in Sierra Leone started with the appointment of Berhanu Dinka in February 1995 as the Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General. The main task of the Special Envoy was to help the country to negotiate a settlement and return the country to civilian rule. However, the democratic government that came to power in March 1996 was soon overthrown in May 1997. It was subsequently reinstated by force in March 1998. At this point the office of the Special Envoy was expanded with the creation (by way of Security Council Resolution 1181) of the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) with a six months mandate starting in June 1998 (UN 1998b :2). The UNOMSIL observers were under the protection of the ECOMOG forces. In December 1998 when the AFRC/RUF forces closed in on Freetown the UNOMSIL personnel had to be withdrawn, being airlifted to Guinea. The subsequent expulsion of rebels from Freetown and the regaining of control by the civilian government led to further negotiations between the government and the rebels. This resulted in the Lomé Agreement signed in July 1999. The United Nations was then requested to expand the role of UNOMSIL until a neutral peacekeeping force had been created. The UN Security Council authorized on 20 August 1999 an increase of UNOMSIL to 210 members.

On 22 October 1999, the UN Security Council adopted Security Council Resolution 1270 that saw UNOMSIL replaced by the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), a large peacekeeping force of 6,000 military personnel, including 260 military observers (United Nations 1999d :1-3). This was in line with the Lomé Agreement provision for a neutral peacekeeping force to oversee its implementation. UNAMSIL would initially be composed of 3,000 Nigerians and 1,000 Guineans (formerly members of ECOMOG) and 2,000 Indians. These were to be joined later by Kenyan troops and British unarmed military observers (15). The UNAMSIL mandate included:

- To cooperate with the government of Sierra Leone and the other parties to the Peace Agreement in the implementation of the Agreement;

- To assist the government of Sierra Leone in the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration plan;

- To that end to establish a presence at key locations throughout the territory of Sierra Leone, including at disarmament/reception centres;

- To ensure the security and freedom of movement of United Nations personnel;

- To monitor adherence to the ceasefire in accordance with the ceasefire agreement of 18 May 1999 through the structures provided therein;

- To encourage the parties to create confidence building mechanisms and support their functioning;

- To facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance;

- To support the operations of United Nations civilian officials, including the Special Representative of the Secretary General and his staff, human rights officers and civilian affairs officers;

- To provide support, as requested, to the elections, which are to be held in accordance with the present constitution of Sierra Leone (United Nations 1999e :2-3).

It was already clear by December 1999 that the implementation of the Lomé Agreement was unraveling partly because of the disagreements within the RUF over the Agreement and partly because of the unwillingness of the RUF to disarm. With the impending withdrawal of the Nigerian ECOMOG contingent (scheduled for May 2000) and the increased violence in the country, on 7 February 2000 the UN Security Council decided, by way of Security Council Resolution 1289 (United Nations 2000c :1-4), to increase the UNAMSIL contingent in Sierra Leone from 6,000 to 11,000 and to broaden its mandate to include:

- To provide security at key locations and government buildings, in particular in Freetown, important intersections and major airports, including Lungi airport;

- To facilitate the free flow of people, goods and humanitarian assistance along specified thoroughfares;

- To provide security in and at all sites of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme;

- To coordinate with and assist, the Sierra Leone law enforcement authorities in the discharge of their responsibilities;

- To guard weapons, ammunition and other military equipment collected from ex-combatants and to assist in their subsequent disposal or destruction.

UNAMSIL was further authorized to take the necessary action to fulfil those additional tasks and to take the necessary action to ensure the security and freedom of movement of its personnel and, within its capacities and areas of deployment, to afford protection of civilians under

imminent threat of physical violence, taking into account the responsibilities of the government of Sierra Leone.

UNAMSIL commenced on 22 October 1999, upon the termination of the UNOMSIL mandate and the creation of the new Chapter VII mission. On 1 May 2000 the RUF launched attacks against two interior DDR camps at Magburaka and Makeni, captured UNAMSIL personnel and destroyed the camps. The two camps were strategically important for RUF as these controlled routes to the diamond-rich region of Koidu. UNAMSIL reinforcements sent to Makeni resulted in the capture of 30 of their personnel on 2 May 2000. On the same day a UNAMSIL helicopter was captured in Kailahun. On 3 May a further 21 peacekeepers were captured in skirmishes. On 5 May 2000, 208 newly arrived Zambian troops were captured as well as their armoured personnel carriers. This was followed by the capture of some Kenyan troops and their disarmament and the capture of more than 500 AK 47s and tons of ammunition from Guinean peacekeepers (Evoe 2008 :56-59).

The RUF's actions against UNAMSIL continued despite the RUF leader, Foday Sankoh, signing an agreement with the Nigerian Special Envoy, General Aliyu Mohammed on 3 May 2000 that promised the immediate release of all UNAMSIL personnel, while pledging to halt further attacks on UNAMSIL and grant the peacekeepers freedom of movement. While some releases did take place, those released had uniforms and weapons confiscated (Olonisakin 2008 :57).

At this point, UNAMSIL was completely in disarray and the RUF began to advance on Freetown, causing general panic. It was just a matter of time before the RUF would create conditions to send the Kabbah government back into exile. Only a stronger force could save UNAMSIL and the Kabbah government. This force came from the United Kingdom at the request of the United Nations Secretary-General. The Secretary-General had approached three powers with recognized rapid reaction capacities – France, the United States and the United Kingdom. While all initially

rejected the Secretary-General's call, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, was persuaded to launch a limited mission to Freetown (Evoe 2008 :60-61).

A few things need to be noted about the early period of UNAMSIL. At the start of the UNAMSIL mandate, ECOMOG forces were - and had been for a considerable period - in place in Sierra Leone. It is these that had forced the RUF to the negotiating table. While the ECOMOG force was unable to defeat the RUF outright, it remained a fighting force with the capacity to engage the RUF. As long as it was in place the UNAMSIL forces were largely shielded from attack. Once the ECOMOG forces were withdrawn the UNAMSIL forces came under attack, with significant consequences.

The question to be posed here was why UNAMSIL became easy prey for the RUF? There are three possible answers to this question. The first deals with the actual rationality of creating a peacekeeping force in an environment where there was no peace to keep. From the earlier agreements, the RUF had shown clearly that it would not abide by any agreement with the government. It had reneged on the Abidjan Agreement and had come back to the negotiating table for the Lomé Agreement after being forced out of Freetown, while the Sierra Leone government was also put under international pressure to conclude a peace agreement. Placing a peacekeeping force in such an environment is a risky gamble.

The second answer lies with the composition of UNAMSIL force. Western countries that have sizeable militaries and a corresponding capacity have shied away from UN peacekeeping missions especially after negative experiences in Somalia and Rwanda in the early 1990's. This has left the UN to rely largely on developing countries to provide the bulk of troops in various peacekeeping missions. This was the case in Sierra Leone if one looks at the list of peacekeepers captured by the RUF – from Zambia, Kenya, Nigeria and India, and in one case, the United Kingdom

(Olonisakin 2008 :57). The implication of this is that, in many cases, forces provided for peacekeeping duties, are not well trained or prepared for peacekeeping operations resulting in potentially disastrous consequences. In UNAMSIL's case, the command structure was marked by sharp differences between the Indian force commander and senior Nigerian military officers (Bullion 2001 :78).

The third answer lies in the actual mandate given to UNAMSIL which only specifies self defence and not peace enforcement, and goes to the heart of the debate between Chapter VI and Chapter VII peacekeeping missions. In most African situations what is needed is a robust peace enforcement mandate rather than merely peacekeeping. It is these factors that have led Evoe (2008 :85) to attribute the UNAMSIL disaster to poor troop strength, substandard preparation and resolve, weak planning and leadership, lack of chain command and deficiencies in proper logistical support. In the context of the nature of the conflict situation in Sierra Leone, the original UNAMSIL mission was effectively set up for failure.

Under the Lomé Peace Agreement the DDR process was supposed to be supervised by the UN. The UN responded to the agreement by strengthening the military observer component of UNOMSIL. On 22 October 1999, the UN Security Council agreed to convert the observer mission into a peacekeeping mission as the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), with an approved force level of 6,000 military personnel, including 260 military observers (United Nations 1999d :3).

The hostage situation of UN peacekeepers in May 2000 led to a reappraisal of the size of the Mission as well as its mandate. Security Council Resolution 1313 *inter alia* authorised UNAMSIL to maintain the security of the Lungi and Freetown peninsulas and their major approach routes, as well the ability 'to deter and, where necessary, decisively counter the threat of RUF attack by responding robustly to any hostile actions or threat of imminent and direct use of force' (United Nations

2000d :1). UNAMSIL was in fact required to use force when Indian peacekeepers were taken hostage on 15/16 July 2000.

3.3   The United Kingdom military intervention.

The military intervention in Sierra Leone in May 2000 by the United Kingdom was, as noted above, at the request of the UN Secretary-General when UNAMSIL was on the point of collapse and the RUF was reportedly closing on Freetown, in the process using the arms and material captured from UNAMSIL. British Prime Minister Tony Blair was persuaded to intervene by his Foreign Secretary and Defence Secretary. As Kargbo (2006 :298) states, Britain was forced to intervene for a number of compelling reasons: the need to match foreign policy pronouncements with actions; the obligation to safeguard British nationals and other interests; the prevention of another humanitarian catastrophe similar to that caused by the January 1999 invasion of Freetown; the defence of democracy threatened by rebels with no political ideology; and the need to prevent the collapse of the largest peacekeeping operation undertaken by the UN. It was clear however, that the British intervention was meant to save the UNAMSIL operation. (Evoe 2008 :60-61)

On 5 May 2000 the British government initiated the deployment of its rapid reaction force. On 7 May 2000, 600 paratroopers were already at Lungi airport and the evacuation of the British nationals began the next day. On 13 May 2000, Royal Navy reinforcements arrived in Freetown, boosting the British force not only in numbers but mostly in firepower and air power. 'Operation Palliser' was now in full swing. British helicopters provided a variety of logistical aid, transporting troops, weapons and supplies and providing reconnaissance over the RUF positions. There was a full show of force and a willingness to use firepower against the rebels. Brigadier David Richards, the British commander, described the start of 'Operation Palliser' in these terms: 'What started as a NEO (non-combatant evacuation operation) developed into something that has all characteristics of a small- to medium-scale war-fighting operation' and

that while British forces came under fire on only a few occasions 'we found ourselves *de facto* closely involved with the direction of a campaign at the operational level' (Global Facilitation Network for Security Sector Reform and International Alert 2009 :52). Richards is of the view that it was British ground commanders in Freetown that changed the rules of engagement and in the process won the support of political leaders in London[11]. As RUF elements approached Freetown, London approved that the force could undertake 'protective operations' and aid UNAMSIL (Evoe 2008 :65).

By 15 June 2000 'Operation Palliser' had officially come to an end, with the RUF power broken and UNAMSIL back on its feet. While 'Operation Palliser' ended, a standby force of 200 Royal Marines and an Instruction team of 90 remained in Sierra Leone to undertake training of a new Sierra Leonean army. Also left behind was a British Joint Headquarters in Freetown which, while it operated independently from UNAMSIL's day-to-day operational activities, worked in conjunction with UNAMSIL's command structure. Despite the conclusion of 'Operation Palliser', the United Kingdom signaled a longer-term involvement with Sierra Leone through 'Operation Basilica' (the training of the new Sierra Leone army). In addition, British forces were required to launch 'Operation Barass' in September 2000 to rescue a group of their soldiers held by the Westside Boys (Connaughton 2001 :110-119). In November 2000 British forces conducted 'Operation Silkman', an amphibious operation that reinforced

---

[11] In the belief that Freetown was under the threat of an imminent RUF attack, British forces quickly organized the so-called 'Unholy Alliance' – a disparate conglomeration consisting of some 2000 members of the SLA, 3000 SLA recruits being trained by the British Army, as well as elements of ex-SLA, AFRC, CDF, and the Westside Boys (former members of the AFRC/RUF Junta) – all operating under the direction of the Government Joint Force Operations and Support Committees, and chaired by British officers. The 'Unholy Alliance" was guided at every level by British officers and non-commissioned officers, allowing any RUF gains to be reversed, and allowing for an acceptable degree of stability to return to Freetown (Global Facilitation Network for Security Sector Reform and International Alert 2009 : 53).

the United Kingdom's political and military resolve in supporting the Kabbah government (Evoe 2008 :74-80).

The question that needs to be asked is why did the United Kingdom intervention, with relatively few military personnel, succeed in a short time where ECOMOG and UNAMSIL with larger troop numbers had failed? The answer lies with capacity and capabilities of the British force and the military hardware available to it. The superior airpower, in both attack and transport capacities, for example, was not available to ECOMOG and UNAMSIL. In addition, the UNAMSIL peacekeepers were completely ill-prepared for the job, being 'badly trained and badly equipped' (Bullion 2001 :83).

The second answer lies in the fact that the British presence boosted a bigger force already on the ground by providing the needed logistics and rapid deployment capabilities and effectively became a force multiplier. The effect of this was seen in 'Operation Khukri' when the Indian UNAMSIL contingent was assisted by the British to rescue a big group of its soldiers that had been surrounded by the RUF in Kailahun for two months (Evoe 2008 :71).

There are, of course, other factors that helped change the situation in the country. One of these was the Guinean government's decision to conduct raids and air attacks on RUF camps near its border. Another was the split within the RUF leadership once Sankoh was arrested. This led to the election of a new RUF leader, Issa Sesay, who, given the extreme losses suffered by RUF, was ready to sign a cease-fire (the Abuja Ceasefire Agreement was signed on 10 November 2000).

3.4   **Concluding remarks.**

It is a pity that at the start of the conflict in Sierra Leone in 1991, the conflict was treated as an offshoot of the Liberian conflict and hence given little attention by ECOWAS/ECOMOG. As a result, the Sierra Leone government was forced to consider other remedies such as the

use of private military companies (Executive Outcomes) and the Civil Defence Force (militias) to fight the rebels. ECOMOG finally intervened but this intervention was in defence of democracy and democratic ideals rather than in the defence of the people of Sierra Leone. The return of Kabbah to power in 1997 did not lead to a consolidation of peace. It only helped to prolong the conflict. Kabbah had become dependent on ECOMOG and could only remain in power under ECOMOG protection. ECOMOG, however, was not strong enough to defeat the RUF which continued to rule the countryside and, more importantly, the diamond fields. Given its resources from diamonds, the RUF was able to regroup and ransack Freetown under 'Operation No Living Thing'. ECOMOG was then forced to fight hard to dislodge the RUF from Freetown during 'Operation Death Before Dishonour'. This however, was done at huge cost through excessive destruction and loss of civilian life. This only helped to lead to a new round of negotiations that culminated in the Lomé Peace Agreement – something that parties were disinclined to implement.

It is equally regrettable that the United Nations was drawn into a peacekeeping venture for which it was ill equipped and in a situation where there was actually no peace to keep. As Evoe (2008 :85) puts it, the assumptions made by the international community about the RUF were tragically wrong. The RUF's actions demonstrated that it had no plans to fully abide by Lomé. This miscalculation led to tragic consequences for UNAMSIL as a number of its members were killed, while others were captured and had its materials used against them.

The British military intervention in May 2000 turned the situation around and helped to save UNAMSIL. But why couldn't they use their tactical capability much earlier in support of ECOMOG in 1997 or even at the start of UNAMSIL? The answer is that since Somalia (1993) and Rwanda (1994) the big powers had limited their contribution to the UN peacekeeping efforts to the provision of funding and specialist groups. This has often meant that troops, at the infantry battalion level, had to rather come from developing countries like Bangladesh, China, Egypt,

India, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Africa and others. Troops from developing countries are often ill-prepared and ill-equipped for the peacekeeping role.

CHAPTER 4

THE PEACE AGREEMENTS IN SIERRA LEONE.

In this Chapter the focus is on the key Peace Agreements concluded during the Sierra Leone conflict, in particular the Abidjan Peace Agreement, signed on 30 November 1996, and the Lomé Peace Agreement, signed on 7 July 1999. In between the two agreements was the Conakry Peace Plan signed on 23 October 1997 whose focus was largely on the restoration of the Kabbah government. Attention will be paid to the factors that led to the Agreements, the contents and finally the non-implementation of the Agreements.

4.1   **The Abidjan Peace Agreement.**

While the civil war started in March 1991, it was only five years later that an agreement was reached between the Sierra Leone government and the RUF rebels. This can be attributed to a number of factors. First was the overthrow of the Momoh government in April 1992. According to Keen (2005 :94) the NPRC *coup* makers had received significant support from RUF in the belief that the NPRC would form a coalition government with them following their seizure of power in early 1992. When this did not take place the RUF broadened their attacks and area of operation. Strasser's unilateral ceasefire in December 1993 had no impact on the RUF. In fact by late 1994, the RUF had significantly stepped up attacks against the government and also resorted to hostage taking. In November 1994 Strasser wrote to the UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, requesting him to use his 'good offices' to bring the Sierra Leone government and the RUF to negotiations. The Secretary- General responded in early 1995 by appointing Berhanu Dinka as his Special Envoy to Sierra Leone and appealed to the Commonwealth and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) for help in the search for a negotiated solution in Sierra Leone (United Nations 1995 :1-2).

In the meantime Strasser was forced to turn to private military companies for military support and training of the army. Strasser was subsequently overthrown by Bio and soon after Sierra Leone moved to the planned elections.

The tentative negotiation process that had started under Strasser, continued under Bio and then under the newly elected Kabbah government. However, this was going nowhere until Sankoh's headquarters near Kenema was destroyed and his control over the diamond fields taken away by the combined efforts of Executive Outcomes and the Kamajors[12]. This helped force the RUF to the negotiating table. This meant making a deal with the RUF in the hope that peace would prevail and that there would be no need for EO. The agreement for EO to exit Sierra Leone however, turned out to be a gross error. The stability and security of the country was being sacrificed for international aid (Evoe 2008 :49).

With the above background one can examine the Abidjan Peace Agreement signed on 30 November 1996. Article 1 was intended to end the conflict by a stroke of the pen. It simply stated that 'the armed conflict between the government of Sierra Leone and RUF is hereby ended with immediate effect. Accordingly, the two foes will ensure that total cessation of hostilities is observed forthwith' (Conciliation Resources 2000 :61-64). This was a declaration of good faith from the belligerent groups which, with hindsight, was far from the truth. Article 3 established a Commission for the Consolidation of Peace, whose role would be a verification mechanism responsible for supervising and monitoring the

---

[12] The new Kabbah administration decided to adopt a two-track approach of a mix of military options and negotiation. Following protracted talks with the RUF in Côte d'Ivoire, it became clear that Sankoh was reneging of concluding a peace agreement. Kabbah unleashed his EO/CDF forces against the RUF, and after Sankoh's headquarters near Kenema was destroyed in November 1996, Sankoh agreed to sign the Abidjan Agreement. It was noted by an unnamed diplomat in Freetown that 'always military pressure had to be put on before negotiations could succeed' (ICG 2001 :11).

implementation of, and compliance with, all the provisions contained in the Agreement. This represented a self monitoring mechanism within which the two parties would oversee a wide range of implementation activities, with only a Neutral Monitoring Group (NMG) responsible for breaches of the Agreement (Article 11). It is this that gave birth to the UN Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL). Articles 5 to 7 dealt with the normal issues of demobilization and resettlement that are common to many political settlements that have accompanied the ending of civil wars in Africa. One aspect to note here is Article 10 which called for the downsizing of the Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLMF) taking into account the security needs of the country. This clause did not sit well with the armed forces and helped contribute towards the subsequent *coup d'état*.

Notwithstanding the fact that the RUF was on the verge of collapse, it ended up being the main beneficiary of the Agreement. Articles 9, 12, 13 and 14 were all in favor of RUF. Article 14 gave the RUF and all its members total amnesty. It stated that 'the government of Sierra Leone shall ensure that no official or judicial action is taken against any member of the RUF in respect of anything done by them in pursuit of their objectives as members of that organization up to the time of signing this agreement'. Article 13 transformed the RUF from a rebel movement into a political movement and a major player in Sierra Leone politics. It stated that 'the parties agree immediately following the signing of the present peace agreement, the RUF shall commence to act as a political movement with the rights, privileges, and duties provided by law; and that within 30 days, following that, the necessary conditions shall be created to enable the RUF to register as a political movement according to law'. Article 9 made provision for the incorporation of RUF members into the Sierra Leone army.

The biggest gain for RUF, however, came with Article 12 that called for the withdrawal of Executive Outcomes, their main nemesis, from Sierra Leone. The Article stated that 'the Executive Outcomes shall be

withdrawn five weeks after the deployment of the Neutral Monitoring Group. As from the date of the deployment of the Neutral Monitoring Group, the Executive Outcomes shall be confined to barracks under supervision of the Joint Monitoring Group and the Neutral Monitoring Group'.

Unfortunately it was only Article 12 that was implemented - even before the deployment of the Neutral Monitoring Group. The withdrawal of Executive Outcomes in January 1997 created a power vacuum that was exploited by the army and RUF. They overthrew Kabbah's government on 25 May 1997 and established the AFRC/RUF Junta. This, in principle, meant the end of the civil war - but at the same time the end of the Abidjan Peace Agreement. The new Junta was however, not recognized by ECOWAS, the OAU and the United Nations.

4.2 **The Conakry Peace Plan.**

The AFRC *coup d'état* on 25 May 1997 was roundly condemned by the international community, that sought the immediate restoration of the democratically-elected government of President Kabbah. The lead role in trying to overturn the *coup d'état* was taken by ECOWAS, led in this regard by Nigeria. ECOWAS, which had maintained a forward base at Lungi (near Freetown) in support of its ECOMOG force in Liberia, at first attempted to respond to the AFRC militarily.

Despite a short-lived military engagement around Freetown, it soon became clear that its ECOMOG forces, at that stage, did not have sufficient capacity for a quick military campaign to defeat the AFRC, and instead opted to find a peaceful negotiated political solution. The first ECOWAS political response was to appoint a four-member Ministerial Committee (Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Ghana, but later expanded to five, when Liberia joined) to engage the AFRC/RUF Junta.

In addition, the AFRC/RUF Junta immediately came under pressure from the international community when bilateral donors suspended

development aid (both the United Kingdom and the European Union), while Sierra Leone was also suspended from the Commonwealth on 11 July 1997. ECOWAS, with political support from the OAU, decided to implement its own sanction measures against the Junta, while the UN Security Council imposed a range of measures against the AFRC/RUF leadership in October 1997, and authorized ECOMOG to enforce these sanctions measures (Keen 2005 :212-213)

The ECOWAS Committee, led by Nigeria, met in Abuja on 11 and 12 October 1997, in the wake of the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1132 that imposed a range of sanctions on the AFRC/RUF Junta. Initial contact between the ECOWAS Committee and the AFRC/RUF Junta suggested that the Junta was adopting stalling tactics, negotiating in bad faith and showed no real sign of any willingness to stand down (United Nations 1997f :1). Notwithstanding the ongoing harassment of ECOMOG forces around Freetown by the Junta, the ECOWAS Committee agreed to pursue negotiations with the AFRC/RUF Junta in Conakry in October 1997 subject to the following conditions: (a) representatives of the regime must have the requisite mandate to negotiate; (b) the regime must negotiate in good faith; and (c) the negotiations should be strictly within the ECOWAS mandate. This envisaged the 'speedy restoration of the constitutional order in Sierra Leone' through the reinstatement of the legitimate government of President Kabbah, the return of peace and security and the resolution of the issues of refugees and displaced persons (United Nations 1997h :3 ; United Nations 1997i :2).

Eventually the ECOWAS Committee of Five met in Conakry on 22 and 23 October 1997 with the AFRC/RUF delegation. The outcome of this meeting was the Conakry Peace Plan signed between the two parties on 23 October. The implementation of this Plan was to cover the period 23 October 1997 to 22 April 1998, and envisaged that President Kabbah would then be restored to office by 22 May 1998 (Conciliation Resources 2000 :65-66). The Foreign Ministers of Nigeria and Guinea signed on

behalf of the ECOWAS Committee of Five, while representative of the UN and OAU witnessed.

It is important to note that the Conakry Peace Plan was not a peace agreement. Its main objective was the restoration of the constitutional government and the broadening of its power base. Thus Article 5 of the Plan stated among other things that 'the restoration of the constitutional order to Sierra Leone is at the heart of ECOWAS peace plan' (Conciliation Resources 2000 :65-66). Consequently, it was considered necessary that the Government of President Kabbah should be enabled to exercise effective control once he was restored to office on 22 May 1998[13]. Nevertheless, it was recognized that for an enduring peace to be restored that would enjoy the support of the majority of Sierra Leoneans and the confidence of the sub- region, efforts should be made to ensure that 'an all inclusive government is evolved'. The only concession given to the Junta was in article 8 which stated that 'It is considered essential that unconditional immunities and guarantees from prosecution be extended to all involved in the unfortunate events of 25 May, 1997 with effect from 22 May 1998'. Article 3 maintained the continued application of sanctions and embargoes against the Junta. It stated that 'sanctions and embargoes will be strictly enforced throughout the period of implementation of the Sierra Leone peace plan, the flow of humanitarian assistance beginning on 14 November 1997 will continue to be monitored by ECOMOG and UN military observers.'

The International Crisis Group (ICG) (2001 :11) described the AFRC/RUF's signing of the Conakry Peace Plan as 'ploy to buy time in the face of international pressure and a domestic boycott by government employees, who refused to work under the AFRC regime and shut down key government functions' and that 'under cover of this accord, the AFRC

---

[13] Although the Conakry Plan provided for 22 May1998 as the resumption of the Kabbah government, the implementation breakdown as well as the ECOMOG counter-offensive at the end of January 1998, allowed for Kabbah's return to Freetown on 10 March 1998 (Malan 2001 :79).

stockpiled weapons and attacked remaining ECOMOG positions at the country's international airport at Lungi'. The same could be said for ECOMOG which, while negotiating the Conakry Peace Plan, was fast reinforcing its strength in Sierra Leone for an anticipated show down.

It is important to note that the Kabbah government-in-exile in Conakry never formed part of the negotiations. The negotiations were between the Junta, which was the *de facto* government in Sierra Leone and the ECOWAS Committee of Five. The Junta had the support of Liberia, Burkina Faso and Libya. Kabbah's government had no option but to accept the Conakry Peace Plan. Kabbah issued a statement on 5 November 1997 urging all Sierra Leoneans to 'regard it as an instrument that will lead to sustainable peace, to be followed by the reconstruction, rehabilitation, reconciliation and ultimate development and prosperity of our country' (United Nations 1997j :2). The Junta's interest was to gain legitimacy and the negotiations gave it international recognition. They were also interested in the retention of power. The punitive stance adopted by the Committee of Five however, did not help the situation at all.

The increasing stalling tactics by the Junta, and the launch of the ECOMOG offensive against the Junta in Freetown in January 1998, ended the Conakry Peace Plan. On 10 March 1998 the Kabbah government was restored in Freetown. As noted earlier, the ECOMOG force was militarily not strong enough to defeat the AFRC/RUF Junta outright, which meant that Kabbah came back to a still divided country with no central government control over the lucrative mineral areas. This left him with no option but to eventually negotiate with the RUF.

4.3   **The Lomé Peace Agreement.**

The Kabbah government that had been restored in March 1998 remained largely a government under siege. Its authority barely extended further than Freetown and its surrounding areas. Kabbah's continued tenure in power was thanks to the presence of the ECOMOG forces. These forces

were not generally welcomed by Sierra Leoneans as they were regarded as occupation forces. At the same time they did not have the capacity to defeat the rebels decisively.

On January 6, 1999 the AFRC/RUF fighters were back in Freetown in 'Operation No Living Thing'. This group ransacked and terrorised the city for close to three weeks before the ECOMOG force could drive them out of the city. In the process the largely Nigerian ECOMOG force lost over 700 soldiers (Evoe 2008 :55). The events of January/February 1999 forced Kabbah back to the negotiating table. This time he was under pressure from the Nigerian government which had sustained heavy losses of its men and were under pressure to withdraw troops from Sierra Leone. Pressure also came from Britain and the United States that wanted the conflict resolved once and for all (Keen 2005 :250). Sankoh, the head of RUF, was released from Sierra Leonean custody (where he was being held under a death sentence) in April 1999 and flown to Lomé to commence negotiations with the Kabbah government. Francis (2000 :362) points out that a key difference to earlier negotiations was that all parties with an interest in the conflict (including RUF supporters from Liberia, Burkina Faso and Libya) were invited to the negotiations. It should however be noted that this did not include members of the former AFRC, but Koroma was later accommodated in implementation structures. The negotiation outcome resulted in the signing of the Lomé Peace Agreement in July 1999 by Kabbah and Sankoh, representing the government and RUF respectively.

Unlike the earlier Abidjan Peace Agreement, Lomé was in all respects a power sharing agreement between the Kabbah government and RUF, and in fact conceded more to the RUF than did the 1996 Abidjan Agreement (Reno 2000b :326). This is what was at the core of Part Two of the Lomé Agreement under the title 'Governance' (Conciliation Resources 2000 :67-77). Article V was titled 'Enabling the RUF/SL to join a Broad-Based Government of National Unity Through Cabinet

Appointment'. This was further elaborated on in Article V (2) where it was stated that;

> 'the Chairman of the Board of the Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development (CMRRD) shall be offered to the leader of the RUF/SL, Corporal Foday Sankoh. For this purpose he shall enjoy the status of Vice President and shall therefore be answerable to the President of Sierra Leone'.

Of more importance, however, were the powers given to the CMRRD under Article VII. Article VII (1) described the responsibility of CMRRD as 'securing and monitoring the legitimate exploitation of Sierra Leone's gold and diamonds and other resources that are determined to be of strategic importance for national security and welfare as well as cater for post war rehabilitation and reconstruction'. Article VII (2) revoked all previous mineral concessions while Article VII (4) gave CMRRD the authority to grant mining licenses. To ensure that there was no ambiguity over the authority of CMRRD, Article VII (9) stated that;

> 'the functions of the Ministry of Mines shall continue to be carried out by the current authorized ministry. However, in respect of strategic mineral resources, the CMRRD shall be autonomous body in carrying out its duties concerning the regulation of Sierra Leone strategic natural resources'.

With the CMRRD Sankoh and RUF would have gained full control of the lucrative mining sector. Apart from the control of minerals and the Vice President position, the RUF was to receive, according to Article V (3), 'one of the three senior cabinet appointments such as finance, foreign affairs and justice' and three other cabinet positions.

In Part 3 (Other Political Issues), Article IX dealt with the issue of Pardon and Amnesty. It is important to note that Article IX (I) dealt with Sankoh as a signatory to the Peace Agreement. It stated in part that 'the Government of Sierra Leone shall take appropriate legal steps to grant Corporal Foday Sankoh absolute and free pardon'. Article IX (2) called for the granting of 'absolute and free pardon and reprieve to all combatants

and collaborators in respect of anything done by them in pursuit of their objectives, up to the time of signing the present agreement'. Lastly Article IX (3) stated that;

> 'the Government of Sierra Leone shall ensure that no official or judicial action is taken against any member of the RUF/SL, ex-AFRC, ex-SLA or CDF in respect of anything done by them in pursuit of their objectives as members of these organizations since March 1991 up to the signing of the peace agreement. In addition, legislative and other measures necessary to guarantee immunity to former combatants, exiles and other persons currently outside the country for reasons related to the armed conflict shall be adopted ensuring the full exercise of their civil and political rights, with a view to their integration with a framework of legality'.

Pardon and amnesty represent one of the common features of peace agreements that end intrastate conflicts. Without pardon and amnesty, the rebels are not likely to lay down their arms. In this case, Sierra Leone became a moral dilemma for the United Nations, given its later decision to prosecute crimes against humanity and genocide. The UN had, in this case, to act as a guarantor of an agreement that was to give absolute and free amnesty to everybody involved in the conflict in Sierra Leone. In the face of this dilemma, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Sierra Leone was instructed to sign the agreement if a proviso was included to the effect that 'the United Nations holds the understanding that the amnesty and pardon in Article IX shall not apply to international crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious violations of international law' (United Nations 1999c :2). In the aftermath of the civil war a Special Court for Sierra Leone was instituted to try war crimes. It is an open question however, that had the Lomé Peace Agreement been implemented as anticipated, whether such a court would have been acceptable to the parties.

Most of the remaining part of the Agreement dealt with the technical issues of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. It is, however, important to note the following elements. Firstly, was the transformation

of ECOMOG into a peacekeeping force whose main task would include the protection of UNOMSIL observers and the protection of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration personnel (Article XIII). Secondly, was the call for the creation of a neutral peacekeeping force comprising of UNOMSIL and ECOMOG whose task would be to disarm all combatants of the RUF/SL, CDF, SLA and paramilitary groups (Article XVI). It is this that led later to the formation of UNAMSIL.

The Lomé Peace Agreement excluded the AFRC members from its provisions of amnesty. They were also excluded from rejoining the formal military structure. This became a sticky issue in the implementation of the Agreement owing to the fact that the so-called rogue soldiers had played key roles in the conflict between the government and the RUF. The AFRC demanded that all soldiers that had joined Koroma in 1998, be reinstated into the army before any restructuring exercise and that all promotions during the rule of the AFRC/RUF Junta be recognised (Keen 2005 :256). Their demands and the potential of the AFRC to disrupt the peace process led to the drafting of Koroma into the power sharing arrangement. Koroma was made Chairman of the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace. Concessions were also made to AFRC members to be taken into the new Sierra Leonean army that was taking shape under British direction.

As was the case with the Abidjan Agreement, there was a similar assumption that the RUF was negotiating in good faith. The Lomé Agreement was more appeasing to the RUF than to the government which was now forced to accommodate its enemy. The subsequent events, however, point in a different direction. The RUF sensed the weakened position of the government and therefore prepared itself to take over the government in Freetown. It was close to Freetown when it was stopped by the sudden appearance on the scene of British military forces in May 2000. While this rapid intervention reversed the military balance of power on the ground it also brought to an end the Lomé Peace Agreement. Relations between the AFRC and the RUF deteriorated,

possibly as a result of the former being excluded from the Lomé Agreement. The exclusion of the AFRC from the Lomé Agreement led to open clashes between AFRC elements and its erstwhile Junta partners, the RUF (Keen 2005 :256). It was also due to the ever-growing animosity between the AFRC and the RUF that led to the capture of Sankoh by former AFRC members on 17 May 2000, following the 8 May 2000 demonstration outside Sankoh's Freetown residence where his RUF bodyguards opened fire on demonstrators killing and wounding dozens of people.

It took almost eighteen months of bickering before a ceasefire could be agreed on between the RUF and the government. This was the Abuja Ceasefire Agreement signed on 10 November 2000. The last piece of this ceasefire agreement called for 'a review of the implementation of this agreement thirty (30) days after its entry into force, to evaluate the timeliness of commencing fresh application of the Lomé Peace Agreement' (United Nations 2000e :4). The main element of the Lomé Peace Agreement that was finally implemented was the process on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.

4.4   Concluding remarks.

In attempting to conclude conflicts, negotiation remains the clearly preferred option as it is firstly a peaceful process that will often require compromise by all the parties. This however, is subject to stresses by parties that enter negotiation processes, sometimes using the process as a strategy to buy time and that have very little intention of abiding by an outcome to the process.

In this regard, it is often possible to distinguish various rounds of negotiation, often interspersed with periods of hostility and confrontation. The negotiation process itself then becomes part of the strategy by one or more parties to extract the maximum advantage for its position and to the detriment of the opposing parties. In the case of Sierra Leone, the RUF was prepared to enter negotiations during periods when it came under

severe military pressure, and that in its dealings, it became apparent that this was used primarily as a stalling tactic to stave off significant military reversals. For the Kabbah government, it too employed a dual track approach towards the RUF, representing a mix of negotiation and military confrontation. The perceived success of military actions would determine the nature of demands made or concessions sought during the negotiation phases. For the Kabbah government however, the events in Freetown in January 1999, brought new added dimensions in the levels of pressure applied to them by external actors. In this regard, the scenes of carnage in Freetown made headlines on television news programmes around the world. This in turn led to, inter alia, the United States and Britain applying pressure on the Kabbah government to resolve the conflict once and for all.

This highlights the important role in negotiations that external actors can bring to bear. The direct involvement of external actors as mediators or negotiators can have a significant impact on the negotiation process itself, as well as the final outcome of this process. For Sierra Leone, the ECOWAS took the lead role in trying to achieve a political solution to the conflict, but at the same time played a key military role inside the country, and was seen effectively as a support for the Kabbah government. While the United Nations involved itself in the various negotiation processes, it was largely dependent on the goodwill of the parties to implement their undertakings. For a considerable part of the conflict, the UN had no capacity to even consider methods of enforcing compliance, and was dependent on the role of ECOMOG. This was particularly reflected during the Conakry Peace Plan process that had as its main aim the restoration of the elected government of Sierra Leone.

The ransacking of Freetown in January 1999, resulted in a more direct diplomatic intervention by two great powers. The role of the United States and the United Kingdom in moving the Kabbah government to concluding the Lomé Agreement cannot be understated. It was clear that significant pressure was brought to bear on Kabbah from this quarter, and that an

agreement was the minimum desired outcome. The question that emerges here is whether a flawed peace agreement is better than no agreement at all. The United Kingdom was able to back up its diplomatic pressure by a rapid military intervention to stave off a disaster for UN peacekeeping. For the United States there was no contemplated military role in Sierra Leone, as it had its hands full in other parts of the world. The qualms about the desirability of the peace agreement was perfectly reflected by the reservation attached by the UN Secretary-General to the Lomé Agreement in respect of the amnesty provisions of the Agreement.

The approach of external actors forcing parties to work together in a political settlement, comes with inherent fault lines. The approach in Africa - from Sierra Leone onwards – seems to have become an established trend that contesting parties must work together in compromise (national unity) arrangements. This often leads to arrangements that seek to reconcile issues that are effectively irreconcilable. In Sierra Leone's case, control over the rich natural resources was effectively ceded to the RUF in an effort to 'buy' their participation in the peace process. At the same time, those that had perpetrated brutality on the population, were then offered the prospect of being incorporated into government structures designed to protect the very same population that had been brutalized. In this compromise, often under intense pressure, lies a further danger that parties that agree to such compromises, may then possibly go out of their way to undermine the compromise arrangements.

In advancing the implementation of DDR processes established under peace agreements, these often present the most significant stumbling blocks to progress. The first problem relates to trust between the parties, and is exacerbated in situations where there is a perception of uneven disarmament, especially where one where the state's own armed forces retain an armed capability. Compounding this problem are two further factors. Firstly, the oversight function of the process must have some capacity to enforce the DDR process. If the process is openly flouted, as

it was in Sierra Leone by the RUF, the DDR may become totally ineffective. The enforcer of the process must retain a capacity to encourage full compliance with agreement undertakings. Secondly, DDR processes are expensive exercises, and are in general, funded by the international and donor community. Donors are also less likely to fund a process that is seen as being ineffective.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION.

This study set out to examine the interplay of negotiations and military intervention in the resolution of the conflict in Sierra Leone between 1991 and 2002, and to draw lessons from this process for the resolution of intrastate conflicts in Africa. To achieve this, a more detailed analysis was undertaken on: the evolution and progress of the conflict in Sierra Leone (Chapter two); the various military interventions (Chapter three); and the various peace agreements (Chapter four). This Chapter pieces together what has been learnt from the previous Chapters under three broad headings: Triggers and drivers of intrastate conflicts; Regional bodies and conflict resolution in Africa; and the United Nations and intrastate conflict in Africa.

5.1 Triggers and drivers of intrastate conflict in Africa.

The immediate trigger of the civil war in Sierra Leone was the ECOWAS military intervention in Liberia in support of President Doe's government against the NPFL forces led by Charles Taylor. This unfortunately led to mistaken conclusions that the conflict in Sierra Leone represented merely a contagion factor of the Liberian conflict which could be resolved by patrolling the Liberia – Sierra Leone border. In fact, the Yamoussoukro IV Accord on ending the conflict in Liberia called for the creation of a buffer zone between Liberia and Sierra Leone to be monitored by ECOMOG (Ero 1995 :4). This was a misreading of the conflict in Sierra Leone, which, as noted in Chapter two, was rooted in the poor state of the economy and youth unemployment as well as the system of patronage politics that had been practiced for decades.

This misreading of the causes of the conflict in Sierra Leone, meant that for a number of years very little attention was paid to the conflict by both the regional body, ECOWAS, and the international community, including the United nations and the Organization of African Unity. As a result, very little assistance was given to the Sierra Leone government to help it fight

the RUF. The result of this was that the NPRC government was forced to turn to private military companies for support.

What is important to highlight here is that in dealing with matters of intrastate conflict in Africa, a distinction must be made between the triggers of conflict and the underlying causes of the conflict. This will help find ways to contain the conflict before it escalates out of hand. It is equally important to make a distinction between the underlying causes of the conflict and the drivers of the conflict once it has begun.

In the case of Sierra Leone, while poverty, economic crisis and patronage politics can be seen as the root causes of the conflict, it was greed and the naked pursuit of power that fuelled the conflict. Much of the fighting between the RUF insurgency and the Sierra Leone government was aimed at gaining control of the resource rich mining areas. Whoever controlled the mining areas gained the upper hand in the conflict as minerals yielded resources to continue to fund the conflict.

The private military company, Executive Outcomes, was brought in specifically to help the government regain control of critical mineral resources, in particular the Sierra Rutile mine and the diamond fields (Chapter two, p. 23). It was their success in forcing the RUF out of the diamond mining areas that brought the RUF to the negotiating table, and resulted in the Abidjan Agreement. It is equally the changing fortunes between the Sierra Leone government and the RUF in the control of the mineral-rich areas that explains the non-implementation of the Abidjan Agreement and the continuation of the conflict.

The acknowledgement that mineral resources in Sierra Leone and elsewhere in Africa resulted in what has come to be known as the Kimberley Process. At the centre of this process was the aim of stopping the trade in 'conflict diamonds' and ensuring that proceeds of this illicit trade did not fuel further conflict. In practice this resulted in the establishment of a certification scheme that would only allow legitimate diamonds onto the international market (Kimberley Process 2010). The

establishment of the Kimberley Process took very long to get off the ground - having had no impact on the conflict in Sierra Leone, but the conflict was rather a driver for launching the process.

In conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa, control of the capital city remains a key psychological aspect of any conflict. Who controls the capital, controls the country. Thus while the proceeds from control of resources gave the combatants the ability to continue the conflict, it was the actual control of the capital that bestowed power. In Sierra Leone, this meant control of Freetown. The *coup d'état* against Kabbah's government in May 1997 resulted in the RUF joining the AFRC Junta in taking control of Freetown. Technically, this would have marked the end of the conflict in Sierra Leone, but the United Nations, the OAU and ECOWAS insisted on the restoration of the Kabbah government in the name of democracy. The result of these decisions, including the enforcement of a sanctions regime against the AFRC/RUF Junta resulted in further heavy fighting over the control of Freetown. This was done first under 'Operation Sandstorm' by ECOMOG forces in late January and early February 1998.

The restoration of Kabbah reignited the conflict in Sierra Leone, and less than a year later (in January 1999), Freetown was at war again. Firstly, the AFRC/RUF launched 'Operation No Living Thing' against the civilian population of Freetown, forcing ECOMOG out of the city and Kabbah's temporary departure. The ECOMOG riposte came from 'Operation Death Before Dishonour' leading to the recapture of the city of Freetown.

The decision by ECOWAS to intervene militarily in Sierra Leone can therefore be said to have prolonged the conflict. The military intervention also supports the correlation with Stedman's findings (Chapter one, p. 7) that the majority of intrastate conflicts are ended through a military victory by one party to the conflict. It also supports the conclusions of Hironaka as well as Regan and Aydin (Chapter one, p. 9) that intrastate conflicts (civil wars) with external intervention are dramatically longer than civil wars in which no intervention had taken place. The important question to

pose here however, is under what circumstances and conditions should military intervention take place. In the case of Sierra Leone one is bound to ask whether the defence of democracy (by restoring President Kabbah) was worth the significant death toll that ensued later? These questions will be addressed in the subsequent section. For now it is important to return to the issue of the pursuit of power in the Sierra Leone conflict and the creation and expansion of military forces in the conflict process.

Three internal military forces were at the centre of the conflict in Sierra Leone. First was the Sierra Leone army. At the beginning of the RUF insurgency, the army consisted of 3,000 men. In response to the RUF insurgency, the Momoh government decided to increase its size to 14,000. The new recruits were drawn from the dislocated sections of society. This, together with poor pay, helped create what was called the 'sobel' phenomenon of soldiers by day and rebels by night (see Chapter two, p. 22).

This in turn meant that the Sierra Leone government could not rely on its own armed forces to fight the insurgency. The same held true for the civilian population which started to form civil defence units for their own protection. As these units grew, especially the Kamajor militia, their objectives began to complement the government's own objectives. It is particularly this militia, headed by Captain Sam Hinga Norman, that benefitted from partnering with Executive Outcomes against the RUF.

By the time Kabbah was elected to power in 1996, the Kamajor force numbered over 20,000 men. Kabbah decided to rely on this force (along with ECOMOG) for his protection, and appointed its commander as his Deputy Minister of Defence. This sidelining of the official army created significant resentment against the Kabbah government. It is this resentment that led to his overthrow and the collaboration between the army and the RUF. The RUF on its own, had grown to over 15,000 men, constituted largely by a group of ragtag boys whose only common

denominator was their anti-social stance. In addition, the absence of any common ideology amongst the RUF members meant that its only cohesion came from terror. Terror then, became its *modus operandi.*

What is important to note here was the rapid growth in the numbers of armed men in Sierra Leone, whose loyalty was not owed to the country, but particularly to their commanders (warlords) and the spoils they could share. This situation raised a number of issues. First was the use of excessive violence towards civilians, the most extreme form being amputations carried out by the RUF. Second was the fact that the demand for immunity became a permanent feature of all negotiations to end the conflict. Third was the problem of implementing the DDR process that was provided for by the various Peace Agreements. Lastly, it was within this over-militarised setup that external military interventions were undertaken. One requires a powerful military force to gain control of an over-militarised country like Sierra Leone. The ECOMOG force was too ill-equipped and for various other reasons incapable of subduing the various armed formations.

The success of the United Kingdom intervention was based on the existence on the ground of a large contingent of UN peacekeepers, as well as having superior force in terms of equipment and training of their rapid deployment units. At its peak, UNAMSIL's strength reached 19,000.

5.2   Regional bodies and conflict resolution in Africa.

The main regional body in Africa that has gone all out to resolve intrastate conflicts in its region is, of course, ECOWAS. It has gone beyond supporting political negotiations and moved to military intervention. The first military intervention by ECOWAS was in Liberia. This was followed by its intervention in Sierra Leone. This is not the place to detail ECOWAS efforts at conflict resolution in West Africa as this has been documented by many scholars (these include Ero 1999 and 2000, Ogunmola and Badmus 2006, Olonisakin 2004, Sesay 1999, Berman and

Sams 2000). The discussion here will be limited to issues raised by the ECOWAS intervention in Sierra Leone.

The first thing that needs to be noted about the ECOWAS/ECOMOG military intervention in Sierra Leone was the domination of the operation by Nigeria. Nigeria is generally regarded as the regional hegemon at the economic and military level. Nigeria has therefore, tended to shoulder more responsibility in the resolution of conflict in the region. In the case of Sierra Leone, it provided the bulk of the ECOMOG force and shouldered most of the costs.

The role of Nigeria within ECOMOG became a divisive issue, with the francophone West African countries, led *inter alia* by Côte d'Ivoire, challenging Nigeria's role. This had a number of effects. Some neighbouring countries – in this case Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso – continued to support the RUF despite the existence of an ECOMOG force. Secondly it led to the legitimizing of the ECOMOG intervention in Sierra Leone. As noted earlier, no agreement existed prior to the May 1997 *coup* for Nigerian troops in Freetown to respond militarily in support of the deposed government. The ECOMOG intervention, though later approved by ECOWAS and the UN Security Council, was largely a unilateral response by Nigeria and thus represented its main weakness. It did not gain unanimous regional support and lacked a clear and proper mandate beyond the restoration of the deposed civilian government. The fact that Sierra Leone's national army had joined with the RUF meant that the ECOMOG effectively became a protection army for the civilian government – something that could not be sustained for long. Its authority was limited to the Freetown area. Even this was challenged in January 1999 when the AFRC/RUF ransacked Freetown and inflicted massive losses on the Nigerian ECOMOG force.

While Nigeria could be regarded as a regional hegemon, it did not have enough resources and capacity to enforce peace in a hostile environment like Sierra Leone where it was often seen as an invading force.

What can be learnt from the ECOMOG intervention in Sierra Leone is that unilateral action by a regional hegemon is likely to fail. Unanimous action is required from the regional body. However, given the divergent interests of the countries constituting the regional body, this was not easy to achieve. The alternative is to have clear arrangements at the level of the regional body on what actions to take in the event of an intrastate conflict. After the Sierra Leone conflict ended, ECOWAS has moved towards the adoption of such arrangements.

The ECOMOG intervention was later sanctioned by the OAU and again by the United Nations Security Council, with a specific mandate of restoring the democratically-elected government. Was this a justifiable mandate, given that it entailed the escalation of the conflict?

5.3   The United Nations and intrastate conflict in Africa.

Intrastate conflicts in Africa have become a major dilemma for the United Nations, given its *modus operandi.* The Somalia and Rwanda experiences have meant that the big powers are no longer willing to contribute significant numbers of troops to UN peacekeeping operations in Africa.

Secondly, the main role of the United Nations has traditionally been peacekeeping, where antagonists have decided to end the conflict. In the African context, peace agreements often mean little to the combatants. These only represent a stage in an ongoing conflict, and definitely not the end of the conflict itself. It has thus become a major challenge for the United Nations on when to send peacekeepers and the type of mandate to be given to the peacekeepers.

In the case of Sierra Leone, the United Nations was called in by Strasser to provide its 'good offices' to facilitate negotiations between the Sierra Leonean government and the RUF. It is this that led to the appointment of a Special Envoy in February 1995. Subsequent events completely changed the situation. When the democratic government was reinstated,

the Special Envoy's office was expanded into the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL), and this was placed under the protection of ECOMOG forces. Following the conclusion of the Lomé Agreement in July 1999, the UNOSMIL observer mission was transformed into a fully-fledged peacekeeping mission, UNAMSIL, in October 1999. This was done by transforming a significant part of the ECOMOG force into UN peacekeepers. This consisted mainly of Nigerian and Guinean military elements with the addition of 2000 Indian peacekeepers.

The major problem however, was that there was no peace to keep, despite the signing of the Lomé Peace Agreement. Secondly, the 're-hatting' of the ECOMOG force into UN peacekeepers did not result in an increased capacity for UNAMSIL, despite the increase in the numbers of the peacekeeping mission. This was to prove detrimental as the RUF forces took advantage of the perceived weakness the UN peacekeepers and took them hostage.

The questions that need to be raised here are: at what point should the United Nations take responsibility for bringing about peace in intrastate conflict situations on the continent? Until now, the United Nations tends to only come in when negotiations have been completed. This is usually too late to prevent gross human rights violations being perpetrated. The United Nations should take more seriously its responsibility to protect and not to wait to take the perpetrators of crimes against humanity to court, as they did in Sierra Leone. Secondly, once the United Nations has decided to intervene, what should the mandate project – peacekeeping or peace enforcement. Given what has been happening on the continent, the proper mandate should be peace enforcement. It is only this that can help stop war criminals. Thirdly, how can the United Nations increase its ability and capacity to seriously intervene in intrastate conflicts in Africa given the attitude of big powers regarding the provision of troops to peacekeeping in Africa? How can African capacity for peacekeeping and peace enforcement be augmented? Part of the answer seems to lie with

the creation of regional standby forces (Kent and Malan 2003 :71-80. The capacity and ability of these forces, however, remain under question. It is only the big powers that have the rapid deployment capacity and the logistics that can make a difference in the continent's intrastate conflicts.

6.   BIBILIOGRAPHY

Abdullah, I. 1997. Bush Path to Destruction: The Origin and Character of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF/SL). Africa Development, XXII(3/4).

Abraham, A. 2004a. State Complicity as a Factor in Perpetuating the Sierra Leone Civil War. In: Between Democracy and Terror – The Sierra Leone Civil War, edited by I. Bangura. Dakar: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa.

Abraham, A. 2004b. The Elusive Quest for Peace: From Abidjan to Lomé. In: Between Democracy and Terror – The Sierra Leone Civil War, edited by I. Bangura. Dakar: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa.

Adebayo, A. and Landsberg, C. 2000. Back to the Future: UN Peacekeeping in Africa. International Peacekeeping, 7(4).

Bangura, Y. 1997. Understanding the Political and Cultural Dynamics of the Sierra Leone War: A critique of Paul Richards's Fighting for the Rain Forest. Africa Development, XXII(3/4).

Bangura, Y. 2002. Strategic Policy Failure and State Fragmentation – Security, Peacekeeping, and Democratization in Sierra Leone. In: The Causes of War and the Consequences of Peacekeeping in Africa , edited by R.R. Laremont. Portsmouth: Heinemann.

BBC News. 2009a. Timeline: Sierra Leone. Internet: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country_profiles/1065898.stm . Access: 15 May 2009.

Berman, E.G. and Sams, K.E. 2000. Peacekeeping in Africa: Capabilities and Culpabilities. Geneva: United Nations.

Brown, M.E. 1996. Internal Conflict and International Action. In: The International Dimensions of Internal Conflict, edited by M.E. Brown. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Bullion, A. 2001. India in Sierra Leone: A Case of Muscular Peacekeeping? International Peacekeeping, 8(4).

Cilliers, J. 1999. Private Security in war-torn African States. In: Peace, Profit or Plunder: The Privatisation of Security in War-Torn African States, edited by J. Cilliers and P. Mason. Pretoria: Institute of Security Studies.

Cilliers, J. and Cornwell, R. 1999. Mercenaries and the Privatisation of Security in Africa. African Security Review, 8(2).

Cornwell, R. 1998. Sierra Leone: RUF Diamonds? African Security Review, 7(4).

Collier, P. 2000. Doing well out of war: An economic perspective. In: Greed and Grievance – Economic Agendas in Civil Wars , edited by M. Berdal and D. Malone. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Collier, P. and Hoeffler, A. 2000. Greed and Grievance in Civil War. Washington: The World Bank.

Conciliation Resources. 2000. Key Texts. In: Paying the Price – The Sierra Leone peace process, edited by D. Lord. London: Conciliation Resources.

Connaughton, R. 2001. Operation 'Barass'. Small Wars and Insurgencies. 12(2).

Douglas, I. 1999. Fighting for diamonds – Private military companies in Sierra Leone. In: Peace, Profit or Plunder: The Privatisation of Security in War-Torn African States, edited by J. Cilliers and P. Mason. Pretoria: Institute of Security Studies.

Ducasse-Rogier, M. 2004. Working Paper 31 : Resolving Intractable Conflicts in Africa: A Case Study of Sierra Leone. Working Paper Series . The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations.

Ero, C. 1995. ECOWAS and Subregional Peacekeeping in Liberia. Internet: http://www.jha.ac/articles/a005.htm. Access: 5 May 2009.

Ero, C. 1999. The Future of ECOMOG in West Africa. In: From Peacekeeping to Complex Emergencies – Peace Support Missions in Africa, edited by J. Cilliers and G. Mills. Johannesburg and Pretoria: South African Institute for International Affairs and the Institute for Security Studies.

Ero, C. 2000. ECOMOG: A model for Africa? Building Stability in Africa: Challenges for the new millennium. ISS Monograph 46.

Evoe, P.J. 2008. Operation Palliser: The British Military Intervention into Sierra Leone, a case of a successful use of Western military interdiction in a Sub-Sahara African civil war (MA thesis). Internet: http://ecommons.txstate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=instad. Access: 15 September 2009.

Francis, D.J. 1999. Mercenary Intervention in Sierra Leone: providing national security or international exploitation. <u>Third World Quarterly</u>, 20(2).

Francis, D.J. 2000. Torturous Path to Peace – The Lomé Accord and Postwar Peacebuilding in Sierra Leone. <u>Security Dialogue</u>, 31(3).

Gberie, L. 2004. The 25 May Coup d'état in Sierra Leone: A Lumpen Revolt. In: <u>Between Democracy and Terror – The Sierra Leone Civil War</u>, edited by I. Bangura. Dakar: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa.

Gberie, L. 2005. <u>A Dirty War in West Africa: The RUF and the destruction of Sierra Leone</u>. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Gershoni, Y. 1997. War Without End and An End to A War: The Prolonged Wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. <u>African Studies Review</u>, 40(3).

Global Facilitation Network for Security Sector Reform and International Alert. 2009. Security System Transformation in Sierra Leone, 1997 – 2007. <u>Internet:</u> http://www.ssrnetwork.net/publications/gfn_ssr_publications.php . Access: 10 November 2009.

Guėhenno, J-M. 2002. On the Challenges and Achievements of Reforming UN Peace Operations. <u>International Peacekeeping</u>,   9(2).

Hawkins, V. 2003. Measuring UN Security Council Action and Inaction in the 1990's – Lessons for Africa. <u>African Security Review</u>, 12(2).

Hironaka, A. 2005. <u>Neverending Wars: The International Community, Weak States, and the Perpetuation of Civil War</u>. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Hirsch, J.L. 2001. <u>Sierra Leone – Diamonds and the Struggle for Democracy</u>. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Hough, L. 2007. A study of peacekeeping, peace-enforcement and private military companies in Sierra Leone. <u>African Security Review</u>, 16(4).

Howe, H.M. 2001. <u>Ambiguous Order – Military Forces in African States</u>. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Human Rights Watch. 1993. Waging War to Keep the Peace: The ECOMOG Intervention and Human Rights. Internet: http://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/1993/liberia/#7. Access: 13 December 2009.

International Crisis Group (ICG). 2001. Sierra Leone – Time for a New Military and Political Strategy. ICG Africa Report No 28. Internet: http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/report_archive/A400278_11042001.pdf. Access: 14 May 2009.

Kaldor, M. 2007. New & Old Wars. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Kandeh, J. 1998. Transitions Without Rupture: Sierra Leone's Transfer Election of 1996. African Studies Review, 41(2).

Kargbo, M. 2006. British Foreign Policy and the Conflict in Sierra Leone, 1991 – 2001. Oxford: Peter Lang AG, International Academic Publishers.

Keen, D. 2005. Conflict & Collusion in Sierra Leone. New York: Palgrave.

Kent, V. and Malan, M. 2003. The African Standby Force – Progress and Prospects. African Security Review, 12(3).

Kimberley Process. 2010. Background. Internet: http://www.kimberleyprocess.com/background/index_en.html. Access: 19 April 2010.

Malan, M. 1999. African Peace Maintenance: A Hard Look to the Future. Whither Peacekeeping in Africa?. ISS Monograph 36.

Malan, M. 2001. 'Layered Response' To an African Conflict or muddling through in Sierra Leone. African Security Review, 10(2).

Musah, A-F. 2000. A Country Under Siege: State Decay and Corporate Military Intervention in Sierra Leone. In: Mercenaries: An African Security Dilemma, edited by A-F. Musah and J.K. Fayemi. London: Pluto Press.

Musah, A-F. and Fayemi, J.K. 2000. In Search of Security: Mercenaries and Conflicts – An Overview. In: Mercenaries: An African Security Dilemma, edited by A-F. Musah and J.K. Fayemi. London: Pluto Press.

Neethling, T. 2009. Whither Peacekeeping in Africa: Revisiting the evolving role of the United Nations. African Security Review, 18(1).

Noyes, F. 2003. Preventive Diplomacy in Sierra Leone. In: <u>Towards Sustainable Peace – The Theory and Practice of Preventive Diplomacy in Africa</u>, edited by H. Solomon. Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa.

O'Brien, K. 2000. Private Military Companies and African Security 1990 – 1998. In: <u>Mercenaries: An African Security Dilemma</u>, edited by A-F. Musah and J.K. Fayemi. London : Pluto Press.

Ogunmola, D. and Badmus, I.A. 2006. Nigeria's Intervention in the Sierra Leonean Civil War – The Dilemma of a Benign Hegemon. <u>Africa Insight</u>, 36(3/4).

Olonisakin, F. 2004. Nigeria, ECOMOG and the Sierra Leone Crisis. In: <u>Between Democracy and Terror – The Sierra Leone Civil War</u>, edited by I. Bangura. Dakar: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa.

Olonisakin, F. 2008. <u>Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone – The story of UNAMSIL</u>. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Oudraat, C. de J. 1996. The United Nations and Internal Conflict. In: <u>The International Dimensions of Internal Conflict</u> , edited by M.E. Brown. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Pratt, D. 1999. Sierra Leone: The Forgotten Crisis – Report to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, P.C., M.P. from David Pratt, M.P., Nepean-Carlton, Special Envoy to Sierra Leone. <u>Internet: http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/1999/crisis-e.htm</u>. Access: 15 May 2009.

Rashid, I. 2004. Student Radicals, Lumpen Youth, and the Origins of the Revolutionary Groups in Sierra Leone, 1977 – 1996. In: <u>Between Democracy and Terror – The Sierra Leone Civil War</u>, edited by I. Bangura. Dakar: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa.

Regan, P.M and Aydin, A. 2006. Diplomacy and Other Forms of Intervention in Civil Wars. <u>The Journal of Conflict Resolution</u>, 50(5).

Reno, W. 1997. Privatizing War in Sierra Leone. <u>Current History</u>, 96(610) May.

Reno, W. 1999. <u>Warlord Politics and African States</u>. Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Reno, W. 2000a. Shadow States and the Political Economy of Civil Wars. In: Greed & Grievance – Economic Agendas in Civil Wars , edited by M. Berdal and D. Malone. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Reno, W. 2000b. No Peace for Sierra Leone. Review of African Political Economy, 27(84).

Reno, W. 2001. The failure of Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone. Current History, 100(646) May.

Richards, P. 1998. Fighting for the Rain Forest – War, Youth & Resources in Sierra Leone. Oxford: James Currey.

Richards, P. 2003. Working Paper 21 : The Political Economy of Internal Conflict in Sierra Leone. Working Paper Series. The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations.

Rotberg, R.I. 2000. Peacekeeping and the Effective Prevention of War. In: Peacekeeping and peace enforcement in Africa: methods of conflict prevention, edited by R. Rotberg. Cambridge/Washington:The World Peace Foundation and the Brookings Institution Press.

Sesay, .A. 1995. Collective Security or Collective Disaster? Regional Peace-keeping in West Africa. Security Dialogue, 26(2).

Sesay, A. 1999. ECOMOG and Subregional Security in West Africa. Conflict Trends, 3.

Shearer, D. 1997. Exploring the Limits of Consent: Conflict Resolution in Sierra Leone. Millennium – Journal of International Studies, 26(3).

Shearer, D. 1998a. Outsourcing War. Foreign Policy, 112.

Shearer, D. 1998b. Private Armies and Military Intervention. Adelphi Papers, 38(316).

Sierra Leone Web. 1997a. Address by Major Johnny Paul Koroma, Head of State and Chairman of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, Freetown, 28 May 1997. Internet: http://www.sierra-leone.org/AFRC-RUF/AFRC-052897.html. Access: 7 September 2009.

Sierra Leone Web. 1997b. Speech by AFRC Chairman Major Johnny Paul Koroma, 30 July 1997. Internet: http://www.sierra-leone.org/AFRC-RUF/AFRC-073097.html. Access: 7 September 2009.

Sierra Leone Web. 2009b. Sierra Leone News January 1999. Internet: http://www.sierra-leone.org/Archives/slnews0199.html. Access: 17 September 2009.

Sierra Leone Web. 2009c. Sierra Leone News, January 2002. Internet: http://www.sierra-leone.org/Archives/slnews0102.html. Access: 25 September 2009.

Solomon, H. 2001. External Intervention. Conflict Trends, 3.

Stedman, S.J. 1996. Negotiation and Mediation in Internal Conflict. In: The International Dimensions of Internal Conflict, edited by M.E. Brown. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

The Independent. 2000. Sierra Leone ceasefire may signal end to civil war. Internet: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/sierra-leone-ceasefire-may-signal-end-to-civil-war-622796.html. Access: 27 April 2010.

Thomson, B. 2007. Sierra Leone: Reform or Relapse? Conflict and Governance Reform. London: Chatham House.

Tuck, C. 2000. "Every Car Or Moving Object Gone" The ECOMOG Intervention in Liberia. Internet: http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v4/v4i1a1.htm. Access: 5 May 2009.

United Nations. 1995. Security Council: Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Sierra Leone (S/1995/975). Internet: http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N95/361/47/PDF/N9536147.pdf?OpenElement. Access: 23 November 2009.

United Nations. 1997a. Security Council: Resolution 1132 on the Situation in Sierra Leone (S/Res/1132). Internet: http://daccessdds.un.org/doc?UNDOC/GEN/N97/267/13/PDF/N9726713.pdf?OpenElement. Access: 15 May 2009.

United Nations.1997b. Security Council: Report of the Secretary-General on Sierra Leone (S/1997/80). Internet: http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N97/013/27/IMG/N9701327.pdf?OpenElement. Access: 27 April 2009.

United Nations. 1997c. Security Council: Statement by the President of the Security Council (S/PRST/1997/29). Internet: http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N97/138/34/PDF/N97113834.pdf?OpenElement. Access: 6 September 2009.

United Nations. 1997d. Press Release: ECOWAS asks Security Council to send 'unequivocal message' to Sierra Leone Regime to return legitimate government of President Kabbah to power (SC/6393). Internet: http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/1997/19970711.SC6393.html. Access: 8 September 2009.

United Nations. 1997e. Security Council: Letter dated 28 October 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1997/824). Internet: http://daccess-ods.un.org/TMP/7697921.html.   Access: 7 September 2009.

United Nations. 1997f. Security Council: Letter dated 7 October 1997 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1997/776). Internet: http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N97/265/84/PDF/N9726584.pdf?OpenElement. Access: 3 December 2009.

United Nations. 1997g. Security Council: Letter dated 15 August 1997 from the Charge d'Affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Nigeria to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1997/646). Internet: http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/N97/220/12/PDF/N9722012.pdf?Open Element. Access : 14 December 2009.

United Nations. 1997h. Security Council: Letter dated 27 June 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1997/499). Internet: http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N97/177/45/PDF/N9717745.pdf?OpenElement. Access: 3 December 2009.

United Nations. 1997i. Security Council: Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Sierra Leone (S/1997/811). Internet: http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N97/280/28/PDF/N9728028.pdf?OpenElement. Access: 3 December 2009.

United Nations. 1997j. Security Council: Letter dated 13 November 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone to the United Nations to the President of the Security Council (S/1997/886). Internet: http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N97/316/78/PDF/N9731678.pdf?OpenElement. Access : 4 December 2009.

United Nations. 1998a. Security Council: Fifth Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Sierra Leone (S/1998/486). Internet: http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N98/157/51/IMG/N9815751.pdf?OpenElement. Access: 15 September 2009.

United Nations. 1998b. Security Council: Resolution 1181 (1998) (S/RES/1181 (1998).Internet: http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N98/203/28/PDF/N9820328.pdf?OpenElement. Access: 17 September 2009.

United Nations. 1999a. Security Council: Special Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (S/1999/20). Internet: http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N99/002/20/IMG/N9900220.pdf?OpenElement. Access: 17 September 2009.

United Nations. 1999b. Security Council: Fifth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (S/1999/237). Internet: http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N99/058/80/IMG/N9905880.pdf?OpenElement. Access: 17 September 2009.

United Nations. 1999c. Security Council: Seventh report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (S/1999/836). Internet: http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N99/221/28/IMG/N9922128.pdf?OpenElement. Access: 21 September 2009.

United Nations. 1999d. Security Council: Resolution 1270 (1999) (S/RES/1270). Internet: http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N99/315/02/PDF/N9931502.pdf?Open Element. Access: 20 September 2009.

United Nations. 1999e. Security Council: Letter dated 19 May 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Togo to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1999/585). Internet: http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N99/149/33/PDF/N9914933.pdf?OpenElement. Access: 21 September 2009.

United Nations. 2000a. Security Council: Fourth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (S/2000/455). Internet: http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N00/407/22/IMG/N0040722.pdf?OpenElement. Access: 22 September 2009.

United Nations. 2000b. Security Council: Eighth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (S/2000/1199). Internet: http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N00/797/01/IMG/N0079701.pdf?OpenElement. Access: 22 September 2009.

United Nations. 2000c. Security Council: Resolution 1289 (2000) (S/RES/1289). Internet: http://www.daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N00/283/50/PDF/N0028350.pdf?OpenElement. Access: 12 October 2009.

United Nations. 2000d. Security Council: Resolution 1313 (2000) (S/RES/1313). Internet: http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N00/591/96/PDF/N0059196.pdf?OpenElement. Access: 22 September 2009.

United Nations. 2000e. Security Council: Identical letters dated 13 November 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Mali addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council (S/2000/1091). Internet: http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N00/747/08/IMG/N0074708.pdf?OpenElement. Access: 7 April 2010.

Vines, A. 1999. Gurkhas and the private security business in Africa. In: Peace, Profit or Plunder: The Privatisation of Security in War-Torn African States, edited by J. Cilliers and P. Mason. Pretoria: Institute of Security Studies.

Vines, A. 2000. Mercenaries, Human Rights and Legality. In: Mercenaries: An African Security Dilemma. London and Sterling: Pluto Press.

Zartman, I.W. 1989. Ripe for Resolution – Conflict and Intervention in Africa. Oxford: Oxford University Press.