

Conciliation Resources

# Accord

Paying the price

**The Sierra Leone peace process**

**Issue Editor David Lord**

**Conciliation Resources**

London 2000



# Contents

<b>Abbreviations</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Foreword</b> James Obita	<b>8</b>
<b>Introduction: the struggle for power and peace in Sierra Leone</b> David Lord	<b>10</b>
<b>Maps</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>First stages on the road to peace: the Abidjan process (1995–96)</b> Lansana Gberie	<b>18</b>
<b>The Lomé peace negotiations</b> Ismail Rashid	<b>26</b>
<b>Lomé Agreement summary</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Implementing the Lomé Peace Agreement</b> Dennis Bright	<b>36</b>
<b>Early civil society peace initiatives</b> The Mano River Bridge initiative The National Co-ordinating Committee for Peace Civil society ‘contact group’ Diaspora actors	<b>42</b>
<b>Sierra Leonean women and the peace process</b> Yasmin Jusu-Sheriff	<b>46</b>
<b>Civil society and peacebuilding: the role of the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone</b> Thomas Mark Turay	<b>50</b>
<b>Grassroots peacebuilding in Pujehun</b> John Massaquoi and Frances Fortune	<b>54</b>
<b>Dialogue on justice and reconciliation</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Key texts</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Chronology</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>Profiles</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Further reading</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>The Accord series</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>Order form</b>	<b>99</b>

**Cover picture: Firearms amnesty in Bo, March 2000**

Source: Lennart Johansen

**Deserted village in the Southern Region, March 2000**

Source: Lennart Johansen



# Acknowledgements

Accord Programme Supervisor	Andy Carl
Acting Accord Series Editor	Guus Meijer
Issue Editor	David Lord
Production Editor	Simon Finch
Marketing	Rebecca Abraham

Thanks to the authors of the articles and to Catherine Barnes, Jeannette Eno, Ron Fennell, Ambrose Ganda, Paul Richards and Mohamed Ehsan Zia for their help and comments; to the Department for International Development (UK), Calpe Trust (UK) and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation (USA) for their financial support; and to Sierra Leone on the Web and Global Witness for donating photographs. Special thanks to Ismail Rashid for his help in editing this volume.

Thanks to Ambrose James for conducting the youth interviews. Ambrose is acting co-ordinator of Conciliation Resources' peacebuilding programme in Sierra Leone. A recent graduate of the University of Sierra Leone, he has been at the forefront of grassroots peacebuilding activities with young people since 1997.

Published by

**Conciliation Resources**  
**173 Upper Street**  
**London N1 1RG**  
**United Kingdom**

**Telephone** +44 (0)20 7359 7728

**Fax** +44 (0)20 7359 4081

**E-mail** [accord@c-r.org](mailto:accord@c-r.org)

**Website** <http://www.c-r.org>

© Conciliation Resources 2000

Permission is granted for reproduction and use of these materials for educational purposes. Please acknowledge your source when using the materials and notify Conciliation Resources.

Design Hoop Associates

Printed in the UK by Eaveswood Colour

UK charity registration number 1055436



# Abbreviations

AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
APC	All Peoples Congress
CCP	Commission for the Consolidation of Peace
CDF	Civil Defence Forces
CMRRD	Commission for Strategic Mineral Resources, Reconstruction and Development
CR	Conciliation Resources
EC	European Commission
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Monitoring and Observation Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EO	Executive Outcomes
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office (UK)
IA	International Alert
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRC SL	Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone
JIC	Joint Implementation Committee
NCDDR	National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NPRC	National Provisional Ruling Council
OAU	Organization of African Unity
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
RUF P	Revolutionary United Front Party
SLA	Sierra Leone Army
SLPP	Sierra Leone Peoples Party
SLST	Sierra Leone Selection Trust
SLWMP	Sierra Leone Women's Movement for Peace
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNOMSIL	United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone
US	United States of America

*Village in Bo District, March 2000*

*Source: Lennart Johansen*



# FOREWORD

by James A. Ori

*Girl's hands as she watches a game in  
the stadium of Freetown, 12 May 2000*

© 2000, Partners Now/Medline 10/00/01

**A**fter the signing of the Lomé Peace Agreement on 7 July 1999, many Sierra Leoneans believed, though with much scepticism, that the country was at long last on the path towards real reconciliation and an end to violence, destruction and human rights abuses. However, the resumption of hostilities in May 2000 has again severely shaken these hopes. Unless positive actions are taken to stop the conflict, the country is bound to slide back into the dark days of violence and uncertainty.

Writing as a Ugandan who has seen his own country being trapped in seemingly endless conflicts, I am acutely aware of the importance of initiatives at every level to keep the momentum towards peace and democracy going. Armed conflicts invariably inflict untold damage and sufferings on the civilian population who are often seen as helpless victims. The people's needs and interests are rarely respected by those locked in the armed conflict. More than ever, civil society needs all the support it can get to participate in finding lasting solutions that can positively shape the country's destiny and institute mechanisms that can protect the people against abuses of power.

The challenge to ensure that the opportunity for lasting change in Sierra Leone is not thrown away at this critical time rests largely with the warring parties. Interested foreign governments, especially the UK and US, and international organizations such as the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity and the Economic Community of West African States, are critically important as well. International trade in precious raw materials, especially diamonds, has contributed to fuelling the war. Recent proposals to curb the trade in 'conflict diamonds' is a positive move that may help to deny the warring parties valuable incomes that are so often used to sustain the conflict.

The government of Sierra Leone must demonstrate that it has the political will to achieve a peaceful resolution. For example, there is need for the government to speed up the implementation of key areas of the Lomé Agreement and embrace the challenges within it. While the government has the responsibility to ensure that law and order prevails in all parts of the country and that all its citizens are secure, this task has to be handled delicately without plunging the country into another full-scale war. A strategy of 'peace through war' is totally undesirable at this delicate time. The history of past attempts at reaching a settlement shows that negotiation can work but also that there is a price to pay for political compromise. It is vitally important that any new agreement reached must not sell out the legitimate concerns and the natural resources of the people of Sierra Leone.

The leadership of the RUF and other armed groups on their part have a big responsibility to allow peace to return to Sierra Leone. The seemingly erratic and unpredictable behaviour of the RUF leadership is a matter of great concern.

The issue of reconciliation and forgiveness in any armed conflict is a complex and extremely difficult matter to deal with. Sierra Leone is no exception. As a compromise for peace and stability, the Lomé Agreement granted blanket amnesty to the rebels and other perpetrators of grave human rights violations. The Amnesty Bill adopted in Uganda confronts us with similar political and moral dilemmas.

Victims and relatives of those who were killed, tortured or seriously abused suffer untold anguish when they see that those responsible for the death and suffering of their loved ones walk away with impunity. To many, such lack of accountability denies the victims of the violators any form of justice or redress. But the reality of life is such that reconciliation demands for down-to-earth difficult compromises and enormous degree of forgiveness.

This issue of Accord gives an account of the Sierra Leone conflict and peace process and provides valuable information for those engaged in peacemaking across the world. For those of us seeking a negotiated settlement in Acholiland, there are two striking lessons among others that can be learnt from this conflict and the attempts to end it.

The first important lesson is that it is very risky to focus attention only on one individual. The central focus of the Lomé process was on Foday Sankoh, leader of the RUF, in the belief that he was going to bring his followers along to accept a negotiated settlement. This proved to be wrong and if anything Sankoh's personal conducts and ambitions have become a major obstacle to the peace process.

The second lesson that comes out clearly from the Sierra Leone conflict is that new approaches have to be devised by future mediators and negotiators in dealing with rebel groups that are elusive and unpredictable. Equally, future rebel negotiators need to understand that the very fabric of civilization and co-existence demands a high degree of integrity and honour in keeping promises.

The crisis of the Lomé Agreement underscores the importance of looking again at the process and outcome of past accords. A durable settlement will have to be built on the strong foundations of democracy and popular participation and not on the shifting sands of buying off interests. If the Sierra Leonean peace process can yet be brought back on track, it will inspire others such as those striving for peace in northern Uganda.

**Dr James A. Obita is a Ugandan working to try and bring peace to northern Uganda. He holds a PhD from the School of Industrial Chemistry, University of New South Wales, Australia.**

# Introduction:

the struggle for power and  
peace in Sierra Leone

by David Lord

**David Lord is a former co-director of Conciliation Resources and was manager of CR's West Africa programme from 1995 to 1999. He is currently living and working as an independent consultant in Ottawa, Canada.**

In early 1991, on the eve of the outbreak of its civil war, Sierra Leone was economically and politically on the verge of collapse. Twenty-four years of manipulation and misrule under Siaka Stevens and his chosen successor, Joseph Saidu Momoh, had left the country heavily dependent on foreign aid and loans. Mismanagement and corruption was rife, and the state was deeply divided between the clients of the All People's Party (APC) regime and a growing number of embittered political and business rivals.

## A house of cards

Beyond the increasingly feeble but sometimes brutal grasp of the government in the capital Freetown, rural Sierra Leone's potentially rich productive activities – agriculture, artisanal diamond and gold mining, and fisheries – were operated mainly for the benefit of 'Big Men' and their networks. The merging of politics, violence and personal business interests secured access to resources for redistribution only to supporters and so undermined any attempts to satisfy broader national needs. The use of gangs of youths and older thugs to settle political scores and intimidate opponents was a common practice of the APC, as was the purging of the military and police of members with suspect loyalties.

Under the APC, the state was unable or unwilling to gather taxes and effectively redistribute resources beyond its own networks. It became increasingly dependent on international financial institutions but this did not lead to any improvement in the provision of basic services such as affordable education, health care, and road or rail links. It also failed to control the rampant smuggling of Sierra Leone's highly valued gem diamonds and other commodities. Eighty per cent of Sierra Leone's population was illiterate and only twenty per cent participated in the wage economy. With more than half



of the population under fifteen years old, the country also contained a vast pool of young people with few opportunities for education or employment. They tended to be acutely aware of an ostentatious ruling elite bleeding the country of its natural wealth and potential for development.

During the 1980s, the 'clientelist' system of governance in Sierra Leone came under even greater pressure, due to demographic and socio-economic changes in the country as well as global economic liberalization. The 'Big Men' found controlling the country's affairs and keeping their networks together increasingly difficult. Competition for resources grew more relentless and the house of cards began to crumble.

## **The Revolutionary United Front**

On 23 March 1991, a handful of Sierra Leoneans, supported by some Liberians and Burkinabes, struck Bomaru in Sierra Leone's eastern-most Kailahun District. A few days later another small force of the previously

unknown Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone (RUF) crossed the Mano River from Liberia into southern Pujehun District to strike border villages there. Led by a little-known former corporal in the Sierra Leone army, Foday Saybana Sankoh, the RUF's stated intention was to overthrow the corrupt APC government, revive multi-party democracy and end exploitation. Initial attacks, however, seemed to have a number of other short-term goals: to persuade or force young people into the RUF; to loot food, drugs and other goods to sustain the fighting force; to kill figures of local authority such as government officials, extension workers, and traditional leaders; and to execute Fula and Mandingo traders. New recruits and captives were led off to forest camps where they were coerced or indoctrinated into the movement.

Borrowing a tactic used by rebel fighters in Liberia, RUF commanders forced captives to murder or mutilate officials, community elders or family members to prevent their being accepted back into their communities or families. Some had the letters 'RUF' carved into their chests.

While tens of thousands of villagers fled or hid from the RUF insurgents, others saw opportunities to seek personal or political vengeance or economic gain. In the words of political scientist Earl Conteh-Morgan and historian Mac Dixon-Fyle:

*The rebel factions in Sierra Leone's civil strife may have attracted more young men not because of any love of violence and war but because warfare offered more hope and opportunities (through looting, control and the impression of being powerful), than during the days of stability, when graduation from high school seemed the end of life in a crisis-ridden economy.*

According to Freetown youth worker Dennis Bright:

*The long years of neglect of youths in the development programmes of successive governments in Sierra Leone has been widely acknowledged as a major cause of the war. Indeed, during the dictatorial rule of the APC, youths were groomed in violence and used as hired thugs in election campaigns but abandoned afterwards and left to sink into drugs, crime and other vices on the margin of society. By the time of the outbreak of the war, the conditions were favourable for manipulation and mass mobilization of such marginalized members of society into organized crime and violence. The massive looting, rape, use of drugs and arson is partly due to the background of the young recruits.*

In southern Pujehun, the APC had used the army to crush supporters of the rival Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) during the 1982 election campaign in events known locally as the Ndogboyosoi (bush devil) war. The still-prevailing resentment provided the RUF with some ready recruits when it swept through the region in 1991. Young people who had suffered abuses from chiefdom authorities (such as forced labour, exorbitant fines for misdemeanours, exile from their communities) or who had no real opportunities to gain an education or employment also turned to the RUF. The insurgents attracted hundreds of itinerant diamond diggers in the remote, lawless mining camps of eastern and southern Sierra Leone.

Throughout the course of the war, the RUF mutated from a handful of poorly armed dissidents to a much larger, highly mobile and destructive guerrilla force. It also slowly evolved into a recognized interlocutor in negotiations and, with the signing of the Lomé Peace Agreement in July 1999, a component of an otherwise elected government. While the RUF began with a more broadly based leadership, Sankoh has been the most visible leader of the movement from the outset. Eventually it was able to establish a semblance of a civilian administration in some areas under its control, while remaining primarily a coercive military organization. At its core was Sankoh as the 'director of ideology', as well as a

War (and later Peace) Council made up of senior members of the movement. Often riven by internal dissent and rivalries, the RUF managed to retain a fairly high degree of cohesiveness through more than nine years of war.

It is now estimated that as many as 20,000 may have joined or been forced into the RUF during the course of the conflict. The vast majority of these served to supply fighting units with food and in a variety of other non-combat roles, such as diamond miners, porters, or 'wives' of fighters. Actual numbers of fighters have been notoriously unreliable, although demobilization and disarmament plans have used a figure of 15,000 RUF combatants.

## **Diamonds and the war economy**

Both the RUF insurgents and subsequent governments have sold diamonds to help finance their war efforts. The proceeds served to buy weapons, pay fighters and hire mercenaries. Some of the war's most intensive fighting has been for control of mining areas. Yet such control has never been complete and much of the diamond mining has remained in private hands.

Many of Sierra Leone's diamonds are found in gravel deposits from rivers and streams and can easily be dug or dredged. Others are embedded in hard-rock volcanic formations known as kimberlite pipes and require costly, mechanized digging. Until the 1950s the government shared in revenues from a monopoly on exploitation reserved for the Sierra Leone Selection Trust, a De Beers subsidiary. But the illicit mining and trading of diamonds was a constantly growing problem. In reaction to this huge illegal trade and political pressure to open mining to Sierra Leonean diggers, the pre-independence Margai government transformed the industry in 1956 by cutting back SLST's concessions and allowing African diggers to acquire licences under the Alluvial Diamond Mining Scheme. Miners sold gems to dealers who, in turn, sold to the government buying office. While some observers claim that the major alluvial deposits may now be largely depleted, it is estimated that substantial deposits of diamonds remain in the east, south and north of the country, valued in the billions of US dollars.

In the early stages of the war, the control of diamond mining areas often changed hands between the RUF and army units loyal to the National Provisional Revolutionary Council (NPRC) military regime. In 1995, the NPRC turned to mercenaries to help them regain control of rutile, bauxite and diamond mining operations that had been overrun by the RUF. In the south and east of the country, militias were formed around traditional hunters – *Kamajors* and other traditional guilds – to protect rural communities and battle with the RUF. As well as Sierra



Leoneans, Liberian mercenaries and regional peacekeepers also have an interest in the rivalry for political supremacy and control of diamonds. All have relied on shifting networks of backers, suppliers and diamond traders to mine and transport their diamonds to markets. Most Sierra Leonean diamonds reach the world market via Liberia because of its proximity to the main Sierra Leonean diamond fields and the absence of border controls. The trade is traditionally in the hands of some thirty licensed Lebanese families who settled in the country in the 1930s, as well as by a smaller number of unlicensed Guinean businessmen.

In the recent stages of the war, RUF staying power has been largely attributed to its control over major diamond fields in the east of the country and the ability to traffic gems through Liberia in exchange for weapons and supplies.

### **The costs of the war**

With few conventional battles, except those for control of diamond mines or strategic bridges or highways, much of the military action was directed at civilian targets. Looted goods from homes, businesses and farms were openly traded in Freetown and provincial markets. Repeated ambushes of unprotected road traffic and even convoys under military escort created siege conditions in provincial towns and drove up the price of fuel, food and other necessities. Relief supplies (mainly food and

medicine but also construction materials, office equipment, cash, vehicles and communications equipment) have also been prime targets for armed raiders. Peasant families fled for towns and cities, adding to food scarcities.

By 1993 relief organizations estimated that about 1 million Sierra Leoneans of a total population of 4.5 million had been displaced within the country or forced to take refuge in Guinea and Liberia. This tremendous uprooting of people produced shattered families, brought agriculture to a halt in many parts of the country, eliminated opportunities for education and put extreme pressure on existing infrastructure in urban areas where hundreds of thousands sought refuge.

Civilian casualties continuously mounted. Current estimates range from 30,000 to 75,000 war-related deaths, although these figures are impossible to confirm. Reliable, comprehensive figures on the numbers of people wounded or psychologically traumatized by the war do not exist. Atrocities such as the amputation of limbs, ears and lips with machetes, decapitation, branding and the gang rape of women and children have been common. In March 2000, the UN's Humanitarian Co-ordination Unit reported that the number of survivors of amputation was approximately 600, rather than previous estimates ranging from 3,000 to 5,000. It is assumed that the survivors represent only about a quarter of all amputees.

## Hotel outside Freetown, March 2000

Source: Lennart Johansen

An estimated 5,000 under-age combatants, some as young as eight years old, were forced or volunteered into the various armed factions. Many were provided with drugs such as marijuana and cocaine and forced or encouraged to take part in atrocities.

The psychological and social effects of the war on combatants and civilians are only beginning to be systematically assessed. A May 1999 sampling of civilians in Freetown carried out by Médecins sans Frontières indicated that almost all of those surveyed had suffered from starvation, had witnessed people being wounded or killed, and half had lost someone close to them.

The psychosocial and mental health consequences of war on civilians are all too often neglected. Even after hostilities cease, the war may continue in people's minds for years, decades, or possibly generations. To address only the material restoration and physical needs of the population denies the shattered emotional worlds, ignores the destruction of basic human trust and benevolence, and leaves the moral and spiritual consequences of war unaddressed.

Another legacy of the war has been an increase in sexually transmitted diseases, prostitution and the social ostracism of rape victims and other women and girls associated with various fighting factions.

In material terms the war has kept Sierra Leone on the bottom rung of the UN Development Programme's Human Development Index. The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization states that the country's Gross National Product, the value of all goods and services produced within the country, declined by an average of 4.9 per cent each year from 1992 to 1998, while the population was increasing by about 2.3 per cent annually. At the time of writing, 90 per cent of the population were said to be living in poverty.

An all-out attack on Freetown by the insurgents in January 1999 left about 150,000 people homeless in the capital. More than eight years of war in the county's provinces had already destroyed many thousands of homes and businesses, as well as schools, health clinics and administrative buildings. The country's road and ferry network, dilapidated before the war, suffered more damage and neglect through the war years.

## Responses to the war

This issue of *Accord* provides a necessarily incomplete account of the attempts at peacemaking in Sierra Leone, starting with the NPRC's half-hearted effort to enter into dialogue with the RUF in the early 1990s, through the failed Abidjan Accord negotiated in 1996 between the RUF and the newly elected civilian government of



Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, to another failed attempt by ECOWAS to broker the restoration of Kabbah in 1998 and, most recently, the severely compromised 1999 Lomé Peace Agreement.

Under Lomé, Foday Sankoh had been pardoned of treason, granted the status of vice president in the cabinet and made chairman of a commission with ostensible powers to regulate the country's diamonds. Yet in early May 2000, the RUF took hostage hundreds of UN peacekeepers who were in the process of being deployed throughout the country to implement and monitor the peace agreement. This, and the overall lack of progress in disarming the RUF, triggered a popular demonstration in Freetown that chased Sankoh from his residence and forced him into hiding. Dozens of RUF officials were put in protective custody at the same time. Sankoh was captured ten days later and taken into detention, while fighters loyal to the government, with a rapidly deployed British task force at their backs in the capital, began to take the war to the RUF outside Freetown.

The successive peace initiatives and agreements in Sierra Leone raise many fundamental questions: Is peacemaking a definable, controllable and rational



process that can be accelerated, deepened and made more effective? How can understanding of the dynamics of violence and peace be improved for those attempting to create peace from war? And how can greater understanding be translated into political agreements and social relationships that counteract the recurrence of widespread violence? What can and should be the roles of ordinary people in shaping the peace they will have to live? Does deepening peace processes necessarily imply more meaningful participation by ordinary people through civil society organizations? In the pursuit of peace, is it morally or politically defensible to forgo applying retributive justice and to instead offer protection and economic status to perpetrators of atrocities?

British anthropologist Paul Richard has noted that for a durable peace to take hold in Sierra Leone, one thing that will be needed is concerted sensitization of civilians:

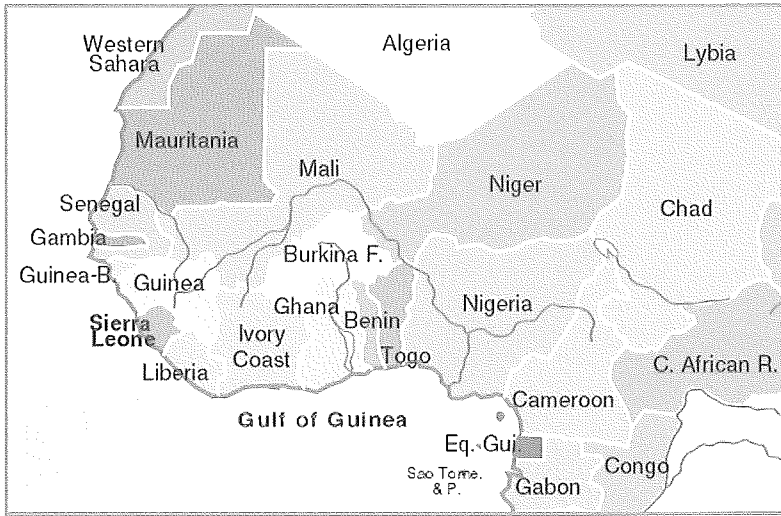
*Such sensitization needs to be based on a realistic appreciation of the suffering and desire for revenge of civilian victims of the war, while at the same time clearly recognizing that many of the under-age human rights abusers of the RUF are themselves products of human rights abuses.*

The RUF's horrific human rights abuses are often (perhaps even mainly) committed by abducted children. Those who command the movement (and perhaps order the atrocities) are themselves the product of earlier cycles of abduction. Now in their late teens or early twenties, these leading fighters are the human rights abusing products of human rights abuses. The original leadership is mainly dead or disappeared. The movement continues to protect itself by waging war and abducting vulnerable children.

While many observers attribute the collapse of the Lomé Peace Agreement to the duplicity of Sankoh and his ambition to rule either through violence or guile, it can also be seen as a failure of traditional peacemaking and diplomacy, leading to an agreement that was doomed from the start. At the time of writing, the struggle for power in Sierra Leone has entered another phase of violent confrontations: between government forces and the RUF; between factions within the forces backing the Kabbah government; between the RUF and peacekeepers. The outcome of these struggles is uncertain. Amidst the renewed fighting, the struggle for peace also continues, both in state politics and in civil society. Drawing lessons from the successes and failures of previous stages is part of the challenges that lie ahead.

# Maps





*Aerial view of Freetown, March 2000*

Source: Lennart Johansen

# First stages on the road to peace:

the Abidjan process

(1995–96)

by Lansana Gberie

Lansana Gberie is a journalist and research associate of the Laurier Centre for Military Strategic and Disarmament Studies and a doctoral student at the University of Toronto. He covered the Sierra Leone war from 1991–1996 and attended the peace talks in Côte d'Ivoire in 1996.

In 1991, the RUF launched the war ostensibly to overthrow the one-party dictatorship of Joseph Saidu Momoh and usher in what it called 'genuine democracy'. Less than eight months after the initial RUF incursions, Momoh signed into law a new multi-party constitution, promising general elections for late 1992 and allowing political parties to organize. Momoh broadcast a call to the RUF to stop fighting and join the political process but this was not backed up with any attempt to open direct talks. Indeed, Momoh later repeated in several radio broadcasts that Sankoh and the RUF were merely a front for Liberian warlord Charles Taylor. The war was said to be under control. After the RUF's first advances were checked by the Sierra Leone army, as well as troops from Guinea and Liberians opposed to Taylor, Momoh mistakenly concluded that his grip on power was safe.

## The NPRC coup

By April 1992, the government's ill-trained and ill-equipped frontline troops had not been paid for three months. A group of them, led by 26-year-old Lt Solomon Musa, descended on Freetown on 29 April 1992. The protest escalated into a coup and Capt. Valentine Strasser, a friend of Musa's, emerged to be chairman of the National Provisional Ruling Council.

The NPRC, which claimed an expeditious end to the war as one of its principal aims, had unique opportunities to open dialogue with the RUF. By the time of the coup, the RUF had been confined to remote areas of Kailahun District in the east of the country and Pujehun in the south. The NPRC's anti-corruption and anti-elite rhetoric was popular across the country and appeared to be in tune with the RUF's own pronouncements. Expectations that the coup offered prospects for a peaceful end to the war were raised in the first week, when RUF spokesmen broadcast messages through the BBC announcing a



unilateral ceasefire and a readiness to work with the NPRC in the interest of 'peace and reconciliation'. Both sides celebrated what they saw as an end to a repressive and corrupt era.

This promising start to peace, however, did not gain momentum. The NPRC vacillated in dealing with the RUF, publicly offering an amnesty in return for unconditional surrender, but without initiating further overtures. Meanwhile, Strasser dismissed the RUF in much the same terms as had Momoh: as 'bandits sent by Charles Taylor' to wreak havoc in Sierra Leone. In retrospect Strasser's successor, Julius Maada Bio, said the young soldiers had convinced themselves that, with the resources of the state at their disposal, they would – and should – easily crush the RUF rebels, rather than negotiate and share power with them. Revenge may also have been a motive behind the NPRC's hardline stance. Many leading NPRC figures, including its powerful civilian secretary general, John Benjamin, hailed from southern and eastern parts of the country that had suffered heavily at the hands of the rebels.

In October 1992, the RUF's surprise takeover of Kono – Sierra Leone's principal diamond mining district – recast the war into a contest for control of the country's diamond resources and the war became national, rather than south-eastern. The NPRC launched a mobilization campaign suggestively code-named 'Genesis' – the real beginning of the war – to beat back the 'bandits'. By June 1993, the offensive had forced the RUF to pull back to its remote base camps. In December 1993, Strasser announced a unilateral ceasefire and called on the remaining rebels to surrender. But the ceasefire was a strategic blunder. It coincided with a major football tournament in Freetown and the NPRC's largely volunteer troops, interpreting the announcement as a sign that the war was over, abandoned their positions at the front and went to Freetown to watch the matches. The RUF renewed its offensive operations with surprising strength and over-ran key army positions in devastating hit-and-run attacks.

## Elections and the promise of peace

As 1995 came to a close, the pursuit of a negotiated settlement and a return to democratic rule were inextricably entwined. While government forces, now backed by mercenaries of the South African private security group Executive Outcomes (EO), had scored some battlefield successes, the RUF was still capable of operating throughout the country. Militarily and politically, a stalemate had developed. The rebel movement lacked widespread popular support and the military regime had lost credibility for not being able to ensure security or to show any marked economic recovery from the devastation of the war. Although civilians had clearly demonstrated their wish to vote out the military, Sankoh said he wanted a peace settlement before any elections.

As the long-promised general election date of February 1996 drew nearer, Strasser had begun to show increasing signs that he would join the race. To do so he would have to change the constitution, as he was too young to run for president. On 16 January 1996, Strasser's deputy carried out a palace coup that sent Strasser into exile and made Bio the new head of state. Bio's coup resulted from anxieties about Strasser and other NPRC members' commitment to democratization. Bio was equally unhappy with Strasser's clumsy handling of the peace process, yet he also had a personal stake in talking with

the RUF as his elder sister and her husband had been abducted by the RUF in 1991. Both were rumoured to have become leading RUF officials.

On the day that he was sworn in as the new head of state, Bio made a terse appeal, broadcast live on national TV and radio: "To you, Corporal Foday Sankoh, the message from my government is that we are prepared to meet with you anywhere, any time and without precondition." The RUF had been waiting for such a gesture, but there were other factors that made the offer particularly palatable. Since the launching of the *Kamajor* militia and the arrival of EO, the RUF had suffered serious setbacks. The two forces had collaborated closely to seek out RUF bush camps and in less than two months they killed an estimated 1,000 of the RUF's best fighters and destroyed several of their bases. More importantly, they had also pushed the RUF away from the main diamond districts.

Sankoh quickly sent word through the International Committee of the Red Cross that he was willing to talk to Bio, who responded publicly on 3 February that he too was ready to talk. He announced that both Ivorian president Henri Konan Bedié and Burkina Faso's Blaise Compaoré were actively attempting 'to get the NPRC and the RUF to the table'. A few days later, over an ICRC radio hook-up witnessed by journalists, Sankoh told Bio he had to postpone the scheduled elections before any progress towards negotiations could be made. Bio's response was



### Paul – aged 12

*interviewed by Ambrose James in March 2000*

I used to live near Serabu with my parents when the town was attacked in 1997 and captured by the RUF. I was taken to Makeni, where I was trained by my commander and given a two pistol grip gun. I was injected with cocaine twice. We used to loot, rape girls and burn houses. I liked to loot tape recorders but they were taken from me by my commander. An Action Contre la Faim vehicle was passing through the Occra Hills. Our commander asked the driver to take us to the Adventist Development and Relief office so that we could be registered as child combatants. This time round, I think everybody is tired of fighting, disarmament has started, UNAMSIL is deploying, and there is hope that the Accord will hold. The older generation has to give way to the young people so that they will have a chance to be exposed to facilities and jobs, especially in the political sphere. That is [how] they will be able to prepare the ground for youth development in the country. If youths do not control the politics of this nation, there is no way for them.

that such a decision was ultimately up to Sierra Leoneans and suggested that the two meet in Côte d'Ivoire or Burkina Faso. These venues were rejected by Sankoh at first in favour of talks within Sierra Leone, but his resistance quickly evaporated and a meeting was set in Abidjan for the end of February 1996.

Behind the scenes an independent London-based conflict resolution organization, International Alert (IA), had helped to bring about a meeting between the assistant secretary general for political affairs of the OAU, Dr. Daniel Antonio, and RUF officials in Abidjan in December 1995. Previously, in April 1994, IA had been one of the organizations that had helped to secure the release of a number of European and Sierra Leonean hostages held by the RUF. IA was also instrumental in helping Ivorian Foreign Minister Amara Essy to travel to Sierra Leone in February 1996 to meet with Sankoh in order to persuade him to enter negotiations. Essy later said: "I told him that as long as he stayed isolated in the bush, he would be considered a butcher by the world. 'No one even knows why you are fighting. Once you have explained yourself, you can put the war behind you'".

Meanwhile, Bio reconvened a National Consultative Conference, where civil society leaders demanded overwhelmingly that elections go ahead on schedule. Despite resistance from within the NPRC and advice from both Nigeria's Sani Abacha and Ghana's Jerry Rawlings to put off the elections in order not to provoke greater violence, Bio acquiesced – a move warily welcomed by many Sierra Leoneans and lauded by the UN Security Council. The UN also launched an international donor appeal for humanitarian assistance.

## First encounters

On 25 February 1996, the day before Sierra Leoneans were to begin voting, talks got underway in Abidjan, chaired by Essy. The fourteen-person NPRC delegation, led by intelligence chief Lt Charles Mbayo, met an eight-person RUF delegation, headed by abducted medical doctor turned RUF enthusiast Mohamed Barrie. Also present were four international 'facilitators': the UN Special Envoy, Ethiopian diplomat Berhanu Dinka, and representatives of the OAU, the Commonwealth, and IA. The ICRC flew the RUF delegation from their jungle bases to Abidjan. The day after the talks began, about one million Sierra Leoneans defied the violent RUF campaign of intimidation – the amputation of hands of would-be voters, beheadings, and attacks on towns, villages and election officials – to cast their ballots for a return to civilian government.

The preliminary encounter in Abidjan lasted four days, with the RUF stating that it rejected the elections and

would refuse to co-operate with elected politicians. The NPRC delegation made the point that they would be relinquishing power and the RUF would be dealing with the elected government. Two concrete outcomes of the session were agreement on a face-to-face meeting between Sankoh and Bio and for Essy to draw up an agenda for further negotiations. Two days later, RUF spokesman Fayia Musa told the BBC that the rebels had decided to call a two-month truce 'in profit of peace', but he also threatened that fighting would continue if a civilian government came to power through the elections.

## Dealing with Kabbah

Results in the run-off presidential election on 15 March 1996 gave SLPP candidate Kabbah a 59 to 40 per cent winning majority over John Karefa Smart. Pending Kabbah's inauguration on 29 March, Bio remained head of state and went ahead with the planned meeting with Sankoh. On 24 March, he headed for Abuja for a meeting with Nigerian leader Abacha and then travelled to Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire, to await the arrival of the RUF. Sankoh and other RUF delegates were picked up by an ICRC helicopter at an undisclosed location in eastern Sierra Leone, reportedly a four-day walk from Sankoh's base. On board the helicopter was Essy, who flew with the RUF delegation first to Guinea, and then on to Côte d'Ivoire. It was Sankoh's first sortie from the bush since 1991.

Ivorian President Bedié spent several hours one-on-one with Sankoh and with Bio, before bringing them together to shake hands for the cameras. When the time came for a general session, Sankoh delivered a twenty-five-minute statement that ranged from religion to war to Pan-Africanism and clean drinking water, food and shelter for Sierra Leoneans. Sankoh said to Bio: "We are tired of being in the forest. Do you think we are happy?" He asked the uniformed NPRC delegates why they had come in combat dress and whether they were 'ready for peace'. Later, Sankoh and Bio met privately for three hours. Reportedly, the second day of talks explored a role for the RUF in the civilian government. After the talks broke up, the RUF delegation, including Sankoh, remained in Abidjan as guests of the Ivorian government.

Awaiting his inauguration, Kabbah reiterated his willingness to enter negotiations. "As leader of the country, my position will have to be that I will not take 'no' for an answer. I will keep on pressing, keep on pursuing and, if necessary, get the assistance of friends and others to help us get to the bottom of this problem". A few days later, as he officially assumed office, Kabbah declared: "The pursuit of lasting peace is my priority and in this regard I emphasize here that I am ready to meet the

leader of the RUF, Corporal Foday Sankoh, at the earliest opportunity." Sankoh, now with ready access to the media in Abidjan, publicly replied that he was willing to travel to Freetown or any other location for talks. But he indicated that he distrusted Kabbah, whom he called a 'rogue' and accused of playing a part in mismanaging the country's resources after independence.

Early in April, word emerged from Abidjan that Kabbah and Sankoh had agreed to meet on 15 April. Meanwhile, Kabbah unveiled a coalition cabinet, drawn from parties that contested the election, and ordered the release of sixty-six suspected RUF members as a gesture of 'national reconciliation'. International creditors announced that they would provide debt relief for Sierra Leone after it reached an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on economic reform. According to an RUF spokesman, Sankoh was planning a regional tour with a first stop in Ghana to argue the RUF's position.

On 22 April, Kabbah and Sankoh finally met face-to-face in Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire. "The time has come for the RUF and the people of Sierra Leone to work together", Kabbah said. "My government is prepared to give a general amnesty to all members of the RUF in the name of peace. We should discuss a permanent ceasefire, disengagement, demobilization, and encampment of combatants. We will also reintegrate these combatants into our society and we hope that these discussions will lead to an accord". Sankoh said that the RUF had come to talk peace but he continued to reject the recent elections. "We, as a people's revolutionary front, still say 'no' to these elections because they were not in the interests of the majority of the people in the rural areas."

## The talks take shape

The following day, despite the apparent chasm between their opening positions, the two sides agreed to a 'definitive ceasefire' and to establish joint working groups to deal with a peace accord, the encampment, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants, as well as a plan on how to secure international assistance for the process. Drafts of proposals from the working groups were to be submitted to a plenary session in two weeks. Before the signing of a joint communiqué, Sankoh demanded that EO be expelled immediately from Sierra Leone, and that the contract between the Sierra Leone government and the mercenaries be published. "The presence of Executive Outcomes in Sierra Leone violates our national dignity and sovereignty as well as hinders our development, since they are additionally rewarded with the benefit of mining activities," he said.

After the talks, Kabbah headed directly for a meeting with Abacha, after which they issued a joint statement calling on the RUF 'to fully embrace dialogue and continue the process of peaceful negotiations'. Kabbah also lauded Nigeria's support for Sierra Leone and asked for continued co-operation, 'particularly in Sierra Leone's post-war task of national reconciliation, reconstruction, and rehabilitation'.

Within days of the Yamoussoukro meeting, Kabbah broadcast that the US would provide financial support for the OAU to supervise disarmament in Sierra Leone and that the UK was prepared to help 'resettle' RUF fighters. A few days later, the European Union approved emergency food and medical aid for a quarter of a million internally displaced Sierra Leoneans. Despite accusations by the RUF that the government was violating the ceasefire, Kabbah said, in his first Independence Day speech to the country that he was optimistic that negotiations would lead to peace. "My recent discussion with the RUF and the agreement signed on that occasion provide ample evidence that the RUF is now thinking seriously about ending the war."

## Stalemate

On 6 May 1996, talks resumed in Yamoussoukro without Kabbah, in an attempt to draft a comprehensive peace plan. But the negotiations stalled on the issues of the RUF's rejection of the elections and a government proposal for power-sharing that the RUF found unacceptable. Substantial agreement was reached at this stage on most of the issues. A draft document called for disarmament of the army and encampment of the army and RUF. Finally, the talks were suspended on 28 May. The RUF demands for the expulsion of EO and power-sharing were apparently the main obstacles for further progress.

As sporadic attacks on villages and highway traffic continued over the next three months there were conflicting reports as to whether they were being carried out by the RUF or renegade soldiers ('sobels'). The government played down their impact on the peace process. More aid for disarmament and relief was promised by the EU and by the ICRC. In early July, the government ordered the ICRC to stop its activities in the country, apparently suspicious that some relief supplies being shipped through Guinea for refugees along the Liberia–Sierra Leone border were going to the RUF. Two weeks later, the ban was lifted when the ICRC agreed to use Freetown for all shipments. In mid-August, Vice President Joe Demby pointed to the spontaneous demobilization or release of about 1,200 people from RUF custody, as showing the RUF was serious about peace.

In an effort to break the stalemate in the formal negotiations, the OAU became more actively involved in attempting to mediate between the parties. It named former Zimbabwean President Canaan Banana as special envoy. Banana and Capt. Kojo Tsikata, Ghana's intelligence chief, spent three days with Sankoh and Essy attempting to unblock the talks.

By early September 1996 there were indications that behind the scenes negotiations and direct contact between Kabbah and Sankoh over a special 'hotline' had achieved some progress and that a formal settlement might be in the offing. Press reports suggested that Sankoh would be flown to Sierra Leone to consult with his followers. Government advisor Sheka Mansaray said the government had agreed to major economic, political and social reforms proposed by the RUF, as well as to the establishment of a trust fund to transform the RUF into a political party. The reform proposals went a long way to satisfy the RUF's aspirations for power-sharing – short of immediately entering government. "We have done all the groundwork to reach an agreement and there is a fair amount of understanding of each other's positions, so it could happen any time", Mansaray said. Two weeks later Finance Minister Thaimu Bangura announced that the RUF had dropped a demand that it be involved in drawing up the national budget. The government also said it would allow the ICRC to ferry Sankoh back into Sierra Leone for three days. Bangura said the announcement of the 'breakthrough' on the budget issue was meant to show international donors that progress was being made in the negotiations: "International donor funding of the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the country is predicated on the negotiations. News of this breakthrough will certainly encourage the donors to help." Ten days later, donor countries pledged \$212 million for post-war reconstruction and rehabilitation.

Outside the talks the military situation remained fluid. Rebel attacks on villages and road traffic continued and EO and government forces reportedly conducted devastating counter-attacks against rebel bases. At the same time, the IMF pressed the government to cut back its expenditure, much of it war-related, as a precondition for economic assistance.

In October Kabbah travelled to New York, where he told the UN General Assembly that Sankoh had indicated his readiness to sign a peace agreement drafted by Côte d'Ivoire after the government had made extensive concessions. These included a general amnesty for all RUF members, the promise of a trust fund for the RUF to convert itself into a political party, and 'jobs to the RUF leader and his followers, including their absorption into the army, the police and other government institutions'.

Yet Kabbah indicated his belief that Sankoh 'seems to be unwilling to honour his commitment to sign the agreement, manufacturing several excuses to justify his prevarication'. Kabbah warned that RUF intransigence could lead to a 'full-scale resumption of the hostilities, given the current level of distrust between the two sides'. To prevent this, he urged the international community to put pressure on the RUF to sign the draft agreement. Kabbah said that if the RUF did not sign, sanctions against the RUF should be considered, including the denial of access to third countries and 'the prospect of their arraignment before a war crimes tribunal for the serious crimes being perpetrated against innocent civilians'.

## Endgame

Two weeks later, Kabbah travelled to Abidjan for a second face-to-face meeting with Sankoh, again chaired by Ivorian President Bedié. Published accounts of the talks said Kabbah agreed to Sankoh returning to Sierra Leone with international observers to meet with RUF members. He also set a deadline of 1 December for signing the agreement. Sankoh told reporters in Abidjan: "I need to renew my mandate from my combatants and the People's War Council for further negotiations or signing any peace accord with the so-called government in Freetown." On 15 November, the government broadcast an announcement of a general amnesty for RUF members. It signalled its willingness to allow 'qualified' RUF fighters to join the national army. A week later, Sankoh flew back into eastern Sierra Leone to meet with his followers, accompanied by Red Cross and Ivorian officials. "I am going to consult my people on this peace accord – whether I can get a mandate to sign it". To reassure Sankoh, Kabbah broadcast that he had ordered government forces to abide by the ceasefire.

On his return to Abidjan, Sankoh said the talks with RUF members had been positive but would not give any details. "I can't say anything until the next seventy-two hours. I am waiting for the foreign minister and president of Ivory Coast. Everything I do must be approved by the foreign minister as chairman of the peace talks". Media reports indicated, however, that Sankoh's followers had argued for the deployment of international monitors and that the *Kamajor* militia be disbanded before Sankoh signed any agreement. On 28 November, Sierra Leone government officials and international representatives involved in the negotiations gathered in Abidjan. Accord came the next day and the formal signing ceremony was held on 30 November 1996. Ordinary Sierra Leoneans rejoiced in the streets.



## Aspects of the Abidjan accord

The accord called for the immediate cessation of all fighting, proclaimed an amnesty for RUF members, and the transformation of the RUF into a political movement. It stipulated the withdrawal of EO within five weeks and regional forces within three months. It also set out a process for the encampment, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of RUF combatants. The Sierra Leone army would be reduced in size and RUF members would be allowed to enter the restructured armed forces.

The agreement also called for electoral, judicial and police reform, probity in government, protection for human rights, and a focus on rural areas and the urban poor in reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts. A 'quality of life' segment called for improved health care, housing, educational services, clean drinking water, job creation, and protection of the environment.

A Commission for the Consolidation of Peace was created to oversee implementation, along with a 'Neutral Monitoring Group from the international community'. The peace commission was to supervise and monitor a range of other bodies – a Socio-Economic Forum, annual Citizens' Consultative Conferences, a Multi-Partisan Council, a Trust Fund for the Consolidation of Peace, a Demobilization and Resettlement Committee, and a National Budget and Debt Committee. Funding and other support was to be sought from the international community.

Beyond the actual terms of the accord, Sankoh was to receive housing and chairmanship of a government commission or committee either on 'veterans' affairs', handling development projects stemming from the peace process, or on corruption and government transparency. RUF members were also expected to receive some government jobs, including deputy ambassador posts.



**Street scene, Freetown, March 2000**

*Source: Lennart Johansen*

## Collapse

On the ground, the ceasefire that had gradually broken down during the pre-signing stalemate was never firmly re-established with the RUF, *Kamajors* and regional forces (mainly Nigerian and Guinean) skirmishing for control of territory and tactical advantage. With EO out of the country, Sankoh refused to allow the UN to deploy peacekeepers and monitors. By late January 1997, the RUF was accusing the government of waging all-out war against it.

In spite of the deteriorating security situation a limited demobilization did get underway but it was handicapped by poor planning, corruption, mismanagement, and lack of funds. Meanwhile, the largely discredited army was further marginalized by Kabbah's decision to effectively disband the existing force and rely on ECOMOG and the *Kamajors*.

Sankoh stayed in Abidjan after the signing and delegated his lieutenants to go to Freetown and become involved in implementing the accord. In March 1997 Sankoh was arrested in Nigeria – reportedly for carrying a handgun and some ammunition. A hasty attempt by a few senior civilian members of the RUF to claim the leadership, ostensibly to move the peace process forward, was quashed by field commanders still loyal to Sankoh. Two months later, on 25 May 1997, the army staged a coup and the RUF, at Sankoh's instigation from detention in Nigeria, joined in.

Despite the speedy collapse of the Abidjan Accord, substantive parts of its contents – in particular the references to human rights and humanitarian law and a framework for the participation of civil society in the achievement of peace – were carried over into the Lomé Agreement and may well continue to be relevant in future. So far, however, realities on the ground have not lived up to any of these terms.

# The Lomé peace negotiations

by Ismail Rashid

Ismail Rashid is from Sierra Leone and is assistant professor of History and African Studies at Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York. His research includes resistance against slavery and colonialism in West Africa, student and youth radicalism, conflict and peace. He has worked with Conciliation Resources as a consultant in West Africa.

The Lomé Peace Agreement of 7 July 1999 was forged from the competing concerns, interests and, at times, the very personal diplomacy of a wide range of players. These included the Sierra Leonean populace and government; the AFRC–RUF alliance; regional and international organizations (such as ECOWAS, OAU, the UN and the Commonwealth); and the governments of Nigeria, Guinea, Liberia, Burkina Faso, Libya, Togo, the US and the UK.

## Military and political background

Although the Lomé Agreement could be seen as an extension of the earlier Abidjan Peace Accord of 1996, its immediate origins lay in the invasion of Freetown on 6 January 1999 by AFRC and RUF combatants. As pro-government forces sought to stop, contain and push back the AFRC–RUF fighters, the battle for Freetown and its environs lasted more than six weeks, leaving large portions of the city devastated and its civilians deeply traumatized.

The Freetown attack radically changed the national political landscape as well as international responses to the country's situation. Nationally it intensified divisions within the populace, the government and parliament. Initially there was relative unanimity around 'flushing' AFRC–RUF fighters from the city. But, in the long run, there was disagreement on when to stop the ECOMOG counter-offensive and begin negotiations with the AFRC–RUF. Many advocated the elimination of any AFRC–RUF presence from all highways and economic and urban centres before dialogue started.

International responses were equally mixed. On one hand, the ECOWAS countries, the UK and the US did not want to see a democratically elected government overthrown by a rebel movement with a very dubious record. For ECOWAS, the Freetown attack dented the

*Sankoh (left) and Kabbah (right) sign the Lomé Agreement, July 1999*

Source: Sierra Leone on the Web

prestige of its ECOMOG peacekeeping force by reviving criticisms of the effectiveness of the regional peacekeeping mechanism. Nigeria and Guinea sent fresh troops and military equipment to strengthen ECOMOG, while the US and the UK provided additional funding, military support and advice to the force. Apart from helping to maintain security and democracy in Sierra Leone, the Western countries wanted to deflect criticism of their allocating disproportionate resources to Kosovo at the expense of conflicts in Africa.

On the other hand, the same governments and international organizations increased the pressures on the Kabbah government to resolve the conflict peacefully. The war had claimed the lives of over 800 regional peacekeepers by the end of May 1999 and was costing Nigeria about US \$1 million daily. Public opinion in other West African countries turned against military involvement in Sierra Leone. Nigerian presidential candidates, after the death of General Sani Abacha, pledged to withdraw Nigerian troops if they were elected. The small Malian contingent withdrew to Freetown after suffering losses in Port Loko. The Ghanaian ECOMOG contingent confined itself to the area around Freetown's international airport at Lungi. President Lansana Conté of Guinea, a staunch supporter of Kabbah, became concerned by the economic and security burdens created by new waves of Sierra Leonean refugees. Liberia's president Charles Taylor, standing accused of supporting the AFRC-RUF onslaught on

Freetown, tried to position himself as peacemaker by calling for dialogue. The UN, the UK and the US had bankrolled the Kabbah government in exile and during the restoration. Though they were horrified by the violence and supportive of securing Freetown, they were also weary of sinking more resources into an endless conflict. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan gave active support to the efforts of his special representative Francis Okelo to broker a ceasefire and initiate fresh peace talks between the two parties. The US State Department and Congress, actively lobbied by RUF officials and sympathizers as well as pro-government Sierra Leoneans, sent strong signals to Kabbah to take the path of dialogue.

Pressure on the government intensified as ECOMOG pushed back the AFRC-RUF combatants and helped re-establish government authority in the Western Area, the Southern Province and pockets of the Northern Province. Pursuing negotiations meant the possibility of ending the conflict, providing peace and stability for the people and the government, and hopefully unifying the country. The government still enjoyed national and international recognition as the country's legitimate and constitutional authority. Despite its lack of an army, it still had the solid support of the Civil Defence Forces. It knew that considerations of regional security, pride and humanitarianism might keep ECOMOG in the country. Refusal to negotiate would mean accepting de facto partition of the country, the potential loss of regional and





international sympathy and support, and continued instability and violence – especially since all parties were beginning to conclude that the war was unwinnable.

The AFRC–RUF alliance was caught in a similar bind. On the alliance's plus side, the Freetown attack had weakened the government and strengthened its own case as a force to be reckoned with. Prior to April 1999, ECOMOG operations had failed to dislodge the alliance fighters from the major urban centres in the Northern and resource-rich Eastern Province, where they still controlled and profited from the diamond fields.

Yet, the invasion had its minuses. The alliance had failed to oust ECOMOG, which instead had put them on the defensive and had slowly pushed them back from the Western Area. Foday Sankoh remained imprisoned and condemned to death and they had lost over 2,000 fighters. The invasion further tarnished the image of the rebels and sparked off a wave of national and international condemnation of their atrocities. The invasion had not won them any support among the Sierra Leonean masses; rather it had deepened their unpopularity. Internally, the relations between AFRC and the RUF factions were rapidly deteriorating and some of the ex-soldiers wanted to return to their barracks and families.

Presidents Taylor of Liberia and Compaoré of Burkina Faso, who allegedly had supported the rebels with training facilities, fighting men and rear bases, came under considerable international pressure to terminate their support and convince the alliance to negotiate with the Kabbah government. For the AFRC–RUF, refusal to pursue negotiations meant holding territory illegally, risking unrest within the army faction and offending its regional supporters. The alliance could either transform its control over these areas to freedom for its leaders, amnesty for its war crimes and legitimate political power through negotiations, or continue to fight an unwinnable war and be treated as pariahs.

### Reopening the peace track

While the military track continued on the ground, diverse personalities and groups worked to rebuild the peace bridges that had been burned in the aftermath of the Abidjan Accord in 1996 and the expulsion of the AFRC–RUF regime from Freetown in 1998. Between January and March 1999, Kabbah met regularly with Sankoh. While these meetings did not stop the fighting, they did result in opportunities for Sankoh to communicate with his commanders, the release of some abducted children and Sankoh's acknowledgement of the legitimacy of the Kabbah government. Kabbah

allowed generals, foreign diplomats, ministers, parliamentarians and religious leaders to meet Sankoh and urge him to end the war. The rehabilitation of the RUF leader signalled a cautious return to the two-track approach that had characterized the Abidjan process.

Kabbah and Sankoh also gave tacit support to UN envoy Okelo to establish connections with the wider RUF movement. Consequently, Okelo and his political officer, Modem Lawson-Butem, flew to Abidjan on 27 January 1999 to meet RUF legal adviser and spokesman Omrie Golley and Ivorian Foreign Minister Amara Essy. Two days of meetings resulted in a communiqué reiterating the legitimacy of the Kabbah government but emphasizing the need to resolve the crisis by dialogue.

The communiqué unleashed a storm of protest from the Freetown press. People wanted a ceasefire and dialogue but from a favourable military position. Okelo retreated and for some time followed the lead of the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSL) who prevailed on Sankoh and Kabbah to demonstrate some mutual trust and to endorse reviving the peace process.

Despite the absence of a formal ceasefire, Kabbah consented in March 1999 to a consultative and preparatory 'family meeting' between Sankoh and his commanders. The RUF wanted the meeting to be held in Côte d'Ivoire or Burkina Faso. The government, resentful of Burkinabe and Ivorian sympathy and support for the RUF, refused. Togo, whose president Gnassingbé Eyadéma held the chair of ECOWAS, emerged as a compromise. The Kabbah government saw ECOWAS – which was divided by competing interests but still strongly influenced by Nigeria – as their strongest supporter and the main arbiter in the conflict. The RUF, though suspicious of ECOWAS, knew Eyadéma had excellent relations with Côte d'Ivoire, one of their key allies. Though unknown to the public then, Sankoh was related to Eyadéma, by virtue of his daughter's marriage to the Togolese leader's son. Eyadéma saw it as an opportunity to advance his stature as an elder statesman. A successful peace treaty could also provide Togo with much-needed positive international attention, as well as foreign investment, following its tumultuous democratic struggles and economic recession of the 1990s.

Before the Kabbah government released Sankoh for the meeting, the Togolese foreign minister, Kokou Joseph Koffigoh, guaranteed the RUF leader's security and accommodation in Togo, as well as his speedy return to Sierra Leone to continue his appeal against his death sentence. As part of the agreement, Okelo guaranteed that the UN Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) would safely and securely transport Sankoh and his allies between Sierra Leone and Togo. Sankoh's departure in a UN aircraft on 18 May 1999 and the lavish reception he

received in Lomé marked another crucial step in his political rehabilitation. Four Togolese ministers met him at the airport and later Koffigoh honoured him with a grand reception. Personal relations, always a crucial element in West African diplomacy, had intersected deftly with high politics: Eyadéma welcomed Sankoh as an eminent foreign dignitary and an in-law.

## Preparatory meetings

Within a week, UNOMSIL flew ten RUF and four AFRC members from the Sierra Leone–Liberia border and Monrovia to join Sankoh in Lomé. Neither AFRC leader Johnny Paul Koroma nor Sam 'Maskita' Bockarie, the RUF second-in-command, showed up. As a security measure, Sankoh insisted that only one of the top three RUF commanders – Bockarie, Ibrahimah Bah or Eldred Collins – should attend and they agreed on Bah. Sankoh, Bockarie and the leadership of the RUF then deliberately kept Koroma out of the meeting to preclude any challenge to Sankoh's leadership. In fact, the AFRC–RUF alliance and Koroma's number two position in it were a façade as Bockarie had effectively arrested Koroma and put him under constant surveillance after their retreat from Freetown in 1998. He had also isolated him from his supporters, the ex-SLA soldiers, and from any role in military planning. The RUF leadership pruned AFRC representatives to the Lomé meeting and included only those seen as potentially amenable to the RUF position. Thus Pallo Bangura, Idrissa Hamid Kamara and Sahr T. Kaibanja were included, while the senior ex-SLA commander Brigadier Gabriel T. Mani was not.

The AFRC–RUF consultative meeting started on 25 April 1999, was expected to last for a week and ran for twenty-one days. The reconsolidation of Sankoh's leadership and the preparation of a common negotiation position took longer than anticipated and the RUF used part of the time to sell its position to its supporters in West Africa, Europe and the US. Golley had also pleaded with Eyadéma not to return Sankoh to Sierra Leone immediately, but to keep him in Lomé until the start of substantive negotiations. Eyadéma agreed and convinced Kabbah to accept the proposition.

The AFRC–RUF preparations produced a fifty-nine-page proposal titled *Lasting Peace in Sierra Leone: the Revolutionary United Front (RUF–SL) Perspective and Vision*. The document, presented to President Eyadéma on 13 May 1999, demanded: a blanket amnesty for all AFRC and RUF fighters; the release of all prisoners; a power-sharing arrangement based on a four-year transitional government until the next elections; recognition of AFRC–RUF control over certain areas of the country; participation in a new Sierra Leonean army; the withdrawal of ECOMOG troops; and the creation of an independent peacekeeping force. It set a single

precondition for the commencement of the negotiations – the ‘immediate and unconditional’ release of Sankoh.

Within the government, little preparation took place beyond cabinet meetings and discussions among senior ministers and the president. The government equivalent of the RUF family meeting was a consultative conference organized by the National Commission for Democracy and Human Rights at the Bintumani Hotel, on 11–14 April 1999. The conference pulled together parliamentarians, paramount chiefs, political parties, civic and women’s groups, professional associations, students and trade unions. Delegates reiterated the legitimacy of the Kabbah government, supported democracy and endorsed the Abidjan and Conakry agreements as the bases for any peace negotiations. They strongly opposed any form of power-sharing with the AFRC–RUF. The government never officially endorsed the conference report but did print and send copies to the Togolese government. Some of the conference resolutions were very much in line with the government’s position throughout the process in Lomé.

## Ceasefire

The peace process received a major boost on 18 May 1999 when Kabbah and Sankoh unexpectedly agreed a ceasefire in Lomé. The agreement officially silenced the guns, allowed for humanitarian aid deliveries and proposed the start of substantive peace talks six days later. The move surprised some of Kabbah’s senior ministers, the ECOMOG High Command and the Sierra Leone populace, who had consistently advocated that the major economic and urban centres in the north and east of the country should be secured before a ceasefire. But the agreement had been instigated by the Rev. Jesse Jackson, US Special Envoy for the Promotion of Democracy in Africa, whose intervention in Sierra Leone had been influenced by Donald Payne, the chairman of the US Congressional Black Caucus. Payne had been heavily lobbied by Taylor and Golley to push for negotiations, rather than backing congressional support for military assistance to ECOMOG. Jackson met with Kabbah during the African–American Summit in Accra, after which the president reluctantly flew with him to Lomé to sign the ceasefire agreement. Jackson’s aggressive diplomacy, designed to counter public criticism of US complacency towards Sierra Leone, kindled resentment among international peace mediators, although the signing ceremony, hosted by Eyadéma, did acknowledge the efforts of the US, the UN and ECOWAS.

Within a week of the ceasefire both parties had assembled their negotiation teams in Togo. Based on external advice, the government chose Solomon Berewa,

the minister of justice and attorney general, to head its team, rather than the hawkish minister of finance, and former UN assistant secretary general, James Jonah. Berewa had good negotiating skills and could be accommodating without exceeding his mandate. Most importantly, he had a good grasp of constitutional issues, which was crucial in the government’s overall negotiation strategy. The team also included Sahr Matturi, the deputy foreign minister; Sylvester Rowe, Sierra Leone’s permanent representative to the UN; Sheka Mansaray, the national security adviser; and Colonel Tom Carew, a senior army officer.

Solomon Y. B. Rogers led the AFRC–RUF team. Although an abductee, he was fiercely loyal to Sankoh and was chairman of the RUF War Council. Other team members included Pallo Bangura, a former college lecturer and AFRC foreign minister; Golley, a barrister, international businessman and subsequently RUF legal adviser; Sahr Kaibanja, ex-AFRC education minister; Brigadier Mike Lamin, a senior RUF commander; Colonel Idrissa Hamid Kamara, alias ‘Leatherboot’, an ex-SLA officer; and Major Agnes Finoh, an abducted former college student.

## Structure and process

The mediation committee, made up of international stakeholders in the conflict, was chaired by Togo’s Foreign Minister Koffigoh and comprised Okelo of the UN; Adwoa Coleman of the OAU; ECOWAS Executive Secretary Lansana Kouyaté; and diplomats from the ECOWAS Committee of Six on Sierra Leone (Guinea, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Ghana and Mali) and Libya. The Inter-Religious Council and other civil groups, their attendance partially funded by the US, complemented the committee. American diplomats, as well as UK and Commonwealth officials, were active throughout the negotiations to ‘ensure a continuation of dialogue’, in the words of one State Department spokesman. The US also provided three consultants to help with the negotiation process.

In the first three days, the committee worked with the parties to develop a convenient and flexible structure, rather than imposing any particular negotiation model. It was accepted that the parties bore the primary responsibility for reaching an agreement and should therefore negotiate directly as much as possible. The mediators provided the necessary support, advice and communication between the two sides and, when an impasse was reached, they called in Eyadéma and the other West African presidents. This resulted in an array of open and closed meetings. The plenary sessions chaired by Koffigoh were open to all, whereas some meetings involved only the parties and the mediation committee. There were also exclusively Sierra Leonean meetings,



### **Jusu – aged 10**

*interviewed by Ambrose James in March 2000*

I was captured in Freetown during the AFRC coup by the Sierra Leone Army and taken to Kono where I was trained to use a gun – an AK-47. We used to do monster parade – loot. We also smoked marijuana and cooked for the squad. From Kono, we were taken to Makeni, to Rogberi Junction, Port Loko and then to Freetown for the January invasion. I was given cocaine on my forehead every day and asked to kill people who I thought were enemies. Cocaine was also put into our food when we cooked. [My squad] killed 35 ECOMOG soldiers during the January invasion. During the invasion, I was captured by ECOMOG...and taken to the Family Homes Movement, an NGO, which deals with child combatants. My mother was traced and reunified with me. I now stay with her. I was going to an Arabic school before the war. I am now in class two and want to continue school until I go to college and then finally go to America. I think that if everything is put in place by government, for example, employment facilities, scholarships or free education, I think youths will have a bright future.

involving the RUF and government representatives, and members of civic groups, when appropriate.

The talks were structured around three main topics – military, humanitarian and political – each one being dealt with in a committee with equal representation from the RUF and the government. Coleman, Okelo, Kouyaté and the other mediators helped facilitate and draft the provisions relevant to the different issues, and the IRCSL and other members participated actively in the discussions.

The military and humanitarian committees completed their work by 8 June. The two parties quickly reached agreement on the issues of amnesty, ceasefire, humanitarian operations, socio-economic matters, human rights, disarmament, demobilization, and the new army. The swift agreement on an amnesty reflected the decision by the two parties to use the 1996 Abidjan Accord and 1998 Conakry Agreement as bases for negotiations, in spite of subsequent atrocities. Both documents had granted a blanket amnesty to the RUF.

Instead of the estimated ten days, the talks dragged on for six weeks. Sporadic outbursts of fraternity and optimism could not prevent deadlocks. The three main

issues of contention were: Sankoh's freedom and status; the RUF notion of transitional government and power-sharing; and the role of ECOMOG in post-war Sierra Leone.

### **Sankoh's freedom**

Despite prior assurances to Eyadéma, the RUF refused to start negotiating until the Kabbah government freed Sankoh. The government team refused and made the RUF–AFRC signing of a peace agreement a precondition for a presidential pardon. Following an intervention by Eyadéma, the RUF relented but Sankoh refused to participate personally in the daily discussions. He insisted that a condemned man could not negotiate freely and that he would only participate if Kabbah did. This complicated the talks since it meant that decisions agreed in committees subsequently had to be scrutinized and approved by Sankoh.

### **Transition and power-sharing**

Nothing came closer to scuttling the talks than the AFRC–RUF demands for power-sharing, in a four-year transitional government, and the speedy removal of

ECOMOG troops from Sierra Leone. Both issues were not new. The RUF had floated the idea of an interim government of national unity in 1995 but the election of Kabbah and the Abidjan Peace Accord had submerged it. From 12 June to 6 July, when these issues were decisively resolved, they taxed the energies of the negotiators, the mediators and the West African regional leaders.

The RUF knew that the major obstacle to their entrenchment in Freetown had been the presence of a government with both popular and constitutional legitimacy. These two elements gave Kabbah the continued support and sympathy of many governments in the region (and beyond) and led to the continued presence of the Nigerian-led ECOMOG force, which repeatedly thwarted RUF efforts to overrun and hold the capital. Even when the disloyal national army had invited the RUF to Freetown in May 1997, it had failed to sustain the takeover. What it could not gain through violence and terror, it now sought through aggressive negotiating tactics. The RUF knew that if it succeeded in wresting any major concession, either on the constitutional issue or on ECOMOG, the government's position would quickly become unsustainable.

For the AFRC–RUF, power-sharing and transitional government meant substantial control over the state apparatus. At the request of Eyadéma, they provided an extensive shopping list of government posts in which they demanded the expansion of the cabinet to twenty members and asked for eleven ministerial and four deputy-ministerial positions, including the posts of vice-president, defence and finance. They also asked for six top diplomatic posts including ambassador to the US, deputy high commissioner to the UK, high commissioner to Nigeria, and ambassador to Liberia. Furthermore, they wanted eleven key para-statal offices, including the governorship of the Bank of Sierra Leone and the head of the Port Authority. They also demanded one of the three resident minister posts – for the north – as well as the mayor of Freetown and head of a post-war reconstruction commission.

The government delegation saw through the RUF strategy to gain control of ministries, other state institutions and the capital's administration and rejected, not only the AFRC–RUF demands, but also the very notions of a transition government and power-sharing. The delegation cited the government's inability to create a transitional authority outside the constitutional framework and argued that 'the government itself is a creature of the 1991 constitution (and) derives its powers and authority only from that constitution'. The negotiators offered the RUF four ministerial posts (two full and two deputies) in a sixteen-person cabinet, suggesting that these would include justice, defence, foreign affairs or finance, and the chairs of some of the committees proposed in the draft accord.

The limited concessions made by the Kabbah government showed the pressure it was under at home. Parliamentarians and some hard-liners within the cabinet, defensive of their positions and the constitution, threatened revolt and impeachment. Fearful of losing their hard-won democratic gains, workers, human rights activists, teachers, students, women and civil groups shut down the capital in protest on 17 June 1999.

Despite popular disapproval, the RUF fought tenaciously to push through its political proposals deploying adversarial negotiating tactics such as holding up negotiations, reneging on compromises, reintroducing old issues, spectacular public outbursts, threatening pullouts and shifting final authority.

These methods were used effectively twice between 23 June and 5 July. By 21 June, after a week of intense regional diplomacy, coaxing, compromising and a bit of arm-twisting, it was felt that a mutually acceptable formula had been found to break the deadlock, namely 'power-sharing within the framework of the 1991 Sierra Leone constitution'. The RUF had accepted a total of four ministerial and three deputy ministerial positions and the Nigerians had agreed to halt their troop deployment in Sierra Leone. The mediators were optimistic. Two days later, Sankoh shocked everyone by rejecting the formula in a BBC interview. He maintained that the RUF had not fought for nine years for four cabinet posts: "We are still demanding a transitional government. The RUF leadership will never back down." He restated the RUF original demand for an expanded cabinet and more ministerial positions, arguing that what they wanted was a 'real' transition regime, not entry into a 'corrupt SLPP' government.

The RUF used similar tactics again on 5 July, when an AFRC–RUF delegation headed by Rogers and sent to sell the final draft to the commanders on the ground, returned to Togo with a new draft agreement. After Sankoh's BBC outburst, Eyadéma had resorted to using the influence of Nigerian President Obasanjo. Newly elected and wary of the Sierra Leone conflict, Obasanjo wanted to bring Nigerian troops home and focus on pressing domestic issues, but not at the cost of Nigeria's pride and regional hegemony. Within these constraints he and Eyadéma had pulled the parties together at Kara, northern Togo, on 25 June. Together, they ironed out what they thought were any wrinkles in the final draft and agreed that Sankoh would head the Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development. They also agreed that Nigerian troops would remain part of ECOMOG with a revised mandate of peacekeeping until peace was consolidated and a UN force put in place. Obasanjo left the meeting at 3:00 am on Saturday 26 June, exhausted but optimistic. After his return on 4 July, Rogers reintroduced the RUF's old demands of transition government, vice-presidency and ECOMOG withdrawal.

## Final phase

When Eyadéma was informed, he knew that the peace process was in danger of collapsing. He shifted regional diplomacy into top gear. The three regional leaders, Obasanjo, Compaoré and Taylor, who held the balance of power in the conflict, were mobilized by Eyadéma to exert pressures on the two parties to compromise. The key to the final deal lay in the sequencing of meetings held over 5 and 6 July. Taylor and Compaoré, the main regional backers of the RUF, met separately to reach a common position on the draft accord and a strategy for handling Sankoh. Eyadéma and Obasanjo, who had worked closely together, met to formulate a common position. The four then met and endorsed four ministerial and four deputy ministerial positions for the AFRC–RUF and Sankoh's chairmanship of the Resources Commission. They agreed on ECOMOG participation in peacekeeping and demobilization operations until their replacement by a UN force.

The four presidents then met Kabbah and Sankoh, individually and together. Sankoh's allies convinced him to accept the final deal, pointing out the pitfalls of

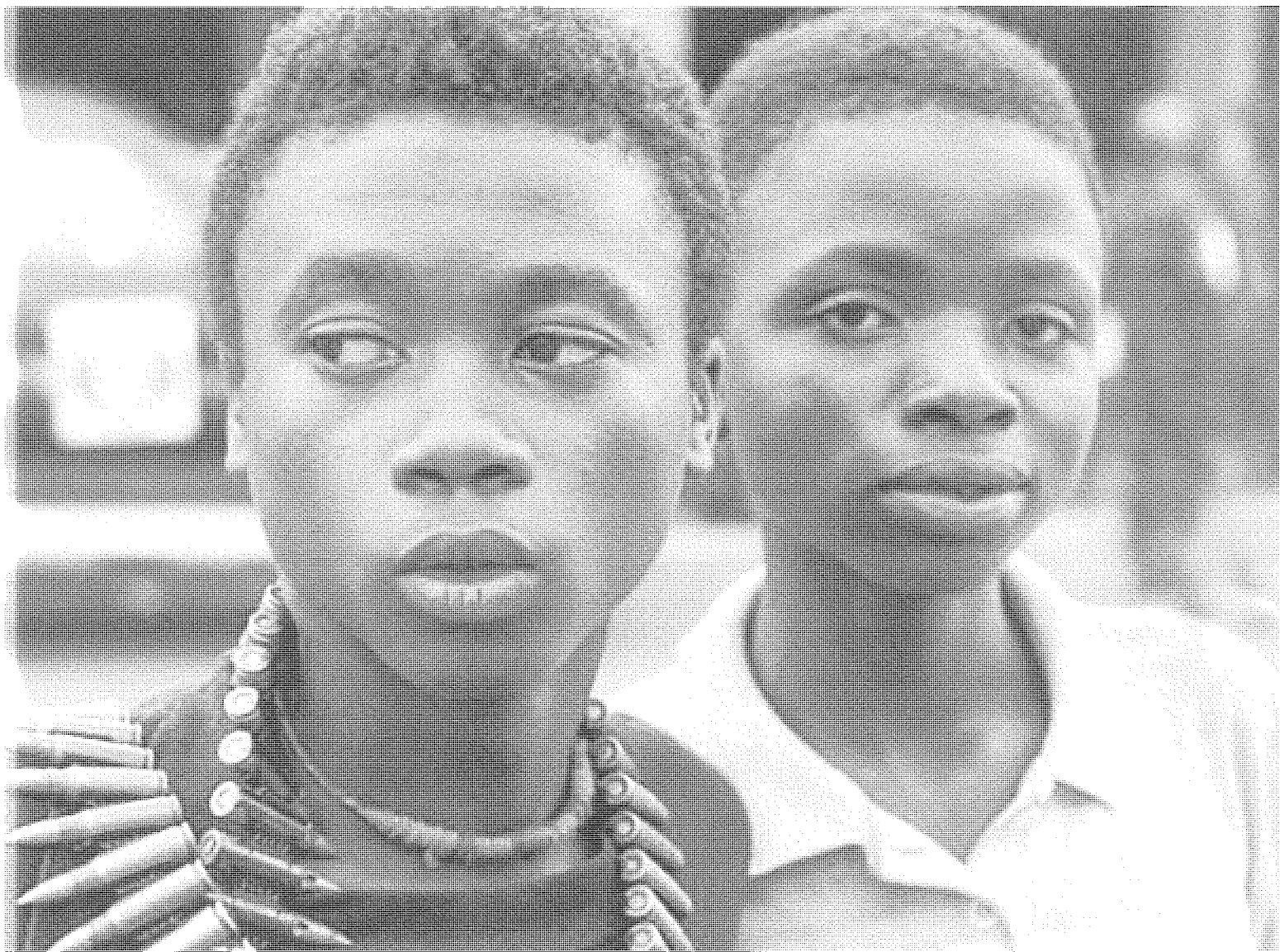
intransigence and the consequences of the failure of the talks. They told him to lead rather than follow and not be overtaken by events. He was advised to think more of a transitional phase rather than transitional government. The four leaders convinced Kabbah to symbolically add the status of vice presidency to Sankoh's chairmanship to assuage his supporters and to elevate him slightly above other ministerial representatives in the government. Kabbah accepted, granted him a pardon, and the deal was done.

On 7 July 1999, Kabbah and Sankoh, flanked by Eyadéma, Obasanjo, Taylor and Compaoré, signed the Lomé Peace Accord. The witnesses and guarantors added their signatures. Although the UN was a guarantor, it signed with the understanding that the amnesty and pardon did not apply to international crimes. Kabbah posed for the cameras holding Memuna, a three-year-old girl whose arms had been amputated by the RUF. He later he gave Sankoh a brotherly embrace.

On paper, the nine-year long conflict in Sierra Leone was over. On the ground, peace was to continue to be elusive.

### *Young Kamajors in Freetown, January 2000*

Source: AFP/Corbis





## Lomé Agreement summary

### **Ceasefire**

(Part I, articles 1–2)

- Immediate end to armed conflict between government forces and the RUF
- Establishment of Ceasefire Monitoring Group and Joint Monitoring Commission to monitor the ceasefire

### **Power-sharing**

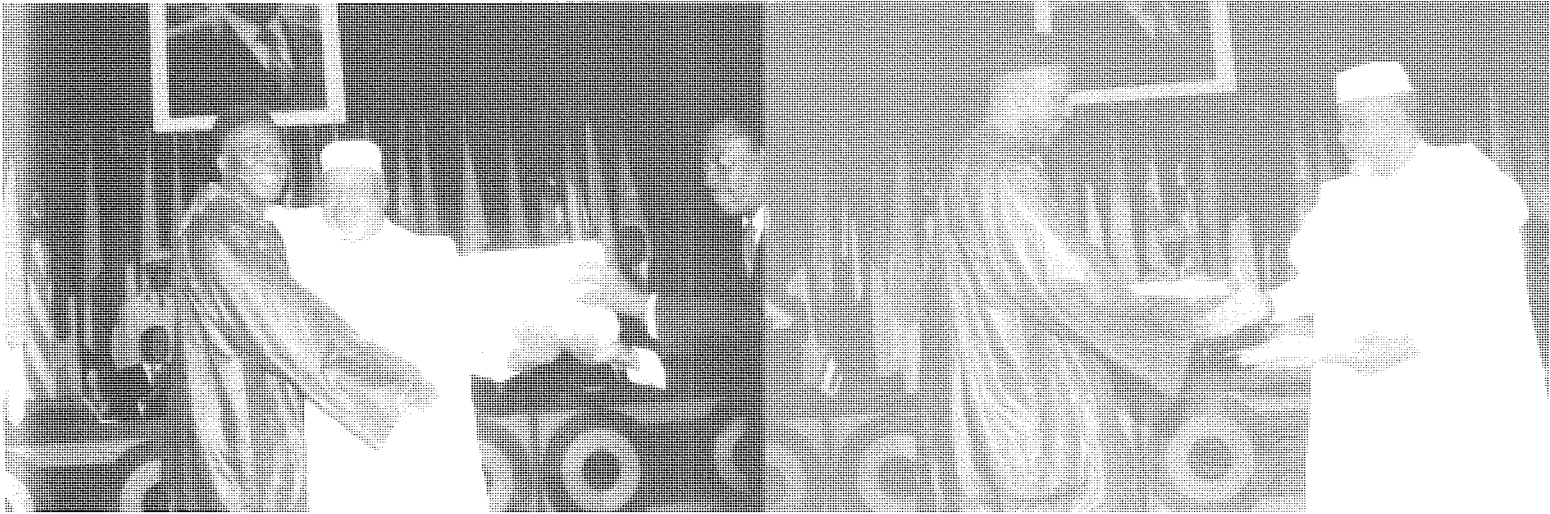
(Part 2, articles 3–5)

- Transformation of the RUF into a political party
- RUF members to be allowed to hold public office
- Formation of broad-based government of national unity including RUF

### **Reconciliation**

(Parts 2–3, articles 6–9)

- Establishment of Commission for the Consolidation of Peace
- Government control of natural resources
- Council of Elders and Religious Leaders to resolve any differences
- Pardon for Sankoh
- Pardon and amnesty for RUF, ex-AFRC, ex-SLA or CDF combatants



Source: Sierra Leone on the Web

## Constitution

(Parts 3, articles 10–12)

- Establishment of Constitutional Review Committee
- Commitment to constitutional elections
- National Electoral Commission to be established

## Military

(Part 4, articles 13–20)

- New mandates for ECOMOG and UNOMSIL
- Guaranteed safety, security and freedom of movement for peacekeeping personnel
- All ex-combatants to be disarmed, demobilized and reintegrated
- New national army to include ex-RUF, CDF and SLA combatants
- Withdrawal of all mercenaries from Sierra Leone
- Joint Monitoring Commission to be informed of location/strength of combatants and unexploded devices
- All combatants to be notified of their responsibilities under the Agreement

## Human rights

(Part 5, articles 21–31)

- Unconditional and immediate release of prisoners-of-war and abductees
- Voluntary repatriation and reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons
- Rights to asylum fully respected

- Full protection of rights within Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights
- Establishment of a national Human Rights Commission
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission to be established, dealing with human rights violations since 1991
- Sierra Leone government to ask for international humanitarian assistance
- Programme of post-war resettlement, rehabilitation and reconstruction started with special attention given to women
- Design and implementation of a programme for the rehabilitation of war victims
- Special attention paid to child combatants
- Commitment to free compulsory education and affordable primary healthcare

## Implementation

(Parts 6–8, articles 32–37)

- Joint Implementation Committee to be established
- Request for formal international involvement in the Agreement, where appropriate
- Moral guarantors stated as Government of Togolese Republic, the UN, the OAU, ECOWAS and the Commonwealth of Nations
- Call for international support for the Agreement
- Commitment to register and publish the Agreement
- Statement of the Agreement coming into immediate force

# Implementing the Lomé Peace Agreement

by Dennis Bright

Dennis Bright is country director of the 'Institut Regional de Cooperation' (IRCOD), a Sierra Leonean NGO working with youth, women and social issues. He is a Commissioner on the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace (CCP) and holds a PhD from the University of Bordeaux, France.

The situation in Sierra Leone in the months following the signing of the Lomé Peace Agreement clearly demonstrated that the road to peace was going to be long and tortuous. It would be full of risks and obstacles and demand extraordinary courage to make concessions, not only from the belligerent parties, but especially from the people themselves.

The Lomé Agreement was intended to be a plan of action. It proposed a schedule for the cessation of hostilities and a series of measures related to governance, political, humanitarian, socio-economic as well as military and security issues. These were to be implemented by a range of institutions established under the agreement. But the framework for peace had its own shortcomings that rapidly became apparent as attempts were made to put it into practice. Perhaps most crucially, attempts at implementation were beset by profound levels of mistrust between the various parties involved and, ultimately, the dissolution of what political will had existed to make Lomé work.

## Joint Implementation Committee

The Joint Implementation Committee (JIC) established by the agreement was to review and assess its application. The committee, chaired by ECOWAS, was to meet at least once every three months and include members of the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace (CCP), regional diplomatic representatives and officials of the agreement's 'moral guarantors' – Togo, the UN, the OAU and the Commonwealth. However, the agreement did not spell out how the JIC was to relate to other institutions established under the agreement, such as the CCP or the Council of Elders.

Military problems began to appear soon after the signing. The role of ECOMOG, the West African peacekeeping force, needed to be reviewed in light of the transformation of the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission (UNOMSIL) to peacekeeping status (UNAMSIL). Pressures on the Nigerian political leadership



to remove their majority contingent in ECOMOG led to the decision to pull out. The option of two separate entities under separate commands in the same theatre of military operations was not seen as being viable. The UN, for policy reasons, refused to give financial support to a regionally constituted force. The compromise adopted was to phase out ECOMOG and absorb part of it into UNAMSIL. This changeover presented an opportunity for those wanting to test both the capabilities and resolve of the newcomers.

The tense and ambiguous situation in the country that brought the conflict parties back to the battlefield in May 2000 was ignited by confrontation between the RUF and UNAMSIL, climaxing in 500 peacekeepers being taken hostage by the RUF forces. From the start, the RUF contested the legitimacy of UNAMSIL and then obstructed its operations. Even before the hostage-taking incident, the RUF had demonstrated its rejection of the UN peacekeepers by seizing large quantities of arms, ammunition and heavy military equipment in two separate incidents. According to Oluymi Adeniji, special representative of the UN secretary general in Sierra Leone:

*From its induction in Sierra Leone, Sankoh had displayed an antagonism which proved implacable to the UN Mission UNAMSIL. He denounced its deployment as illegal and inconsistent with the Lomé Agreement, done without his agreement and threatening to his party. Every effort made to explain the link between UNAMSIL and article XVI of the Lomé Agreement met with a pretence at understanding, only for UNAMSIL to be denounced again shortly thereafter. With that posture, RUF obstructed UNAMSIL from deployment throughout the country, protection of innocent Sierra Leoneans and others from gross violation of their human rights and assisting the extension of the authority of the Government of National Unity throughout the entire country. (report to 3rd JIC meeting, 13 May 2000)*

At the political level, the JIC appeared to have little effect in mediating disputes arising from the agreement. At the second committee meeting, held on 24 January 2000, the RUF representative Solomon Rogers suggested that during the life of the current government and until general and presidential elections, the Lomé Agreement should take precedence over the constitution. Rogers' contention was summarily dismissed on the grounds that

the Lomé document's section on 'governance' situated the agreement squarely "within the spirit and letter of the constitution." However, rejecting the RUF position conveniently ignored the fact that, in one area at least, the designers of the Lomé Agreement had been obliged to bend the constitution. In their effort to carve out a niche within the country's power structure for the RUF, they had offered Sankoh a "status equivalent to vice president," even though only one vice president is provided for in the constitution. This political surgery, done in the name of peace, was apparently perceived by Sankoh as the opening of a dam of privileges and powers for him. When this did not happen, he constantly complained, as he once did to parliament, that his VP status was just a 'white elephant'.

Some of the other major problems were related to the inclusion of the RUF in the Government of National Unity, the RUF's establishment as a political party and the setting up of key structures created by the agreement. On several occasions, including the last press conference called by Sankoh before he fled into temporary hiding on 8 May, the RUF reiterated their claim that the government had not honoured its commitment to offer the RUF Party all the political, diplomatic and para-statal posts provided for in the agreement. The agreement had reserved for the RUF "one of the senior cabinet appointments such as finance, foreign affairs or justice" and not one of these was offered. Instead, the government conceded the ministries of trade and industry, and of energy and power. It leaned on the semantic argument that the expression 'such as' should not mean 'that is' and it could therefore designate any posts considered to be of the same standing as those indicated.

The real bone of contention, however, was to become the allocation of diplomatic and para-statal jobs. The government claimed that it had decided to privatize the para-statals due to their poor management and that it was unnecessary to make fresh appointments to their boards. As far as diplomatic appointments were concerned, one can only interpret the eagerness of the RUF to get these posts as the expression of a desire to test their international 'acceptability', taking into account that the blanket amnesty granted by the Lomé Agreement was not fully endorsed by the international community. One surprising aspect of the tussle was that some cabinet members dismissed as a trivial detail what the RUF considered to be of crucial importance. Government claims of insufficient funds to set up diplomatic missions due to the continued occupation by the RUF of the country's revenue base – the diamond-rich district of Kono – were contradicted by the appointment of new ambassadors to Libya and Ghana.

## The Commission for the Consolidation of Peace

While it was assumed that the AFRC–RUF alliance of 1997 still held at the time of the signing of the Peace Agreement, it soon became apparent that there had been a divorce and that the AFRC–SLA leadership, a major stakeholder in the conflict, had been left out of the deal. To rectify this, accommodation was found for Lt Col Johnny Paul Koroma, former AFRC leader, as chair of the CCP.

Under Lomé, the CCP was to be responsible for supervising the implementation of the peace process and monitoring all the other commissions and committees created by the agreement, including the ceasefire Joint Monitoring Commission, the Commission for Strategic Mineral Resources, National Reconstruction and Development (CMRRD) headed by Sankoh, the Human Rights Commission, and a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). It was also to ensure somehow that all the institutions set up under the agreement were "given the necessary resources for realizing their respective mandates."

The five commissioners were to be drawn from civil society (2), the RUF (1), the government (1) and parliament (1), and the institution was to have its own offices, adequate communication facilities and staff. It was also intended to look after the victims of the war and the issue of reparations.

Initially, with Koroma as its chair, the CCP was politically and financially marginalized by both the government and the international community. While its original plan of action identified fundamental issues underlying the conflict and proposed practical solutions to ensure the security and welfare of the people, it eventually pared down its scope to focus on confidence-building at all levels as a strategy for enhancing the peace process. With its broad membership it enjoyed the relative confidence of all parties. As Koroma's public and political rehabilitation outpaced Sankoh's and with growing recognition that multi-level confidence-building was crucial to the peace process, the commission began to attract greater attention and financial support.

The CCP scored a major success in April 2000 when a confidence- and trust-building conference for ground and battalion commanders held in the southern town of Bo ignited mass voluntary disarmament by pro-government militiamen. This provoked deep reflections by young combatants from all the factions on the catastrophic effects of the war on the country and their own future.

The institutional problems related to the very survival of the CCP, however, were symptomatic of the precarious situation of the agreement itself as the implementation of an agreement of this type costs money. Where funding is largely external and depends on the choices or areas of interest of the donors, there is bound to be unequal support to the structures provided for, and therefore uneven application of the peace plan.

## **Commission for Strategic Mineral Resources, National Reconstruction and Development**

The appointment of Sankoh as head of the CMRRD was regarded as the biggest risk taken and concession made to the RUF leader by the Kabbah government because of the importance of resource control throughout the war.

The agreement set out a new approach to the exploitation of gold and diamonds and the use of their proceeds, but there was some confusion and conflict related to the role or powers of the CMRRD. While the agreement called for the Ministry of Mines to carry out its normal functions, including the issuing of mining licences, it also nullified all previous concessions and banned “all exploitation, sale, export or any other transaction of gold and diamonds except if allowed by the CMRRD”.

On paper, the CMRRD was to be an autonomous body, whose head was responsible only to the president. Amidst such confusion, the CMRRD was never really constituted and Sankoh simply ignored his appointment and continued to fund his military and political programmes through mining proceeds from RUF activities in Kono District.

## **National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration**

The process of disarmament under the NCDDR was much in the limelight and criticized for being slow. Among the various agencies set up under the agreement, the NCDDR was to receive the lion's share of external funding in an effort to stabilize the security situation in the country as quickly as possible and by peaceful means. Nine months after the signing of the agreement, however, there was still a US\$20 million shortfall in funding for the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) process.

But shortage of money was only part of the problem. The NCDDR complained regularly about the lack of co-operation from the RUF leader, who always found reasons for refusing to order his men to disarm. In some cases, in

spite of major sensitization efforts, it was realized that combatants received too little or distorted information about the benefits of the DDR programme. Some observers also warned about the dangers of encamping large numbers of fighters, because it kept them at battalion strength and helped maintain their fighting spirit. Within the camps, disgruntlement about living conditions, negative peer pressure and mob mentality sometimes combined to transform simple misunderstandings into ugly incidents.

Clearly, one of the weaknesses of the DDR structure was its inflexibility and incapacity to fully decentralize its operations and offer limited ownership of the process to the conflict parties themselves. The financial element that came to be associated with the process – money for weapons – ended up creating not only great expectations among ex-combatants, but also great suspicions on the part of their leaders. They believed that huge sums of money were being spent on a handful of technicians, ‘experts’ and their gadgets, instead of on their men. Their argument was that only faction leaders could really and truly disarm those they had armed, and should therefore be entrusted with the wherewithal to do so.

## **The Council of Elders and Religious Leaders**

The serious disagreements that arose during the first ten months of the life of the agreement, and the disastrous effect they were to have, point to fundamental negligence on the part of the government to provide for an effective dispute resolution mechanism. Under the agreement, a Council of Elders and Religious Leaders was to be established to settle differences arising from conflicting interpretations of how it should be implemented. One would assume that potentially explosive misunderstandings could have received special attention from this mediating body. Unfortunately, the government never set up the Council of Elders, even though its establishment would not have been costly.

## **Failure to build trust**

The problems outlined above were not mere hitches. They represented the concrete difficulties that were bound to appear after the initial euphoria lifted and which could only be resolved if the spirit of the agreement was preserved, all parties were willing to make concessions, and trust, confidence and sincerity were maintained.

One of the main impediments to peace in Sierra Leone has been the total lack of trust, as well as the fear, among the conflict groups, especially at the leadership level.

## RUF and government

At a meeting with the CCP, Sheikh Nabih a senior RUF member, openly declared his movement's distrust of government by referring to a statement allegedly made by Attorney General Solomon Berewa at a treason trial in which Nabih himself was an accused. According to Nabih, Berewa described the Conakry peace plan signed by the government in 1997 as a ploy intended to pacify RUF members before prosecuting them. On several other occasions, including the commanders conference in Bo, the RUF maintained that threats of revenge were being made against them by senior government officials.

On the other hand, the RUF, and especially Sankoh, proved to be extremely unreliable. The RUF leadership vowing one thing and doing another became a common feature of the peace process. This attitude increased suspicion that the RUF was not interested in peace and was moving towards seizing power by force. This in part explains why government representatives were increasingly unenthusiastic about the systematic and thorough application of some sections of the Peace Agreement.

Sankoh's lack of trust in UNAMSIL, according to one of his senior aides, is rooted in his overall suspicion of international agencies' unreliability in ensuring protection. This goes as far back as the betrayal and assassination of Congo's Patrice Lumumba in the 1960s and of Samuel Doe in Liberia.

Essentially, the behaviour of the RUF and, to a point, the AFRC in literally sticking to their guns, despite verbal commitments to disarm, is indicative of their fear of being brought to justice. Psychologically, their hesitations, misgivings, reluctance to disarm, and arrogant behaviour betrayed a deep sense of guilt and an unwillingness to face their victims.

## RUF and AFRC—SLA

The collaboration between these two parties during the nine-month junta rule in 1997 collapsed with the restoration of democracy in 1998, when they fled into the bush. AFRC leader Koroma was held prisoner for 18 months at the RUF base in Kailahun, eastern Sierra Leone. Reports abound of very bad treatment meted out to the AFRC men by the RUF under the local commander, self-styled general Sam 'Maskita' Bockarie. It would appear that the two groups never succeeded in patching things up. This deep-seated grudge between the two groups contributed to the massive turn-out in early May 2000 when Koroma called all soldiers, old and new, to join the Civil Defence Forces and other pro-government forces to fight against the common enemy, the RUF.

## CDF and RUF

For months after the Peace Agreement was signed, the RUF complained persistently that the CDF were secretly training fighters in the southern towns of Gbangbatoke and Bonthe in order to launch an attack against them. Whereas the AFRC and RUF had once been allies, the CDF and RUF generally remained sworn enemies, despite instances of peaceful, though wary, co-existence in some mining areas. During the war, the CDF constituted the backbone of resistance to the rebellion. Stories from the warfront ascribe to the CDF a capacity to unleash terror and commit atrocities comparable to those of the RUF, which has contributed to the mistrust and suspicion between the two armed factions.

The examples cited above are part of a larger web of suspicion that seemed to haunt the peace process. Illustrative of this are perceptions of the relationship between Sankoh and chief Samuel Hinga Norman, national co-ordinator of the CDF and Deputy Defence Minister. They are seen as two old army boys both implicated in coups in the 1960s and 1970s; as knowing each other well from their army days; as rumoured to have worked together for a while in Liberia to plan the 1991 insurgency against the APC government; and as subsequently finding themselves on opposite sides in the rebel war.

## Conclusion

The search for peace in Sierra Leone has been pursued against daunting odds. Implementation got underway in a complex context that affected how the words and ideas in the agreement could be translated into reality in a severely damaged nation. The physical devastation within the country, the exodus of skilled Sierra Leoneans, the disruption of schooling, high numbers of traumatized war victims, the destruction of authority systems, and deeply rooted social problems, particularly the neglect of youth, were all part of the environment in which the Lomé Agreement was to succeed or fail.

The focus of the Peace Agreement on Sankoh and the assumption that he could be relied on to successfully lead his combatants through the peace process proved to be tragically flawed. The inconsistencies of the RUF leader in word and deed were largely responsible for the ups and downs of implementation. If the war had really been waged on the grounds of an ideology of some sort, perhaps the agreement could have addressed substantive issues and then might have enjoyed a better destiny. It seems that Sankoh's commitment was not to peace, but to state power and a share in the country's wealth, involving the connivance of some interested neighbours. Given Sankoh's arrest in early May and the

possibility of judicial action being taken against him, it remains to be seen if the agreement can survive the man.

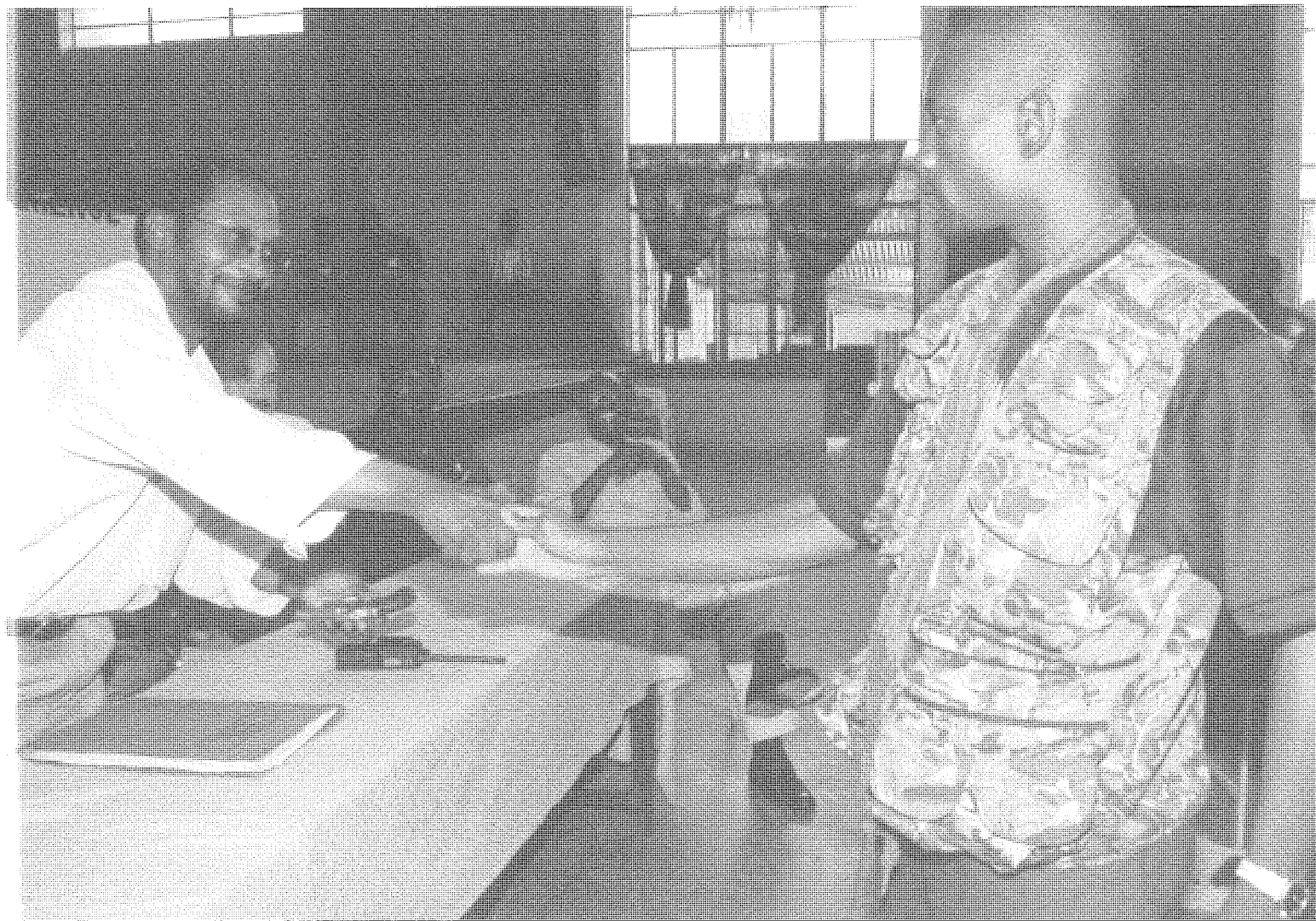
Imbued with such a heavy dose of violence it is only natural for society to experience sharp withdrawal symptoms during the healing process. It is not an easy business for young men and women who have been conditioned (and sometimes drugged) to fight for their survival to be converted to a more orderly form of existence based on adherence to the law and respect for life and property.

In general, RUF and AFRC combatants have had little trust in the civilian populace, largely out of fear of retribution for atrocities and other crimes committed during the war. During the ECOMOG intervention in February 1998, which restored legitimate democratic rule, mob justice was meted out to supporters of the junta, some of whom were 'given the necklace' – burnt alive by pouring petrol on a tyre hung round their necks. Similar revenge killings were carried out in the provinces, particularly in Bo. In the circumstances, it is easy to understand why RUF and AFRC combatants found it hard to believe that people would ever embrace them.

However, the search for peace can only be done within the framework of an agreement such as Lomé. It is worth stressing that one of the basic weaknesses of the agreement at the outset was its failure to include all the

parties, particularly the remnants of the SLA. Furthermore, all implementation structures should be set up in a businesslike manner, if not the partners will lose their trust in the process and a mood of triviality will be created around the peace process, with dangerous consequences. Confidence-building should be a permanent feature of the process because true reconciliation is difficult to achieve when suspicions based on past animosities and betrayals continue to thrive. Reconciliation efforts must not only aim at bringing together warring parties, but also at bridging gaps created during the conflict between fighters of all factions and the civilian population. This is where civil society organizations assume all their importance – in acting as a mobilizing force and as guides during the healing process.

Implementation of the agreement has also underlined the need for flexibility, not only in terms of technical fixes, but also in the minds of stakeholders who should be ready to tackle unforeseen problems as they arise. Negotiators and conflicting parties should count on unexpected hurdles springing up at any time. When that does happen, they are required to muster enough courage, tact and imagination to surmount them. In that respect, the Sierra Leone government was under a moral obligation to lead the way in the search for peace – an obligation it did not always fulfil.





## Early civil society peace initiatives

The official diplomatic efforts that eventually drew the government of Sierra Leone and the RUF into formal peace negotiations and led to the Abidjan Accord in 1996 were preceded and complemented by a range of other initiatives aimed at a peaceful settlement of the conflict. A diverse cast of civil society groups and individuals were important at different stages, some active in mobilizing public opinion in favour of peace and democratization, while others operated in the shadows cast by the high-level international political manoeuvring that led to the Abidjan Accord.

Despite initial efforts and good intentions, civil society was to remain largely on the fringes of the actual negotiations as they developed in 1996. A return to democratic government became the main focus of many organizations, while international support for Sierra Leonean civil society organizations was often not sustained. With hindsight it is evident that civil society energies and resources became concentrated more on personal and organizational survival than on solving the country's continuing crisis. The fact that virtually all the negotiations took place outside Sierra Leone also handicapped civil society involvement.

**Family, Bo District, March 2000**

*Source: Lennart Jahansen*

## The Mano River Bridge initiative

While women's groups and prominent individuals began to organize to promote both a transition to democracy and an end to the war, the seeds of a less-well publicized, civilian-led initiative were germinating among community leaders in displacement camps sheltering southerners who had been forced to flee the RUF. In late 1994, the NPRC sanctioned a peace overture led by community leaders from Soro-Gbema chiefdom on the Liberian border. In mid-December and January 1995, a group of local leaders walked across the Mano River Bridge into RUF-controlled territory carrying banners bearing peace messages in English and Arabic and singing Islamic songs. One of the initiative's instigators, John Massaquoi, wrote later: "We assembled at the edge of the bridge on the Liberian side, began singing and started moving bravely, but never sure if we would be back alive. We got there alive. We met the rebels."

That day, three members of the fifteen-person delegation – Musu Kpaka (the mother of the local RUF commander Momoh Konneh), Prince Massaquoi and Alhaji Emurana Massaquoi – volunteered to stay in the hands of the RUF, who were afraid of being attacked. They were to remain captives for two years. In the following weeks at two subsequent meetings marked by swings between periods of high tension and amicable fraternizing, efforts to persuade the RUF to enter negotiations with the government foundered. Media reports at the time

indicated that Sankoh rejected NPRC conditions for more substantive talks. Participants in the Mano River Bridge initiative, however, attributed the failure to high levels of suspicion between the RUF and the government, and military action against the rebels whilst the talks were underway.

## The National Co-ordinating Committee for Peace

In early 1995, some sixty non-governmental and civil society groups, including the Women's Movement for Peace, the Council of Churches in Sierra Leone, the Sierra Leone Labour Congress and the Sierra Leone Teachers' Union, came together to form the National Co-ordinating Committee for Peace. The NCCP organized a number of workshops and conferences. The intention was to create a strong national peace constituency, which would force both the government and the RUF to the negotiating table and ensure that any peace agreement would be sustainable.

But the group lasted only six months. On 12 July 1995, it issued a statement asking the local media to stop referring to the RUF as "bandits" or even "rebels," and instead call its members "fighters." The organization's spokesman, M'ban Kabu, then launched a verbal attack on Executive Outcomes, the South African mercenary group hired by the NPRC government to beat back the



### Hawa – aged 18

*interviewed by Ambrose James in April 2000*

I was captured in 1997 by the RUF. I took part in the attack of Kono and Freetown during the January invasion. We burnt houses, killed people and cut off their hands. [To escape] I boarded a vehicle from Makeni to Freetown with no fare. When I arrived in Freetown I ran away. I sell ice for people and I am paid monthly. I want to learn tailoring so I can be self-sufficient. I want to establish a tailoring shop and employ my friends who do not have jobs. Youths in Sierra Leone are just used by politicians in their election campaigns and they gain nothing in return. Look at the number of youths who are unemployed in the city. I think that unless there is a radical change in the politics of this nation, where people will concentrate on youths, as they form the bulk of the population, there is no future for them.



**Ahmed – aged 25**

*interviewed by Ambrase James in April 2000*

I was a Kamajor defending my community. In 1996 with the bad governance of the NPRC, we all wanted democracy. When elections were declared, we voted for President Kabbah. After the elections the president was overthrown by the AFRC – more military business. These soldiers started to threaten our people and put them under pressure and it was because of this that I thought that by joining this society I will help to put an end to this. I was a patrol commander with fifty men under my control and my role was to discuss with these men about strategies. [The Kamajor society] had a genuine cause in defending this nation. The medicinal power was very good if you abide by the laws and principles. In fact, I used to hesitate to face battle initially, but when we were attacked at our base at Gbalma, I saw it. Bullets hitting me all over and dropping, leaving me unhurt. It is an organized movement but we lacked logistical support. The Kamajors were not a disciplined force because of the high illiteracy rate amongst us. [In the future] I still want to continue my driving job.

rebels, calling them “hard-core apartheid attack dogs.” This was too much for the government and the NPRC had Kabu arrested, along with the editor of the Standard Times newspaper, which had quoted Kabu’s remarks on page one, and thrown into jail. The NCCP never recovered and quickly disintegrated.

### **Civil society ‘contact group’**

Despite setbacks, by mid-1995 peace was firmly on the agenda of a wide range of Sierra Leonean organizations and individuals. Approaches to bringing the war to an end had been regularly suggested by the Supreme Islamic Council to local Muslim clerics as subjects for weekly services. The Sierra Leone Labour Congress had been one of the prime movers of the NCCP, while the Council of Churches was a member of the Multi-Religious Council for Peace and had its own Peace Committee. The Sierra Leone Women’s Movement for Peace (SLWMP) was active as part of the broader women’s movement (see “Sierra Leonean women and the peace process”).

The ICRC had facilitated initial discreet radio contacts between four civic leaders and the RUF in August and had offered to arrange a meeting between an expanded group of civic and religious representatives. However, after the initiative was communicated to the government and it responded by widely publicizing the possibility of talks, there was no movement on the part of the RUF,

even after the ICRC formally informed the RUF that the government would allow such a meeting to go ahead. Threats by RUF spokesmen against relief convoys clouded the prospects for talks further, along with atrocities carried out in the name of the RUF near Bo, and accusations of collaboration by government officials and supporters against some of the civic leaders.

To prepare for possible talks, the NGOs expressed an interest to Conciliation Resources for training in negotiation and mediation skills. In October 1995, a training session took place in Freetown with fourteen members of a ‘contact group’ of civic leaders. Participants included a paramount chief, senior officials of the Supreme Islamic Council, the Council of Churches, the Labour Congress, the Teachers Union, the Petty Traders Association, officials of the SLWMP, and representatives of displaced people. Several of those involved had ongoing professional and personal contacts with key government officials, members of the military and representatives of the international inter-governmental and non-governmental community. Three of the participants had spoken with Sankoh by radio. These and other activities made the organizations and their leaders visible and credible actors in the peace process, as well as targets of suspicion.

The training session was aimed at strengthening the capability of the individuals involved and their

organizations to respond to concrete peace overtures, and to act, if called upon, as intermediaries between the parties to the conflict. Another objective was to improve communication between and among the civic groups and encourage a spirit of trust and co-operation in pursuit of long-term peace and reconstruction. All the participants expressed a firm commitment to pursuing peace both as individuals and through their organizations. However, optimism for civilians to play an intermediary role between parties to the conflict was at a low ebb, in part due to government publicity of the RUF invitation and the collapse of ICRC efforts to deliver food and tools to RUF-controlled areas. The sessions also underscored the differences of opinion on the root causes of the war, varying degrees of opposition or sympathy towards the NPRC government, differing opinions and feelings with regard to the culpability of different parties to the conflict, and degrees of personal and organizational distrust. It was also evident that the overall climate of fear and intimidation had had a chilling effect on the ability of individuals and organizations to openly express themselves and carry on certain activities without fear of reprisal or vilification.

Following the sessions a delegation of participants met with a government official to discuss the seminar and the future activities of the group. That the group had come together to discuss and develop its mediation capabilities was communicated to the RUF in mid-November. But Sankoh never followed up on their invitation to meet with civil society leaders and the group's existence was short-lived. Nonetheless, a number of individual members, such as SLWMP President Fatmatta Boie-Kamara and Pujehun peace activist John Massaquoi, were to continue to play influential roles at the national and local levels.

## Diaspora actors

Individual Sierra Leoneans outside the country have been deeply involved on all sides of the conflict. Among the more visible has been Omrie Golley, a London-based businessman and one-time NPRC supporter. After falling out with the NPRC, Golley had himself introduced to Sankoh in his forest hideout. Golley also launched a group called The National Convention for Reconstruction and Development of Sierra Leone (NCRD) with its stated objective being the restoration of peace and reconciliation in Sierra Leone as a precursor for economic and social reconstruction and development. According to Golley, this group acted as a 'peacebroker' between the rebels and successive Sierra Leonean governments, although he admitted that those governments also suspected him of being partial to the RUF. As the

momentum for negotiations developed Golley, and other expatriate Sierra Leoneans who had been calling for a negotiated settlement, gravitated towards the region. In general, they received a warmer welcome from an RUF struggling to establish political legitimacy than from the Sierra Leone government or the diplomatic community.

While Golley's contacts with the RUF in 1995–96 may have provided Sankoh and his followers with some external recognition, he appeared to play more of an observer role than anything else in the Abidjan peace negotiations. Subsequently, Golley was to become more intimately involved with the RUF and emerged as the group's official spokesman in the preliminary moves that led to the Lomé Peace Agreement in 1999. However, when Sankoh was freed to take part in the negotiations, Golley's star began to fade. After the signing of the agreement, RUF officials denounced Golley and accused him of collecting money on behalf of the RUF without its consent. Golley denied the allegation and said that his leaving the RUF fold came about by mutual consent and was rooted in policy differences over implementation of the Peace Agreement. "Since the signing of the accord, I have been most concerned with the pace and the direction of the peace process, particularly regarding disarmament and demobilization, about the showing of remorse and pursuing positive acts of reconciliation and rehabilitation in favour of the people of Sierra Leone and most particularly in respect of recent human rights abuses being perpetrated against innocent civilians." He also announced he was forming a political party to contest the next elections.

Another leading expatriate actor has been Ambrose Ganda, a London-based critic of successive Sierra Leone governments who, beginning in early 1994, called for a peaceful solution to the conflict in his influential newsletter *Focus on Sierra Leone*. "The war exists; it has not been won; it is spreading; rebels appear to dictate the pace. Through sheer arrogance and an almost uncontrolled urge to self-destruct, the NPRC buries its head in the sands of illusion and ignores advice that they must seriously seek to negotiate with the enemy," Ganda then wrote.

Ganda's highly visible and controversial efforts – tracking the progress of the war, publicly arguing for a negotiated peace, helping to organize diaspora groups favouring dialogue and, whenever possible, personally encouraging the parties to the conflict to enter negotiations – were often condemned by the Sierra Leone authorities and other critics. Nonetheless, Ganda persevered in arguing publicly for a negotiated settlement and in privately encouraging both the RUF and government sympathisers to negotiate rather than continue the carnage.

# Sierra Leonean women and the peace process

by Yasmin Jusu-Sheriff

**Yasmin Jusu-Sheriff is a barrister and solicitor of the High Court of Sierra Leone and of Gray's Inn, London, who has been in private practice in Sierra Leone since 1985. During this time she has also been a women's rights advocate. She is a member of several women's organizations and sits on the board of 'Femmes-Africa-Solidarité'.**

Centralization of power, violence and patriarchal attitudes excluded women from politics and public decision making in post-independence Sierra Leone. Subsequently, politics and politicians were discredited by the failure of the APC one-party government to meet even the most basic needs. In response, women formed non-political voluntary groups that focused on the advancement of the status and welfare of women and worked at the community level to provide them with material benefits and democratic opportunities not otherwise available. Eschewing politics was seen as essential to protect oneself at the personal and organizational level under the APC regime and its successor, the NPRC junta.

## The Women's Forum

In mid-1994, the Sierra Leone Association of University Women (SLAUW) proposed that women's groups meet regularly for networking, information sharing and collective action on issues of common concern. The Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), the Women's Association for National Development (WAND), SLAUW, the National Organization for Women (NOW), and long-time community activists such as Haja Isha Sasso formed the backbone of the new structure. Soon the women of ZONTA and Soroptimist International were networking with Omo Benjamin of the Women's Wing of the Sierra Leone Labour Congress, with Alice Conteh of the newly formed National Displaced Women's Organization, and with members of different women traders groups. Muslim women's associations and mass membership Christian women's groups were also active participants in the Women's Forum, as the discussion group came to be known.

The first issues tackled were preparations for the Beijing Conference on Women. However, the rebel war was



having such a negative impact on women it could not be ignored and women were drawn into political discussions on how to end it. Amy Smythe, the then president of the YWCA, was one of those who argued consistently that women should not insulate themselves from the ongoing crisis and insisted that the YWCA offer its resources in support of activities that were considered by many of her members to be 'too political'. In 1995, Patricia Sharpe of the US Information Service at the US Embassy in Freetown organized a series of discussions with teleconference facilities, enabling Sierra Leonean women, many of them members of the Forum, to learn about initiatives taken by other Third World women in similar situations. At the end of 1994 a women's seminar organized with support from the US Embassy ended with a resolution to take action for peace.

## Women's Movement for Peace

As a first step the Sierra Leone Women's Movement for Peace (SLWMP) was formed and joined the Forum. The SLWMP's initial objective was simply to restore peace in the country. It justified its strategy of direct intervention in politics on the grounds that the national crisis was too

serious to be left to the military government. They argued that women were natural peacemakers who could bring unique skills to resolving the conflict. SLWMP obtained the Forum's active support for a campaign of appeals to government and rebels, marches, prayer rallies and meetings with government and members of the international community to apply pressure for a negotiated settlement.

The military government, like its predecessor, was uneasy about public discussion and particularly sensitive about criticism of their handling of the war. The women's peace campaign put the issue in the public domain in a non-partisan and non-confrontational manner that made public debate of contentious issues possible without the fear of automatically offending the government.

The first peace march organized by the SLWMP in January 1995 was a joyous carnival affair led by a then little-known paediatrician, Fatmatta Boie-Kamara. It was a public demonstration of a kind not seen since the Mothers' Union marched on Parliament in the 1960s to protest against changes in family law. Female professionals, previously known for standing aloof from



## Finda – aged 16

*interviewed by Ambrose James in March 2000*

I was captured in 1996 at Tombodu by a woman captain. She took me to be part of her squad and to be her close aide. I was trained to use an AK-58 gun and a pistol. We attacked Tongo, Koidu, Kongoteh, and a Guinea border town called Fokonia, where we burnt houses and looted foodstuffs and chopped off people's hands. When we were [forced to move out of] Koidu, we went near to the Liberian border and then started attacking right up to Freetown. I used to infiltrate into enemy territories to spy. We smoked marijuana, took capsules, had cocaine injections. My mother was killed in Kono and I have not been able to see my father, brother and sisters. Although I have never gone to school, I want to go to school and become a nursing sister. On the whole, I am still not sure that this accord will work. Unless there are adequate job opportunities for the youths in this country, there will be no future for them. The political arena is crowded with too many old people and no chance is given to the younger people. They ask for experience and how can youths get experience when they are not given the opportunity?

the concerns of ordinary people, danced through central Freetown, linking arms with female soldiers, petty traders and student nurses, singing choruses. The message of the demonstrators was simple and compelling: 'Try Peace to end this senseless war'. As the march moved along, the crowd of women of all ages and stations called to onlookers to join them. Many found the appeals irresistible.

Peace groups hitherto viewed with suspicion as 'fifth columnists' and rebel sympathisers acquired legitimacy through association with the women who had mobilized a mass movement and enjoyed the support of the international community. As a result of the women's intervention a negotiated peace settlement became a respectable option that offered both government and the rebels the opportunity to climb down from entrenched positions without loss of face.

However, by mid-1995, no significant response to the women's activities from the parties left their peace campaign in the doldrums. WOMEN (a small member of the Forum), whose main objectives were promotion of a democratic culture and active participation of women in politics and governance, at this point provided fresh impetus. They proposed the Forum take up the government's half-hearted offer of civilian rule, given under pressure from the international community. As

ever, many groups were wary of politics. In a passionate debate some members of the SLWMP, themselves recently displaced as a result of the war, pointed out that economic collusion between government soldiers and RUF forces meant a speedy battlefield victory by the government was unlikely. It was concluded that peace would best be pursued through a return to democratic civilian rule.

## Building momentum

Women took the lead in the democratization process encouraged by other civil society groups, who felt the military would put up with more from the women than from them. The women's position paper prepared for the National Consultative Conference in August 1995 (called Bintumani I, after the hotel where it was held) was circulated to all delegates and convinced them of the conference's importance. Many of the women's recommendations were adopted without debate, the most significant of which was the provision that only a recall of the conference could authorise postponement of elections.

As the voting date neared and civilians were increasingly targeted in brutal attacks aimed at maiming potential voters and intimidating others, the Women's Forum called a widely reported press conference. There they

underlined the need for candidates to address women's issues such as illiteracy, health care, women entrepreneurship to reduce poverty, and reform of laws detrimental to women on divorce, property, marriage and inheritance. They also reaffirmed their commitment to peace and demanded that elections go ahead as planned as 'an essential and fundamental part of the peace process' and that women make up fifty per cent of any peace negotiation delegation.

In the midst of the pre-election violence and an orchestrated campaign calling for peace before elections, the national Consultative Conference was recalled by the NPRC government two weeks before the election in February 1996. Looking back, the democratisation process had an air of inevitability about it, but on that morning there was still all to play for in the contest for delegates' votes at Bintumani II. Many delegates were undecided, particularly after the force commander clearly signalled the army's opposition to elections. When someone noticed that the young teacher slated to speak on behalf of the Women of the Eastern Province was being prevailed upon by Kailahun District elders to break ranks, an immediate decision was taken by the other women in the conference hall to substitute another speaker. Marie Turay's loud and unequivocal declaration in favour of elections took courage and was considered by many to be the turning point in favour of the decision to proceed with elections.

## Representation

The women's movement's claim to speak for women nationally was often challenged but it was justified. The women's demands in 1995–96 were a non-controversial minimum, reflecting the long-standing demands of women for improved welfare and status. Women displaced to Freetown and the main towns joined the Forum and other connected groups. Well-established Forum members, like the YWCA, already had nation-wide membership and communication structures. Other Freetown groups, such as WAND, had established contacts with up-country women leaders through their provincial projects. SLWMP undertook a successful sensitization campaign and opened branches in all accessible parts of the country. The Forum considered these provincial links important and used them to share information, to co-ordinate marches, and, when places were obtained for additional women delegates to Bintumani I, to identify and contact provincial participants. Decision-making through long and lively discussions on issues attended by up to eighty women at a time, all of whom had a right to speak and to which experts might be invited to provide information, was the hallmark of the Forum and was cultivated to emphasize the democratic credentials of the movement.

Initially the women brought nothing to the peace process but idealistic appeals that carried no weight with the belligerents. The RUF never responded to their appeals for direct talks and the NPRC and civilian governments ignored their demands to be included in the formal peace process. In any case, neither the NPRC nor the RUF were, at that time, interested in the kind of peace being suggested by the women. Women believed that their hard work in the democratization process would be rewarded by places at the negotiating table, but politicians recognized that the ideas and attitudes thrown up by the women's movement had the potential of destabilizing traditional politics, so they discouraged further participation by women in leadership. Thirty years of systematic marginalization of women in politics had left them lacking confidence. The majority of women steadfastly refused to convert into a political force that would have had leverage in the peace process. A civilian government that promised to take over responsibility for the peace process was a sufficient achievement for many of the women's groups who were not comfortable in the spotlight.

The 1996 elections produced a civilian government but neither a participatory peace process nor sustainable peace. After Abidjan, internal conflict disintegrated the SLWMP, while the Forum struggled to fulfil the limited role offered by a flawed agreement it had played no part in drawing up. The May 1997 coup ended women's attempts at independent intervention in the peace process. In future they would be firmly submerged within civil society.

## Lost voices

Although the participation in the search for peace and democratization processes were very empowering experiences for individual women, the movement was perhaps not as influential as sometimes suggested – at least not in the short-term. Certainly they opened up opportunities for public debate on peace issues and peace advocates were no longer automatically perceived as fifth columnists. They also emphasized the importance of issues over personalities in politics. However, the lack of an ideological framework to guide their peacebuilding activities blunted the movement's effectiveness. Forum discussions were long and inclusive, but the analysis was shallow and the consensual style prevented a clear and consistent long-term vision being elaborated.

Nonetheless, the women of Sierra Leone did succeed in creating an independent voice that articulated a non-partisan, female perspective on a wide range of fundamental issues. The most useful contribution a women's movement could make to sustaining peace would be to regain that voice.

# Civil society and peacebuilding:

## The role of the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone

by Thomas Mark Turay

Thomas Mark Turay is a Sierra Leonean and former director of Caritas Makeni and currently completing his doctoral programme at the University of Toronto. His research interests include peace education and social change, local capacity building and sustainable development.

Among the numerous players involved in shaping the Lomé Peace Agreement, the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSL) stands out as the most highly visible and effective non-governmental bridge builder between the warring factions and a population devastated and divided by more than eight years of violence.

With Muslims making up an estimated sixty per cent of Sierra Leone's 4.5 million people and Christians another fifteen to twenty per cent, the mosques and churches and their agencies were key players in the spiritual, cultural and socio-economic development of Sierra Leone before and after independence. Despite spiritual differences between Muslims, Christians and believers in traditional religions, tolerance, co-operation and inter-faith marriages have been hallmarks of religious practice in Sierra Leone. The outbreak of war brought the two major religious groups closer together than ever before. Ordinary Muslims and Christians began to urge their religious leaders to act to end the violence and they in turn condemned the war and urged the RUF to lay down its arms. Churches and mosques around the country preached against the barbaric nature of the violence, prompting rebel forces to target religious leaders and institutions. The rebels burnt schools, killed some missionaries and, on several occasions, abducted religious leaders. As the attacks intensified, it became evident that Muslims and Christians needed to co-operate to a greater extent and use their religious influence and mandate to prevail on both the rebels and the government to find a peaceful resolution.

### **Inception**

In April 1997, religious leaders – with the active support and encouragement of the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP) – established the IRCSL. Some of the founders had been active throughout the Abidjan peace



talks in 1996, earning the respect of both the government and the RUF in the process. The Council was inspired primarily by religious beliefs in the promotion of social justice; secondly, by the example of the Inter-Religious Council in Liberia, which was very vocal against human rights abuses during and after Liberia's civil war; and, thirdly, by calls from their membership to be more proactive in the peace process. Organizational members include the Supreme Islamic Council, the Sierra Leone Muslim Congress, the Federation of Muslim Women Associations in Sierra Leone, the Council of Imams, and the Sierra Leone Islamic Missionary Union. Christian members include the Roman Catholic Church, the Pentecostal Churches Council and the Council of Churches in Sierra Leone (an umbrella for eighteen Protestant denominations).

### Testing the waters

On 23 May 1997, a Council delegation met with President Kabbah "to urge him and remind him about the worsening security situation in the country and to put IRCSL up-front in trying to resolve the conflict", according to Co-Chair Alimamy P. Koroma (also the Secretary General of the Council of Churches). But the initiative came too late to forestall the coup by junior army officers two days later. The IRCSL leaders realized that civilians looked to them to use their influence in convincing the military to resolve the crisis peacefully. They actively

pursued dialogue with the coup leaders and listened to their complaints, while at the same time expressing condemnation of the coup and human rights abuses committed by the junta. They tried hard to convince the coup leaders to listen to the bulk of Sierra Leoneans and the international community and return the country to civilian rule. They also sought to persuade them of the resolve of civil society to sustain its campaign of civil disobedience and the commitment of the international community to isolate the new regime.

The Council's efforts in the ill-fated peace talks in Conakry in October 1997 had virtually no impact on the course taken by the military, which remained defiant of domestic and international pressure until it was overthrown by ECOMOG in February 1998. Nonetheless, there is little doubt that the Council's high visibility and engagement with the junta prevented greater abuses against civilians. With the restoration of civilian government in March 1998, the Council conducted nation-wide thanksgiving services. But it reacted warily to the government's two-track approach to ending the conflict – which combined military force with negotiations.

The Council's relative silence was broken when rebel advances throughout the eastern and northern provinces increased in late 1998. Attacks on religious establishments climaxed in the attack on Freetown in January 1999 when rebels and AFRC soldiers burned

many churches and mosques. Members of certain religious groups, especially Catholics, were abducted and some were murdered. Immediately after the attack had been repelled, Francis Okelo, the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy, turned to the IRCSL as a key player in the search for peace. He encouraged the Council to initiate a dialogue between President Kabbah and RUF leader Foday Sankoh, then being held in custody in Freetown. The IRCSL reciprocated by not challenging the UN, ECOWAS and Western diplomatic support for a combined military and negotiation strategy.

## Growing influence

In early February 1999, the IRCSL released a statement: "The Council is alarmed at the brutality, inhumanity and barbarity unleashed by these rebels and condemns unequivocally all such heinous activities and their perpetrators, as they go against God's plan for mankind, whom he made in His own image." The Council also appealed to the "leadership of the RUF to demonstrate their sincerity of purpose and love for their country and its people by accepting the invitation (of Kabbah) to engage in purposeful dialogue leading to the final and lasting resolution of the crisis in Sierra Leone."

The statement signalled the relaunching of the Council's earlier campaign for a negotiated settlement and its expansion from private lobbying and public advocacy to a multi-faceted approach. One tack was to convene paramount chiefs, tribal heads and parliamentarians in a series of consultative meetings to articulate their views without fear of a government backlash.

By the end of February, the Council issued another statement, agreeing with Kabbah that the Abidjan Accord serve as a basis for future negotiations, but arguing that it be reviewed. It warned that the government should "talk less and listen more, and that the people of Sierra Leone should be given the opportunity to hear from the RUF and its allies what they seek". In concrete terms, the Council recommended the convening of a national consultative conference, the closing of the border with Liberia, and the appointment of a roving regional peace ambassador. It suggested prudence in reintegrating former soldiers into the army.

## Presidential meetings

The Council then initiated a number of meetings with Kabbah to 'consolidate the existing relationship' and to build greater confidence between the Council and the government, as it pressed to gain access to Sankoh. In early March, a delegation was allowed to meet the RUF leader at a military barracks in Freetown – a test of the Council's neutrality and the level of trust it commanded from both the government and Sankoh. The delegation

briefed Sankoh on the previous consultations with Kabbah, the chiefs and civil society groups. They pointed out that they recognized the RUF leader as one of the key players in the peace process. In turn, Sankoh used the occasion to communicate his stated willingness to negotiate a peaceful settlement, as well as his positions and views on how that should happen. To ensure that Sankoh was serious, the Council pleaded with him to authorize the release of some abducted children and child soldiers. Sankoh requested that Council members provide humanitarian assistance in the form of food and medicines to his rebels.

The Council demonstrated its goodwill by providing clothing, blankets, and sanitary kits to surrendered soldiers, while providing relief food to civilians. "The IRCSL made radio contacts with a cross-section of rebels in the bush, counselled them on the need for peace, visited and met with them in their base in the bush to continue discussions on the way to peace," Alimamy P. Koroma said. "These activities helped to consolidate real confidence and thus marked the beginning of actual dialogue between the RUF and the government of Sierra Leone through the kind facilitation of the IRCSL." Sankoh was allowed to talk with his field commanders by radio and with the international media. Rebel field commanders responded by releasing fifty-four abducted children. Meanwhile, at the urging of the Council, the government accepted the notion of a neutral venue for eventual negotiations and more frequent meetings between government representatives and the RUF.

## Liberia

In mid-April, a large delegation of Council members travelled to Liberia to highlight the need to engage President Charles Taylor in the peace process, as well as to meet with RUF members in Monrovia (including spokesman Omrie Golley and military advisor Ibrahima Bah). In the emotional encounter, "the two groups met, they embraced, they were all talking about peace, they want peace for their country," Liberian Information Minister Joe Mulbah reported. "We heard some of them saying 'We are Sierra Leoneans, why continue to kill ourselves? It is time for peace for our country'." When the IRCSL delegation, along with its Liberian counterpart, met with Taylor, they appealed to him "to join the government and people of Sierra Leone in the search for peace in Sierra Leone. When there is war in Sierra Leone there cannot be peace anywhere in the sub-region." Taylor "promised to help restore peace to Sierra Leone."

Unsurprisingly, the Council's activities provoked sharp criticism from some civil society groups, local newspapers, politicians and many ordinary Sierra Leoneans opposed to negotiations with the rebels. The visit to Monrovia was particularly controversial because of

Liberian support for the RUF. Yet it ultimately led the Kabbah government to rethink its initial rejection of dialogue with Taylor and to solicit his co-operation. The ECOWAS, OAU, UN, UK and US governments' representatives agreed with the IRCSL's position regarding Taylor and he eventually took part in the Lomé negotiations.

## Lomé

The initial interventions by religious leaders led the RUF to invite the Council to its internal consultations in Lomé prior to formal negotiations. As the actual talks got underway, a fifteen-member team, including representatives from the IRCSL, WCRP and Norwegian Church Aid, was on hand to provide guidance and act as 'informal mediators', primarily to build confidence. The Council's main strategy was to remain neutral and supportive of the mediation process. Recognized by regional foreign ministers for having 'kick started' the peace process, IRCSL members became integral facilitators of the talks. During negotiating impasses, Council members acted as 'go-betweens' to convince the parties to return to the table. They also used caucusing to air critical issues raised by the parties and to encourage them to co-operate and work towards finding common ground. In moments when the parties failed to see eye-to-eye on certain burning issues, such as power-sharing and the removal of regional military forces from Sierra Leone, the Council members resorted to preaching and praying to sway resistant hard liners. Beyond the talks, the IRCSL played a key role in helping the UN to secure the release of more abducted children, as a sign of the RUF's commitment to the peace process. After the signing of the agreement, Council members collaborated with the UN and other agencies to conduct an emergency relief needs assessment in RUF-held territory.

The Council's active role in encouraging and promoting the negotiations that resulted in the Lomé Agreement was recognized by giving the IRCSL a predominant role in the Council of Elders and Religious Leaders, which was to be established to mediate disputes of interpretation of the accord. However, the Council was never set up. IRCSL members did become involved in reconciliation, relief, human rights training, democratization, disarmament, and reintegration programmes, especially of child combatants and children affected by the war.

The IRCSL organized the free distribution of thousands of copies of the agreement to civil society groups and local and international NGOs. It also continued to reach out to the civil populace and the rebels, primarily through biweekly 'experience-sharing' sessions on various themes of the agreement. The sessions provided a forum for discussions regarding the implementation of the

agreement and issues related to the post-war period in Sierra Leone. They also provided an opportunity for combatants to ask for forgiveness, while allowing people who had suffered to articulate their feelings about atrocities and other abuses. Participants included representatives from the RUF, junta military, government agencies, the media, international and local NGOs, paramount chiefs, politicians and the general public.

## Achievements

Among Sierra Leone's civil society groups, the IRCSL showed great initiative and played a significant role in facilitating dialogue and building confidence among the different parties to the conflict, both prior to and after the Lomé peace talks. The IRCSL earned the respect of civil society, the parties to the conflict and the international community. The Council achieved this status through a variety of actions such as consultative meetings with all the key players in the crisis, press releases, communiqués, experience sharing, prayers, and the preaching of God's message of repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation.

Rev. Fornah Usman, a Wesleyan minister from Makeni and IRCSL member, conveyed the spiritual dimension of the Council's approach: "We are always preaching the ministry of reconciliation. No matter what those guys may have done, there is room on the side of the Lord to forgive them and to bring them back on the road they are supposed to be on. We don't want to take sides in a conflict, because as religious ministers we are supposed to be on top of the situation. If any of the factions is not doing something right, we must be in a position to tell them the wrong things they are doing. For those things that are correct we can applaud them."

It is extremely difficult to determine the relative impact of the IRCSL vis-à-vis the other players who facilitated the peace talks. The Council took the bold step to initiate the first meeting between Sankoh and Kabbah after the invasion of Freetown. Their visit to Monrovia prior to the Lomé talks helped to recognize Charles Taylor as a key player capable of prevailing on the rebels to lay down their arms. It also provided recognition of the improved relationship between the two governments. Perhaps the greatest impact of the Council's involvement was in helping to build confidence between the rebels and civil society – a trust heavily shaken, however, by the return to military confrontation in May 2000.

# Grassroots peacebuilding in Pujehun

by John Massaquoi and  
Frances Fortune

**John Massaquoi is director of the Sulima Fishing Community Development Project in Sierra Leone. He has spoken about his community peacebuilding work in Sierra Leone and Liberia at several international conferences.**

**Frances Fortune was Conciliation Resources' West Africa programme co-ordinator from March 1997 to July 2000, based in Bo. Previously she worked with a number of international and Sierra Leonean NGOs on social and rural development programmes.**

**T**he Sulima Fishing Community Development Project (SFCDP) is an organization based in Soro-Gbema Chiefdom in the extreme southern corner of Sierra Leone, where the country's border with Liberia meets the Atlantic Ocean. It is an area well endowed with natural resources – river and ocean fisheries, farmland and forests, and beautiful beaches once enjoyed by tourists. Access has become increasingly difficult because of neglect of roads and ferries and the insecurity caused by the war.

## Beginnings

The community development project was originally established to improve living standards and promote development within the communities of Soro-Gbema. The chiefdom had been marginalized for years prior to the start of the war in 1991. Pujehun District and especially Soro-Gbema Chiefdom were the scene of the 1982 *Ndogboyosoi* War, which was triggered by election campaign manipulation by the ruling APC party and the intervention of a special squad of customs police against supporters of the SLPP candidate. There was no process of reconciliation following this violent episode. The children of those killed in the fighting, or who died in detention, were among the first to join the RUF when they attacked eastern and southern Sierra Leone from Liberia nine years later.

The 1996 elections were followed by a period of relative peace in the country and the liberation of the entire Pujehun District by the civil militia (*Kamajors*). Displaced people and refugees started to return and the SFCDP began to work on peacebuilding in Soro-Gbema, Kpaka and Makpele chiefdoms, undertaking youth vocational training, micro-credit for the destitute, resettling women, and communal fishing to re-establish the economic base of the community – all as a vehicle for peacebuilding.



## Peacebuilding in exile

The May 1997 coup that overthrew the elected government led to looting of project inputs and the suspension of funding. Most of the project staff went into exile in Liberia, where they regrouped without immediate operational support. New funds eventually enabled peacebuilding work to continue. The focus was bridging the deep rifts between pro-government and pro-RUF refugees in Liberia, particularly in camps near Monrovia and closer to the Sierra Leone border, to improve the lot of those living in exile and prepare the foundations for a return home.

SFCDP organized one-day conflict resolution workshops in each camp: the first of their kind for the refugees. These were opportunities for participants to explore the causes of the war and reasons for their being forced to flee. Chiefs, women, youths and ex-RUF combatants all took part in examining their social and political problems. From both sides of the divide they looked at individual and collective responsibility and discussed the need for reconciliation with their children in the RUF. The project team also organized refresher courses in adult literacy, training for teachers among the refugees, and camp football teams and matches that brought people of different backgrounds and persuasions together in enjoyment and fun.

## Problems of return

The ousting of the junta in February 1998 triggered a spontaneous movement of refugees back into southern Pujehun, but the pre-war problems and new conflicts generated by the war awaited them. The project team set to work organizing workshops in three chiefdoms for returnees and those who had stayed behind. The meetings included young people, local authorities, many elders and women. Similar problems were faced in all three chiefdoms: misconceptions developed during the conflict, looting and false claims to other people's property, theft, family disputes, separation and marital conflicts. Social misbehaviour was a major cause of conflict, most of which affected youths. Many youths became drug abusers and traffickers, tradition and customs were ignored as they engaged in cultivation of drugs and the destruction of sacred places. Their parents or local authorities had no control over them.

At the level of local politics, the returnees faced longstanding chieftaincy disputes caused by the deaths of paramount chiefs, the lack of civil authority, the usurpation of authority by CDF commanders, personal and community conflicts between those who stayed behind in rebel-controlled territory, and those who fled to government-controlled areas or Liberia. The disruption of existing social and political customs and allegiances

caused by the war also meant that new leaders had emerged among those who had left and those who had remained behind.

## Peace monitors

During the initial community meetings local people established a mechanism to promote the peaceful resolution of disputes. Peace monitors were identified by the community to help resolve palavers and conflicts and to ensure a just solution. Because the communities are predominantly Muslim, the personal qualifications sought in peace monitors were facility in Koranic reading and respect in the community. Each chiefdom section nominated one person, mainly Koranic teachers or mwalimus, to provide early warning of conflict within their section and to intervene before the conflicts became severe. To be able to intervene effectively, the peace monitors were trained in basic conflict-handling skills to deal with local militia personnel, community relations, human rights issues and reconciliation.

Each peace monitor was expected to work for twelve days every month, covering between ten and fifteen villages. They were given a bicycle to get around. A small stipend was provided so that each monitor could commit the required time to this work. From within their ranks the monitors nominated a principal peace monitor, through whom the project managers received their reports. The head monitor and his deputy are invited to workshops organized by the SFCDP.

When there are local grievances, the people call the peace monitors instead of turning to the native court system. The peace monitors use dialogue and the Koran to solve problems. When they encounter more complex conflicts, such as political disputes between villages or tensions between communities and the CDF, they call for the assistance of a grievance committee established at chiefdom level with representatives of all segments of the community.





### Thomas – aged 14

*interviewed by Ambrose James in March 2000*

We were attacked at Telu. My family and I ran in two different directions. My father was shot in the foot while he hid in a mosque. I was not captured. I escaped in the thick of the fighting, but this was the work of the almighty God. I came to Bo, where I met a woman who took care of me. Later she left Bo, so I went to another woman, who took me to sell ice for her. But I broke a flask in her house and I was driven out. I joined my friends and we used to sleep on verandas. My friends told me about an NGO, which deals with child protection. While I was there I was provoked by other kids and it led to me wounding one of them. So I was starved for a week and I decided to leave and found the Unaccompanied Children and Street Children Project. I think there will be hope for me because the war is coming to an end now and opportunities are coming for the young, more so with the RUF now in town.

These strategies have proven very effective to date. However, as this alternative service is free of charge to the parties in conflict, one consequence has been that the district administration is unable to generate revenue. This has led to growing official resentment. When the district officer of Pujehun District sent a treasury clerk to count returnees in the chiefdom, re-institute collection of local taxes and re-establish the native authority court, people refused. They were just starting to rebuild their lives and their communities and they had no means to generate funds for taxes. Local people also remembered the heavy fines imposed by the courts and unfair decisions based on favouritism towards one of the parties. Rebuilding that system is seen as a recipe for ongoing conflict within the community.

In individual cases, peace monitors have reported that attempts at resolving conflicts that called for financial restitution have not been successful because financial obligations are not always honoured and there are no serious measures taken against defaulters. To rectify these problems, community leaders are looking at combining all future grassroots peacebuilding efforts with a component of human rights and 'good governance' advocacy to strengthen voluntary compliance. They also hope to find some common ground with traditional leaders and local court officials through workshops on officials' and citizens' responsibilities and obligations to their community and to the state.

## Conclusion

Overall, this localized peacebuilding process has been successful. Grievances are being examined and discussed, minimising violations and abuses of power. People have an increased awareness of democratic principles and their rights and obligations. The settlement of disputes is seen to be fairer than the old court system. Community conflict resolution has helped families reunite. All this has helped lay the foundation for peaceful coexistence in the community. But there is a need to replicate and widen the knowledge and experience gained. Other communities in Soro-Gbema, Kpaka, Makpele and Gallinas Perri chiefdoms are requesting peacebuilding workshops and a system of peace monitors, as well as help in reactivating the local economy.

# Dialogue on justice and reconciliation

Facilitated by Florella Hazely  
Notes taken by Alpha Abu

Alpha Abu works for both the radio and television stations of the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service.

Florella Hazely is the advocacy desk officer of the Council of Churches in Sierra Leone.

*In March 2000, well before the May crisis in the peace process, five key figures in Sierra Leone's search for peace were brought together in Freetown to discuss the prospects for justice and reconciliation and the potential impact of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) envisaged in the Lomé Agreement. The discussion was facilitated by Florella Hazely, advocacy officer for the Council of Churches in Sierra Leone, and the report prepared by Alpha Abu, who works for both the radio and television stations of the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service. Excerpts are reproduced below.*

---

**Zainab Bangura**, Director of the Campaign for Good Governance, part of the umbrella Civil Society Movement

The first thing we need to understand is that whatever has happened in Sierra Leone, we will never be able to forget. We might be able to forgive. And if we are to deal with that, it is very important to know exactly what happened, why did it happen and how it happened.

Something must have gone wrong somewhere that our brothers and sisters can resort to being less than beasts. We need to be very honest. Maybe they themselves need healing. But we need to understand it. And, until we are able to do that, we cannot put our lives together as a nation, because that psychological problem will always be behind us to say 'it will happen again'.

If we do not reconcile, I mean real reconciliation, where people can be honest with each other and know the truth of what happened and commit ourselves that it should never happen again in the history of this country, there cannot be true reconciliation. The perpetrators need to ask for forgiveness and the victims need to be able to forgive. The issue of vengeance shouldn't come into it.

---

**Solomon Berewa**, Attorney General and Minister of Justice

We as a government are criticized quite heavily, and, I believe quite justifiably, for granting what has been called a blanket amnesty to those who caused what has been described in various quarters as the worst types of human rights violations. In doing that, we are more or less denying the victims of those violations any form of justice or redress. So the TRC was provided for in the agreement as a very weak way of addressing the issue of impunity.

The good thing about (the TRC) is that it is more a religious matter than a legal or political matter. It is our conviction, based purely from our own local settings and our individual religious beliefs, that if somebody wrongs you or does you anything harmful and he comes forward and owns up to it, that would bring some element of degradation to him and, in the process, it might chasten him. It will also bring some element of comfort to the victim.

If there is anything like innocent persons, they are the war victims. They did not create any situation which led to the war. There is no basis for inflicting the type of injury on them which they suffered.

In a situation like the TRC, the one thing that we do not want to appear, or even to be thought of, is the word vengeance. Forgiveness is the direct opposite of vengeance. So obviously, we are talking of truth and reconciliation where we want to bring people together after one has done wrong to the other. Even in law, if you do anything because of vengeance, whatever justification you have had initially, you lose that justification immediately. Justice implies trying to make some form of amends for some wrong done to the victim. The only justice the victim would have here is the satisfaction that he has come to know who caused the injury to him, whatever reasons he might have had, but above all, the request for forgiveness. And if the victim is satisfied with the manner of asking for forgiveness and he grants forgiveness, then that will be justice, and, in the process, reconciliation would come.

---

**Father Giorgio Biguzzi**, Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Makeni

The thrust, the spirit, of the TRC is very positive. The aim is not in a sense punitive, it's 'Let's go beyond. Let's rebuild'. There are a lot of misconceptions among ordinary Sierra Leoneans about the commission. Some might think it's a way – just like with a sponge – to clean up the whole thing and go forward.

Legal amnesty is different from getting religious amnesty from God, which implies that it touches my soul, my inner being. I have to understand what I have done, accept, repent, if I'm the perpetrator, so that I can be healed. I will receive eventual amnesty from God and that will bring me to a point where I can be healed and my brother or sister can accept me, but if he is also ready to forgive. Forgiveness is a religious experience, an ethical and moral act.

---

**Mike Lamin**, RUF Minister for Trade and Industry

We are in a very peculiar situation, in the sense that for eight to ten years we have been engulfed by a civil crisis and (all) have been victims, the combatants as well as the civil populace. We believe that the TRC should not be a kind of commission to inflict punishment on people alleged to have been engaged in human rights abuses.

We should encourage the perpetrators, as well as the victims, to explain themselves and not to threaten them with punitive measures or else we would be either wittingly or unwittingly postponing something which we are trying to

avert. We should not send a (negative) signal to those that took up arms as a result of the situation that we found ourselves in before the war.

Reconciliation underpins the essence of the commission itself. We should try by all means to desist from using the word 'vengeance'. Like somebody was mentioning about the January invasion after it was repulsed and the restoration of the democratically elected government in 1998, we found ourselves in a vicious cycle of violence. It is well documented that a lot of atrocities were committed even in Freetown here. So we should actually try to get that word [vengeance] out of our dictionary.

Collectively, we should not only focus on the victims but even the perpetrators themselves have psychological problems you have so-called PTSD – post traumatic stress disorder. We are all victims, perpetrators as well as ordinary victims. So we should look at the problem from a holistic point of view, instead of creating problems that in fact will revert us to the root of the crisis itself.

---

**Prince Nicol**, Public Relations Officer for the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace (CCP), chaired by former AFRC leader Johnny Paul Koroma

The TRC would be an important ingredient in ensuring peace for a start. It is designed to ease the trauma that men, women, and children have gone through.

The African setting is such that you can subdue the human being when he knows that he has done awful things, when you get him to tell you that I did this or that, in front of you and elders. But let us not pick a leaf from the Western world and import their own form of truth and reconciliation to address the Sierra Leone issue.

If you offend an elder or a child and you take upon yourself to admit that I have committed these atrocities or these crimes, the African is a soft-spoken human being. On most occasions they accept that you have repented.

I believe that people should be encouraged to come and listen to those they call 'perpetrators' and for those who are alleged perpetrators of crimes to say what they have done.

If we want to actualize the terms of reference of the TRC, we should start to remove some of those words, like 'vengeance' and 'justice'. One should turn to the perpetrator and say: "You hurt me some time ago. Tell me why did you do it". Reconciliation has to come from the heart.

# Key texts

- ☞ The Abidjan Agreement *page 61*  
Peace Agreement between the Government of the  
Republic of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary  
United Front of Sierra Leone (RUF)  
– 30 November 1996
- ☞ The Conakry Peace Plan *page 65*  
ECOWAS Six-month Peace Plan for Sierra Leone  
23 October 1997 – 22 April 1998  
– 23 October 1997
- ☞ The Lomé Agreement *page 67*  
Peace Agreement between the Government of  
Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front  
of Sierra Leone  
– 7 July 1999

# THE ABIDJAN AGREEMENT

---

Peace Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone (RUF)

The Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone (RUF).

Moved by the imperative need for a just and durable peace in Sierra Leone;

Inspired by the equally imperative need for genuine national unity and reconciliation to end the fratricidal war in Sierra Leone;

Committed to promoting popular participation in governance and full respect for human rights and humanitarian laws;

Dedicated to the advancement of democratic development and to the maintenance of a socio-political order free of inequality, despotism and corruption;

Convinced that a sense of common purpose and patriotism is the need of the hour;

HEREBY AGREE as follows:

## ARTICLE 1

The armed conflict between the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF is hereby ended with immediate effect. Accordingly, the two foes will ensure that a total cessation of hostilities is observed forthwith.

## ARTICLE 2

The Government and the RUF undertake that no effort shall be spared to effect the scrupulous respect and implementation of the provisions contained in this Peace Agreement to ensure that the establishment and consolidation of a just peace becomes a priority in Sierra Leone.

## ARTICLE 3

A national body to be known as the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace shall be established within two weeks of the signing of this Agreement. The Commission shall be a verification mechanism responsible for supervising and monitoring the implementation of and compliance with all the provisions contained in this Peace Agreement.

The Commission, in fulfilment of this task during the period of consolidating the peace, shall co-ordinate and facilitate the work of the following bodies which will proceed to establish:

- (i) Socio-Economic Forum;
- (ii) Citizen's Consultative Conferences;
- (iii) Multi-partisan Council;
- (iv) Trust Fund for the Consolidation of Peace;
- (v) Demobilization and Resettlement Committee;
- (vi) National Budget and Debt Committee.

The Commission shall comprise representatives of the Government and the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone, drawing on the resources of state and civic institutions as and when necessary.

The Commission shall have the power to recommend the preparation of enabling measures contained in this Peace Agreement. It shall have the power to issue publicly its conclusions. The parties undertake to comply with the conclusions of the Commission.

The Commission shall have the power to prepare preliminary legislative drafts necessary for the implementation and development of the provisions contained in the present Peace Agreement.

The Parties undertake to consult the Commission before taking decisions on measures relating to the present Peace Agreement.

The Commission may similarly consult the Parties at the highest level whenever it is appropriate.

The Commission shall have access to and may inspect any activity or site connected with the implementation of the present Peace Agreement. The Commission shall have full powers to organize its work in the manner in which it deems most appropriate and to appoint any group or sub-committee which it may deem useful in the discharge of its functions.

The Commission shall have its own offices, adequate communication facilities and adequate secretariat support staff.

A Trust Fund for the Consolidation of Peace shall be established to provide funding for the implementation of the present Peace Agreement.

## ARTICLE 4

Citizens' Consultative Conferences shall be organized once a year the first of which shall be organized within one hundred and twenty days of the signing of the present Peace Agreement in order to encourage people's participation and to invite recommendations for the formulation of guidelines and their implementation that will ensure truly fair and representative political processes.

#### ARTICLE 5

The disarmament of combatants will be effected upon their entry into the designated assembly zones, and demobilization and reintegration as soon as practicable thereafter.

The upkeep and welfare of the encamped combatants shall be the primary responsibility of the Government of Sierra Leone in conjunction with the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace, assisted by the international community.

#### ARTICLE 6

The Parties commit themselves to a well planned national effort on encampment, disarmament, demobilization and resettlement linked to national development objectives. To that end, a Demobilization and Resettlement Committee shall be established within a month of the signing of the present Peace Agreement.

The Committee shall coordinate the encampment, disarmament, demobilization and resettlement of RUF combatants. The Committee shall work in coordination with all the relevant institutions and agencies.

Both Parties shall consult on the nomination of the membership of the Committee which shall not exceed seven persons.

The Committee shall be provided with adequate funding.

#### ARTICLE 7

The Demobilization and Resettlement Committee shall identify assembly zones and camp areas for RUF combatants where they shall be registered, encamped and disarmed. The movement into the Assembly Zones shall commence within once month of the signing of this Agreement and be completed as soon as practicable but no later than three months from this date.

#### ARTICLE 8

The Parties shall request the international community to help supervise and monitor the encampment, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes. The Joint Monitoring Group shall have observers at any of these processes.

#### ARTICLE 9

The Commission shall, as a priority, make recommendations on the restructuring and re-orientation of the military as well as its leadership. In this context, members of the RUF who may wish to be part of the country's military can become part of the new unified armed forces within a framework to be discussed and agreed upon by the Commission.

#### ARTICLE 10

The Government of Sierra Leone shall ensure the return to barracks of those units of the army not required for normal security duties and the downsizing of the Armed Forces of Sierra Leone (RSLMF), taking into account the security needs of the country.

#### ARTICLE 11

A Neutral Monitoring Group (NMG) from the international community shall be responsible for monitoring breaches provided under this Peace Agreement.

Both Parties upon signing this Agreement shall request the international community to provide neutral monitors.

Such monitors when deployed shall be in position for an initial period of three months.

The Neutral Monitoring Group shall report any violations of the ceasefire to its headquarters which shall in turn communicate the same to the headquarters of the Joint Monitoring Group comprising of representative of the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF based in Freetown.

#### ARTICLE 12

The Executive Outcomes shall be withdrawn five weeks after the deployment of the Neutral Monitoring Group (NMG). As from the date of the deployment of the Neutral Monitoring Group, the Executive Outcomes shall be confined to barracks under the supervision of the Joint Monitoring Group and the Neutral Monitoring Group. Government shall use all its endeavours, consistent with its treaty obligations, to repatriate other foreign troops no later than three months after the deployment of the Neutral Monitoring Group or six months after the signing of the Peace Agreement, whichever is earlier.

#### ARTICLE 13

The Parties agree that immediately following the signing of the present Peace Agreement, the RUF shall commence to function as a political movement with the rights, privileges and duties provided by law; and that within thirty days, following that, the necessary conditions shall be created to enable the RUF to register as a political movement according to law.

#### ARTICLE 14

To consolidate the peace and promote the cause of national reconciliation, 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 the signing of this Agreement. In addition, legislative and other measures necessary to guarantee former RUF 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 reintegration within a framework of full legality.

#### ARTICLE 15

The mandate and membership of the existing National Unity and Reconciliation Commission shall be expanded in consultation with the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace to enable it to undertake a sustained and effective campaign of

civic education aimed at enhancing national unity and reconciliation, taking into account the imperative need to heal the wounds of the conflict.

#### ARTICLE 16

The Parties agree that the standards of accountability, integrity and probity in the public services of Sierra Leone shall be raised. To that end, immediate steps shall be taken to establish the office of Ombudsman to promote the implementation of a professional code of ethics, and the integrity and patriotism of all public servants. It shall also seek to eradicate all forms of corruption.

#### ARTICLE 17

The Parties shall approach the international community with a view to mobilizing resources which will be used to establish a trust fund to enable the RUF to transform itself into a political party.

#### ARTICLE 18

The Parties agree to the principle of reforming the present electoral process in Sierra Leone. There shall, in that regard, be the full participation of citizens and their organizations in formulating electoral reforms.

The independence and integrity of the National Electoral Commission shall be guaranteed to ensure fair and acceptable electoral exercise.

In reconstituting the National Electoral Commission, the President shall consult all political parties and movements including the RUF to determine the membership and terms of reference of that Commission, paying particular attention to the need for a level playing field in the nation's electoral politics.

Both the Government and the RUF shall, together with other political parties, nominate men and women of professionalism, integrity and objectivity to the National Electoral Commission, not later than three months after the signing of the present Peace Agreement.

It is hereby agreed that no member of the National Electoral Commission shall be eligible for appointment to a political office by any government formed as a result of an election they were mandated to conduct.

#### ARTICLE 19

The Parties agree that the basic civil and political liberties which are recognised by the Sierra Leone legal system and are contained in the Declarations and Principles on Human Rights adopted by the UN and the OAU, especially the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, shall be fully guaranteed and promoted within Sierra Leone society.

These include the right to life and liberty, freedom from torture; the right to a fair trial, freedom of conscience, expression and association, and the right to take part in the governance of one's country.

To foster national reconciliation and ensure the full and unrestricted participation of the RUF in the political process, the RUF shall enjoy:

(i) freedom of the press and access to the media in order that they may be heard and informed. (ii) freedom of association, expression, assembly and the right to mobilise and demonstrate freely, and to communicate politically in order that they may organize effectively and set up appropriate infrastructure.

All political prisoners and prisoners of war, if any, shall be released.

#### ARTICLE 20

To monitor compliance with the basic rights guaranteed in the present Peace Agreement, as well as to promote human rights education throughout the various sectors of Sierra Leonean society, including schools, the media, the police and the military, an independent National Commission on Human Rights shall be established.

In pursuance of the above, technical and material assistance may be sought from the UN Special Commission on Human Rights, UN Centre for Human Rights, African Commission on Human and People's Rights and other relevant international organizations.

The National Commission on Human Rights shall have the power to investigate human rights violations and to institute legal proceedings where appropriate.

Further, a consortium of local human rights groups shall be encouraged to help monitor human rights observance.

#### ARTICLE 21

The Parties undertake to respect the principles and rules of international humanitarian law.

#### ARTICLE 22

In the pursuit of the reconstruction, rehabilitation and socio-economic development of Sierra Leone as a matter of the utmost priority, special attention shall be given to rural and urban poor areas, war victims, disabled persons and other vulnerable groups. The Government in conjunction with the Committee for Demobilization and Resettlement shall co-operate with all political parties and movements, including the RUF, to raise resources internationally for these objectives during the initial phase of the consolidation of peace.

#### ARTICLE 23

The Government shall do all in its power to mobilize resources internally and externally to meet the needs of the post-war reconstruction and socio-economic development.

#### ARTICLE 24

The Parties agree that the independence of the Judiciary shall be strengthened in accordance with its role of ensuring the fair and impartial dispensation of justice in a democratic order. The composition of the present Judicial and Legal Service Commission shall be determined so as to ensure the independence of the Judiciary from the other organs of state as well as the political parties. Its membership shall include, in addition to judges and representatives of the legal profession and public services, representatives of other sectors of society not directly connected with the administration of justice.

## ARTICLE 25

The Police Force shall be strengthened to ensure that the rule of law is upheld throughout Sierra Leone. To that end, the present Police Force shall be vetted. Furthermore, the professional training of the Police Force shall henceforth assure a new orientation, but emphasizing professionalism, the importance of human dignity and democratic values and respect and protection of human rights. It shall, further, emphasise that the conduct of members of the Police Force shall be free from all partisan considerations of politics, ideology and social position and that the Police Force shall avoid and combat corruption.

Nominations for the Police Council will come from wider sectors of society prior to their appointment so as to ensure their truly civilian and non-partisan character.

## ARTICLE 26

It is recognised that there is a socio-economic dimension to the conflict which must also be addressed in order to consolidate the foundation of peace. Accordingly, the socio-economic policy of Sierra Leone shall be guided among other things, by the following principles, taking into account available resources:

i. Enhancement of the nation's productive capacity through meaningful grassroots participation in the reconstruction and development of the country;

ii. The provision of equal opportunities to all Sierra Leoneans especially those in the countryside and the urban poor, with the aim of equitable distribution of the nation's resources thereby empowering them to contribute effectively to decisionmaking and implementation of policies which affect their lives;

iii. Improving the quality of life of the people through the provision of, inter alia,

a. primary health care in all villages and towns;

b. affordable and quality housing, especially in the countryside and poor urban areas;

c. improved educational services to enable all children of primary and junior-secondary school age to receive free and compulsory schooling as well as provide the opportunity for the youth and all other Sierra Leoneans to receive affordable quality education;

d. clean drinking water and sewerage system in every village and town;

e. provide job opportunities in a systematic and sustainable way for the people, especially the youth;

f. promote and sustain rural development and support agriculture in terms of technical, credit and marketing facilities;

g. provide support for production and provision of basic food and nutritional requirements of the people and food security in general;

h. protect the environment and regulate the exploitation of natural resources in the interest of the people, as well as prohibit monopolies;

i. provide the required infrastructure such as roads, transport and communications, energy and rural electrification, for improved living conditions, especially of the rural people;

j. seek to obtain debt relief in order to transfer funds from debt servicing to meet the urgent requirements of rebuilding a war-torn society.

## ARTICLE 27

A broad-based Socio-Economic forum, in which the RUF shall participate, shall be established with a view to enriching policy formulation and execution in the socio-economic sector.

## ARTICLE 28

The Government of Côte d'Ivoire, the United Nations, the OAU and the Commonwealth shall stand as moral guarantors that this Peace Agreement is implemented with integrity and in good faith by both parties.

Annex to this Agreement:

A nationwide sensitization programme for the peace process shall be pursued by the Parties, using all available means of communication to impress upon their combatants and the nation at large:

- the fact that hostilities have ended;
- the reasons for demobilization;
- the opportunities for reintegration of combatants; and
- the need for reconciliation and lasting peace.

Done in Abidjan this 30 day of the month of November, 1996.

*Alhaji Dr. Ahmad Tejan Kabbah*  
*President of the Republic of Sierra Leone*

*Corporal Foday Saybana Sankoh*  
*Leader of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF)*

*Henri Konan Bedie*  
*President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire*

*Berhanu Dinka*  
*Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General for Sierra Leone*

*Adwoa Coleman*  
*Representative of the Organization of African Unity (OAU)*

*Moses Anafu*  
*Representative of the Commonwealth Organization*

# THE CONAKRY PEACE PLAN

## ECOWAS SIX-MONTH PEACE PLAN FOR SIERRA LEONE

23 OCTOBER 1997 –  
22 APRIL 1998

### (SCHEDULE OF IMPLEMENTATION)

#### PREAMBLE:

Pursuant to the ECOWAS mandate to implement proposals for the resolution of the Sierra Leone crisis contained in the Final Communique of 26 June, 1997 in Conakry, a seven-point peace plan has been devised for the early return of constitutional governance to Sierra Leone. These are:

1. Cessation of hostilities throughout Sierra Leone

i. With immediate effect

ii. Establish monitoring and verification mechanism

Note: Process to be undertaken by ECOMOG, and the UN military observers. Participation of UN military observers needs the agreement of the UN Security Council.

2. Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration of Combatants: 1 to 31 December, 1997

Note: ECOWAS Committee of Five Ministerial Assessment visit (20 November, 1997)

3. Commencement of Humanitarian Assistance: 14 November 1997

Note: ECOMOG to monitor the process

4. Return of Refugees and Displaced Persons

Commencement date: 1 December, 1997

UNHCR assisted repatriation and resettlement of refugees and displaced persons

5. Restoration of the constitutional Government and Broadening of the Power Base: Takes effect from 22 May, 1998.

6. Immunities and Guarantees: Takes effect from 22 May, 1998

#### ELABORATION OF ECOWAS PEACE PLAN

1. Cessation of Hostilities:

It is considered that cessation of hostilities should come into force immediately. However, this will have to be accompanied by a monitoring and verification regime. Leaders of the various combatant units will be expected to disseminate information concerning these measures and ensure compliance with them. These measures will be supervised by ECOMOG, assisted by UN military observation group. The verification process will continue right up to the termination of the peace plan, i.e. 22 April 1998.

2. Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration of Combatants:

It is considered that a minimum of 30 days would be required to conduct an effective disarmament and demobilisation of combatants. This should take place from 1 to 31 December, 1997. Given the nation-wide dislocation of infrastructures and administration, a simple and uncomplicated procedure is envisaged. Combatants will be directed to report at designated centres in order to be engaged in the disarmament process. ECOMOG will supervise the entire process of disarmament and demobilisation. Where necessary, incentives may have to be provided to encourage the voluntary participation of combatants in all this process.

3. Humanitarian Assistance:

Considering that sanctions/embargoes will be strictly enforced throughout the period of the implementation of the Sierra Leone peace plan, the flows of humanitarian assistance beginning 14 November 1997 will continue to be monitored by ECOMOG and UN military observers. To this effect, a mechanism will be established by ECOMOG to facilitate the flow of

humanitarian assistance. All this will be worked within the context of UN Security Council Resolution.

4. Return of Refugees and Displaced Persons:

Recognising that refugees, particularly those in neighboring countries, may wish to voluntarily return following the cessation of hostilities, UNHCR assistance should begin from 1 December, 1997.

5. Restoration of Constitutional Government and Broadening of the Power Base:

The restoration of constitutional order to Sierra Leone is at the heart of the ECOWAS peace plan. Consequently, it is considered necessary that the Government of Tejan Kabbah should be enabled to exercise effective control once he is restored to office on 22 May 1998. Nevertheless, it is recognised that for an enduring peace to be restored which will enjoy the support of the majority of Sierra Leoneans and the confidence of the subregion, efforts should be made to ensure that an all-inclusive government is evolved. In this regard, the goodwill and assistance of the international community, both financial and material, would be necessary.

The interest of the various parties in Sierra Leone should be suitably accommodated. Accordingly, it is recommended that the new Cabinet should be a cabinet of inclusion.

Furthermore, in order to accommodate the aspirations of their supporters, Board and Senior Civil Service appointments are to reflect broad national character.

All the above power sharing formulas should come into effect 22 May 1998.

It is recognised that Corporal Foday Sankoh as a leader of RUF could continue to play an active role and participate in the peace process.

In the spirit of the Abidjan Accord and in the context of this Agreement, Corporal Foday Sankoh is expected to return to his country to make his contribution to the peace process.

6. Reintegration of Combatants:

All those who disarm as a result of the implementation of the peace process,

should be provided with either job training to fit them for alternative employment or given scholarships and grants for further education. Access to education at all levels should be made available to all demobilised persons. Ex-combatants should be provided with assistance to facilitate their re-integration into their communities. We strongly appeal to the UN, OAU, ECOWAS and indeed the international community to render appropriate assistance to achieve this objective.

7. Donor Appeals for Emergency Humanitarian Assistance for Reconstruction and Rehabilitation:

The United Nations and the OAU in cooperation with ECOWAS are requested to launch these appeals as soon as hostilities cease.

8. Immunities and Guarantees:

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.

DONE AT CONAKRY, THIS 23RD DAY OF OCTOBER 1997

FOR THE COMMITTEE OF FIVE OF ECOWAS ON SIERRA LEONE

*Chief Tom Ikimi*  
*Minister of Foreign Affairs*  
*Federal Republic of Nigeria*

*Lamine Kamara*  
*Minister of Foreign Affairs*  
*Republic of Guinea*

FOR THE DELEGATION  
REPRESENTING MAJOR JOHNNY  
PAUL KOROMAH

*Col Abdul Karim Sesay*  
*Secretary General AFRC*

*Alimamy Pallo Bangura*  
*Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs*

WITNESSES

*For U.N.*  
*Prof. Ibrahima Fall*  
*Asst. Secretary-General UN*

FOR O.A.U.

*Ms. Adwoa Coleman*  
*OAU Representative*

# THE LOMÉ AGREEMENT

## PEACE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE AND THE REVOLUTIONARY UNITED FRONT OF SIERRA LEONE

### THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE and THE REVOLUTIONARY UNITED FRONT OF SIERRA LEONE (RUF)

Having met in Lomé, Togo, from the 25 May 1999, to 7 July 1999 under the auspices of the Current Chairman of ECOWAS, President Gnassingbe Eyadéma;

Recalling earlier initiatives undertaken by the countries of the sub-region and the International Community, aimed at bringing about a negotiated settlement of the conflict in Sierra Leone, and culminating in the Abidjan Peace Agreement of 30 November, 1996 and the ECOWAS Peace Plan of 23 October, 1997;

Moved by the imperative need to meet the desire of the people of Sierra Leone for a definitive settlement of the fratricidal war in their country and for genuine national unity and reconciliation;

Committed to promoting full respect for human rights and humanitarian law;

Committed to promoting popular participation in the governance of the country and the advancement of democracy in a socio-political framework free of inequality, nepotism and corruption;

Concerned with the socio-economic well being of all the people of Sierra Leone;

Determined to foster mutual trust and confidence between themselves;

Determined to establish sustainable peace and security; to pledge forthwith, to settle all past, present and future differences and grievances by peaceful means; and to refrain from the threat and use of armed force to bring about any change in Sierra Leone;

Reaffirming the conviction that sovereignty belongs to the people, and

that Government derives all its powers, authority and legitimacy from the people;

Recognising the imperative that the children of Sierra Leone, especially those affected by armed conflict, in view of their vulnerability, are entitled to special care and the protection of their inherent right to life, survival and development, in accordance with the provisions of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child;

Guided by the Declaration in the Final Communique of the Meeting in Lomé of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of ECOWAS of 25 May 1999, in which they stressed the importance of democracy as a factor of regional peace and security, and as essential to the socio-economic development of ECOWAS Member States; and in which they pledged their commitment to the consolidation of democracy and respect of human rights while reaffirming the need for all Member States to consolidate their democratic base, observe the principles of good governance and good economic management in order to ensure the emergence and development of a democratic culture which takes into account the interests of the peoples of West Africa;

Recommitting themselves to the total observance and compliance with the Ceasefire Agreement signed in Lomé on 18 May 1999, and appended as Annex 1 until the signing of the present Peace Agreement;

HEREBY AGREE AS FOLLOWS:

#### PART ONE

#### CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES

##### ARTICLE 1

##### CEASEFIRE

The armed conflict between the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF is hereby ended with immediate effect. Accordingly, the two sides shall ensure that a total and permanent cessation of hostilities is observed forthwith.

##### ARTICLE II

##### CEASEFIRE MONITORING

1. A Ceasefire Monitoring Committee (hereinafter termed the CMC) to be chaired by the United Nations Observer

Mission in Sierra Leone (hereinafter termed UNOMSIL) with representatives of the Government of Sierra Leone, RUF, the Civil Defence Forces (hereinafter termed the CDF) and ECOMOG shall be established at provincial and district levels with immediate effect to monitor, verify and report all violations of the ceasefire.

2. A Joint Monitoring Commission (hereinafter termed the JMC) shall be established at the national level to be chaired by UNOMSIL with representatives of the Government of Sierra Leone, RUF, CDF, and ECOMOG. The JMC shall receive, investigate and take appropriate action on reports of violations of the ceasefire from the CMC. The parties agree to the definition of ceasefire violations as contained in Annex 2 which constitutes an integral part of the present Agreement.

3. The parties shall seek the assistance of the International Community in providing funds and other logistics to enable the JMC to carry out its mandate.

#### PART TWO

#### GOVERNANCE

The Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF, recognizing the right of the people of Sierra Leone to live in peace, and desirous of finding a transitional mechanism to incorporate the RUF into governance within the spirit and letter of the Constitution, agree to the following formulas for structuring the government for the duration of the period before the next elections, as prescribed by the Constitution, managing scarce public resources for the benefit of the development of the people of Sierra Leone and sharing the responsibility of implementing the peace. Each of these formulas (not in priority order) is contained in a separate Article of this Part of the present Agreement; and may be further detailed in protocols annexed to it.

Article III Transformation of the RUF into a Political Party

Article IV Enabling Members of the RUF to Hold Public Office

Article V Enabling the RUF to Join a Broad-Based Government of National Unity Through Cabinet Appointment

Article VI Commission for the Consolidation of Peace

Article VII Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development

Article VIII Council of Elders and Religious Leaders.

### ARTICLE III

#### TRANSFORMATION OF THE RUF INTO A POLITICAL PARTY

1. The Government of Sierra Leone shall accord every facility to the RUF to transform itself into a political party and enter the mainstream of the democratic process. To that end:

2. Immediately upon the signing of the present Agreement, the RUF shall commence to organize itself to function as a political movement, with the rights, privileges and duties accorded to all political parties in Sierra Leone. These include the freedom to publish, unhindered access to the media, freedom of association, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, and the right to mobilize and associate freely.

3. Within a period of thirty days, following the signing of the present Agreement, the necessary legal steps shall be taken by the Government of Sierra Leone to enable the RUF to register as a political party.

4. The Parties shall approach the International Community with a view to mobilizing resources for the purposes of enabling the RUF to function as a political party. These resources may include but shall not be limited to:

- (i) Setting up a trust fund;
- (ii) Training for RUF membership in party organization and functions; and
- (iii) Providing any other assistance necessary for achieving the goals of this section.

### ARTICLE IV

#### ENABLING MEMBERS OF THE RUF TO HOLD PUBLIC OFFICE

1. The Government of Sierra Leone shall take the necessary steps to enable those RUF members nominated by the RUF to hold public office, within the time-frames agreed and contained in

the present Agreement for the integration of the various bodies named herein.

2. Accordingly, necessary legal steps shall be taken by the Government of Sierra Leone, within a period of fourteen days following the signing of the present Agreement, to amend relevant laws and regulations that may constitute an impediment or bar to RUF and AFRC personnel holding public office.

3. Within seven days of the removal of any such legal impediments, both parties shall meet to discuss and agree on the appointment of RUF members to positions in parastatals, diplomacy and any other public sector.

### ARTICLE V

#### ENABLING THE RUF TO JOIN A BROAD-BASED GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY THROUGH CABINET APPOINTMENTS

1. The Government of Sierra Leone shall accord every opportunity to the RUF to join a broad-based government of national unity through cabinet appointments. To that end:

2. The Chairmanship of the Board of the Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development (CMRRD) as provided for in Article VII of the present Agreement shall be offered to the leader of the RUF, Corporal Foday Sankoh. For this purpose he shall enjoy the status of Vice President and shall therefore be answerable only to the President of Sierra Leone.

3. The Government of Sierra Leone shall give ministerial positions to the RUF in a moderately expanded cabinet of 18, bearing in mind that the interests of other political parties and civil society organizations should also be taken into account, as follows:

- (i) One of the senior cabinet appointments such as finance, foreign affairs and justice;
- (ii) Three other cabinet positions.

4. In addition, the Government of Sierra Leone shall, in the same spirit, make available to the RUF the following senior government positions: Four posts of Deputy Minister.

5. Within a period of fourteen days following the signing of the present Agreement, the necessary steps shall be taken by the Government of Sierra Leone to remove any legal impediments that may prevent RUF members from holding cabinet and other positions.

### ARTICLE VI

#### COMMISSION FOR THE CONSOLIDATION OF PEACE

1. A Commission for the Consolidation of Peace (hereinafter termed the CCP), shall be established within two weeks of the signing of the present Agreement to implement a post-conflict programme that ensures reconciliation and the welfare of all parties to the conflict, especially the victims of war. The CCP shall have the overall goal and responsibility for supervising and monitoring the implementation of and compliance with the provisions of the present Agreement relative to the promotion of national reconciliation and the consolidation of peace.

2. The CCP shall ensure that all structures for national reconciliation and the consolidation of peace already in existence and those provided for in the present Agreement are operational and given the necessary resources for realizing their respective mandates. These structures shall comprise:

- (i) the Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development;
- (ii) the Joint Monitoring Commission;
- (iii) the Provincial and District Ceasefire Monitoring Committees;
- (iv) the Committee for the Release of Prisoners of War and Non-Combatants;
- (v) the Committee for Humanitarian Assistance;
- (vi) the National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration;
- (vii) the National Commission for Resettlement, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction;
- (viii) the Human Rights Commission; and

(ix) the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

3. The CCP shall have the right to inspect any activity or site connected with the implementation of the present Agreement.

4. The CCP shall have full powers to organize its work in any manner it deems appropriate and to appoint any group or sub-committee which it deems necessary in the discharge of its functions.

5. The Commission shall be composed of the following members:

(i) Two representatives of the civil society;

(ii) One representative each named by the Government, the RUF and the Parliament.

6. The CCP shall have its own offices, adequate communication facilities and secretarial support staff.

7. Recommendations for improvements or modifications shall be made to the President of Sierra Leone for appropriate action. Likewise, failures of the structures to perform their assigned duties shall also be brought to the attention of the President.

8. Disputes arising out of the preceding paragraph shall be brought to the Council of Elders and Religious Leaders for resolution, as specified in Article VIII of the present Agreement.

9. Should Protocols be needed in furtherance of any provision in the present Agreement, the CCP shall have the responsibility for their preparation.

10. The mandate of the CCP shall terminate at the end of the next general elections.

## ARTICLE VII

### COMMISSION FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF STRATEGIC RESOURCES, NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

1. Given the emergency situation facing the country, the parties agree that the Government shall exercise full control over the exploitation of gold, diamonds and other resources, for the benefit of the people of Sierra Leone. Accordingly, a Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources,

National Reconstruction and Development (hereinafter termed the CMRRD) shall be established and charged with the responsibility of 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, as provided for under Article XXVIII of the present Agreement.

2. The Government shall take the necessary legal action within a period not exceeding two weeks from the signing of the present Agreement to the effect that all exploitation, sale, export, or any other transaction of gold and diamonds shall be forbidden except those sanctioned by the CMRRD. All previous concessions shall be null and void.

3. The CMRRD shall authorize licensing of artisanal production of diamonds and gold, in accordance with prevailing laws and regulations. All gold and diamonds extracted or otherwise sources from any Sierra Leonean territory shall be sold to the Government.

4. The CMRRD shall ensure, through the appropriate authorities, the security of the areas covered under this Article, and shall take all necessary measures against unauthorized exploitation.

5. For the export or local resale of gold and diamonds by the Government, the CMRRD shall authorize a buying and selling agreement with one or more reputable international and specialized mineral companies. All exports of Sierra Leonean gold and diamonds shall be transacted by the Government, under these agreements.

6. The proceeds from the transactions of gold and diamonds shall be public monies which shall enter a special Treasury account to be spent exclusively on the development of the people of Sierra Leone, with appropriations for public education, public health, infrastructural development, and compensation for incapacitated war victims as well as post-war rehabilitation and reconstruction. Priority spending shall go to rural areas.

7. The Government shall, if necessary, seek the assistance and cooperation of other governments and their instruments of law enforcement to detect and facilitate the prosecution of violations of this Article.

8. The management of other natural resources shall be reviewed by the CMRRD to determine if their regulation is a matter of national security and welfare, and recommend appropriate policy to the Government.

9. 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 an autonomous body in carrying out its duties concerning the regulation of Sierra Leone's strategic natural resources.

10. All agreements and transactions referred to in this Article shall be subject to full public disclosure and records of all correspondence, negotiations, business transactions and any other matters related to exploitation, management, local or international marketing, and any other matter shall be public documents.

11. The Commission shall issue monthly reports, including the details of all the transactions related to gold and diamonds, and other licenses or concessions of natural resources, and its own administrative costs.

12. The Commission shall be governed by a Board whose Chairmanship shall be offered to the Leader of the RUF, Corporal Foday Sankoh. The Board shall also comprise:

(i) Two representatives of the Government appointed by the President;

(ii) Two representatives of the political party to be formed by the RUF;

(iii) Three representatives of the civil society; and

(iv) Two representatives of other political parties appointed by Parliament.

13. The Government shall take the required administrative actions to implement the commitments made in the present Agreement; and in the case of enabling legislation, it shall draft

and submit to Parliament within thirty days of the signature of the present Agreement, the relevant bills for their enactment into law.

14. The Government commits itself to propose and support an amendment to the Constitution to make the exploitation of gold and diamonds the legitimate domain of the people of Sierra Leone, and to determine that the proceeds be used for the development of Sierra Leone, particularly public education, public health, infrastructure development, and compensation of incapacitated war victims as well as post-war reconstruction and development.

#### ARTICLE VIII

##### COUNCIL OF ELDERS AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS

1. The signatories agree to refer any conflicting differences of interpretation of this Article or any other Article of the present Agreement or its protocols, to a Council of Elders and Religious Leaders comprised as follows:

- (i) Two members appointed by the Inter-Religious Council;
- (ii) One member each appointed by the Government and the RUF; and
- (iii) One member appointed by ECOWAS.

2. The Council shall designate its own chairperson from among its members. All its decision shall be taken by the concurrence of at least four members, and shall be binding and public, provided that an aggrieved party may appeal to the Supreme Court.

#### PART THREE

##### OTHER POLITICAL ISSUES

The Part of the present Agreement Consists of the following Articles

Article IX Pardon and Amnesty

Article X Review of the Present Constitution

Article XI Elections

Article XII National Electoral Commission

#### ARTICLE IX

##### PARDON AND AMNESTY

1. In order to bring lasting peace to Sierra Leone, the Government of Sierra Leone shall take appropriate legal steps to grant Corporal Foday Sankoh absolute and free pardon.

2. After the signing of the present Agreement, the Government of Sierra Leone shall also grant 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 the signing of the present Agreement.

3. To consolidate the peace and promote the cause of national reconciliation, the Government of Sierra Leone shall ensure that no official or judicial action is taken against any member of the RUF, ex-AFRC, ex-SLA or CDF in respect of anything done by them in pursuit of their objectives as members of those organizations, since March 1991, up to the time of the signing of the present 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 reintegration within a framework of full legality.

#### ARTICLE X

##### REVIEW OF THE PRESENT CONSTITUTION

In order to ensure that the Constitution of Sierra Leone represents the needs and aspirations of the people of Sierra Leone and that no constitutional or any other legal provision prevents the implementation of the present Agreement, the Government of Sierra Leone shall take the necessary steps to establish a Constitutional Review Committee to review the provisions of the present Constitution, and where deemed appropriate, recommend revisions and amendments, in accordance with Part V, Section 108 of the Constitution of 1991.

#### ARTICLE XI

##### DATE OF NEXT ELECTIONS

The next national elections in Sierra Leone shall be held in accordance with the present Constitution of Sierra Leone.

#### ARTICLE XII

##### NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION

1. A new independent National Electoral Commission (hereinafter termed the NEC) shall be set up by the Government, not later than three months after the signing of the present Agreement.

2. In setting up the new NEC the President shall consult all political parties, including the RUF, to determine the membership and terms of reference of the Commission, paying particular attention to the need for a level playing field in the national elections.

3. No member of the NEC shall be eligible for appointment to political office by any government formed as a result of an election he or she was mandated to conduct.

4. The NEC shall request the assistance of the International Community, including the UN, the OAU, ECOWAS and the Commonwealth of Nations, in monitoring the next presidential and parliamentary elections in Sierra Leone.

#### PART FOUR

##### POST-CONFLICT MILITARY AND SECURITY ISSUES

1. The Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF, recognizing that the maintenance of peace and security is of paramount importance for the achievement of lasting peace in Sierra Leone and for the welfare of its people, have agreed to the following formulas for dealing with post-conflict military and security matters. Each of these formulas (not in priority order) is contained in separate Articles of this Part of the present Agreement and may be further detailed in protocols annexed to the Agreement.

Article XIII Transformation and New Mandate of ECOMOG

Article XIV New Mandate of UNOMSIL

Article XV Security Guarantees for Peace Monitors

Article XVI Encampment, Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration

Article XVII Restructuring and Training of the Sierra Leone Armed Forces

Article XVIII Withdrawal of Mercenaries

Article XIX Notification to Joint Monitoring Commission

Article Notification to Military Commands.

#### ARTICLE XIII

#### TRANSFORMATION AND NEW MANDATE OF ECOMOG

1. Immediately upon the signing of the present Agreement, the parties shall request ECOWAS to revise the mandate of ECOMOG in Sierra Leone as follows:

(i) Peacekeeping;

(ii) Security of the State of Sierra Leone;

i. Protection of UNOMSIL.

i. Protection of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration personnel.

2. The Government shall, immediately upon the signing of the present Agreement, request ECOWAS for troop contributions from at least two additional countries. The additional contingents shall be deployed not later than 30 days from the date of signature of the present Agreement. The Security Council shall be requested to provide assistance in support of ECOMOG.

3. The Parties agree to develop a timetable for the phased withdrawal of ECOMOG, including measures for securing all of the territory of Sierra Leone by the restructured armed forces. The phased withdrawal of ECOMOG will be linked to the phased creation and deployment of the restructured armed forces.

#### ARTICLE XIV

#### NEW MANDATE OF UNOMSIL

1. The UN Security Council is requested to amend the mandate of UNOMSIL to enable it to undertake the various provisions outlined in the present Agreement.

#### ARTICLE XV

#### SECURITY GUARANTEES FOR PEACE MONITORS

1. The Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF agree to guarantee the safety, security and freedom of movement of UNOMSIL Military Observers throughout Sierra Leone. This guarantee shall be monitored by the Joint Monitoring Commission.

2. The freedom of movement includes complete and unhindered access for UNOMSIL Military Observers in the conduct of their duties throughout Sierra Leone. Before and during the process of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration, officers and escorts to be provided by both Parties shall be required to facilitate this access.

3. Such freedom of movement and security shall also be accorded to non-military UNOMSIL personnel such as Human Rights Officers in the conduct of their duties. These personnel shall, in most cases, be accompanied by UNOMSIL Military Observers.

4. The provision of security to be extended shall include United Nations aircraft, vehicles and other property.

#### ARTICLE XVI

#### ENCAMPMENT, DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILIZATION AND REINTEGRATION

1. A neutral peace keeping force comprising UNOMSIL and ECOMOG shall disarm all combatants of the RUF, CDF, SLA and paramilitary groups. The encampment, disarmament and demobilization process shall commence within six weeks of the signing of the present Agreement in line with the deployment of the neutral peace keeping force.

2. The present SLA shall be restricted to the barracks and their arms in the armoury and their ammunitions in the magazines and placed under constant surveillance by the neutral peacekeeping force during the process of disarmament and demobilization.

3. UNOMSIL shall be present in all disarmament and demobilization locations to monitor the process and provide security guarantees to all ex-combatants.

4. Upon the signing of the present Agreement, the Government of Sierra Leone shall immediately request the International Community to assist with the provision of the necessary financial and technical resources needed for the adaptation and extension of the existing Encampment, Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programme in Sierra Leone, including payment of retirement benefits and other emoluments due to former members of the SLA.

#### ARTICLE XVII

#### RESTRUCTURING AND TRAINING OF THE SIERRA LEONE ARMED FORCES

1. The restructuring, composition and training of the new Sierra Leone armed forces will be carried out by the Government with a view to creating truly national armed forces, bearing loyalty solely to the State of Sierra Leone, and able and willing to perform their constitutional role.

2. Those ex-combatants of the RUF, CDF and SLA who wish to be integrated into the new restructured national armed forces may do so provided they meet established criteria.

3. Recruitment into the armed forces shall reflect the geo-political structure of Sierra Leone within the established strength.

#### ARTICLE XVIII

#### WITHDRAWAL OF MERCENARIES

All mercenaries, in any guise, shall be withdrawn from Sierra Leone immediately upon the signing of the present Agreement. Their withdrawal shall be supervised by the Joint Monitoring Commission.

#### ARTICLE XIX

#### NOTIFICATION TO JOINT MONITORING COMMISSION

Immediately upon the establishment of the JMC provided for in Article II of the present Agreement, each party shall furnish to the JMC information regarding the strength and locations of all combatants as well as the positions and descriptions of all known unexploded bombs (UXBs), explosive ordnance devices (EODs), minefields, booby traps, wire entanglements, and all other physical or military hazards. The JMC shall seek all necessary

technical assistance in mine clearance and the disposal or destruction of similar devices and weapons under the operational control of the neutral peacekeeping force. The parties shall keep the JMC updated on changes in this information so that it can notify the public as needed, to prevent injuries.

#### ARTICLE XX

##### NOTIFICATION TO MILITARY COMMANDS

Each party shall ensure that the terms of the present Agreement, and written orders requiring compliance, are immediately communicated to all of its forces.

#### PART FIVE

##### HUMANITARIAN, HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC ISSUES

1. The Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF\SL recognizing the importance of upholding, promoting and protecting the human rights of every Sierra Leonean as well as the enforcement of humanitarian law, agree to the following formulas for the achievement of these laudable objectives. Each of these formulas (not in priority order) is contained in separate Articles of this Part of the present Agreement

Article XXI Release of Prisoners and Abductees

Article XXII Refugees and Displaced Persons

Article XXIII Guarantee of the Security of Displaced Persons and Refugees

Article XXIV Guarantee and Promotion of Human Rights

Article XXV Human Rights Commission

Article XXVI Human Rights Violations

Article XXVII Humanitarian Relief

Article XXVIII Post War Rehabilitation and Reconstruction

Article XXIX Special Fund for War Victims

Article XXX Child Combatants

Article XXXI Education and Health

#### ARTICLE XXI

##### RELEASE OF PRISONERS AND ABDUCTEES

All political prisoners of war as well as all non-combatants shall be released immediately and unconditionally by both parties, in accordance with the Statement of June 2, 1999, which is contained in Annex 3 and constitutes an integral part of the present Agreement.

#### ARTICLE XXII

##### REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS

The Parties through the National Commission for Resettlement, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction agree to seek funding from and the involvement of the UN and other agencies, including friendly countries, in order to design and implement a plan for voluntary repatriation and reintegration of Sierra Leonean refugees and internally displaced persons, including non-combatants, in conformity with international conventions, norms and practices.

#### ARTICLE XXIII

##### GUARANTEE OF THE SECURITY OF DISPLACED PERSONS AND REFUGEES

As a reaffirmation of their commitment to the observation of the conventions and principles of human rights and the status of refugees, the Parties shall take effective and appropriate measures to ensure that the right of Sierra Leoneans to asylum is fully respected and that no camps or dwellings of refugees or displaced persons are violated.

#### ARTICLE XXIV

##### GUARANTEE AND PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

1. The basic civil and political liberties recognized by the Sierra Leone legal system and contained in the declarations and principles of Human Rights adopted by the UN and OAU, especially the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights, shall be fully protected and promoted within Sierra Leonean society.

2. These include the right to life and liberty, freedom from torture, the right to a fair trial, freedom of conscience, expression and association, and the

right to take part in the governance of ones country.

#### ARTICLE XXV

##### HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

1. The Parties pledge to strengthen the existing machinery for addressing grievances of the people in respect of alleged violations of their basic human rights by the creation, as a matter of urgency and not later than 90 days after the signing of the present Agreement, of an autonomous quasi-judicial national Human Rights Commission.

2. The Parties further pledge to promote Human Rights education throughout the various sectors of Sierra Leonean society, including the schools, the media, the police, the military and the religious community.

3. In pursuance of the above, technical and material assistance may be sought from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights and other relevant international organizations.

4. A consortium of local human rights and civil society groups in Sierra Leone shall be encouraged to help monitor human rights observance.

#### ARTICLE XXVI

##### HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

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

2. In the spirit of national reconciliation, the Commission shall deal with the question of human rights violations since the beginning of the Sierra Leonean conflict in 1991.

This Commission shall, among other things, recommend measures to be taken for the rehabilitation of victims of human rights violations.

3. Membership of the Commission shall be drawn from a cross-section of Sierra Leonean society with the participation and some technical support of the

International Community. This Commission shall be established within 90 days after the signing of the present Agreement and shall, not later than 12 months after the commencement of its work, submit its report to the Government for immediate implementation of its recommendations.

#### ARTICLE XXVII

##### HUMANITARIAN RELIEF

1. The Parties reaffirm their commitment to their Statement on the Delivery of Humanitarian Assistance in Sierra Leone of June 3, 1999 which is contained in Annex 4 and constitutes an integral part of the present Agreement. To this end, the Government shall request appropriate international humanitarian assistance for the people of Sierra Leone who are in need all over the country.

2. The Parties agree to guarantee safe and unhindered access by all humanitarian organizations throughout the country in order to facilitate delivery of humanitarian assistance, in accordance with international conventions, principles and norms which govern humanitarian operations. In this respect, the parties agree to guarantee the security of the presence and movement of humanitarian personnel.

3. The Parties also agree to guarantee the security of all properties and goods transported, stocked or distributed by humanitarian organizations, as well as the security of their projects and beneficiaries.

4. The Government shall set up at various levels throughout the country, the appropriate and effective administrative or security bodies which will monitor and facilitate the implementation of these guarantees of safety for the personnel, goods and areas of operation of the humanitarian organizations.

#### ARTICLE XXVIII

##### POST-WAR REHABILITATION AND RECONSTRUCTION

1. The Government, through the National Commission for Resettlement, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction and with the support of the International

Community, shall provide appropriate financial and technical resources for post-war rehabilitation, reconstruction and development.

2. Given that women have been particularly victimized during the war, special attention shall be accorded to their needs and potentials in formulating and implementing national rehabilitation, reconstruction and development programmes, to enable them to play a central role in the moral, social and physical reconstruction of Sierra Leone.

#### ARTICLE XXIX

##### SPECIAL FUND FOR WAR VICTIMS

The Government, with the support of the International Community, shall design and implement a programme for the rehabilitation of war victims. For this purpose, a special fund shall be set up.

#### ARTICLE XXX

##### CHILD COMBATANTS

The Government shall accord particular attention to the issue of child soldiers. It shall, accordingly, mobilize resources, both within the country and from the International Community, and especially through the Office of the UN Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict, UNICEF and other agencies, to address the special needs of these children in the existing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes.

#### ARTICLE XXXI

##### EDUCATION AND HEALTH

The Government shall provide free compulsory education for the first nine years of schooling (Basic Education) and shall endeavour to provide free schooling for a further three years. The Government shall also endeavour to provide affordable primary health care throughout the country.

#### PART SIX

##### IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT

#### ARTICLE XXXII

##### JOINT IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

A Joint Implementation Committee consisting of members of the

Commission for the Consolidation of Peace (CCP) and the Committee of Seven on Sierra Leone, as well as the Moral Guarantors, provided for in Article XXXIV of the present Agreement and other international supporters shall be established. Under the chairmanship of ECOWAS, the Joint Implementation Committee shall be responsible for reviewing and assessing the state of implementation of the Agreement, and shall meet at least once every three months. Without prejudice to the functions of the Commission for

the Consolidation of Peace as provided for in Article VI, the Joint Implementation Committee shall make recommendations deemed necessary to ensure effective implementation of the present Agreement according to the Schedule of Implementation, which appears as Annex 5.

#### ARTICLE XXXIII

##### REQUEST FOR INTERNATIONAL INVOLVEMENT

The parties request that the provisions of the present Agreement affecting the United Nations shall enter into force upon the adoption by the UN Security Council of a resolution responding affirmatively to the request made in this Agreement. Likewise, the decision-making bodies of the other international organizations concerned are requested to take similar action, where appropriate.

#### PART SEVEN

##### MORAL GUARANTORS AND INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

#### ARTICLE XXXIV

##### MORAL GUARANTORS

The Government of the Togolese Republic, the United Nations, the OAU, ECOWAS and the Commonwealth of Nations shall stand as Moral Guarantors that this Peace Agreement is implemented with integrity and in good faith by both parties.

#### ARTICLE XXXV

##### INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

Both parties call on the International Community to assist them in implementing the present Agreement with integrity and good faith. The

international organizations mentioned in Article XXXIV and the Governments of Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriyah, Mali, Nigeria, Togo, the United Kingdom and the United States of America are facilitating and supporting the conclusion of this Agreement. These States and organizations believe that this Agreement must protect the paramount interests of the people of Sierra Leone in peace and security.

## PART EIGHT

### FINAL PROVISIONS

#### ARTICLE XXXVI

##### REGISTRATION AND PUBLICATION

The Sierra Leone Government shall register the signed Agreement not later than 15 days from the date of the signing of this Agreement. The signed Agreement shall also be published in the Sierra Leone Gazette not later than 48 (forty-eight) hours after the date of registration of this Agreement. This Agreement shall be laid before the Parliament of Sierra Leone not later than 21 (twenty-one) days after the signing of this Agreement.

#### ARTICLE XXXVII

##### ENTRY INTO FORCE

The present Agreement shall enter into force immediately upon its signing by the Parties.

Done in Lomé this seven day of the month of July 1999 in twelve (12) original texts in English and French, each text being equally authentic.

*Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah  
President of the Republic of Sierra Leone*

*Corporal Foday Saybana Sankoh  
Leader of the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone*

*His Excellency Gnassingbé Eyadéma  
President of the Togolese Republic  
Chairman of ECOWAS*

*His Excellency Blaise Compaore  
President of Burkina Faso*

*His Excellency Dahkpanah Dr. Charles  
Ghankey Taylor President of the  
Republic of Liberia*

*His Excellency Olusegun Obasanjo  
President and Commander-in-Chief of  
the Armed Forces of the Federal  
Republic of Nigeria*

*His Excellency Youssoufou Bamba  
Secretary of State at the Foreign  
Mission in charge of International  
Cooperation of Cote d'Ivoire*

*His Excellency Victor Gbeho  
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the  
Republic of Ghana*

*Mr. Roger Laloupo  
Representative of the ECOWAS Special  
Representative*

*Ambassador Francis G. Okelo  
Executive Secretary of the United  
Nations*

*Secretary General Ms. Adwoa Coleman  
Representative Organization of African  
Unity*

*Dr. Moses K.Z. Anafu  
Representative of the Commonwealth  
of Nations*

## ANNEX 1

### AGREEMENT ON CEASEFIRE IN SIERRA LEONE

President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah and Rev. Jesse Jackson met on 18 May 1999 with Corporal Foday Saybana Sankoh, under the auspices of President Gnassingbé Eyadéma. At that meeting, the question of the peace process for Sierra Leone was discussed.

The Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone (RUF),

– Desirous to promote the ongoing dialogue process with a view to establishing durable peace and stability in Sierra Leone; and

– Wishing to create an appropriate atmosphere conducive to the holding of peace talks in Lomé, which began with the RUF internal consultations to be followed by dialogue between the Government and the RUF;

– Have jointly decided to:

1. Agree to ceasefire as from 24 May 1999, the day that President Eyadéma invited Foreign Ministers of ECOWAS to discuss problems pertaining to Sierra Leone. It was further agreed that the dialogue between the Government of

Sierra Leone and RUF would commence on 25 May 1999;

2. Maintain their present and respective positions in Sierra Leone as of the 24th of May 1999; and refrain from any hostile or aggressive act which could undermine the peace process;

3. Commit to start negotiations in good faith, involving all relevant parties in the discussions, not later than May 25 in Lomé;

4. Guarantee safe and unhindered access by humanitarian organizations to all people in need; establish safe corridors for the provision of food and medical supplies to ECOMOG soldiers behind RUF lines, and to RUF combatants behind ECOMOG lines;

5. Immediate release of all prisoners of war and non-combatants;

6. Request the United Nations, subject to the Security Councils authorisation, to deploy military observers as soon as possible to observe compliance by the Government forces (ECOMOG and Civil Defence Forces) and the RUF, including former AFRC forces, with this ceasefire agreement.

This agreement is without prejudice to any other agreement or additional protocols which may be discussed during the dialogue between the Government and the RUF.

Signed in Lomé (Togo) 18 May 1999, in six (6) originals in English and French

*For the Government of Sierra Leone*

*Dr. Alhadji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah  
President Of The Republic Of Sierra  
Leone*

*For the Revolutionary United Front Of  
Sierra Leone*

*Corporal Foday Saybana Sankoh,  
Leader of the Revolutionary United  
Front (RUF)*

WITNESSED BY:

*For the Government of Togo and  
Current Chairman of ECOWAS*

*Gnassingbé Eyadéma  
President of the Republic of Togo*

*For the United Nations*

*Francis G. Okelo  
Special Representative of the*

*Secretary General*

*For the Organization of African Unity (OAU)*

*Adwoa Coleman*

*Representative of the Organization of African Unity*

*US Presidential Special Envoy for the Promotion of Democracy in Africa*

*Rev. Jesse Jackson*

## ANNEX 2

### DEFINITION OF CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS

1. In accordance with Article II of the present Agreement, both parties agree that the following constitute ceasefire violations and a breach of the Ceasefire Agreement:

a. The use of weapons of any kind in any circumstance including: –

(i) Automatic and semi-automatic rifles, pistols, machine guns and any other small arms weapon systems.

(ii) Heavy machine guns and any other heavy weapon systems.

(iii) Grenades and rocket-propelled grenade weapon systems.

(iv) Artillery, rockets, mortars and any other indirect fire weapon systems.

(v) All types of mine, explosive devices and improvised booby traps.

(vi) Air Defence weapon systems of any nature.

(vii) Any other weapon not included in the above paragraphs.

b. Troop movements of any nature outside of the areas recognized as being under the control of respective fighting forces without prior notification to the Ceasefire Monitoring Committee of any movements at least 48 hours in advance.

c. The movement of arms and ammunition. To be considered in the context of Security Council Resolution 1171 (1998).

d. Troop movements of any nature;

d. The construction and/or the improvement of defensive works and positions within respective areas of control, but outside a geographical

boundary of 500m from existing similar positions.

f. Reconnaissance of any nature outside of respective areas of control.

g. Any other offensive or aggressive action.

2. Any training or other military activities not provided for in Articles XIII to XIX of the present Agreement, constitute a ceasefire violation.

3. In the event of a hostile external force threatening the territorial integrity or sovereignty of Sierra Leone, military action may be undertaken by the Sierra Leone Government.

## ANNEX 3

### STATEMENT BY THE GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE AND THE REVOLUTIONARY UNITED FRONT OF SIERRA LEONE ON THE RELEASE OF PRISONERS OF WAR AND NON-COMBATANTS

The Government of Sierra Leone (GOSL) and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) have agreed to implement as soon as possible the provision of the Ceasefire Agreement which was signed on 18 May 1999 in Lomé, relating to the immediate release of prisoners of war and non-combatants.

Both sides reaffirmed the importance of the implementation of this provision in the interest of the furtherance of the talks.

They therefore decided that an appropriate Committee is established to handle the release of all prisoners of war and non-combatants.

Both the Government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone decided that such a Committee be established by the UN and chaired by the UN Chief Military Observer in Sierra Leone and comprising representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), UNICEF and other relevant UN Agencies and NGOs.

This Committee should begin its work immediately by contacting both parties to the conflict with a view to effecting the immediate release of these prisoners of war and non-combatants.

Lomé – 2 June 1999

## ANNEX 4

### STATEMENT BY THE GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE AND THE REVOLUTIONARY UNITED FRONT OF SIERRA LEONE ON THE DELIVERY OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE IN SIERRA LEONE

The parties to the conflict in Sierra Leone meeting in Lomé Togo on 3rd June 1999 in the context of the Dialogue between the Government of Sierra Leone (GSL) and the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone (RUF):

Reaffirm their respect for international convention, principles and norms, which govern the right of people to receive humanitarian assistance and the effective delivery of such assistance.

Reiterate their commitment to the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement signed by the two parties on 18th May 1999 in Lomé.

Aware of the fact that the protracted civil strife in Sierra Leone has created a situation whereby the vast majority of Sierra Leoneans in need of humanitarian assistance cannot be reached.

Hereby agree as follows:

1. That all duly registered humanitarian agencies shall be guaranteed safe and unhindered access to all areas under the control of the respective parties in order that humanitarian assistance can be delivered safely and effectively, in accordance with international conventions, principles and norms govern humanitarian operations.

2. In this respect the two parties shall:

a. guarantee safe access and facilitate the fielding of independent assessment missions by duly registered humanitarian agencies.

b. identify, in collaboration with the UN Humanitarian Co-ordinator in Sierra Leone and UNOMSIL, mutually agreed routes (road, air and waterways) by which humanitarian goods and personnel shall be transported to the beneficiaries to provide needed assistance.

c. allow duly registered humanitarian agencies to deliver assistance according to needs established through independent assessments.

d. guarantee the security of all properties and of and goods transported, stocked or distributed by the duly registered humanitarian agencies, as well as the security of their project areas and beneficiaries.

3. The two parties undertake to establish with immediate effect, and not later than seven days, an Implementation Committee formed by appropriately designated and mandated representatives from the Government of Sierra Leone, the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone, the Civil Society, the NGO community, and the UNOMSIL; and chaired by the United Nations Humanitarian Co-ordinator, in co-ordination with the Special Representative of the Secretary General in Sierra Leone.

The Implementation Committee will be mandated to:

a. Ascertain and assess the security of proposed routes to be used by the humanitarian agencies, and disseminate information on routes to interested humanitarian agencies.

b. Receive and review complaints which may arise in the implementation of this arrangement, in order to re-establish full compliance.

4. The parties agree to set up at various levels in their areas of control, the appropriate and effective administrative and security bodies which will monitor and facilitate the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance in all approved points of delivery, and ensure the security of the personnel, goods and project areas of the humanitarian agencies as well as the safety of the beneficiaries.

Issued in Lomé

June 3 1999

## ANNEX 5

### DRAFT SCHEDULE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PEACE AGREEMENT

#### 1. ACTIVITIES WITH SPECIFIC TIMING:

##### DAY 1

Signing of the Peace Agreement

Amnesty

Transformation and new mandate of ECOMOG

The Government to grant absolute and free pardon to the RUF leader Foday Sankoh through appropriate legal steps

Request to ECOWAS by the parties for revision of the mandate of ECOMOG in Sierra Leone

Request to the UN Security Council to amend the mandate of UNOMSIL to enable it to undertake the various provisions outlined in the present Agreement;

Request to the international community to provide substantial financial and logistical assistance to facilitate implementation of the Peace Agreement.

Request to ECOWAS by the parties for contributions of additional troops.

Transformation of the RUF into a political party.

RUF to commence to organize itself to function as a political party.

Encampment, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR).

Request for international assistance in adapting and extending the existing DDR programme.

Withdrawal of mercenaries

Supervision by Joint Monitoring Commission

Notification to Joint Monitoring Commission Communication by the parties of positions and description of all known warlike devices/materials

Notification to Military Commands

Communication by the parties of written orders requiring compliance

##### DAY 15

Enabling members of the RUF to hold public office, and to join a broad-based Government of National Unity through Cabinet appointments

Removal by the Government of all legal impediments

Commission for the Consolidation of Peace (CCP)

Creation of the Commission to implement a post-conflict reconciliation and welfare programme

Mandate of the Commission to terminate at the end of next general elections Jan–Feb 2001

Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development (CMRRD)

Ban on all exploitation, sale, export, or any transaction of gold and diamonds except those sanctioned by the CMRRD

##### DAY 22

Enabling members of the RUF to hold public office

Discussion and agreement between both parties on the appointment of RUF members to positions of parastatal, diplomacy and any other public sector for a period of fourteen days

##### DAY 31

Transformation of the RUF into a political party

Commission for the management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development (CMRRD)

Transformation, new mandate, and phased withdrawal of ECOMOG

Necessary legal steps by the Government for the registration of the RUF as a political party

Preparation and submission by Government to the Parliament of relevant bills for enabling legislation commitments made under the peace agreement

Deployment of troops from at least two additional countries

DAY 60

Completion of encampment, disarmament and demobilization

Restriction of SLA soldiers to the barracks and storage of their arms and ammunition under constant surveillance by the Neutral Peace-Keeping Force during the disarmament process

Monitoring of disarmament and demobilization by UNOMSIL

DAY 90

Human Rights Commission

Creation of an autonomous quasi-judicial national Human Rights Commission

Request for technical and material assistance from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the African Commission on Human Rights and Peoples Rights and other relevant organizations

Creation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Elections

Establishment of a new independent National Electoral Commission (NEC) in consultation with all political parties including the RUF

Request for financial and logistical support for the operations of the NEC

Request for assistance from the international community in monitoring the next presidential and parliamentary elections in Sierra Leone

DAY 456

Human Rights Violations

Submission by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of its report and recommendation to the Government for immediate implementation

II. ACTIVITIES WITHOUT SPECIFIC TIMING: (SHORT/MEDIUM/LONG TERM):

1. Ceasefire monitoring

(Ceasefire Agreement signed on 18 May 1999)

Establishment of a Ceasefire Monitoring Committee at provincial and district levels

Request for international assistance in providing funds and other logistics for the operations of the JMC

JMC already established and operational

2. Review of the present Constitution

Establishment of a Constitutional Review Committee

3. Mediation by the Council of Elders and Religious Leaders

Appointment of members of the Council by the Interreligious Council, the Government, the RUF and ECOWAS

4. Timetable for the phased withdrawal of ECOMOG

Formulation of the timetable in connection with the phased creation and deployment of the restructured Armed Forces

5. Security guarantees for peace monitors

Communication, in writing, of security guarantees to UN military observers

6. Restructuring and training of the SLA

Creation by the Government of truly national armed forces reflecting the geo-political structure of Sierra Leone within the established strength.

# Chronology

## The pre-colonial period

Sierra Leone's earliest known inhabitants lived in small fishing and farming communities along the Atlantic coast and scattered settlements in the interior. In the mid-fifteenth century, Portuguese explorers make their first contact with the coastal tribes and give the territory its name. Contacts with Europe are followed by African invaders, the Mane. Sierra Leone's two largest ethnic groupings, the Mende and the Temne, both have Mane antecedents, as do a number of the country's fifteen other ethnic groups.

## The colonial period 1787–1961

### 1787

British philanthropists and merchants found the Colony of Sierra Leone on the Freetown Peninsula as a haven for freed slaves, who eventually become British subjects. Throughout the eighteenth century, holy war, trade, missionary activities and Koranic teaching spread Islam throughout the country, although many retain their animist religion or opt for Christianity, propagated by Westerners based in the colony of Freetown.

### 1895

Britain declares a Protectorate over the hinterland of the colony. Colonialism provides the underpinnings of a state, but societal divisions are also apparent. Rivalries set off the Krio descendants of freed slaves from ethnic groups from the Protectorate, rural Sierra Leoneans from the wealthy and powerful inhabitants of Freetown, northerners from southerners, members of one ethnic group from competing chieftaincy lineages, and restive youths from authority figures. By the use of force and indirect rule through loyal chiefs, Britain is largely able to control ethnic and communal antagonisms, although violent resistance to the colony's administration and its Sierra Leonean proxies flares up occasionally. A two-tiered system of British common law and traditional public consultation and arbitration provides a means of mediating social and economic conflicts, although both systems are prone to discrimination and abuse.

Economically, the colonial era sees transformations in agriculture, transportation and, after 1945, mining. Economic development is, however, unevenly concentrated in the capital and south and east of the country. It is predominantly extractive and export oriented for the profit of foreign companies. The discovery of diamonds and other minerals in Sierra Leone leads to the diversification of exports. There is a shift from agricultural products to unprocessed minerals – diamonds, iron ore, bauxite, rutile, platinum, chromite and gold. By 1957, mining contributes seventy-two per cent of exports. The lure of illegal diamond mining sharply reduces the number of agricultural workers. It

also leads to the increasing involvement of Lebanese merchants, who had migrated to West Africa at the turn of the century. Rural Sierra Leoneans who can not strike it rich in the diamond fields join the growing masses of urban unemployed.

## Early years of independence

### 1961

Under the conservative leadership of Sir Milton Margai, a Mende medical doctor, the country's transition to independence is peaceful. Sierra Leone has become a hub of education and commerce on the Atlantic. With a population of 2.5 million, government revenues of US\$39 million and trade worth about US\$126 million in 1961, the former British possession is markedly better off than its West African neighbours.

### 1964–1967

Sir Milton's death in 1964 leads to the contested succession of his stepbrother, Albert Margai. When Margai's Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) wins fewer seats than the opposition All People's Congress (APC) in the 1967 election, the army commander, Brig. David Lansana, steps in and arrests Siaka Stevens, the APC leader, as he was appointing a cabinet. Lansana, a Margai appointee, is subsequently arrested by some of his junior officers, along with Sir Albert. The junior officers set up Sierra Leone's first military government, the National Reformation Council, marking the emergence of the military as a force too-often ready to interfere in Sierra Leone's politics.

## The Stevens era

### 1968

A second coup leads to Siaka Stevens's civilian government being installed.

### 1971

Guinean troops help stave off a coup attempt in Sierra Leone. Stevens declares Sierra Leone a republic and becomes president under the new constitution.

### 1973

Stevens is returned to power in an election boycotted by the opposition.

### 1977

The SLPP contests the election but wins only fifteen of eighty-five seats. Students demonstrate against APC one-party rule and deteriorating economic conditions.

### 1978

Through a referendum, Stevens transforms Sierra Leone into a one-party state, with the APC as the only legal

political party and Stevens as first president for a seven-year term. SLPP members of parliament join the APC.

### 1980

Stevens spends borrowed millions on hosting an OAU conference, contributing to the country's mounting debt.

### 1983

The Ndogboyosoi (bush devil) war between APC and SLPP supporters racks Pujehun District in southern Sierra Leone. The localized rebellion is linked to electoral manipulation and rivalries over control of cross-border smuggling into Liberia.

### 1985

Major-General Joseph Saidu Momoh is appointed as successor to Stevens. Momoh receives ninety-nine per cent of the vote in national elections and is inaugurated president. Attempts at financial, administrative and political reform fail.

### December 1989

Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) launches an insurgency from Côte d'Ivoire in an attempt to overthrow Samuel Doe's brutal regime, beginning the six-year Liberian civil war.

## War in Sierra Leone

### 23 March 1991

About sixty Sierra Leoneans, Liberians and Burkinabes led by Foday Sankoh attack two border villages in eastern Sierra Leone from neighbouring Liberia. Four days later, 300 fighters capture the town of Buedu.

### April 1991

Sierra Leonean forces strike into Liberia's Lofa County. Fighting ensues in Kailahun, Sierra Leone's Eastern Province. Despite the backing of 1,200 Nigerian troops and 300 Guineans, efforts by government forces to contain the insurgents fail for lack of equipment, pay and political support. Anti-Taylor Liberians in Sierra Leone and Guinea offer their military support to the Sierra Leone government and form the United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia, ULIMO. Guinea reportedly begins secretly training ULIMO fighters. ULIMO advances into the diamond mining and timber areas of eastern Sierra Leone and western Liberia.

### August 1991

Momoh revises Sierra Leone's Constitution to reintroduce a multi-party system. Sixty per cent of voters approve the change in a referendum. Elections are scheduled for May 1992.

## The NPRC regime

### 29 April 1992

Disgruntled front-line soldiers take their grievances to Freetown. Fearing a coup, Momoh flees to Guinea. The young officers – most of them in their mid-twenties – seize power. The newly formed National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) is led by Captain Valentine Strasser, a twenty-six-year-old. Civilians rejoice in their eagerness to see the back of Momoh and a regime marked by mismanagement, corruption and political repression.

### May 1992

The NPRC declares a state of emergency, dissolves the legislature and bans all political parties. The RUF 'extends an olive branch' to the NPRC, calls a halt to ambushes, and invites the NPRC to hold talks on developing a joint programme aimed at bringing the war to an end. According to the RUF, the initiative gets no response and NPRC representatives travel to Nigeria and Ghana seeking military aid.

### December 1992

An alleged coup attempt by former army officers leads to nine suspected coup plotters and seventeen other prisoners being executed by the NPRC. The UK cuts off £4 million in aid in reaction to the executions. Strasser promises to end the civil war and work towards the restoration of democracy, but fighting intensifies.

### July 1992

Strasser dismisses his vice chairman, S.A.J. Musa, and replaces him with Lt Julius Maada Bio. Musa seeks refuge in the Nigerian Embassy and then is granted asylum in the UK.

### October 1993

In response to international pressure, Strasser announces a two-year transition to democratic rule, with elections to be held at the end of 1995.

### January 1994

The NPRC decides to go to the streets of Freetown to increase the strength of the army. Youths, some only twelve years old, are trained in a few weeks and assigned to units in the provinces. Numerically, the army doubles in size to an estimated 6,000, later to grow to about 15,000. Yet, it appears that the street-children of Freetown are being armed and set loose in the country's provinces, where, to survive, they quickly adopt RUF tactics to live off the civilian population.

The NPRC declares "total war" on the RUF, but by April the insurgents are active in the centre of the country and the army launches new offensives. The rebels change tactics, opting for a policy of lightning raids on the centre and the north.

### October 1994

It is estimated that as much as 40 per cent of new recruits to the army have defected. Public and international goodwill towards the NPRC melts as the young soldiers indulge in drugs, corruption and abuses against opponents and ordinary civilians. In the countryside, evidence grows of some soldiers milking the war economy for personal gain and collusion with the RUF in attacks on civilians.

### November 1994–January 1995

Two UK aid workers are abducted near Kabala in the north of Sierra Leone. RUF leader Sankoh contacts UK diplomats and unsuccessfully demands recognition of the RUF and weapons in return for the release of the hostages. Meanwhile, the RUF launches attacks on the provincial centres of Bo and Kenema, as well as a major refugee camp near Bo guarded by Nigerian troops. The insurgents attack rutile and bauxite mines further south, seizing more hostages, destroying plant equipment and carrying off loot. The RUF takes control of hills near Freetown. Expatriates are advised to leave the country by their governments.

A government-sanctioned peace initiative is undertaken by local leaders in southern Pujehun, who cross the Mano River Bridge to make contact with RUF members in the bush. Talks between the civilian delegation and RUF units are unsuccessful. The RUF accuses the government of insincerity.

### March 1995

A number of expatriate and Sierra Leoneans taken captive by the RUF are released to the International Committee of the Red Cross through the intervention of International Alert, a London-based non-governmental organization. IA draws on its access to the RUF to become a key actor in subsequent peace negotiations along with regional diplomats, the OAU, the UN and the Commonwealth.

### April–July 1995

The NPRC turns to mercenaries to shore up their military fortunes. After a contingent of Gurkhas is mauled in an ambush and leaves Sierra Leone, a South African led mercenary group, Executive Outcomes, is hired for cash and diamond concessions. EO clears the RUF from the environs of Freetown, retakes the bauxite and rutile mines and secures the Kono diamond fields within a few months.

### August 1995

Following massive street demonstrations in Freetown by women's organizations, a National Consultative Conference is held in Freetown. Political leaders, traditional chiefs, labour organizations, women's groups and religious organizations, encouraged by the UK and

US governments, press for elections to be held in February 1996 and for the NPRC to pursue a negotiated settlement with the RUF.

## Civilian government

### February–March 1996

In early February, a palace coup ousts NPRC chairman Strasser. He is replaced by Bio, who agrees to allow elections to proceed on schedule. Financed by Western governments and opposed by the RUF and some segments of the army, the voting is marked by attempts at intimidation of voters, including the amputation of limbs. In relatively secure areas of the country, thirty-seven per cent of the voting age population turn out to elect a new legislature. In a run-off vote, former UN bureaucrat Ahmad Tejan Kabbah is elected president. Kabbah sets up a multi-party and multi-ethnic cabinet and follows up on preliminary discussions begun by the NPRC with the RUF about peace negotiations.

### November 1996

A peace agreement brokered by Côte d'Ivoire, with the support of other regional governments and international organizations, is arrived at, triggering jubilant street celebrations in Freetown and in provincial towns. The Abidjan Accord promises, in part, a cessation of hostilities, conversion of the RUF into a political party, amnesty for RUF members, disarmament and demobilization of its combatants, downsizing of the armed forces, and the withdrawal of Executive Outcomes from the country.

Peace, however, proves ephemeral. The cessation of hostilities stipulated by the Abidjan Accord is breached by all sides. Within weeks the war has resumed and intensified. In mid-February, Kabbah complains in a letter to one of the 'moral guarantors' of the accord of the RUF's refusal to release women and children who had been abducted during the war, of road ambushes on civilians, attacks on villages, 'and the illegal harvesting of cash crops and mining of precious minerals, particularly in the Kailahun District'. Equally ominous is the increasing number of clashes between *Kamajors* and soldiers throughout the country in an apparent struggle for tactical advantage and control of diamonds and other resources.

### March 1997

The Peace Agreement collapses when Foday Sankoh is arrested in Nigeria on weapons charges. In rapid succession, several of Sankoh's lieutenants claim leadership of the RUF and that they will press ahead with the peace process, only to be captured by Sankoh loyalist Sam 'Maskita' Bockarie. The arrest of Sankoh leads to stepped up attacks by the RUF, while increasing government support for the civilian militias prompts the army into open revolt.

## The AFRC coup

### 25 May 1997

Junior military officers calling themselves the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) stage a coup in Freetown, overwhelming Nigerian ECOMOG troops and forcing President Kabbah to flee to Guinea. In a move that only serves to confirm suspicions of collusion between soldiers and the RUF, the junta quickly invites the RUF into Freetown. From detention in Nigeria but still with access to communications, Sankoh gives the go ahead for his movement to join the coup and RUF fighters stream into Freetown.

Freed from jail, where he was being held on previous charges of attempting a coup, Major Johnny Paul Koroma emerges as the nominal leader of the junta. Koroma suspends the constitution, bans all political parties and calls for the return of Sankoh from Nigeria. The absent RUF leader is named vice-chairman of the junta. AFRC soldiers and RUF fighters say they have merged into a new People's Army.

### June 1997–January 1998

The junta takeover is met by civil disobedience by civilians and widespread condemnation from around the world. Nigerian and Guinean troops remain in their positions within Sierra Leone and ECOWAS attempts to force the junta to hand power back to the civilian government with a combination of military and diplomatic pressure. Nigerian and other West African troops arrive to reinforce ECOMOG. In the provinces, civil defence units attempt to harass junta forces and cut off lines of supply.

In July 1997, the junta calls for a national conference and new elections that will be 'truly democratic'. In late August, ECOWAS imposes sanctions on the junta aimed at forcing it to relinquish power.

A six-month peace plan, signed in October by junta representatives and Nigerian and Guinean foreign ministers for the ECOWAS Committee of Five member states, calls for an immediate cessation of fighting, a one-month disarmament and demobilization programme, the resumption of humanitarian aid, the return of refugees and displaced persons, and a restoration of the constitutional government, effective from 22 April 1998. The agreement says Sankoh is expected to return to Sierra Leone to take part in the peace process. A final clause notes that it is essential that unconditional immunities and guarantees from prosecution be extended to all involved in the May 1997 coup. Despite the peace plan, skirmishing continues between ECOMOG and junta forces. Civil defence units launch a campaign to immobilize junta activities in the provinces.

## Restoration of Kabbah

### February–July 1998

In February Nigerian forces, backed by CDF units, launch an offensive against the AFRC and RUF alliance that controlled the country for nine months. The junta is quickly forced out of Freetown and several provincial towns. In March, Kabbah returns to Freetown, but is still faced with the military threat of the undefeated RUF rebels and renegade AFRC soldiers, many of whom have retreated into the north of the country, where the civil defence movement is weakest. Attempts to mop up the junta remnants bog down, while the restored government prosecutes and executes captured junta members. Sankoh is returned to Freetown in custody. But the vulnerability of the government increases as Nigeria inches towards restoring a civilian government. Junta loyalists remain active in the north and east of the country. In June, Nigeria's military ruler Sani Abacha dies and is replaced by Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar, who pledges to return the country to civilian rule. In July, the UN Security Council agrees to send a military observer group to Sierra Leone.

### October–December 1998

Twenty-four Sierra Leone soldiers are executed by firing squad for taking part in the 1997 coup. Sankoh is sentenced to death for treason and former president Momoh receives a ten-year sentence for conspiracy. The executions and sentencing of Sankoh trigger more violence in the north and east of the country and a push by junta forces towards Freetown.

By mid-December 1998, despite rebel attacks within fifty kilometres of Freetown and a spate of attacks in the east and north of the country, President Kabbah tells Freetown residents in a radio broadcast there is no reason to panic. "ECOMOG has assured us one hundred percent that they are completely on top of the situation and that the rebels are no match militarily for them."

ECOMOG brings reinforcements into Freetown, while the junta forces register a string of battlefield gains in the Kono diamond fields and in the north. RUF field commander Bockarie states what the rebels' aims are in a satellite phone interview, demanding the 'immediate and unconditional release' of Sankoh and peace through dialogue.

Echoing accusations made by the Sierra Leone government and ECOMOG of official Liberian involvement in the offensive, the US calls on Liberia to 'stop support for RUF activities emanating from its territory'. ECOMOG commander Maj. Gen. Timothy Shelpidi says: "We have a destabilizing situation in the sub-region, and if it's allowed to continue, it's going to be very, very serious. It won't end in Sierra Leone, it's going to

spill over and affect every country in the sub-region". Liberian Foreign Minister Monie Captan admits there are Liberians in Sierra Leone but denies Liberian government involvement.

## Battle of Freetown

### 6 January 1999

After weeks of severe fighting in the north and east, AFRC and rebel fighters, mingling with civilians fleeing into Freetown, infiltrate the east and centre of the capital. The attack shows careful planning and co-ordination and underscores military bungling and low morale among Nigerian ECOMOG defenders. But ECOMOG and CDF retain a hold on the west end of the city and fierce fighting erupts to push the attackers out of the city. More than two weeks of street fighting, machete attacks on civilians, summary executions and vigilante killings of suspected rebels leave 5–6,000 people dead and much of the housing in the eastern end of the city destroyed. Hundreds of men, women and children are mutilated. Sankoh remains a prisoner.

The demonstration of the rebellious soldiers and RUF's military capabilities immediately provokes new international efforts to broker a negotiated settlement. At the end of January, West African leaders hold an impromptu meeting in Guinea. The consensus is for dialogue. A Nigerian spokesman says that ECOMOG has finally retaken control of Freetown, but would not be able 'to clean up the whole country'. Abubakar himself says he hopes to have all Nigerian troops out of Sierra Leone by the time he hands over to a civilian government in March.

### February–March 1999

A flurry of diplomatic activity involves pressing Kabbah to agree to participate in negotiations with the RUF. American diplomats say they favour all the parties being at the negotiating table. Nigerian diplomats enlist the public support of Libyan leader Muammar Ghaddafi as a possible host of face-to-face talks between Kabbah and Sankoh. Also involved in efforts to encourage negotiations are the UN, the Commonwealth and the OAU. Ultimately, ECOWAS remains the focal point for negotiations and Togo's President Gnassingbé Eyadéma, then chair of ECOWAS, the convenor.

Late in February, Francis Okelo, the UN Secretary General's Special Representative in Sierra Leone, meets with RUF representatives in Abidjan to discuss conditions for substantial negotiations. The Abidjan meeting leads to preliminary talks in Lomé reuniting Sankoh with some of his field commanders and civilian backers. Freed from detention for the meeting, Sankoh stays on in the Togolese capital.

## The Lomé Agreement

### 25 May 1999

Detailed negotiations begin in Lomé after the promise of eventual freedom to Sankoh and introduction of a ceasefire.

### 7 July 1999

After two months of negotiations, the RUF and the government of Sierra Leone reach a settlement. It includes power-sharing between the elected Kabbah government and the rebels, a blanket amnesty for crimes committed up to the signing, disarmament and demobilization, and the establishment of human rights and truth and reconciliation commissions. The UN special representative attaches a disclaimer to the agreement saying: "The United Nations interprets that the amnesty and pardon shall not apply to international crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law."

Sankoh is granted the 'status of vice president' and chairmanship of a Commission for the Management of Strategic Mineral Resources, National Reconstruction and Development. Other RUF and AFRC members receive several cabinet posts and places within the administration. The parties also agree to the deployment of a neutral peacekeeping force, leading to a shift from reliance on ECOMOG to a more diverse UN contingent of peacekeepers and military observers.

### July 1999–April 2000

Implementation of key areas of the agreement is painfully slow. Disarmament and demobilization deadlines are not met and deployment of peacekeepers is blocked. The UN force retains contingents from Nigeria, Ghana and Guinea, as well as new contributors Kenya, India, Jordan, Bangladesh and Zambia. Humanitarian access to rebel controlled areas is limited. Nonetheless, all sides claim publicly that they are committed to peace and making the agreement work.

### May 2000

RUF fighters begin seizing peacekeepers and UN military observers at a demobilization camp at Makeni after a dispute over the return of disarmed combatants. The confrontations spread to other areas in the north and east. Within days, about 500 peacekeepers are captured or surrounded by the RUF, leading to accusations that the deployment of poorly equipped and trained peacekeepers was foolhardy, when implementation of the Peace Agreement and the RUF's commitment to disarm were so uncertain.

In talks with the UN's Special Representative to Sierra Leone, Nigerian Oluyemi Adeniji, Sankoh accuses the UN of triggering the crisis by attempting to forcefully disarm combatants. The RUF leader is unmoved by diplomatic pressure from Nigeria, Algeria, Libya, Burkina Faso and others. Women protest in front of Sankoh's Freetown residence, calling for the RUF to abide by the Lomé Agreement. UK troops begin arriving to secure the international airport and evacuate their nationals.

Sankoh flees from his residence after a second demonstration turns violent and shoots are fired by his bodyguards. Nineteen people are killed, including several RUF members. Unfounded reports suggesting the RUF is moving towards Freetown create panic in the city. Johnny Paul Koroma, former junta leader and RUF ally, now chairman of the Committee for the Consolidation of Peace, publicly calls on current and former soldiers and CDF to go on the offensive against the RUF. Liberian President Charles Taylor is asked by regional leaders to help free the hostages and get the peace process back on track. After a few days on the run, Sankoh emerges from the hills behind Freetown and is captured. He is taken into custody and later to an undisclosed location.

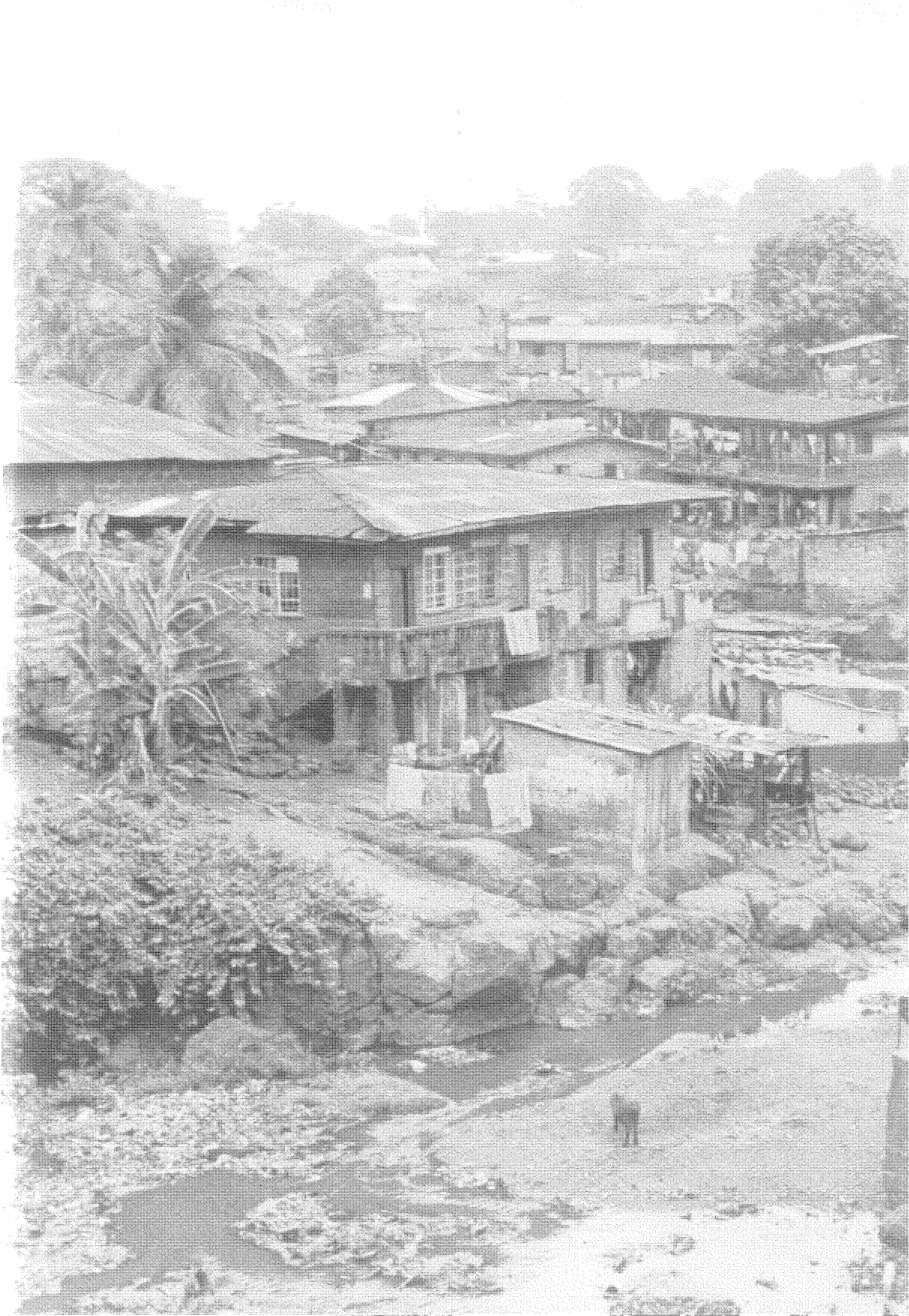
UN Secretary General Kofi Annan recommends immediately reinforcing the peacekeeping force from 9,250 to 13,000 and expanding it further as soon as possible.

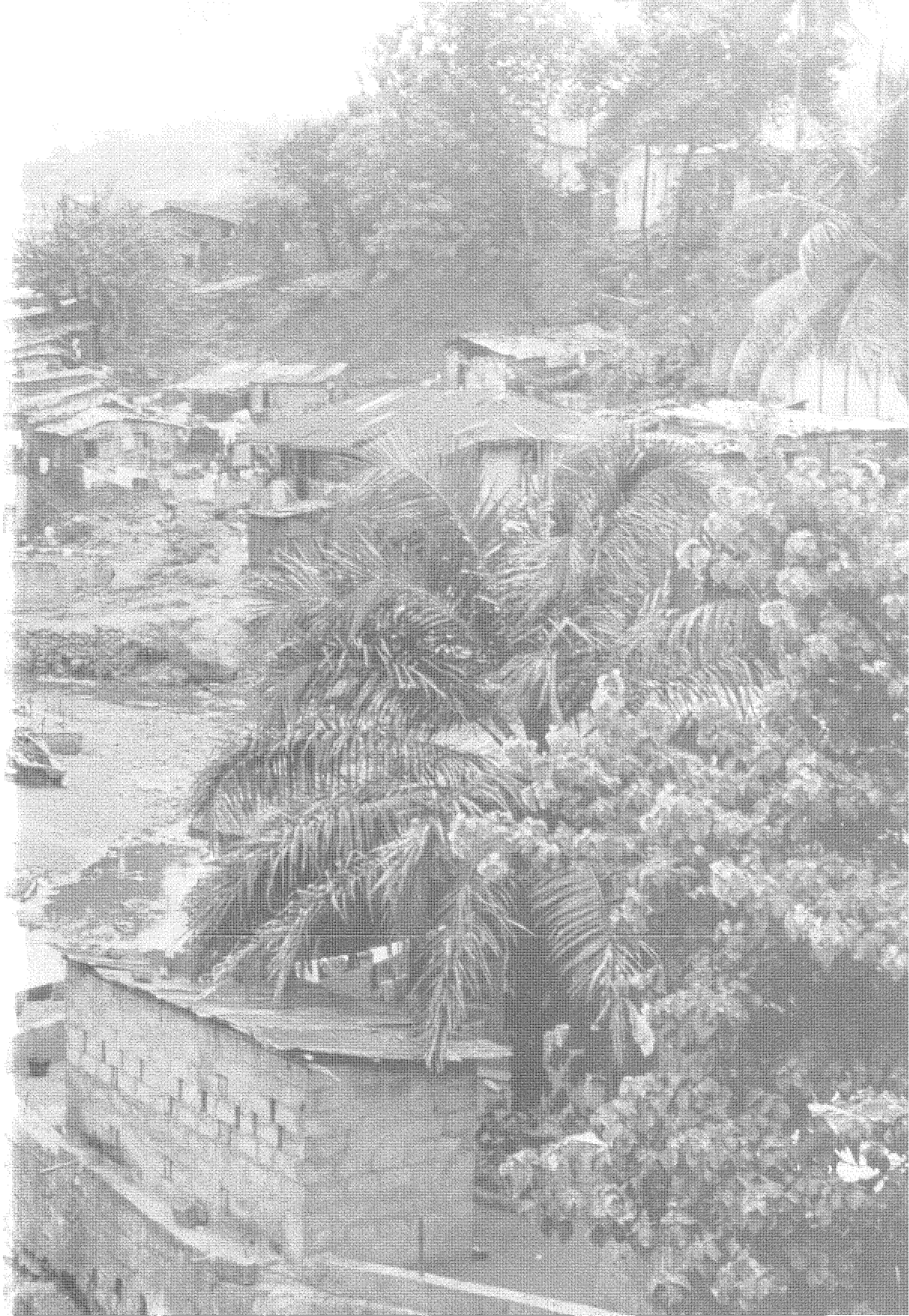
### June 2000

By the beginning of June, Taylor has succeeded in using his influence with the RUF to secure the release of the hostages. However, fighting continues north of Freetown and pressure mounts for Sankoh and other arrested RUF leaders to be prosecuted for alleged crimes committed since the signing of the Peace Agreement.

**Next page: Freetown, March 2000**

Source: Lennart Johansen





# Profiles

## Sierra Leone

President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah



Virtually unknown within Sierra Leone after spending more than two decades in New York, Ahmad Tejan Kabbah was seen as a compromise candidate when he was put forward by the Mende-dominated Sierra Leone People's Party as their presidential hopeful in 1996. The SLPP won the legislative vote overwhelmingly in the south and east of the country, split the Freetown area with a number of other parties, and lost in the north. With the SLPP party apparatus behind him and promises of coalition government for some of the other contenders, Kabbah won a run-off vote for the presidency against northerner John Karefa-Smart by fifty-nine per cent to forty per cent. Despite the violence surrounding the first round of voting, half the country's voting age population cast ballots in the more tranquil presidential run-off.

Born in 1932 at Pendembu in Kailahun District, eastern Sierra Leone, Kabbah had served as an assistant district commissioner in the colonial administration, and later in senior civil service posts in several ministries. In 1968, he studied law in the UK and then took up a post at the UN as deputy chief of the West Africa Division. When he retired from the UN in the early 1990s, he was director of the Division of Administration and Management. Returning to Sierra Leone, Kabbah provided advice to Valentine Strasser's NPRC military government as chairman of a high level advisory council.

The challenges facing Kabbah's new government called for a miracle worker. The country's armed forces were suspected of collusion with the RUF and national security was largely dependent on foreign troops, mercenaries, and fledgling, ethnic-based militias. The economy was crippled. The administration was steeped in corruption and inefficiency. Lacking a personal political constituency and beholden to the international community for its financial and political backing, Kabbah proved unable to make the transformation from cautious bureaucrat to charismatic national leader. As president, he quickly

moved to engage in peace negotiations initiated by the NPRC, while at the same time turning to international organizations and friendly governments for support for rebuilding the country. The RUF declared a ceasefire, entered negotiations and eventually signed the Abidjan Peace Accord in November 1996. This settlement, in combination with the imprimatur of democratic elections, led to a surge in international assistance during the following three years. Yet Kabbah was unable to sustain the peace promised at Abidjan and was forced to flee the country in the May 1997 coup. After his government was restored by ECOMOG, he was powerless to avert the carnage unleashed by the junta soldiers in Freetown in January 1999. With much of Freetown and the rest of the country in ruins and Nigeria threatening to withdraw its forces, Kabbah eventually bowed to international pressure to re-enter negotiations with the RUF, defying critics vehemently opposed to any dealings with the rebels.

### Foday Sankoh and the RUF



Source: Lennart Johansen

The leader of the Revolutionary United Front, Foday Saybana Sankoh is sixty-four. A Temne from Tonkolili District in northern Sierra Leone, Sankoh was the son of a farmer. "As a small boy, I liked the bush, setting traps for wild animals, fighting with my brothers, you know, we used to wrestle," Sankoh said in an interview in late 1999. "I enjoyed setting up ambushes for children from other villages, we used to fight them and my group was always on top. They used to call me 'the warrior', in our language, *okuruba*."

Sankoh attended primary school and took on a number of jobs in Magburaka before he joined the Sierra Leone army in 1956. He has said that he undertook training in Nigeria and Britain. In 1971, then a corporal, he was cashiered from the army's signal corps and imprisoned for seven years for taking part in a mutiny. "Most of my education, I got when I was in Pademba Road prison. I spent all my time in prison with books, reading and learning"

On his release he worked as an itinerant photographer in the south and east of Sierra Leone, eventually coming in contact with young radicals and finding his way to Libya for insurgency training in 1988. On their return to Sierra Leone, Sankoh and confederates Rashid Mansaray and Abu Kanu solicited support for an armed uprising to oust the APC government. They then travelled to Liberia, where they reportedly continued recruiting and served with Charles Taylor's NPFL.

From the beginning of the war in Sierra Leone in 1991 until 1996, Sankoh stayed in the bush, acting as Head of Ideology and principal spokesman of the RUF. While the RUF practised a form of collective leadership, Sankoh was clearly the most influential figure within the leadership, revered by many of his field commanders and youthful fighters. Potential rivals Mansaray and Kanu were killed.

Following the signing of the November 1996 Abidjan Peace Accord, Sankoh stayed on in the Ivorian capital, sending some of his lieutenants to Freetown to take part in setting up the mechanisms to implement the agreement. In March 1997, the RUF leader was arrested in Nigeria, allegedly for carrying a weapon. A coup and a government restoration later, Sankoh was put on trial in Freetown and found guilty of treason, only to be pardoned as one of the conditions for signing the Lomé Agreement in July 1999.

As leader of the RUF, Sankoh was awarded the status of vice-president of Sierra Leone, as well as the chairmanship of the board of the Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development. The commission was to be responsible for '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'. The commission never functioned as such, although Sankoh himself was apparently dealing in diamonds until his re-capture.

In early May 2000, Sankoh was chased from his Freetown residence by an angry crowd of over 200,000 demonstrators after a string of major breaches of the ceasefire and disarmament terms of the Peace Agreement. He was subsequently recaptured and taken into custody.

Sankoh has been characterized by his adversaries as poorly educated, irrational, often unintelligible, and duplicitous. But the RUF under Sankoh demonstrated its ability to remain intact in the face of external pressure and internal stresses, to sustain a guerrilla war, and to negotiate favourable terms of a settlement. Given the

RUF's military and political successes under his leadership, hardcore members of the movement have continued to demonstrate their allegiance to the mercurial former corporal.

### **Sam 'Maskita' Bockarie**

Sam Bockarie, thirty-five, joined the RUF in 1990 in Liberia and was part of the initial incursion into Sierra Leone in 1991. The son of a diamond miner from Kono in eastern Sierra Leone, Bockarie dropped out of secondary school and worked as a diamond miner until 1985. He quit the mines to become a professional disco dancer, touring the mining areas to perform. He then travelled to Liberia and eventually Côte d'Ivoire, where he worked as a hairdresser and waiter.

When Charles Taylor's NPFL invaded Liberia from Côte d'Ivoire in 1989, Bockarie did not join. A few months later, he came across some recruits of a new Sierra Leonean guerrilla movement in Abidjan, climbed aboard their truck and a few days later was in the deep forests of the Liberia-Sierra Leone border region, undergoing military training.

After Sankoh was put under house arrest in Nigeria in early 1997, 'General' Bockarie emerged as the RUF's leading field commander, teaming up with the AFRC during the junta period. He was also considered the principal strategist behind the offensive that culminated in the devastating attack on Freetown in January 1999. "I never wanted myself to be overlooked by my fellow men. Now I think I am at a stage where I am satisfied. I have heard my name all over, I have become famous," Bockarie told an interviewer by satellite phone in the midst of the fighting. In another interview Bockarie said that he was fighting "to liberate my country from unscrupulous politicians and other politicians who send all our money to foreign lands."

In early 2000, Sankoh and Bockarie fell out, reportedly over Bockarie's reluctance to disarm and abide by the Lomé Peace Agreement. Claiming that Sankoh loyalists were being dispatched to his headquarters in eastern Sierra Leone to murder him, Bockarie fled to Monrovia.

### **Johnny Paul Koroma and the AFRC**



Johnny Paul Koroma emerged as the leader of the military coup in May 1997 that ousted Kabbah's civilian government. A thirty-four-year-old, Sandhurst-trained, major in the Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces, Koroma was being held in prison in Freetown at the time of the coup for his alleged part in a previous coup plot. Koroma, a born-again Christian, had also been implicated in the army's failure to protect the Sierra Rutile mine in January 1995, when it was overrun by the RUF and several Sierra Leonean and foreign hostages seized.

Freed from jail and installed as chairman of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, Koroma called Sankoh in detention in Nigeria and offered him the vice-chairmanship of the new junta government. Sankoh agreed and ordered his RUF fighters into Freetown to join the soldiers' revolt. When the coup was reversed by Nigerian-led forces in February 1998, Koroma escaped and temporarily disappeared. His elder brother, who had participated in the AFRC administration, was captured in Freetown and later executed along with twenty-three other members of the military found guilty of capital crimes by a court martial. Eventually Koroma resurfaced among junta remnants in eastern Sierra Leone in the care of RUF commander Sam Bockarie.

In the political negotiations that followed the signing of the Lomé Agreement, Koroma was given the post of chairman of the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace, whose mandate was to supervise and monitor the overall implementation of the agreement.

## Samuel Hinga Norman and the CDF

Samuel Hinga Norman is currently deputy minister of defence and national co-ordinator of the Civil Defence Forces. Norman, who retired from the army with the rank of captain, has long been associated with the Sierra Leone People's Party. In 1968, he was found guilty of participating in a coup against Siaka Stevens and jailed at Pademba Road Prison, where Foday Sankoh was to join him three years later. In the military, Sankoh and Norman had served together in the Signal Corps and other units. Norman re-emerged as a national figure in 1996, when he was named deputy minister of defence by the newly elected Kabbah government. Kabbah himself was minister of defence as well as president.

A Mende and regent chief of Telu Bongor chiefdom, Norman had been instrumental in organizing the *Kamajor* civil defence in southern and eastern Sierra Leone before being appointed as de facto defence minister. The emergence of growing numbers of pro-government CDF began to change the dynamics of the war in 1993–94. Prior to that, traditional hunters had mainly been used by the military as scouts or in small units to track and harass the RUF in the bush, where conventional forces were ineffective. From a core of solitary village hunters, armed with single-barrel shotguns and a wealth of esoteric and practical bush lore, rural community leaders began to create a militia that would retake chiefdoms that had been depopulated by the RUF and renegade soldiers.

The CDF movement crystallized among the tens of thousands of displaced southerners around Bo and Kenema under the leadership of Mende traditional chiefs, Poro secret society elders and political figures associated with the SLPP. Drawing on magical religious beliefs that initiates would be invincible in battle, and the Mende historical tradition of the *Kamajor* hunters as community founders, protectors and providers, the militia's moral and political legitimacy with the rural population stood in stark contrast to attitudes towards the RUF and the military.

While attempts to replicate the mobilization of locally rooted militias elsewhere in the country among other ethnic groups were less successful, the *Kamajors* were eventually able to retake much of the rural south and east, with initial support from South African mercenaries, Nigerian and Guinean troops. By the time of the signing of the Lomé Agreement, the CDF reportedly numbered 25,000 members, the largest military force in the country.

## Regional

### Charles Taylor and Liberia

Charles Taylor, President of Liberia since July 1997, came to power after a long and bloody civil war. In December 1989, Taylor launched an insurrection against dictator Samuel Doe, leading about a hundred fighters into Liberia from Côte d'Ivoire. Doe fought back by unleashing a reign of terror against ethnic Mano and Gio because of their support for Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). When, in mid-1990, it looked as if Taylor was on the verge of taking the capital Monrovia, Doe requested ECOWAS military intervention. A Ghanaian general led the initial ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), made up of Nigerians, Sierra Leoneans, Gambians, Ghanaians and Guineans.

As in Sierra Leone, the Liberian war generated hundreds of thousands of refugees. Unlike Sierra Leone, ethnicity was a major factor in the composition of factions. Ethnic massacres were widespread. The Liberian conflict left an estimated 150,000 dead from a total population of about 2.5 million. The eventual military stalemate created by the intervention of ECOMOG led to the negotiation of an interim power-sharing agreement between the various factions and elections in July 1997. In control of most of Liberia, Taylor was elected President with seventy-five per cent of the vote.

Many Sierra Leoneans consider Taylor to be the main external culprit in initiating and sustaining their own war. Taylor had publicly threatened to take the Liberian war to Freetown in response to then President Momoh's support for ECOMOG and the fact that Nigerian warplanes were striking Taylor's forces from their base near Freetown. Foday Sankoh and other RUF members have acknowledged they received support from Taylor to launch their attacks into Sierra Leone in 1991. Liberians loyal to Taylor were among the original RUF insurgents.

Despite various allegations of Taylor's continuous support for the RUF, including the supply of weapons, training and use of transit points for supplies, there is little proof of Liberia's direct military involvement. There is no doubt, however, that the RUF and later, AFRC members, have been welcome in Liberia and that the RUF's main route for external supplies and trade in diamonds and other commodities has passed through Monrovia. On the diplomatic front, Taylor has pressed for negotiations between the RUF and the Sierra Leone government and for inclusion of the RUF in government. In securing the release of hundreds of captive peacekeepers in May 2000, Taylor clearly demonstrated his influence over the RUF.

## **Olusegun Obasanjo and Nigeria**

Nigeria's support for subsequent governments in Sierra Leone goes back to 1989–90 when military dictator Ibrahim Babangida's opposed Charles Taylor's insurgency against Liberian President Samuel Doe. Although Babangida was reportedly partly motivated by personal business interests, Nigerian leadership in forming ECOMOG to protect Doe was a vehicle for the regional economic and military power to project its influence throughout the region. With a settlement in Liberia, albeit one that brought Taylor to power through elections, Sierra Leone became the frontline of Nigeria's regional security role. Successive leaders have stood by Sierra Leonean governments, military or civilian, despite military embarrassments, mounting casualties and accusations of political hypocrisy. These accusations came from internal and external opponents of military rule in Nigeria as Babangida and his successor Sani Abacha pursued the war after March 1997 to ensure the survival of Sierra Leone's democratically elected government.

In February 1999, Nigerians put an end to a string of military dictatorships and elected retired general Olusegun Obasanjo as president. Obasanjo had ruled Nigeria from 1976–79 after the assassination of Murtala Muhammad and had demonstrated his democratic credentials by handing power over to a civilian government in 1979. Through the 1980s and early 1990s, Obasanjo devoted considerable energies to the causes of African leadership, fighting corruption, and conflict resolution, while managing his farm and other businesses. In 1995, criticism of President Abacha landed Obasanjo in jail, only to be released when Abacha died in June 1998.

Obasanjo indicated during his election campaign that he would bring Nigerian troops home from Sierra Leone as quickly as possible. Once in power, the new president became directly involved in the peace negotiations, playing a key role in persuading Foday Sankoh to sign the Lomé Agreement. He also eventually agreed to extend the stay of Nigerian troops in Sierra Leone until a more diverse UN peacekeeping force was positioned to fill any security vacuum.

## **Muammar Ghaddafi and Libya**

Libyan involvement in the Sierra Leone crisis is rooted in decades of support from its leader Muammar Ghaddafi for anti-imperialist movements around the world. Ghaddafi's populist political ideology and his country's oil revenues provided the ingredients for nurturing a number of West African leaders, including Liberia's Charles Taylor, Foday Sankoh, Burkina Faso's Blaise Compaoré and Togo's Gnassingbé Eyadéma.

During the 1980s, Libya's revolutionary influence in Sierra Leone was channelled through students and discussion groups focusing on Ghaddafi's Green Book. Later, some of those student radicals and other dissidents, including Sankoh, went to Libya to receive guerrilla training. In 1996, Ghaddafi welcomed the RUF leader to Tripoli after the signing of the Abidjan Accord. When the RUF re-entered negotiations in 1999, Ghaddafi dispatched his former foreign minister to the talks and Libya became one of the guarantors of the Lomé Agreement.

## **Lansana Conté and Guinea**

Wrapped around Sierra Leone to the north and east and sharing a border with Liberia, Guinea has been most directly effected by the wars in the sub-region. Hundreds of thousands of Sierra Leoneans have fled to Guinea, causing severe strain on a country already struggling to overcome poverty and ethnic and political divisions. While Guinea has largely welcomed the refugees, the influx has had serious financial, social, political and environmental repercussions.

At the political level, Guinea has served as a haven for ousted Sierra Leonean leaders, beginning with Siaka Stevens in the 1960s, through Joseph Momoh, Valentine Strasser to Tejan Kabbah. While the AFRC–RUF junta was in power in Freetown, Kabbah and members of his administration found refuge in the Guinean capital Conakry, under the protection of President Lansana Conté.

Conté had seized power after the death of dictator Sékou Touré in 1984 and moved away from Touré's brand of African socialism by liberalizing the economy and encouraging foreign investment. In response to external and domestic pressure, he allowed and won multi-party elections in 1994 and again in December 1998, though both votes were violent and the results contested. President Kabbah reportedly met weekly with Conté while in exile after the 1997 coup. Kabbah traces his Mandingo ethnic roots back to the Futa Jallon region of western Guinea.

In 1990, Guinean troops were among the first ECOMOG forces to go into Liberia to prevent Charles Taylor from seizing power. Guinean forces have also been active in Sierra Leone under bilateral defence agreements and later as part of ECOMOG. Mutual distrust between Conté and Taylor has been constant. Rival Liberian warlord Alhaji Kromah, a Mandingo, called for a Muslim holy war against Taylor's NPFL from Conakry in 1991. Kromah went on to take over the leadership of the United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO). Taylor has often accused Guinea of harbouring and encouraging his political foes.

## Blaise Compaoré and Burkina Faso

The former French colony is ruled by ex-paratrooper Blaise Compaoré, whose interest in Liberia and Sierra Leone can be traced back to his family links with the late president of Côte d'Ivoire, Félix Houphuet-Boigny. Compaoré, came to power in 1982 after the killing of Thomas Sankara, a charismatic, radical, young army officer. Compaoré was part of Sankara's cabinet at the time. He was first elected president in 1991 in a ballot boycotted by opposition parties. While pursuing conventional development policies, Compaoré has also maintained strong ties with Libya and provided a haven for regional dissidents. Burkina Faso has been accused of providing military training and political support to Taylor's NPFL and to the RUF and of being a transit route for arms purchased in Eastern Europe. Burkinabes are known to have fought along Taylor in Liberia and to have been part of the original RUF force in 1991. More recently, Burkina Faso was named in a UN report on violations of international sanctions 'against Angola's insurgent movement UNITA as being a transshipment point for arms. Compaoré himself was reported to have received direct payments from UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi and to have provided 'a safe haven' for diamond transactions by the rebel movement.

## Others

### ECOWAS and ECOMOG

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has been the principal regional organization implicated in Sierra Leone's war and the search for peace. ECOWAS was established in 1975 by sixteen West African governments as a means to promote regional economic integration. Nigeria dwarfs the other fifteen members in terms of population as well as economic and military power as it contains about half the region's population and accounts for about seventy per cent of its gross domestic product. Nigeria's willingness to use ECOWAS as a vehicle to protect or extend its interests has often conflicted with the interests of other members, particularly the former French colonies of Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Togo and Benin. Years of rivalry between Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire stem, in part, from the late Ivorian President Félix Houphuet-Boigny's military and diplomatic support for the Biafrans in Nigeria's civil war of 1967–70. Economic competition between Côte d'Ivoire, with the most successful economy in the region, and Nigeria has sometimes imperilled ECOWAS effectiveness. Ghana, Nigeria's principal anglophone rival in the region, has also been an uneasy participant.

ECOWAS structures include the Authority of the Heads of State, the Standing Mediation Committee, a Secretariat and a number of committees made up of specific member countries. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, ECOWAS heads of state established a collective security framework to counter external threats and resolve disputes between and within member states. ECOMOG, the ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group, was originally constituted in 1990 to intervene in the Liberian civil war. Key ECOWAS structures in the Sierra Leone conflict have been the Authority, which comes together under the sitting chairman of the organization in annual summits and other meetings; the Secretariat, which played a co-ordinating and support role in Sierra Leone's peace negotiations; the Committee of Five, made up of Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia and Nigeria (later the Committee of Six with the addition of Togo); and ECOMOG.

Through the early 1990s, ECOMOG's presence in Sierra Leone was limited to a few hundred logistics troops in support of operations in Liberia. However, under separate bilateral agreements with Nigeria and Guinea, non-ECOMOG combat units from those countries were stationed in Freetown and northern and southern Sierra Leone. Two months prior to the May 1997 coup that ousted the Kabbah government, Sierra Leone and Nigeria renewed their agreement – Nigeria was to provide presidential protection, training for the Sierra Leone army and "strategic support"

In opposition to the coup, ECOMOG deployed more troops to Sierra Leone, with the force growing to over 12,000 by February 1998, when the junta was routed from Freetown. Throughout the interventions in Liberia and Sierra Leone, the force has usually been commanded by a Nigerian and Nigeria has provided by far the largest troop contingents. In Sierra Leone, Guinea, Ghana and Mali have also provided forces. With the signing of the Lomé Agreement, the UN moved to replace most of ECOMOG with a more diverse international contingent.

### United Nations

While UN development and humanitarian agencies were active in Sierra Leone throughout the war, the world body's political involvement intensified in 1994 after NPRC Chairman Valentine Strasser asked the Security Council for help in negotiating a settlement. UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali dispatched Sudanese diplomat Berhanu Dinka as his special representative to Sierra Leone. However, Dinka's personal style and positioning in Freetown aroused RUF suspicions of his impartiality. Amid the plethora of regional and international organizations seeking to facilitate an

agreement – ECOWAS, the OAU, the Commonwealth, International Alert, and Western diplomats – the UN's role was limited. Nonetheless, the UN was expected to help observe and monitor the 1996 Abidjan Accord and became one of its 'moral guarantors'. The rapid collapse of the settlement prevented the deployment of UN peacekeepers.

Following the May 1997 coup, the UN was vocal in condemning the military takeover and calling for a return to civilian rule. It also eventually imposed sanctions on the junta, in support of ECOWAS sanctions. In 1999, Dinka's replacement, Ugandan diplomat Francis Okelo, proved more acceptable to the insurgents and he was instrumental in persuading the RUF to enter into negotiations under the auspices of ECOWAS. The UN was to become a guarantor of the Lomé Agreement, however, Okelo was instructed to sign with the explicit proviso that the UN understands the amnesty and pardon not to apply to international crimes.

With the threatened pull-out of the Nigerian contingent from ECOMOG by December 1999, the UN moved to establish a 6,000-strong peacekeeping operation, and UNOMSIL was renamed the UN Mission in Sierra Leone, UNAMSIL, in October 1999. Controversially, Nigeria was to retain a key security role during implementation of the peace deal by providing blue-helmeted UN troops, instead of forces for ECOMOG. Ghana, Guinea, India, Jordan, Kenya and Zambia made up the remainder of the UN force, with 220 military observers drawn from 30 countries.

The main purpose of the peacekeeping force was to 'assist the government in carrying out its programme to disarm and demobilize all former combatants and help create the conditions of confidence and stability required for the smooth implementation of the peace process'. ECOMOG was to maintain responsibility for security in Freetown and at the nearby international airport, as well as for carrying out operations against 'rogue elements unwilling to participate in the peace process.'

In the ten months after the signing of the Lomé Agreement numerous security problems emerged: disarmament was slow and combatants from all sides became impatient; ECOMOG forces continued to be withdrawn without proper replacement; some RUF commanders were reluctant to allow free access of UN troops and humanitarian agencies; and there were incidents of UN or ECOMOG forces being disarmed and their weapons taken by rebel forces. In view of these problems Secretary General Kofi Annan recommended in January 2000 to increase the strength of UNAMSIL to 11,100 and revise the force's mandate. The new mandate allowed it to protect civilians, escort humanitarian

supplies, increase security at demobilization and disarmament sites, carry out more patrolling and provide armed escorts on main roads, retrieve illegal weapons, and guard government buildings and other installations.

Meanwhile, the RUF had started testing the deployed forces, severely undermining the credibility of the peacekeeping operation. In early May 2000, about 500 peacekeepers were taken captive in a series of incidents, only to be released weeks later after the intervention of Liberian President Taylor. Critics charged that the force had been sent in where there was no peace to keep and that the contingent had been under-trained and under-equipped.

### United Kingdom

As the former colonial power in Sierra Leone, the UK has been one of the main external actors throughout the war period. UK diplomatic and humanitarian leverage was evident in pressuring the NPRC government to allow elections in 1996, and in subsequent support for the Kabbah government, both before and after the 1997 coup.

Until the death of Nigeria's military ruler Abacha in June 1998, UK backing of the Kabbah government was complicated by the tough international stance the UK had taken against the Nigerian regime and the fact that a succession of Nigerian military leaders had been the main defenders of the Sierra Leone government. Nigerian democratization allowed London to begin actively co-operating with Abuja.

Diplomatically, the UK rallied UN member states and international organizations to provide political and material support for the elected government. While Kabbah's government was in exile, the UK hosted his appearance at a Commonwealth meeting in Edinburgh and provided financial and technical support to develop plans to be implemented once it was restored. Behind the scenes, the UK provided funds and equipment for a pro-government radio station.

Career diplomat Peter Penfold became UK High Commissioner to Sierra Leone a few weeks before the Kabbah government was overthrown in May 1997. Demonstrating the UK government's continued recognition of the elected government and resolve to see the coup reversed, Penfold set up a diplomatic mission in the Guinean capital Conakry, where the Kabbah government had fled. Though working towards the restoration of the elected government by diplomatic means, Penfold and other UK officials did not rule out the possible use of force. In 1998, a UK commission of inquiry was set up into what came to be known as the 'arms to

Africa affair'. It found that in breach of a UN arms embargo Penfold had given tacit approval to a deal between Sandline International, a Bahamas-registered private military company, and the Kabbah government for the delivery of US\$10 million worth of technical know-how, arms and ammunition for forces loyal to the government. Reprimanded in the UK for providing 'a degree of approval' for the deal, Penfold's support to Kabbah was celebrated in the streets of Freetown and he was made an honorary paramount chief. Although the scandal caused deep embarrassment to UK politicians and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the weapons only arrived weeks after ECOMOG had pushed the junta out of Freetown.

After Lomé, UK aid to Sierra Leone has involved providing military equipment to ECOMOG and the government of Sierra Leone, restructuring and retraining of the military and police, material support and advice to the disarmament and demobilization process, as well as emergency relief and funding for governance and civil society activities.

As the security situation deteriorated in early May 2000, Britain dispatched a 900-strong contingent of crack troops, ostensibly to evacuate British nationals. The British

forces temporarily helped shore up the defences of Freetown and stiffened the resolve of UN peacekeepers, pro-government soldiers and CDF. By mid-June, the majority of troops were withdrawn and the British military role reverted to training and advice.

### **United States of America**

Between 1991 and 1999, the US was the single largest donor of humanitarian aid to Sierra Leone, providing a total of US\$293 million and an additional US\$110 million in support of ECOMOG in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Diplomatically, the US took a more active role in promoting a negotiated settlement of the war than the UK, working behind the scenes to gain the confidence of the RUF and pressing the Kabbah government to enter negotiations. As the Lomé negotiations entered their final stages, President Clinton personally intervened, speaking to Sankoh by phone. Sankoh told an American journalists later: "What rebel leader gets called by the president of the United States? I only got that call because I fought in the bush for so many years."

### **Locals bathe near the UN heliport, May 2000**

*Source: AFP/Corbis*



# Further reading

## The internet

### News sources

Sierra Leone Web news  
<http://www.sierra-leone.org/slnews.html>

BBC Africa news  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/africa/>

WorldNews.com Sierra Leone news  
<http://www.sierraleonenews.com/>

Yahoo Sierra Leone news  
[http://headlines.yahoo.com/Full\\_Coverage/World/Sierra\\_Leone/](http://headlines.yahoo.com/Full_Coverage/World/Sierra_Leone/)

### Documents

Sierra Leone Web documents  
<http://www.sierra-leone.org/documents.html>

BBC special reports  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/in\\_depth/africa/2000/sierra\\_leone/default.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/in_depth/africa/2000/sierra_leone/default.stm)

### News and opinion

Concord Times  
<http://www.oe-pages.com/BIZ/Homebiz2/concord/>

Focus on Sierra Leone  
<http://www.focus-on-sierra-leone.co.uk/>

### Human rights

Human Rights Watch  
<http://www.hrw.org/campaigns/sleone/index.htm>

Amnesty International crisis in Sierra Leone  
[http://www.amnestyusa.org/countries/sierra\\_leone/aiinfo.html](http://www.amnestyusa.org/countries/sierra_leone/aiinfo.html)

### Humanitarian assistance

**Relief Web**  
<http://www.reliefweb.int/>

### Government of Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone on the Web  
<http://www.sierra-leone.gov.sl/slindex.htm>

### Intergovernmental organizations

United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone  
[http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/unamsil/body\\_unamsil.htm](http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/unamsil/body_unamsil.htm)

Economic Community of West African States  
<http://www.cedeao.org/index2.htm>

## Selected reading

### Peace processes in West Africa

**Armon J. & Carl A.** eds The Liberian Peace Process 1990–1996. *Accord: An International Review of Peace Initiatives, Issue no. 1. Conciliation Resources, London, 1996*

**Bangura Y.** Reflections on the 1996 Sierra Leone Peace Accord. *United Nations Research Institute on Social Development, Geneva, 1999*

**Garcia E.** The Abidjan Peace Accord and Beyond: Taking Steps Towards a Sustainable Peace: A Layperson's Guide to the Peace Agreement. *International Alert, London, December 1996*

**Harris P. & Reilly B.** eds Democracy and Deep-Rooted Conflict: Options for Negotiators. *International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Stockholm, 1998*

**International Alert** An End to War, a Time of Hope. *International Alert, London, December 1996*

**International Alert** Paths to Peace in Sierra Leone. Breaking Ground and Advancing the Process. *International Alert, London, 1996*

**International Alert** Sierra Leone Peace Talks. Reports and Reflections. *International Alert, London, 1996*

**Sorbo G., McCrae J. & Wohlgemuth L.** NGOs in Conflict – An Evaluation of International Alert. *Christian Michelsen Institute, Bergen, 1997*

**Walraven K. van** The Pretence of Peacekeeping: ECOMOG, West Africa and Liberia (1990–1998). *Clingendael Institute, The Hague, 1999*

### Sierra Leone history and politics

**Abdullah I. & Bangura Y.** eds Africa Development, Vol 22, Nos 3–4. *CODESRIA, Dakar, 1997*

**Alie J.A.D.** A New History of Sierra Leone. *Macmillan Press, London, 1990*

**Conteh-Morgan E. & Dixon-Fyle M.** Sierra Leone at the End of the Twentieth Century. *Peter Lang, New York, 1999*

**Kpundeh S.J.** Politics and Corruption in Africa: A Case Study of Sierra Leone. *University Press of America, Lanham, MD, 1995*

**Reno W.** Corruption and State Politics in Sierra Leone. *Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995*

**Reno W.** Warlord Politics and African States. *Lynne Rienner, Boulder, CO, 1998*

**Richards P.** Rebellion in Liberia and Sierra Leone: A Crisis of Youth? in **Furley O.W.** ed. *Conflict In Africa. Tauris, London, 1995*

**Richards P.** Fighting for the Rain Forest: War, Youth & Resources in Sierra Leone. *James Currey, London, 1996*

### Revolutionary United Front

**Abdullah I. & Muana P.** The Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone: A Revolt of the Lumpen proletariat. in **Clapham C.** ed. *African Guerrillas. James Currey, Oxford, 1998*

**Ali T.M. & Matthews R.O.** eds Civil Wars in Africa: Roots and Resolution. *McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal, 1999*

### African Politics

**Bayart J.F., Ellis S. & Hibou B.** The Criminalization of the State in Africa. *James Currey, Oxford, 1999*

**Chabal P. & Daloz J.P.** Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument. *James Currey, Oxford, 1999*

**Chazan N., Lewis P., Mortimer R.A., Rothchild D. & Stedman S.J.** Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa, 3rd edition. *Lynne Rienner, Boulder, CO, 1999*

### Diamonds

**Greenhalgh P.** West African Diamonds 1991–83. *Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1985*

**Smillie I., Gberie L. & Hazelton R.** The Heart of the Matter: Sierra Leone, Diamonds & Human Security. *Partnership Africa, Canada, Ottawa, 2000*

### Liberia

**Ellis S.** Liberia's Warlord Insurgency. in **Clapham C.** ed. *African Guerrillas. James Currey, Oxford, 1998*

**Ellis S.** The Mask of Anarchy: The Destruction of Liberia and the Religious Dimension of an African Civil War. *Hurst, London, 1999*

**Huband M.** The Liberian Civil War. *Frank Cass, London, 1998*

### Mercenaries

**Arnold G.** Mercenaries: The Scourge of the Third World. *Macmillan, London, 1999*

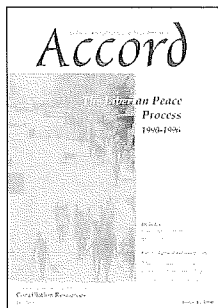
**Cillers J. & Mason P.** eds Peace, Profit or Plunder? The Privitisation of Security in War-Torn African Societies. *Institute for Security Studies, Halfway House (South Africa), 1999*

**Legg T. & Ibbs R.** Report of the Sierra Leone Arms Investigation. *The Stationery Office, London, 1998*

**Spicer, Lt Col.T.** An Unorthodox Soldier: Peace and War and the Sandline Affair. *Mainstream Publishing, Edinburgh, 1999*

# The Accord series

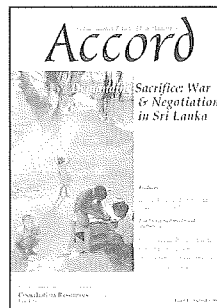
*Accord: an international review of peace initiatives is published by Conciliation Resources (CR). It provides detailed narrative and analysis on specific war and peace processes in an accessible format. The series is intended to provide a practical resource for reflection for all those engaged in peacemaking activities.*



## The Liberian Peace Process 1990-1996

Issue 1 October 1996

This issue documents the six years of military 'peacekeeping' and negotiations which led to the Abuja Accord of 1996.



## Demanding Sacrifice: War and Negotiation in Sri Lanka

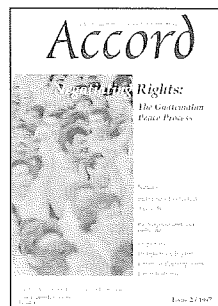
Issue 4 August 1998

This issue documents the cycles of conflict and negotiation since the ethnic and national conflict degenerated into war in 1983.

Tamil and Sinhalese language editions:  
Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies

Fax: +94 74 610943

E-mail: cha-info@sri.lanka.net



## Negotiating Rights: The Guatemalan Peace Process

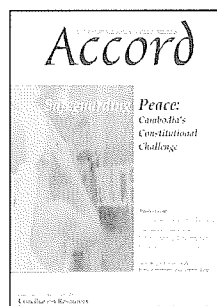
Issue 2 November 1997

This issue describes the negotiations for social justice, political pluralism and the rule of law which were at the heart of the Guatemala national peace process.

Spanish language edition: FLACSO-Guatemala

Fax: +502 332-6729

E-mail: flacso@concyt.gob.gt



## Safeguarding Peace: Cambodia's Constitutional Challenge

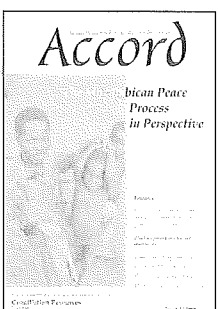
Issue 5 November 1998

This issue documents the violent collapse in July 1997 of the country's governing coalition barely six years after the 1991 Paris agreements that had 'officially' ended Cambodia's long war.

Khmer language edition (1999): The Khmer Institute of Democracy

Fax: +855 23 4-27521

E-mail: kid@camnet.com.kh



## The Mozambican Peace Process in Perspective

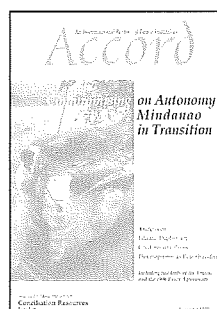
Issue 3 January 1998

This issue revisits key aspects of the Mozambican peace process five years on from the negotiated settlement between the Frelimo Government and Renamo.

Portuguese language edition:  
ARQUIVO

Fax: +258 1 423-428

E-mail: zumbo@mail.tropical.co.mz



## Compromising on Autonomy: Mindanao in Transition

Issue 6 April 1999

This issue centres on the political settlement that brought an end to twenty-four years of civil war in the Southern Philippines and focuses on the negotiations between the Philippines Government and the Moro National Liberation Front over the struggle of the minority Muslims of Mindanao for self-determination.



### **A question of sovereignty**

#### **The Georgia–Abkhazia peace process**

Issue 7 October 1999

In exploring the Abkhaz demand for sovereignty and Georgia's refusal to grant it – Accord 7 provides a unique insight into a political stalemate and points towards possible avenues out of the deadlock. Writers from both Georgia and Abkhazia analyse the obstacles and the opportunities of the negotiations process. International authors look critically at interventions from the United Nations and the Russian Federation and at civic peace initiatives. The conflict illustrates the challenges faced by divided communities in the search for peace when parties are unable to move beyond grievance and insecurity.

*Russian language edition available from CR in late 2000.*



### **Striking a balance**

#### **The Northern Ireland peace process**

Issue 8 December 1999

A selection of key players in Northern Ireland, from a wide range of political backgrounds, offer their perspectives on the Belfast Agreement and share their hopes and fears for the future of peace. These unique insights, edited from a conflict resolution perspective, shed new light on one of the most high-profile peace processes of recent years. Accord 8 offers a concise and readable resource for those facing the challenge of transforming violent conflict into sustainable, lasting peace.

*Russian language edition available from CR in late 2000*

---

### *Next issue* **The Tajikistan peace process** Issue 10 2000

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Central Asian republic of Tajikistan fragmented along regional, ethnic, and ideological lines, descending into civil war in 1992. Accord 10 will examine the causes and dynamics of this war, the role of foreign governments and international institutions that intervened in the conflict, as well as the official and 'unofficial' peace processes that led to acceptance of the 1997 peace agreement, and the ongoing challenges of implementing the agreement and promoting peaceful development and democratisation in Tajikistan.

## Conciliation Resources

Conciliation Resources (CR) was established in 1994 to provide an international service to local organizations pursuing peacebuilding or conflict transformation initiatives. CR's principal objective is to support the activities of individuals and groups working at community and national levels in preventing violent conflict or in transforming conflict into opportunities for social, political and economic development based on more just relationships.

In striving to attain that objective CR:

- assists local organizations in the development of indigenously rooted, innovative solutions to short- and long-term social, economic and political problems related to armed conflict or communal strife
- involves previously marginalized or excluded groups in community and national peacebuilding processes
- helps build or strengthen civic capabilities for dialogue, problem-solving and constructive action locally, nationally and regionally when existing mechanisms for effective participation are weak or lacking
- participates in local and international development and dissemination of conflict transformation practice and theory

In addition to the Accord programme, support in 1999 and 2000 has been given to:

- civic groups in Liberia and Sierra Leone
- Citizens' Constitutional Forum in Fiji
- Kacoke Madit in Uganda
- NGOs in Georgia and Abkhazia
- journalists and media organizations in eleven African countries with particular focus on Nigeria and Uganda

For more information or to make a donation contact:

**Conciliation Resources**  
**173 Upper Street**  
**London N1 1RG**  
**United Kingdom**

Telephone +44 (0)20 7359 7728  
Fax +44 (0)20 7359 4081  
E-mail [conres@c-r.org](mailto:conres@c-r.org)  
Website <http://www.c-r.org>

*Charity Registration No 1055436*



